

April 15, 2013

The Honorable Arne Duncan
Secretary of Education
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Ave., SW
Washington, DC 20202-6100

Subject: Request for Waiver under P.L. 107-110, Section 9401
To Reduce Duplication and Unnecessary Burden on the SEA and LEAs

Dear Secretary Duncan:

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) is requesting that the U.S. Department of Education (USDE) waive specific provisions of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), as amended by P.L. 107-110 No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001. The waiver requests are submitted under NCLB's Section 9401 waiver authority and would give TEA and more than 1,200 local education agencies additional flexibility while reducing duplication.

Our state's educational system is aligned with the three principles outlined in your provisional waiver application. We are hopeful that you and your staff will recognize the potential gains that Texas schools and students could make by better aligning the federal and state systems without costly and time-consuming duplication of effort.

The attached application document delineates the specific statutory provisions for which we are seeking waivers and provides the supporting documentation necessary for USDE's review of the evidence supporting our request. We appreciate your consideration of our request and look forward to working with you. If you have any questions or want further information, please contact Lizzette Gonzalez Reynolds, Chief Deputy Commissioner, at Lizzette.Reynolds@tea.state.tx.us or (512) 463-8629.

Sincerely,

Michael L. Williams
Commissioner of Education

**ESEA Flexibility Request
Submitted to the U.S. Department of Education
April 15, 2013**

**Submitted by
Texas Education Agency
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Introduction

This document delineates the Texas Education Agency’s specific requests for flexibility in implementing the provisions of ESEA and provides the supporting documentation necessary for review by USDE. It should be noted that TEA is submitting this request under Section 9401 waiver authority. To assist the Department in reviewing TEA’s request, this document is organized according to the topics and sequence outlined in the “ESEA Flexibility Request” template.

Requested Waivers

To further support the implementation of Texas’ College and Career Readiness Standards, assessment and accountability system, accountability intervention system, and teacher certification and principal accountability systems, and to avoid duplication and unnecessary burdens on the Texas Education Agency and local education agencies, TEA requests a waiver of the following statutory provisions:

1. Title I School Improvement Funds at LEA Level

Section 1003(a) requiring TEA to reserve 4% of its Title I, Part A allocation for school improvement activities and to distribute 95% to LEAs for use in Title I schools in improvement, corrective action, and restructuring.

Specifically, this waiver is requested to allow TEA to distribute 95% of the 4% reservation to Title I schools identified as priority, focus, or support schools and for systemic improvement at the LEA level to support the identified schools. Current regulations prohibit the use of any Title I School Improvement Program funds at the LEA level.

2. Accountability System

Section 1111(b)(2)(E-H) defining the calculation of Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), establishing of annual measurable objectives (performance targets) for AYP, 100% proficiency by the end of 2013-2014, and implementation of the respective requirements specified in Sections 1111 and 1116 and Section 1116(a)(1)(A-B) requiring the LEAs to make AYP determinations for schools.

Specifically, this waiver of the federal Accountability Performance Targets/Standards Setting Procedures is requested to allow TEA to replace the current AYP calculations and performance targets with the state’s robust accountability rating system. Our system meets the intent and purposes of the ESEA statute. Flexibility would allow the state’s existing systems of reform and interventions to guide the support and improvement of teaching and learning.

3. Support and Intervention

Section 1116(b) requiring the LEA to identify schools for improvement, corrective action, and restructuring with corresponding requirements for implementation.

Specifically, this waiver is requested to allow TEA to identify schools for graduated levels of support and intervention based on the state accountability system rather than using the current AYP regulations.

4. Implementation of a Single Intervention System

Section 1116(b)(1)(E) and (e) and all corresponding provisions requiring the LEA to offer, in a federally prescriptive manner, school choice for schools for improvement, corrective action, and restructuring with corresponding requirements for implementation, and Section 1116(e) requiring the federally prescriptive implementation of supplemental educational services under Section 1116(b)(5, 7, and 8).

Specifically, this waiver is requested to allow TEA to use improvement activities better aligned to the state's accountability and intervention systems.

5. State Accountability System

Section 1116(c) requiring TEA to make determinations of AYP for LEAs and identify LEAs for improvement and corrective action with corresponding requirements for implementation.

Specifically, this waiver is requested to allow TEA to identify LEAs based upon school performance using the state accountability system rather than current AYP regulations.

6. Small, Rural and Low-Income Schools

Sections 6213(b) and 6224(e) requiring TEA to limit participation in, and use of funds under the Small, Rural School Achievement (SRSA) and Rural and Low-Income School (RLIS) programs based on whether an LEA has made AYP and is complying with the requirements in ESEA section 1116.

Specifically, this waiver is requested to allow an LEA that receives SRSA or RLIS funds to use those funds for any authorized purpose regardless of whether the LEA meets state accountability targets.

7. Intervention Regardless of Poverty Percentage

Section 1114(a)(1) requiring that a school have a poverty percentage of 40 percent or more in order to operate a schoolwide program.

Specifically, this waiver is requested to allow an LEA to implement schoolwide interventions in any of its support, focus, or priority schools, even if those schools do not have a poverty percentage of 40 percent or more.

8. Reward Schools

Section 1117(c)(2)(A) allowing TEA to reserve Title I, Part A funds to reward a Title I school that (1) significantly closed the achievement gap between subgroups in the school; or (2) has exceeded AYP for two or more consecutive years.

Specifically, this waiver is requested to allow TEA to use funds reserved under this section for any school that the state determines to be a reward school.

9. Funding Transferability

Section 6123 that limits the amount of funds an SEA or LEA may transfer from certain ESEA programs to other ESEA programs under the Funding Transferability provision.

Specifically, this waiver is requested to allow TEA and LEAs to transfer up to 100 percent of authorized program funds between those funds and into Title I, Part A.

10. School Improvement Grant

Section 1003(g)(4) and the definition of a Tier I school in Section I.A.3 of the School Improvement Grant (SIG) final requirements.

Specifically, this waiver is requested to allow TEA to award Texas Title I Priority Schools (TTIPS) SIG funds to an LEA to implement one of the four SIG models in any of the schools that the state determines are priority schools.

11. 21st Century Community Learning Centers

Sections 4201(b)(1)(A) and 4204(b)(2)(A) that restrict the activities provided by a community learning center under the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) grant program to activities provided only during non-school hours or periods when school is not in session.

Specifically, this waiver is requested to allow 21st CCLC funds to be used to support extended learning time during and after the

school day to meet the identified needs of students, in addition to activities during non-school hours or periods when school is not in session.

12. Rank Ordering of Priority Schools

Section 1113(a)(3-4) and (c)(1) requiring an LEA to serve eligible schools under Title I, Part A in rank order of poverty and to allocate Title I, Part A funds based on that rank ordering.

Specifically, this waiver is requested to allow LEAs to serve a Title I-eligible high school with a graduation rate below 60 percent that TEA has identified as a priority school even if that school does not otherwise rank sufficiently high to be served under section 1113.

Assurances

This request is submitted under Section 9401. In submitting this request the Texas Commissioner of Education certifies that Texas' College and Career Readiness Standards, assessment and accountability system, accountability intervention system, and teacher certification and principal accountability systems are in alignment with the principles outlined in USDE's provisional waiver application.

In addition, the Texas Education Agency assures that:

1. It requests waivers of the above-referenced requirements based on its agreement to meet Principles 1 through 4 of the flexibility, as described throughout the remainder of this request.
2. It has adopted English language proficiency (ELP) standards that correspond to the State's college- and career-ready standards, consistent with the requirement in ESEA section 3113(b)(2), and that reflect the academic language skills necessary to access and meet the new college- and career-ready standards, no later than the 2013–2014 school year. (Principle 1)
3. It has developed and administered alternate assessments based on grade-level academic achievement standards or alternate assessments based on alternate academic achievement standards for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities that are consistent with 34 C.F.R. § 200.6(a)(2) and are aligned with the State's college- and career-ready standards. (Principle 1)

4. It has developed and administered ELP assessments aligned with the State's ELP standards, consistent with the requirements in ESEA sections 1111(b)(7), 3113(b)(2), and 3122(a)(3)(A)(ii). (Principle 1)
5. It will report annually to the public on college-going and college credit-accumulation rates for all students and subgroups of students in each LEA and each public high school in the State. (Principle 1)
6. If the SEA includes student achievement on assessments in addition to reading/language arts and mathematics in its differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system and uses achievement on those assessments to identify priority and focus schools, it has technical documentation, which can be made available to the Department upon request, demonstrating that the assessments are administered statewide; include all students, including by providing appropriate accommodations for English Learners and students with disabilities, as well as alternate assessments based on grade-level academic achievement standards or alternate assessments based on alternate academic achievement standards for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities, consistent with 34 C.F.R. § 200.6(a)(2); and are valid and reliable for use in the SEA's differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system. (Principle 2)
7. It will report to the public its lists of reward schools, priority schools, and focus schools at the time the SEA is approved to implement the flexibility, and annually thereafter, it will publicly recognize its reward schools as well as make public its lists of priority and focus schools if it chooses to update those lists. (Principle 2)
8. Once available, it will provide student growth data on current students and the students they taught in the previous year to, at a minimum, all teachers of reading/language arts and mathematics in grades in which the State administers assessments in those subjects in a manner that is timely and informs instructional programs, or it will do so no later than the deadline required under the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund. State statute requires that a data portal with student-teacher information be implemented to provide teachers and parents up-to-date information about a student's progress. These reports allow a teacher to determine if a student is making the necessary progress to be successful in subsequent grades or courses. The data portal generates reports as soon as the teacher-student link information is available from the state's district data collection system, called PEIMS. Although the state does not currently provide statewide teacher-specific reports for all 327,000 teachers, districts are provided with the information to generate comprehensive reports at the district level. These teacher- and student-specific reports are available through the data portal. This system was designed with the safety and privacy of Texas students in mind, and is in compliance with current FERPA regulations. (Principle 3)
9. It will evaluate and, based on that evaluation, revise its own administrative requirements to reduce duplication and unnecessary burden on LEAs and schools. (Principle 4)

10. It has consulted with its Committee of Practitioners regarding the information set forth in its request.
11. It will provide all LEAs with notice and a reasonable opportunity to comment on the request and has attached a copy of that notice (*Attachment 1*) as well as copies of any comments it received from LEAs (*Attachment 2*).
12. It will provide notice and information regarding the request to the public in the manner in which the State customarily provides such notice and information to the public (*e.g.*, by publishing a notice in the newspaper; by posting information on its website) and has attached a copy of, or link to, that notice (*Attachment 3*).
13. It will provide to the Department, in a timely manner, all required reports, data, and evidence regarding its progress in implementing the plans contained throughout this request.
14. It will report annually on its State report card, and will ensure that its LEAs annually report on their local report cards, for the “all students” group and for each subgroup described in ESEA section 1111(b)(2)(C)(v)(II): information on student achievement at each proficiency level; data comparing actual achievement levels to the State’s annual measurable objectives; the percentage of students not tested; performance on the other academic indicator for elementary and middle schools; and graduation rates for high schools. It will also annually report, and will ensure that its LEAs annually report, all other information and data required by ESEA section 1111(h)(1)(C) and 1111(h)(2)(B), respectively.
15. It will submit to the Department for peer review and approval a copy of the guidelines that it will adopt by the end of the 2012–2013 school year. (Principle 3)

Consultation and Public Input

TEA has solicited input and provided for meaningful engagement of teachers and other stakeholder groups, not only in preparing this flexibility request, but throughout the process of developing, adopting, and implementing the state’s College and Career Ready Standards and assessment and accountability systems. Information regarding the latter is included in subsequent sections of this document, which describe the development, adoption, and implementation process for major components of the Texas system. Information regarding the state’s solicitation and receipt of input regarding this flexibility request is presented below and in Attachments 1, 2, and 3.

Solicitation of Input from Teachers and Their Representatives

TEA provided local administrators and teachers with notice and the opportunity to comment on this flexibility request. In doing so, we followed the state's usual procedures, i.e., through a letter to all LEAs that was (1) posted on the TEA website and (2) disseminated through TEA's "To the Administrator Addressed" electronic mail list server on September 6, 2012; see *Attachment 1a* for a copy of the letter. TEA personnel also presented and discussed the Intent to Apply for Waivers under Section 9401 with the state's Committee of Practitioners on September 18, 2012; see *Attachment 1b* for a copy of the meeting agenda. Comments on the flexibility request received from LEAs, teachers, and other stakeholders are included in *Attachment 2*.

In addition, thousands of Texas educators have served on one or more of the educator committees involved in the development of the Texas assessment program. These committees represent the state geographically, ethnically, by gender, and by type and size of school district. They routinely include educators with knowledge of the needs of all students, including students with disabilities and English language learners (ELLs).

Solicitation of Input from Other Diverse Stakeholder Groups

Pursuant to P.L. 107-110, Section 9401(3)(A)(iii), TEA provided notice and information regarding the agency's intent to apply for this waiver to the public in the manner in which TEA customarily provides such notice and information to the public, i.e., by posting to the TEA web site and by publishing a notice in the *Texas Register* on September 21, 2012. TEA will also provide notice and information regarding the waiver on April 19, 2013. (See *Attachment 3* for copies of the notice.)

Evaluation

At this time, TEA does not elect to collaborate with USDE in this voluntary evaluation process.

Overview of TEA's Request for ESEA Flexibility

Texas has been a national leader in the college- and career-readiness movement. We were the first state to develop and implement college and career readiness curriculum standards and the first state to assess those standards, and we will be the first to implement an accountability system to hold schools accountable for preparing students for post-secondary success.

Independent of federal requirements, Texas has developed and begun full implementation of a statewide system that surpasses the requirements of the ESEA statute. Three years ago, the state completed full implementation of the Texas College and Career Readiness Standards. This year we are transitioning to a consolidated, differentiated accountability and interventions system, with tiered interventions beginning in school year 2013-2014. Upon approval of this waiver request, Texas will have a single, differentiated accountability system. This differentiated accountability system is based on the state's rigorous new assessment program, the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR). Texas also continues to build upon its rigorous teacher certification system that is working to improve teacher and principal accountability to ensure high quality teaching and learning for all students.

Despite Texas' progress on these fronts, the failure of Congress to reauthorize ESEA has forced LEAs to operate within two (at times conflicting) accountability and intervention systems, while taking valuable resources and time away from focusing on improving student achievement. The federal requirements and guidelines of ESEA no longer adequately reflect the performance of the state's schools. For example:

- More graduates in the Class of 2012 scored a 3 or higher on at least one AP Exam than took AP Exams in 2002. Moreover, the number of Texas students taking the ACT reached an all-time high (110,180) in 2012, with Hispanic participation doubling over the past five years. Forty-eight percent of Texas students met the ACT college readiness benchmark on the mathematics test, compared to 46 percent nationally. Even with the rapid rise in participation, the ACT composite score rose from 20.7 in 2008 to 20.8 in 2012. The number of Hispanic students taking the SAT increased by 65 percent between 2007–08 and 2011–12. African American and Asian students also showed double-digit increases (42% and 29%, respectively). The mean SAT mathematics score remained stable or increased for all student groups over this time period.
- Based on USDE's new graduation rate calculation, Texas tied for the third highest high school graduation rate in the country for all students. Texas ranks number one in graduation rates for Asian, African-American, and white students.
- In 2011, every major ethnic group of Texas students significantly outscored their peers nationally on the eighth grade National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) science test, and Texas Hispanic and African-American students earned the second highest score on the eighth-grade mathematics test.
- Annual undergraduate degrees and certificates awarded to Hispanics have increased by 150% since 2000.

The Texas educational system is rigorous, responsive to the needs of the state's more than 1,200 local education agencies, and aligned with the three principles outlined in USDE's provisional waiver application. Moreover, Texas already has adopted and has either completed or begun implementation of the key components described in those principles. Our request for flexibility is intended to avoid duplication and to further support the implementation of the state's system.

Principle 1: College- and Career-Ready Expectations for All Students

1.A Adoption of College- and Career-Ready Standards

As noted earlier, Texas was the first state in the nation to adopt college- and career-ready curriculum standards. The following paragraphs summarize the adoption process, with extensive supporting documentation provided in *Attachment 4*.

The Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills Curriculum Standards

Since 1998, K-12 education in Texas has been guided by the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) curriculum standards. The TEKS, codified in Title 19 of the Texas Administrative Code, Chapters 110-130, became effective in all content areas and grade levels on September 1, 1998. Statute required that the TEKS be used for instruction in the foundation areas of English language arts and reading, mathematics, science, and social studies. TEKS in the enrichment subjects (including health education, physical education, fine arts, career and technical education, technology application, and languages other than English) served as guidelines, rather than requirements. In 2003, the 78th Texas Legislature added enrichment subjects to the list of subject areas required to use the TEKS.

Incorporation of College- and Career-Ready Standards into the TEKS

In 2006, the 79th Texas Legislature required TEA and the state agency for higher education, the Texas Higher Education Coordination Board (THECB), to establish vertical teams composed of public school educators and faculty from institutions of higher education that would develop college- and career- ready standards in the areas of English/language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. The work of the vertical teams was organized in three phases. The first phase entailed a series of team meetings to create the college- and career-ready standards (CCRS) for the four subject areas. Phase two required the vertical teams to make recommendations as to how to align existing public school content standards with the CCRS. Phase three required the vertical teams to develop or establish instructional strategies, professional development materials, and online support materials for students who need additional assistance in preparing to successfully perform college-level work. Upon adoption of the TEKS at each phase teams also engaged in a series of gaps analyses first to ensure alignment between the adopted TEKS and the Texas CCRS. An additional phase of vertical teams also met to ensure appropriate alignment.

The THECB adopted the standards in January 2008. The Commissioner of Education approved the standards, and the State Board of Education (SBOE) incorporated them into the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) curriculum content standards as follows: English language arts and reading TEKS in 2008; mathematics and science TEKS in 2009; and social studies TEKS in 2010. *Attachment 4* includes a description of the State's standards adoption process (*Attachment 4a*), English language arts and mathematics gap analyses documents (*Attachment 4b*) evidence of the adoption of the college- and career-ready standards by the THECB

(*Attachment 4c*), their approval by the Commissioner of Education and the Commissioner of Higher Education, (*Attachment 4d*), and the SBOE actions incorporating them into the TEKS standards (*Attachment 4e*).

The attachment also includes a copy of the college- and career-ready standards (*Attachment 4f*) and the findings from a comparison of the Texas standards with the national Common Core College Readiness Standards created by the Council of Chief State School Officers and the National Governors Association (*Attachment 4g*). The comparison, conducted by the Educational Policy Improvement Center and involving teams of higher education and public school educators and content educators, found that the Texas standards are more comprehensive than the Common Core standards, including additional areas of college readiness that are missing from the national standards. Overall, Texas standards in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics matched 92% and 75% of those in Common Core Standards, respectively. Breadth of coverage, or the extent to which matched standards are representative of content topics within each Common Core strand, was rated as strong for both content areas. Finally, the level of cognitive demand, or depth of knowledge, attributed to Texas standards was at or above that of the Common Core Standards for 90% of mathematics standards, and 71% of ELA standards.

In addition to comparison to the Common Core Standards, a 2010 study (see *Attachment 4h*) conducted by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board of the extent to which college admission and placement tests assess the Texas standards found that, on average, performance expectations contained within the standards were both more rigorous and cognitively demanding than the test items from the ACT, SAT, ACCUPLACER, COMPASS, ASSET, and the Texas Higher Education Assessment.

During 2011-2012, the cycle of review and revision of the TEKS standards continued with the comprehensive revision of the K-12 mathematics TEKS, which once again raised the bar to ensure the necessary rigor for college and career readiness. The SBOE adopted these new math TEKS in April 2012 (see *Attachment 4i*).

The English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS) were created in response to a USDE Monitoring Visit in 2008. Prior to the development of the ELPS, Texas implemented English as a Second Language (ESL) TEKS that imbedded in the English language arts/Reading TEKS, and the USDE indicated that it was not clear that the English language acquisition standards were to be addressed in conjunction with all foundation subject areas. Since the Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment Standards (TELPAS) were already being implemented, the agency formed a committee comprised of educators and administrators from throughout the state to develop ELPS that were aligned to TELPAS. The TELPAS includes standards for the four language domains of listening, speaking, reading, and writing with the proficiency levels of beginning, intermediate, advanced, and advanced high. Once the ELPS were written, the committee completed an alignment of the ELPS with the Grade 4 content standards. The proposed ELPS were then submitted to the State Board of Education for approval and adoption. As part of the periodic review and revision of the TEKS and related standards, the agency plans to initiate review and revision of the ELPS in the coming year. This review will follow the same

process that the SBOE uses for review and revision of the TEKS that includes appointment of review committees comprised of educators, parents, business and industry leaders, and employers to recommend revisions to the standards. The committees will be asked to ensure proper alignment with the CCRS as well as the state’s prekindergarten guidelines. Prior to adoption of any revisions to the ELPS the SBOE will conduct public hearings and solicit input from educators throughout the state.

All state level Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills professional development is required to incorporate connections with the English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS) and the College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS). Within the Linguistic Instructional Alignment Guide (*Attachment 4j*), explicit connections between the ELPS and the CCRS for each of the linguistic domains have been incorporated in an effort to support teachers’ understandings of the connections between the two. With this understanding, teachers incorporate activities that strengthen both language development and college and career readiness.

1.B Transition to College- and Career-Ready Standards

Texas has already made the transition to statewide use of the college- and career-ready standards. This transition has included (1) incorporation of the standards into the TEKS, as described above; (2) provision of instructional strategies, professional development materials and activities, and online support materials for local educators; (3) resources for students who may need additional assistance, including English Learners, students with disabilities, and other high-need populations; and (4) alignment of statewide assessments to the standards as incorporated into the TEKS. Additional information about these activities is provided in the following paragraphs, in Section 1.C addressing the state’s student assessment program, and in *Attachment 5*.

Resources for Students Who Are English Language Learners

Resources that support both language development and content understanding for the 838,494 English language learners (ELLs) in Texas who speak over 120 languages are housed on the The Texas English Language Learner Web Portal (www.elltx.org) and are available to educators and parents throughout the state. This website includes resources, tools and training materials that are designed to support educators in effectively serving ELLs and also in improving content knowledge and English proficiency. Examples of the resources available on this state include the following:

1. The Texas English Language Learner Instructional Tool (TELLIT) Courses

These courses help teachers learn how to address the linguistic, cognitive, and affective needs of English language learners. Course participants are able to view video segments of teachers using effective strategies that enhance mathematics, science, and social studies instruction and promote academic achievement of ELL students.

TELLIT Math Linguistic Environment Course

TELLIT Math Cognitive Learning Environment Course
TELLT Math Affective Learning Environment Course

TELLIT Science Linguistic Learning Environment Course
TELLIT Science Cognitive Learning Environment Course
TELLIT Science Affective Learning Environment Course

TELLIT Science Linguistic Learning Environment Course
TELLIT Science Cognitive Learning Environment Course
TELLIT Affective Learning Environment Course

2. Professional Service Provider (PSP) Training – Math

This course provides Professional Service Providers with a tool that can be used in providing feedback and exploring perceptions with campus administrators about what is occurring in mathematics instruction for ELLs. During this course, participants learn about the role of the PSP in the classroom-observation process, including pre-observation and post-observation tasks.

3. Accelerating Language Acquisition for Secondary English Language Learner Online Course

This online course provides self-paced professional development training for content area teachers in secondary classrooms. The course presents skills and strategies for teaching academic language to facilitate the content learning of English language learners (ELLs).

4. ELPS Face-to-Face Academies in all content areas (Science, Social Studies, ELAR, Mathematics) - These face to face professional development sessions provide participants with an exploration of ways to increase achievement for ELLs using the ELPS. In this face-to-face session, participants examine the ELPS and practice writing language objectives using the four linguistic domains of: listening, speaking, reading and writing. The resources contain specific strategies that will enable teachers to incorporate the ELPS in their classrooms.

5. ELPS Online Academy Overview – This online course assists in the understanding of how the ELPS provide cross-curricular second language acquisition essential knowledge and skills for listening, speaking, reading, and writing to provide a common framework for instruction in content area classrooms.

6. **Implementing the ELPS Online Modules in all content areas (Science, Social Studies, ELAR, Mathematics)** - This online course assists teachers in understanding how to apply the ELPS cross-curricular student expectations and linguistic accommodations in an English language arts lesson. A focus on the integration of the ELPS into lesson planning and instructional practices in support of ELL success is addressed. In addition, a variety of instructional strategies that assist ELLs in both language development and content acquisition are explored in order to promote academic success.
7. **ELPS Resource Supplement** - This resource is accessible as part of the ELPS Academy online course and is available for download and printing. The resource contains the ELPS, College and Career Readiness Standards, Response to Intervention information, and processing activities aligned to the face-to-face and online modules.
8. **ELPS Linguistic Instructional Alignment Guide (Resource)** - The purpose of the ELPS Instructional Alignment Guide is to support content area teachers in the identification of the essential components for providing instruction commensurate with English language learners' linguistic needs. This tool allows teachers to see connections among *English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS)*, *ELPS-TELPAS Proficiency Level Descriptors (PLDs)*, *College Career Readiness Standards (CCRS)* and *Linguistic Accommodations*. The consistent integration of these components is critical in lesson planning in order to meet the linguistic and academic needs of English language learners.
9. **ELPS Linguistic Instructional Alignment Guide (ELPS LIAG) Trainer of Trainer online course**
The purpose of this online trainer of trainer course is to build capacity on how to deliver professional development sessions on the use of the ELPS LIAG. The goal is for trainers to increase knowledge and understanding on the use of the ELPS LIAG and its components.
10. **A+Rise Online Tutorial** - This online tutorial course assists 9th-12th secondary educators in the use of the A+Rise program in order to access instructional strategies for ELPS implementation effectively.

Professional Development and Other Supports for Local Educators

Recognizing the level of rigor of the new curriculum requirements and the need to support the state's more rigorous student graduation requirements (which require four years of math, science, social studies and English language arts as the default graduation plan), the Texas Legislature committed significant funding toward professional development to support implementation of the new TEKS. The state's system of 20 Regional Educational Service Centers (ESCs) serves as a primary vehicle for ensuring that all local educators have access to the professional development they need. Providing leadership to the ESCs, TEA has developed and deployed professional development addressing the incorporation of the CCRS into the TEKS and the instructional implications of the new standards; supporting the use of diagnostics, data, and technology in implementing the TEKS; and facilitating the use of student-

centered strategies including Response to Intervention, Gifted and Talented approaches, and strategies to strengthen academic language among English Learners.

Online support materials are provided through TEA’s online portal for Texas teachers, known as Project Share (see *Attachment 5a* for a description), and are available to all Texas LEAs. These materials include lessons, aligned to the TEKS and CCRS, that supplement classroom instruction and provide additional practice for students during and beyond traditional school hours.

As the state has worked toward college and career readiness, literacy has remained a top priority. The Texas Legislature continues to commit significant resources toward the Texas Adolescent Literacy Academies (TALA), which support teachers in grades 6-8 in the use of diagnostic instruments and intensive instructional strategies that build proficiency in reading and comprehension for all middle school students. Through these academies, English language arts teachers also have received training in how to administer and interpret the results of the Texas Middle School Fluency Assessment (TMSFA), an instrument designed to measure key reading skills in middle school students. TMSFA materials and training are available at no cost to LEAs and open-enrollment charter schools that serve middle school students. In addition to face-to-face trainings, TALA and TMSFA professional development courses are also available through Project Share.

TEA also has taken the initiative to develop the *Middle-School Students in Texas: Algebra Ready (MSTAR)* and *Texas Response to Curriculum Focal Points (Grades K-8)*, which are used in mathematics professional development academies that are available in both face-to-face and online environments. These materials address key “focal points” contained within the mathematics TEKS that target algebra readiness for grades K-8.

Provision of Resources for Students

As noted above, TEA’s online portal, Project Share, includes significant resources and professional development opportunities for teachers. In addition, it provides engaging online resources and support materials for students (see *Attachment 5b* for examples). Many of the Project Share student resources are provided in both English and Spanish versions to further support English Language Learners and the teachers who work with them. English/Spanish resources include a series of videos that explain secondary math and science concepts, algebra-readiness universal screeners and diagnostic assessments, and a math and science item bank that teachers can draw from when creating formative and summative assessments. Project Share also provides OnTRACK Lessons for core secondary English, math, science, and social studies subjects. The OnTRACK Lessons, which are developed at the state level and electronically distributed to all Texas districts for use at the local level, include lessons designed to supplement classroom instruction and to provide accelerated instruction for struggling students, particularly those who are at risk for not meeting curricular expectations and/or not passing state assessments.

Alignment of Assessments to the College- and Career-Ready Standards

Please see section 1.C, below, for more information on this topic.

1.C Development and Administration of Annual, Statewide, Aligned, High-Quality Assessments That Measure Student Growth

Texas already has developed and begun annually administering statewide aligned, high-quality assessments that measure student growth in reading/language arts and in mathematics in at least grades 3-8 and at least once in high school in all LEAs. The state launched its first statewide student assessment program in 1979 to bring common standards to the measurement of students' academic achievement. From this early Texas Assessment of Basic Skills to the new State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR), Texas has steadily increased the rigor, expanded the scope, and raised the performance standards measured on its assessments. The STAAR program began operational testing in the 2011-2012 school year. A description of the development and critical features of the STAAR system are provided in the following paragraphs.

Overview of the STAAR Assessment Program

With the creation of the STAAR assessment program, the Texas Legislature continued its efforts to improve the state's education system using statewide assessments. STAAR represents a more unified, comprehensive assessment program that incorporates the state's rigorous college and career readiness standards. TEA set broad goals for the STAAR assessment program that include the following:

- The performance expectations on STAAR were established such that they raise the bar on student performance to a level where graduating students are postsecondary ready.
- The focus of student performance at high school shifted to end-of-course (EOC) assessments in twelve courses, and those assessments, where appropriate, will be linked to college and career readiness.
- In reading and mathematics, the grades 3–8 tests are linked from grade to grade to the college-and career-readiness performance standards for the Algebra II and English III assessments.
- Individual student reports provide comprehensive, concise results that are easily understood by students and parents. Assessment results will be available to a wide variety of individuals (as appropriate) through the state's education data portal.

The most significant changes that TEA has implemented under the STAAR program are summarized below.

General changes:

- High school, grade-based testing represented by the previous state assessment, the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills

(TAKS), was replaced with course-based EOC assessments.

- A data portal was implemented to give students, parents, and educators access to authorized information on student achievement.

Rigor:

- Content standards for the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) — the source for the state’s K–12 instructional curricula as well as the basis for the state assessment program — have been strengthened to include college-and career-readiness content standards, as described earlier.
- New test blueprints (the number of items on the test for each reporting category) emphasize the assessment of the content standards that best prepare students for the next grade or course.
- Assessments have increased in length at most grades and subjects, and overall test difficulty has increased by including more rigorous items.
- The rigor of items has increased by assessing skills at a greater depth and level of cognitive complexity. In this way, the tests are better able to measure the growth of higher-achieving students.
- In science and mathematics, the number of open-ended (griddable) items on most tests has increased to allow students more opportunity to derive an answer independently without being influenced by answer choices provided with the questions.
- Performance standards are set so that they require a higher level of student performance than was required on the TAKS assessments.
- To validate the level of rigor, student performance on STAAR assessments has been compared with results on standardized national and international assessments.

Postsecondary readiness:

- College-and career-readiness content standards have been fully incorporated into the TEKS, and these TEKS are assessed on the STAAR EOC assessments. This helps ensure students are prepared for their freshman year of college without the need for remediation, prepared to enter the workforce, or prepared to serve in our nation’s military.
- Performance standards on assessments were vertically aligned to ensure college readiness, using empirical data gathered from studies that linked performance in grades three through 12 from year to year. Performance standards will be reviewed at least once every three years and, if necessary, adjusted so that the assessments maintain a high level of rigor.
- Texas law defines college readiness as “the level of preparation a student must attain in English language arts and mathematics courses to enroll and succeed, without remediation, in an entry-level general education course for credit in that same content area for a baccalaureate degree or associate degree program.”

Measures of progress:

- Measures of student progress, based on the more rigorous standards for STAAR assessments, are being developed and

implemented. Progress measures are being phased in over several years as data for the new program become available, with initial implementation scheduled no later than Fall 2013. (See additional information and timeline under Principle 2, section 2.A.)

- Progress measures are designed to provide an early-warning indicator for students who are not on track to meet the passing standard, may not be successful in the next grade or course, may not be ready for advanced courses in mathematics and English in high school, or may not be postsecondary ready in mathematics and English.

Process for Setting STAAR Performance Standards

TEA has engaged and will continue to involve a wide range of stakeholders in the development and implementation of the STAAR program (see Educator Review of STAAR Assessments, *Attachment 6a*). Following the development of the new STAAR test design, standard-setting advisory panels composed of diverse groups of stakeholders (i.e., business leaders, superintendents, and regional service center representatives) made recommendations regarding where the performance standards should be set within each subject area. These panels provided TEA, the commissioner of education, and the commissioner of higher education with recommendations (for English III and Algebra II) for establishing cut scores and for matching the cut scores with the policy definitions that relate to performance on each assessment. The performance standards were developed to comply with legislative requirements for setting several performance standards for each STAAR EOC assessment. In addition, the validity of the STAAR assessments is integral to meeting the long-range educational goals of the state as well as for the overall defensibility of the assessment program. To provide evidence of the validity of the STAAR assessments, empirical studies were conducted in various stages of the standard-setting process.

TEA has conducted extensive research to support the standard-setting process. Studies focused on creating links between STAAR assessments and other measures of students' knowledge and skills. Some studies linked students' scores on STAAR assessments to corresponding course grades. Another set of studies linked STAAR assessments to established national and international assessments, such as SAT, ACT, NAEP, and PISA. Additional studies linked STAAR assessments to other assessments (THEA and ACCUPLACER) used by Texas colleges and universities to place students in credit-bearing courses. Finally, research was conducted to link STAAR scores to corresponding grades in entry-level, credit-bearing college courses. To support reliable and meaningful score interpretations, links between two assessments were based on the same students taking STAAR and one of the comparison assessments listed above.

TEA and THECB have agreed on the performance standards for college-and career-readiness on the Algebra II and English III EOC assessments. Moving forward, TEA and THECB will periodically review the performance standards and will make adjustments if data indicate this is appropriate. The thoroughness of the studies and research, as well as the checks and balances incorporated into the process, will provide a reliable and objective measure of college and career readiness. TEA and THECB will continue to collaborate to improve the assessment of the college and career readiness of graduating high school students.

Addressing the State’s Diverse Student Populations

In response to changes in federal and state legislation, the Texas assessment program has broadened in recent years to better assess the state’s diverse student populations. Since the inception of TAKS in 2003, the assessment program has evolved to include linguistically accommodated testing for eligible English language learners, English language proficiency measures through the K–12 Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS), and two separate assessments for some students receiving special education services. The Texas student assessment program includes as many students as possible in the STAAR, while also providing options for alternate assessments for eligible students receiving special education services whose academic achievement and progress cannot be measured appropriately with the general assessments. The alternate assessments for eligible students who receive special education services include STAAR Modified and STAAR Alternate and reflect the general STAAR program. TEA has also developed Spanish versions of STAAR in grades 3–5 in accordance with state statute. In addition, TEA has developed online versions of STAAR with built-in, standardized linguistic accommodations for eligible ELLs in grades 3–8 and high school.

STAAR Modified and STAAR Alternate. STAAR Modified assessments have been developed for all content areas for grades 3–8 that are part of the general STAAR program and for nine of the STAAR EOC assessments (English I, II, and III, Algebra I, geometry, biology, world geography, world history, and U.S. history). Modified assessments are not being developed for Algebra II, chemistry, or physics as these courses are not required in order for students to graduate on the Minimum High School Program (MHSP), and all students taking STAAR Modified assessments are automatically on the MHSP because they are receiving modified instruction. The MHSP is general high school diploma that students may opt into by meeting one of three criteria and upon agreement in writing by the student, the student’s parent/guardian, and a school administrator. Primary differences in course requirements between the Recommended High School Program (RHSP), the default program and the MHSP include the following: the MSHP does not require credits in foreign language, requires one fewer mathematics credit, two fewer science credits, one fewer social studies credit, and requires at least one academic elective that is not required in the RHSP (see *Attachment 6b* for current graduation credit requirements).

The STAAR Modified assessments cover the same content as the general STAAR assessments but have been modified in format and test design. The modified assessments are designed for eligible students receiving special education services who can make academic progress even though they may not reach grade-level achievement standards in the same time frame as their non-disabled peers. Performance standards were set so that they require a higher level of student performance than was required on TAKS–Modified assessments. Each STAAR Modified assessment consists primarily of multiple-choice questions addressing the content of the assessed curriculum for the grade-level subject. Item modification guidelines specify how to modify test questions from the general assessment in a way that preserves the integrity of the knowledge or skill being assessed.

By the 2014–2015 school year, or such time as states are no longer allowed to use results of modified assessments in federal accountability, whichever is later, Texas will require students currently participating in STAAR Modified to take the general

assessments and will discontinue the modified assessment program. Texas will determine what additional accommodations can be provided to students previously eligible for modified assessments to help ensure they can access the more rigorous content of the general assessments.

STAAR Alternate is based on alternate academic achievement standards and is designed for students with significant cognitive disabilities receiving special education services who meet the participation requirements for the program. This assessment is not a traditional paper or multiple-choice test. Instead, it requires teachers to observe students as they complete state-developed assessment tasks linked to the grade-level TEKS. Teachers then evaluate student performance based on the dimensions of the STAAR Alternate rubric and submit results through an online instrument. The STAAR Alternate assessments reflect the same increased rigor and focus of the general and modified assessments.

English Language Learners and the STAAR Program. The number of English Learners in Texas public schools has risen steadily during the past decade from about 570,000 in 2000–2001 to more than 838,000 (or about 1 in 6 students) by the 2011–2012 school year. ELLs are a diverse group of students who know English to varying degrees when they enter U.S. schools and have widely differing educational and sociocultural backgrounds. Both state and federal regulations require ELLs to be taught and tested over the same grade-level academic skills as other students. TEA has developed Spanish versions of STAAR in grades 3–5 in accordance with state statute. In addition, TEA has developed online versions of STAAR with built-in, standardized linguistic accommodations for eligible ELLs in grades 3–8 and high school. TELPAS will continue to measure the progress ELLs make in learning English language.

Plan for Measurement of Student Progress

In 2006, Texas expanded its reporting of student performance to include a measure of student progress when legislation from HB 1 (79th Texas Legislature, Third Called Session, 2005) required the commissioner of education to determine a method for measuring annual improvement in student achievement. Additionally, HB 3 (81st Texas Legislature, 2009) required that performance standards be tied to a measure of college readiness.

With the implementation of the STAAR program, Texas is considering growth measures to determine if students (1) are on-track to meet performance standards in a subsequent year, (2) are prepared for advanced courses, and (3) are projected to meet college- and career-readiness performance standards.

The following table outlines the general steps and timeline for implementing and reporting measures of student progress for the STAAR program. A number of different types of growth measures will be considered to meet state and federal requirements for STAAR reporting and for using a growth measure for state and federal accountability. Also under consideration is a measure of

expected academic performance for ELLs that sets challenging but achievable goals to meet grade-level academic content standards for ELL students in accordance with a timeline based on their years in U.S. schools.

Steps in the Process for Implementing and Reporting Measures of Student Progress for STAAR Assessments	Timeline
Identify the most appropriate student progress measures for the STAAR program	November 2010 – May 2011
Empirically evaluate the identified measures	June 2011 – October 2011
Obtain advisory group and expert advice	November 2011 – August 2012
Reevaluate plans for measures of student progress after spring 2012 and spring 2013 STAAR administrations (review of proposed measures and empirical data; additional advisory group and expert advice also may be gathered)	Summer 2012 and Summer 2013
Obtain approval of the new measures of student progress	Summer 2013
Implement and report new measures of student progress for the STAAR program	No later than Fall 2013

Provisions for Peer Review through the U.S. Department of Education

TEA submitted STAAR Modified for peer review by USDE in May 2012. The state had developed a plan to submit STAAR 3-8, STAAR 3-8 Alternate, STAAR EOC, and STAAR EOC Alternate for peer review in three phases, according to the following schedule:

Phase I: January 2013

- Content Standards (1): Critical elements 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4
- Statewide Assessment System (3): Critical elements 3.1, 3.4, 3.7

Phase II: May 2013

- Achievement Standards (2): Critical elements 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.6
- Statewide Assessment System (3): Critical elements 3.5, 3.6
- Technical Quality (4): Critical elements 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6

- Inclusion (6): Critical elements 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 6.4
- Reports (7): Critical elements 7.1, 7.2, 7.3, 7.4

Phase III: December 2013

- Achievement Standards (2): Critical elements 2.5
- Alignment (5): Critical elements 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.4, 5.5, 5.6

TEA has been successful at obtaining USDE peer review approval for its state assessment system in the past, and is prepared to submit documentation on STAAR that demonstrates the state assessment program meets all aspects of a high quality assessment system. Peer review notes from the initial submission for STAAR Modified that provide evidence that the assessment program meets these criteria are included in *Attachment 6c*. On December 21, 2012, USDE suspended the peer review process pending further notice. TEA is continuing to work on all of the required elements detailed above as a part of the STAAR Technical Digest. When USDE sets a new timeline for peer review submissions, TEA will resume submissions and adjust the schedule accordingly. Also attached is the outline for the 2011–2012 Technical Digest (*Attachment 6d*), which will form the basis for the STAAR peer review submission.

Principle 2: State-Developed Differentiated Recognition, Accountability, and Support

2.A Development and Implementation of a State-Based System of Differentiated Recognition, Accountability, And Support

This section provides a detailed description of the state's differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system, its alignment with the principles of the federal system, and provisions for integrating the two systems. Supporting documentation may be found in *Attachment 7*.

Background on the State's Accountability System

For some time, Texas schools and LEAs have been held accountable under two systems: the state accountability system, mandated by the Texas Legislature, and the federal system, created by the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act. Texas led the nation in the introduction of a statewide accountability system as a foundation for public education reform when, in 1993, the Texas Legislature enacted statutes mandating the creation of the Texas public school accountability system to rate LEAs and evaluate schools. A viable and effective accountability system could be developed in Texas because the state already had the necessary supporting infrastructure in place comprised of a student-level data collection system; a state-mandated curriculum; and a statewide assessment tied to the curriculum, the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS).

A new accountability system was designed in 2004 following introduction of a new state assessment program replacing the TAAS, the TAKS. This change coincided with the 2002 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act via NCLB, which extended federal accountability requirements that previously applied only to Title I schools and LEAs to all schools and LEAs. Designing an accountability system that met the demands of implementing the new TAKS system; reporting TAKS results and a longitudinal completion rate; meeting other state requirements; and adhering to the new federal regulations presented the state with new challenges. One challenge was keeping the performance improvement of low-performing students a priority, while improving the performance of top-performing students who must compete with other top-performing students across the nation. Additionally, new state accountability requirements expanded the system in one direction with more subjects and grades, while federal accountability requirements expanded the system in another direction with more student groups.

Under the provisions of Texas Education Code (TEC), Chapter 39, and the ESEA Title I School Improvement Program (SIP), the state is required to provide interventions to improve low-performing schools. TEC, Chapter 39, establishes a related system of interventions and sanctions for LEAs and schools, including charter schools. Interventions may include the appointment of campus

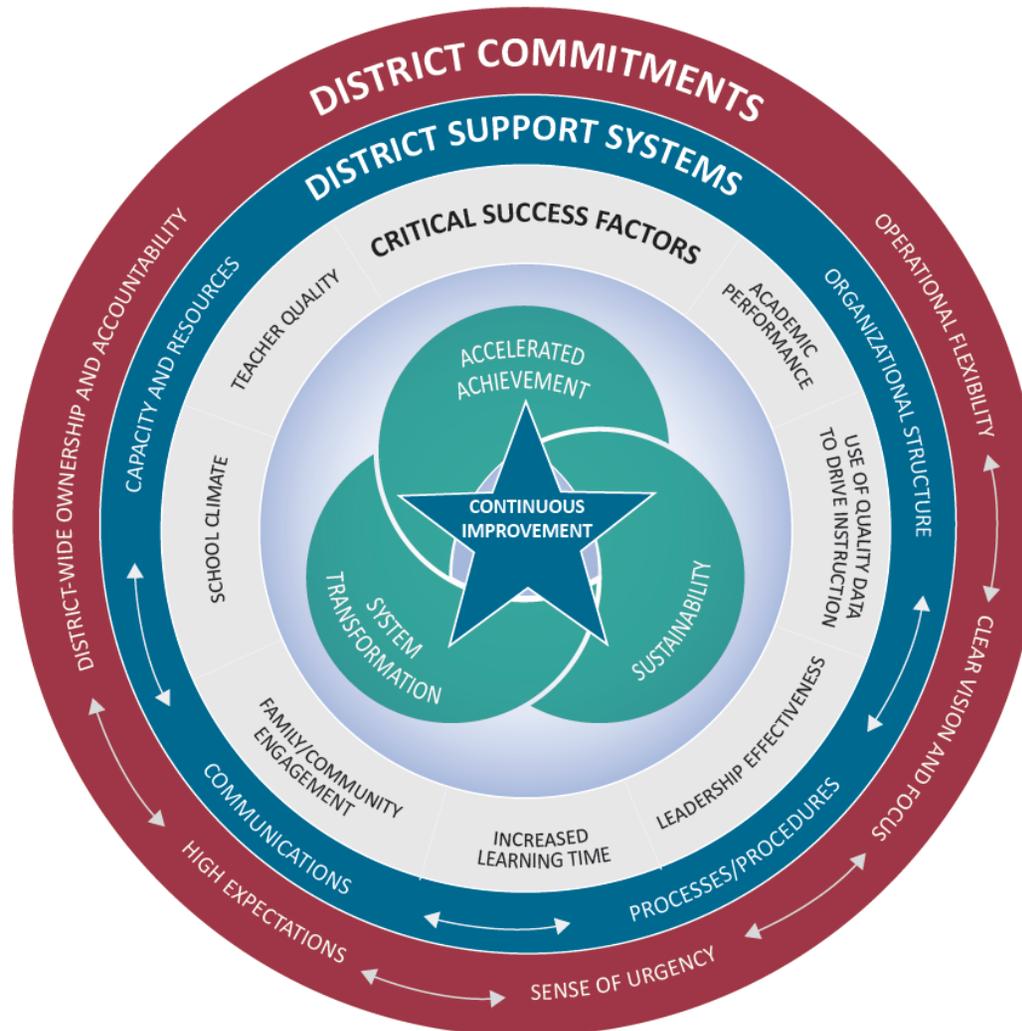
intervention teams, monitors, conservators, management teams, and boards of managers and also may include required hearings, public notifications, and the development of improvement or corrective action plans. School-level interventions required in state statute include the appointment of an intervention team to any school that fails to meet established performance standards, with escalated interventions imposed as a result of continuing low performance. Those graduated interventions include school reconstitution, the possible appointment of a monitor or conservator to provide LEA-level oversight, and a potential order of campus repurposing, alternative management, or closure (see Campus Intervention Matrix, *Attachment 7a*). The statute also establishes certain sanctions for LEA-level underperformance, including, but not limited to, LEA closure.

Similarly, the framework of support implemented by Texas under the federal accountability system includes the appointment of external technical assistance providers to support low-performing schools, with escalated interventions imposed as a result of continuing low performance. Those interventions may include student-level supports, corrective actions, school restructuring, and alternative governance.

The State's Framework for Continuous District and School Improvement

As part of the state's evolving efforts to align the state and federal accountability systems, TEA established the Texas Center for District and School Support (TCDS), a state-level entity that functions to coordinate, in conjunction with TEA, system-level leadership for school improvement efforts under both the federal and state systems. In collaboration with the TCDS, TEA developed a research-based framework for continuous district and school improvement. The framework outlines a cohesive system of intervention and the implementation of policies and practices that establish the environment and support needed to effectively impact low-performing schools. Designed to aid in the development of both district and campus improvement planning, the framework provides a common language and process for addressing the school improvement challenge. It is designed to show the aligned leadership and systems of support at the state, regional, district, and campus levels that will build the capacity necessary to turn around low-performing schools in Texas. Service providers, working collaboratively with district and school leadership, help facilitate district and campus supports that are aligned to the framework. The graphic on the following page illustrates the framework's key components, processes and outcomes; more detailed information about each component is provided in the narrative and tables following the illustration.

Texas Framework for Continuous District and School Improvement



Outcomes. The overarching goal of the framework is a state of continuous improvement for campuses, districts and the state. The end goal of the system of support, reflected in the center of the illustration, is accelerated achievement, sustainability, system

transformation, and continuous improvement. The table below describes these four outcomes in more detail.

Outcome	Description
Accelerated Achievement	Accelerated achievement is rapidly attained improvement resulting from an intense and urgent focus on identified areas of need. As barriers to achievement are uncovered and addressed, significant gains are accomplished and performance gaps are reduced.
Sustainability	Sustainability is the institutionalization of effective systems and processes that maintain progress over time, regardless of changing conditions. Districts ensure capacity for continuity, safeguard successful practices, and maintain commitment to continuous improvement.
System Transformation	System Transformation is the comprehensive change of expectations and behaviors, resulting in sustained innovation and success. Transformation is reflected in all aspects of the organization through fully functioning and effective processes.
Continuous Improvement	Continuous Improvement is the result of the dynamic interaction of organizational commitments and support systems ensuring the effective implementation of all Critical Success Factors. When these elements are integrated and fully operational, the outcomes of accelerated achievement, sustainability, and system transformation are produced.

Critical Success Factors. The framework’s critical success factors capture seven areas to address in improvement efforts. Whether campus interventions are being provided through the district, local Education Service Center, or the Texas Center for District and School Support, sharing a common language around resources is essential. The seven Critical Success Factors (CSFs) provide a common language to anchor the work of school improvement across Texas and create opportunity to match resources to needs. These factors reference the USDE turnaround principles and will be part of the statewide intervention system. Schools connecting individual needs to the CSFs can easily choose from customized resources provided across the state. The table below describes each CSF in more

detail.

Critical Success Factor	Description
Academic Performance	The foundational CSF. By focusing on data driven instruction that targets the use of ongoing monitoring of instruction, schools can increase performance for all students. Curricular alignment, both horizontally and vertically, is also an essential component of this CSF.
Use of Quality Data to Drive Instruction	Emphasizes data disaggregation training and ongoing communication of data to improve student learning outcomes. A focus of this CSF is utilizing data to drive decisions.
Leadership Effectiveness	Targets the need for leadership on the campus to exercise operational flexibility and the effective use of data and resources. Providing job-embedded professional development to build capacity of campus leaders is a vital part of this CSF.
Increased Learning Time	Necessitates flexible scheduling that allows time for additional instructional minutes, enrichment activities and staff collaborative planning time. This CSF also confirms as a requisite, an instructionally-focused calendar.
Family/Community Engagement	Calls for increased opportunities for input from parents and the community, as well as the necessity for effective communication and access to community services.
School Climate	Recognizes increased attendance and reduced discipline referrals as indicators of a positive and welcoming environment. Increased attendance in extracurricular activities is another sign that students feel supported by an affirming school climate.
Teacher Quality	Focuses on the need to recruit and retain effective teachers while also supporting current staff with job-embedded professional development. A locally developed appraisal and evaluation system informs personnel decisions in order to ensure quality teaching and learning.

District Support Systems. District support systems are vital as they have a significant impact on campus success. The most effective

road to improvement is through the district. District support systems that should be in place and characteristics related to the effectiveness of these systems are presented in the following table.

District Support System	Description
Organizational Structure	The district organizational structure has clearly delineated roles and responsibilities for personnel that focus on teaching and learning with accountability and impact on student achievement. The district eliminates barriers to improvement, redefines staff roles and responsibilities as necessary, and empowers staff to be responsive in support of school leadership.
Processes/Procedures	Priority is placed upon teaching and learning when establishing and implementing systemic operational protocols that guarantee accountability, availability of resources, and their effective use.
Communications	A clearly defined process that ensures a consistent message is being sent, received, and acted upon using multiple, effective delivery systems. Proactive efforts are engaged by district level staff to establish effective internal communication systems and transparent external communication practices. Communication is focused on a shared and clear vision for continuous improvement which streamlines collaborative efforts toward student success.
Capacity and Resources	The district organization strategically utilizes internal and external human capital and necessary resources to meet all needs for a successful learning environment. Expertise is purposefully cultivated and sustained through targeted recruitment, retention and succession planning.

District Commitments. An additional focus on the role of districts in continuous improvement is on district commitments that are essential to sustainable transformation. Critical district commitments are described in more detail in the table below.

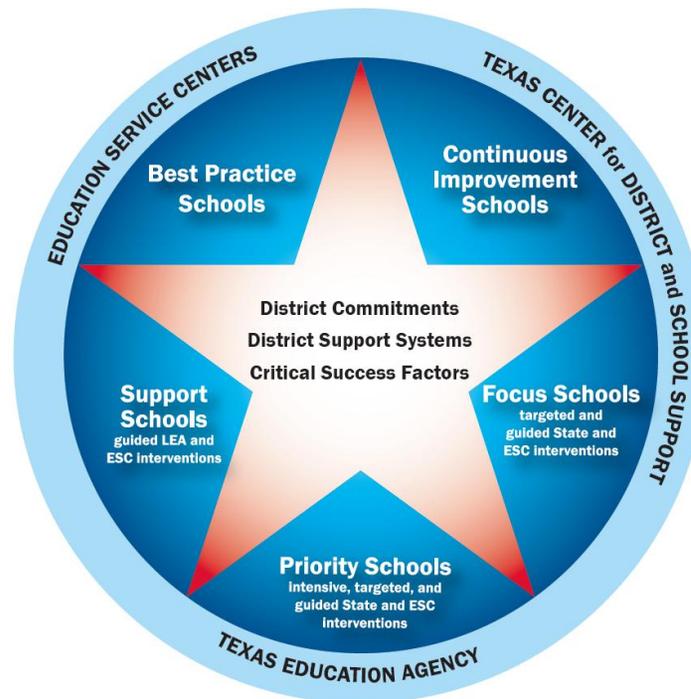
District Commitment	Description
Operational Flexibility	The district permits the agility to shift resources, processes, and practices in response to critical needs identified. The district's ability to address the needs of all students is contingent upon allowing customized approaches, expedition of resources, and departures from standard practice when the need is substantiated.
Clear Vision and Focus	The district strongly articulates a focus on student achievement as its

	primary work. Clear plans across the district are developed to address increasing performance for all students on all campuses. This vision is embraced and embedded in daily practice by all staff members.
Sense of Urgency	District staff, compelled by an intolerance of failure and dissatisfaction with deficits of the current state, set a priority and press for rapid action to change ineffective practices and processes that impede student success.
High Expectations	Explicit, rigorous standards are in place for student learning with adult and student confidence that success is attainable. These expectations are pervasively evident and understood by all with a commitment to providing a timely response and/or adjustment when goals are not met.
District-Wide Ownership and Accountability	Throughout the district, leadership recognizes and accepts responsibility for all current levels of performance and transparently interacts with stakeholders to plan and implement improvement initiatives. The district is engaged in continuous review of systemic, district-wide practices to ensure effective impact on critical need areas, such as low-performing campuses.

In summary, the Texas Framework for Continuous District and School Improvement supports district ownership and investment so that meaningful change can take place at the school level. The framework reflects a retooling of how the state supports low-performing schools, shifting more focus to developing central office teams to lead the work, and providing a structure to organize, deliver, and monitor the supports provided. Implementation of the framework is supported through the components of the Texas School Support System, described below.

The Texas School Support System.

With the increase in identified low-performing districts as they work with TEA, the TCDSS, and the network of regional Education Service Centers are committed to working with districts. The Texas School Support System, categorizes schools according to increased assistance and intervention. effective approaches to school success others across the state. *Continuous* and commitments that focus on their



performing districts and schools, support that is available to provide their campuses on improvement. regional Education Service Centers to provide support to campuses. depicted graphically to the right, identified needs across levels of *Best practice schools* have that can serve as resources to *improvement schools* have systems improvement efforts and they are

continuously progressing toward better performance. *Support schools* have identified areas of needed improvement and are working with their district and regional education service center to positively impact the identified areas. *Focus schools* have also identified areas of needed improvement and are working with their district, regional education service center, and have some statewide interventions targeting areas of need. *Priority schools* have multiple identified areas of needed improvement. They receive intensive, targeted, and guided district, education service center, and state interventions.

The structure of the Texas School Support System aligns state and federal accountability systems into a single system of support, and recognizes that sustainable transformation is the result of district commitments, district systems, and campus institutionalization of critical success factors. Schools are required to engage in the Texas Accountability Intervention System due to identified low performance in the state and/or federal accountability systems.

A System Characterized by Increasing Rigor. Primary features of the state-defined rating system since 1993 have been increasing rigor by raising the standards progressively over time; including new assessments as they become available; and incorporating more students in the LEA and school evaluations. In 2009, the Texas legislature enacted House Bill 3, making significant changes to parts of the Texas Education Code (TEC) relating to public school accountability that continue the trend toward greater rigor. These changes shift the focus of the state accountability system from meeting satisfactory standards on the state assessments to meeting both satisfactory and college-ready standards as measured by new STAAR assessments that are linked to postsecondary readiness.

The focus of HB 3 is the state-defined academic accountability ratings and distinction designations. However, state-defined accountability is part of the state's proposed integrated accountability system for Texas public schools and LEAs, the Texas Accountability Intervention System (TAIS). Changes to the state assessment program and accountability ratings will be reflected throughout the larger system of public school accountability. Three major components of the integrated accountability system will use STAAR assessment results to evaluate campuses and/or LEAs. State accountability ratings and federal accountability status will feed into multiple other processes that identify campuses and/or LEAs for interventions, sanctions, or rewards. Consequently, decisions made during the state accountability development process will extend beyond the state accountability ratings. The following goals have guided development of the new, state-defined accountability system:

1. Focus on LEA/school performance changes from minimum standards to standards based on postsecondary readiness.
2. Increase rigor of college readiness standards incrementally to ensure that Texas performs among the top ten states in postsecondary readiness by 2020.
3. Assign recognized and exemplary distinction ratings based on higher levels of student performance on college readiness standards rather than higher percentages of students performing at the satisfactory level.
4. Award schools distinctions for achieving the top quartile in terms of overall individual student progress and closing

- performance gaps among student groups.
5. Assign schools distinctions on broader indicators of excellence beyond results on state assessments.
 6. Aggregate reports providing detailed academic and financial information that is relevant, meaningful, and easily accessible to the public.
 7. Align state and federal accountability requirements to the greatest extent possible.

The Need for a Single Integrated System

Despite the best efforts of all parties, the implementation of two systems often results in a confusing mix of requirements that detract attention from the overall goal—improved performance for all students. To support this goal, and to create optimal learning environments and sustainable increases in student achievement, a coordinated, effective statewide system of support for struggling schools and LEAs is essential. In an endeavor to maximize resources and minimize confusion, TEA has engaged in evolving efforts to align the systems. With this flexibility request, TEA is proposing to implement a single accountability system with tiered interventions beginning in school year 2013–2014. With USDE approval, a waiver will allow Texas to implement one integrated system built on a strong foundation of both federal and state interventions. The following sections provide detailed descriptions of the state’s efforts in aligning state and federal requirements and the proposed system for 2013 and beyond.

A single system will foster the coordination of technical assistance and interventions to facilitate systemic change. One robust intervention system will allow for a focus on LEA involvement and sustainability for struggling schools through graduated levels of intervention. Furthermore, tiered interventions based on individual school needs that consider multiple variables will target and streamline interventions. Full implementation of the TAIS will allow LEAs to focus on creating accelerated, sustainable and systemic transformation in Texas schools to significantly increase student achievement. This conceptual approach moves beyond the classification of schools and requires LEAs to clearly articulate commitments and provide for necessary support to implement improvement strategies for low-performing schools. This provides LEAs with the opportunity to target the critical success factors of the Texas Framework for Continuous District and School Improvement described earlier.

Each district or school required to engage in the TAIS must collect and analyze data; conduct a needs assessment to determine factors contributing to low performance; develop an improvement plan addressing all areas not meeting the required performance standard; and monitor the implementation of the improvement plan. Schools must also establish a campus intervention team consisting of:

1. A Professional Service Provider (PSP), a TEA-approved member responsible for assuring implementation of all intervention requirements and reporting progress to the agency;
2. A District Coordinator of School Improvement (DCSI), an individual assigned by the district and approved by TEA, and who is a district-level employee in a leadership position in school improvement, curriculum and instruction, or another position with

responsibility for student performance; the DCSI is responsible for ensuring district support for the academic achievement of each campus; and

3. The Campus Leadership Team (CLT), made up of key school leaders and membership determined by the principal and/or the district; the CLT is responsible for developing, implementing, and monitoring the improvement plan; monitoring student performance; and determining student interventions and support services.

Relying on decades of school improvement research to identify critical success factors that elevate expectations and lead schools on a path of continuous improvement, the TAIS is designed to specify the foundational systems, actions, and processes to transform Texas’ schools. TAIS distinguishes levels of assistance for schools by incorporating the state and federal accountability labels into an aligned system of support (see *Attachment 7b* for an overview of the TAIS). Success will require purposeful actions and thoughtful planning by analyzing data, determining needs, developing focused plans for improvement, and monitoring the impact of those plans. The Texas School Support System will assist schools with these actions, placing them on a path toward attaining the outcomes central to the Framework for Continuous District and School Improvement.

Transitioning to the New, Integrated System

At the beginning of the accountability development process, a federal accountability transition plan for the 2011-2012 school year was submitted to USDE for approval. USDE approved the proposal for use of STAAR results at the TAKS equivalency standard for grades 3-8 so that federal accountability ratings could be released before the beginning of the school year.

Following are passing rates for the Grade 3-8 assessments from the 2012 administration.

Passing Rates for 2012 STAAR					
Grades 3-8					
Grade	Reading	Mathematics	Writing	Science	Social Studies
3	76%	68%	–	–	–
4	77%	68%	71%	–	–
5	77%	77%	–	73%	–
6	75%	77%	–	–	–

7	76%	71%	71%	–	–
8	80%	76%	–	70%	59%
– STAAR not required for grade level					

As with the high school STAAR tests, passing standards are being phased in for the elementary and middle school tests using a four-year, two-step process. This approach provides school districts with time to adjust instruction, provide additional training for teachers, and close knowledge gaps.

Although students first took the STAAR tests last spring, the passing standards were not finalized until recently for grades 3-8. State law required the passing rates to be set on the high school end-of-course exams first, with the standards for tests in lower grades aligned to those standards. Passing standards for the end-of-course assessments were established last spring.

For spring 2013 testing, results will be released on the normal schedule, which is typically by the end of the school year.

Additional information about grades 3-8 results can be found on the STAAR resources webpage at <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/student.assessment/staar/> under the statewide summary reports link. A question and answer document and technical details about the standard setting process are also available on that page.

A larger proposal for approval of federal accountability determinations for 2013 and beyond under the STAAR assessment program is being submitted through the annual accountability workbook submission process; see *Attachment 7c* for a copy of the Consolidated State Application Accountability Workbook. The assessment results for 2013 incorporated in the accountability indicators include STAAR grade-level assessments administered to students in Grades 3-8, STAAR EOC assessment results for all EOC assessments administered to students enrolled in Grades 9 and 10, and TAKS results for students enrolled in Grade 11.

TEA is far along in the process of developing a new state accountability system based on the structure outlined in HB 3. The 2011 school ratings were the last ratings assigned under the previous academic accountability system. Accountability ratings were suspended for 2012 while student performance standards were set on the new STAAR assessments and the new accountability system was being developed. During the development of the new accountability system, the commissioner of education has relied extensively on the detailed review, study, and advice of educators, parents, and business and community leaders in establishing accountability criteria and setting standards. The intent of the accountability development process is to design a new accountability system rather than modify the previous system. As part of this process, advisory committees are reevaluating every aspect of the accountability system. The timeline on the following pages provides dates for meetings of advisory groups and other key events related to the development of the new accountability system.

2011	
October 24 - November 14	Superintendents and ESC Directors submitted nominees to serve on the Accountability Technical Advisory Committee (ATAC).
December 21	Educators selected to serve on ATAC received notification.
2012	
January	Members selected for the Academic Achievement Distinction Designation Committee (AADDC).
January	Members selected for the Accountability Policy Advisory Committee (APAC).
March 5	First joint meeting of APAC and ATAC
March 6	First meeting of ATAC
March 26-29	STAAR Testing (grades 3-8 and EOC)
April 16	First meeting of the AADDC
April 24	EOC Standards Approved by Commissioner
April 24-27	STAAR Testing (grades 3-8)
May 7-18	STAAR Testing (EOC)
May 30	Second meeting of the ATAC
June 8	EOC results available with standards
June 28	Graduation and dropout data available to districts
June 25	Second meeting of AADDC
August 8	Preliminary district and campus AYP status for 2012 released to public
August 29	Third meeting of ATAC
October 22	Third and final meeting of AADDC
November 5	Second joint meeting of APAC and ATAC
November 6	Fourth meeting of ATAC
November	STAAR (grades 3-8) standards approved by commissioner
November	2011-12 AEIS reports released
December	Final district and campus AYP status for 2012 released to public

2013	
January 8	83rd Regular Session of the Texas Legislature convenes
January	STAAR (grades 3-8) results from spring 2012 available with standards
February 11-12	Fifth meeting of the ATAC
March 7	Third meeting of APAC
March	Commissioner releases final decisions for 2013 accountability ratings and distinctions
May	Key chapters of <i>2013 Accountability Manual</i> released
May 27	Last day of 83rd Regular Session of the Texas Legislature
Early June	Graduation and dropout data available to districts
June 15	If possible, notification reports will be issued to districts for campuses that were rated as <i>Academically Unacceptable</i> in 2011 and are anticipated to be rated as "unacceptable*" in 2013.
August 8	District and campus ratings are released, based on percent proficient indicator. Some distinction designations are assigned to campuses.
August 8	Ratings may be appealed.
Late September	Appeals Panel meets to consider appeals.
October	Commissioner determines final ratings; ratings updated.
November	Release of 2012-13 Performance Reports.
2014	
February/March	Annual meeting of the ATAC and APAC.
March	Commissioner releases final decisions for 2014 ratings
May	Key chapters of <i>2014 Accountability Manual</i> released.
Early June	Graduation and dropout data available to districts
June 15	Notification reports issued to districts for campuses rated as "unacceptable*" in 2013 that are anticipated to be rated as "unacceptable*" in 2014.
August 8	Release of district and campus performance ratings based on percent proficient and percent college-ready indicators. Some distinction designations are assigned to districts and campuses.
August 8	Ratings may be appealed.
Late September	Appeals Panel meets to consider appeals
Early October	Commissioner determines final ratings; ratings updated.
November	Release of 2013-14 Performance Reports.

Design of the New Accountability System

The goal specified in state statute is that 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 achievement gaps among groups; and closing gaps among groups in the percentage of students graduating under the recommended high school program and advanced high school program. The accountability system is designed address this goal and includes all campuses and districts administered by TEA regardless of program or type of public school.

The overall design of the accountability system is a performance index framework. Performance indicators are grouped into four indexes that align with the goals of the accountability system.

Index 1: Student Achievement is a snapshot of performance across subjects, on both general and alternative assessments, at the satisfactory performance standard.

Index 2: Student Progress separates measures of student progress from measures of student achievement to provide an opportunity for diverse campuses to show the improvements they are making independent of overall achievement levels. Growth is evaluated by subject and student group.

Index 3: Closing Performance Gaps emphasizes advanced academic achievement of the economically disadvantaged student group and the lowest performing race/ethnicity student groups at each campus or district.

Index 4: Postsecondary Readiness includes measures of high school completion and STAAR performance at the postsecondary readiness standard. The intent of this index is to emphasize the importance for students to receive a high school diploma that provides them with the foundation necessary for success in college, the workforce, job training programs, or the military.

2013 Transition Year Accountability Ratings Criteria and Targets

To receive a Met Standard rating, all campuses and districts must meet the accountability targets on all indexes for which they have performance data in 2013.

Districts and campuses with students in Grade 9 or above must meet targets on four indexes:

Index 1: Student Achievement

- Index 2: Student Progress
- Index 3: Closing Performance Gaps
- Index 4: Postsecondary Readiness

Districts and campuses with a high grade of Grade 8 or lower must meet targets on three indexes for which they have performance data in 2013:

- Index 1: Student Achievement
- Index 2: Student Progress
- Index 3: Closing Performance Gaps

Statutory requirements, timing of availability of data, transition from TAKS to STAAR, and implementation of new statutory requirements regarding calculation of graduation rates and dropout rates, will all affect the first few years of implementation of the new accountability rating system. The most immediate transition issues are those related to the 2013 ratings. The accountability system will look significantly different in 2013 than it will in 2014. Some of the transitions, however, will continue to affect the indicators through the 2016 ratings. The system design must be robust enough to withstand some instability.

The introduction of STAAR final Level II (Index 4) and Level III advanced performance (Index 3) in 2014 will be very visible changes to the performance indexes. Other transitions will change the indicators in ways that are not as obvious. It will be more difficult to compare campus and district performance on individual indicators from one year to the next during the first few years of the new accountability system. At the index level, performance results will not be comparable.

Introducing the Performance Index Framework in 2013

Some components of the performance index framework cannot be implemented in 2013.

- Index 1: Student Achievement – implemented in 2013 for all campuses
- Index 2: Student Progress – implemented in 2013 for all campuses
- Index 3: Closing Performance Gaps – modified for 2013 (see Transition 1)
- Index 4: Postsecondary Readiness – partially implemented in 2013 for campuses with graduation rates or dropout rates (see Transition 1)

Transitions

1. STAAR final Level II and Level III Advanced. Statute requires reporting of college readiness standards in 2013 and postponing use in the accountability ratings until 2014. Academic achievement indicators based on college readiness are included in Index 3: Closing Performance Gaps and Index 4: Postsecondary Readiness.
 - Index 3: Closing Performance Gaps. The indicator in Index 3 is a weighted performance rate that, when fully implemented, gives one point for students performing at the Level II satisfactory performance standard and two points for students performing at the Level III advanced performance standard. For 2013 the indicator definition will be modified to give one point for students performing at the Level II satisfactory performance standard or higher.
 - Index 4: Postsecondary Readiness. The assessment indicator in Index 4, which measures achievement at the final Level II performance standard, will not be included in the index in 2013. The 2013 ratings will not include evaluation of Index 4 for elementary and middle/junior high schools. For high schools, performance of the graduation rate component of Index 4 will be evaluated.
2. TAKS to EOC. Transition from TAKS to STAAR EOC as the assessment requirement for graduation will take place with the class of 2015. The 2013 ratings must include Grade 11 TAKS results for the class of 2014. Most students in the class of 2015 are enrolled in Grade 10 in 2013. In 2014 no TAKS results are included in the indicators. In addition, most students in the class of 2015 will attempt the higher level Grade 11 EOC assessments for the first time in 2014 – English III, Algebra II, Physics, and U.S. History. Consequently, the assessment indicators will become more rigorous in 2014 because the Grade 11 TAKS results are replaced by results on the most difficult EOC assessments. For high schools and combined elementary/secondary schools the increase in rigor of the STAAR indicator will offset STAAR performance gains on the assessment indicators in Index 1, Index 3, and Index 4 performance.
3. ELL. An English language learner performance measure is being developed to evaluate student achievement for ELL students in their first years in a U.S. school as they progress toward proficiency in English. This measure will not be finalized in time for the 2013 accountability ratings.
4. Graduation Rate. The longitudinal graduation rates will be calculated under the state definition with statutorily required exclusions beginning with the class of 2011, but the change will not be fully phased in until the class of 2014 graduation rates used for 2015 accountability ratings. The affect of this change will be less each year.

Recommended High School Program/Advanced High School Program (RHSP/AHSP)

The RHSP/AHSP indicator will measure graduation plans of TAKS graduating classes through 2014. The rates calculated for the class of 2015 (2016 accountability ratings) will be the first based on graduation plans of a STAAR graduating class. Given the increased rigor of the RHSP and AHSP diploma requirements, performance on this indicator may initially decline.

2013 Transition Year Accountability Targets

	Index 1: Student Achievement	Index 2: Student Progress	Index 3: Closing Performance Gaps	Index 4: Postsecondary Readiness
non-AEA (7,338 campuses)	----- 50	Index score at 5 th percentile of non-AEA campus performance	----- 55	----- 75
AEA (311 campuses)	----- 25	Index score at 5 th percentile of AEA campus performance	----- 30	----- 45

Overall Design: Performance Index

The performance index framework addresses the four statutory policy goals for the new accountability system.

- 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 advanced high school program.

Performance indicators are grouped into four indexes that align with the goals of the accountability system.

Index 1: Student Achievement is a snapshot of performance across subjects, on both general and alternative assessments, at the satisfactory performance standard.

Index 2: Student Progress separates measures of student progress from measures of student achievement to provide an opportunity for diverse campuses to show the improvements they are making independent of overall achievement levels. Growth is evaluated by subject and student group.

Index 3: Closing Performance Gaps emphasizes advanced academic achievement of the economically disadvantaged student group and the lowest performing race/ethnicity student groups at each campus or district.

Two approaches were considered on how best to meet the statutory requirement that Texas will be among the top ten states in postsecondary readiness by 2020 with no significant achievement gaps by race, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status. The first approach was to compare the performance of the lower performing student group to the performance of a higher performing student group over time. There were clear disadvantages to this approach.

- Sets performance expectations of the lower performing student groups to the performance level of the higher performing student group, a relative and moving target.
- Requires additional safeguards to ensure that progress in closing the performance gaps is not achieved by lowering the performance of the higher performing student groups.
- Evaluates fewer campuses since both the lower and higher performing groups must meet minimum size criteria. For example, campuses may meet minimum size criteria for economically disadvantaged student group but not non-economically disadvantaged student group.
- Requires more complex statistical calculations to measure change in the size of performance gaps between two groups, both of whose performance is changing.

The second approach in evaluating progress toward closing performance gaps was to compare the performance of the lower

performing student group to an external target. The Index 3 indicators take the second approach. This approach has a number of advantages.

- Sets performance expectations of the lower performing student groups, in this case economically disadvantaged students and the lowest performing race/ethnicity student groups, at the STAAR Level III advanced performance standard, an absolute performance target that is tied to the statutory and accountability goal that Texas will be among the top ten states in postsecondary readiness by 2020 with no significant achievement gaps by race, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status.
- Evaluates more campuses because most campuses meet minimum size criteria for economically disadvantaged student group. Many campuses will also meet minimum size criteria for at least two race/ethnicity student groups.

Performance Expectations

Performance expectations are set at the STAAR Level III advanced performance standard rather than at the performance level of the higher performing student group. This sets performance expectations for the low performing groups to an absolute performance target that does not change every year. In addition, the STAAR Level III advanced performance standard is tied to the statutory and accountability goal that Texas will be among the top ten states in postsecondary readiness by 2020 with no significant achievement gaps by race, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status.

The STAAR Level III advanced performance standard focuses on closing performance gaps at the highest performance level. Student performance gaps are greatest at Level III. Performance in this category indicates that students are well prepared for the next grade or course. Students in this category have a high likelihood of success in the next grade or course with little or no academic intervention.

Weighted Performance Rate

The STAAR Weighted Performance Rate used in Index 3 gives Level III advanced test results twice the weight of phase-in Level II test results in the indicator, acknowledging the greater challenge of achieving the Level III advanced performance standard.

Student Groups

Most campuses and districts meet minimum size criteria for the economically disadvantaged student group. Although there is overlap between race/ethnicity student groups and the economically disadvantaged student group, there are race/ethnicity student group performance gaps that exist independent of current socioeconomic status of students. Also, including both economically disadvantaged student group and low-performing race/ethnicity student groups in Index 3 addresses one of the weaknesses of the performance index framework – the possibility of low performance of one student group being masked by higher performance of other student groups. The inclusion of student groups that may consist of the same students illustrates that the primary purpose of Index 3 is to reward schools that focus the necessary instructional resources on these student populations. Further, the proposed

construction of Index 3 will reduce the need to incorporate performance floors into the accountability ratings criteria to protect student group performance.

Index 4: Postsecondary Readiness

Index 4 includes measures of high school completion and STAAR performance at the final Level II standard. The intent of this index is to emphasize the importance for students to receive a high school diploma that provides them with the foundation necessary for success in college, the workforce, job training programs, or the military.

Performance Expectations. The index includes final Level II performance. Performance at this level indicates that students are sufficiently prepared for the next grade or course and have a reasonable likelihood of success in the next grade or course. The index includes final Level II performance for Grades 3-8 as well as high school to emphasize the importance of elementary and middle schools in preparing students to achieve this level of performance in high school. Giving credit for students who meet the final Level II standard on one or more tests recognizes that students have strengths and talents in certain areas but not always in all areas.

Career Readiness

Postsecondary readiness encompasses both college readiness and career readiness, and there is an interest in additional measures that focus on career readiness. As required by statute, the criteria for new 21st Century Workforce Development Program distinction designations will be developed by an advisory committee of experts, educators, and community leaders appointed by the governor, lieutenant governor, and speaker of the house. The 21st Century Workforce Development Program committee will convene through 2013 to develop distinction designations that can be awarded as early as 2014. As distinction designations indicators for 21st Century Workforce Development Programs are developed, accountability advisory groups will examine how career-readiness measures can be incorporated into the performance index accountability system for 2014 and beyond.

Student Groups and Minimum Size Criteria

Evaluation of student group performance has been a constant in the Texas accountability system since its inception and is credited with driving the comparatively high performance of Texas minority and economically disadvantaged students on national assessments. The new accountability system will include evaluation of student groups based on race/ethnicity and socioeconomic status. The accountability system includes disaggregated student group performance for all required student groups: All Students, seven race/ethnicity student groups, economically disadvantaged students, special education students, and English language learners (ELL). The following table shows the student groups that are included in the accountability system, with their numbers and percentage of total enrollment from the 2011–2012 school year.

Student Group*	2011–2012	
	Number	Percent
African American	637,934	12.8
American Indian	22,224	0.4
Asian	176,755	3.6
Hispanic	2,530,789	50.8
Pacific Islander (formerly with Asian)	6,227	0.1
White	1,520,320	30.5
Two or More Races (new category)	83,871	1.7
Economically Disadvantaged	3,008,464	60.4
Special Education	430,350	8.6
English Language Learner	837,536	16.8
Total Enrollment	4,978,120	

*Groups are based on the new federal race/ethnicity definitions that were collected in the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) for the first time in the 2009–2010 school year

The performance indexes include evaluation of performance of all students and ten student groups: economically disadvantaged, English language learners, special education, and seven race/ethnicity groups (African American, American Indian, Asian, Hispanic, Pacific Islander, White, and Two or More Races). The following table shows which student groups are evaluated for each index and indicator. A single set of minimum size criteria apply across all indicators.

All Students: No minimum size criteria; data are aggregated across three years if the denominator is smaller than ten. Data are also aggregated across three years for the economically disadvantaged student group in Index 3.

Student Groups: 25 (denominator greater than or equal to 25).

Student Groups in the Performance Indexes

Index 1: Student Achievement	
STAAR Percent Met Phase-in Level II Standard	All Students

Index 2: Student Progress	
STAAR Weighted Growth	All Students Race/Ethnicity (seven groups) English Language Learners Special Education
Index 3: Closing Performance Gaps	
STAAR Weighted Performance (Phase-In Level II and Level III)	Economically Disadvantaged Race/Ethnicity (two lowest performing groups)
Index 4: Postsecondary Readiness	
STAAR Percent Met Final Level II on At Least One Test	All Students Race/Ethnicity (seven groups)
RHSP/AHSP Annual Rates	
Graduation Rates (4-year and 5-year)	All Students Race/Ethnicity (seven groups) English Language Learners Special Education
Annual Dropout Rates Gr. 9-12	
System Safeguards	
STAAR Percent Met Phase-in Level II Standard	All Students Economically Disadvantaged Race/Ethnicity (seven groups) English Language Learners Special Education
STAAR Participation Rates	
Federal Graduation Rates (4-year and 5-year)	
District 1% and 2% Limits on STAAR-Alternate and STAAR-Modified	All Students

Accountability System Safeguards

Underlying the performance index framework are disaggregated performance results. The disaggregated performance results will serve as the basis of safeguards for the accountability rating system. The following template shows the disaggregated safeguard measures and targets. Performance rates are calculated from the assessment results used to calculate performance rates in the performance index. For purposes of the safeguards, a single target will be used for all campuses and districts for the disaggregated performance rates that correspond to the target for student achievement in Index 1. Participation rates, graduation rates, and limits on use of STAAR Alternate and STAAR Modified are calculated to meet federal requirements and federal targets have been set for these indicators.

Accountability System Safeguard Measures and Targets											
	All	African American	American Indian	Asian	Hispanic	Pacific Islander	White	Two or More	Econ. Disadv.	ELL	Special Educ.
Performance Rates											
Reading	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%
Mathematics	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%
Writing	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%
Science	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%
Soc. Studies	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%
Participation Rates											
Reading	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%
Mathematics	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%
Federal Grad. Rates[#]											
4-year	78%	78%	78%	78%	78%	78%	78%	78%	78%	78%	78%
5-year	83%	83%	83%	83%	83%	83%	83%	83%	83%	83%	83%
District Limits on Use of Alternative Assessment Results											
Reading											
Modified	2%	<i>Not Applicable</i>									
Alternate	1%	<i>Not Applicable</i>									
Mathematics											
Modified	2%	<i>Not Applicable</i>									
Alternate	1%	<i>Not Applicable</i>									

[#] Federal graduation rate targets include an improvement target.

Results will be reported for any cell that meets accountability minimum size criteria. Failure to meet the safeguard target for any reported cell must be addressed in the campus or district improvement plan. If the campus or district is already identified for assistance or intervention in the Texas Accountability Intervention System (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. The TAIS determines the level of intervention and support the campus or district receives based on performance history as well as current year state accountability rating and performance on the safeguard performance measures.

Federal Performance Rate Targets

In addition to the significant increase in rigor of the STAAR assessments, as described in Section 2.B. below, the following factors were considered in determining the starting point for the AMO target for the performance rate.

- The minimum size for an individual student group to be evaluated has been lowered to 25, as compared to prior criteria of 50 students which must comprise at least 10 percent of all students or 200 students, even if that group represents less than 10% of all students. The minimum size criteria of 25 or more students is applied regardless of the percentage of students in the student groups compared to all students.
- Since all content areas are evaluated in the performance index framework, the performance rate targets must be met for writing, science, and social studies. The subject areas evaluated for federal accountability in prior years was reading/ELA and mathematics only.
- The student groups evaluated are expanded to include all racial/ethnic groups. The racial/ethnic groups evaluated for federal accountability in prior years was African American, Hispanic, and white student groups only. Four additional student groups are now included in the evaluation in addition to the economically disadvantaged students, students with disabilities, and English language learner student groups.

Federal Participation Rate Targets

Participation rates targets of 95% that are applied to the STAAR assessments are unchanged from the targets applied to the TAKS assessments in the federal accountability evaluations in prior years.

Federal Graduation Rate Goals and Targets

State statute (Texas Education Code §39.053(g-1)) requires that certain students be excluded from the graduation rates and dropout rates used in the state accountability rating system. The rates with state exclusions are included in Index 4 in compliance with state statute. These include four-year graduation rates and five-year graduation rates; annual dropout rates; and four-year, five-year, and six-year graduation and GED rates for alternative education campuses.

A second set of graduation rates without the state exclusions is calculated to meet federal accountability requirements. The rates without state exclusions are reported and are evaluated outside the performance index framework as part of the disaggregated system safeguards. Districts and campuses must meet federal accountability targets on the federal graduation rates for All Students and each of the ten student groups evaluated in the state accountability system.

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 the 90.0 percent graduation rate goal must meet either an annual target or a growth target for the four-year graduation rate, or an annual target for the five-year graduation rate.

Four-Year Graduation Rate Annual Target: For 2013 accountability determinations, 78.0 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 difference between prior year graduation rate and the 90.0 percent goal or at least 1.0 percentage point increase in graduation rate.

Five-Year Graduation Rate Target: For 2013 accountability determinations, 83.0 percent of students graduate with a regular high school diploma in five years.

All districts and campuses that fail to meet graduation rate targets are subject to interventions. The interventions require districts and campuses to develop focused plans for improvement. If graduation rates do not improve and the district or campus fails to meet federal accountability targets in the next accountability cycle, the level of assistance and intervention increases.

Accountability Ratings Criteria and Targets

2013 Rating Labels

To meet state statutory requirements, the accountability system must identify acceptable and unacceptable campuses and districts. The actual labels are not in statute, and the recommendation from the APAC and ATAC was to use different labels for the new performance index accountability ratings than those used under the former accountability system. Districts and campuses will be assigned the following rating labels based on the performance index accountability system:

- *Met Standard* – met performance index targets
- *Met Alternative Standard* – met modified performance index targets for alternative education campuses and districts
- *Improvement Required* – did not meet one or more performance index targets

2013 Ratings Criteria and Targets

Each of the four indexes will have a score of 0 to 100 representing campus/district performance points as a percent of the maximum possible points for that campus/district. The performance targets that are set for each index will be used to assign accountability rating labels.

2013 Transition Year

The 2013 ratings criteria and targets will stand alone because the performance index framework cannot be fully implemented in 2013.

2013 Accountability Appeals

The compensatory nature of the performance index framework and other features of the indexes, such as the use of multiple indicators to derive an overall index score, minimize the possibility that district errors in coding student demographic information in PEIMS or the STAAR assessment program negatively impact the overall accountability rating. Therefore, appeals will only be considered in rare cases where a data or calculation error is attributable to the testing contractor or the Texas Education Agency.

Plan for 2014 and Beyond

Accountability advisory groups will reconvene in fall 2013 to finalize recommendations for accountability ratings criteria for 2014 and beyond and targets for 2014 through 2016. Accountability ratings labels of A, B, C, D, and F are planned to be used in the state accountability rating system beginning in the 2013-14 school year. The criteria that will be used to assign the A-F rating labels will be determined by the agency in fall 2013.

State Accountability Ratings and Distinction Designations	Year Label Implemented	
	Campus	District
Met Standard and Improvement Required	2013	2013
A, B, C, D, and F (proposed)	2014	2014
Top 25% in student progress distinction	2013	NA
Top 25% in closing achievement gaps distinction	2014	NA
Academic achievement in reading/ELA distinction	2013	NA
Academic achievement in mathematics distinction	2013	NA
Academic achievement in science distinction	2014	NA
Academic achievement in social studies	2014	NA

distinction		
21 st Century Workforce Development distinction	2014	NA

Assessments for Accountability

The following STAAR assessments will be used to determine the acceptable and unacceptable performance ratings that will be assigned beginning in 2013:

- STAAR Grades 3-8 English and Spanish
- STAAR EOC assessments administered in the spring and the previous fall and summer
- STAAR Grades 3-8 and EOC Modified and Alternate

The 2013 STAAR results will be used as the baseline for establishing accountability performance targets for 2014 and beyond. The 2013 assessment results will include two cohorts of high school students (class of 2015 and class of 2016) on STAAR EOC graduation plans. The 2012 assessment results will not be used to establish a starting point because in 2012 only one cohort of high school students (class of 2015) is assessed on STAAR EOC, as shown on the following table. In addition, the 2013 assessment results will be used to finalize the STAAR English Language Learner Progress Measure. Consequently, the 2013 assessment results will serve as a baseline for all four indexes.

Baseline Data for Targets

	EOC Courses*	2012	2013	2014
Grade 9	English I Reading English I Writing Algebra I Biology World Geography	Class of 2015 STAAR EOC	Class of 2016 STAAR EOC	Class of 2017 STAAR EOC
Grade 10	English II Reading English II Writing Geometry Chemistry World History	Class of 2014 TAKS	Class of 2015 STAAR EOC	Class of 2016 STAAR EOC
Grade 11	English III Reading English III Writing Algebra II Physics U.S. History	Class of 2013 TAKS	Class of 2014 TAKS	Class of 2015 STAAR EOC

*There is not a state-mandated course sequence; however, this table represents the typical course sequence that most students follow.

Distinction Designations

Districts and campuses that receive an accountability rating of Met Standard are eligible for distinction designations. The campus top twenty-five percent in student progress and closing achievement gaps will be determined by performance index scores. Campuses are also eligible for academic achievement distinction designations in reading/English language arts and mathematics developed by a separate advisory committee. Campus distinction designations will be based on campus performance in relation to a comparison group of campuses. The following campus distinction designations will be awarded in 2013:

- Top 25% Student Progress
- Academic Achievement in Reading/English language arts
- Academic Achievement in Mathematics

Campus Top Twenty-Five Percent Distinction Designations

Campus top twenty-five percent distinction designations will be based on performance on Index 2 and Index 3 in relation to campuses in the comparison group.

- 2013 and Beyond: Top 25% Student Progress. Based on performance on Index 2: Student Progress. Campuses that are in the top quartile of their campus comparison group in performance on Index 2.
- 2014 and Beyond: Top 25% Closing Achievement Gaps. Based on performance on Index 3: Closing Performance Gaps. Campuses that are in the top quartile of their campus comparison group in performance on Index 3.

Campus Academic Achievement Distinction Designations (AADD)

The AADD system recognizes outstanding academic achievement in reading/English language arts (ELA) and mathematics on a variety of indicators, including completion of advanced/dual enrollment courses and SAT and ACT performance and participation, based on comparison groups of similar campuses. See Final Decisions for Academic Achievement Distinction Designations (AADD) in Reading/ELA and Mathematics.

District and Campus Recognized and Exemplary Ratings

The district and campus recognized and exemplary distinction designations will be implemented in 2014. Criteria and targets will be set in fall 2013 when other 2014 accountability targets are set.

Alternative Education Accountability

Alternative education campuses are required to meet the same performance targets as regular campuses for federal accountability purposes. Specifically, each of the performance, participation, and graduation rate targets that are required for regular campuses in the system safeguards table above must also be met by alternative education campuses for federal accountability. For state accountability evaluations, alternative education campuses and districts will receive accountability ratings under the performance index accountability system. Although a separate alternative education accountability system will not be developed, the following modifications will be made for alternative education campuses and districts.

Eligibility Criteria

In addition to the ten eligibility criteria under the former state accountability system, alternative education campuses of choice must primarily serve students in Grades 6-12.

Accountability Targets

Accountability targets will be modified from those used for non-AEA campuses and districts as shown under 2013 Transition Year Accountability Ratings Criteria and Targets above.

Residential Facilities

Alternative education campuses and districts identified as Residential Facilities will not be assigned rating labels in 2013. Performance index results will be reported but no rating label will be assigned.

Index 4: Postsecondary Readiness

The following modifications to indicator definitions and index construction were created for AEA campuses:

- **Grade 9-12 Graduation and GED Rate**

The graduation rate calculation is modified to give AEA campuses and districts credit for GED recipients as well as graduates. Four-year, five-year, and six-year modified graduation and GED rates will be calculated for AECs. To meet federal accountability requirements, alternative education campuses do not get credit for students receiving a GED. Specifically, these campuses must meet the 78% graduation target based on the four-year rate or the 83% target for the five-year rate based on graduates only.

Graduation and GED Score will contribute 75 percent of the points to Index 4 and STAAR Score (Percent Met final Level II on One or More Tests) will contribute 25 percent of the points. (For regular campuses STAAR Score and Graduation Score contribute equally to Index 4.)

- **Annual Dropout Rate**

The annual dropout rate conversion is modified to give AEA campuses and districts points in Index 4 for annual dropout rates lower than 20.0. (For non-AEA campuses and districts the conversion gives credit for annual dropout rates lower than 10.0.)

- **Bonus Points**

Bonus Points will be added to the final index score for the following indicators, to a maximum of 50 points.

- Recommended High School Program/Advanced High School Program rates (rather than averaging the rates into the Graduation and GED Score). For AEA campuses and districts that use the Annual Dropout Rate, an annual RHSP/AHSP rate will be calculated for bonus points.
- Continuing Students Success Rates will give AEA campuses and districts bonus points for continuing students who graduate or receive a GED in their fifth or sixth year.

- Excluded Students Credit will give AEA campuses and districts bonus points for serving recovered dropouts and other students who are statutorily excluded from the graduation rate and dropout rate calculations for those students who graduate or earn a GED.
- **Distinction Designations**

Beginning in 2013, AEA campuses will be eligible for Top 25% Student Progress distinction designations based on Index 2 performance. In addition, AECs will be eligible for recognition under the Academic Achievement Distinction Designations (AADD) system. The AADD system includes indicators for completion of advanced/dual enrollment courses, and SAT and ACT performance and participation based on comparison groups of similar campuses.

Overview of Proposed Performance Index Framework*

Shaded areas are not evaluated in 2013

	Index 1: Student Achievement	Index 2: Student Progress	Index 3: Closing Performance Gaps	Index 4: Postsecondary Readiness
Features of Index	<p>STAAR Satisfactory Performance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Students Only Combined over All Subject Areas Credit given for meeting phase-in Level II performance standard on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> STAAR Grades 3-8 English and Spanish for assessments administered in the spring; EOC for assessments administered in the spring and the previous fall and summer; STAAR Grades 3-8 and EOC Modified and Alternate; STAAR L (linguistically accommodated) based on the ATAC ELL Workgroup recommendations; and, TAKS Grade 11 results at Met Standard performance standard (2013 only). 	<p>Student Progress to Satisfactory or Advanced Performance Levels</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ten Student Groups Evaluated: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Students Each Race/Ethnicity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> African American American Indian Asian Hispanic Pacific Islander White Two or More Races Students with Disabilities English Language Learners (ELLs) By Subject Area (Reading, Math, and Writing for available grades) Same assessments used in Index 1 where student progress measures are available Credit based on weighted performance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> One point credit given for each percentage of students at the Met growth expectations level Two point credit given for each percentage of students at the Exceeded growth expectations level 	<p>Achievement Gaps Measured for Satisfactory and Advanced Levels</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Economically Disadvantaged Students and Two Lowest Performing Racial/Ethnic Groups based on the Index 1 student achievement indicator reported in the prior year By Subject Area (Reading/ELA, Mathematics, Writing, Science, and Social Studies) Same Assessments Used in Index 1 Credit based on weighted performance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> One point credit given for each percentage of students meeting the phase-in Level II performance standard Two point credit given for each percentage of students meeting the final Level III Advanced performance standard 	<p>Measures of Postsecondary Readiness Credit based on average of two postsecondary indicators:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> STAAR postsecondary readiness standard (final Level II) and high school graduation rates and diploma plans <p>STAAR Postsecondary Readiness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eight Student Groups Evaluated: All Students and each Race/Ethnicity Combined over All Subject Areas Credit given for meeting postsecondary readiness standard (final Level II) on one or more tests <p>High School Graduation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Four-year Graduation Rate or Five-year Graduation Rate (or Annual Dropout Rate if no graduation rate) Ten Student Groups Evaluated: All Students, each Race/Ethnicity, Students with Disabilities, and ELLs Percent Recommended or Advanced High School Program Plan (RHSP/AHSP) Graduates Eight Student Groups Evaluated: All Students and each Race/Ethnicity <p style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;">Career and Technical Education Indicators TBD (2015 and Beyond)</p>
Additional Evaluations	<p>Apply Safeguards to Specific Performance Indexes, as needed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report performance by student group, performance level, subject, and grade; Implement interventions focused on specific areas of weak performance; Implement interventions based on minimum participation rate targets; and, Implement interventions for excessive use of STAAR Modified and STAAR Alternate. 		<p>Academic Achievement Distinctions in Reading/ELA and Mathematics</p> <p>Campuses earn distinctions for outstanding academic achievement on indicators, such as SAT/ACT participation/performance, AP/IB participation/performance, Advanced (Level III) Performance on STAAR, Advanced/Dual Enrollment Course Completion, and Attendance Rates.</p>	

* Additional features, such as Required Improvement and three-year averaging, are incorporated when applicable.

Performance Index Targets

Texas Education Code requires that the commissioner of education annually define the current year's state accountability target for student achievement indicators and project each indicator's state target for the following two years [TEC §39.053(f)]. This section of statute also directs the commissioner to raise the target for the percent college-ready indicator so that Texas ranks in the top ten among states nationally by 2019–2020 on two measures—the percent college-ready and the percent graduating under the recommended or advanced high school program, with no significant gaps by race, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status. A single target will be used for the disaggregated performance rates that correspond to the 2013 target for student achievement in the performance index (see table below).

In 2011, the ELL Progress Measure was incorporated in the state accountability system to evaluate progress towards reading proficiency in English for current and monitored limited English proficient (LEP) students. The ELL Progress Measure that is under development for the state assessment program sets challenging but achievable goals to meet grade-level academic content standards for ELL students in accordance with a timeline based on their years in U.S. schools. When fully implemented, the performance index framework described next will include the performance of ELLs in all four indexes of the accountability system over the course of their first four years in U.S. public schools. The commissioner of education will determine how the STAAR and TELPAS assessment results for ELLs will be used to determine ratings in the new accountability system.

Accountability System Safeguard Measures and Targets											
	All	African American	American Indian	Asian	Hispanic	Pacific Islander	White	Two or More	Econ. Disadv.	ELL	Special Educ.
Performance Rates											
Reading	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%
Mathematics	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%
Writing	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%
Science	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%
Soc. Studies	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%
Participation Rates											
Reading	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%
Mathematics	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%
Federal Grad. Rates #											
4-year	78%	78%	78%	78%	78%	78%	78%	78%	78%	78%	78%
5-year	83%	83%	83%	83%	83%	83%	83%	83%	83%	83%	83%
District Limits on Use of Alternative Assessment Results											
Reading											
Modified	2%	<i>Not Applicable</i>									
Alternate	1%	<i>Not Applicable</i>									
Mathematics											
Modified	2%	<i>Not Applicable</i>									
Alternate	1%	<i>Not Applicable</i>									

Federal graduation rate targets include an improvement target.

Federal targets have been set for participation rates, graduation rates, and limits on use of proficient results from assessments based on alternate achievement standards and assessments based on modified achievement standards. Results will be reported for any cell that meets accountability minimum size criteria (i.e., All Students—no minimum size criteria; if denominator is less than 10, data are aggregated across two or three years; Student Groups—denominator greater than or equal to 25). Failure to meet the safeguard target for any reported cell must be addressed in the TAIS. 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. The TAIS determines the level of intervention and support the campus or district receives based on performance history as well as current year state accountability rating and performance on the safeguard performance measures.

Graduation Rate Targets

Texas is required by state statute to use the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) dropout definition and No Child Left Behind (NCLB) graduation rate calculation. The four-year graduation rates follow a cohort of first-time ninth graders through their expected graduation three years later. The five-year rates follow the same cohort of students for one additional year. Texas also calculates six-year rates following the same cohort of students for two additional years.

State statute [Texas Education Code §39.053(g-1)] requires that certain students be excluded from the graduation rates and dropout rates used in the state accountability rating system. These exclusions include students who are seeking a high school equivalency certificate as ordered by a court, students previously reported as dropouts, students in detention facilities who are not otherwise residents of the school district, and students incarcerated as adults. The rates with state exclusions are included in Index 4 in compliance with state statute. These include four-year graduation rates and five-year graduation rates; annual dropout rates; and four-year, five-year, and six-year graduation and GED rates for alternative education campuses. A second set of graduation rates without the state exclusions is calculated to meet federal accountability requirements. The rates without state exclusions are reported and are evaluated outside the Performance Index Framework as part of the disaggregated System Safeguards. Districts and campuses must meet federal accountability targets on the federal graduation rates for All Students and each of the ten student groups evaluated in the state accountability system.

The long-term statewide goal for the four-year graduation rate is 90.0 percent. High schools and school districts that do not meet the 90.0 percent graduation rate goal must meet either an annual target or a growth target for the four-year graduation rate, or an annual target for the five-year graduation rate. For 2013 accountability determinations the Four-Year Graduation Rate Annual Target is 78.0 percent. The Four-Year Graduation Rate Growth Target is a 10.0 percent decrease in difference between prior year graduation rate and the 90.0 percent goal or at least 1.0 percentage point increase in graduation rate. Finally, the Five-Year Graduation Rate Target for 2013 accountability determinations is 83.0 percent.

All districts and campuses that fail to meet graduation rate targets are subject to interventions. The interventions require districts and campuses to develop focused plans for improvement. If graduation rates do not improve and the district or campus fails to meet federal accountability targets in the next accountability cycle, the level of assistance and intervention increases.

Performance Reporting

HB 3 modified and reorganized all performance reporting requirements into Chapter 39, Subchapter J., Parent and Educator Reports. While HB 3 did not significantly change the reporting requirements that existed in prior statute, the new aggregate reports will be designed to provide detailed academic and financial information that is relevant, meaningful, and easily accessible to the public. Statute specifies the following reports:

- *Report to District: Comparisons for Annual Performance Assessment (§39.302)*. The agency shall provide annual improvement information on assessments to LEAs.
- *Report to Parents (§39.303)*. Each parent or guardian shall be provided student-level assessment information such as is currently reported on the Confidential Student Reports.
- *Teacher Report Card (§39.304)*. LEAs are required to use Comparisons for Annual Performance Assessments (§39.302) to prepare a report for teachers at the beginning of the school year informing them of their students performed on assessments.

- *Campus Report Card* (§39.305). The language in statute describing this report is similar to the language used in prior statute to describe the current school/campus report cards. This report card includes indicators used in the rating system evaluation, graduation rates, performance on SAT and ACT assessments, and the percentage of students provided accelerated instruction, as well as average class size and instructional and administrative costs per student.
- *Performance Report* (§39.306). The language in statute describing performance reports is similar to the language used in prior statute to describe the Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) reports, which required the reporting of performance results for each LEA and school compared to prior year performance and to state established standards. Additional indicators for the performance report are stipulated in §39.301 and §39.306, including references to indicators that are described in sections elsewhere in statute. The agency will produce and disseminate these reports annually at the school, LEA, region, and state-level aggregations. The possibility of consolidating the school report cards and/or the performance reports with the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Report Card will be considered for the 2012–2013 school year and beyond.

As new indicators or additional assessments are planned for inclusion in the current state accountability rating system, the AEIS reports have included “preview indicators” that provide current year results reformulated to reflect the future indicator. During the development of the new performance reports, options will be explored to address how best to “preview” performance on future indicators that are based on higher student performance standards or include additional assessments.

Assistance and Intervention

TAIS was implemented following release of the 2012 state accountability ratings and 2012 federal adequate yearly progress designations. TAIS distinguishes levels of assistance for Title I and non-Title I campuses and districts by incorporating the state and federal accountability labels into an aligned system of support. Support Schools are assigned to one of two intervention stages, LEA guided interventions and Education Service Center (ESC) guided interventions. Focus Schools receive targeted and guided state and ESC interventions. Priority Schools receive intensive, targeted, and guided state and ESC interventions.

Following release of the 2013 state accountability ratings, the TAIS levels of assistance will be updated by incorporating the new designations under the Performance Index Framework. State statute requires multiple years of state rating outcomes, therefore for purposes of determining level of interventions, 2013 accountability ratings will be considered consecutive years of ratings with 2011 state accountability ratings and 2012 adequate yearly progress determinations. Districts and campuses are also subject to supports and interventions for failure to meet disaggregated system safeguard targets. As described earlier, the TAIS determines the level of intervention and support the campus or district receives, and is based on performance history as well as the current year state accountability rating and performance on the safeguard measures.

2.B Establishment of Ambitious but Achievable Annual Measurable Objectives

This section describes the method by which the commissioner of education sets ambitious but achievable annual measurable objectives (AMOs) in tested content areas for the state, LEAs, schools, and student subgroups to guide and support improvement efforts. A timeline is presented and discussed, including starting points and performance targets as well as phase-in for the new accountability rating system.

Assignment of Rating Standards and Accountability Targets

As noted above, TEC §39.053(f) requires that the commissioner annually define the current year's state accountability target for student achievement indicators and project each indicator's state target for the following two years. This section of statute also directs the commissioner to raise the target for the percent college-ready indicator so that Texas ranks in the top ten among states nationally by 2019–2020 on two measures—(1) the percent college-ready; and (2) the percent graduating under the recommended or advanced high school program, with no significant gaps by race, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status.

The 2013 accountability ratings will mark a transition from the former system of dual state and federal ratings under the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) to an integrated accountability system under the STAAR assessment program that meets both state and federal accountability requirements. Due to the move from end-of-grade to end-of-course (EOC) assessments as the high school graduation requirement, development of new student growth measures for STAAR, and the transition from accountability based on proficiency standards to postsecondary readiness performance standards, the performance index framework cannot be fully implemented until 2014. For that reason, the 2013 accountability targets will be independent of future targets rather than the baseline target for future years and will be set based on 2012 performance percentiles.

The Accountability Technical Advisory Committee (ATAC) members met in February 2013 to review options for accountability criteria and targets. Their recommendations were reviewed by the Accountability Policy Advisory Committee (APAC) members met in March 2013. Using the input from the ATAC members, the APAC submitted their recommendations on the accountability ratings criteria and targets to the commissioner.

The data available to model the provisions of the new accountability system are not an exact representation of the data that will be used to calculate the indicators for the ratings in 2013. Therefore, estimates of the percentage of campuses that will be assigned an unacceptable rating come with the following caveats.

- It is reasonable to expect that student performance will improve between 2012 (used for modeling) and 2013 (used for 2013 ratings).
- Performance improvement will be offset for high schools and districts by the inclusion of more difficult assessment results. The biggest difference is that the model uses STAAR EOC results for only one class of students – English I, Algebra I, Biology and World Geography for the class of 2015, the first class to graduate under the STAAR. The actual 2013 performance will use STAAR EOC results for two

classes of students, and include the next higher test in each subject – English II, Geometry, Chemistry, and World History.

The recommended ratings criteria for 2013 include evaluation of Index 2: Student Progress but performance on that index cannot be modeled prior to the spring 2013 STAAR administration. The introduction of Index 2 can only increase the number of campuses receiving the Improvement Required rating because some campuses that meet all other targets might not meet the Index 2 target.

To receive a Met Standard rating all campuses and districts must meet the following accountability targets on all indexes for which they have performance data in 2013.

	Non-AEA Campuses and Districts	AEA Campuses and Districts
Index 1: Student Achievement	50	25
Index 2: Student Progress	5 th percentile	5 th percentile
Index 3: Closing Performance Gaps	55	30
Index 4: Postsecondary Readiness	75	45

A starting point and targets for 2014 and beyond will be tied to the state goal that Texas will be among the top ten states in postsecondary readiness by 2020. The starting point and targets will be set following the 2013 ratings release as described below.

High School Starting Points and Targets

The 2012 assessment results will not be used to establish a starting point for high schools because in 2012 only one cohort of high school students (class of 2015) was assessed on STAAR EOC. In 2012, most students in the class of 2015 took the first course in the sequence for each subject. Consequently the 2012 results are not representative of the STAAR program when fully implemented. The 2013 STAAR results will be used as the baseline for establishing accountability performance targets for 2014 and beyond. The 2013 assessment results will include two cohorts of high school students (class of 2015 and class of 2016) on STAAR EOC graduation plans. STAAR EOC results will include results for both the first and second course in the sequence for each subject. The tables below provide more detailed information regarding the state’s timeline for this process.

Timeline for Setting Baseline Data for Targets for EOC Courses

	EOC Courses*	Baseline Data for Targets		
		2012	2013	2014
Grade 9	English I Reading	Class of 2015	Class of 2016	Class of 2017

	English I Writing Algebra I Biology World Geography	STAAR EOC	STAAR EOC	STAAR EOC
Grade 10	English II Reading English II Writing Geometry Chemistry World History	Class of 2014 TAKS	Class of 2015 STAAR EOC	Class of 2015 STAAR EOC
Grade 11	English III Reading English III Writing Algebra II Physics U.S. History	Class of 2013 TAKS	Class of 2014 TAKS	Class of 2015 STAAR EOC

*There is not a state-mandated course sequence; however, this represents the typical course sequence that most students follow.

Timeline for Setting Accountability Targets

Date	Action
June 2013	STAAR results from 2012-2013 testing released.
July/August 2013	STAAR English language learner progress measure finalized.
September 2013	Models of 2014 accountability performance indexes and disaggregated system safeguards constructed.
October 2013	Accountability advisory groups convene to develop recommendations to commissioner for accountability ratings criteria for 2014 and beyond and targets for 2014, 2015, and 2016 accountability systems.
November 2013	Commissioner announces accountability ratings criteria for 2014 and beyond and final 2014 targets, preliminary 2015 targets, and preview 2016 targets.

In addition to the timelines noted above, the new accountability rating system will be implemented in phases. The first ratings issued in 2013 will be based on satisfactory performance on the STAAR assessments. The 2014 ratings are to be based on both college-ready and satisfactory performance on the STAAR Distinction designations for which performance on the college-ready indicator is an eligibility requirement will be introduced in 2014. Distinction designations in new areas may be phased in as new data are collected.

2.C Reward Schools

This section presents the method the state will use to identify its highest-performing and high-progress schools as reward schools. The broadening of distinction designations compared to the state's previous accountability system is also noted.

To meet statutory requirements, the basic accountability ratings must identify satisfactory and unsatisfactory schools and LEAs and describe conditions that trigger state monitoring and

interventions. In addition to the basic accountability ratings, LEAs and schools are eligible for distinction designation ratings for recognized or exemplary performance.

Accountability ratings labels of A, B, C, D, and F are planned to be used in the state accountability rating system beginning in the 2013-14 school year. The criteria that will be used to assign the A-F rating labels will be determined by the agency in fall 2013.

Texas has a long history of recognizing high performance by students in academics beyond those required to receive an acceptable accountability rating and this will continue with campus distinction designations for schools in the top 25% in annual improvement, schools in the top 25% of those demonstrating ability to close performance gaps, and schools that meet criteria for academic performance in English language arts, mathematics, science, or social studies. Academic achievement distinction designations in reading/English language arts and mathematics will be assigned to campuses in August 2013 concurrent with the release of the accountability ratings. These distinctions will include indicators based on performance at the Advanced standard on STAAR, attendance rates, completion of advanced/dual enrollment courses, and SAT and ACT performance and participation.

Under HB 3, schools will also be awarded distinctions in four new areas: fine arts, physical education, 21st Century Workforce Development programs, and second language acquisition programs. The criteria and standards for distinctions will depend on advice and guidance from committees comprised of individuals who practice as professionals in the content area relevant to the distinction designation; educators and other individuals with subject matter expertise in the content area; and community leaders, including leaders from the business community.

2.D Priority Schools

This section provides a description of the state's methodology for identifying the lowest 5% of Title I schools as priority schools. Interventions and supports for identified schools are also described, as is a plan to identify effective district-based turnaround strategies, develop leadership capacity for these schools, and institutionalize such systems and supports.

Identification

Priority schools will include schools identified in 2013 under the new accountability system as *Improvement Required* and that were also academically unacceptable in 2010 and 2011 for three or more consecutive years (as defined in the transition statute as consecutive years, TAC §97.1065). The methodology will be reviewed to determine if this designation includes at least 5% of Title I campuses and ensures that identified priority schools are among the lowest 5% of Title I schools in Texas. This designation will be based on the achievement of the "all students" group in terms of proficiency on the statewide assessments that are part of TEA's differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system, and a demonstrated lack of progress on those assessments over a number of years in the "all students" group. Selected targets in the new assessment system will identify about 5% of campuses as *Improvement Required* (based on modeling). For 2013, although performance is expected to increase, this will be offset by more difficult assessments (English I, II, Algebra I, Geometry, Biology, Chemistry, World Geography, World History).

Priority schools will include Title I participating or Title I eligible high schools with a graduation rate of less than 60 percent over two years or are Tier I or Tier II schools under the School Improvement Grants (SIG) program that are using SIG funds to fully implement a school intervention model. The recommended graduation rate target in index four of the new assessment system is 75%. Based on modeling, about 5% of campuses will not meet graduation standards.

As the information needed to define this category will not be available until Summer 2013, a list of Priority Schools will be included with the final version of the waiver request.

System Safeguards

Accountability System Safeguards include participation rates, graduation rates, and limits on the use of alternate assessments. These have been calculated to meet federal requirements and federal targets. Results will be reported for any subgroup that meets accountability minimum size criteria as described previously. Failure to meet the safeguard target for any reported cell must be addressed in the campus or district improvement plan. Campuses will be encouraged to work with the regional Education Service Center Turnaround Teams if they *Meet Standard* yet have areas of underperformance within an index. Based on the modeling assumptions described above, the estimated percentage of campuses that will not meet one or more of the federal accountability targets for performance rates, participation rates, or federal graduation rates is 40% in 2013.

Interventions and Supports

As described earlier, all schools (support, focus, and priority) identified in the Texas accountability system as *Improvement Required* in 2013 will be assigned a professional services provider (PSP), to engage in the continuous improvement process, and address and correct areas of campus low performance. Districts also must designate a district coordinator of school improvement (DCSI). The PSP will be selected, trained, monitored and evaluated each year. Both the PSP and the DCSI work together to support the campus through the improvement process and identified interventions. This improvement process includes addressing each of the Critical Success Factors described earlier in section 2.A.

In addition, state statute defines the duties of the PSP, including facilitating data analysis and development of a needs assessment; working on curriculum and instruction; addressing teacher quality; reviewing principal performance; and recommending which educators to retain (see full statutes TAC 97.1063 and 97.1064 in *Attachment 7d*). The PSP's role is to monitor progress and to ensure (1) an increase in quality instruction; (2) effective leadership and teaching; and (3) that student achievement and graduation rates for all students, including English learners, students with disabilities, and the lowest achieving students, improves.

With respect to increasing the quality of instruction and improving outcomes for all students, the PSP monitors the progress of the campus and provides monthly reports. Additionally, the DCSI provides quarterly updates on the progress of identified campuses and works with the PSP and TEA staff to develop sustainability plans once the campus *Meets Standard*. As prescribed in current state statute (TAC 97.1063i), the PSP will continue to work with the campus until the campus satisfies all performance standards for a two-year period. Therefore, interventions will continue for at least three years.

Applying Principles of School Turnaround

In addition to the interventions and supports noted above, TEA is also in the process of posting a Request for Proposals to establish proof points for effective district-based turnaround strategies that can be replicated statewide. The purpose of the District Turnaround Leadership Initiative (DTLI) is to enable districts to own the processes and develop the leadership necessary to swiftly and systematically diagnose, intervene, and provide ongoing support to low-performing campuses, thus rapidly and permanently improving the performance of the students. The successful bidder, in cooperation with the USDE-funded Texas Comprehensive Center and institutions of higher education and/or educator preparation programs, will institutionalize systems, processes and procedures that enable districts to reform struggling campuses.

As referenced in the section on Texas Framework for Continuous and District and School Improvement, the Critical Success Factors build on the USDE turnaround principles. Priority schools will work with districts and state personnel to align their intervention efforts with these principles:

- providing strong leadership by: (1) reviewing the performance of the current principal; (2) either replacing the principal if such a change is necessary to ensure strong and effective leadership, or demonstrating to the SEA that the current principal has a track record in improving achievement and has the ability to lead the turnaround effort; and (3) providing the principal with operational flexibility in the areas of scheduling, staff, curriculum, and budget;
- ensuring that teachers are effective and able to improve instruction by: (1) reviewing the quality of all staff and retaining only those who are determined to be effective and have the ability to be successful in the turnaround effort; (2) preventing ineffective teachers from transferring to these schools; and (3) providing job-embedded, ongoing professional development informed by the teacher evaluation and support systems and tied to teacher and student needs;
- redesigning the school day, week, or year to include additional time for student learning and teacher collaboration;
- strengthening the school's instructional program based on student needs and ensuring that the instructional program is research-based, rigorous, and aligned with State academic content standards;
- using data to inform instruction and for continuous improvement, including by providing time for collaboration on the use of data;
- establishing a school environment that improves school safety and discipline and addressing other non-academic factors that impact student achievement, such as students' social, emotional, and health needs; and
- providing ongoing mechanisms for family and community engagement.

Timeline for Implementation of Intervention Process for Priority Schools

The table below presents the implementation timeline for 2012–2013 identified priority schools.

Activity	Timeline
Accountability ratings released	August 8, 2013
Parent notification/public notice/hearing	August 15, 2013
District submits names of PSP and DCSI	September 9, 2013

Data analysis, needs assessment, improvement plan completed; improvement plan submitted for approval	October 31, 2013
PSP progress reports	Monthly
Reconstitution Plan drafts submitted	October 2013 – January 2014
Final Reconstitution Plan approved	June 2014

In addition, the PSP and DCSI will determine the implementation timeline for specific activities for each individual campus based on the data analysis, needs assessment and improvement plan for each school.

Exiting Priority Status

The criteria for exiting priority school status is identified in TAC §97.1063(i) which states that the PSP must continue to work with the campus until the campus satisfies all performance standards for a two-year period, or the campus satisfies all performance standards for a one-year period and the commissioner determines that the campus is operating and will continue to operate in a manner that improves student achievement. Any 2013 Priority school that satisfies all performance standards in 2014 will be identified as a Support school for two years, based on the criteria described previously. Once identified, Priority schools will be part of the intervention system for at least three years. If during that time, the school makes significant improvements, and would no longer be identified under the Priority criteria, the campus will become a Support school. Continued interventions will include sustainability planning with the Regional Educational Service Center, as well as possibly serving as a model campus for other priority campuses.

2.E Focus Schools

This section describes the state’s methodology for identifying and providing intervention supports for focus schools.

Identification

Focus schools will include the schools identified in 2013 under the new accountability system as *Improvement Required* that were also academically unacceptable in 2011 for two consecutive years as defined in the transition statute as consecutive years, [TAC §97.1064(h)]. Methodology will be reviewed to determine if it identifies at least 10% of Title I campuses. The proposed new assessment system will identify schools that have the largest within-school gaps between the highest-achieving subgroup or subgroups and the lowest-achieving subgroup or subgroups or, at the high school level, the largest within-school gaps in the graduation rate; or a subgroup or subgroups with low achievement or, at the high school level, a low graduation rate. Selected targets in the new assessment system will identify about 5% of campuses as *Improvement Required* (based on modeling). For 2013, although performance is expected to increase, this will be offset by more difficult assessments (English I, II, Algebra I, Geometry, Biology, Chemistry, World Geography, World History). Although campuses may be identified as meeting the overall standard on each of the indexes within the new assessment system, focus schools will be identified by the agency based on their performance in index three (Closing the Performance Gaps) and index four [Postsecondary Readiness (including Graduation)].

Focus schools will also include all Title I-participating high schools with a graduation rate less than 60% over two years that are not identified as priority schools. The recommended graduation rate target in index four of the new assessment system is 75%. Based on modeling, about 5% of campuses will not meet graduation standards.

As the information needed to define this category will not be available until Summer 2013, a list of Focus Schools will be included with the final version of the waiver request.

System Safeguards

Accountability System Safeguards include participation rates, graduation rates, and limits on the use of alternate assessments. These have been calculated to meet federal requirements and federal targets. Results will be reported for any subgroup that meets accountability minimum size criteria. Failure to meet the safeguard target for any reported subgroup must be addressed in the campus or district improvement plan. Campuses will be encouraged to work with the regional Education Service Center Turnaround Teams if they *Meet Standard* yet have areas of underperformance within an index. Based on the modeling assumptions described above, the estimated percentage of campuses that will not meet one or more of the federal accountability targets for performance rates, participation rates, or federal graduation rates is 40% in 2013.

Timeline for Implementation of Intervention Process for Focus Schools

The table below presents the implementation timeline for 2012–2013 identified focus schools.

Activity	Timeline
Accountability ratings released	August 8, 2013
Parent notification/public notice/hearing	August 15, 2013
District submits names of PSP and DCSI	September 9, 2013
Data analysis, needs assessment, improvement plan completed; improvement plan submitted for approval	October 31, 2013
PSP progress reports	Monthly

Exiting Focus Status

The criteria for exiting focus school status is the same for priority and support school status and is identified in TAC §97.1063(i), which states that the PSP must continue to work with the campus until the campus satisfies all performance standards for a two-year period, or the campus satisfies all performance standards for a one-year period and the commissioner determines that the campus is operating and will continue to operate in a manner that improves student achievement. Any 2013 focus school that satisfies all performance standards in 2014 will be identified as a Support school for two years based on the previously described criteria.

2.F Provision of Incentives and Support for Other Title I Schools

As mentioned earlier, the campuses and districts included in Texas’ differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system include all campuses and districts administered by the Texas Education Agency regardless of program or type of public school. The Texas system also includes provisions for identifying Support Schools, which include the schools identified in 2013 under the new accountability system as *Improvement Required* for the first time, those that did not meet AYP in 2012, or were formerly unacceptable in 2011 in the state accountability rating

system [TAC §971063]. Campuses will be encouraged to work with the regional Education Service Center Turnaround Teams if they *Meet Standard* yet have areas of underperformance within an index. This request for support schools will be part of an additional waiver request above and beyond the current waiver request.

2.G Provisions for Building SEA, LEA, and School Capacity to Improve Student Learning

As noted earlier, the Texas Center for District and School Support (TCDSS) has evolved to support LEAs and schools around school improvement and interventions. Initial coordination efforts to align systems focused on similar intervention requirements for schools that were identified as academically unacceptable in the state accountability system and were subject to the school improvement program under federal accountability requirements. Evolving from early work on the accountability system was the creation of the TAIS, which is built upon the best aspects of both the state and federal systems. TEA determined that the fundamental issues for underperforming campuses are the same in both systems, and students with academic needs are often the same regardless of the identification process. Therefore, the TAIS was designed to assist LEAs and schools to focus on engaging in the improvement process as opposed to completing and checking off state and federal requirements. The comprehensive Texas system continues to develop along with ongoing investments in improving the initial system. Along these lines, partnerships have been built between TEA, ESCs, Texas LEAs and schools that have strengthened the accountability and improvement processes.

The TAIS provides a variety of connected supports, opportunities, and incentives to monitor and adapt interventions to engage districts and campuses in the improvement process. The campus intervention team will ensure timely and comprehensive monitoring and technical assistance for the implementation of interventions. Staff at TEA, the TCDSS, and the network of regional Education Service Centers will provide assistance to the campus interventions teams and assess progress on leading indicators and student outcomes at identified schools and adapt services and support to better meet specific campus- and district-level needs.

Under NCLB, many LEAs were required to reserve 20 percent of the districts' Title I allotments to implement choice and/or Supplemental Educational Services (SES). With approved waivers, funds that the LEA previously reserved to meet requirements of ESEA section 1116(b)(10) may be used to support the implementation of interventions in an LEA's Focus Schools or Priority Schools in accordance with allowable use of Title I funds. Once the LEA demonstrates that sufficient resources are available to support interventions in its Priority and Focus schools, funds may be used to support instructional programs at the district-level or by providing Title I funds in school allocations under ESEA section 1113(c). An LEA may also reserve funds to support the implementation of interventions in an LEA's Focus Schools or Priority Schools in accordance with allowable use of Title I funds. Although, the SEA will not require LEAs to use the funds in a specific way, all decisions must be made based on an LEA's careful analysis of local capacity and based on a comprehensive needs assessment. The LEA must demonstrate in its Title I Application that resources have been allocated to its Priority and Focus schools sufficient to support the interventions described.

Principle 3: Supporting Effective Instruction and Leadership

3.A Develop and Adopt Guidelines for Local Teacher and Principal Evaluation and Support Systems

This section provides a description of the state’s guidelines for local teacher and principal evaluation and support systems. Beginning with information regarding the current system, the section describes progress the state has made toward developing and piloting new appraisal systems focused on improving practice and raising student achievement, as well as on the state’s efforts to hold educator preparation programs accountable for the quality of their graduates. Supporting documentation for this section may be found in *Attachment 8*.

Teacher Evaluation and Support Systems

The Texas approved instrument for evaluating teachers, the Professional Development and Appraisal System (PDAS), is currently used by 86 percent of LEAs in the state and has been in place since 1997. As research has routinely emphasized, the number one in-school factor for increasing student achievement is the effectiveness of the teacher, and since 2009 Texas has made significant strides to improve both the quality of its educator preparation programs and the quality of individual teacher evaluations so that teachers and administrators have more meaningful feedback on student learning and growth. In acknowledging the vital roles teachers play in student achievement, TEA is currently revising the State’s approved instrument for evaluating teachers.

Stakeholder Involvement

During Fall 2011, the TEA created the Teacher Effectiveness Workgroup, comprised of members from the agency’s Educator Initiatives Division, the USDE-funded Texas Comprehensive Center, Educate Texas (a public-private education initiative of the Communities Foundation of Texas), and Education Service Center, Region 13. This workgroup examined literature on promising and state practices on evaluating educator effectiveness, including different appraisal models from across the nation, to help inform the development of a new Texas system. As a key resource, the workgroup reviewed and used the National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality’s publication, *A Practical Guide to Designing Comprehensive Teacher Evaluation Systems: A Tool to Assist in the Development of Teacher Evaluation Systems*.

In early 2012 TEA, with the assistance of the Education Service Centers, identified stakeholders consisting of 20 teachers—one representative from each ESC region—and four principals who were invited by the commissioner of education to form the Teacher Appraisal Advisory Committee (see TAAC Members, *Attachment 8a*). The TAAC advised TEA on how Texas could strengthen the new teacher appraisal system to improve teaching practice and raise student achievement. Beginning with the 2012–2013 school year, Texas began piloting the new system, which includes an updated observation rubric and a campus and individual teacher value-add metric of student growth.

Observation Rubrics

The initial pilot incorporates two nationally recognized observation rubrics by Teachscape and the National Institute for Excellence in Teaching. These two frameworks offer more robust and timely feedback to teachers on their practice through more frequent, targeted observations and timely input of results. The initial pilot of these two rubrics in the 2012–2013 school year focuses on 100 campuses from across the state; the phase two pilot will continue in the 2013–2014 school year (see PDAS Pilot Participants: Priority Schools, *Attachment 8b*). TEA’s goal is to roll out a new rubric statewide, based on an evaluation of the pilot results, in the 2015–2016 school year.

Value-Add Metric

In an effort to capture the impact of a teacher on students’ learning over the course of a school year, TEA has contracted with the American Institute of Research (AIR) to develop both a campus-wide and individual teacher value-add metric. In May 2013, TEA will share initial results of the value-add metric with campus leaders and teachers of the pilot schools. During phase two of the pilot, TEA will make refinements to the metric with the goal of incorporating those changes into the updated evaluation system during the 2015–2016 school year.

Interstate Collaboration

TEA has recently contacted the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) regarding their State Collaborative on Educator Effectiveness (SCEE). Given the work the Agency is undertaking, this collaborative is viewed as an important opportunity to engage other state leaders on the lessons learned from building state systems for evaluating and supporting all teachers.

By the 2015–2016 school year, Texas will have established a more robust teacher evaluation system based on multiple measures, including student growth. With this new system in place, TEA and LEAs will be able to provide more targeted, and differentiated, supports to teachers and principals.

Key Milestone or Activity	Detailed Timeline	Party or Parties Responsible
Update state teaching standards and observation rubric	July 2013–July 2014	TEA Texas Comprehensive Center
Develop Educator Effectiveness Metric based on value-added data	2014–2015 Statewide Rollout	AIR

Principal Evaluation and Support Systems

Texas recognizes that school leadership is critical to the success of recruiting and retaining top teachers and fostering an environment where student learning flourishes. To that end, Senate Bill 1383 was enacted by the 82nd Texas Legislature in 2011 and codified in Section 21.3541 of the Texas Education Code. This statute directs TEA to accomplish the following initiatives:

- Establish and administer a comprehensive appraisal and professional development system for public school principals.
- Establish a consortium of nationally recognized experts on educational leadership and policy to assist in developing the system and make recommendations about the training, appraisal, professional development, and compensation of principals.
- Establish school leadership standards and a set of indicators of successful school leadership to align with such training, appraisal, and professional development.

TEA expects to complete the new school-leadership standards by the end of 2013. Pending the availability of additional resources, the Agency plans to begin the development and pilot of the principal evaluation system during the 2014-2015 school year.

Overview of work to date:

February 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TEA Commissioner invites 12 key stakeholders to become members of the Principal Advisory Committee (Committee now includes 15 stakeholders, 3 TEA partners, and 2 TEA staff) •
March 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First meeting of the Principal Advisory Committee. The committee was provided pre-reading information that included the following documents: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Overview of the Collaborative Project between TEA and AREL; ○ Gateways to the Principalship: State Power to Improve the Quality of School Leaders; ○ A New Approach to Principal Preparation: Innovative Programs Share Their Practices and Lessons Learned; ○ AREL Framework. • Outcomes of this meeting included the opportunity for members to review: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The rationale for the proposed changes in state policy ○ The current state laws and policies governing the principalship ○ Best practices in principal preparation and state policies regulating them ○ The proposed plan for addressing changes in policy and practice ○ Their role and expectations for guiding implementation of the plan • General project introduction and overview, with validation from committee members for the case for change and the strategies for implementing the changes. The advisory group provided feedback for amendments to the design of the collaborative project
April 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Second meeting of the Principal Advisory Committee. The outcomes for this meeting included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Validation of the recommendations from the first meeting and review changes planned as a result of the input provided ○ Presentations from three external experts provided by AREL: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Erika Hunt—Center for the Study of Education Policy at Illinois State University—facilitated the state of Illinois’ large-scale policy reform that revised standards for principal certification and preparation ○ Steve Tozer--Center for Urban Education Leadership at University of Illinois Chicago—advised the Illinois state change process and directs a preparation program which results in highly effective principals ○ Ben Fenton—Chief Strategy Officer and Co-Founder of New Leaders—works with other states involved in large-scale policy change • Committee produced the first draft of a set of competencies that principals should acquire in order to be effective leaders and improve student achievement
June 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting of Educator Preparation Programs (EPPs) that are currently approved to grant principal certification in Texas

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The outcomes for this meeting included the opportunity for members to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Understand the goals and scope of the project to review, revise, and make internally consistent all of the policies and procedures that affect principal standards for preparation, certification, appraisal and on-going professional development and to reflect on best practices that will result in highly effective school principals ○ Review and comment on core documents and research that support the process ○ Review and respond to the proposed principal framework defining the competencies of principals that should drive all other policies and procedures • Members demonstrated support for the project goals and provided feedback on each stated objective. The feedback included the need for alignment of state standards for principal certification with assessment of aspiring principals and standards for principal preparation programs. Additionally, support for an evaluation system for principals that provides support for professional development was expressed.
June 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Third meeting of the Principal Advisory Committee. The outcome of this meeting included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Reaching consensus on the concepts for the competency framework and next steps in the process. ○ Reaching consensus on the concepts for the preparation program standards and next steps in the process ○ Reviewing the communication plan and website content • Committee produced first draft of desired characteristics of high-quality principal preparation programs. This initial draft included characteristics in four major areas: (1) Vision/Mission; (2) Culture of High Expectations; (3) Leadership; (4) Operations/System Development
June 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus groups at state principal conferences were held: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ June 13, 2012 – Texas Association of Secondary School Principals ○ June 14, 2012 – Texas Association of Elementary School Principals ○ June 26, 2012 – Texas Association of School Administrators • These groups comprised of elementary, secondary principals and superintendents provided input in the following areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The skills, knowledge, and dispositions required of effective principals ○ The principal’s role in relationship to student achievement ○ The preparation and development of effective principals • Focus group data will inform revisions of competencies and program characteristics and development of next steps
September 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fourth meeting of the Principal Advisory Committee • Final review of committee recommendations for principal standards and key characteristics of effective principal preparation programs. The recommendations were based on the four major areas: (1) Vision/Mission; (2) Culture of High Expectations; (3) Leadership; (4) Operations/System Development. These will form the basis of the work that will be accomplished by a writing team of national experts.
Winter 2012-2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing team of national experts requested from AREL to develop an initial draft of proposed standards for principals •
Spring 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft to be reviewed by Steering Committee
Summer 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft to be finalized by TEA staff for presentation to SBEC

Educator Preparation Program Accountability

In 2009, the 81st Texas Legislature passed Senate Bill 174, which amended sections of the Texas Education Code related to accountability for educator preparation programs. The purpose of the accountability system for educator preparation is to assure that each EPP is held accountable for the effectiveness of graduates from their program. Moving forward, the accreditation status of an

EPP will be determined based on the following performance standards:

- The passing rate on certification examinations taken by EPP candidates
- The results of beginning teacher appraisals by principals
- The improvement in student achievement of students taught by a beginning teacher for the first three years following certification
- The frequency, duration, and quality of field supervision of beginning teachers

Aside from basing accreditation on these performance standards, TEA plans to provide data to educator preparation programs that will help identify areas that will increase the effectiveness of their programs. Ultimately, TEA plans to see an increase in the quality of educator preparation based on multiple measures of accountability that will lead to increased student achievement in Texas, including ensuring that EPP instruction is aligned with the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) and the Texas College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS).

Overview of Legislation

- Went into effect June 19, 2009 (TEC 21.045)
- SBEC approved rules on February 5, 2010
- Accountability system comprised of four standards
 - Standard 1: Pass rates on certification exams
 - Standard 2: Principal appraisal of beginning teachers
 - Standard 3: Beginning teacher's impact on student achievement
 - Standard 4: Support to beginning teachers

2009-2010

- Overall accreditation status for educator preparation program (EPP) is determined by Standard 1 only.
- Set pass rate for Standard 1 at 70 percent to determine EPP accreditation status.
- Began data collection for Standard 2.
- Began development of value-add model for Standard 3.
- Began data collection for Standard 4.

2010-2011

- Overall accreditation status for educator preparation program (EPP) is determined by Standard 1 only.
- Pass rate for Standard 1 increased to 75 percent to determine EPP accreditation status.
- Development and pilots of Standards 2, 3, and 4 continue.

2011-2012

- Overall accreditation status for educator preparation program (EPP) is determined by Standard 1 only.
- Pass rate for Standard 1 increased to 80 percent to determine EPP accreditation status.
- Development and pilots of Standards 2, 3, and 4 continue.

2012-2013

- Standards 1, 2, and 4 used to determine overall accreditation status. Results from value-add model used for Standard 3 included in report only.
- Pass rate for Standard 1 maintained at 80 percent to determine EPP accreditation status.
- SBEC approves rules for use of Standards 2 and 4 for accreditation status.

2013-2014

- Standards 1, 2, and 4 used to determine overall accreditation status. Results from value-add model used for Standard 3 included in report only.
- Pass rate for Standard 1 maintained at 80 percent to determine EPP accreditation status.
- SBEC will approve rules for use of Standard 3 in following year's accountability system.

2014-2015

- All four standards applied to accountability rating for EPPs.

3.B Ensure LEAs Implement Teacher and Principal Evaluation and Support Systems

This section addresses the state's process for ensuring that each LEA develops, adopts, pilots, and implements evaluation and supports systems consistent with the state's guidelines yielding high-quality local teacher and principal evaluation systems.

Current Texas Education Code [TEC 21.352] requires LEAs to use the state-developed evaluation system *or* a locally developed system that contains the same components as the state system. As mentioned earlier, 86% of school districts in the state presently use PDAS, Texas' approved instrument for teacher evaluation.

Additionally, TEA will update Texas Administrative Code (TAC) Chapter 150 to require all districts to submit locally developed plans for approval. Plans will be evaluated to ensure they meet the following requirements outlined in Chapter 150.1009 of the TAC. Administrative rules will be revised to clearly outline the expectations that evaluations happen on a regular and timely basis including multiple observation walkthroughs that include pre- and post-meetings between the appraiser and the teacher. Finally, the Agency will set guidance for districts on the appropriate use of evaluations to help inform career pathways for all teachers.

TAC §150.1009. Alternatives to the Commissioner's Recommended Appraisal System.

(a) District option. Beginning with the 1997-1998 school year, a school district not wanting to use the commissioner's recommended Professional Development and Appraisal System must develop its own teacher-appraisal system supported by locally adopted policy and procedures and by the processes outlined in Texas Education Code (TEC), §21.352. The Texas Teacher Appraisal System (TTAS) is no longer a state-recommended system; however, it may become a local option governed by the process outlined in TEC, §21.352. If adopted as a local option, the TTAS must be modified to comply with TEC, §21.351(a)(1) and (2).

(1) The school district-level planning and decision-making committee shall:

(A) develop an appraisal process;

- (B) develop evaluation criteria, including discipline management and performance of the teachers' students; and*
- (C) consult with the campus planning and decision-making committee on each campus in the school district.*

(2) The appraisal process shall include:

- (A) at least one appraisal each year;*
- (B) a conference between the teacher and the appraiser that is diagnostic and prescriptive with regard to remediation needed in overall performance by category; and*
- (C) criteria based on observable, job-related behavior, including:*
 - (i) teachers' implementation of discipline management procedures; and*
 - (ii) performance of the teachers' students.*

(3) The school district-level planning and decision-making committee shall submit the appraisal process and criteria to the superintendent, who shall submit the appraisal process and criteria to the school district board of trustees with a recommendation to accept or reject. The school district board of trustees may accept or reject an appraisal process and performance criteria, with comments, but may not modify the process or criteria.

The current state evaluation system is outlined in Texas Administrative Code Chapter 150. The 1002 requires that teachers be evaluated on four performance levels: 1) exceeds expectations, 2) proficient, 3) below expectations, and 4) unsatisfactory.

Beginning with the 2012-2013 school year, TEA is working with the American Institute of Research to develop the Educator Effectiveness Metric (EEM) that will measure student growth at the individual teacher and campus levels in state tested grades. The Agency will continue with year 2 of the pilot in the 2013-2014 school year with the goal of providing EEM statewide in 2014-2015 for all teachers in state tested grades and subjects.

By the 2015-2016 school year, TEA will have available a statewide Teacher Appraisal Framework that will include multiple measures of teacher performance. Measures will include an updated, more robust observation framework, the Educator Effectiveness Metric, and provide resources to districts that want to use student-learning objectives and portfolio assessments for teachers.

Activity	Year
Update Teaching Standards and Observation Rubric	2013-2014
Pilot Educator Effectiveness Metric	2013-2014
Pilot Updated Observation Rubric	2014-2015
Statewide rollout of Educator Effectiveness Metric	2014-2015
Update Texas Administrative Code to reflect new guidelines for Texas Appraisal	2014

Framework (for School Year 2015-2016 implementation)	
Statewide rollout of Completed Texas Appraisal Framework including new observation rubric and Educator Effectiveness Metric	2015-2016