



Vernon ISD Superintendent Response to the New State Accountability Rating

The Texas Education Agency released the A-F school ratings for each school district based on a new statewide rating system.

VISD's school board and administration felt it important to share the district's stance on yet another attempt to evaluate schools based on criteria that VISD and many other districts feel do not accurately measure the quality of education being provided to our students.

The rating is largely a measurement of one test on one day. It does not account for individual academic needs, competency, extracurricular successes, or parental involvement. It does not account for our community involvement, our teaching strategies, or the cumulative performance of Vernon Independent School District.

It certainly does not measure the hard work and effort of our students and faculty over the past school year. I witness first hand on a daily basis how hard our VISD staff works and how much they love our students.

Given the tremendous diversity of Texas schools, we comprehend and respect the inherent difficulties in trying to evaluate all schools under a single rating system. However, we also recognize that attempts to do so can produce confusing results. For the 2017-2018 school year, every VISD campus met standards promulgated by the State of Texas, yet our grade under the new system was a 69.3(D). For the 2018-2019 school year, our district scores improved from a 63.9(D) to a 78(C) as a district. Our elementary campuses received a 55(F), and the middle school received a 62(D).

VISD's school board and administration does not find this acceptable, and we are in the process of determining what factors caused this score to decide if the district's long-term and short-term plans need to be modified. In Domain II, Vernon ISD grew from an "F" to a 75 (C). In fact, VISD received the same letter grade many other districts received, but those districts received higher overall ratings.

While we as a district realize that there is significant room for improvement, let's not lose sight of the great things that have happened in our schools this past school year.

- McCord Elementary has a strong awareness of individual student's strengths with a variety of ways to support them. We take immense pride in helping any and every student from gifted children to those with special needs.
- McCord Elementary has a strong record of accomplishment regarding the celebration of student, community, and school-wide success. We schedule various activities that focus on the many positive academic achievements of our students.
- Central students are recognized weekly for following the school-wide program of Capturing Kids Hearts with positive reinforcement and social contracts.
- Students at Central visited local assisted living homes to perform for them during the Christmas holidays.
- The TIE Club has grown from being just at Shive to being offered at Shive, Middle School, and the High School.
- Shive showed a 3% increase in students achieving Meets and Masters on their state testing.

- 5th grade economically disadvantaged students had a 9% increase in Reading and a 4% increase in the passing rate in Science. Special Education students had a 6% increase in the passing rate in Science.

VERNON ISD

- Vernon Middle School has utilized both the Capturing Kids Hearts and AVID programs to build relationships with students and prepare them for success after high school graduation. They have also incorporated the TIE Club this last year.
- Vernon High School continues to find ways to meet our student's needs through diverse extracurricular activities, clubs, and programs.
- Vernon ISD has collaborated with Vernon College building a dual credit program that can afford students the opportunity to graduate high school with an Associate's Degree.
- The NTSH AFP Campus achieved higher participation and success on the STAAR Tests and EOC Tests during the 2018-2019 school years than ever before. The AFP is a specialized campus serving teens in a therapeutic and rehabilitating setting; it is more student-centered and focuses on a modular curriculum program with proven increased results that helps motivate students for success.
- Vernon High School's athletic department has a rich tradition of success. The tennis team has qualified for the state. Cross country had a runner qualify for state. This past spring, we had students qualify for the state wrestling tournament, tennis tournament, and track meet. During the 2017-2018 school year, 14 teams qualified for the state playoffs. We have qualified many individuals and teams for state competitions in Academic UIL, Band, and Choir.
- Between the Vernon High School FFA and the Wilbarger County 4-H Program, VISD students had 25 projects make the sale at major stock shows.

As a district, we strive to engage our students in learning; we are a member of the High-Reliability Schools network and are District Certified Level 1: Safe and Collaborative. McCord Elementary celebrated the success of becoming a Level II HRS School, which requires Effective Teaching in Every Classroom. We continue to strive for Effective Teaching in Every Classroom. AVID provides the support for achievement to our students as we prepare them for success in college and professional careers. As a district, our College, Career, and Military Readiness Standard was met by 57% of our students. This is a 12% increase from the 2017-2018 school year. We are working to provide industry certifications as well as maintaining a strong partnership with Vernon College in our dual credit program.

In conclusion, the District does not feel that the new rating system adequately gauges the level of education that Vernon students are provided. That being said, VISD takes this evaluation seriously and is committed to improving in all areas. I have children that attend VISD, and I am very grateful they do attend Vernon Schools. I know that many of our parents feel the same way. I ask the community to join our efforts to support our kids, teachers, and staff to make Vernon Schools the very best that we possibly can be. Please understand the stress level the state has forced on our teachers and let them know how much you appreciate them. I can assure you, they show up every day with a passion to help our children succeed and to let them know how much they love each and every child that walks the hallways of VISD.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jeff Byrd". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and "B".

Jeff Byrd
Vernon ISD Superintendent of Schools