

Chapter 5 – Distinction Designations

Distinction designations are awarded in recognition of outstanding achievement in academic areas in addition to those evaluated under state accountability. Campus distinctions are based on indicators of student performance in comparison to 40 similar campuses (Texas Education Code [TEC] §§39.201–203).

Distinction Designations

For 2015, distinction designations are awarded in the following areas:

- Academic Achievement in English Language Arts/Reading (campus only)
- Academic Achievement in Mathematics (campus only)
- Academic Achievement in Science (campus only)
- Academic Achievement in Social Studies (campus only)
- Top 25 Percent: Student Progress (campus only)
- Top 25 Percent: Closing Performance Gaps (campus only)
- Postsecondary Readiness (district and campus)

Distinction Designation Labels

Reports for districts and campuses show one of the following labels for each distinction designation.

Distinction Earned. The campus or district is rated *Met Standard* and meets the criteria for the distinction designation.

No Distinction Earned. The campus or district does not meet the distinction designation criteria or is rated *Improvement Required*. (Those that are later granted a rating of *Met Standard* on appeal are eligible to be evaluated and may earn distinctions.)

Not Eligible. The campus or district does not have results to evaluate for the distinction designation, is labeled *Not Rated* or *Not Rated: Data Integrity Issues*, is evaluated by alternative education accountability (AEA) provisions, or is a campus paired with a feeder campus for accountability evaluation.

Campus Comparison Groups

Each campus is assigned to a unique comparison group comprised of Texas schools that are most similar to it. To determine the campus comparison group, each campus is identified by school type (See the *School Types* chart in *Chapter 2* for more information.) then grouped with forty other campuses from anywhere in Texas that are most similar in grade levels served, size, the percentage of students who are economically disadvantaged, mobility rate, and the percentage of English language learners. Each campus has only one campus comparison group, and each campus in a comparison group has its own unique comparison group. There is no limit to the number of comparison groups to which a school may be a member. It is possible for a school to be a member of no comparison group other than its own, or a member of a number of comparison groups within a particular school type.

All distinction designations for a campus are based on performance that is in the top quartile (Q1) of its comparison group.

- For an indicator to be evaluated for the distinction designations, there must be at least 20 campuses in the campus comparison group for that indicator. If fewer than 20 campuses in the comparison group have an indicator, that indicator cannot be used to earn the distinction. This may affect schools with non-traditional grade spans.
- Because schools do not have access to performance data of other schools until the accountability data tables are released on August 7, a school cannot see where it is placed within its comparison group. Therefore, campuses will not know if it has earned a distinction until the ratings are released.

For details on how campus comparison groups are determined, see *Appendix H – Campus Comparison Groups*.

Academic Achievement in English Language Arts/reading

An Academic Achievement Distinction Designation (AADD) is awarded to campuses for outstanding achievement in English language arts/reading based on outcomes of various performance indicators in the top 25 percent of its CAMPUS COMPARISON GROUP.

Who is eligible: Campuses assigned a *Met Standard* rating.

Student Groups: Performance is evaluated for the *All Students* group only.

Minimum Size: Minimum size is determined separately for each indicator.

- **Attendance Rate.** Minimum size is based on total days in membership. If there are fewer than 1,800 total days in membership (e.g., 10 students x 180 school days) attendance cannot be evaluated for this distinction.
- **Assessments (STAAR, AP/IB, SAT, and/or ACT).** Minimum size is 10 students for each assessment. If there are fewer than 10 test takers for an assessment, that indicator cannot be evaluated for this distinction.
- **Participation**
 - **AP/IB: ELA.** Minimum size is 10 students enrolled in grades 11 and 12.
 - **Advanced/Dual Enrollment Course Completion: Reading/ELA.** Minimum size is 10 students in grades 11 and 12 who completed at least one course.
 - **SAT/ACT Participation.** Minimum size is 10 reported annual graduates.

Indicators:

AADD Reading/ELA Indicators	High School	Middle School / Junior High	Elementary	K–12
1) Attendance rate	✓	✓	✓	✓
2) Greater Than Expected Student Growth in Reading/ELA	✓	✓	✓	✓
3) Grade 3 Reading Performance (Level III)			✓	✓
4) Grade 4 Reading Performance (Level III) <i>NEW</i>			✓	✓
5) Grade 4 Writing Performance (Level III)			✓	✓
6) Grade 5 Reading Performance (Level III) <i>NEW</i>			✓	✓
7) Grade 6 Reading Performance (Level III) <i>NEW</i>		✓		✓
8) Grade 7 Reading Performance (Level III) <i>NEW</i>		✓		✓
9) Grade 7 Writing Performance (Level III)		✓		✓
10) Grade 8 Reading Performance (Level III)		✓		✓

11) English I Performance (Level III) <i>NEW</i>	✓			✓
12) English II Performance (Level III) <i>NEW</i>	✓			✓
13) AP/IB Examination Participation: ELA	✓			✓
14) AP/IB Examination Performance: ELA	✓			✓
15) SAT/ACT Participation	✓			✓
16) SAT Performance: Reading and Writing	✓			✓
17) ACT Performance: ELA	✓			✓
18) Advanced/Dual Enrollment Course Completion Rate: Reading/ELA <i>NEW</i>	✓			✓
Total Reading/ELA Indicators	10	6	6	18

Methodology:

Step 1: Performance on each indicator that applies to the campus is determined.

Step 2: Performance for each indicator within the campus comparison group is determined.

Step 3: Determine if the campus is in the top 25 percent of its campus comparison group:

- High schools and combined elementary/secondary schools (K–12) must be in the top quartile (Q1) for 33 percent or more of their total eligible indicators.
- Middle schools, junior high schools, and elementary schools must be in the top quartile for 50 percent or more of their total eligible indicators.

The methodology, date, and source for each indicator are described in *Appendix K – Data Sources*.

Other Information:

- *Additional Grade Level and End-of-Course (EOC) Assessments.* Beginning in 2015, six additional assessments have been added to the list of eligible indicators for the AADD in ELA/reading:
 - Grade 4 Reading Performance (Level III)
 - Grade 5 Reading Performance (Level III)
 - Grade 6 Reading Performance (Level III)
 - Grade 7 Reading Performance (Level III)
 - English I Performance (Level III)
 - English II Performance (Level III)
- *Advanced/Dual Enrollment Course Completion: Reading/ELA.* Beginning in 2015, the Advanced/Dual Enrollment Course Completion rate for Reading/ELA for students enrolled in grades 11 and 12 has been added to the list of eligible indicators for the AADD in Reading/ELA.
- *Assessments.* A complete list of AP and IB assessments used in determining this distinction is available in *Appendix K – Data Sources*.
- *Attendance Rate.* This is based on student attendance for the entire school year for students in grades 1–12. The Attendance Rate indicator applies to all four subject areas of the AADDs. Consequently, this indicator cannot be the sole measure used by a campus to attain an AADD.

Example: Colonial High School is fictional, but typical of Texas high schools with varied performance on the ten indicators for this distinction. To determine whether it has earned the distinction, its performance is compared to its unique Campus Comparison Group—made up of itself and 40 other schools—for each of the 10 indicators. It must be in the top quartile (Q1) for at least 33% of the indicators for the AADD in Reading/ELA.

Step 1	Determine Colonial HS performance on its 10 indicators	Attendance rate	Greater Than Expected Growth	English I Performance	English II Performance	AP/IB ELA Performance	AP/IB ELA Participation	SAT/ACT Participation	Average SAT Performance in Reading and Writing	Average ACT Performance in ELA	Advanced/ Dual Enrollment Course Completion
		93.3%	2%	8%	9%	72%	48.9%	90%	1079	23.5	18.5%
Step 2	Compare performance to campuses in Colonial HS Comparison Group.						Q1	Q1	Q1		Q1
				Q3	Q3	Q2				Q2	
		Q4	Q4								
Step 3	Is performance in the top quartile?	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Result:	Performance on 4 of 10 indicators is in Q1, which is greater than 33% of indicators; therefore, the AADD in Reading/ELA is earned.										

Academic Achievement in Mathematics

An AADD is awarded to campuses for outstanding achievement in mathematics based on outcomes of various performance indicators in the top 25 percent of its campus comparison group.

Who is eligible: Campuses assigned a *Met Standard* rating.

Student Groups: Performance is evaluated for the *All Students* group only.

Minimum Size: Minimum size is determined separately for each indicator:

- **Attendance Rate.** Minimum size is based on total days in membership. If there are fewer than 1,800 total days in membership (e.g., 10 students x 180 school days) attendance cannot be evaluated for this distinction.
- **Assessments (STAAR, AP/IB, SAT, and/or ACT).** Minimum size is 10 students for each assessment. If there are fewer than 10 test takers for an assessment, that indicator cannot be evaluated for this distinction.
- **Participation**
 - **AP/IB: Mathematics.** Minimum size is 10 students enrolled in grades 11 and 12.
 - **Advanced/Dual Enrollment Course Completion: Mathematics.** Minimum size is 10 students in grades 11 and 12 who completed at least one course.
 - **Algebra I by Grade 8 Participation.** Minimum size is 10 students enrolled in grade 8.
 - **SAT/ACT Participation.** Minimum size is 10 reported annual graduates.

Indicators:

AADD Mathematics Indicators	High School	Middle School / Junior High	Elementary	K–12
1) Attendance rate	✓	✓	✓	✓
2) Greater Than Expected Student Growth in Mathematics (Algebra I only)	✓	✓		✓
3) Algebra I by Grade 8 Participation		✓		✓
4) Algebra I Performance (Level III)	✓	✓		✓
5) AP/IB Examination Participation: Mathematics	✓			✓
6) AP/IB Examination Performance: Mathematics	✓			✓
7) SAT/ACT Participation	✓			✓
8) SAT Performance: Mathematics	✓			✓
9) ACT Performance: Mathematics	✓			✓
10) Advanced/Dual Enrollment Course Completion Rate: Mathematics <i>NEW</i>	✓			✓
Total Mathematics Indicators	9	4	N/A	10

Methodology: This distinction is determined as follows:

Step 1: Performance on each indicator that applies to the school is determined.

Step 2: Performance for each indicator within the campus comparison group is determined.

Step 3: Determine if the campus is in the top 25 percent of its campus comparison group:

- High schools and combined elementary/secondary schools (K–12) must be in the top quartile for 33 percent or more of their total eligible indicators.
- Middle schools, junior high schools, and elementary schools must be in the top quartile for 50 percent or more of their total eligible indicators.

The methodology, date, and source for each indicator are described in *Appendix K – Data Sources*.

Other Information:

- *Exclusion of Grade 3–8 Mathematics.* Due to the exclusion of grade 3–8 mathematics from state accountability for 2015, the Grade 5 Mathematics Performance (Level III) indicator is not available for the AADD in mathematics for 2015.
- *Algebra I by Grade 8 Participation.* Beginning in 2015, the Algebra I by Grade 8 Participation indicator limits the denominator to 8th grade students based on 2014 PEIMS fall enrollment, using Algebra I tests taken in either the current or any prior school year as reported on the Consolidated Accountability File (CAF), cumulative history section.
- *Advanced/Dual Enrollment Course Completion: Mathematics.* Beginning in 2015, the Advanced/Dual Enrollment Course Completion rate for mathematics for students enrolled in grades 11 and 12 has been added to the list of available indicators for the AADD in Mathematics.
- *Assessments.* A complete list of AP and IB assessments used in determining this distinction is available in *Appendix K – Data Sources*.

- **Attendance Rate.** This is based on student attendance for the entire school year for students in grades 1–12. The Attendance Rate indicator applies to all four subject areas of the AADDs. Consequently, this indicator cannot be the sole measure used by a campus to attain an AADD.

Academic Achievement in Science

An AADD is awarded to campuses for outstanding achievement in science based on outcomes of various performance indicators in the top 25 percent of its campus comparison group.

Who is eligible: Campuses assigned a *Met Standard* rating.

Student Groups: Performance is evaluated for the *All Students* group only.

Minimum Size: Minimum size is determined separately for each indicator:

- **Attendance Rate.** Minimum size is based on total days in membership. If there are fewer than 1,800 total days in membership (e.g., 10 students x 180 school days) attendance cannot be evaluated for this distinction.
- **Assessments (STAAR, AP/IB, and/or ACT).** Minimum size is 10 students for each assessment. If there are fewer than 10 test takers for an assessment, that indicator cannot be evaluated for this distinction.
- **Participation**
 - **AP/IB: Science.** Minimum size is 10 students enrolled in grades 11 and 12.
 - **Advanced/Dual Enrollment Course Completion: Science.** Minimum size is 10 students in grades 11 and 12 who completed at least one course.

Indicators:

AADD Science Indicators	High School	Middle School / Junior High	Elementary	K–12
1) Attendance rate	✓	✓	✓	✓
2) Grade 5 Science Performance (Level III)			✓	✓
3) Grade 8 Science Performance (Level III)		✓		✓
4) EOC Biology Performance (Level III)	✓			✓
5) ACT Performance: Science	✓			✓
6) AP/IB Examination Participation: Science	✓			✓
7) AP/IB Examination Performance: Science	✓			✓
8) Advanced/Dual Enrollment Course Completion Rate: Science <i>NEW</i>	✓			✓
Total Science Indicators	6	2	2	8

Methodology:

Step 1: Performance on each indicator that applies to the school is determined.

Step 2: Performance for each indicator within the campus comparison group is determined.

Step 3: Determine if the campus is in the top 25 percent of its campus comparison group:

- High schools and combined elementary/secondary schools (K–12) must be in the top quartile for 33 percent or more of their total eligible indicators.

- Middle schools, junior high schools, and elementary schools must be in the top quartile for 50 percent or more of their total eligible indicators.

The methodology, dates, and sources are described in *Appendix K – Data Sources*.

Other Information:

- *Advanced/Dual Enrollment Course Completion: Science*. Beginning in 2015, the Advanced/Dual Enrollment Course Completion rate for science for students enrolled in grades 11 and 12 has been added to the list of available indicators for the AADD in Science.
- *Assessments*. A complete list of AP and IB assessments used in determining this distinction is available in *Appendix K – Data Sources*.
- *Attendance Rate*. This is based on student attendance for the entire school year for students in grades 1–12. The Attendance Rate indicator applies to all four subject areas of the AADDs. Consequently, this indicator cannot be the sole measure used by a campus to attain an AADD.

Academic Achievement in Social Studies

An AADD is awarded to campuses for outstanding achievement in social studies based on various outcomes of performance indicators in the top quartile of its campus comparison group.

Who is eligible: Campuses assigned a *Met Standard* rating.

Student Groups: Performance is evaluated for the *All Students* group only.

Minimum Size: Minimum size is determined separately for each indicator:

- *Attendance Rate*. Minimum size is based on total days in membership. If there are fewer than 1,800 total days in membership (e.g., 10 students x 180 school days) attendance cannot be evaluated for this distinction.
- *Assessments (STAAR and/or AP/IB)*. Minimum size is 10 students for each assessment. If there are fewer than 10 test takers for an assessment, that indicator cannot be evaluated for this distinction.
- *Participation*
 - *AP/IB: Social Studies*. Minimum size is 10 students enrolled in grades 11 and 12.
 - *Advanced/Dual Enrollment Course Completion: Social Studies*. Minimum size is 10 students in grades 11 and 12 who completed at least one course.

Indicators:

AADD Social Studies Indicators	High School	Middle School / Junior High	Elementary	K–12
1) Attendance rate	✓	✓	✓	✓
2) Grade 8 Social Studies Performance (Level III)		✓		✓
3) EOC U.S. History Performance (Level III)	✓			✓
4) AP/IB Examination Participation: Social Studies	✓			✓
5) AP/IB Examination Performance: Social Studies	✓			✓
6) Advanced/Dual Enrollment Course Completion Rate: Social Studies <i>NEW</i>	✓			✓
Total Social Studies Indicators	5	2	N/A	6

Methodology:

Step 1: Performance on each indicator that applies to the school is determined.

Step 2: Performance for each indicator within the campus comparison group is determined.

Step 3: Determine if the campus is in the top 25 percent of its campus comparison group:

- High schools and combined elementary/secondary schools (K–12) must be in the top quartile for 33 percent or more of their total eligible indicators.
- Middle schools/junior high schools must be in the top quartile for 50 percent or more of their total eligible indicators.

The methodology, date, and source for each indicator are described in *Appendix K – Data Sources*.

Other Information:

- *Advanced/Dual Enrollment Course Completion: Social Studies*. Beginning in 2015, the Advanced/Dual Enrollment Course Completion rate for social studies for students enrolled in grades 11 and 12 has been added to the list of eligible indicators for the AADD in Social Studies.
- *Assessments*. A complete list of AP and IB assessments used in determining this distinction is available in *Appendix K – Data Sources*.
- *Attendance Rate*. This is based on student attendance for the entire school year for students in grades 1–12. The Attendance Rate indicator applies to all four subject areas of the AADDs. Consequently, this indicator cannot be the sole measure used by a campus to attain an AADD.

Top 25 Percent: Student Progress

A distinction designation is awarded to a campus for outstanding student progress if it is ranked in the top 25 percent (Q1) of campuses in its campus comparison group for Index 2.

Who is eligible: Campuses that are evaluated for Index 2 and received a *Met Standard* rating.

Methodology: Campuses are assigned a numeric value for Index 2. Those values are arranged in descending order for the campuses in the campus comparison group. If the Index 2 value for a campus is within the top quartile for its comparison group, it receives a distinction for student progress.

For more information on Index 2, see *Chapters 3 and 4*.

Top 25 Percent: Closing Performance Gaps

A distinction designation is awarded to a campus for outstanding performance in closing student achievement gaps if it is ranked in the top 25 percent (Q1) of campuses in its campus comparison group for Index 3.

Who is eligible: Campuses that are evaluated for Index 3 and receive a *Met Standard* rating.

Methodology: Campuses are assigned a numeric value for Index 3. Those values are arranged in descending order for the campuses in the campus comparison group. If the Index 3 value for a campus is within the top quartile for its comparison group, it receives a distinction for Closing Performance Gaps. For more information on Index 3, see *Chapters 3 and 4*.

Postsecondary Readiness

A distinction designation is awarded to districts and campuses for outstanding academic performance in attainment of postsecondary readiness. Elementary and middle schools must show performance in the top 25 percent of similar schools in their campus comparison group. High schools and K–12 campuses must have at least 33 percent of the indicators in the top quartile. Districts must have at least 70 percent of its campus-level indicators in the top quartile.

Who is eligible: Districts and campuses that receive a *Met Standard* rating, except for districts or charters comprised of only one campus that share the same 2015 performance data as the campus. For these single-campus districts and charters, the campus is eligible to earn the campus postsecondary readiness distinction designation; however, the district or charter is *not* eligible to earn the district postsecondary readiness distinction designation.

Student Groups: Indicators 1–9 use the *All Students* group only. Values used for indicators 1–3 are determined through the calculations for Index 4.

Minimum Size: Indicators 4–9 must have a minimum size of 10 in the denominator. Values used for indicators 1–3 are determined through the calculations for Index 4. See those descriptions for information on minimum size.

Indicators for campuses:

Postsecondary-Readiness Indicators	High School	Middle School / Junior High	Elementary	K–12
1) Index 4 - Percent at STAAR Postsecondary Readiness Standard	✓	✓	✓	✓
2) Four-Year Longitudinal Graduation Rate	✓			✓
3) Four-Year Longitudinal RHSP/DAP Rate	✓			✓
4) College-Ready Graduates	✓			✓
5) Advanced/Dual Enrollment Course Completion Rate: Any Subject	✓			✓
6) SAT/ACT Participation	✓			✓
7) SAT/ACT Performance	✓			✓
8) AP/IB Examination Performance: Any Subject	✓			✓
9) CTE-Coherent Sequence Graduates	✓			✓
Total	9	1	1	9

Methodology:

Elementary and Middle Schools: Campuses are assigned a numeric value for the STAAR Postsecondary Readiness Standard component of Index 4. Those values are arranged in descending order for the campuses in the campus comparison group. If the STAAR performance for a campus is within the top quartile for its comparison group, it receives a distinction for postsecondary readiness.

High Schools: High schools in the top quartile on at least 33 percent of their eligible measures receive the postsecondary readiness distinction designation.

Districts: A district must have at least 70 percent of its campus-level postsecondary indicators in the top quartile (Q1). See the following example.

Districts with less than five campus-level postsecondary indicators are not eligible for the postsecondary readiness distinction.

Other Information:

- *CTE-Coherent Sequence Graduates.* New for 2015, the CTE-Coherent Sequence Graduates indicator measures the percent of 2013–14 annual graduates who enrolled in and completed a four-year plan of study to take two or more CTE course for 3 or more credits. The CTE-Coherent Sequence designation is derived from the summer 2014 PEIMS submission. For more information, see *Appendix K – Data Sources*.
- *Advanced/Dual Enrollment Course Completion.* Beginning in 2015, the Advanced/Dual Enrollment Course Completion rate includes only students enrolled in grades 11 and 12. A list of advanced courses is available in *Appendix K – Data Sources*.
- *Index 4 Construction.* For details on the components for indicators that make up Index 4, see *chapters 3 and 4*.
- *Methodology:* A complete description of the methodology and data sources used in determining each of the indicators in the table above is in *Appendix K – Data Sources*.

<i>Example:</i> Beta High School is fictional, but typical of Texas high schools with varied performance on the nine indicators for this distinction. To determine whether it has earned the distinction, its performance is compared to its unique campus comparison group—made up of itself and 40 other schools—for each of the nine indicators. It must be in the top quartile (Q1) for at least 33% of the indicators for the Postsecondary Readiness Distinction Designation.										
Step 1	Determine Beta HS performance on its nine indicators.	STAAR Post secondary Readiness Standard 47%*	Graduation Rate 87.7%*	RHSP/DAP Rate 85.9%*	College-Ready Graduates 85%	Advanced/Dual Enrollment Courses 60.9%	SAT/ACT Participation 94.4%	SAT/ACT Met Criterion 49.6%	AP/IB Met Criterion 61.3%	CTE-Coherent Sequence Graduates 28%
Step 2	Compare performance to campuses in Beta HS Comparison Group.			Q1	Q1	Q1	Q1			
		Q2	Q2					Q2		
								Q3		
										Q4
Step 3	Is performance in the top quartile?	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
Result		Performance on 4 of 9 indicators is in Q1, which is greater than 33% of indicators; therefore, the Postsecondary Readiness Distinction Designation is earned.								
* This is the same value as is used for determining Index 4.										

<i>Example:</i> A sample district has 12 campuses. Each campus has either 1 or 9 possible indicators for this distinction.			
School	Grade span	Postsecondary Indicators in top quartile for this school	Maximum Possible Postsecondary Indicators
High School A	9–12	6	9
High School B	9–12	6	9
Middle School C	6–8	0	1
Middle School D	6–8	0	1
Middle School E	6–8	1	1
Middle School F	6–8	1	1
Elementary G	PK–5	1	1
Elementary H	PK–5	1	1

Elementary I	PK-5	1	1
Elementary J	PK-5	1	1
Elementary K	PK-5	0	1
Elementary L	PK-5	1	1
Total		19	28
Result:	Performance on 19 of 28 indicators is in Q1, or 68%, which is less than the 70% standard. The Postsecondary Readiness Distinction Designation is not earned.		

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