

**Accountability System Development for 2013 and Beyond
Accountability Technical Advisory Committee Recommendations**

1. Overall Design: Performance Index

The overall design of the accountability system is a performance index framework. Performance indicators are grouped into four indexes that align with the goals of the accountability system.

Index 1: Student Achievement

Index 2: Student Progress

Index 3: Closing Performance Gaps

Index 4: Postsecondary Readiness

Rationale: The performance index framework addresses the four statutory policy goals for the new accountability system.

- Improving student achievement at all levels in the core subjects of the state curriculum.
- Ensuring the progress of all students toward achieving Advanced Academic Performance.
- Closing Advanced Academic Performance level gaps among groups.
- Closing gaps among groups in the percentage of students graduating under the recommended high school program and advanced high school program.

Communicating campus and district performance to parents, teachers, school administrators, policymakers, and the general public is one of the primary purposes of the accountability system. The performance index framework is a new approach to school accountability for Texas, and explaining a new system always presents communication challenges. Given the greater complexity of the statutory requirements of the new accountability system, however, the performance index framework was determined to communicate more effectively than a separate indicators system. The performance index framework provides multiple views of school performance. For this reason, it lends itself to narrative and graphic reporting that better communicate campus and district strengths and areas in need of improvement.

Providing multiple views of school performance in turn provides incentives for campuses and districts that are working hard to improve. The underlying reporting system and accountability system safeguards will inform school and classroom practice and enable educators to address individual student needs. New reporting timelines will provide data and information about student performance in a timely manner.

The performance indicators framework is considered less punitive than a separate indicators system, not because fewer districts and campuses will be assigned an unacceptable rating label but because the accountability rating will be based on overall performance rather than the lowest performing measure. With a performance index framework, stronger performance in some areas can compensate to some extent for weaker performance in other areas. The accountability system safeguards described below address the concern that areas of weak performance might be neglected under this framework.

The technical document provides more detail on indicator definitions and index construction for each of the four indexes. The following information focuses on issues that were discussed at Accountability Technical Advisory Committee (ATAC) meetings, including issues that were the subject of public comment.

Index 1: Student Achievement is a snapshot of performance across subjects, on both general and alternative assessments, at the satisfactory performance standard.

EOC Retest Results: The indicators in Index 1 and Index 4 include first attempt EOC results from the current accountability year, defined as a cycle that includes the previous summer administration and current year fall and spring administrations. Including the three administrations addresses the needs of innovative programs and students completing courses at different paces. EOC retest results are not included in Index 1 and Index 4 in order to provide a consistent measure of performance across all campuses and districts. Since all high school students are eligible to retest, not just those that failed an EOC, whether and how often students retest will vary from campus to campus and district to district depending on a number of factors, including whether the district can afford to offer more expensive alternative schedule options to students.

Index 2: Student Progress separates measures of student progress from measures of student achievement to provide an opportunity for diverse campuses to show the improvements they are making independent of overall achievement levels. Growth is evaluated by subject and student group.

Index 3: Closing Performance Gaps emphasizes advanced academic achievement of Economically Disadvantaged student group and the lowest performing Race/Ethnicity student groups at each campus or district.

Performance Expectations. Performance expectations are set at the STAAR Level III advanced performance standard rather than at the performance level of the higher performing student group. This sets performance expectations for the low performing groups to an absolute performance target that does not change every year. In addition, the STAAR Level III advanced performance standard is tied to the statutory and accountability goal that Texas will be among the top ten states in postsecondary readiness by 2020 with no significant achievement gaps by race, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status.

The STAAR Level III advanced performance standard focuses on closing performance gaps at the highest performance level. Student performance gaps are greatest at Level III. This index provides a consistent target to attain the 2020 goal of closing performance gaps. Performance in this category indicates that students are well prepared for the next grade or course. Students in this category have a high likelihood of success in the next grade or course with little or no academic intervention. For Algebra II and English III, this level of performance also indicates students are well prepared for postsecondary success.

Weighted Performance Rate. The STAAR Weighted Performance Rate used in Index 3 gives Level III advanced test results twice the weight of phase-in Level II test results in the indicator, acknowledging the greater challenge of achieving the Level III advanced performance standard. The performance rate includes EOC retest results so that districts and campuses receive credit for remediation of students who need to improve their EOC scores.

Student Groups. Most campuses and districts meet minimum size criteria for Economically Disadvantaged student group. Although there is overlap between Race/Ethnicity student groups and the Economically Disadvantaged student group, there are Race/Ethnicity student group performance gaps that exist independent of current socioeconomic status of students. Also, including both Economically Disadvantaged student group and low-performing Race/Ethnicity student groups in Index 3 addresses one of the weaknesses of the performance index framework – the possibility of low performance of one student group being masked by higher performance of other student groups. The inclusion of student groups that may consist of the same students illustrates that the primary purpose of Index 3 is to reward schools that focus their instructional resources on these student populations. Further, the proposed construction of Index 3 will reduce the need for to incorporate performance floors into the accountability ratings criteria to protect student group performance.

Index 4: Postsecondary Readiness includes measures of high school completion and STAAR performance at the final Level II standard. The intent of this index is to emphasize the importance for students to receive a high school diploma that provides them with the foundation necessary for success in college, the workforce, job training programs, or the military.

STAAR Results. The index includes final Level II performance. Performance at this level indicates that students are sufficiently prepared for the next grade or course and have a reasonable likelihood of success in the next grade or course. For Algebra II and English III, this level of performance also indicates students are sufficiently prepared for postsecondary success. The index includes final Level II performance for Grades 3-8 as well as high school to emphasize the importance of elementary and middle schools in preparing students to achieve this level of performance in high school. Giving credit for students who meet the final Level II standard on one or more tests recognizes that students have strengths and talents in certain areas but not always in all areas.

Career Readiness. Postsecondary readiness encompasses both college readiness and career readiness and there is an interest in additional measures that focus on career readiness. As required by statute, the criteria for new 21st Century Workforce Development Program distinction designations will be developed by an advisory committee of experts, educators, and community leaders appointed by the governor, lieutenant governor, and speaker of the house. The 21st Century Workforce Development Program committee will convene through 2013 to develop distinction designations that can be awarded as early as 2014. As distinction designations indicators for 21st Century Workforce Development Programs are developed, APAC and ATAC will examine whether some career-readiness measures can be incorporated into the performance index accountability system for 2015 and beyond.

2. Student Groups and Minimum Size Criteria

The performance indexes include evaluation of performance of All Students and ten student groups: Economically Disadvantaged, English Language Learners, Special Education, and seven Race/Ethnicity groups (African American, American Indian, Asian, Hispanic, Pacific Islander, White, and Two or More Races). The following table shows which student groups are evaluated for each index and indicator. A single set of minimum size criteria apply across all indicators.

All Students: No minimum size criteria; data are aggregated across three years if the denominator is smaller than ten. Data are also aggregated across three years for the Economically Disadvantaged student group in Index 3.

Student Groups: 25 (denominator greater than or equal to 25). The minimum size criteria for student groups of 25 is an increase from the original ATAC recommendation of 20.

Student Groups in the Performance Indexes

Index 1: Student Achievement	
STAAR Percent Met Phase-in Level II Standard	All Students
Index 2: Student Progress	
STAAR Weighted Growth	All Students Race/Ethnicity (seven groups) English Language Learners Special Education
Index 3: Closing Performance Gaps	
STAAR Weighted Performance (Phase-In Level II and Level III)	Economically Disadvantaged Race/Ethnicity (two lowest performing groups)
Index 4: Postsecondary Readiness	
STAAR Percent Met Final Level II on At Least One Test	All Students Race/Ethnicity (seven groups)
RHSP/AHSP Rates (4-year)	
Graduation Rates (4-year and 5-year)	All Students Race/Ethnicity (seven groups) English Language Learners Special Education
Annual Dropout Rates Gr. 9-12	
System Safeguards	
STAAR Percent Met Phase-in Level II Standard	All Students Economically Disadvantaged Race/Ethnicity (seven groups) English Language Learners Special Education
STAAR Participation Rates	
Federal Graduation Rates (4-year and 5-year)	
District 1% and 2% Limits on STAAR-Alternate and STAAR-Modified	

Rationale: One of the advantages of the performance index framework is that it can include more student groups with smaller minimum size criteria because accountability ratings are not based on the lowest performing measure.

Minimum Size Criteria. The smaller minimum size criteria provide a more equitable evaluation across campuses with different grade configurations, sizes, and student demographics. Because they are smaller, elementary schools were often not held accountable for the same student group performance as middle schools and high schools under the previous accountability system. In a

performance index, student group performance can help as well as hurt campus or district performance, unlike the former system where additional student groups represented additional accountability hurdles.

3. Accountability System Safeguards

Underlying the performance index framework are disaggregated performance results. The disaggregated performance results will serve as the basis of safeguards for the accountability rating system. The following template shows the disaggregated performance measures and safeguard targets. Performance rates are calculated from the assessment results used to calculate performance rates in the performance index. A single target will be used for the disaggregated performance rates that correspond to the target for student achievement in the performance index. Participation rates, graduation rates, and limits on use of STAAR Alternate and STAAR Modified are calculated to meet federal requirements and federal targets have been set for these indicators.

Accountability System Safeguard Measures and Targets											
	All	African American	American Indian	Asian	Hispanic	Pacific Islander	White	Two or More	Econ. Disadv.	ELL	Special Educ.
Performance Rates											
Reading	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Mathematics	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Writing	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Science	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Soc. Studies	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Participation Rates											
Reading	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%
Mathematics	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%
Federal Grad. Rates #											
4-year	78%	78%	78%	78%	78%	78%	78%	78%	78%	78%	78%
5-year	83%	83%	83%	83%	83%	83%	83%	83%	83%	83%	83%
District Limits on Use of Alternative Assessment Results											
Reading											
Modified	2%	Not Applicable									
Alternate	1%	Not Applicable									
Mathematics											
Modified	2%	Not Applicable									
Alternate	1%	Not Applicable									

* Targets for 2013 will be set by the commissioner in March 2013. The system safeguard performance rates and target will correspond to the performance rates and target for student achievement in the performance index.

Federal graduation rate targets include an improvement target.

Results will be reported for any cell that meets accountability minimum size criteria. Failure to meet the safeguard target for any reported cell must be addressed in the campus or district improvement plan. If the campus or district is already identified for assistance or intervention in the Texas Accountability Intervention System (TAIS) based on the current year state accountability rating or prior year state or federal accountability designations, performance on the safeguard indicators will be incorporated into

that improvement effort. The TAIS determines the level of intervention and support the campus or district receives based on performance history as well as current year state accountability rating and performance on the safeguard performance measures.

Rationale: With a performance index framework, poor performance in one subject or other indicator, or one student group, does not result in an unacceptable accountability rating. However, disaggregated performance will be reported and districts and campuses are responsible for addressing performance for each subject, other indicator, and student group. The underlying accountability system safeguards formalize this requirement. The safeguards remove the need to apply floors to the disaggregated performance results as part of the accountability ratings criteria in order to ensure that poor performance of one student group or indicator is not ignored. The intent of the safeguards system is to also meet additional federal accountability requirements.

4. **Accountability Ratings Criteria and Targets**

Rating Labels. To meet state statutory requirements, the accountability system must identify acceptable and unacceptable campuses and districts. The actual labels are not in statute and the recommendation is to use different labels for the new performance index accountability ratings than those used under the former accountability system. Districts and campuses will be assigned the following rating labels based on the performance index accountability system.

- *Met Standard* – met performance index targets and other accountability rating criteria
- *Improvement Required* – did not meet one or more performance index targets or other accountability rating criteria

Ratings Criteria and Targets. Each of the four indexes will have a score of 0 to 100 representing campus/district performance points as a percent of the maximum possible points for that campus/district. Performance targets will be set for each index. Performance across the four indexes will be used to assign accountability rating labels such that failure to meet one target does not necessarily result in an Improvement Required accountability rating.

2013 Transition Year. The 2013 ratings criteria and targets will stand alone because the performance index framework cannot be fully implemented in 2013. Recommended accountability ratings criteria and targets for 2013 will be finalized following the March meeting of the Accountability Policy Advisory Committee (APAC).

Plan for 2014 and Beyond. The ATAC and APAC will reconvene in fall 2013 to finalize recommendations for accountability ratings criteria for 2014 and beyond and targets for 2014 through 2016.

Rationale: The 2013 STAAR results will be used as the baseline for establishing accountability performance targets for 2014 and beyond. The 2013 assessment results will include two cohorts of high school students (class of 2015 and class of 2016) on STAAR EOC graduation plans. The 2012 assessment results will not be used to establish a starting point because in 2012 only one cohort of high school students (class of 2015) is assessed on STAAR EOC, as shown on the following table. In addition, the 2013 assessment results will be used to finalize the STAAR English Language Learner Progress Measure. Consequently, the 2013 assessment results will serve as a baseline for all four indexes.

Baseline Data for Targets

	EOC Courses*	2012	2013	2014
Grade 9	English I Reading English I Writing Algebra I Biology World Geography	Class of 2015 STAAR EOC	Class of 2016 STAAR EOC	Class of 2017 STAAR EOC
Grade 10	English II Reading English II Writing Geometry Chemistry World History	Class of 2014 TAKS	Class of 2015 STAAR EOC	Class of 2016 STAAR EOC
Grade 11	English III Reading English III Writing Algebra II Physics U.S. History	Class of 2013 TAKS	Class of 2014 TAKS	Class of 2015 STAAR EOC

*There is not a state-mandated course sequence; however, this represents the typical course sequence that most students follow.

5. Distinction Designations

Districts and campuses that receive an accountability rating of Met Standard are eligible for distinction designations. The district and campus recognized and exemplary rating distinction designations, and campus top twenty-five percent in student progress and closing achievement gaps will be determined by performance index scores. Campuses are also eligible for academic achievement distinction designations in reading and mathematics developed by a separate advisory committee. Campus distinction designations will be based on campus performance in relation to a comparison group of campuses.

District and Campus Recognized and Exemplary Ratings. The district and campus recognized and exemplary distinction designations will be implemented as part of a comprehensive distinction designation system rather than as higher rating levels. Campus and district exemplary and recognized distinction designations will be based on performance on Index 4: Postsecondary Readiness.

- Labels will be assigned for district and campus exemplary and recognized distinction designations: Distinguished and Commendable.
- Targets for distinguished and commendable performance on Index 4 will be set in fall 2014 when other 2014 accountability targets are set
- Distinguished districts and campuses. Districts and campuses that meet the distinguished performance target on Index 4 and campuses whose performance is in the top ten percent of their campus comparison group in performance on Index 4.
- Commendable districts and campuses. Districts and campuses that meet the commendable performance target on Index 4 and campuses whose performance is in the top twenty percent of their campus comparison group in performance on Index 4.

Campus Top Twenty-Five Percent Distinction Designations. Campus top twenty-five percent distinction designations will be based on performance on Index 2 and Index 3 in relation to campuses in the comparison group.

- Top 25% Student Progress. Based on performance on Index 2: Student Progress. Campuses that are in the top quartile of their campus comparison group in performance on Index 2.
- Top 25% Closing Achievement Gaps. Based on performance on Index 3: Closing Performance Gaps. Campuses that are in the top quartile of their campus comparison group in performance on Index 3.

6. Alternative Education Accountability

Alternative education campuses and districts will receive accountability ratings under the performance index accountability system. Although a separate alternative education accountability system will not be developed, the following modifications will be made for alternative education campuses and districts.

- In addition to the ten eligibility criteria under the former state accountability system, alternative education campuses of choice must serve students in Grades 6-12. This new rule does not apply to residential facilities.
- In Index 4, the graduation rate calculation is modified to give alternative education campuses and districts credit for general educational development (GED) recipients as well graduates. Four-year, five-year, and six-year graduation and GED rates will be calculated for alternative education campuses and districts.
- Index 4 will be constructed to give more weight to the graduation rates, compared to college-ready performance on STAAR.
- In Index 4, alternative education campuses and districts will get bonus points for students graduating under the Recommended High School Program or Advanced High School Program, rather than averaging those rates into their index scores.
- Accountability targets for each index will be modified as appropriate for alternative education campuses and districts from the targets for regular campuses and districts.

The following modifications are in addition to the original ATAC recommendations:

- Index 3 is credited one point for each percent of students at the Level I minimum score performance standard and above (includes students at Phase-in Level II and Level III Advanced).
- Accountability ratings criteria that specify which combinations of performance index targets must be met to receive a Met Standard rating will be modified as appropriate for alternative education campuses and districts.
- Alternative education campuses and districts identified as Residential Facilities will not be assigned rating labels (in 2013). Performance index results will be reported but no rating label will be assigned.

Distinction Designations. Beginning in 2013, AECs will be eligible for recognition under the Academic Achievement Distinction Designations (AADD) system. Current AADD proposals include indicators for completion of advanced/dual enrollment courses, and SAT and ACT performance and participation. Proposals under consideration for the AADD system, as well as other campus distinction designations for 2014 and beyond, are based on comparison groups of similar campuses. Comparison groups of alternative education campuses will be created.

Accountability Development. There is a need for more indicators that better measure the progress that students on alternative education campuses make toward the goal of graduation. Additional indicators under consideration would give alternative education campuses and districts credit for credit accrual of high school students and for success of recovered dropouts. Further analyses will be conducted to determine whether districts with alternative education campuses can be credited for the students who are included in the graduation and GED rate results for the alternative campus.

Rationale: The performance index framework is flexible enough to include alternative education campuses and districts. Nevertheless, there is a need for further development of indicators that measure the progress that students on alternative education campuses make toward the goal of graduation. Modified accountability targets are necessary and reflect the special circumstances of alternative education campuses and districts.