

Accountability System Development for 2013 and Beyond
Accountability Policy Advisory Committee (APAC)

Accountability Ratings Criteria for 2013

Background

The accountability system described in the Accountability Technical Advisory Committee (ATAC) recommendations, which is built on proposals from the November APAC/ATAC meeting, describes a three-tiered accountability system.

1. Performance Index Framework is the basis for assignment of Met Standard/Improvement Required accountability ratings. (Former academically acceptable and unacceptable ratings.)
 - Improvement Required accountability ratings lead to Texas Accountability Interventions System (TAIS) supports and interventions.
2. Comprehensive Distinction Designation System discriminates among campuses and districts with Meets Standards accountability ratings and recognizes strengths in academic and other areas of performance. Campus distinction designations are based on performance compared to a group of campuses of similar type, size, and student demographics.
 - Commended and Distinguished Distinction Designation ratings for districts and campuses. (Former exemplary and recognized ratings.)
 - Campus Top Twenty-Five Percent in Student Progress and Closing Performance Gaps.
 - Academic Achievement Distinction Designations in Reading and Mathematics.
 - Distinction Designations to be developed for Academic Achievement in Science and Social Studies, 21st Century Workforce Development Programs, Second Language Acquisition Programs, Fine Arts, and Physical Education.
3. System Safeguards to ensure that performance on each subject or other indicator and student group is addressed, and that all state and federal accountability requirements are incorporated into the accountability system.
 - Failure to meet System Safeguards targets does not immediately affect accountability ratings but leads to TAIS supports and interventions to ensure performance is addressed.

Since the February ATAC meeting it has become clear that there is a growing interest in the assignment of school grades of A, B, C, D, and F. Assignment of A through F grades cannot be implemented until 2014 when the higher performance levels on the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) are allowed by statute to be incorporated into the accountability system. The current proposal is to reconvene the APAC and ATAC in fall 2013 to develop recommendations for ratings criteria and targets for 2014 through 2016. The Plan for Accountability Ratings Criteria and Targets for 2014 and Beyond includes issues related to implementing an A through F grading system in 2014.

2013 Ratings Criteria

This document presents options for 2013 district and campus accountability ratings criteria. Options presented below for assigning the Met Standard and Improvement Required accountability rating labels in 2013 are based on the following assumptions.

- The options describe 2013 transition year ratings criteria. The 2013 criteria will stand alone because the performance index framework cannot be fully implemented in 2013. ***The decision for 2013 is not a decision for 2014 and beyond ratings criteria.***
- The options apply to campus and district accountability ratings.
- Each of the four indexes will have a score of 0 to 100 representing campus or district performance points as a percent of the maximum possible points for that campus or district. The intent of the framework design of four indexes is to evaluate four different views of campus or district performance. Summing or averaging the four index scores are not presented as options.
- Targets identifying the lowest performing campuses and districts are set for each index. The targets modeled are set so that approximately the same numbers of campuses and districts are designated as Improvement Required under each option. Consequently, statewide campus performance is not better under one option than another.
- The commissioner has indicated that performance on Index 3: Closing Performance Gaps should receive a higher weight in the ratings than performance on the other indexes. This goal can be achieved by focusing on Index 3 in the ratings criteria or by where the targets are set for Index 3.
- Any of the options for 2013 can be aligned with A through F letter grades for 2014 and beyond.

Option 1: ATAC Recommendation: Meet Any One Target -- to receive the Met Standard rating, districts and campuses must meet the accountability target on one index. (Note: At the time the ATAC made this recommendation, Index 2 was scheduled to be implemented in 2014 rather than 2013.)

- Districts and campuses with students in Grade 9 or above must meet the target on one of the four indexes:
 Index 1: Student Achievement
 Index 2: Student Progress
 Index 3: Closing Performance Gaps
 Index 4: Postsecondary Readiness
- Districts and campuses with a high grade of Grade 8 or lower must meet the target on one of the three indexes for which they have performance data in 2013:
 Index 1: Student Achievement
 Index 2: Student Progress
 Index 3: Closing Performance Gaps

Advantages	Disadvantages
<p>Since 2013 is a transition year, the accountability criteria should be as simple as possible. Performance on Index 2 is an unknown, only high schools and districts can be evaluated on Index 4, and Index 3 and Index 4 will change significantly when the higher performance standards are implemented in 2014. The fairest approach is to assign 2013 ratings without a complicated set of rules for this one year.</p>	<p>A campus or district may have very low performance on all but one index and still meet the criteria for a Met Standard rating. District and high schools must meet a target for either graduation rates or assessment results but not both.</p>
<p>This option provides the greatest flexibility and identifies the schools that require immediate attention (those that are in the bottom on every index for which they have data).</p>	
<p>Targets for all indexes can be set higher if campuses and districts are only required to meet the target on one index.</p>	

Option 2: Meet Any Two Targets -- to receive the Met Standard rating, districts and campuses must meet two targets:

- Districts and campuses with students in Grade 9 or above must meet targets on two of the four indexes:
 - Index 1: Student Achievement
 - Index 2: Student Progress
 - Index 3: Closing Performance Gaps
 - Index 4: Postsecondary Readiness
- Districts and campuses with a high grade of Grade 8 or lower must meet targets on two of the three indexes for which they have performance data in 2013:
 - Index 1: Student Achievement
 - Index 2: Student Progress
 - Index 3: Closing Performance Gaps

Advantages	Disadvantages
<p>The ratings criteria are flexible but require campuses and districts to meet a broader set of expectations than Option 1.</p>	<p>Districts and high schools can receive Met Standard rating without meeting the target for graduation rates.</p>
<p>Closing performance gaps is emphasized for elementary and middle schools because they must meet the target on Index 3 or on Index 2, which measures growth of all student groups.</p>	

Option 3: Meet Index 1 or Index 2, and Index 3 or Index 4 -- To receive the Met Standard rating, districts and campuses must meet targets on two indexes:

- All campuses and districts must meet the state accountability target on either Index 1: Student Achievement or Index 2: Student Progress.

In addition,

- Districts and campuses that have graduation rate or dropout rate indicators in Index 4 must meet the state accountability target on Index 4: Postsecondary Readiness.
- Districts and campuses with a high grade of Grade 8 or lower must meet the state accountability target on Index 3: Closing Performance Gaps.

Advantages	Disadvantages
Requiring districts and campuses to meet the target on either Index 1 or Index 2 gives equal weight in the ratings to student achievement and student progress. Campuses and districts that do not meet the target for student achievement as measured on Index 1 are not indentified for interventions if they are already showing sufficient progress.	Different ratings criteria for high schools and elementary/middle schools may be seen as adding complexity to the accountability system.
Districts and high schools must meet performance targets for both assessments and graduation rates.	
Higher targets can be set for Index 1 and/or Index 2 if campuses are not required to meet the targets for both indexes.	A very high target for Index 1 might shift the meaning of an Improvement Required rating.
Closing performance gaps is emphasized because elementary and middle schools must meet the target for closing performance gaps, emphasizing the need to close performance gaps before students reach high school. The target for Index 3 can be set higher if high schools are not required to meet this target.	

Option 4: Meet Index 3 and Any Other Target -- To receive the Met Standard rating, districts and campuses must meet targets on two indexes:

- All campuses and districts must meet the state accountability target on Index 3: Closing Performance Gaps.

In addition,

- Districts and campuses with students in Grade 9 or above must meet the target on one of the other three indexes:
 Index 1: Student Achievement
 Index 2: Student Progress
 Index 4: Postsecondary Readiness

- Districts and campuses with a high grade of Grade 8 or lower must meet the target on one of the other two indexes for which they have performance data in 2013:
 Index 1: Student Achievement
 Index 2: Student Progress

Advantages	Disadvantages
Closing performance gaps is emphasized by requiring all districts and campuses to meet the target for Index 3.	High schools will represent a disproportionate number of Improvement Required campuses because elementary and middle schools perform better than high schools on Index 3.
	High schools are not required to meet a performance target for graduation rates.
	The target for Index 3 will have to be set lower if all districts and campuses must meet the target.

Modeling the 2013 System

The four options described above have been modeled with four different sets of targets that identify from 2 percent to 17 percent of campuses as Improvement Required. In reviewing the model results and making a recommendation regarding 2013 accountability targets, the following caveats must be considered.

2012 Model Performance versus 2013 Actual Performance. The data available to model the provisions of the new accountability system are not an exact representation of the data that will be used to calculate the indicators for the ratings in 2013.

- It is reasonable to expect that student performance will improve between 2012 (used for modeling) and 2013 (used for 2013 ratings).
- Performance improvement will be offset for high schools and districts by the inclusion of more difficult assessment results. The biggest difference is that the model uses STAAR EOC results for only one class of students – English I, Algebra I, Biology and World Geography for the class of 2015, the first class to graduate under the STAAR. The actual 2013 performance will use STAAR EOC results for two classes of students, and include the next higher test in each subject – English II, Geometry, Chemistry, and World History.

Index 2: Student Progress. The options include evaluation of Index 2: Student Progress but performance on that index cannot be modeled. In all four options, the introduction of Index 2 can only improve the outcome – some campuses that do not otherwise meet the required number of targets might meet the Index 2 target.

The proposal is to set the 2013 accountability target for Index 2 at a similar percentile as the targets for the other indexes. Regardless of where the target is set, the difference to the ratings outcome modeled is not known. If the target is set at the 25th percentile, for example, then by definition seventy-five percent of campuses, or 5,500 campuses, will meet the Index 2 target. The difference to the modeled ratings outcome is not known.

- On one extreme, it is possible that these 5500 campuses that meet the Index 2 target already meet enough targets to receive a Met Standard rating and Index 2 will not change the ratings outcome.
- On the other extreme, it is possible that these 5500 campuses that meet the Index 2 target include all of the campuses that would otherwise receive the Improvement Required rating and the result is that very few or no campuses receive the Improvement Required rating in 2013.