

# Summary of Commissioner of Education Final Decisions Regarding 2015 State Accountability

Changes to the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) program in the 2014–15 school year will affect the 2015 state accountability system. This document summarizes those changes and presents the commissioner of education’s final decisions regarding the 2015 state accountability system. This information covers only the substantial differences in state accountability between 2014 and 2015. The 2015 state accountability system will be fully explained in the *2015 Accountability Manual*, scheduled for release in May.

## I. Changes to the STAAR Program in the 2014–15 School Year

### Assessments for Students Receiving Special Education Services

- STAAR A, an online accommodated version of the general STAAR, was available beginning in spring 2015.
- STAAR Alternate 2 (a redesign of the original STAAR Alternate) was administered for the first time in February 2015.

### New Performance Standards for Mathematics, Grades 3–8

Revised curriculum standards in mathematics for grades K–8 were adopted by the State Board of Education in April 2012 for implementation in the 2014–15 school year. New student performance standards for the corresponding STAAR assessments will be set in August 2015. In September 2015, districts will receive updated student confidential reports and test data files that indicate the student’s passing status based on new performance standards.

## 2. Assessments Evaluated in 2015 State Accountability

To accommodate these assessment changes, the following will apply to 2015 state accountability ratings and distinction designations:

- Results of STAAR assessments in mathematics for grades 3–8 will be excluded from all four indexes and distinction designations.
- Results of STAAR A and STAAR Alternate 2 assessments for all subjects and grade levels and EOC tests will be excluded from all four indexes and distinction designations.

The 2015 accountability ratings will be based on the results of the STAAR general assessments for the following subjects and courses:

- Reading, grades 3–8
- Writing, grades 4 and 7
- Science, grades 5 and 8
- Social Studies, grade 8
- English I
- English II
- Algebra I
- Biology
- U.S. History

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## 3. Performance Index Targets

The following two tables establish the 2015 performance targets for each index. For Index 1, the performance index target is increased by five percentage points from 2014. For Index 2, the performance target will be set in the same manner as in prior years. For Index 3 and Index 4, the performance targets are unchanged from 2014.

**Table 1: 2015 Performance Index Targets for Non-AEA Campuses and Districts**

	Index 1	Index 2*	Index 3	Index 4	
				All Components	STAAR Component Only
District Targets	60	5 <sup>th</sup> Percentile	28	57	13
Campus Targets (by campus type)					
Elementary	60	5 <sup>th</sup> Percentile	28	n/a	12
Middle	60	5 <sup>th</sup> Percentile	27	n/a	13
High School/K–12	60	5 <sup>th</sup> Percentile	31	57	21

\* Targets for non-AEA campuses are set at about the fifth percentile of non-AEA 2015 campus performance by campus type. Targets for non-AEA districts correspond to about the fifth percentile of non-AEA 2015 campus performance across all campus types.

**Table 2: 2015 Performance Index Targets for AEA Campuses and Districts**

	Index 1	Index 2*	Index 3	Index 4	
AEA				Both Components	Graduation/ Dropout Rate Component Only
Campus and Charter District Targets	35	5 <sup>th</sup> Percentile	11	33	45

\* Targets for both AEA campuses and charter districts correspond to approximately the fifth percentile of AEA campus performance in 2015.

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## 4. Ratings Criteria

For 2015 accountability, campuses and districts will be required to meet three indexes. To receive a *Met Standard* or *Met Alternative Standard* rating, a campus or district must meet the target on each index for which it has performance as shown below.

- Either Index 1 or Index 2
- Index 3
- Index 4

The combination of raising the performance target for Index 1 and requiring either Index 1 or Index 2 to be met along with Index 3 and Index 4 appropriately addresses the changes to the STAAR program in the 2014–15 school year. This decision is applicable to 2015 only and will be revisited for 2016 and beyond.

## 5. Performance Indexes

**Index 1: Student Achievement** shows the percentage of students—across all subjects and grades—who perform at the satisfactory performance standard.

### Inclusion of English Language Learners (ELLs)

As in 2014, for ELLs in their second through fourth year in U.S. schools who receive Bilingual/English as a Second Language services and do not take the STAAR assessment in Spanish, ELL progress measure results will continue to be used to calculate accountability ratings.

In 2015, STAAR results of ELLs enrolled in their second through fourth years in U.S. schools who do not receive Bilingual/English as a Second Language instructional services will be included in Index 1 at the phase-in I level II standard. Previously, these students were excluded from accountability because they did not have an ELL progress measure as a result of parental denials. The following table shows how these ELLs will be included in each index. The shaded cells indicate changes from 2014.

**Table 3: 2015 Inclusion of ELLs with Parental Denials for Services**

Years in U.S. schools	Index 1	Index 2	Index 3	Index 4
<b>First year</b>	<i>Not Included</i>	<i>Not Included</i>	<i>Not Included</i>	<i>Not Included</i>
<b>Second through fourth year</b>	STAAR Phase-in I Level II	STAAR Progress Measure	STAAR Phase-in I Level II and Level III	<i>Not Included</i>
<b>Fifth year and beyond</b>	STAAR Phase-in I Level II	STAAR Progress Measure	STAAR Phase-in I Level II and Level III	STAAR Final Level II

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**Index 2: Student Progress** measures each student's year-to-year improvement on STAAR assessments independent of the student's pass/fail status.

Because of the reduction in progress measures available in 2015 due to the introduction of new assessments, the calculation for Index 2 will be changed from a weighted score that measures student improvement in each subject or course individually to an aggregate weighted score. The new calculation for Index 2 will be one weighted performance rate that combines STAAR and ELL progress measures in reading, writing, and mathematics (Algebra I only for 2015). The percent met or exceeded progress and percent exceeded progress will be calculated from the combined results. This decision is applicable to 2015 only and will be revisited for 2016 and beyond.

Scores will continue to be weighted based on students' level of performance: one point for each percentage of assessment results that meet or exceed progress, and one additional point for each percentage of results that exceed progress.

Additionally, the ELL student group for Index 2 will be expanded to include both current ELLs and monitored ELLs in their first and second years of academic monitoring after exiting ELL status.

**Index 3: Closing Performance Gaps** measures the academic achievement of three specific student groups: economically disadvantaged and the two lowest-performing racial/ethnic groups from the previous year.

Except for those explained previously, there are no changes to the calculations or the students included in Index 3 for the 2015 accountability ratings.

**Index 4: Postsecondary Readiness** measures both high school students' preparedness for college, the workforce, job training programs, or the military and elementary and middle school students' preparedness for high school.

The postsecondary component of Index 4 will be expanded to include students who demonstrate postsecondary readiness through the following means:

- Completing and earning credit for at least two advanced/dual enrollment courses, or
- Enrolling in a career and technical education (CTE) coherent sequence of courses as part of a four-year plan of study to take two or more CTE courses for three or more credits.

For alternative education accountability (AEA) campuses and charter districts serving at-risk students in alternative education programs, these additional postsecondary indicators will be added to the indicators that generate bonus points for Index 4.

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## 6. Distinction Designations

Based on indicators of student performance, distinction designations are awarded to campuses for outstanding achievement in specific areas compared to forty other campuses most similar in grade levels served, size, the percentage of students who are economically disadvantaged, mobility rate, and the percentage of English language learners.

The following changes will be made to distinction designations:

- *Algebra I by Grade 8–Participation* will be redefined as the percent of current year 8<sup>th</sup> grade students based on fall enrollment who have taken Algebra I in either the current or any prior school year based on the Consolidated Accountability File (CAF), cumulative history section.
- *Algebra I by Grade 8–Performance (Level III)* will be redefined as *Algebra I–Performance (Level III)*, making the distinction available for high schools.
- The advanced course/dual credit enrollment completion indicator will include only those students enrolled in grades 11 and 12.
- The advanced course/dual credit enrollment completion indicator will include completion by subject for English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies.
- The reading/English language arts and mathematics academic achievement distinction designations will now include performance at the advanced level III standard for all grades and subjects tested, including high school courses for which end-of-course assessments are given.

Results of STAAR assessments in mathematics for grades 3–8 and results of STAAR A and STAAR Alternate 2 assessments for all subjects and grade levels and EOC tests will be excluded from the 2015 distinction designations.