



MCALLEN AFT NEWS



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SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS & MORE

Scholarships Awarded

Several students of AFT members were awarded scholarships from McAllen AFT and the Texas



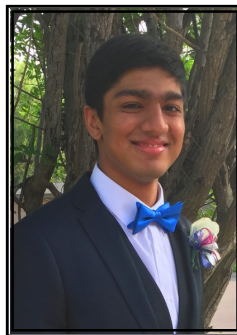
Stephanie Frand, a student at IB Lamar, won the Texas AFL-CIO Scholarship and the McAllen AFT Scholarship. She plans to attend Texas A&M where she will study aerospace engineering. Her

father, Steve Frand, is a teacher at Fossum Middle School. She is an AP scholar, NASA High School Aerospace Scholar, participated in the robotics club, yearbook club, badminton club and is a member of NHS. Her future goal is to work at NASA or SpaceX. Congratulations to Stephanie and we wish her the best of luck in her future endeavors.



Jayda Sareen Veliz, a student at McAllen High School. She received the McAllen AFT Scholarship and plans to attend Texas State University in San Marcos where she will major in pre-med with a

minor in chemistry. Jayda's goal is to become a pediatrician. At McHi, she served as class president her sophomore, junior, and senior years and played soccer for her school. She is also an NHS member. Her mother is Sylvia Veliz, a teacher at McAllen High School. Congratulations to Jayda and we wish her the best of luck in her future endeavors.



Tivon Mohammed, a sophomore at UTRGV, received a continuing scholarship from the Texas AFL-CIO. Tivon is a graduate of the IB program and began his first year of studies as a sophomore after earning 34 college credits at the IB Academy at Lamar. He'll be a junior next year and continue

working towards his major in computer science and minor in business. His mother, Indeera Mohammed is office staff at McAllen AFT. We wish him the best of luck in his future endeavors.



Flora Arnold, a food service employee for McAllen ISD for the past 12 years, won the McAllen AFT member scholarship. Flora will use her scholarship to complete her Bachelor's degree in Management Technology at South Texas College. Congratulations to

Flora and we wish her the best of luck.

Texas AFT reaches lawsuit settlement with TEA Commissioner Mike Morath on teacher evaluation requirements

No mandate to use STAAR test scores or 'value added' in teacher evaluation systems

Texas AFT filed suit one year ago in state district court to challenge the authority of the Texas commissioner of education—Mike Morath—to dictate how to measure student performance for the purpose of teacher





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appraisals. Texas AFT filed the suit because the commissioner attempted to enshrine in state rules the misuse of test scores as part of an exclusive list of permissible methodologies for teacher evaluation. The state recommended system for evaluations developed by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) is the recently-developed Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System, or “T-TESS.”

Now, as part of a negotiated settlement to the Texas AFT lawsuit, the commissioner has agreed to strike from state rules any reference to specific measures of student performance, including so-called “value-added data based on student state assessment results.” Under the agreement, the commissioner has agreed to revise current state regulations so that school districts are free to use any method they choose to measure how teachers’ students progress academically. This change applies to both the statewide T-TESS as well as to a locally developed appraisal system. The settlement agreement also makes clear that local appraisal systems are not subject to state requirements giving specific weight to certain elements that make up the teacher’s appraisal. Those weights are to be determined by the local school district that develops its own teacher appraisal system.

“The legislature gave the commissioner the authority to recommend the use of a commissioner-approved appraisal model, not to dictate to districts,” said Texas AFT President Louis Malfaro. “The law clearly allows districts to develop their own locally designed alternative model, and the commissioner

simply had no legal basis for telling districts how to measure students’ performance for purposes of teacher evaluation. This successful resolution of our lawsuit is a vindication for teachers who have argued against the use of state assessment data in their evaluations. It is also a victory for school districts that want to develop meaningful tools to appraise and support teachers. Local school districts, working in collaboration with their teachers and staff, now have a clear path to develop meaningful teacher evaluation systems that support good teaching rather than reinforce a broken system of over-testing and over-reliance on standardized tests.”

Previously, the U.S. Department of Education had attempted to require states, as a precondition for receiving relief from onerous NCLB mandates, to tie each individual teacher’s evaluation to the scores of the



We are at a critical moment when we must reclaim the promise of public education—not as it is today or as it was in the past, but as it can be—to fulfill our collective obligation to help all children succeed.

teacher’s students on standardized state tests.

Texas officials rightly rejected this requirement as one they could not impose, because the state’s appraisal law gives school districts the option of devising their own local alternative to the state-recommended system. Congress vindicated the Texas stance in defense of local discretion over teacher-evaluation policies by passing a complete ban on federally dictated teacher-evaluation methods.

“The only shred of legal rationale for such a dictate was eliminated when the U.S. Congress repealed the No Child Left Behind Act and prohibited any federal control over teacher evaluation,” Malfaro said. “Despite the demise of NCLB, the commissioner’s rules would have continued the legally unsupported effort to dictate local teacher-evaluation methodologies. The rules would have mandated that districts use one of four, and only four, acceptable ways to measure student performance for appraisal purposes, with one of those ways being the attribution of students’ scores on standardized tests to individual teachers. Ruled out for purposes of teacher appraisal would have been creative options like the use of performance-based assessments of students that allow them to demonstrate, by performing a task or carrying out a project, the critical thinking and problem-solving skills they have developed in a course or grade level.”

Texas AFT pioneered the legal challenge to the misuse of student test scores as the basis for high-stakes teacher appraisal in Texas with a 2014 lawsuit filed in federal court in Houston by Texas AFT’s local affiliate, the Houston Federation of Teachers, against the Houston ISD “value-added” system of teacher evaluation—called the Educational Value-Added Assessment System (EVAAS). The distortions and destructive impact on instruction resulting from the misuse of student test scores in teacher appraisal are at the heart of the ongoing federal lawsuit.

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