2013 Accountability System Frequently Asked Questions Updated June 4, 2013

2013 Legislative Session

Q: How will House Bill 5 (HB 5) affect the new state accountability system?

A: HB 5 does not affect the new state accountability ratings that will be assigned for the first time to all districts and campuses on August 8, 2013. As described in the final decisions released by the commissioner on April 23, 2013, the 2013 state accountability rating system will be based on the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness® (STAAR) grades 3-8 assessments administered in spring 2013 and the STAAR end-of-course assessments administered in summer 2012, fall 2012, and spring 2013. The changes to the number of EOC assessments required for graduation will affect the state rating system beginning with the 2013-14 school year.

It is not anticipated that the performance index framework of the new rating system will require substantial modifications due to HB 5 changes in testing requirements for graduation or the addition of postsecondary readiness indicators. The design of the performance indexes allows for the addition and/or deletion of indicators over time. With a performance index each measure contributes points to an index score. Since overall performance on the index must meet a single accountability target, changes in the underlying assessment measures in a particular index do not increase the number of targets that must be met.

During the development of the new accountability system, it was anticipated that the new accountability indicators, such as career and technical education indicators, would be incorporated in the rating system when available. The new postsecondary readiness indicators listed in Section 39.053 (4)-(6) of HB 5, such as percentages of students achieving Texas Success Initiative (TSI) benchmarks, can be evaluated with the other indicators that are currently included in Index 4: Postsecondary Readiness. Since the performance index framework cannot be fully implemented in 2013, 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. At that time, advisory groups will also make recommendations on the options for incorporating the new additional postsecondary readiness indicators required by HB 5.

Regarding the accountability rating labels, HB 5 requires that the commissioner assign performance ratings of A – F to districts and ratings of exemplary, recognized, acceptable, and unacceptable to campuses beginning with the 2016-17 school year. In fall 2013, accountability advisory groups will make recommendations to the commissioner on the accountability rating labels that will be assigned in the 2013-14 through the 2015-16 school years.

2013 Targets and Ratings

Q: How is a rating label determined for 2013?

A: With a performance index, each measure contributes points to an index score. Each of the four indexes will have a score of 0 to 100 representing campus or district performance points as a percent of the maximum possible points for that campus or district.

- *Met Standard:* Assigned to districts and campuses that meet performance index targets on all indexes for which they have performance data in 2013.
- Met Alternative Standard: Assigned to charter operators and alternative education campuses (AECs) evaluated under alternative education accountability (AEA) provisions that meet modified performance index targets on all indexes for which they have performance data in 2013.
- *Improvement Required:* Assigned to a district or campus that did not meet one or more performance index targets in 2013.

Q: What are the accountability targets for 2013?

A: To receive a *Met Standard* or *Met Alternate 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 Districts and	AEA Districts					
Targets	Campuses	and Campuses					
Index 1: Student Achievement	50	25					
Index 2: Student Progress	5th percentile*	5th percentile*					
Index 3: Closing Performance Gaps	55	30					
Index 4: Postsecondary Readiness	75	45					
* Target will be set at about the fifth percentile of campus performance and will be applied to both							

Q: Are all districts and campuses rated in 2013, including new campuses?

A: All public school campuses, including alternative education campuses (AECs) and open-enrollment charter schools are evaluated. New campuses and new open-enrollment charter schools are evaluated the first year they report fall enrollment.

Q: What if a campus does not have data for an Index?

campuses and districts.

A: Campuses and districts receive an accountability rating based on all indexes for which they have performance data in 2013. In some instances, a campus may not have data necessary to calculate an index score, due to lack of students or grade-level configurations. For example, in 2013, most elementary campuses will not have postsecondary data needed to calculate an Index 4 score. In these situations, the overall 2013 accountability rating will be calculated using the remaining three index scores.

Q: When will schools receive their accountability ratings?

A: All schools and districts will be rated under the new accountability system in 2013, and will receive those ratings on August 8, 2013.

Q: When will the 2013 Accountability Manual be posted online?

A: Chapters 3 - 9 of the <u>2013 Accountability Manual</u> are now available online. The remaining chapters and each appendix will be posted in mid-June, 2013.

2013 Performance Index Framework

Q: What is the purpose of Index 1: Student Achievement?

A: The purpose of this index is to provide a snapshot of performance across subjects, on both general and alternative assessments, at the satisfactory performance standard. In 2013, Index 1 is based on the STAAR results at the phase-in 1 Level II passing standard.

Q: What is the purpose of Index 2: Student Progress?

A: The purpose of this index is to provide a measure of student progress by subject and student group independent of overall student achievement levels. Growth is evaluated by subject (reading, mathematics, writing, where available) and student group (All Students, Special Education, ELLs, African American, American Indian, Asian, Hispanic, Pacific Islander, White, and Two or More Races).

Q: What is student growth?

A: The growth measure is based on a change score that is the difference between the student's current and prior year scores. Students are assigned to one of three growth categories based on change in scale score in relation to growth expectations: Did Not Meet Growth Expectation, Met Growth Expectation, and Exceeded Growth Expectation. Details concerning the STAAR Progress Measure will be released by the Student Assessment Division in mid-July, 2013.

Q: Why is the target for Index 2 set at the 5th percentile?

A: The commissioner determined that campuses that are in the lowest fifth percentile of all campuses in terms of student progress on STAAR should receive the appropriate interventions needed to be successful in future years. Campuses in this category will be assigned the Improvement Required rating.

Q: Will there be a separate percentile target for each of the 10 student groups in Index 2?

A: No, like other indexes, the target chosen will apply to the overall index score. To determine the 5th percentile target, only the All Students results for Index 2 for non-AEA campuses will be examined to select one index target that will be applied to both non-AEA campuses and districts. Likewise, only the All Students results for Index 2 for AEA campuses will be used to select the index target that will be applied to both AEA campuses and charters.

Q: What is the purpose of Index 3: Closing Performance Gaps?

A: The purpose of this index is to emphasize advanced academic achievement of the economically disadvantaged student group and the lowest performing race/ethnicity student groups at each campus or district.

Q: Should Index 3 compare the lowest performing student groups to the highest performing student groups?

A: There are two approaches to evaluating progress toward closing performance gaps. One approach is to compare the performance of the lower performing student group to the performance of a higher performing student group over time. The other approach is to compare the performance of the lower performing student group to an external target that does not change every year.

Index 3 is designed to compare the performance of the lower performing student group to an external target. The external target is one that allows the state to meet 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. Index 3 was also designed as a weighted performance index that sets the performance expectation at the STAAR Level III advanced performance standard.

State law requires that STAAR results at the Level III Advanced performance standard not be included in accountability until 2014. For this reason, the 2013 calculation of Index 3 includes only the results for STAAR phase-in 1 Level II satisfactory performance standard. When Index 3 is fully implemented in 2014, the index will resemble a weighted performance index with high expectations of performance for economically disadvantaged students and the lowest performing race/ethnicity student groups. A comparison of the performance of the lowest performing student groups to this external target allows for focused student improvement efforts and positions Texas to attain its goal of postsecondary readiness by 2020 with no significant achievement gaps by race, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status.

Q: Why is the target for Index 1 set at 50%, while the target for Index 3 is set at 55%?

A: The Index 3 target was set higher than the Index 1 target to emphasize that closing achievement gaps is critical and that attention must be given to the student groups evaluated in Index 3 in order to achieve the 2020 goal for postsecondary readiness.

Q: Why is STAAR Level III performance not included in Index 3 for 2013?

A: State law prohibits the use of STAAR results at the college-readiness standard in calculation of performance results for 2013. Beginning in 2014, the Level III Advanced performance standard will be used to evaluate Index 3 and the final Level II performance standard will be used in determining Index 4.

Q: In Index 3, can special education and ELL student groups be considered in the lowest performance student groups?

A: No, the ELL and special education student groups are not included in Index 3 as a potential lowest performing student group.

Q: What is the purpose of Index 4: Postsecondary Readiness?

A: The purpose 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.

Q: For Index 4, will the Recommended High School Program (RHSP)/Distinguished Achievement Program (DAP) calculation be independent of cohort year?

A: Yes, for 2013, the RHSP/DAP graduates annual rate is used with the longitudinal graduation rates in Index 4. The percent of RHSP/DAP graduates annual rate that will be applied to Index 4 in the 2013 state accountability system is the same rate that has been reported for a number of years on the Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) reports for all high schools and districts statewide.

The percent of RHSP/DAP graduates based on the longitudinal cohort will be reported for the first time in 2013 for the Class of 2012. For this reason, the RHSP/DAP indicator used for the 2013 ratings will be based on the annual rate instead of the longitudinal rate. Once the data for the Class of 2012 results are examined, it is possible the use of a longitudinal-based rate for 2014 and beyond may be implemented.

Q: What are alternative education campuses and how are they assigned ratings in 2013?

A: Alternative performance measures for campuses serving at-risk students were first implemented in the 1995-96 school year. Over time, procedures expanded to include charters that served large populations of at-risk students. Accountability advisory groups consistently recommend evaluating Alternative Education Campuses (AECs) under separate and/or different procedures due to the large number of students served in alternative education programs on AECs and to ensure that all students demonstrate proficiency on the state assessments in order to graduate. Due to the unique nature of their student population, AECs and charters evaluated under alternative provisions must meet modified targets on all 4 indexes.

STAAR Retests and Mobility

Q: How are the STAAR grades 5 and 8 results for students with Student Success Initiative (SSI) requirements included in the performance index results?

A: For students in grades 5 and 8, the performance index will include reading and mathematics test results from the first and second administration (first re-test opportunity). The best test result in each subject is found first then attributed to the campus and district; the accountability subset rules determine whether the test result is included in the performance index. The performance index includes test results for students who were enrolled in the campus or district in the fall as reported on the PEIMS October snapshot date and tested in the same campus or district in the spring.

Q: How are STAAR EOC retest results included in the performance index results?

A: Districts and campuses are accountable for three EOC test administrations: 1) summer results for students enrolled on the prior year fall enrollment snapshot, 2) fall results for students enrolled on the fall enrollment snapshot, 3) spring results for students enrolled on the fall enrollment snapshot. The table below describes the 2013 subset criteria for EOC tests and retests.

If a student was enrolled on the campus/district on this date:	Then these results are included in the campus/district accountability subset:		
Fall 2011 enrollment snapshot	EOC summer 2012 administration		
Fall 2012 enrollment snapshot	EOC fall 2012 administration		
	EOC spring 2013 administration		

For students who are enrolled and tested on the same campus or district during the 2013 accountability cycle (<u>Scenario 1</u>), the state accountability system will include EOC results based on the best result from first administration and retest results of tests administered in summer 2012, fall 2012, or spring 2013. Note that EOC retest results used for state accountability include results for students who took an EOC test in a prior accountability cycle, i.e., the summer 2012 retest results include students who were first tested in spring 2012.

For students who are enrolled and tested at a different campus or district during the 2013 accountability cycle (Scenario 2), the student's single best test outcome for each course is found first and attributed to the testing campus and district. After attributing the test to a campus and district, the accountability subset rules determine whether the test result is included in the performance index. If the single best test outcome for a course is attributed to a campus or district where the student does not meet the accountability subset criteria, then EOC test results are not evaluated for accountability. When all test results meet the accountability subset criteria and meet the student passing standard, then the best test result is chosen. When all test results meet the accountability subset criteria but do not meet the student passing standard, then the most

English Language Learners

Q: Why are English Language Learners (ELLs) in their first three years in U.S. schools excluded from the performance index results in 2013?

A: The Accountability Technical Advisory Committee (ATAC) members, made up of Texas public school educators from districts and Education Service Centers, was formed to consider the complex technical issues related to accountability and develop recommendations that ensured that Texas achieves the goals of the accountability system for 2013 and beyond. A workgroup of ATAC members was charged with developing recommendations on the appropriate inclusion of English Language Learners (ELLs) in the new state accountability system.

The ATAC ELL Workgroup recommended criteria that allowed for students to attain acquisition of academic language within the generally accepted time frame while remaining accountable for the academic progress of ELL students. Also, critical to the recommendation of the ELL workgroup was the anticipated development in 2014 of the STAAR ELL Progress Measure which will provide an appropriate measure of growth and academic attainment of ELL students who are tested on STAAR English test versions.

The criteria for including or excluding STAAR results of ELL students from state accountability in the first year of the new accountability system were developed based on the following considerations to allow for a one year transitional period (2013) before final inclusion/exclusion rules are implemented for 2014 and beyond.

- Availability of the STAAR ELL Progress Measure in 2014 and beyond; and
- Collection of additional information on 2013 TELPAS that may be taken in consideration in 2014 and beyond, e.g. students with interrupted formal education.

The following table shows the inclusion of STAAR results of ELL students for each performance index in 2013 and plans for 2014 and beyond.

Inclusion of STAAR results of ELL Students by Performance Index*	Index 1		Index 2		Index 3		Index 4	
	2013	2014 and beyond	2013	2014 and beyond	2013	2014 and beyond	2013	2014 and beyond
Tested on STAAR English versions	YR 4 & above	YR 2 & above	Not available	YR 2 & above	Exclude	YR 2 & above	n/a	YR 5 & above
Tested on STAAR Spanish versions	YR 4 & above	YR 2 & above	YR 4 & above	YR 2 & above	Exclude	YR 2 & above	n/a	YR 2 & above

YR: Year in US Schools

n/a: not applicable

* Rules for Asylee/Refugee students are not shown in the table.

Q: What is the STAAR ELL Progress Measure?

A: The STAAR ELL Progress Measure (available in 2014) will be calculated for ELL students that are tested on STAAR English test versions. The STAAR growth measure will be available in 2013 and will be calculated for students in certain grades and subjects, including ELL students tested on STAAR Spanish test versions. For this reason, a STAAR ELL Progress Measure will not be calculated for ELL students tested on STAAR Spanish test versions because these students will, instead, have growth calculated under the STAAR growth measure. A description of the STAAR ELL Progress Measure will be released by the Student Assessment Division in September, 2013.

Q: Does an ELL student have to be designated as a "recent immigrant" in order to be excluded from the performance index results based on their number of years in U.S. schools?

A: Immigrant status is not a consideration in the current state accountability system. The years in U.S. schools information that is reported on TELPAS determines which STAAR results of ELL students are included/excluded from the performance index calculations in 2013 and beyond. The language proficiency assessment committees (LPACs) are required to determine the number of school years each ELL student has been enrolled in a U.S. school in accordance with agency guidelines. This

information is reported by school districts to TEA through the Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS). For more information, see Instructions for <u>Instructions for Years in U.S. Schools Data Collection</u> under the TELPAS Policy Resources section.

Q: Are STAAR L results included in the 2013 accountability ratings?

A: STAAR L tests are linguistically accommodated STAAR tests available in mathematics, science, and social studies for ELLs that have been enrolled in U.S. schools for three school years or less starting with first grade. Since 2013 is a transitional year, test results for ELL students tested on STAAR L are not included in any of the performance index calculations. For more information on STAAR L, see the <u>Student Assessment STAAR L Resources website</u>.

Special Issues

Q: Is Required Improvement (RI) applicable in 2013?

A: No, due to the transitional issues in the first two years of the new accountability system, Required Improvement calculations will not be applied in 2013. Beginning in 2014, the Level III Advanced performance standard will be used to evaluate Index 3 and the final Level II performance standard will be used to evaluate Index 4. A separate required improvement calculation at the index level for campuses and districts that do not meet the accountability target for the index will be considered for 2015 and beyond when the underlying indicators can be more appropriately used for year-to-year comparisons.

Q: How are results for students receiving special education services included in the 2013 accountability system?

A: All students receiving special education services assessed on STAAR, STAAR Modified, or STAAR Alternate are included in the 2013 accountability system.

Q: How are STAAR results counted for students who take more than one assessment in the same content area within the accountability year?

A: As an example, if a student takes the Algebra I EOC test during the summer of 2012 and the Geometry EOC test during the spring of 2013, the results for both assessments will be included in the performance index calculations.

Minimum Size

Q: What are the minimum size requirements for a student group to be included in the performance index calculations?

A: The minimum size of 25 for student groups is applied to Indexes 2, 3, and 4. For indexes 1 and 3, small campuses that have fewer than 10 tests trigger small numbers analysis. Small numbers analysis is also used in Index 4 for the All Students results evaluated.

Q: What is small numbers analysis and when is it used?

A: All indicators in each of the four indexes must be evaluated before an index score can be calculated. The process of small numbers analysis is employed when there are very small numbers of student performance results to determine if an index score is appropriate. In 2013, a two-year-average will be calculated for assessment indicators because only two years of STAAR results are available. The calculation based on the multi-year average that will be used in the performance index is calculated by adding the number passing in 2012 and number passing in 2013 then dividing by the sum of the number of tests taken each year.

A similar calculation is used in Index 4 for any All Students indicator that does not meet the minimum size criteria of 10. Three-year-averages are calculated in the same manner since historical data is available for the graduation rate, annual dropout, Recommended High School Program (RHSP)/Distinguished Achievement Program (DAP) rate.

Safeguards

Q: What are System Safeguards?

A: With a performance index framework, poor performance in one subject or one student group does not necessarily result in an Improvement Required accountability rating. However, disaggregated performance will be reported and districts and campuses are responsible for addressing performance for each subject and each student group. The underlying accountability

system safeguards results are addressed through the Texas Accountability Intervention System (TAIS) to ensure that poor performance in one area or one student group is not masked in the performance index. Along with possible interventions, the intent of the safeguards system is to also meet additional federal accountability requirements that are not met in the performance index. See *Chapter 9 – Responsibilities and Consequences* of the <u>2013 Accountability Manual</u> for additional information on System Safeguards.

Q: What are the minimum size requirements for student groups to be included in the system safeguards?

A: The minimum size requirement for student groups, including the All Students group, to be evaluated in system safeguards is 25. No small numbers analysis is applied for student groups that have fewer than 25 assessment results.

Distinction Designations

Q: What are Distinction Designations?

A: Campuses that receive an accountability rating of Met Standard are eligible for the following distinction designations in 2013.

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

Q: Are alternative education campuses eligible for Distinction Designations?

A: No. Campuses evaluated under alternative education accountability (AEA) provisions are not eligible for distinction designations, per Texas Education Code (TEC) §39.201.

Q: What is a comparison group?

A: Campus distinction designations will be based on campus performance in relation to a comparison group of campuses. Each campus is assigned to a unique comparison group of 40 other public schools (from anywhere in the state), that closely matches that school on the following characteristics: campus type, campus size, percent economically disadvantaged students, mobility rates (based on cumulative attendance), and percent of students with limited English proficiency. The campus comparison groups that will be used for the 2013 distinction designations will be posted online in mid-June, 2013.

Q: Will schools and districts be able to earn Gold Performance Acknowledgments in 2013?

A: Gold Performance Acknowledgments will no longer be awarded. TEC requires that Distinction Designations be assigned to campuses for outstanding academic achievement.

Q: When will schools receive their distinction designations?

A: Distinction designations will be assigned to eligible campuses concurrent with the release of the state accountability ratings on August 8, 2013.

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)

Q: What is the status of 2013 AYP?

A: TEA has requested 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 that the current Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) calculations and performance targets be replaced with the state's robust accountability rating system. The new system meets the intent and purposes of the ESEA statute which would allow the state's existing systems of reform and interventions to guide the support and improvement of teaching and learning.

Q: If the USDE does not approve the waiver request, then how will schools and districts be evaluated for AYP in 2013?

A: If the waiver is approved, the Accountability System Safeguard identifies areas of needed intervention for state and federal purposes. If the waiver is not approved, the commissioner will have to consider other options that will meet federal requirements for 2013. There are ongoing discussions with USDE on the requested waiver but a final decision is still pending.

A: Yes, if the waiver is approved, the System Safeguards replaces a separate AYP evaluation. The table outlining System Safeguard Measures and Targets in *Chapter 9 – Responsibilities and Consequences* of the <u>2013 Accountability Manual</u>, includes the reference to Federal Graduation Rates, 4-year target of 78% and 5-year target of 83%, as "Federal graduation rate targets include an improvement target." The <u>waiver request</u> included the submission of the Texas AYP Workbook (Attachment 8) where page 35 and 36 also reflect the same federal graduation rate targets and improvement targets.

Q: Are the 1% and 2% caps still used in 2013?

A: Caps on the use of STAAR Modified (2%) and STAAR Alternate (1%) assessment results are not applied to performance results in 2013. Districts that exceed these caps will be noted in the System Safeguards and will be addressed through the Texas Accountability Intervention System (TAIS).

2013 Accountability Development

Q: Why did Texas develop a performance index framework for public school accountability?

A: In the previous state accountability system, campuses and districts were required to meet criteria on up to 25 separate assessment measures (five subjects times five student groups), plus up to 10 dropout and high school completion measures in order to achieve the Academically Acceptable rating. Based on House Bill 3 (2009) requirements, separate indicators under the previous state accountability framework may have resulted in up to 100 measures. The performance index framework will produce an index score for each of the four performance indexes evaluated for each campus and district. Performance on each index will be evaluated against targets specific to each index. With a Performance Index, the resulting rating reflects overall performance for the campus or district rather than the weakest performance of one student group/subject area.

The performance index framework was selected by advisory committees to meet the House Bill 3 (2009) requirements for a more comprehensive accountability system focused on postsecondary readiness and closing achievement gaps. The new framework allows educators and the public to understand how their district or campus is performing on four indexes. The accountability reports that are planned for the 2013 ratings release will provide an easy-to-understand summary of each school's performance on each index, including a graphical presentation of each index outcome relative to the accountability target.

Q: With a performance index, how will we ensure that individual student groups are not ignored?

A: Index 3 is specifically designed to address this concern. In addition to evaluating the economically disadvantaged student group, this index will identify the two lowest performing race/ethnicity student groups for the district and for each campus based on their prior year performance. Index 3 will be the critical index in the overall district/campus evaluation that ensures that their lowest performing student groups receive focused interventions.

Also critical to ensuring individual student group performance are the System Safeguards. The underlying accountability system safeguards results are reported to districts and campuses and addressed through the Texas Accountability Intervention System (TAIS). Along with possible interventions, the system safeguards ensure that poor performance in one area or one student group is not masked in the performance index.

Additionally, the previous state accountability systems only evaluated five student groups (All Students, White, Hispanic, African American, and Economically Disadvantaged). The 2013 system will evaluate the performance of eleven student groups (All Students, African American, Hispanic, White, American Indian, Asian, Pacific Islander, Two or More Races, Students served by Special Education, Economically Disadvantaged, and English Language Learners) depending on the specific indicator and index.

Q: Do any other states use a performance index for the state accountability systems?

A: Yes, a number of states use different variations of performance index systems to evaluate their schools. The accountability advisory committee members that developed the performance index proposal reviewed the performance index systems that are in place in the following states: California, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Ohio, Oklahoma, North Carolina, and South Carolina.

Q: Who helped TEA develop the new state accountability rating system?

A: Between March 2012 and March 2013, two advisory committees, the Accountability Technical Advisory Committee (ATAC) and the Accountability Policy Advisory Committee (APAC), met with TEA staff numerous times to consider the complex technical issues related to accountability and make recommendations to the commissioner on the specific features of the system. The accountability development materials that were reviewed at each meeting by the advisory groups are available online at the Accountability Development Materials site.

Q: Who are the members of the APAC and ATAC advisory groups?

A: In addition to educators representing campuses, school districts, and education service centers, the members of the <u>Accountability Policy Advisory Committee (APAC)</u> include legislative representatives, business and community leaders, representatives of higher education, and parents of children attending Texas public schools.

Members of the <u>Accountability Technical Advisory Committee (ATAC)</u> are Texas public school educators from districts and education service centers who have detailed knowledge of the state assessment and accountability systems.