

# CADDO MILLS INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

P.O. Box 160  
Caddo Mills, Texas 75135

*Vicki Payne, Superintendent*  
903-527-6056  
Fax 903-527-4883

*Kathy Weis, Assistant Superintendent*  
903-527-6133

November 15, 2016

Mr. Mike Morath  
Texas Education Agency  
1701 N. Congress Avenue  
Austin, Texas 78701

Dear Commissioner Morath,

Caddo Mills, Texas is a rural community approximately 40 miles outside Dallas in Hunt County. Our school district has a history of exemplary performance. Of the almost 1700 students in Caddo Mills ISD, over 100 of those are paying transfer students that do not live in our attendance zone. There is no industry or large business in the City of Caddo Mills, therefore, residents move here and remain here because of the outstanding school district.

Caddo Mills High School experienced several issues with the 2016 STAAR testing.

1. 58 student tests were flagged with submission issues from online testing and their scores were not counted at all in accountability. Of the 58 students, 50 were students who passed, and 7 who were advanced level III and would have positively affected our indexes.
2. 22 student tests were submitted for rescore on August 25th. ETS reported that the turnaround time would be 4 weeks for rescore. We received the rescoring back on October 5th (almost 6 weeks later). Had we received in the 4 week time period, CMISD would have had time to file a formal appeal.
3. Of the 22 English I and English II students we rescored, 18 had scores that increased. Of these 18, 6 increased from level II to advanced level III (3 from each grade level), 11 went from failing to level II met standard. All 11 of these students were required to attend mandatory tutoring and summer testing. Four have been in a remedial EOC tutorial class this year due to these scoring errors. With the small number of students in our district, these numbers affect our accountability greatly.
4. One student was rescored early on after scores were received. Her scores were corrected with ETS. She is showing as a pass and a fail on the Confidential Accountability Student Download.

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While we understand that both the District and High School have a rating of Met Standard even with the exclusions of the passing scores, these irregularities did affect the Index scores and Distinction Designations. In particular, the ELA/reading distinction, CMHS was one indicator away from earning the distinction. We were in quartile 2 for level II performance in both English I and English II. Many of our advanced level III student scores were not counted (see above) or were rescored and are not counting.

As School Board Members, Administrators, Superintendent, faculty, staff, and stakeholders of Caddo Mills ISD, we have some concerns with HB2804: New District and Campus Accountability Rating System of "A-F" and the preliminary ratings being presented to Legislature on January 1, 2017. Based on the aforementioned testing and scoring issues, the A-F rating for Caddo Mills ISD and Caddo Mills High School will reflect incorrect scores. While we understand that these are not official ratings, they will be accessible by the public. These ratings could reflect poorly on the district and in turn affect enrollment, funding and our economy.

As you are designing the criteria for the new rating system, we ask that you strongly consider the ramifications for districts whose ratings fall short of a higher rating based on a flawed testing system and false passing percentages. These ratings can and will be detrimental to districts and misleading to community members.

Our hope is that you will continue to work with ETS on improving the state testing system. Your time and consideration are greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,



Vicki Payne  
Superintendent  
Caddo Mills ISD

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