



FOR RELEASE
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**SECRETARY PAIGE APPROVES TEXAS' STATE ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN UNDER
NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND**

AUSTIN, Texas – U.S. Education Secretary Rod Paige today announced that Texas has completed its plan for a strong state accountability system aligned with the *No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB)* of 2001. Assistant Secretary for Intergovernmental and Interagency Affairs Laurie Rich made the announcement on behalf of Secretary Paige at the State Capitol. Texas Commissioner of Education Felipe Alanis and U.S. Rep. John Carter joined Rich for the announcement.

"Texas has worked hard to align its state assessment system with the accountability requirements of No Child Left Behind," Paige said. "I applaud Commissioner of Education Felipe Alanis and his team for their efforts to ensure every child in Texas has access to a high-quality education and that no child is left behind."

"I'm honored to be representing Secretary Paige here in my home state to deliver the good news about Texas' accountability plan," Rich said at the event.

Under NCLB's strong accountability provisions, states must describe how they will close the achievement gap and make sure all students, including disadvantaged students, achieve academic proficiency. In addition, they must produce annual state and school district report cards that inform parents and communities about state and school progress. Schools that do not make

progress must provide supplemental services, such as free tutoring or after-school assistance, take corrective actions and, if still not making adequate yearly progress after five years, must make dramatic changes to the way the school is run.

Texas is the 33rd accountability plan to gain approval. Other plans to be approved include Arkansas, Colorado, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Mississippi, Missouri, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Vermont, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin and Wyoming.

No Child Left Behind is the landmark education reform law designed to change the culture of America's schools by closing the achievement gap, offering more flexibility, giving parents more options and teaching students based on what works.

Foremost among the four key principles is an insistence on stronger accountability for results. To achieve that, states must develop strong accountability systems or improve those already in place, establish high standards and hold all children to the same standards. They also must provide instruction by highly qualified teachers, which results in steady progress. All students must be proficient by the 2013-14 school year.

All states submitted draft accountability plans to the U.S. Department of Education by the Jan. 31 deadline. Following an initial review and technical assistance, if needed, the next step was onsite peer review of each state's proposed accountability plan. Teams of three peer reviewers -- independent, nonfederal education policy, reform or statistical experts -- conducted each peer review. Following a review of the team's consensus report, the Department provided

feedback to the state and worked to resolve any outstanding issues. Ultimately, Paige approved the state plan, as he did for Texas.

Despite all the priorities competing for our tax dollars, President Bush's budget boosts federal education funding to \$53.1 billion – a \$10.9 billion increase since the President took office. Texas alone will receive more than \$9 billion, including \$8 billion to implement NCLB. If the President's budget is approved, federal education funding for Texas will have gone up \$950 million since President Bush took office.

Texas's plan will be posted online in the coming days at:

<http://www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/CFP/csas/index.html>.

For more information about the No Child Left Behind Act, go to www.nochildleftbehind.gov.

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