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## **TAKS test moved to allow schools to serve as polling places and maintain test security**

AUSTIN - Commissioner of Education Robert Scott announced today that he is adjusting the state testing calendar to ensure that no Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills exams are given on the March 4 primary election day.

“By moving testing dates, we can preserve schools as polling places and maintain a calm, quiet, secure testing environment for our students,” Scott said.

The commissioner decided to change the testing calendar after consulting with many superintendents, testing coordinators and education service center directors.

Many schools are used as polling places. For the first time, a testing date and election day coincided because of three changes in the law. Lawmakers moved the March election day up by one week. Another law pushed the start date for schools back to late August and, because of that change, a third bill required testing to occur two weeks later than it did during the 2006-2007 school year.

When public comment was requested on a draft version of the testing calendar this past summer, none of the comments received expressed a concern about conducting testing on election day. But as election day draws near, some district officials began to worry that the steady influx of voters into their building could be distracting to students taking a high-stakes test.

Under the new calendar, all tests scheduled for March 4-6 will be given one day later than originally scheduled. The exit-level TAKS social studies exam, which was originally scheduled for Friday, March 7, will be moved to Monday, March 3.

“We know this change causes additional work for our district and campus testing coordinators so we have not made this decision lightly. We had to balance the long-standing tradition of using schools as polling places with children’s right to a quiet testing environment as they take high stakes exams,” Scott said.

Some of the tests that were originally scheduled to be given on Tuesday, March 4, determine whether children are promoted to the next grade or whether they will graduate from high school.

While state tests are not normally administered on Monday, the exit-level social studies exam affects the fewest number of test takers, approximately 10,000 students statewide.

Attached is a schedule that shows the original testing calendar for the week of March 3 and the revised calendar.

About 2.6 million students in grades 3,4,5,7,8,9,10,11 and any senior who has not met testing requirements for graduation will take the TAKS during this week.

