

School Curriculum in Texas now includes Sikhism Community & Coalition effort creates dramatic change

LAST SUMMER, THE TEXAS BOARD of Education voted to include information on Sikhs and Sikh practices in the curriculum for public school students. This marks a significant victory for the Sikh community as Sikhs and *Sikhi* has never before been included in the state-wide curriculum.

In 2011, Texas students will learn about Sikhs at three points during their public school education. Sixth graders will learn about Vaisakhi when they learn about Christmas, Yom Kippur, Ramadan, and Diwali. High school students taking World History will learn about the origin of Sikhism and its basic beliefs. Finally, high school students will also learn locations of large Sikh populations in their World Geography classes.

The Sikh Coalition commends the state Board of Education and urges all state Boards of Education to take similar measures. Today's victory - which the whole community should cherish - is an important first step towards ensuring that Sikh parents and students do not solely carry the burden of educating students on Sikhs and Sikh practices. As we know, education is the best tool to fight bias and discrimination.

The Texas *sangat*, in coordination with the Sikh Coalition, produced over **400 letters** to the Board of Education, requesting that information on Sikhs be included in the state curriculum. Texas Sikhs also presented a petition to the Board in January which included over **1,000 signatures** from Texas constituents requesting the Board to include Sikhism in the standards. The Coalition flew to Texas to **attend four meetings** of the Board of Education and organized local Texas Sikhs to testify in front of the Board.

