

# Chapter 1 – Introduction

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## About this Manual

The *2014 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. The manual provides details of the accountability system for 2014, including ratings, academic achievement distinction designations, safeguards, and special issues. Districts and campuses can also find the information necessary to compute 2014 ratings and distinction designations.

## History of the Accountability System

The Texas Legislature in 1993 enacted statutes that mandated the creation of the Texas public school accountability system to rate school districts and evaluate campuses. A viable and effective accountability system was achievable in Texas because the state already had the necessary infrastructure in place: a student-level data collection system; a state-mandated curriculum; and a statewide assessment program tied to the curriculum.

The accountability system initiated with the 1993 legislative session remained in place through the 2001-02 school year. The ratings issued in 2002 were the last under that system. The Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) were first administered beginning in the 2002-03 school year. This assessment included more subjects and grades and was more difficult than the previous statewide assessment. A rating system based on the TAKS was developed during 2003 with ratings established under the redesigned system first issued in fall 2004. Districts and campuses were required to meet criteria on up to 25 separate assessment measures and up to 10 dropout and completion measures. The last year for accountability ratings based on the TAKS was 2011.

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

As a transition to the new assessment program, no state accountability ratings were issued in 2012. TEA worked throughout the year with technical and policy advisory committees to develop a new rating system based on the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR)<sup>1</sup> and a new distinction designations system. The new accountability system allows for a large number of measures to be evaluated within a performance index framework, eliminating the limitations of a single indicator determining the rating. The 2012-13 school year marked the first year of ratings and distinction designations based on STAAR results.

In 2013, the Texas Legislature passed HB 5 which requires evaluation of additional indicators for postsecondary readiness and distinction designations. The 2014 ratings include a new postsecondary readiness measure – college-ready graduates. Future ratings will expand postsecondary readiness indicators to include other measures of postsecondary success.

<sup>1</sup> STAAR ® is a registered trademark of the Texas Education Agency.

# Goals of Texas Accountability System

Texas will be among the top 10 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 student groups; and,
- Rewarding excellence based on other indicators in addition to state assessment results.

## Guiding Principles

### Student Performance

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

### System Safeguards

- The accountability system uses safeguards to minimize unintended consequences.

### Recognition of Diversity

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

### Public Participation and Accessibility

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

### Statutory Compliance

- The accountability 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 rather than more students performing at the satisfactory level.

## Accountability 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 current accountability system.

**Accountability Technical Advisory Committee (ATAC)** includes representatives from school districts and regional education service centers (ESCs). Members made recommendations to address major policy and technical issues for 2014 accountability.

**Accountability Policy Advisory Committee (APAC)** includes representatives from legislative offices, school districts, and the business community. Members participated in identifying 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.

**Academic Achievement Distinction Designations Committee (AADDC)** consists of professionals, content experts, educators, and community leaders appointed by the Offices of the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, and Speaker of the House of Representatives. Members made recommendations for 2014 academic achievement distinction designations in science and social studies.

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. The accountability development proposals and supporting materials that were reviewed and discussed at each meeting of the advisory groups are available online at <http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/perfreport/account/2014/index.html>.

## Overview of the 2014 Accountability System

### State Accountability Ratings

State accountability ratings are based on a framework of four indexes that are used to evaluate the performance of each public campus and district in the state. The framework includes a range of indicators to calculate a score for each index and enables a thorough assessment of campus and district effectiveness. Accountability ratings are based on achieving a target established for each performance index.

**Index 1: Student Achievement** provides a snapshot of performance across subjects.

**Index 2: Student Progress** measures year-to-year student progress by subject and student group.

**Index 3: Closing Performance Gaps** tracks advanced academic achievement of economically disadvantaged students and the lowest performing racial/ethnic student groups.

**Index 4: Postsecondary Readiness** emphasizes the importance of earning a high school diploma that provides students with the foundation necessary for success in college, the workforce, job training programs, or the military.

Three labels are used to rate the overall performance of districts and campuses – *Met Standard*, *Met Alternative Standard*, or *Improvement Required* – as determined by the four indexes. Broadly based, the performance index framework considers results from the STAAR testing program, in addition to graduation rates and rates of students

completing the Recommended High School Program and Distinguished Achievement Program, and other indicators. 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**

Campuses that receive an accountability rating of *Met Standard* are eligible for distinction designations. Distinction designations are awarded to campuses based on achievement in several performance indicators relative to a group of campuses of similar type, size, and student demographics.

Beginning in 2014, campuses and districts are eligible for distinction designation in Postsecondary Readiness. Additional distinctions are also available for campuses for academic achievement in science and social studies and top 25 percent in closing performance gaps.

The following chart outlines the accountability ratings and distinction designations assigned in 2014.

Ratings (Districts and Campuses)	Distinction Designations	
	Districts	Campuses
<i>Met Standard</i>	Postsecondary Readiness	Academic Achievement: Reading/ELA and/or Academic Achievement: Mathematics and/or Academic Achievement: Science and/or Academic Achievement: Social Studies and/or Top 25%: Student Progress and/or Top 25%: Closing Performance Gaps and/or Postsecondary Readiness
<i>Met Alternative Standard</i> (Assigned to charter operators and alternative education campuses evaluated by alternative education accountability provisions)	N/A	N/A
<i>Improvement Required</i>	N/A	N/A

## **System Safeguards**

With a performance index framework, poor performance in one subject or one student group does not necessarily result in an *Improvement Required* rating. System safeguards evaluate disaggregated performance results to ensure that districts and campuses address performance for each subject and each student group. System safeguards also meet certain federal accountability requirements outside of the performance index framework. See *Chapter 8 – System Safeguards and Other Federal Requirements* for detailed information about system safeguards in 2014.

Comparison of 2013 and 2014 Performance Index Criteria and Indicators for Non-AEA Districts and Campuses

	2013	2014
Index 1: Student Achievement	Index 1 Target: 50	Index 1 Target: 55
	All students group	No change
	All tests combined	No change
	Performance standard: Phase-in 1 Level II (Satisfactory)	No change
	STAAR EOC Assessments (15 tests)	STAAR EOC Assessments (5 tests): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o English I (reading &amp; writing combined into a single English I)</li> <li>o English II (reading &amp; writing combined into a single English II)</li> <li>o Algebra I</li> <li>o Biology</li> <li>o U.S. History</li> </ul>
	Substitute assessments not available	Substitute assessments for STAAR EOC tests are included
	English Language Learners (ELLs): <b>English version:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Students in U.S. schools Year 1 excluded</li> <li>o Students in U.S. schools Years 2 - 3 excluded</li> <li>o Students in U.S. schools Years 4+ included (Phase-in 1 Level II)</li> </ul> <b>Spanish version:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Students in U.S. schools Year 1 excluded</li> <li>o Students in U.S. schools Years 2 - 3 excluded</li> <li>o Students in U.S. schools Years 4+ included (Phase-in 1 Level II)</li> </ul> STAAR L not included	English Language Learners (ELLs): <b>English version:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o No change</li> <li>o Students in U.S. schools Years 2-4 included (ELL Progress Measure)</li> <li>o Students in U.S. schools Years 5+ included (Phase-in 1 Level II)</li> </ul> <b>Spanish version:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o No change</li> <li>o Students in U.S. schools Years 2-3 included (Phase-in 1 Level II)</li> <li>o No change</li> </ul> STAAR L evaluated in ELL Progress Measure
Index 2: Student Progress	Index 2 Target: Based on 5 <sup>th</sup> percentile of Index 2 outcomes based on the 2013 performance results by campus type: elementary, middle, or high school. Targets for districts based on 5 <sup>th</sup> percentile of campus performance across all campus types.	Index 2 Target: Based on 5 <sup>th</sup> percentile of Index 2 outcomes based on the 2014 performance results by campus type: elementary, middle, or high school. Targets for districts based on 5 <sup>th</sup> percentile of campus performance across all campus types.
	Ten student groups: All students, 7 racial/ethnic groups, Students with Disabilities, and ELL students	No change
	By subject: reading, mathematics, and writing	By subject: reading and mathematics
	Points based on weighted performance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o 1 point for each percentage of tests at the <i>Met</i> progress level</li> <li>o 2 points for each percentage of tests at the <i>Exceeded</i> progress level</li> </ul>	No change
	Progress Measure: STAAR	Progress Measures: STAAR, STAAR Modified, STAAR Alternate, and ELL Progress Measure
	All districts and campuses with progress measure results are evaluated on Index 2	High schools/K-12 campuses are not evaluated on Index 2 (2014 only)
	English Language Learners (ELLs): <b>English version:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Students in U.S. schools Year 1 excluded</li> <li>o Students in U.S. schools Years 2-4 excluded</li> <li>o Students in U.S. schools Years 5+ excluded</li> </ul> <b>Spanish version:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Students in U.S. schools Year 1 excluded</li> <li>o Students in U.S. schools Years 2-4 excluded</li> <li>o Students in U.S. schools Years 5+ included (STAAR Progress Measure)</li> </ul>	English Language Learners (ELLs): <b>English version:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o No change</li> <li>o Students in U.S. schools Years 2-4 included (ELL Progress Measure)</li> <li>o Students in U.S. schools Years 5+ included (STAAR Progress Measure)</li> </ul> <b>Spanish version:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o No change</li> <li>o Students in U.S. schools Years 2-4 included (STAAR Progress Measure)</li> <li>o No change</li> </ul>

Comparison of 2013 and 2014 Performance Index Criteria and Indicators for Non-AEA Districts and Campuses

	2013	2014
Index 3: Closing Performance Gaps	Index 3 Target: 55	Index 3 Target: Based on 5 <sup>th</sup> percentile of Index 3 outcomes based on the 2014 performance results by campus type: elementary, middle, or high school. Targets for districts based on 5 <sup>th</sup> percentile of campus performance across all campus types.
	By Subject Area: reading, mathematics, writing, science, and social studies	No change
	Student Groups: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Economically Disadvantaged</li> <li>o Two Lowest Performing Racial/Ethnic Student Groups</li> </ul>	No change
	Minimum Size Criteria for Racial/Ethnic Student Groups: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Identify the Racial/Ethnic student groups that have 25 or more tests in All Subjects from the prior year (2011-12)</li> <li>2) Select the lowest performing student group(s) that meet the above minimum size based on prior year (2011-12) results for All Subjects.</li> </ol>	Minimum Size Criteria for Racial/Ethnic Student Groups: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Identify the Racial/Ethnic student groups that have 25 or more tests in reading/ELA and 25 or more tests in mathematics from the prior year (2012-13)</li> <li>2) Select the lowest performing student group(s) that meet the above minimum size based on prior year (2012-13) results for All Subjects.</li> </ol>
	Points based on STAAR performance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Phase-in 1 Level II (Satisfactory): 1 point for each percentage of tests at phase-in 1 Level II (Satisfactory)</li> </ul>	Points based on STAAR performance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Phase-in Satisfactory Standard: 1 point for each percentage of tests at Phase-in Satisfactory Standard</li> <li>o Advanced Standard: 2 points for each percentage of tests at Advanced Standard</li> </ul>
	English Language Learners (ELLs): <p><b>English version:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Students in U.S. schools Year 1 excluded</li> <li>o Students in U.S. schools Years 2 - 4 excluded</li> <li>o Students in U.S. schools Years 5+ excluded</li> </ul> <p><b>Spanish version:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Students in U.S. schools Year 1 excluded</li> <li>o Students in U.S. schools Years 2 - 4 excluded</li> <li>o Students in U.S. schools Years 5+ excluded</li> </ul> <p>STAAR L excluded</p>	English Language Learners (ELLs): <p><b>English version:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o No change</li> <li>o Students in U.S. schools Years 2 - 4 included ELL Progress Measure (1 point); STAAR Final Level II (2 points)</li> <li>o Students in U.S. schools Years 5+ included Phase-in 1 Level II (1 point); STAAR Advanced Level III (2 points)</li> </ul> <p><b>Spanish version:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o No change</li> <li>o Students in U.S. schools Years 2 - 4 included Phase-in 1 Level II (one point); STAAR Advanced Level III (two points)</li> <li>o Students in U.S. schools Years 5+ included Phase-in 1 Level II (one point); STAAR Advanced Level III (two points)</li> </ul> <p>STAAR L evaluated in ELL Progress Measure</p>

Comparison of 2013 and 2014 Performance Index Criteria and Indicators for Non-AEA Districts and Campuses

	2013	2014
Index 4: Postsecondary Readiness	<p>Index 4 Target:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Elementary Schools: Not Evaluated</li> <li>o Middle Schools: Not Evaluated</li> <li>o High Schools: 75</li> <li>o Districts: 75</li> </ul> <p>Based on Two Components: Graduation Score and Graduation Plan</p>	<p>Index 4 Target:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Elementary Schools: 12</li> <li>o Middle Schools: 13</li> <li>o High Schools/K-12: 57 (based on all four components)*</li> <li>o Districts: 57 (based on all four components)*</li> </ul> <p>Based on Four components: STAAR Final Level II, Graduation Score, Graduation Plan, and College-Ready Graduates</p> <p>If all four components (STAAR Final Level II, Graduation Score, Graduation Plan, and College-Ready Graduates) are not available for high schools or districts, evaluate the STAAR Final Level II performance at the following Index 4 targets:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o High Schools/K-12: 21*</li> <li>o Districts: 13</li> </ul>
	STAAR Results Not Included	<p><b>STAAR Score:</b> STAAR Percent Met Final Level II on two or more STAAR subject-area tests for All Students and race/ethnicity student groups</p> <p>Students tested on one subject area only must meet the final Level II performance standard for that subject area. Similarly, students tested on only two subject areas must meet the final Level II performance standard for both subject areas.</p>
	<p><b>Graduation Score:</b> Combined performance across graduation/dropout rates for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Grade 9-12 Four-Year Graduation Rate for ten student groups; or</li> <li>o Grade 9-12 Five-Year Graduation Rate for ten student groups, whichever contributes the most points to the index</li> </ul> <p>Ten Student Groups: All students, each race/ethnicity (7 groups), Students with Disabilities, and ELLs</p>	No change
	<b>Graduation Plan:</b> RHSP/DAP Graduates based on Annual Graduates for the 2011-12 school year: All Students and racial/ethnic groups	<b>Graduation Plan:</b> RHSP/DAP Graduates based on Class of 2013 Four-Year Longitudinal Cohort: All Students and racial/ethnic groups
	<b>College-Ready Graduates:</b> Not Included	<b>College-Ready Graduates:</b> High school graduates from the 2012-13 school year who met the college-ready criteria on the TAKS exit-level test, or the SAT test, or the ACT test in both ELA and mathematics.
	<p>Weighting: Combine with equal weight (50%) the results of two components:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Graduation Rate</li> <li>o Graduation Plan</li> </ul>	<p>Weighting: Combine with equal weight (25%) the results of four components if all four available:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o STAAR Final Level II</li> <li>o Graduation Rate</li> <li>o Graduation Plan</li> <li>o College-Ready Graduates</li> </ul>
	Substitute assessments not available	Substitute assessments for STAAR EOC tests are included
	<p>English Language Learners (ELLs):</p> <p><b>English version:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Students in U.S. schools Year 1 excluded</li> <li>o Students in U.S. schools Years 2-4 excluded</li> <li>o Students in U.S. schools Years 5+ excluded</li> </ul> <p><b>Spanish version:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Students in U.S. schools Year 1 excluded</li> <li>o Students in U.S. schools Years 2-4 excluded</li> <li>o Students in U.S. schools Years 5+ excluded</li> </ul>	<p>English Language Learners (ELLs):</p> <p><b>English version:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o No change</li> <li>o No change</li> <li>o Students in U.S. schools Years 5+ included (Final Level II)</li> </ul> <p><b>Spanish version:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o No change</li> <li>o Students in U.S. schools Years 2-4 included (Final Level II)</li> <li>o Students in U.S. schools Years 5+ included (Final Level II)</li> </ul>

Comparison of 2013 and 2014 Performance Index Criteria and Indicators for AEA Charters and Campuses

	2013	2014
Index 1: Student Achievement*	Index 1 Target: 25	Index 1 Target: 30
Index 2: Student Progress	Index 2 Target: Based on 5 <sup>th</sup> percentile of Index 2 outcomes based on the 2013 performance results across all AEA campuses. Targets for charter districts based on 5 <sup>th</sup> percentile of campus performance across all AEA campuses.	Campuses and charters districts registered for Alternative Education Accountability (AEA) provisions are not evaluated on Index 2 (2014 only).
Index 3: Closing Performance Gaps*	Index 3 Target: 30	Index 3 Target: Based on 5 <sup>th</sup> percentile of Index 3 outcomes based on the 2014 performance results across all AEA campuses. Targets for charter districts based on 5 <sup>th</sup> percentile of campus performance across all AEA campuses.
Index 4: Postsecondary Readiness	Index 4 Target (with bonus points): 45  Based on Graduation Score/Annual Dropout Rate	Index 4 Target (with bonus points): 33 (based on two components)  Based on two components: STAAR Final Level II and Graduation Score/Annual Dropout Rate  If both components, STAAR Final Level II and Graduation Score/Annual Dropout Rate, are not available for AEC campuses or charter districts, evaluate the Graduation Score/Annual Dropout Rate performance only and the Index 4 target (with bonus points) is 45.  If the Graduation Score/Annual Dropout Rate performance component is not available, do not evaluate Index 4.
	STAAR results not included	<b>STAAR Score:</b> STAAR Percent Met Final Level II on two or more subject-area tests for All Students and race/ethnicity student groups  Students tested on one subject area only must meet the Final Level II performance standard for that subject area. Similarly, students tested on two subject areas must meet the Final Level II performance standard for both subject areas.
	<b>Graduation Score:</b> Combined performance across graduation/dropout rates for ten student groups for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Grade 9-12 Four-Year Graduation and GED Rate;</li> <li>or</li> <li>o Grade 9-12 Five-Year Graduation and GED Rate;</li> <li>or</li> <li>o Grade 9-12 Six-Year Graduation and GED Rate, whichever contributes the most points to the index</li> </ul> Ten Student Groups: All students, each race/ethnicity (7 groups), Students with Disabilities, and ELL students	<b>Graduation Score:</b> Combined performance across graduation/dropout rates for ten student groups for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Grade 9-12 Four-Year Graduation, Continuers, and GED Rate; or</li> <li>o Grade 9-12 Five-Year Graduation Continuers, and GED Rate; or</li> <li>o Grade 9-12 Six-Year Graduation, Continuers, and GED Rate, whichever contributes the most points to the index.</li> </ul> No change

\* For Indexes 1 and 3, the same assessments and indicators are used for both non-AEA campuses and districts and AEA campuses and charter districts.

Comparison of 2013 and 2014 Performance Index Criteria and Indicators for AEA Charters and Campuses

	2013	2014
Index 4: Postsecondary Readiness (continued)	Weighting: Not applicable since STAAR results were not included.	Weighting: Apply the following weights if both components are available: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Graduation, Continuers, and GED Rate: 75%</li> <li>o STAAR Final Level II: 25%</li> </ul>
	Bonus Points for Graduation Plan: RHSP/DAP Graduates based on Annual Graduates for the 2011-12 school year	Bonus Points for Graduation Plan: RHSP/DAP Graduates based on Class of 2013 Four-Year Longitudinal Cohort (or annual RHSP/DAP graduates for the 2012-13 school year)
	Bonus Points for Continuing Students	Bonus points are not applied; continuing students are included in the graduation score component.
	Bonus Points for College-Ready Graduates: Not Included	Bonus Points for College-Ready Graduates: High school graduates from the 2012-13 school year who met the college-ready criteria on the TAKS exit-level test, SAT test, or ACT test in both ELA and mathematics.
	Bonus Points for Excluded Students: Graduates and GED recipients from four-year longitudinal cohort	Bonus Points for Excluded Students: Graduates, Continuers, and GED recipients from four-year longitudinal cohort
	Bonus Point Cap: 50	Bonus Point Cap: 30
	Substitute assessments not available	Substitute assessments for STAAR EOC tests included
	English Language Learners (ELLs): <b>English version:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Students in U.S. schools Year 1 excluded</li> <li>o Students in U.S. schools Years 2 - 4 excluded</li> <li>o Students in U.S. schools Years 5+ excluded</li> </ul> <b>Spanish version:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Students in U.S. schools Year 1 excluded</li> <li>o Students in U.S. schools Years 2 - 4 excluded</li> <li>o Students in U.S. schools Years 5+ excluded</li> </ul>	English Language Learners (ELLs): <b>English version:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o No change</li> <li>o No change</li> <li>o Students in U.S. schools Years 5+ included (final Level II)</li> </ul> <b>Spanish version:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o No change</li> <li>o Students in U.S. schools Years 2-4 included (final Level II)</li> <li>o Students in U.S. schools Years 5+ included (final Level II)</li> </ul>