

Accountability System for 2013 and Beyond

Commissioner of Education Final Decisions

OVERVIEW

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 is a snapshot of performance across subjects, on both general and alternative assessments, at the satisfactory performance standard.

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 the economically disadvantaged student group and the lowest performing race/ethnicity student groups at each campus or district.

Index 4: Postsecondary Readiness includes measures of high school completion and STAAR performance at the postsecondary readiness 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.

2013 Transition Year Accountability Ratings Criteria and Targets

To receive a *Met Standard* rating, all campuses and districts must meet the accountability targets on all indexes for which they have performance data in 2013.

Districts and campuses with students in Grade 9 or above must meet targets on 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 three indexes for which they have performance data in 2013:

- Index 1: Student Achievement
- Index 2: Student Progress
- Index 3: Closing Performance Gaps

2013 Transition Year Accountability Targets

	Index 1: Student Achievement	Index 2: Student Progress	Index 3: Closing Performance Gaps	Index 4: Postsecondary Readiness
Non-AEA districts and campuses	----- 50	Index score at about the 5 th percentile of non-AEA campus performance	----- 55	----- 75
AEA districts and campuses	----- 25	Index score at about the 5 th percentile of AEA campus performance	----- 30	----- 45

Estimated Impact

Based on the assumptions described below, it is estimated that the percentage of campuses that will receive the Improvement Required rating will range from seven percent to twelve percent. Since performance on Index 2 cannot be modeled, the commissioner set the target for Index 2 at about the fifth percentile of campus performance. This means that about five percent of campuses, or about 383 campuses, will not meet the Index 2 target in 2013.

The following caveats must be considered regarding the estimated impact of the accountability rating criteria and targets.

- 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 estimates are based on 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.

- Performance on Index 2: Student Progress cannot be estimated. The introduction of Index 2 can only increase the number of campuses receiving the Improvement Required rating because some campuses that meet all other targets might not meet the Index 2 target.

The following information focuses on decisions that were discussed at Accountability Technical Advisory Committee (ATAC) and Accountability Policy Advisory Committee (APAC) meetings, and issues that were the subject of public comment. A separate technical description document provides more detail on indicator definitions and index construction for the new accountability system.

1. Overall Design: Performance Index

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.

Rationale: 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 index 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.

Index 1: Student Achievement is a snapshot of performance across subjects, on both general and alternative assessments, at the phase-in Level II performance standard.

EOC Retest Results: All assessment indicators include first attempt and retest EOC results from the current accountability year, defined as a cycle that includes the previous summer administration and current school year fall and spring administrations. Including the three administrations addresses the needs of innovative programs and students completing courses at different paces.

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 the 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. 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.

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.

Student Groups. Most campuses and districts meet minimum size criteria for the 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 the necessary instructional resources on these student populations. Further, the construction of Index 3 will reduce the need 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.

EOC Retest Results: Similar to Index 1, all assessment indicators include first attempt and retest EOC results from the current accountability year, defined as a cycle that includes the previous summer administration and current school year fall and spring administrations.

Performance Expectations. 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. 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, accountability advisory groups will examine how career-readiness measures can be incorporated into the performance index accountability system for 2014 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).

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/DAP Annual Rates	
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	All Students

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 safeguard measures and targets. Performance rates are calculated from the assessment results used to calculate performance rates in the performance index. For purposes of the safeguards, a single target will be used for all campuses and districts for the disaggregated performance rates that correspond to the target for student achievement in Index 1. 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	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%
Mathematics	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%
Writing	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%
Science	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%
Soc. Studies	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%
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									

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 state 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 intent of the safeguards system is to also meet additional federal accountability requirements.

4. Accountability Ratings Criteria and Targets

2013 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 from the APAC and ATAC was 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
- *Met Alternative Standard* – met modified performance index targets for alternative education campuses and districts
- *Improvement Required* – did not meet one or more performance index targets

2013 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. The performance targets that are set for each index will be used to assign accountability rating labels.

2013 Transition Year. The 2013 ratings criteria and targets will stand alone because the performance index framework cannot be fully implemented in 2013.

2013 Accountability Appeals. The compensatory nature of the performance index framework and other features of the indexes, such as the use of multiple indicators to derive an overall index score, minimize the possibility that district errors in coding student demographic information in PEIMS or the STAAR assessment program negatively impact the overall accountability rating. Therefore, appeals will only be considered in rare cases where a data or calculation error is attributable to the testing contractor or the Texas Education Agency.

Plan for 2014 and Beyond. Accountability advisory groups will reconvene in fall 2013 to finalize recommendations for accountability ratings criteria for 2014 and beyond and targets for 2014 through 2016. Accountability ratings labels of A, B, C, D, and F are planned to be used in the state accountability rating system beginning in the 2013-14 school year. The criteria that will be used to assign the A-F rating labels will be determined by the agency in fall 2013.

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 table 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 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/English language arts 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. The following campus distinction designations will be awarded in 2013:

Top 25% Student Progress
Academic Achievement in Reading/English language arts
Academic Achievement in Mathematics

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.

- 2013 and Beyond: 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.
- 2014 and Beyond: 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.

Campus Academic Achievement Distinction Designations (AADD). The AADD system recognizes outstanding academic achievement in reading/English language arts (ELA) and mathematics on a variety of indicators, including completion of advanced/dual enrollment courses and SAT and ACT performance and participation, based on comparison groups of similar campuses. See Final Decisions for Academic Achievement Distinction Designations (AADD) in Reading/ELA and Mathematics.

District and Campus Recognized and Exemplary Ratings. The district and campus recognized and exemplary distinction designations will be implemented in 2014. Criteria and targets will be set in fall 2013 when other 2014 accountability targets are set.

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.

Eligibility Criteria: In addition to the ten eligibility criteria under the former state accountability system, alternative education campuses of choice must primarily serve students in Grades 6-12.

Accountability Targets: Accountability targets will be modified from those used for non-AEA campuses and districts as shown under 2013 Transition Year Accountability Ratings Criteria and Targets above.

Residential Facilities: 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.

Index 4: Postsecondary Readiness: Modifications to indicator definitions and index construction.

Grade 9-12 Graduation and GED Rate: The graduation rate calculation is modified to give AEA campuses and districts credit for GED recipients as well graduates. Four-year, five-year, and six-year modified graduation and GED rates will be calculated for AECs.

Annual Dropout Rate: The annual dropout rate conversion is modified to give AEA campuses and districts points in Index 4 for annual dropout rates lower than 20.0. (For non-AEA campuses and districts the conversion gives credit for annual dropout rates lower than 10.0.)

Index Construction

- Graduation and GED Score will contribute 75 percent of the points to Index 4 and STAAR Score (Percent Met final Level II on One or More Tests) will contribute 25 percent of the points. (For regular campuses STAAR Score and Graduation Score contribute equally to Index 4.)
- Bonus points will be added to the final index score for the following indicators, to a maximum of 50 points.
 - Recommended High School Program/Distinguished Achievement (Advanced) High School Program (RHSP/DAP) rates (rather than averaging the rates into the

Graduation and GED Score). For AEA campuses and districts that use the Annual Dropout Rate, an annual RHSP/DAP rate will be calculated for bonus points.

- Continuing Students Success Rates will give AEA campuses and districts bonus points for continuing students who graduate or receive a GED in their fifth or sixth year.
- Excluded Students Credit will give AEA campuses and districts bonus points for serving recovered dropouts and other students who are statutorily excluded from the graduation rate and dropout rate calculations for those students who graduate or earn a GED.

Rationale: The performance index framework is flexible enough to include alternative education campuses and districts. Nevertheless, modified accountability targets reflect the special circumstances of alternative education campuses and districts.