



Introduction to the Texas Performance Standards Project

VIDEO TRANSCRIPT

Kelly Calloway: You know in Texas we have over 333,000 identified gifted students, that's almost 8% of the student population. The performance standards project helps us to raise the expectations, document the learning, and assess the achievements of these gifted learners. The results of the performance standards project will be a vast improvement in meeting the needs of gifted and talented students across the state of Texas. With this model, districts can increase the accountability and rigor of their gifted and talented programs, enhance student achievement, assess the learning and progress of gifted students, something that's often difficult to do with standardized assessments. Most importantly, districts can ensure that the needs of all their students, including this special population, are being met appropriately.

Dawn Campagna: Gifted and talented students love challenges and these performance standards projects are full of novelty, and fun, and excitement.

Beverly Jeffcoat: It provides them with very meaningful, rigorous, relevant curriculum that does challenge them but it does fit into the core curriculum and keeps them solidly based in the TEKS.

Kelly Calloway: Basically they're covering the TEKS, they're mastering the TEKS, and they're going beyond the TEKS into greater depth and complexity.

Ferleshare Starks: It's truly a student-led learning experience, as opposed to a teacher-led, because the student picks the topic, decides where they want to go. And the student produces the final product.

Kelly Calloway: They're getting to really take charge of their own learning. They're getting to make decisions about their own learning, and they feel a real ownership in what they're accomplishing through the performance standards project.

Student: It was like the first project I did that didn't really have any boundaries on it, I could do whatever I wanted, and that was really nice.

Robbie Young: It doesn't put limits on top of what they can do. It allows them to go as far and as deep as they need to go.

Kelly Calloway: The performance standards projects not only allows us to measure the achievement of individual students,

Sandra Warren: It puts before educators, students, and their parents, the end product- of what gifted education should enable students to do, and that's had a great impact on the understanding of gifted education among our parents, among our teachers, among our administrators, but most importantly in the children themselves. They begin to see what they actually are capable of doing at a very young age, and they are never satisfied with just producing good work, they want to produce excellent work.



VIDEO TRANSCRIPT (CONT)

Robbie Young: I think probably the most amazing thing out of it is the comment I got from the kids where they told me, “Ms. Young, we never ever thought we would finish, and we did. So now we know what we’re capable of doing.”

Student: I didn’t think I was smart enough to really research and it showed me that I really could and showed me that I wanted to do more.

Jackie Caffey: The confidence that I see these children grow with their public speaking is just wonderful.

Linda Bell: They gain respect not only for themselves but they gain respect for the people they are working with, their peers. They get to see what they can do and share the ideas.

Sandra Warren: One of the greatest components of this effort is to lead kids into what they’re interested in. And from my experience with the exit level performance standards projects and seeing the remarkable, in fact incredible, things that high school students can do, I realized that we need to begin training kids as young as possible.

Student: I really enjoyed this project because it found what I really love in life, and that’s science. It really helped to connect it to the real world today, not only just in a student environment but also in a professional environment as well.

Kelly Calloway: The exit level program follows an independent study design. Students team up with a mentor in a professional field in which they’re very interested. This allows them to work outside the classroom walls in a real world environment.

Student: I had the best experience of my life, it gave me an opportunity that I wouldn’t have been able to get in a classroom.

Tom Booker: It is something of a pleasure to bring a student into the real world at the time that they’re in the process of making decisions about what career they are going to choose and what profession they are going to follow.

Student: Bringing up my product, bringing it to life from a thought in head, an idea in my head to actually having it in front of me, putting it into action was a journey.

Beverly Jeffcoat: The essential end result, I think, of the performance standards is the exit level, which gives our high school students the opportunity to do what the state plan says and that’s to develop that product or performance of a professional quality as a result of the services they receive within the school day. For that to happen there has to be a vertical alignment.

Vowery Carlile: So this is giving them the foundation to build onto to get that distinguished achievement diploma and we want all of our gifted kids to graduate with that diploma.

Student: It takes a lot of hard work, it takes a lot of time. I stressed over it but in the end, the final product is well worth it.

Sandra Warren: Once you’ve seen remarkable things that students can do, it changes your perspective for what education in Texas can be about.

