

Test Returns: Assessing Implementation of a New Regulation

In September 2012, the Council Rock administration updated its policy relating to the return of student tests and assessments. The revised regulation states, in part: "With the exception of District Assessments, students have the option of taking assessments home." (You can read the full regulation here under AR 213: <http://www.crsd.org/site/Default.aspx?PageID=593>)

The change means that beginning this school year, almost all tests, quizzes, essays, papers, lab reports and homework should be available to all students and coming home. The exceptions include midterms, finals, and other district-wide exams (such as quarterlies), or work that students choose to leave in school. In addition, parents and students should easily see what assessments are available to bring home through the Home Access Center; there should be an asterisk next to any assessment item that is not available to bring home.

Citizens For Education recently collected some anecdotal data from parents to get an understanding of how well this new regulation is being implemented in our two high schools. As would be expected when a new policy takes effect, progress is slow but steady. The good news is that many people are reporting improvement with more student work going home than before.

However, there are still areas where implementation is not as successful. Some teachers are consistently re-collecting tests and quizzes after class review and not sending things home. Others are only allowing work to go home if parents or students specifically ask the teacher. Confronting the teacher about this is sometimes stressful to both students and parents. In other instances, teachers are allowing work to go home only for a limited time, such as 48 hours, or only allowing one test home at a time.

The administration is committed to keeping this issue a priority and having continuous improvement. When confronted with specific problems, administrators have been able to work directly with teachers to get improvement. Teachers are informed of the regulation through many sources: in faculty meetings, department meetings, building meetings and directly from district administration. The message about this change in procedure will continue to be communicated at the start of each school year, with the goal of continuous improvement and ultimately, total compliance.

Administrators urged parents to talk to teachers and administrators if they have concerns or are not getting assessments home. Curriculum coordinators can also help and their contact information can be found at: <http://crsd.org/Page/228>

Citizens For Education applauds the Council Rock administration for continuing its commitment to this very significant change, which will lead to greater productivity, better communication and, hopefully, less stress for students.