

MEASURE WHAT
MATTERS



A Report from the Measure What Matters
Assessment & Accountability Council

October 2022

RAISE[®]
YOUR HAND TEXAS

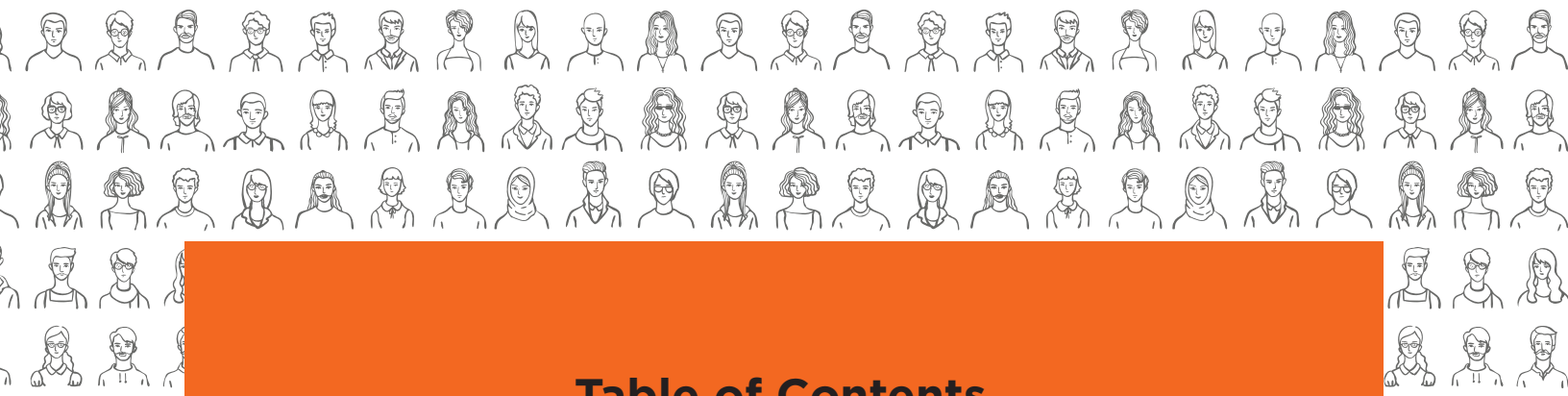


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Introduction

As our state and federal testing and accountability ratings systems have evolved over time, concerns from educators, administrators, parents, and community members regarding the emphasis on high-stakes student testing have increased. In 2005, Measure What Matters Assessment & Accountability Council member Dr. Angela Valenzuela wrote, “At issue is not whether school districts should be held accountable, but what means should be used to accomplish the widely shared goals of ensuring that all children receive a high-quality education.” The question still resonates today.

A Report from the Measure What Matters Assessment & Accountability Council is our call to action to hold ourselves accountable as a state for designing the educational systems our students and families need and deserve. For Texas to remain a national leader in public education, it is imperative that we utilize the vast expertise that exists across the state in order to design a more relevant assessment and accountability system. While many great efforts are evident throughout Texas schools, we continue to rely on a very narrow measure of school performance to define a ‘good school.’ At present, 100% of an elementary or middle school’s accountability rating is based on STAAR scores; STAAR scores are also the predominant factor for high school ratings. The quest for more meaningful ways to measure student learning and make continued progress toward the goal of an excellent education for all students is a call that brings us together as Texans.

¹ Introduction: *The Accountability Debate in Texas: Continuing the Conversation*. https://www.academia.edu/68735011/Introduction_The_Accountability_Debate_in_Texas_Continuing_the_Conversation



On this journey, we would do well to listen to the voices of those closest to the reality of our current assessment and accountability system in Texas: our teachers. In the Charles Butt Foundation's third annual report on Texas teachers' attitudes toward the profession and the state of public education in Texas (2022), a representative and random sample of 1,291 Texas public school teachers was selected from the Texas Education Agency's roster of 376,007 teachers. The results are a resounding vote of no confidence in our accountability system as it is currently structured, with 98% of educators indicating a lack of confidence in the A-F single grade ratings system. The report also showed that 63% of educators feel ratings should be based on a combination of test scores as well as other factors that capture student learning.

Furthermore, the emphasis on STAAR scores in our A-F system seems to be contributing to the frustration that is driving teachers from the profession in record numbers. In the report, 81% of educators cite undue pressure placed on students to perform well on standardized assessments as a significant barrier to teaching. This singular focus on standardized tests causes a narrowed focus on a subset of the curriculum, which then leads to a lack of teacher control and autonomy over what is taught in the classroom. This lack of control and autonomy disrespects teachers as instructional leaders, curbs their creativity, and limits their ability to tailor learning to individual student needs – all of which contribute to more and more educators choosing to leave the profession.

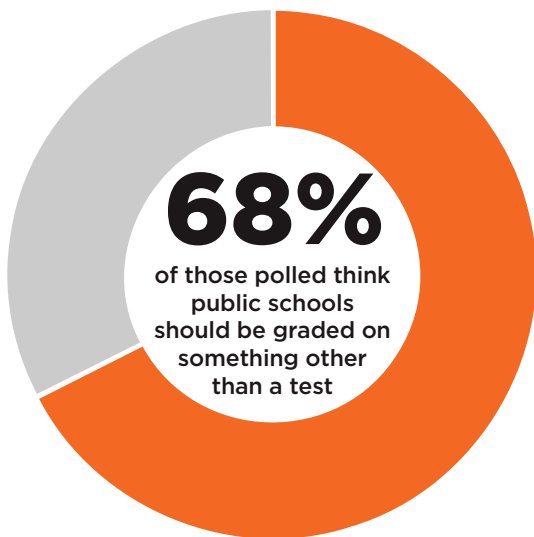
The Legislature will face two distinct but related challenges with respect to public education in the upcoming legislative session. First, this year alone, 77% of Texas teachers seriously considered leaving the classroom, citing excessive workloads, insufficient pay, and a disrespect of the profession as major factors. Many school districts continue to face teacher shortages - and will continue to do so - unless the Legislature acts now. Second, in 2020, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) began another cycle of revision to the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) test as well as a "refresh" of the state's A-F accountability ratings system. The Legislature will have the task of interpreting TEA's findings and ensuring that this refresh brings our assessment and accountability systems more in line with public expectations.

Reforming the A-F accountability system to de-emphasize STAAR and incorporate more measures of student learning and campus outputs would enable the Legislature to make meaningful progress toward both challenges. To do what is best for students, we must identify what actions matter most inside our schools and ensure they are reflected in our accountability system. To do what is best for teachers, we must allow sufficient time and flexibility in our classrooms for them to deploy their expertise. With doing our best for students and teachers as our standard, we will move closer to the mark of doing what is best for the future of Texas. Because the future of Texas is in our public schools.

What Matters to Texans

With reform to our assessment and accountability systems on the horizon, Raise Your Hand Texas recognized the importance of hosting a broader statewide conversation focused on key opportunities to increase the relevance of the state accountability system and assess what truly matters to Texas with respect to public education. So from October 2021 through May 2022, we listened to more than 15,600 Texans from across the state through individual conversations, small group discussions, and surveys. Through our Texas Voices initiative, we spoke with teachers, parents, business leaders, school administrators, community members, and others with a vested interest in public education. The premise of the Texas Voices conversations was simple: What makes a good public school, and are we measuring what matters in our current assessment and accountability system? The responses were overwhelming: Texans indicated they believe that our schools are much more than the results of one test on one day and that our current system is not sufficient to measure all that our schools accomplish.

The results from the Texas Voices initiative echoed other sources of public opinion regarding Texas' assessment and accountability system. The 2022 Charles Butt Foundation Texas Education Poll found a majority of Texans are skeptical that STAAR effectively measures how well a student is learning, with 56% of the respondents indicating they are not confident in the STAAR test. In the same poll, 83% of Texans believe that the Texas Education Agency should not base its A-F letter grades for Texas public schools entirely on STAAR test scores. However, one of the most compelling findings is that 68% of Texans think our public schools should be graded partially on how their students perform on tests and partially on the programs and services schools provide. Our current A-F accountability ratings system fails to meet this expectation at the elementary and middle school levels because the ratings are calculated solely on STAAR test scores.



What Gets Measured?

Student Achievement Domain

Elementary/Middle Schools

STAAR (Approaches, Meets & Masters Grade Level)

Weight

100%

High Schools

STAAR

40%

College, Career, and Military Readiness (CCMR)

40%

Graduation Rate

20%



Leading the Way in School Accountability

As a long-standing leader in school accountability reform, Texas has a unique responsibility to set the standard when it comes to developing effective and informative assessment and accountability systems. In light of this, Raise Your Hand Texas formed the Measure What Matters Assessment & Accountability Council composed of Texas' leading education experts, researchers, policymakers, and community leaders. The council convened multiple times throughout the year, establishing guiding principles and considering a vast array of information in order to develop an agreed-upon package of policy recommendations for more meaningful assessment and accountability practices (see Appendix A).

The Measure What Matters guiding principles fall into three categories: Assessment, Accountability, and Local & Benefits-Based Accountability. The section below details the components of each of the guiding principles.

Measure What Matters Assessment & Accountability Council's Guiding Principles

Assessment

- Assessments must help inform classroom instruction.
- STAAR tests should be just one of a variety of assessment tools to help inform classroom instruction and track student progress over time.
- STAAR tests should not be used for high-stakes student decisions.
- The number of STAAR tests should be reduced to align with federal testing requirements.

Accountability

- STAAR tests should not be the determining factor in Texas public school accountability ratings.
- The A-F accountability ratings system should reflect multiple measurable indicators that provide information about the effectiveness of schools.

Local Accountability Systems & Benefits-Based Accountability

- Support all campuses on their continuous improvement journey to better understand where they are effective and where they can improve.
- Explore new approaches to school accountability ratings.

By using the guiding principles as a starting point, in tandem with the data gathered through the Texas Voices survey and stakeholder group feedback, the following key findings and seven recommendations will serve as a springboard for meaningful policy change during the 88th Legislative Session.

Measure What Matters Council: Key Findings

- 01** **Texas' test-centric A-F accountability system overemphasizes the STAAR test.** Elementary and middle schools are rated on their student achievement based solely on STAAR results
- 02** **The high-stakes consequences attached to STAAR results place excessive pressure on our students and teachers.** Texas measures student learning based on the results of a test given on a single day. This does not provide a full picture of an individual's achievement and growth - especially for emergent bilingual students and students receiving special education services.
- 03** **Texas' A-F accountability system excludes highly valuable indicators of school quality and performance.** Equally important to measure and impactful upon student learning, the new accountability system should measure programming such as fine arts, extracurricular offerings, and dual language programs, as well as student safety and teacher quality.
- 04** **Assigning a single letter grade of A-F oversimplifies the important work of school districts and campuses.** By creating a multi-dimensional system of accountability, Texas increases the level of transparency regarding the successes and areas of strength, as well as opportunities for improvement, for each public school and district.

Measure What Matters Council Key Recommendations:

Assessment and Testing

01

Remove all high-stakes consequences for students.

Rationale: STAAR tests should be one of a variety of assessment tools to help inform classroom instruction and monitor student progress over time. One test administered on one day is inadequate to determine a student's readiness for grade advancement or high school graduation.

Policy change: Eliminate the STAAR End-of-Course (EOC) exam requirements for high school graduation. STAAR EOC exams could continue to be administered to meet federal testing requirements, but the high-stakes graduation requirement for students should be removed. As an alternative to EOC tests, consider using ACT, SAT, or TSIA, which directly aligns to postsecondary success measures that Texas schools are ultimately preparing students to achieve.

02

Reduce the number of STAAR tests in order to align with federal testing requirements.

Rationale: STAAR preparation constrains how classroom time may be used. College admissions and placement tests are already taken by most Texas students and can be used to meet federal testing requirements without the additional cost and time taken away from instruction to administer additional high school EOC tests.

Policy change: Eliminate tests that are not required by federal law, including the 8th grade Social Studies STAAR test, the U.S. History STAAR EOC exam, and the English II STAAR EOC exam. Consider utilizing federal testing waivers to create and administer local assessments, project-based learning activities and experiences, or student portfolios in lieu of STAAR tests.

03

Require an independent evaluator to provide an annual report to the Legislature on the progress of the Texas Through-Year Assessment Pilot (TTAP) program.

Rationale: Assessments must help inform classroom instruction for all students, including students. TTAP school districts will administer assessment instruments at multiple points during the school year in an attempt to better measure student growth. It will be important to ensure there are no unintended consequences associated with the TTAP such as the over-testing of students or engaging with assessments that provide little direct impact on instruction and student learning.

Policy change: Create annual reports to the Legislature from TTAP districts. The reports will detail implementation challenges and successes, the amount of time spent testing students, as well as whether the assessments informed meaningful instruction. The reports should also include state and local costs and comparisons in performance between pilot schools and non-pilot schools.

04

Actively engage in an independent evaluation to determine the validity, readability, and cultural appropriateness of the STAAR tests to determine if the tests are subject and grade-level appropriate.

Rationale: Parents, students, and policymakers must trust the validity and readability of our state tests. Conflicting studies have called STAAR's trustworthiness into question. There needs to be more research to demonstrate that questions and passages are written with both grade-level and cultural appropriateness for all students, including our students receiving special education services, our emergent bilingual students, and our students of color.

Policy change: Provide an independent review to the Legislature related to the readability, grade-level, and cultural appropriateness of the STAAR and EOC tests.

Measure What Matters Council Key Recommendations: **Accountability**

01

Expand the scope of Texas' A-F accountability ratings system to include factors beyond STAAR test scores for all grade levels.

Rationale: Restricting the inputs for Texas' public school accountability ratings system to a single standardized test administered on a single day fails to comprehensively capture educators' work and student readiness for college and career. Our system should reflect multiple measurable indicators that provide information about the effectiveness of schools and districts.

Policy changes: In addition to STAAR, add indicators for elementary and middle school ratings that address student safety, teacher quality, and access to enrichment programs like fine arts and second language programs. Add career/workforce indicators to the College, Career, and Military Readiness component for high school ratings, including high school endorsement rates for graduation plans.

02

Limit the high-stakes nature of STAAR tests by restricting their weight in school accountability ratings.

Rationale: Basing a widely publicized accountability label entirely on one test creates a high-pressure atmosphere that is detrimental to student mental health, discouraging for educators, and ultimately presents a distorted picture of the work happening in Texas public schools.

Policy change: STAAR test results may only count for up to 50% of any domain or overall score in the state's accountability ratings system.

03

Use individual domain letter grades to inform parents, educators, and communities on what is working well and what needs to be improved in their schools.

Rationale: The use of a single letter grade to describe campus and district effectiveness clouds the complexity of a school's work and fails to capture how a campus or district performs across a variety of functions.

Policy change: Remove the summative A-F rating and provide ratings for each of the domains in order to increase transparency for all indicators that are part of the state assessment and accountability system.

Measure What Matters Council Key Recommendations: **Local Accountability System**

01

Explore new approaches to school accountability ratings.

Rationale: Accurately capturing student academic achievement and postsecondary readiness, as well as understanding what factors differentiate campuses and districts from one another in terms of effectiveness, is a complex task. This is especially true given Texas' size and diversity. More nuanced, community-responsive, and actionable approaches may exist.

Policy change: Require the Texas Education Agency to produce a report on alternative accountability ratings systems, including but not limited to, Local Accountability Systems, Community-Based Accountability Systems, and Benefits-Based Accountability Systems, to provide detailed information regarding how schools are continually improving over time.



Texas Assessment and Accountability: **Past, Present, and Future**

2016-17

A-F system developed using 2016-17 modeled data. This data was released to districts and was used as Year 1 Closing the Gaps data.*

2017-18

Districts received A-F ratings under the new system. Campuses were evaluated using the A-F system but received Met Standard/Improvement Required ratings.

2018-19

Districts and campuses received A-F ratings.

2019-20

Due to COVID-19 and the cancellation of STAAR, all districts and campuses were labeled Not Rated: Declared State of Disaster.

2020-21

STAAR test administered. All districts and campuses received Not Rated: Declared State of Disaster ratings. Available accountability data, excluding ratings, released publicly. Agency and stakeholder groups worked on accountability reset development.

2021-22

Districts and campuses received A-F ratings. TEA will complete reset development and release 2023 reset framework in May 2022.

2022-23

Districts and campuses will be evaluated under A-F system.

* Texas Education Agency, Governance and Accountability, Performance Reporting

The State of Texas' influence over state and federal accountability systems is undeniable. In 1984, and again in 1993, Texas led the nation by creating assessment and accountability provisions that held schools accountable for student achievement in a way that had not been seen before. In 2002, the Texas model was transformed, once again, when the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) was signed into federal law. During the 2011-12 academic year, the Texas Education Agency launched an even more robust assessment called the State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness, or the STAAR test. All public school districts, charter schools, and individual campus schools were required to administer these assessments.

The STAAR test assesses the following grades and subjects:

- Mathematics in grades 3-8;
- Reading language arts (RLA) in grades 3-8;
- Science in grades 5 and 8;
- Social studies in grade 8;
- End-of-course (EOC) assessments for Algebra I, English I, English II, Biology, and U.S. History.

In 2015, the NCLB Act was replaced with new federal requirements under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) which provided states additional flexibility with respect to the number and types of assessments. Despite the greater flexibility afforded through ESSA, states must still test students for the purpose of monitoring academic achievement and determining the strengths of student services.

In 2017, the 85th Texas Legislature responded to ESSA with the passage of House Bill 22 (HB22), establishing the State's current A-F accountability ratings system. HB 22 has continued to utilize the STAAR assessment as the foundations of the A-F ratings in Texas.

Beginning with the 2017-18 academic year, school districts began receiving A-F accountability ratings, and in 2018-19, campuses received letter grade ratings for the first time. The ratings examined student achievement, school progress over time, and whether or not districts and campuses were closing achievement gaps among student groups. The data for the A-F ratings is still composed of the following metrics:

- STAAR results for grades 3-8, 9-12;
- Graduation rates for grades 9-12;
- College, career, military readiness indicators for grades 9-12.

Once again, the State of Texas has an important opportunity to lead the way in the development of an accountability system that is meaningful, rigorous, and expands the current definitions of what it means to serve all students at the highest levels.

TEA'S 2022 ACADEMIC ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM OVERVIEW

Student Achievement

All Students

Elementary Schools and Middle Schools

STAAR

- Combined over all STAAR subject areas evaluated (reading, mathematics, science, social studies)
- Credit awarded for Approaches Grade Level or above,
- Meets Grade Level or above, and Masters Grade Level

High Schools, K-12s, and Districts

STAAR

See description above.

College, Career, and Military Readiness (CCMR)

Percentage of annual graduates that meet any of the following:

- Meet TSI criteria in ELA/reading and mathematics on assessments or complete college prep courses
- Meet AP/IB criteria
- Earn dual-course credits
- Earn an approved industry-based certification
- Earn an associate degree
- Graduate with completed IEP and workforce readiness
- Earn a Level I or Level II certificate
- Complete an OnRamps dual-enrollment course
- Graduate under an advanced diploma plan and be identified as a current special education student

Graduation Rate

Best of four-year, five-year, or six-year graduation rate (or annual dropout rate if no graduation rate is available).

School Progress

All Students

Elementary Schools, Middle Schools, High Schools, K–12s, and Districts

Part A: Academic Growth

Credit awarded for students who improve performance year over year as measured by STAAR progress measures and performance levels on STAAR reading and mathematics.

Part B: Relative Performance

Credit awarded based on performance relative to districts or campuses with a similar percentage of economically disadvantaged students.

Summary of 2022 Updates

- Overall and domain scaled scores will be calculated and displayed.
- Overall and/or domain scaled scores of at least a 70 will receive applicable A–C ratings.
- Overall and/or domain scaled scores below 70 will receive Not Rated: SB 1365 labels.

Closing the Gaps

All Students and Disaggregated Student Groups

Elementary Schools and Middle Schools Academic Achievement

- Reading and mathematics STAAR results
- Credit awarded for Meets Grade Level or above and Masters Grade Level

Academic Growth

- Credit awarded for students who improve performance year over year as measured by STAAR progress measures and performance levels on STAAR reading and mathematics.

English Language Proficiency

- Emergent bilingual students/English learners' performance on TELPAS
- Credit for advancing by at least one composite rating from the prior year to the current year, or a composite rating of Advanced High or Basic Fluency

STAAR Component

See Student Achievement–STAAR for description.

High Schools, K–12s, and Districts Academic Achievement

See description above.

Federal Graduation Rate

Four-year federal graduation rate (without exclusions).

English Language Proficiency

See description above.

College, Career, and Military Readiness

Percentage of annual graduates and non-graduating grade 12 students that meet any of the CCMR indicators as described in the Student Achievement domain.

Source: TEA A-F Resources, 2022. <https://tea.texas.gov/sites/default/files/2022-accountability-system-overview.pdf>

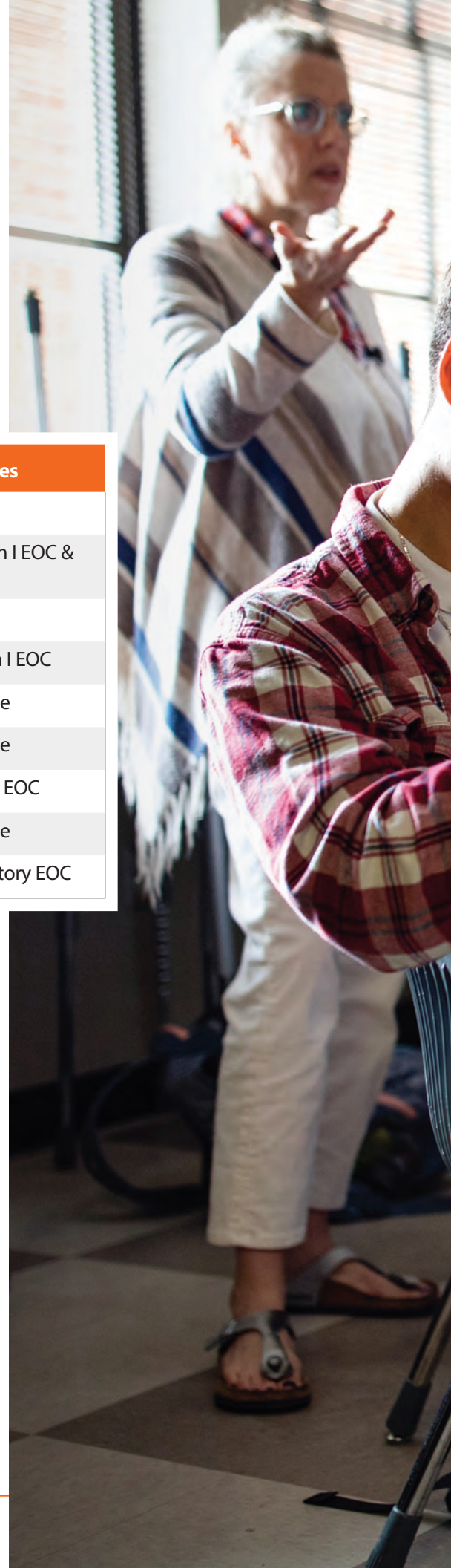
Every Student Succeeds Act: **Federal Accountability & Assessment Requirements**

Although the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requires states to test students each year, it provides greater flexibility for states than the current model Texas has adopted. The following chart outlines a comparison of what is required by the State of Texas versus what is required through ESSA at the federal level. The chart below reflects an increase in testing for the State of Texas beyond what is required by the federal government.

Grades	Subject Area	ESSA Requires	Texas Requires
3–8	Reading/LA	Annually	Annually
High School	Reading/LA	Once	Twice - English I EOC & English II EOC
3–8	Mathematics	Annually	Annually
High School	Mathematics	Once	Once, Algebra I EOC
Elementary	Science	Once in grades 3–5	Once, 5 th grade
Middle School	Science	Once in grades 6–8	Once, 8 th grade
High School	Science	Once in grades 9–12	Once, Biology EOC
Middle School	Social Studies	N/A	Once, 8 th grade
High School	Social Studies	N/A	Once, U.S. History EOC

ESSA does not require state tests to be used for high-stakes decisions like graduation requirements and grade-level promotion. It is important to note that ESSA provides an additional level of flexibility. States may choose to offer nationally recognized assessments at the high school level in lieu of state assessments as long as the assessments are deemed to be reliable, valid, and comparable. By using assessments like the SAT or ACT rather than the STAAR EOC exams, districts across the state would be in much better alignment with the ultimate goal of ensuring students are prepared to enter college under the House Bill 3 parameters.

The federal government recognizes that making changes to the state accountability system does take time, effort, and funding. To address this, ESSA allows the use of federal funds to conduct audits of state and local assessment systems in order to eliminate unnecessary tests while innovating other means for measuring student achievement and learning. Limiting the amount of time students spend on assessments at each grade level is yet another way ESSA has the best interest of students at heart.





Beyond STAAR: **Well-Rounded Education Indicators**

Measuring Impactful, Quality School Indicators

Under the Texas public school accountability ratings system, the A-F letter grades that school districts and campuses receive are almost entirely determined by student performance on the STAAR tests. In fact, STAAR test scores are the only metric that drives the accountability ratings for elementary and middle schools. While high school ratings also include graduation rates and College, Career, and Military Readiness metrics, STAAR tests are still the primary driver for the majority of A-F accountability ratings.

Although STAAR tests provide a snapshot of student performance on one day, they cannot capture all of the other factors that directly contribute to high-quality schools. Every day, millions of public school students are engaging in dual language, fine arts, extracurricular, and co-curricular programs that positively impact student success rates. Research published by colleges and universities (*Edutopia*, 2021) as well as studies funded by the federal government (National Center for Education Statistics, 1995) concur that engagement in extracurricular and co-curricular programming results in higher attendance rates, better satisfaction with school experiences, and a decrease in behavior that interferes with academic achievement.

Beyond providing programming to engage students in their areas of interest, Texas public schools also play a critical role in providing essential resources such as early childhood education, meals, health-related services, and ensuring the safety of students. Our current ratings system does not examine the quality of these crucial services when calculating A-F letter grades - the very grades that shape Texans' perceptions of school quality.

Texas Voices Matter

As discussed in the introduction, it is important to note that Texans clearly desire a more well-rounded accountability ratings system. The 2022 Charles Butt Foundation Texas Education Poll found that 83% of Texas respondents believe that A-F letter grades should be based on something other than STAAR alone. The report found that 68% of respondents believe the accountability ratings system should be determined in part by STAAR tests and in part by "the programs and services schools offer." The findings from our Texas Voices campaign, which surveyed over 15,600 Texans, echoed the sentiments of these poll results (see Resources).

The Measure What Matters Assessment & Accountability Council has discussed possible indicators for grade spans Pre-K through 8th grade and grades 9-12 that would expand the scope of the school accountability ratings system in order to provide a more holistic measure of school quality. These indicators would be known as "Well-Rounded Education Indicators."

If incorporated into the school accountability ratings system, these indicators would, for the first time, provide parents and stakeholders with important information about the quality of the resources schools provide. The addition of these metrics would allow the state to further define school quality indicators that emphasize academic growth and postsecondary readiness in a way that the STAAR tests are not capable of doing.

Well-Rounded Education Indicators: Grades Pre-K through 8 & Grades 9-12

The Pre-K through 8th grade indicators would focus on establishing the strong foundational knowledge and skills students need to prepare for a successful transition to high school. The proposed Well-Rounded Education Indicators would measure the access to and engagement in school resources and programming that are important to student success. Such indicators could include full-day Pre-K participation, attendance rates, extracurricular and co-curricular participation (fine arts, physical education, dual language), school safety, teacher retention efforts, and additional factors to be determined based on further research and public input. These potential indicators would allow Texas public school districts, charter schools, and campuses to monitor student achievement in more areas than “academic mastery” on STAAR. The Well-Rounded Education Indicators would measure the extent to which Pre-K through 8th grade students are on-track to meet the learning expectations for early childhood literacy, reading, language arts, and math, as well as areas directly linked to high school readiness.

These indicators would measure how students are growing academically throughout their elementary and middle school careers, providing useful and actionable information that districts, schools, and educators would use to maximize long-term growth.

Potential Well-Rounded Education Indicators for students in grades 9-12 would focus on the attainment of knowledge, skills, and interests through high-quality experiences that would directly prepare students to achieve their college and career goals after high school. These Well-Rounded Education Indicators are similar to those proposed for Pre-K through 8th, with an added emphasis on workforce partnerships and high-quality, work-based learning experiences (i.e., internships, externships, apprenticeships).

The Well-Rounded Education Indicators related to postsecondary readiness would reduce the number of STAAR End-of-Course exams required to graduate, remove the high-stakes pressure of the exams, and promote the pursuit and completion of college- and career-relevant coursework. Such a shift would allow high school students to invest more time on the opportunities that would shape their career pathway and would help them become better-informed and better-engaged citizens.

The great news is that Texas school districts are already reporting the data for many of these indicators. As a result, the TEA could readily incorporate this data into the accountability ratings system. Additionally, the TEA is working with school districts across the state to report on the feasibility of incorporating the participation rates for extracurricular and co-curricular activities into the school accountability ratings system. The report is due to the Legislature in December 2022.

The time is right for Texas to launch a balanced accountability ratings system that offers so many of the benefits that our communities and families deserve. These benefits include a system that is more transparent for students, parents, school districts, communities, and the state. Such a framework permits a more fair and accurate evaluation of school quality that takes into consideration the outputs along with meaningful school inputs. The identified indicators would reduce high-stakes testing, prioritize student growth and satisfaction, and give teachers the opportunity to hone their craft in ways that result in students who are truly prepared for their futures. The tables below provide additional information about the possible indicators, including the definitions of each indicator, their potential impact, whether or not they already exist in the ratings system, and the extent to which the data is currently available.

Measure What Matters: Possible Pre-K through 8th Grade Indicators

Based on comprehensive research, analysis, and input from a broad range of stakeholders, Raise Your Hand Texas Measure What Matters Council proposes the following indicators for schools serving students in grades Pre-K through 8:

Well-Rounded Education	Academic Mastery (Growth & Achievement)
<p>Indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NEW Full Day Pre-K participation rates (local indicator)* • NEW Attendance – Absent fewer than 15 days during the school year (local indicator)* • NEW Access to and participation in fine arts, P.E., Languages Other Than English, or enrichment curriculum courses (local indicator)* • NEW Access to and participation in extracurricular and co-curricular activities, including UIL academics, fine arts, Languages Other Than English, chess, robotics, and athletic events (local indicator)* • NEW Successfully complete a character education program required by statute SEC. 29.906 (local indicator)* • NEW Documentable strategies for increasing teacher retention, including mentoring programs and professional development (local indicator)^ • NEW Results from a State-developed School & Student Safety and/or Climate Survey for educators, administrators, students, and parents^ • NEW Health & Wellness metrics^ • NEW Career Exploration at middle school (local indicator)* • NEW Employability Micro-credentials – Skills aligned to workforce industry credentials (middle & high school)^ 	<p>Primary Pre-K - 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-K-2 Literacy Progress & Growth (local assessment) – report only; local results posted on TAPR • Kindergarten Readiness (local assessment) – report only; local results posted on TAPR <p>Elementary 3-5</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grades 3-5 STAAR Math & ELA – Approaches/Meets/Masters • Grades 3-5 STAAR Math & ELA – Student Growth • NEW Grade 5 STAAR Science – Report for ESSA only, possibly a portfolio or project-based assessment.^ <p>Middle School 6-8</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grades 6-8 STAAR Math & ELA and EOCs for Algebra I, Biology, English I, and English II for accelerated testers – Approaches/Meets/Masters • Grades 6-8 ELA & Math – Student Growth • NEW Grade 8 STAAR Science – Report for ESSA only – possibly a portfolio or project-based assessment.^ • NEW Grade 8 STAAR Social Studies – Not required by ESSA – possibly a portfolio or project-based assessment.^ • NEW Grades 6-8 Advanced Coursework (local indicator)* • NEW 9th Grade On-Track for high school graduation within four years^

* Local indicators are currently collected at the school district level and reported to the Texas Education Agency.
 ^ TEA will need to develop an indicator that most effectively captures school performance.



What Does This Mean for Students?

These indicators signal what matters most in the development of graduates prepared to succeed. By measuring improvement and achievement for each indicator, the Measure What Matters Council is affirming the importance of these components as benchmarks that contribute to the lifelong success of each student. For Pre-K through 8th grade, the indicators focus on the establishment of the strong foundational knowledge and skills students need as they prepare for a successful transition to high school.

Indicator	Student Success Characteristic	Definition	Impact / Incentive	Currently in A-F ratings	Data Availability
Full Day Pre-K Participation Rates	Academic Mastery	Percentage of eligible Pre-K students participating in full day Pre-K	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inform early intervention for students needing additional support. Increase prioritization of K-3 foundational learning. 	No	Currently Available
Student Attendance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School Engagement Work Ethic 	Students maximize learning opportunities by attending school regularly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve student attendance. Implement effective interventions with students at risk of chronic absenteeism. 	No	Currently Available
Fine Arts, P.E., LOTE, Enrichment Courses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Academic Mastery Communication & Collaboration 	Percentage of students participating in a coherent sequence of fine arts courses, P.E., Languages Other Than English, or enrichment curriculum courses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote participation in and access to courses beyond the foundation school program, expanding the traditional school experience. 	No	Currently Available
Extracurricular/ Co-Curricular Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communication & Collaboration Work Ethic 	Percentage of students participating in meaningful extracurricular and co-curricular programming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote participation in and access to programs beyond the traditional school experience. Foster collaboration by offering rigorous extracurricular and co-curricular activities for all students. 	No. TEA's report is due Dec. 2022.	Currently Available
Character Education Program SEC 29.906, modified by SB 123, 87th Legislature	Positive Character Traits & Personal Skills	Percentage of students successfully completing a locally adopted character education program	<p>Beginning with the 2021-2022 school year, and in accordance with the rules adopted by the SBOE, school districts and open-enrollment charter schools are required to provide instruction on the TEKS for positive character traits at least once during each of the following grade bands: grades K-2, grades 3-5, grades 6-8, and grades 9-12. Schools may provide the required instruction in a variety of arrangements, including through a standalone course or by integrating the positive character traits standards listed in the TEKS for one or more courses or subject areas at the appropriate grade levels.</p> <p>https://tea.texas.gov/academics/learning-support-and-programs/positive-character-traits-education</p>	No	TBD

Indicator	Student Success Characteristic	Definition	Impact / Incentive	Currently in A-F ratings	Data Availability
Teacher Retention	Academic Mastery	Efforts to increase teacher retention, including mentoring programs and professional development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote local and statewide programs to retain effective educators. 	No	Currently Available
School & Student Safety/Health & Wellness/Climate Survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School Engagement Parental Engagement Positive Character Traits & Personal Skills 	Efforts to understand, improve, and/or maintain high standards of school safety, including but not limited to climate surveys and safety protocols	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure schools are a safe place for students, teachers, staff, parents, and visitors. Promote understanding of school climate and its impact on students, teachers, staff, and parents. 	No	TBD
Career Exploration (Middle Schools)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Career & Postsecondary Readiness Communication & Collaboration Work Ethic 	Percentage of students participating in rigorous career exploration in grades 6-8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage schools to adopt comprehensive programming that affords students the opportunity to explore and engage in career and postsecondary interests. 	No	Currently Available
Employability Micro-credentials (Middle Schools)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Career & Postsecondary Readiness Communication & Collaboration Work Ethic 	Percentage of students earning high-value micro-credentialing badges demonstrate mastery of employability standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support students in developing lifelong skills that complement student pathway options for high school and postsecondary success. Encourage schools to build out intentional programs and experiences aligned to Texas Employability Standards (not currently developed). 	No	Not Available
Pre-K through 2nd Literacy Progress	Academic Mastery	Percentage of students demonstrating progress or growth in essential early reading skills year over year, as measured by state-approved, locally selected literacy assessments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Align instructional practices to the Science of Reading standards and use early literacy assessments to inform strategic, early intervention for students needing additional support. Increase prioritization of K-3 foundational learning. 	No. It is a "Report Only" Indicator on TAPR.	Currently Available
Kindergarten Readiness	Academic Mastery	Percentage of kindergarten students demonstrating the skills necessary for kindergarten readiness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guide instruction and inform early intervention for students needing additional support. Expand access to quality Pre-K to ensure students enter kindergarten ready to learn. Increase prioritization of K-3 foundational learning. 	No. It is a "Report Only" Indicator on TAPR.	Currently Available
ELA & Math Proficiency & Growth	Academic Mastery	Students meeting or exceeding annual growth expectations toward proficiency of ELA and math standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide effective ELA and math instruction (including accelerated instruction when needed) for Texas TEKS to all students, including most educationally disadvantaged students. 	Yes	Currently Available

Indicator	Student Success Characteristic	Definition	Impact / Incentive	Cuurrently in A-F ratings	Data Availability
<p>Advanced Coursework (Middle Schools)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Academic Mastery Career & Postsecondary Readiness Work Ethic 	<p>Students completing advanced coursework (e.g., Pre-AP, Algebra I, Biology) prior to 9th grade</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide effective instruction (including accelerated instruction when needed) for TEKS to ensure all students have the knowledge they need to consider enrolling in advanced coursework. Expand access to advanced coursework which may align with future student high school and postsecondary pathways. 	<p>No</p>	<p>Currently Available</p>
<p>9th Grade On-Track</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Career & Postsecondary Readiness School Engagement Work Ethic 	<p>Longitudinal outcomes for middle grades - identifies students (formerly in 8th grade) who, at the end of 9th grade, have completed the credits to be considered on-track to graduate on time from high school in four years</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effectively prepare students for the transition to high school. Continuously monitor students up to and through 9th grade to inform programs and supportive strategies in middle school. 	<p>No</p>	<p>Currently Available</p>

Measure What Matters: Possible 9-12th Grade Indicators

Based on comprehensive research, analysis, and input from a broad range of stakeholders, the Raise Your Hand Texas Measure What Matters Council proposes the following indicators for schools serving students in grades 9-12:

Well-Rounded Education	Postsecondary Readiness
<p>Indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NEW Attendance - Absent fewer than 15 days during the school year (local indicator)* • NEW Access to and participation in fine arts, P.E., Language Other Than English, or enrichment curriculum courses (local indicator)* • Access to & participation in extracurricular and co-curricular activities, including UIL academics, fine arts, Languages Other Than English, chess, robotics, and athletic events (local)* • NEW Successfully complete a character education program required by statute SEC. 29.906 (local indicator)* • NEW High School Graduation On-Track Credit Accumulation (local indicator)^ • NEW Documentable strategies for increasing teacher retention, including mentoring programs and professional development (local indicator)^ • NEW Results from a State-developed School & Student Safety and/or Climate Survey for educators, administrators, students, and parents^ • NEW Health & Wellness metrics^ • NEW Employability Micro-credentials – Skills aligned to workforce industry credentials (middle & high school)^ • NEW Workforce Partnerships & High-Quality Work-Based Learning (examples include Boeing, Grow with Google, T-10 Toyota) (high school)^ 	<p>College & Career Credentials</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eliminate End-of-Course exams that function as high-stakes tests required for high school graduation • SAT/ACT/TSIA Performance – Approaches/Meets/Masters Grade Level • AP/IB/Dual Credit/Cambridge International/The Princeton Review Course Completion • Associates Degree (local indicator)* • NEW Grades 9-12 Advanced Coursework (local indicator)* • CTE Programs of Study (local indicator)* • NEW Fine Arts Coherent Sequence of Courses (local indicator)* • Industry-Based Certifications (local indicator)* • Redefine Military Readiness^ • NEW Enrollment in postsecondary institution immediately following high school graduation* • NEW Strength of Diploma: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Graduation Pathways/Endorsement Completion Rates (local indicator)* - Graduation Distinguished Level of Achievement Rates (local indicator)* • Graduation Rates* • NEW Free Application for Federal Student Aid Completion Rates (In accordance with Texas Education Code (TEC) §28.0256, beginning with students enrolled in 12th grade during the 2021-2022 school year, each student must do one of the following in order to graduate: a) Complete and submit the FAFSA; b) Complete and submit the Texas Application for State Financial Aid (TASFA); or c) Submit a signed opt-out form^

* Local indicators are currently collected at the school district level and reported to the Texas Education Agency.

^ TEA will need to develop an indicator that most effectively captures school performance.

MEASURE WHAT MATTERS



What Does This Mean for Students?

These indicators signal what matters most in the development of graduates prepared to succeed. By measuring improvement and achievement for each indicator, Measure What Matters Council is affirming the importance of these components as benchmarks that contribute to the lifelong success of each student. For high school, the indicators focus on the advancement of the individual knowledge, skills, and interests through high-quality experiences so that students are prepared to achieve their college and/or career goals after high school.

Indicator	Student Success Characteristic	Definition	Impact / Incentive	Currently in A-F ratings	Data Availability
Student Attendance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School Engagement Work Ethic 	Students maximize learning opportunities by attending school regularly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve student attendance. Implement effective interventions with students at risk of chronic absenteeism. 	No	Currently Available
Fine Arts, P.E., LOTE, Enrichment Courses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Academic Mastery Communication & Collaboration 	Percentage of students participating in a coherent sequence of fine arts courses, P.E., Languages Other Than English, or enrichment curriculum courses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote participation in and access to courses beyond the foundation school program/traditional school experience. 	No	Currently Available
Extracurricular/ Co-Curricular Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communication & Collaboration Work Ethic 	Percentage of students participating in meaningful extracurricular and co-curricular programming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote participation in and access to programs beyond the traditional school experience. Foster collaboration to offer rigorous extracurricular and co-curricular activities for all students. 	No. TEA's Report Is Due Dec. 2022	Currently Available
Character Education Program SEC 29.906, modified by SB 123, 87th Legislature	Positive Character Traits & Personal Skills	Percentage of students successfully completing a locally adopted character education program	<p>Beginning with the 2021-2022 school year and in accordance with the rules adopted by the SBOE, school districts and open-enrollment charter schools are required to provide instruction on the TEKS for positive character traits at least once during each of the following grade bands: grades K-2, grades 3-5, grades 6-8, and grades 9-12. Schools may provide the required instruction in a variety of arrangements, including through a standalone course or by integrating the positive character traits standards in the TEKS for one or more courses or subject areas at the appropriate grade levels.</p> <p>https://tea.texas.gov/academics/learning-support-and-programs/positive-character-traits-education</p>	No	TBD

Indicator	Student Success Characteristic	Definition	Impact / Incentive	Currently in A-F ratings	Data Availability
High School Graduation On-Track (credit accumulation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Academic Mastery Postsecondary Readiness School Engagement Work Ethic 	Percentage of students earning the expected number and type of credits annually in order to graduate in 4 years (on time with their cohort)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support students in the determination of whether or not they are staying on-track to earn a high school diploma through the use of individual graduation plans and other means. 	No	Currently Available
Teacher Retention	Academic Mastery	Efforts to increase teacher retention, including mentoring programs and professional development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote local and statewide programs to retain effective educators. 	No	Currently Available
School & Student Safety/Health & Wellness/ Climate Survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School Engagement Parental Engagement Positive Character Traits & Personal Skills 	Efforts to understand, improve, and/or maintain high standards of school safety, including but not limited to climate surveys and safety protocols	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure schools are a safe place for students, teachers, staff, parents, and visitors. Promote understanding of school climate & its impact on students, teachers, staff, and parents. 	No	TBD
Employability Micro-credentials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Career & Postsecondary Readiness Communication & Collaboration Work Ethic 	Students earning high-value micro-credentialing badges demonstrate mastery of employability standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support students in developing lifelong skills that complement student pathway options for high school and postsecondary success. Encourage schools to build out intentional programs and experiences aligned to Texas Employability Standards (not currently developed). 	No	TBD
Workforce Partnerships & High-Quality Work-Based Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Career & Postsecondary Readiness Communication & Collaboration Work Ethic 	The percentage of students participating in high-quality work-based learning experiences as defined by TEA (e.g., Boeing, Grow with Google, T-10 Toyota)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage partnerships between schools and local employers to create career-embedded learning opportunities for students while they are in high school. Provide real-world opportunities for students to apply their learning in a career context and develop employability skills. 	No	TBD
SAT/ACT/TSIA Performance (Eliminate EOCs as a Graduation Requirement)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Academic Mastery Career & Postsecondary Readiness 	Students meeting ELA and math performance standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide effective ELA and math instruction aligned to Texas TEKS to all students, including our most educationally disadvantaged students. Encourage schools to provide SAT/ACT/TSIA testing and test prep during the school day, ensuring more students have access to postsecondary opportunities and funding. 	Yes. CCMR Outcomes Bonus	Currently Available

Indicator	Student Success Characteristic	Definition	Impact / Incentive	Cuurrently in A-F ratings	Data Availability
AP/IB/Dual Credit/ Cambridge International/The Princeton Review Course Completion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Academic Mastery Career & Postsecondary Readiness Work Ethic 	Students successfully completing advanced coursework (e.g., AP, IB, DC, IC, prior to 12th grade)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide effective ELA and math instruction (including accelerated instruction when needed) on Texas TEKS to all students, including our most educationally disadvantaged students. 	Yes	Currently Available
9th Grade On-Track	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Career & Postsecondary Readiness School Engagement Work Ethic 	Longitudinal outcomes for middle grades - identifies students (formerly in 8th grade) who, at the end of 9th grade, have completed the credits to be considered on-track to graduate high school in four years (on time)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effectively prepare students for the transition to high school. Continuously monitor students up to and through their 9th grade year to inform programs and supportive student strategies in middle school. 	No	Currently Available

The Texas Voices Campaign

**MY CHILD IS NOT
A NUMBER. MY
SCHOOL IS NOT A
LETTER. THE STAAR
IS NOT ENOUGH TO
MEASURE MY CHILD
OR MY SCHOOL.**

- TEXAS PARENT

**MEASURE HOW
THEY APPLY THE
KNOWLEDGE,
NOT HOW THEY
MEMORIZE IT.**

- TEXAS PARENT

**PARENTS [ARE] LOOKING
FOR AN EDUCATION
THAT ALLOWS THEIR
STUDENTS TO ACHIEVE
THEIR DREAMS, AND
EDUCATORS WHO
SUPPORT THE WHOLE
PERSON - MIND,
BODY, SPIRIT.**

- TEXAS PARENT

**A SCHOOL PREPARES
KIDS FOR THE
WORLD, [THE]
WORKFORCE, [AND]
TO GO FORWARD
AFTER THEIR TIME AT
SCHOOL IS DONE.**

- TEXAS TEACHER

As mentioned previously, beginning in October of 2021, Raise Your Hand Texas engaged in conversations about assessment and accountability with thousands of parents, educators, students, and community members from across the state. The Texas Voices campaign was focused on capturing what truly matters to Texans with respect to public education. Through group discussions and an online survey, we heard from more than 15,600 Texans. We posed the simple question, “What makes for a good school?” And Texans responded by sharing what they wanted most from their public schools as well as their hopes for the future of Texas public education. The following quotes from the Texas Voices campaign exemplify the types of feedback we received. These quotes reinforce the importance of developing an assessment and accountability system that is capable of measuring the rigorous content taught in our schools as well as the application of that knowledge to broader contexts. And above all, our assessment and accountability system needs to be able to measure the skills, knowledge, and dispositions to ensure all of our students are successful in the world beyond our schools.

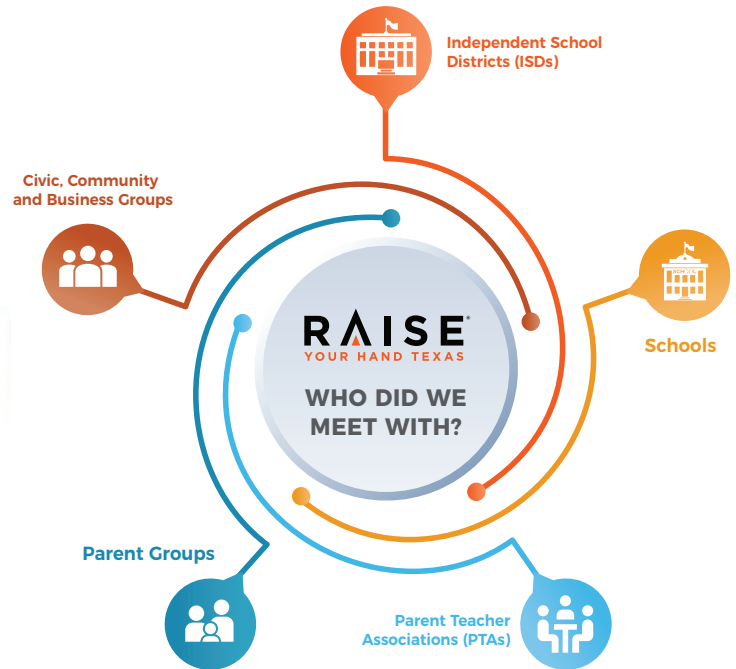
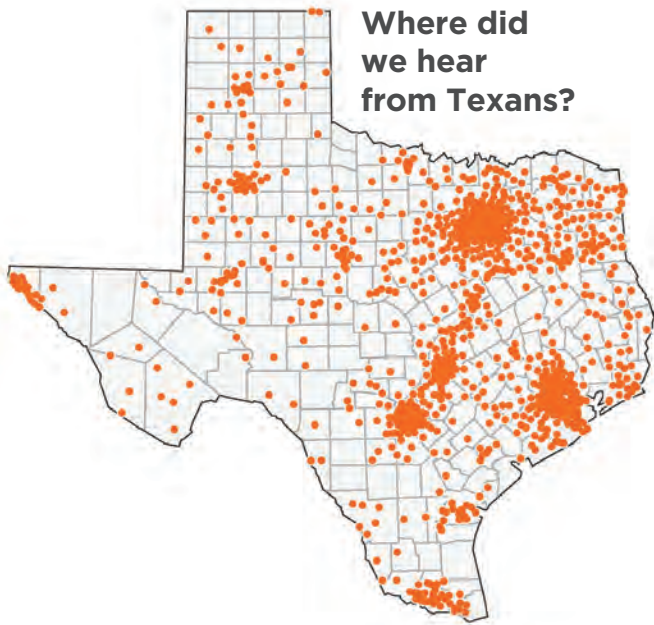
Overwhelmingly, Texans told us they are dissatisfied with the current assessment and accountability system. They want more and better information from the state when it comes to our schools’ ratings because more goes into a school year than one test on one day. Over and over, we heard Texas teachers say that the STAAR test does not adequately capture the amazing work happening with our students in Texas classrooms, every day and all year.

The Measure What Matters Council and Conference

To further guide our efforts, in December 2021, we invited a group of education and business leaders, teachers, school board trustees, and advocates to join the Measure What Matters Council on Assessment & Accountability. In the time since the initial meeting, the council has analyzed input gathered from the Texas Voices campaign described earlier in this report and the Measure What Matters Conference held in January 2022. The council used the feedback received to develop the policy recommendations within this report to spearhead assessment and accountability reform during the 88th Texas Legislature beginning in January 2023.

The Measure What Matters Conference provided insightful discussions about school accountability in Texas through a blended format of both in-person and livestreamed sessions featuring presentations from experts across the state. Topics included the history of Texas’ school assessment system, redesigning the STAAR test, insights from current and former officials in the education system, and the reality of how hard Texas educators work to navigate our current testing and accountability system on their campuses.

More than **15,600** Texans shared what they think about Texas testing and accountability.



Texas Takeaways: What We Learned

The opinions regarding STAAR are clear: There is little support for STAAR serving as an accurate measure of student learning. There is also minimal support for STAAR serving as a primary indicator of the overall effectiveness of our schools. In fact, very few Texans believe STAAR does a good job of assessing our students and schools. Among those surveyed, 69% of the Texans do not believe STAAR effectively measures how well students are learning, rating the effectiveness as a “1” or “2” on a scale of 1 to 5. On the opposite end of the spectrum, only 7% of those polled believe STAAR is an effective measure of student learning, rating the assessment with a “4” or “5.”

Measuring Our Schools

When thinking about how we assess our schools, only 1% of respondents believe STAAR results are an excellent measure of what makes for a good school. Conversely, 60% of surveyed Texans felt very strongly the opposite, with 83% reporting a negative feeling toward STAAR’s effectiveness in measuring what makes a good school.

What Texans Want

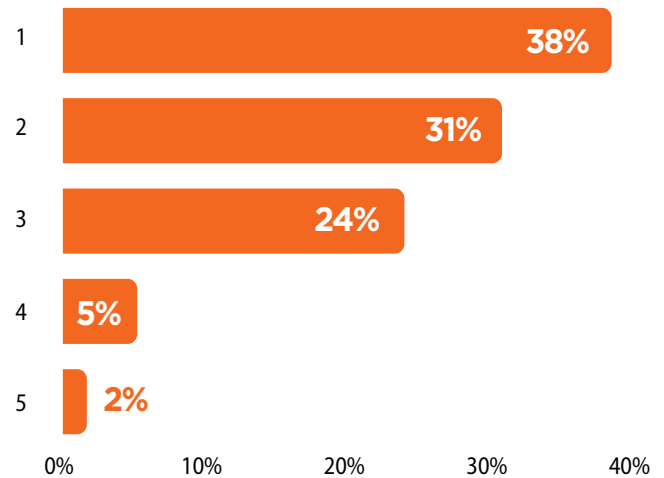
So, what do Texans want in an assessment and accountability system for their public schools? Our survey finds that Texans are comfortable with the letter grade system as it is something familiar to them like a report card. However, they would like more grades assigned for each campus in order to provide a more comprehensive view of how schools are and are not yet effective.

A total of 39% said they like the letter grade system but want to see multiple letter grades assigned to different aspects of the campus rather than provide one all-encompassing grade. Another 30% said they would like to see standardized testing have less emphasis on the letter grade given to schools. Only 6% of surveyed Texans found the current A-F system informative and easy to understand.

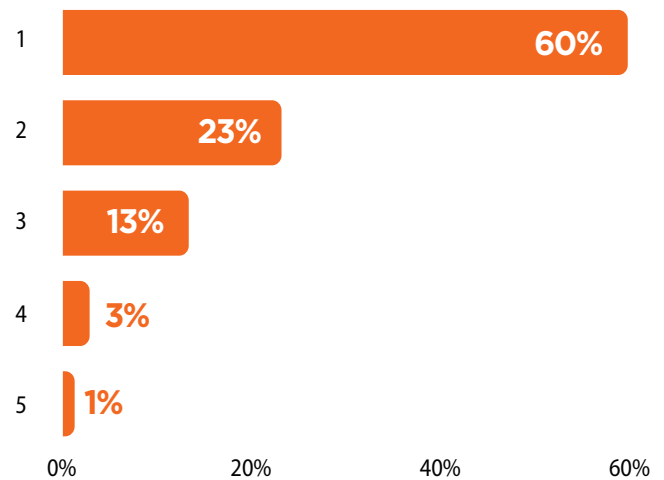
Q5 – Which statement best describes you:

Answer	%
I’m okay with the idea of letter grades, but I would find it more valuable to see multiple letter grades to describe different kinds of work happening in a campus or district, rather than just one combined letter grade	39%
I’m okay with a letter grade, but I think the things that determine the letter grade should rely less on standardized tests and be different/more varied than what they currently are	30%
I don’t believe we should be using letter grades to describe all the work that happens in a campus or district	26%
I find the A–F system meaningful, informative, and easy to understand	6%

Q2 – On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being not a good measure at all and 5 being an excellent measure, how effectively do you believe STAAR measures how well students are learning?



Q4 – On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being not a good measure at all and 5 being an excellent measure, how effectively do you believe STAAR measures the full range of things that make for a good school?



Assessment & Accountability Across the United States

While all states are held to federal standards of assessment and accountability, many have developed innovative approaches that expand the measurement of school performance into more holistic and inclusive indicators. These indicators more accurately reflect the variety of roles that schools play within their respective communities. Required by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), the School Quality and Student Success (SQSS) indicator gives states significant flexibility with respect to how SQSS can be measured. By building on the innovative approaches used in other states, Texas can maintain its role as a leader within school accountability reform and more effectively serve its public school students.

By far, the most common indicators used within the SQSS measure are college and career readiness, chronic absenteeism, and school climate. College and career readiness rates and chronic absenteeism rates are easily defined. School climate can be measured in multiple ways, including suspension and discipline rates, as well as survey data relating to school climate.*

The following list illustrates the frequency with which these three areas are monitored throughout the United States:

- College and Career Readiness: 37 states and Washington, D.C.;
- Chronic Absenteeism: 36 states and Washington, D.C.;
- School Climate: 12 states and Washington, D.C.

When looking across the nation for assessment and accountability models that Texas might draw upon for further exploration, there are five states that rose to prominence (listed below). These states have been included because they have accountability frameworks that utilize a variety of indicators rather than relying solely on standardized test scores. These selected indicators provide insights into campus and district qualities that isolated test scores are not capable of measuring as a standalone metric. The specifics regarding each state's measures and the respective weighting of those measures are included in Appendix B.

- Connecticut;
- Arkansas;
- Illinois;
- Maryland; and
- Nebraska.

The call to action is clear: Texas deserves a school assessment and accountability system that clearly tells our schools, our families, our communities, and our business partners how well we are preparing all of our students for the futures they want and deserve. This includes the types of data that paint a detailed picture capable of highlighting our students' academic pursuits, their passions for learning, and their goals for life beyond our Pre-K through 12th grade system of education.

* *Education Commission of the States, 2021*

Measure What Matters Assessment & Accountability Council Bios

Our Measure What Matters Council is comprised of education leaders, superintendents, teachers, school board trustees, and education advocates, who worked together to further guide our efforts on examining assessment and accountability. Our goal is that their work and recommendations will culminate in legislative change during the 88th Texas Legislative Session and beyond. We thank the council members for their hard work and dedication to this important effort.



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MEASURE WHAT MATTERS

** Term ended June 2022 after joining Raise Your Hand Texas as the Central Texas Regional Advocacy Liaison*



Appendix A

The Measure What Matters Council's Guiding Principles

Assessment

Assessments must help inform classroom instruction.

- 1. The purpose of state and local assessments should be to help inform classroom instruction for all students, including students served through special education or emergent bilingual services.**

Texas currently offers its summative STAAR and EOC assessments at the end of each school year. This approach limits the ability to provide meaningful and timely instructional feedback during the school year to support more personalized instruction. Our schools already know the benefits of providing formative and diagnostic assessments throughout the school year to help shape lessons and target areas of student need and opportunities for growth within our Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) based curriculum.

- 2. STAAR tests should be just one of a variety of assessment tools to help inform classroom instruction and track student progress over time.**

Our state's current assessment system bases student achievement and school success on a STAAR test given once a year on a single day. We should base our students' success on multiple indicators and modalities over many points in time during the school year, including, but not limited to, performance-based assessments. Student growth should be measured by tests, but should also be informed by teacher observations, individual and student group projects, and portfolios for all subject matters.

- 3. STAAR tests should not be used for high-stakes student decisions.**

The assessment system should not be high-stakes, and the STAAR test should not be the only tool used for grade advancement or high-school graduation.

High school students must pass the five STAAR End-of-Course assessments (Algebra I, English I, English II, Biology, and U.S. History) to earn a high school diploma. This makes all five of these exams high-stakes tests that impact students directly.

- 4. The number of STAAR tests should be reduced to align with federal testing requirements.**

Texas should reduce the number of tests given to our students and align with the minimum number of tests required by federal law. Eliminate the STAAR EOC tests in grades 9-12, and use SAT/ACT/TSIA to meet federal testing requirements.

ESSA requires that states test students annually in grades 3-8 in reading or language arts and math and once in grades 10-12; and in science once in each of the grade spans 3-5, 6-9, and 10-12. Texas currently requires tests not mandated by federal law, including 8th grade social studies and the U.S. History and English II End-of-Course Exams. Allow alternative assessments, such as problem-based learning, diagnostics, or portfolios, for the subjects not required by ESSA.

College admissions and placement tests are already taken by most of our students and could be used to meet federal testing requirements without the cost and time taken from instruction to administer additional high school EOC tests.

Accountability

5. STAAR tests should not be the determining factor in Texas public school accountability ratings.

Currently STAAR is the sole determining factor of A-F campus ratings for elementary and middle school campuses to measure student achievement, school growth, and closing achievement gaps. For the three high school “domains,” STAAR End-of-Course assessments account for 40% of the student achievement domain, career and military readiness (CCMR) indicators account for 40%, and graduation rates account for the other 20%; school growth relative performance STAAR accounts for 50% and CCMR accounts for 50%; and in closing the gaps, STAAR accounts for 50%, CCMR accounts for 30%, and graduation and ELPS account for 10% each.

6. The A-F accountability ratings system should reflect multiple measurable indicators that provide information about the effectiveness of schools.

“How are the students doing?” is a different question from “What does the school contribute?” Our state’s A-F accountability system must measure a multitude of state and local-level expectations. Texas’ accountability systems must begin to measure items such as community and school engagement, teacher quality indicators, student and teacher and campus safety, health and wellness factors, Pre-K participation, and student participation in CTE program, dual language, and extracurricular and co-curricular activities.

Local Accountability Systems & Benefits-Based Accountability

7. Support all campuses on their continuous improvement journey to better understand where they are effective and where they can improve.

Every school deserves resources to improve, unique to their specific needs. Measure What Matters supports developing tools for districts ready to pilot new approaches to school accountability. In 2017, Texas established the Local Accountability System (LAS) to allow districts and open-enrollment charter schools to develop local accountability system plans for their campuses. The process and requirements for this underutilized system should be reformed to meet community and stakeholder needs.

8. Explore new approaches to school accountability ratings.

Our state and schools should begin to explore and pilot new ways to improve our accountability system.

Appendix B

State Accountability Indicators from Across the Country

The Education Commission of the States' report, "States' School Accountability Systems: State Profiles," is a valuable resource to compare the numerous accountability approaches across the country. States use various approaches in rating their schools, including A-F ratings, descriptive report cards, indexes, dashboards, and 1-5 rating systems. There are numerous states that have included multiple measures in rating and grading schools.

Five Key States to Watch

Connecticut

Connecticut uses its Next Generation Accountability System to develop an index rating system of 1 through 5 for its campuses and districts. This accountability system includes a broad set of 12 indicators and strives to move beyond test scores and graduation rates to include a more holistic perspective of school and district performance.

For elementary school, Connecticut uses the following indicators and weights to determine school accountability ratings:

- Achievement (300 points)
- Growth (400 points)
- English Language Proficiency (100 points)
- Chronic Absenteeism (100 points)
- Physical Fitness (50 points)

For middle school, the following indicators and weights determine accountability ratings:

- Achievement (300 points)
- Growth (400 points)
- English Language Proficiency (100 points)
- Chronic Absenteeism (100 points)
- On-Track to Graduation (50 points)
- Physical Fitness (50 points)

For schools that contain both middle and high school students, the following indicators and weights determine accountability ratings:

- Achievement (300 points)
- Growth (400 points)
- English Language Proficiency (100 points)
- Chronic Absenteeism (100 points)*
- Preparation for Postsecondary and Career Readiness Coursework (50 points)
- Preparation for Postsecondary and Career Readiness Exams (50 points)
- On-Track to High School Graduation (50 points)
- Graduation - 4-year (100 points)
- Graduation - 6-year (100 points)
- Postsecondary Entrance (100)
- Physical Fitness (50 points)
- Arts Access (50 points)

For high school, the following indicators and weights are used for accountability ratings:

- Achievement (800 points)
- English Language Proficiency (100 points)
- Graduation Rate: 4-year (100 points)
- Graduation Rate: 6-year (100 points)
- Chronic Absenteeism (100 points)*
- Preparation for Postsecondary and Career Readiness Coursework (50 points)
- Preparation for Postsecondary and Career Readiness Exams (50 points)
- On-Track to Graduation (50 points)
- Postsecondary Entrance (100 points)
- Physical Fitness (50 points)
- Arts Access (50 points)

Arkansas utilizes a school rating index system using a multiple-measures approach that includes achievement, growth, graduation rate, English Learner progress, and at least one other indicator. The School Rating System uses the ESSA School Index, which is comprised of multiple, robust indicators for each grade span responsive to stakeholders and state and federal requirements.

Elementary/Middle School:

- Achievement (35%)
- Growth (Growth Indicator Academic and Growth English Language Progress) (50%)
- English Language Proficiency (Proportionately weighted in student growth score by number of English learners 1:1 ELP to content growth)
- School Quality and Student Success (SQSS) Indicator (15%)

High School:

- Achievement (35%)
- Growth (35%)
- English Language Proficiency (proportionately weighted in school growth score by number of English learners 1:1 ELP to content growth)
- Graduation Rates (15%)
- - 4-year (10%)
- - 5-year (5%)
- SQSS Indicator (15%)

School Quality and Student Success (SQSS Measures)

available for inclusion:

- Chronic Absenteeism*
- Science Achievement
- Science Value-Added Achievement
- Reading at Grade Level
- ACT
- ACT Readiness Benchmark
- GPA 2.8 or Better on a 4.0 Scale
- Community Service Learning Credits Earned
- On-Time Credits
- Computer Science Course Credits Earned
- Advanced Placement/International Baccalaureate or Concurrent Credit Courses (ACE included)

Illinois uses a descriptive model system using various indicators, including climate surveys, chronic absenteeism, on-track to graduation, and fine arts.

Elementary/Middle School:

- Achievement (15%)
- Growth (50%)
- English Language Proficiency (5%)
- Science Achievement (5%)
- Chronic Absenteeism (5-10%)*
- Climate Surveys (5%)
- Elementary/Middle Grade Indicator (5%)
- Pre-K - 2 Indicator (5%)
- Fine Arts Indicator (0-5%)

High School:

- Achievement (15%)
- Graduation Rates (50%)
- English Language Proficiency (5%)
- Science Achievement (5%)
- Chronic Absenteeism (2.5-7.5%)*
- Climate Surveys (5%)
- On-Track to Graduation (6.25%)
- College and Career Readiness (6.25%)
- Fine Arts Indicator (0-5%)

SQSS Measure:

- Chronic Absenteeism (ES/MS/HS): The percentage of students with 10% or more excused and unexcused absences in the prior academic year.*
- Climate Survey: The results of the 5 Essentials Survey completed by students in grades 6-12, parents, teachers, and administrative voices in the 5 Essentials Survey.
- Elementary/Middle Grade Indicator (ES/MS): Measuring range of experience in academic and non-academic activities, including participation and opportunities for acceleration.
- Pre-K through 2nd Indicator (ES): Early learning as an indicator, beyond the 3-12 grade measurements, to include chronic absenteeism, dual language programs, 3rd grade literacy, and participation.
- Fine Arts Indicator (ES/MS/HS): Includes measurements of student participation, instruction quality and student voice.
- 9th Grade On-Track (HS): The percentage of students that earn five full-year course credits and no more than one semester F in a core course in their first year of high school.
- College and Career Readiness (HS): Using academic indicators, distinguished scholars (including GPA, ACT and SAT scores), and career-ready indicators (including workplace learning experience and industry credentials) to assert that a child is ready academically and capable of entering the workforce.

Maryland uses a 1-5 star system that takes into account school climate, access to a well-rounded curriculum, and chronic absenteeism.

Elementary/Middle School:

- Achievement (20%)
- Growth (25%)
- Credit for Completion of a Well-Rounded Curriculum (10%)
- English Language Proficiency (10%)
- Chronic Absenteeism (15%)*
- School Climate (10%)
- Access to a Well-Rounded Curriculum (10%)

High School:

- Achievement (30%)
- English Language Proficiency (10%)
- Graduation Rate (15%)
- Chronic Absenteeism (15%)*
- School Climate (10%)
- Access to a Well-Rounded Curriculum (10%)
- College and Career Readiness (10%)

SQSS Measure:

- Chronic Absenteeism (ES/MS/HS): The number of students absent 10% or more school days during the school year.
- School Climate (ES/MS/HS): The results from the school climate survey completed by students and educators.
- Access to Well-Rounded Curriculum (ES/MS/HS):
 - Elementary schools, the percent of 5th grade students enrolled in science, social studies, fine arts, physical education, and health.
 - Middle schools: Percent of 8th grade students enrolled in fine arts, physical education, health, and computational learning.
 - High schools: Percent of students graduating or exiting with a certificate of program completion, with enrollment in AP or IB courses, dual enrollment, or enrolled in a CTE program.
- College and Career Readiness (HS):
 - The percent of 9th grade students earning credits from mathematics, English language arts, science, social studies and/or world languages.
 - Credit for the completion of a well-rounded curriculum through a certificate of program completion and, but not limited to, adequate scores from AP, ACT, and SAT tests, dual enrollment credit, completion of an apprenticeship program, industry certification, met standards of state postsecondary institutions, or a seal of biliteracy.

• Other school quality indicators may include:

- Class size;
- Case load; and
- Opportunities for:
 - Advanced Placement courses and International Baccalaureate Programs;
 - Career and Technical Education Programs;
 - Dual enrollment;
 - Data on discipline and restorative practices; and
 - Access to teachers who hold an Advanced Professional Certificate or have obtained National Board Certification.

Nebraska uses a descriptive model system that takes into account various indicators, including science achievement, chronic absenteeism, and civic readiness.

Elementary/Middle School:

- Achievement
- Growth
- English Language Proficiency
- Chronic Absenteeism
- Student Improvement (3-year trend line)
- Student Non-Proficiency (3-year trend line)
- Assessment Participation
- Science Achievement
- Evidence-Based Analysis of State Accountability System Indicators

High School:

- Achievement (includes growth)
- English Language Proficiency
- Graduation Rates
- Chronic Absenteeism*
- Improvement (3-year trend line)
- Non-Proficiency (3-year trend line)
- Assessment Participation
- Science Achievement
- Evidence-Based Analysis of State Accountability System Indicators

SQSS Measure:

- Chronic Absenteeism: The percentage of students who miss more than 10% of days.
- Science Achievement (ES/MS/HS): The measure of student performance on required state science assessments.
- Evidence-Based Analysis (ES/MS/HS): School performance on the six tenets of AQuESTT (state accountability system) indicators, including leadership; postsecondary, career and civic readiness; positive relationships; transitions; educational opportunities and access; and educator effectiveness.

Resources

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