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## **Senate Bill 149 Provides Hope to 21 Canutillo High Seniors**

*New law provides rigorous graduation alternative to seniors who pass at least three of the five end-of-course assessments.*

CANUTILLO, TEXAS – In a welcome move for public school districts across Texas, Governor Greg Abbott signed Senate Bill 149 into law yesterday to provide nearly 28,000 students who passed at least three of the five end-of-course (EOC) assessments with an alternate route to graduation.

“The Class of 2015 is the first graduating class required to pass the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) end-of-course exams in order to graduate,” Governor Abbott said in a statement yesterday. “While it is critical that the state appropriately holds public schools and districts accountable for delivering the best possible education, we must protect Texas students from being penalized as a result of evolving testing standards. SB 149 protects students from undue penalization, and guarantees that students who meet specified requirements are able to graduate.”

Implemented in 2011-2012 when the former Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) transformed into STAAR, high school seniors initially had to pass 15 EOC exams to graduate, which are now five EOC exams: English I, English II, Algebra I, Biology, and U.S. History. At Canutillo ISD, 21 seniors currently enrolled at Canutillo High School have passed at least three of their EOC exams. The new law now makes it possible for them to receive their diplomas only after satisfying the following conditions:

1. The attendance review committee must determine that the students completed all of their credits, have satisfactory attendance (at least 90%) and successfully completed any applicable principal plans for additional hours of lesson time during after school hours.
2. An Individual Graduation Committee (IGC) is created for each student who passed three or four of the EOC exams comprised of the school’s principal or designee, the teacher of the failed EOC course, the teacher’s department head, and the parent/guardian. At CISD, the counselor and the Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC) representative will also be invited.
3. The **IGC must unanimously approve the student** to receive his/her diploma after considering an extensive list of key data points including the recommendation of the student’s teacher in the course of the failed EOC, the student’s grade for the course of the failed EOC, number of hours of completed remediation, student’s school attendance rate, performance on any dual credit, SAT/ACT/ASVAB exams, AP exams, TELPAS exam, and acquisition of any CTE credentials and certificates, among others.

“Our mission is to produce college- and career-ready students, and the future success of our students and community is based on more than just one data point,” said Dr. Pedro Galavíz, CISD Superintendent. “I am grateful to our state legislators and Governor Abbott for supporting this law that will strengthen the quality of a CISD diploma by increasing the level of engagement and participation of our students, teachers and parents through the rigorous individual graduation committee process.”

