

Methodology for Construction of Campus Comparable Groups

Proposal	
The campus comparable groups should be constructed so that: 1. Comparable groups are unique. That is, campuses/districts belong only to a single comparable group. 2. Comparable groups take into account a. campus size, b. campus type (Elementary, Middle, High), c. percent of Limited English Proficient students, d. and percent of Economically Disadvantaged students.	
Rationale	
Policy Issues:	The Academic Achievement Distinction Designation Committee (AADDCC) is recommending use of comparable groups for evaluation of the AADDCC indicators. Questions regarding the methodology for construction of the comparable group were deferred to ATAC and assigned to the Distinction Designation workgroup. The Distinction Designation workgroup is also recommending that Distinction Designations for Indexes 1 and 4 as well as top 25% designations for indexes 2 and 3 be based on comparable grouping.
Incentives:	By assigning campus/district to a unique comparable group based on similar demographic factors, more campuses have the opportunity to achieve Distinction Designations and/or top 25% designations. Being assigned to comparable groups provides a more level playing field. Comparable groups would not have to be limited to 40 as they were for Gold Performance Acknowledgement, but could conceivably be 100 or more. It is recommended that groups be similar in size, but not necessarily the exact same number. The intent is to provide as many opportunities for campuses/districts to be recognized for their achievements. Concern: If campuses/districts are assigned to more than one comparable group, then the recommendation of the Distinction Designation workgroup would be to require meeting the Distinction and/or top 25% requirements in all groups in order to receive the higher designation. This potentially would decrease the number of campuses/districts receiving higher designations.
Effect on Classroom Instruction:	The way for campuses to achieve higher distinction ratings is for classroom instruction to improve by implementing a more rigorous and relevant curriculum. Irrespective of the school demographic factors, schools have the ability to identify peer campuses that are comparable to their school and model the school improvement process based on best practices from these higher performing schools.
Communication Issues:	Assigning campuses and districts to a unique comparable group yields a fair methodology for identifying high performing campuses/districts while recognizing the diverse challenges faced by campus/district demographics. If the rationale and methodology of why and how campuses are classified to a comparable group is well communicated, parents, the community, and districts will recognize the benefits of unique comparable groups.
Development and Implementation Issues:	Indicators related to change in student performance will be finalized after results from the second administration of STAAR in 2012-2013 are available for use in 2014. Report only would be recommended where available in 2013. It is crucial that schools understand how comparable peer campus groups are designated. The Distinction Designation workgroup recommends that comparable group information is available based on PEIMS data by the last Friday of February.

Performance Criteria for Recognized and Exemplary Rating Designations

Proposal	
1. In order to be eligible for these designations, the campus or district must be rated <i>Acceptable</i>. 2. Replace the label <i>Recognized</i> with the label <i>Recommended</i>. 3. Replace the label <i>Exemplary</i> with the label <i>Distinguished</i>. 4. Comparable group information should be available, based on PEIMS data, by the last Friday of February. 5. A designation of <i>Recommended</i> would be assigned to a campus if: a. a campus is in the top quartile for either <u>index 1</u> or <u>index 4</u> within its comparable group, or b. a campus achieves 90% or more of the total number of possible points for <u>index 1</u> or achieves a threshold for <u>index 4</u> (determined by data) that will increase with time. 6. A designation of <i>Distinguished</i> would be assigned to a campus if: a. a campus is in the top quartile for both <u>index 1</u> and <u>index 4</u> within its comparable group, or b. a campus achieves 90% or more of the total number of possible points for <u>index 1</u> and achieves a threshold for <u>index 4</u> (determined by data) that will increase with time, or c. a campus meets a combination of (a) and (b) between the two indexes.	
Rationale	
Policy Issues:	TEC §39.202 requires that the <i>Recognized</i> and <i>Exemplary</i> (actual labels to be determined) performance indicators use Level III performance, as well as college readiness standards.
Incentives:	Campuses and districts identified for the <i>Recommended</i> or <i>Distinguished</i> distinctions have shown outstanding performance in order to achieve an index score in the top quartile amongst campuses that are similar in enrollment and key demographic factors, or because they have reached 90% of all possible points in one or both indexes 1 and 4. These campuses have outperformed their comparable campuses, or have achieved the ideal performance and college readiness measures, and can serve as models and share best practices that yield to high performance.
Effect on Classroom Instruction:	By providing campus and districts the opportunity to be compared with a comparable group, faculty and staff will be better able to relate their strengths and areas in need of improvement with those at the top of the group. This will provide incentives to implement the practices shared by high performing members of the group. The comparable group will allow campuses and districts that face greater challenges in reaching high performance to compete for these designations in a level playing field, thus providing positive pressure to improve achievement. High performing campuses and districts that are part of high performing comparable groups will have the opportunity to achieve these designations regardless of their placement in the group by reaching 90% of the maximum possible points in each index. The net result is recognition and positive pressure to improve achievement for districts and campuses that face greater challenges in reaching high performance when they outperform their peers. At the same time, it results in recognition and positive pressure to improve achievement for districts and campuses that are already high performing when they reach 90% of the maximum possible points in each index.

Communication Issues:	If the rationale and methodology of why and how campuses are classified to a comparable group is well communicated, parents, the community, and districts will recognize the benefits of unique comparable groups. Identifying <i>Recommended</i> and <i>Distinguished</i> rating designations for campuses within comparable peer campuses yields a fair methodology for identifying high performing campuses while recognizing the diverse challenges faced by schools with unique demographics. These campuses can celebrate their achievements as well as serve as model campuses for their peers.
Development and Implementation Issues:	TEC §39.116 specifies that Level III performance is incorporated into the ratings evaluation in 2014. Distinction designations will not be awarded in 2013. Report only would be recommended where available in 2013. These designations are highly dependent on the methodology used to create comparable groups. It is crucial that schools understand how comparable campus groups are designated, and that they know what campuses/districts are included in their group as soon as possible. Although districts and campuses will not be able to accurately predict their rating, information from previous years on the members of the comparable group will provide some guidance on whether the campus or district falls within the top quartile of its group.

Campus Top 25% Distinction Designations

Proposal	
1. Campuses must be rated <i>Acceptable</i> in order to be eligible for a Top 25% Distinction designation. 2. If a campus is in the top quartile within its comparable group for Index 2, it would have a designation of <i>Top 25% in Student Progress</i> distinction. 3. If a campus is in the top quartile within its comparable group for Index 3, it would have a designation of <i>Top 25% in Closing Achievement Gaps</i> distinction.	
Rationale	
Policy Issues:	TEC §39.203(a) and (b) requires that the top 25% distinction designations be based on student progress and closing performance gaps.
Incentives:	Campuses identified for the “Top 25% Distinction” within comparable campus groups are campuses that have demonstrated outstanding performance to achieve an index score in the top quartile amongst campuses that are similar in enrollment and key demographic factors. These campuses have outperformed their comparable campuses and serve as model campuses. These top performing campuses within comparable schools on the Student Progress and closing Achievement Gaps Index serve as model campuses to learn best practices that yield to high performance.
Effect on Classroom Instruction:	Irrespective of the school demographic factors, schools have the ability to identify peer campuses that are comparable to their school and model the school improvement process based on best practices from these higher performing schools. Campuses can establish professional communities to learn from these distinction campuses and accelerate student progress at all levels of performance and close achievement gaps. As the new reporting system will disaggregate Index 2 and 3 scores to each grade level and students’ beginning level of achievement, comparable schools can analyze best practices from these top 25% campuses that are applicable to their grade and subject areas. When best practices are effectively implemented at all campuses, all schools will have effective practices in place to guide students to Level III Advanced performance.
Communication Issues:	Identifying top 25% campuses within comparable peer campuses yields a fair methodology for identifying high performing campuses while recognizing diverse challenges introduced by school demographics. If parents, community, and districts are well informed on the rationale and methodology of why and how campuses are classified to comparable groups, the benefits of identifying top 25% campuses with best practices that produce high growth and gap closure will be highly welcome. These campuses can celebrate their achievements as well as serve as model campuses for their peers.
Development and Implementation Issues:	Indicators related to change in student performance will be finalized after results from the second administration of STAAR in 2012-2013 are available for use in 2014. Report only would be recommended where available in 2013. It is crucial that schools understand how comparable peer campus groups are designated. This information should be made available by the last Friday of February based on Fall PEIMS data snapshot.