

## Chapter 8 – System Safeguards and Other Federal Requirements

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Two separate system safeguard reports are provided to school districts for the 2015 accountability results:

- State system safeguards aligned with 2015 state accountability Index 1 results
- Federal system safeguards aligned with 2015 federal assessment and accountability requirements

As announced by the commissioner of education on April 8, 2015, the 2015 state accountability ratings and distinction designations **exclude** the results of STAAR A and STAAR Alternate 2 for all subjects and grade levels and all STAAR assessments in mathematics, grades 3–8. The state system safeguard performance and participation measures are based on the 2015 state accountability Index 1 results and, therefore, also exclude these assessments. The system safeguard reports for state accountability are planned for release by August 7, 2015.

Assessment results that are used to meet federal accountability requirements must be based on performance and participation data that **include** the results of STAAR A and STAAR Alternate 2 for all subjects and grade levels and all STAAR assessments in mathematics, grades 3–8. The student performance standards for grades 3–8 mathematics that will be set by the commissioner of education in summer 2015 will be applied to the federal accountability performance rate calculations. For this reason, separate system safeguard reports aligned with 2015 federal assessment and accountability requirements are planned for release in late fall 2015.

### Background

The *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (NCLB) (P.L. 107–110), reauthorized and amended federal programs established under the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965* (ESEA). Under NCLB, accountability provisions that formerly applied only to districts and campuses receiving Title I, Part A funds were expanded to all districts and campuses which were evaluated annually for Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) from the 2002–03 through the 2011–12 school years.

On September 30, 2013, the U.S. Secretary of Education approved the request of the Texas Education Agency (TEA) to waive specific provisions of the ESEA. The U.S. Department of Education (USDE) waived the 2012–13 and 2013–14 AYP calculations, allowing the state's existing systems of interventions to guide the support and improvement of schools. The following year, TEA requested a one-year extension of USDE's approval to implement ESEA flexibility through the end of the 2014–15 school year. On September 19, 2014, the USDE approved the extension request with conditions related to the state's teacher and principal evaluation and support systems.

Under the approved waiver, campuses are identified as either Priority or Focus schools and must engage in the Texas Accountability Intervention System (TAIS) which is aligned with ESEA principles for school improvement. The conditional approval for school year 2014–15 allows Texas to meet the federal accountability requirements that must include STAAR A and STAAR Alternate 2 for all subjects and grade levels and all STAAR assessments in

mathematics, grades 3–8 based on the student passing standard that will be set by the commissioner of education in summer 2015.

## State Accountability System Safeguards

The disaggregated performance results of the state accountability system serve as the basis of safeguards for the accountability rating system to ensure that poor performance in one subject area or one student group is not masked in the performance index. The state accountability system safeguard data are released in conjunction with the state accountability ratings.

On August 7, 2015, the state accountability ratings, distinction designations, and system safeguard reports, will be released on the TEA website. These reports provide disaggregated results with the percent of measures and targets met. For 2015, the disaggregated performance measures and safeguard targets are calculated for three components (performance rates, participation rates, and graduation rates) for eleven student groups: All Students, African American, American Indian, Asian, Hispanic, Pacific Islander, White, and Two or More Races; Economically Disadvantaged, Students with Disabilities, and English language learners (ELLs). The ELL student group includes both ELL students currently identified as limited English proficient (LEP) and ELL students who have met the criteria for exiting bilingual or English as a Second Language (ESL) programs. These students are no longer classified as LEP for Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) reporting and are in the first or second year of monitoring. District- and campus-level system safeguard results will be reported for any student group that meets minimum size criteria.

### State Performance Targets

Performance rates calculated for system safeguards for state accountability are the same disaggregated results used for Index 1 in reading, mathematics (Algebra I only in 2015), writing, science, and social studies. The performance target for the 2015 system safeguard measures correspond to the target of 60 on Index 1: Student Achievement.

### State Participation Targets

Test participation rates are included in the system safeguards reports for state accountability, with targets aligned to federal requirements. The target of 95 percent is unchanged from the federal accountability target in place in prior years. Participation measures are based on all students enrolled at the time of testing and defined as the total number of test answer documents submitted by each school district (denominator of the participation rate). The calculation is not limited to students enrolled for the full academic year. Test answer documents that are coded *Absent* or *Other* are not counted as participants and are therefore not included in calculating the participation numerator.

State reading and mathematics participation rates exclude STAAR A and STAAR Alternate 2 for all subjects and grade levels and all STAAR assessments in mathematics, grades 3–8. Therefore, the state participation results for mathematics are based on STAAR EOC Algebra I tests only.

### Limits on Use of Alternative Assessments Not Applied

Due to the exclusion of STAAR Alternate 2 for all subjects and grade levels, including EOCs, school district limits on the use of alternate assessments are not applicable to 2015 state system safeguard reports.

## Graduation Rate Goals and Targets

Texas is required by state statute to use the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) dropout definition and the federal calculation for graduation rate.

*Goal:* The long term statewide goal for the four-year graduation rate is 90.0 percent. High schools and school districts that do not meet this goal must meet either 1) an annual target or a growth target for the four-year graduation rate or 2) an annual target for the five-year graduation rate.

*Four-Year Graduation Rate Annual Target:* For 2015, the annual target is 83.0 percent of students graduate with a regular high school diploma in four years.

*Four-Year Graduation Rate Growth Target:* The growth target is a 10.0 percent decrease in the difference between prior year graduation rate and the 90.0 percent goal.

*Five-Year Graduation Rate Annual Target:* For 2015, the annual target is 88.0 percent of students graduate with a regular high school diploma in five years.

## State Minimum Size Requirements

The minimum size criteria applied to state system safeguards are aligned to the performance indexes to the greatest extent possible. A comparison of state and federal system safeguard minimum size criteria is provided at the end of this chapter.

The table below provides the 2015 performance targets that are used for the state system safeguard reports.

<b>State Accountability System Safeguard Measures and Targets (aligned with Index 1 performance results and targets)</b>											
	All	African Amer.	Hispanic	White	Amer. Indian	Asian	Pacific Islander	Two or More Races	Econ. Disadv.	Special Ed	ELLs*
<b>Performance Rate Targets - State</b>											
Reading	60%	60%	60%	60%	60%	60%	60%	60%	60%	60%	60%
Mathematics (Alg I only)	60%	60%	60%	60%	60%	60%	60%	60%	60%	60%	60%
Writing	60%	60%	60%	60%	60%	60%	60%	60%	60%	60%	60%
Science	60%	60%	60%	60%	60%	60%	60%	60%	60%	60%	60%
Social Studies	60%	60%	60%	60%	60%	60%	60%	60%	60%	60%	60%
<b>Participation Rates</b>											
Reading	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%
Mathematics	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%
<b>Federal Graduation Rates **</b>											
4-year	83.0%	83.0%	83.0%	83.0%	83.0%	83.0%	83.0%	83.0%	83.0%	83.0%	83.0%
5-year	88.0%	88.0%	88.0%	88.0%	88.0%	88.0%	88.0%	88.0%	88.0%	88.0%	88.0%
<b>District Limits on Use of Alternative Assessment Results <i>Not Applicable for 2015</i></b>											
Reading-STAAR Alt 2	n/a	Not Applicable									
Mathematics-STAAR Alt 2	n/a	Not Applicable									

\* Both current and monitored ELLs are included in the performance rates, current ELLs only are included in the participation rates, and EVER ELLs in high school are included in the federal graduation rates.

\*\* Federal graduation rate targets are applied to state system safeguards and include an improvement target.

## Consequences and Interventions

Interventions pertain to activities that result from the issuance of ratings under the state accountability system. State accountability-related interventions require engaging in the continuous improvement process within the Texas Accountability Intervention System (TAIS). Intervention activities reflect an emphasis on increased student performance, targeted improvement planning, data analysis, needs assessment, and data integrity. Required levels of intervention are determined based on the requirements of the Texas Education Code (TEC), Chapter 39. See the Division of Program Monitoring and Interventions website at <http://tea.texas.gov/pmi/> for more information.

Failure to meet the state accountability safeguard target for any reported cell will be addressed through the TAIS continuous improvement process. If the campus or district is already identified for assistance or intervention in the 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. If the campus or district received a rating of *Met Standard*, performance on the safeguard indicators will be addressed through intervention activities in TEC Chapter 11 improvement plans. The level of intervention and support the campus or district receives is based on performance history as well as current-year state accountability rating and performance on the safeguard measures.

## Federal Accountability Requirements

To meet federal requirements, disaggregated performance measures with annual measureable objectives (AMOs) must be reported. For 2015, the federal accountability disaggregated safeguard measures include four components: performance rates, participation rates, graduation rates, and limits on the use of alternative assessments. The federal system safeguards require reporting the results of performance rates, participation rates, and graduation rates for seven student groups: All Students, African American, Hispanic, and White; Economically Disadvantaged, Students with Disabilities, and English language learners (ELLs) that includes both ELL students currently identified as LEP and ELL students in the first or second year of monitoring.

The 2015 federal performance and participation rates must include STAAR A, STAAR Alternate 2, and STAAR assessments in mathematics, grades 3–8, based on the student passing standard that will be set by the commissioner of education in summer 2015. The 2015 federal system safeguard report is planned for release in late fall 2015 following the release of STAAR grades 3–8 mathematics performance results.

The federal targets or AMOs are outlined in the final waiver request approved by the U.S. Department of Education. Targets for participation rates and graduation rates, and limits on use of STAAR Alternate 2 are aligned to federal requirements. District- and campus-level system safeguard results will be reported for any student group that meets minimum size criteria.

The table below provides the 2015 performance targets that are used for the federal system safeguard reports.

<b>Federal Accountability System Safeguard Measures and Targets (aligned with federal AMO targets required by the ESEA waiver)</b>											
	All	African Amer.	Hispanic	White	Amer. Indian	Asian	Pacific Islander	Two or More Races	Econ. Disadv.	Special Ed	ELLs*
<b>Performance Rate Targets – Federal</b>											
Reading	83%	83%	83%	83%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	83%	83%	83%
Mathematics	83%	83%	83%	83%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	83%	83%	83%
<b>Participation Rates</b>											
Reading	95%	95%	95%	95%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	95%	95%	95%
Mathematics	95%	95%	95%	95%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	95%	95%	95%
<b>Federal Graduation Rates **</b>											
4-year	83.0%	83.0%	83.0%	83.0%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	83.0%	83.0%	83.0%
5-year	88.0%	88.0%	88.0%	88.0%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	88.0%	88.0%	88.0%
<b>District Limits on Use of Alternative Assessment Results</b>											
Reading-STAAR Alt 2	1%	Not Applicable									
Mathematics-STAAR Alt 2	1%	Not Applicable									

\* Both current and monitored ELLs are included in the performance rates, current ELLs only are included in the participation rates, and EVER ELLs in high school are included in the federal graduation rates.

\*\* Federal graduation rate targets include an improvement target.

In addition to meeting the federal accountability requirements of the ESEA waiver, the federal system safeguard results are used in the district evaluations for Title III Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives (AMAOs), USDE Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) State Performance Plan (SPP), and State Annual Performance Report (APR). These results must also be submitted to the USDE via *EDFacts* to meet federal reporting requirements.

### Federal Performance Targets

The federally-approved target of 83 percent is applied to reading and mathematics performance results which include STAAR A and STAAR Alternate 2 for all subjects and grade levels and all STAAR assessments in mathematics, grades 3–8. The student performance standards for grades 3–8 mathematics that will be set by the commissioner of education in summer 2015 will be applied to the federal accountability performance rate calculations. As described in the waiver, the federal target must reflect an increase from the 2014 performance target of 79 percent.

*STAAR A:* The STAAR A tests that are included in the performance results for the special education student group are for students receiving special education services only. The STAAR A performance results for students who are not receiving special education services are not included in the special education student group.

### Federal Participation Targets

Federal reading and mathematics participation rates include STAAR A and STAAR Alternate 2 for all subjects and grade levels and all STAAR assessments in mathematics, grades 3–8. Test participation rates are calculated in the same manner as the state system

safeguards participation rates. The calculation is not limited to students enrolled for the full academic year, and test answer documents that are coded *Absent* or *Other* are not counted as participants.

*STAAR Alternate 2*: Students who meet the eligibility criteria for STAAR Alternate 2 may not be required to take the STAAR Alternate 2 based on documented decisions in the student's individualized education program (IEP) by his/her admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committee. There are two reasons an ARD committee could determine that the STAAR Alternate 2 will not be administered to the student:

- No Authentic Academic Response (NAAR)
- Medical Exception

Detailed information about the participation requirements for STAAR Alternate 2 are available at <http://tea.texas.gov/student.assessment/special-ed/staaralt/>.

For federal participation rates, students with the NAAR designation are included in the total number of students (denominator) and the total number of participants (numerator), so the participation rate includes these students as participants. Students with the medical exception designation are not included in the total number of students (denominator), so they are not counted as participants or nonparticipants. The participation rate is not affected by the students with the medical exception designation.

*STAAR A*: The STAAR A tests that are included in the participation results for the special education student group are for students receiving special education services only. The STAAR A participation results for students who are not receiving special education services are not included in the special education student group.

## **Federal Limits on use of Alternative Assessments**

For school districts only, the system safeguard reports for federal accountability indicate whether a school district exceeds the federal limit on use of alternative assessments. Federal limitations require that the number of scores that meet the STAAR Alternate 2 performance standard not exceed one percent of the district's total participation. Due to the discontinuation of the STAAR Modified, there is no application of a two percent limit on proficient results from assessments with modified achievement standards. The measures of STAAR Alternate 2 limits are reported separately for reading and mathematics.

## **Federal Graduation Rate Goals and Targets**

The state and federal system safeguard graduation rate measures are aligned and generate the same results.

## **Minimum Size Requirements**

The following table compares the minimum size criteria for state and federal system safeguards.

<b>Comparison of Minimum Size Criteria for 2015 State and Federal System Safeguards</b>			
		<b>State System Safeguards</b>	<b>Federal System Safeguards*</b>
Performance Rates	All Students	None (Small Numbers Analysis applied)	25 (No Small Numbers Analysis applied)
	Student Groups	25	25 and 10%; or 200
Participation Rates	All Students	None (Small Numbers Analysis applied)	25 (No Small Numbers Analysis applied)
	Student Groups	25	25 and 10%; or 200
Federal Graduation Rates	All Students	None (Small Numbers Analysis applied)	10 (No Small Numbers Analysis applied)
	Student Groups	25	25 and 10%; or 200

\* These minimum size criteria are applied to the federal system safeguard results used to meet the assessment and accountability requirements of the ESEA waiver, Title III Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives (AMAOs), and USDE Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP).

The approved ESEA flexibility waiver is available online at <http://tea.texas.gov/nclb/>.

The current Priority, Focus, and Reward Schools lists, methodology, and student groups evaluated are available at [http://tea.texas.gov/Student\\_Testing\\_and\\_Accountability/Monitoring\\_and\\_Interventions/School\\_Improvement\\_and\\_Support/Priority,\\_Focus,\\_and\\_Reward\\_Schools/](http://tea.texas.gov/Student_Testing_and_Accountability/Monitoring_and_Interventions/School_Improvement_and_Support/Priority,_Focus,_and_Reward_Schools/).

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