

Salem Abraham

Texas High School Dual Credit Courses Quality and Access Issues for Rural High Schools

Bio for Salem Abraham:

Salem Abraham is the president and founder of Abraham Trading Company. He grew up in Canadian, Texas, where his family has been involved in the ranching and commodities business for over 100 years. He attended the University of Notre Dame where he graduated in December of 1987 cum laude with a BBA in Finance. He has owned seats and held full memberships at both the Chicago Board of Trade and the Chicago Mercantile Exchange.

Abraham Trading Co. currently manages \$520 million and has 19 employees. For the past 22 years his clients have enjoyed an average annual rate of return of 20.4% and an individual investor who invested \$1,000 with Salem when he opened his business in January of 1988 would now have over \$72,000.

Salem and his wife of 21 years, Ruth Ann, have 8 children ages 6-17 (1st grade to 12th grade). They live in Canadian, Texas where he has served on the local school board for the past nine years. In 2008, Salem was one of the 15 members of the Select Committee on Public School Accountability. He also currently sits on the investment committees of St. Jude Children's Hospital in Memphis, Tennessee and the Amarillo Area Foundation in Amarillo, Texas.

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Background Information on Canadian ISD:

Canadian, Texas has a population of 2,400 people and is located in the northeast corner of the Texas Panhandle about 100 miles northeast of Amarillo.

Canadian ISD is a 1A school district with 790 students from Pre K to 12th grade and has 720 square miles in the school district. The closest junior college is 70 miles away. The closest college is 110 miles away.

Currently Canadian High School offers the following seven dual credit courses (there are no AP or IB classes offered on site at the school):

English IV	6 hours college credit	2 semesters
Pre Calculus	6 hours college credit	2 semesters
Calculus	6 hours college credit	2 semesters
US History	6 hours college credit	2 semesters
Govt & Politics	3 hours college credit	1 semester
Economics	3 hours college credit	1 semester
Geology	6 hours college credit	2 semesters

In addition to the dual credit courses listed above, Canadian ISD offers high school students the opportunity to take any online class for high school credit or college credit including any AP classes offered online. These courses are taken by students during one or more periods of their eight period school day in a computer lab with a certified teacher present. The school pays 100% of the cost for these online classes.

Recent positive developments with dual credit courses:

HB 2480 (Rep. Hochberg, Rep. Guillen, and Sen. Seliger) passed last session was very helpful in allowing more competition between junior colleges for dual credit courses. This bill allowed junior colleges to go outside of their service area and work with any high school in Texas. More competition is great! Being a captive to one junior college was not the ideal situation. We appreciate the legislature for helping high schools gain access to all the junior colleges in our state.

Problems Canadian ISD sees with dual credit courses:

- Rural schools need more access to all types of courses, including dual credit courses.
- We are not always pleased with the level of rigor in some dual credit courses.
- Many Ivy League colleges do not recognize or accept Texas dual credit courses. For the most part, Ivy League colleges only recognize AP or IB classes.
- dual credit classes, UIL academic competitions, and AP classes are not aligned with each other as well as they could be.

Solutions for rural schools:

Texas needs to commit more money to online learning and online curriculum. This will help increase the number of dual credit classes and other classes available to school children in Texas. Taking text book money or other money and directing it toward electronic, interactive, virtual learning media would improve educational opportunities for the school children across our state and would save Texas billions of dollars!

Course offerings in selected schools across Texas

	Total Courses	AP, IB, & Dual Cr.	Foreign Lang.	Fine Arts	Vo-tech	ADA
Ft Elliott ISD	61	5	3	2	11	130
Miami ISD	42	5	3	1	1	150
Canadian ISD	154	12	3	11	17	615
Olney ISD	73	3	3	4	4	725
Muleshoe ISD	50	8	3	7	5	1,425
Pecos-Barstow-Toyah ISD	122	9	7	12	14	2,072
La Feria ISD	105	19	5	14	12	2,783
Lufkin ISD	215	15	13	38	41	7,634
Schertz-Cibola-Universal City ISD	360	31	17	20	46	7,746
Edgewood ISD	324	50	12	100	22	11,485
Denton ISD	286	57	28	51	27	16,290
Hurst-Eules Bedford	219	39	15	21	29	18,920
Amarillo ISD	430	71	29	51	114	27,363
Richardson ISD	286	33	26	40	?	31,915
Alief ISD	321	31	20	78	50	44,301
Plano ISD	411	60	35	93	69	53,335
Aldine ISD	393	58	45	49	41	54,768
Arlington ISD	327	55	31	49	33	61,325
Fort Bend ISD	245	14	37	39	83	65,138
Austin ISD	529	83	42	85	62	73,100

* These figures were taken from the high school course guides from each ISD for the year 2007-2008.