

Student Groups Evaluated for Performance, Progress, and Performance Gap Measures

From 1993 through 2011 the state accountability system included evaluation of performance of economically disadvantaged students and the three largest race/ethnicity student groups in Texas: African American, Hispanic, and white. Performance of two additional student groups, English language learners (ELL) and special education students, was evaluated for federal adequate yearly progress (AYP) beginning in 2003. The accountability indicators included performance, progress, and for AYP, participation.

The new state accountability system must include evaluation of performance of student groups based on socioeconomic status and race/ethnicity. It is not necessary that performance of every student group be evaluated for every indicator; however, under current statute performance of student groups based on both criteria must be evaluated. The Accountability Technical Advisory Committee (ATAC) Performance Index Workgroup has proposed a framework made up of four indexes. Student groups based on race/ethnicity are a component of the Student Progress Index and the Postsecondary Readiness Index. Student groups based on socioeconomic status are a component of the Closing Performance Gaps Index.

Race/Ethnicity Student Groups. The Texas Education Agency (TEA) implemented the new federal standard for the collection of ethnicity and race information beginning with Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) data collected for the 2009-10 school year. Under the new race/ethnicity data standards, seven reporting categories are available, compared to five under the former data standards. The following table shows the seven race/ethnicity categories, with number and percentage of students from 2011-12 fall enrollment, number and percent of campuses meeting 2011 accountability minimum size criteria for the student group in reading, and percent meeting the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) commended performance standard in 2010-11.

Race/Ethnicity Category	2011-12 Enrollment		Campuses Meeting 2011 Minimum Size Criteria (30/10%/50)		2010-11 TAKS Reading
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Commended
African American	557,009	12.8	2,595	32.8	23%
American Indian	19,349	0.4	21	0.2	32%
Asian	156,889	3.6	881	11.1	56%
Hispanic	2,179,559	50.0	6,333	80.0	26%
Pacific Islander (formerly with Asian)	5,399	0.1	4	0.0	33%
White	1,370,101	31.4	4,925	62.2	45%
Two or More Races (new category)	73,168	1.7	282	3.5	43%
Total Enrollment	4,361,474		7,907		33%

One of the advantages of the Performance Index framework is that adding student groups to the system does not increase the number of targets that must be met. In addition, by making race/ethnicity student groups a component of the Student Progress Index, the Performance Index Workgroup has addressed the concern that stronger performance of one student group can compensate to some extent

for weaker performance of another student group. For these reasons, the starting point for discussion of race/ethnicity student groups is the assumption of including all seven groups.

Race/Ethnicity Student Groups	Comments/Considerations
African American American Indian Asian Hispanic Pacific Islander White Two or More Races	One of the advantages of the Performance Index framework is that performance of all student groups can be included without increasing the number of targets that large, diverse campuses and districts must meet. Although some of the race/ethnicity student groups make up a very small percentage of Texas students, every group meets the 2011 minimum size criteria on some campuses.
Pacific Islander	This is the smallest race/ethnicity student group in Texas, with only four campuses meeting the 2011 accountability minimum size criteria. In Texas, it may make more sense to combine performance of Pacific Islander and Asian as was done under former data reporting.
American Indian	This is another very small race/ethnicity student group in Texas, with only 21 campuses meeting the 2011 accountability minimum size criteria.
Two or More Races	This group currently represents fewer than two percent of Texas students, but almost 300 campuses meet 2011 minimum size criteria. This reporting option is new and the numbers are increasing every year. Removing the group from the accountability system could produce an incentive for greater use of the option.
Asian	Asian students make up 3.6 percent of total students enrolled in Texas public schools and 11.1 percent of campuses have sufficient numbers of Asian students to meet the 2011 minimum size criteria. . In Texas, it may make more sense to combine performance of Pacific Islander and Asian as was done under former data reporting.
African American Hispanic White	African American, Hispanic, and white students represent 94.2 percent of the students in Texas public schools. Including these three student groups would meet the statutory requirement and focus the accountability system on performance of the largest student groups in the state.

Socioeconomic Status Student Groups. A longstanding accountability concern with socioeconomic status student groups is the overlapping membership with the race/ethnicity student groups. Over 70 percent of African American students and almost 80 percent of Hispanic students are economically disadvantaged, and the performance gap between economically disadvantaged and non-economically disadvantaged students is similar to that between white students and the African American and Hispanic student groups. The Performance Index Workgroup addressed this issue by using socioeconomic status in a different index than race/ethnicity – the Closing Performance Gaps Index. Gap closure measures require comparison of performance of two groups. Performance of a student group is routinely compared to that of larger groups of which it is a part – comparison of performance of economically disadvantaged students to campus, district, or state performance, for example. For gap closure measures, however, the indicator may produce unexpected and unintended results if the two

comparison groups are not mutually exclusive. Socioeconomic status produces two mutually exclusive student groups – economically disadvantaged and non-economically disadvantaged.

As the following tables show, using minimum size criteria of 30, about 83 percent of districts and 70 percent of campuses had economically disadvantaged/non-economically disadvantaged comparison groups for 2010-2011 TAKS reading/ELA results. The numbers were similar for mathematics.

**Socioeconomic Status Student Groups
Meeting Minimum Size Criteria of 30
2010-2011 TAKS Reading/ELA**

Campuses			Districts		
Econ. Disadv.	Non-Econ. Disadv.		Econ. Disadv.	Non-Econ. Disadv.	
	No	Yes		No	Yes
No	5%	4%	No	3%	2%
Yes	21%	70%	Yes	11%	83%

The campuses/districts that do not meet minimum size criteria fall into two categories:

Size – Campuses/districts with fewer than 60 students will not meet the minimum size criteria for both groups even if their students are equally divided between economically disadvantaged and non-economically disadvantaged. The five percent of campuses (433 campuses) and three percent of districts (39 districts) that do not meet minimum size criteria for either group fall into this category. Size is also a factor for some of the campuses/districts that meet minimum size criteria for one but not both groups.

Homogeneous student population – The campuses/districts that meet minimum size criteria for one but not both groups also includes larger campuses/districts on which all or virtually all students are either economically disadvantaged or non-economically disadvantaged.

Following are some options for defining gap closure groups.

Gap Group Definitions	Comments/Considerations
Economically disadvantaged/ non-economically disadvantaged	State statute requires that student groups based on socioeconomic status be included in the accountability system. Limiting the gap group assignment to socioeconomic status meets this statutory requirement. It is not necessary to include all campuses/districts in the Closing Performance Gaps Index. Closing performance gaps between socioeconomic status student groups is simply not an issue for homogeneous campuses and districts.
Smaller minimum size criteria	Smaller minimum size criteria would allow more campuses to be evaluated on gap closure measures with current year test results. Using a minimum size criteria of ten, for example, 94 percent of districts and 88 percent of campuses meet minimum size criteria for both economically disadvantaged and non-economically disadvantaged.

<p>Three-year average performance</p>	<p>Statute requires that campuses and districts be given the option of meeting accountability requirements based on current year performance or three-year average performance. Combining test results across three years will allow some campuses to meet minimum size criteria for both economically disadvantaged and non-economically disadvantaged student groups.</p> <p>Using three-year average in this way may require some campuses to be evaluated on three-year average performance rather than giving them the option to use either current year or three-year average performance.</p>
<p>Economically disadvantaged</p>	<p>Gap closure could focus on performance or progress of the lower performing group rather than comparing performance of two groups. Over 90 percent of campuses have 30 or more economically disadvantaged students. With minimum size criteria of ten, 96 percent of campuses and 99 percent of districts have an economically disadvantaged student group.</p>
<p>Lowest performing 25% of students</p>	<p>For campuses/districts that are homogeneous – all or most students either economically disadvantaged or non-economically disadvantaged – a different strategy may be needed to define a gap group. All campuses/districts have a lowest performing 25 percent of students and this group would meet minimum size criteria on all but the smallest campuses/districts.</p> <p>Some options cannot be considered if students are assigned to the gap group based on academic achievement. For example, gap closure indicators would have to be limited to student progress measures – evaluating progress of the gap group rather than comparing academic achievement of the gap group and other students.</p> <p>There may be objections to using two different sets of criteria to define the gap group. Some campuses that meet minimum size criteria for the economically disadvantaged/ non-economically disadvantaged student groups may prefer to be evaluated under the alternative gap group.</p> <p>Another option would be to include two types of measures – gap closure measures for socioeconomic status student groups and progress measures for lowest performing 25%.</p>

English Language Learners and Special Education Student Groups

Although not included in the previous state accountability system, performance of English language learners (ELL) and special education student groups must be evaluated for federal accountability and including them would achieve important alignment between the state and federal systems. The STAAR assessments are being developed to include modified and alternate assessments for special education students and growth measures appropriate for measuring achievement of students who are not proficient in English. Following are some possible approaches for including ELL and special education student groups in the proposed performance index framework. The ELL Workgroup may develop additional proposals for inclusion of ELL student performance.

<p>Special Education and ELL Student Groups</p>	<p>Comments/Considerations</p>
<p>Student Achievement Index</p>	<p>It may be most appropriate to evaluate performance of special education students, including performance on the modified and alternate assessments, against Level II performance standards.</p>

Student Progress Index	A separate progress measure for ELL students is being developed. Until students achieve academic proficiency in English, this may be the best performance measure for this group.
Closing Performance Gaps Index	The gap group could be defined to include special education and ELL students as well as economically disadvantaged students. This approach would help the four percent of campuses and two percent of districts that meet minimum size criteria for only the non-economically disadvantaged student group by shifting students to the gap group.
Postsecondary Readiness	Including ELL and special education student groups in the evaluation of graduation rates aligns the student groups for state accountability and AYP.

Longitudinal Student Group Definitions

Defining student group membership longitudinally is a consideration for some groups. Economically disadvantaged status is based on participation of the student in the National School Lunch Program, which declines as students get older. Limited English proficient status used to assign students to the ELL group is removed once a student becomes proficient in English, thereby removing successful students from the group.

	Grades 1-12		Grade 1		Grade 12	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Economically Disadvantaged	2,560,725	59%	253,898	65%	137,282	47%
English Language Learner	641,137	15%	110,698	28%	10,411	4%

A longitudinal definition could assign a student to a group if the student was ever a member of that group since entering the Texas public school system.

Longitudinal Student Group Definitions	Comments/Considerations
Economically disadvantaged – any student who has ever been identified as economically disadvantaged since entering the Texas public school system.	This will more accurately identify students from low-income homes, especially for high schools, by including older students who choose not to participate in the school lunch program. Districts will have more difficulty identifying economically disadvantaged students in order to direct services to them if the student group identification can be based on participation in the school lunch program in another school district.
ELL – any student who has ever been identified as having limited English proficiency since entering the Texas public school system.	One of the issues with evaluation of performance of the ELL student group is that students exit the group when they acquire proficiency in English. In the past, the USDE did not approve this definition for use in AYP.

<p>ELL – include students identified as limited English proficient in the current school year, and for two years after they enter a regular, all English instructional program.</p>	<p>This definition is used for the AYP performance calculation. For graduation rate, students are included in the ELL student group if they are identified as limited English proficient at any time in Grade 9 or a higher grade.</p>
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