

## Hays CISD participates in TEA pilot program

by Brett Thorne

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In September, Hays CISD was one of seven districts in the state that rolled out a student achievement tracking program that state officials hope will improve the Texas education system. Hays CISD officials said the program's initial launch during the 2012–13 school year was a success.

About 400 educators from throughout the state gathered at the Hays CISD Performing Arts Center on May 16 to hear officials from the district and the Texas Education Agency discuss implementation of the new system.

Brenda Richmond, assistant director of management information systems for Hays CISD, said the Texas Student Data System would aid the district and teachers in tracking state funding, accountability, grades, attendance and disciplinary issues.

"A teacher can sign in and look up Johnny and see on one screen with red and green indicators that he's doing better in his attendance, but his discipline isn't improving, and his grades in this area are improving, whereas in this area they are not," Richmond said.

The TSDS will replace the old Public Education Information Management System, which has been in use for 25 years and can no longer handle the amount of data being collected by schools and districts, Richmond said.

Robert Duron, TEA deputy commissioner of finance and administration, said the system was due for an update.

"The old system has reached its capacity from an infrastructure standpoint," Duron said. "This is a solution to help provide a more efficient way to submit data."

Before joining TEA, Duron was the superintendent of San Antonio ISD.

"When I was in San Antonio, I had the blessing to have a pretty big [information technology] staff, and I wanted to know how many fourth-graders who failed the TAKS test last year, how many were not in school this week," Duron said.

Duron said his staff at SAISD would have needed eight to nine months' advance notice as well as extra staff members before they could get the information to him.

"The point being, [the program] gives quick information that you can drill down and can answer some questions you have," Duron said. "To have that at your fingertips is going to make you a lot more efficient."

According to the TEA's timeline, each of Texas' 1,237 school districts will have adopted the new system by the 2016–17 academic school year.

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