

Chapter 1 – Introduction

In 2009, the Texas Legislature passed House Bill (HB) 3 mandating the creation of an entirely new accountability system focused on the achievement of postsecondary readiness for all Texas public school students. Texas Education Agency (TEA) has worked closely with public school personnel and others to develop an integrated accountability system based on the following goals and guiding principles.

GOALS

Texas will be among the top ten states in postsecondary readiness by 2020, by:

- 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 Distinguished Achievement (Advanced) High School Program, and
- Rewarding excellence based on other indicators in addition to state assessment results.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Student Performance

- The system is designed to improve student performance.
- The system focuses on preparing students from the elementary grades and higher for success after high school.

System Safeguards

- The system uses safeguards to minimize unintended consequences.

Recognition of Diversity

- The system is fair and addresses the diversity of student populations and educational settings.

Public Participation and Accessibility

- The system's development and implementation are informed by advice from Texas educators and the public.
- The system is understandable and provides performance results that are relevant, meaningful, and easily accessible.

Coordination

- The system is part of an overall coordinated strategy for state and federal ratings, reporting, monitoring, and interventions.

Statutory Compliance

- The system is designed to comply with statutory requirements.

Local Responsibility

- Districts are responsible for submitting accurate data upon which ratings are based.
- The system relies on local school districts to develop and implement local accountability systems that complement the state system.

Distinction Designations

- Distinction designations are based on higher levels of student performance.

To achieve these goals, a three-tiered approach of assigning accountability ratings based on four performance indexes, awarding distinction designations, and applying system safeguards will be implemented beginning with the 2013 accountability system. Accountability ratings are assigned to every district and campus in the Texas public education system each year. In 2013, the system will assign a rating label – *Met Standard*, *Met Alternative Standard*, or *Improvement Required* – based on the evaluation of four performance indexes for Student Achievement, Student Progress, Closing Performance Gaps, and Postsecondary Readiness.

The indexes include assessment results from the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR)¹ testing program, graduation rates, and rates of students achieving the Recommended High School Program and Distinguished Achievement (Advanced) High School Program. In addition to evaluating performance for all students, the performance of the following individual groups of students are evaluated in the performance index framework - All Students, African American, American Indian, Asian, Hispanic, Pacific Islander, White, Two or More Races, Students served by Special Education, Economically Disadvantaged, and English Language Learners (ELLs).

Distinction designations will be awarded to campuses based on campus performance compared to a group of campuses of similar type, size, and student demographics. Distinction designations acknowledge that these campuses meet accountability standards and demonstrate outstanding academic performance for indicators other than those used to determine accountability ratings.

System safeguards are applied to ensure that performance on each subject, indicator, and student group is addressed, and all state and federal accountability requirements are incorporated into the accountability system.

About the *Manual*

The *2013 Accountability Manual* is a technical resource that explains the accountability system used by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) to evaluate the performance of public school districts and campuses. This *Manual* details the accountability system for 2013, including ratings, academic achievement distinction designations, responsibilities, safeguards, and special issues. All information necessary to compute 2013 ratings and academic distinction designations for districts and campuses is included.

¹ STAAR[®] is a registered trademark of the Texas Education Agency.

Advisory Groups

Educators, school board members, business and community representatives, professional organizations, and legislative representatives from across the state provided assistance and advice to TEA during the development of the accountability system. Additionally, more than 1,600 public comments were received on the website highlighting both strengths and weaknesses of the proposed accountability system.

The Accountability Technical Advisory Committee (ATAC) includes representatives from districts and regional education service centers (ESCs) who made recommendations to address major policy and design issues for 2013 accountability.

The Accountability Policy Advisory Committee (APAC) includes representatives from legislative offices, school districts, and the business community who participated in resolving issues critical to the accountability system and reviewed the ATAC recommendations. The APAC either endorsed the ATAC's proposals or recommended alternatives which were forwarded to the commissioner.

The Academic Achievement Distinction Designations Committee (AADDCC) consisted of professionals, content experts, educators, and community leaders appointed by the Offices of the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, and Speaker of the House of Representatives who made recommendations for academic achievement distinction designations in reading/English language arts and mathematics.

The commissioner considered all proposals and made final decisions that are reflected in this publication. See *Appendix A – Acknowledgments* for more information on advisory groups.

Reports Associated with the Accountability System

Accountability Reports. Reports showing the performance data used for determining accountability ratings are made public at the time of the ratings release. These reports provide the data necessary to understand a district or campus rating. Samples of these reports are shown in *Appendix E – Sample Accountability Table and Index Calculations*.

Performance Reports. Since 1990-91, campus and district performance reports [formerly Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) reports] have been generated and published annually for all districts and campuses in the state. Local districts share responsibility for disseminating the performance reports, including holding hearings for public discussion of the report content. All indicators used for accountability are included, with additional disaggregations depicting how each grade level and each student group performed on the state assessments. Performance on various college-readiness indicators, such as participation and performance rates on the SAT/ACT, is included. Additionally, the demographic information about students and staff, and program information, all of which provide context for interpreting accountability results are shown.

State statute also requires that a subset of the information found on the performance report is produced at the campus level only and provided to each student's family.

Section 1111(h)(1) and (2) of the NCLB Act also requires annual reporting of student achievement and federal accountability information for the state, local educational agency, and school. TEA uses a web-based reporting system that generates the annual NCLB Report Card (NCLB RC) at the state, district, and campus levels.

Snapshot: School District Profiles. This online TEA publication provides a state- and district-level overview of public education in Texas. The *District Detail* section of *Snapshot* provides up to 90 data items of information for each public school district.

All of the reports cited in this section can be found on the TEA Division of Performance Reporting website at <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/perfreport/>.