

Terrell High Graduation Rate Increases

Terrell County's School Superintendent and Terrell High School's Principal were exceptionally pleased about the graduation rate for Terrell High School for 2015 that was released last week by the Georgia Department of Education.

Terrell High School's graduation rate for 2015 was reported at 93.8 per cent.

And Terrell School Superintendent Robert Aaron and Terrell High Principal Douglas Bell both said they were "ecstatic" about the graduation rate.

"Terrell High School continues to receive great results for reducing the drop-out rate, and increasing the number of students graduating," Superintendent Aaron said.

Mr. Bell concurred, adding that "the graduation rate for Terrell High released for 2014 (last year) was reported at 85.1 per cent, and for 2015 (this year) it was reported at 93.8 per cent. It increased by almost nine per cent, or actually 8.7 per cent.

"This increase validates our efforts of keeping students in school," Mr. Bell added.

According to Superintendent Aaron, "Terrell High's graduation rate for 2015 was significantly higher than the state's graduation rate of 78.8 per cent.

"Members of our faculty and administration are working very hard to educate all students to

their maximum potential," he reported.

"We will continue to make every effort to meet the needs of our students," both Superintendent Aaron and Mr. Bell added.

This is the fifth year Georgia has calculated the graduation rate using the adjusted cohort rate, which is now required by the U.S. Department of Education. The four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate defines the cohort based on when a student first becomes a freshman; it is calculated using the number of students who graduate within four years and includes adjustments for student transfers. In contrast, Georgia's former graduation rate calculation defined the cohort upon graduation, which may have included students who took more than four years to graduate.

This is the first class not required to take the Georgia High School Graduation Test in order to receive a regular diploma, as Georgia moves away from a one-size-fits-all approach to graduation.

There is evidence that focusing less on testing, and more on career education and personalized paths to graduation, opens up opportunities for students. The graduation rate for students who complete a Career Pathway is much higher – at 89 per cent – than the rate for stu-

dents who do not.

Moving forward, the Georgia Department of Education will continue to focus on personalized learning rather than a standardized approach – including Career, Technical and Agricultural Education (CTAE) and core credit flexibility, including the new flexibility that allows students to receive a math, science or foreign language credit for a computer programming course.

The agency is also working to improve the graduation rate for students with disabilities through a statewide systemic improvement plan which establishes a network of regional support to support local districts in implementing interventions provided by the National Dropout Prevention Center.

All states now calculate the graduation rate using the same formula, but each state still sets its own requirements for students to earn a diploma. Georgia still has some of the highest requirements in the nation for students to graduate with a regular diploma.

Following are the State Graduation Rates for the past five years:

2015 – 78.8 per cent
2014 – 72.5 per cent
2013 – 71.8 per cent
2012 – 69.7 per cent
2011 – 67.4 per cent.

