

**Consortium for Policy Research in Education (CPRE)  
Assessment and Accountability in the Fifty States: 1999-2000**

**TEXAS**

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**The Texas State Assessment System**

The Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) is designed to measure competency in the Texas Essential Elements curriculum. TAAS tests are administered in the following subjects:

- ***Grade Levels and Subjects Tested***
  - Reading and Math in grades 3-8
  - Exit examination in Reading, Mathematics and Writing in grade 10
  - Writing in grades 4 and 8
  - Science and Social Studies in Grade 8
  - End-of-course (EOC) examinations in English, U.S, History, Biology and Algebra I

- ***Norm or Criterion Referenced*** – Criterion

- ***Matrix or Census Testing*** – Census

- ***Item Types***

Multiple choice, traditional and enhanced questions are used on the TAAS, while the writing assessments in grades 4, 8, and 10 involved performance and essays. The grade 8 science and social studies also include performance/projects or demonstration.

- ***Student Performance Levels***

Passing the TAAS means that 70% of the items are correct, while academic recognition means that 95% of the items are correct. On the writing composition test, a score of 2 meets minimum expectations (passing), while a score 3 or 4 reflects objective mastery.

- ***Inclusion Policies***

State and District Accountability Systems and the Federal Role – 6/2000

TAAS exemptions may be permitted for reading, writing, math, science and social studies tests if the student has received a special education exemption from the ARD committee and it is specific in the IEP. All non-immigrant LEP students in grades 3-8 must take the TAAS in English or Spanish. A one-time postponement of the end-of-course tests will be allowed for recent immigrants who enroll in U.S. schools no more than 12 months before the test administration. The LEP exemption, however, is not an option for students taking the grade 10 exit TAAS.

- ***Other Assessments***

Beginning with field tests in 1999, a **reading proficiency test in English (RPTE)** will be required for all LEP students in grades 3-8. The RPTE will be used in conjunction with Spanish and English TAAS tests. LEP students take assessments in Spanish for reading and math in grades 3-6 and writing in grade 4.

- ***State Requirements for Local Assessment***

The legislature requires that each school district administer a reading instrument to each student in grades K-2. Local districts can select an assessment from the Commissioner's list of acceptable tests, or adopt another instrument with the approval of the district committee.

## **Performance Data**

- ***What data are reported?***

The School report card reports:

1. TAAS passing rates by student subgroup as well as Asian/Pacific Islander and Native American,
2. Average TAAS passing rates for state, district and school,
3. Exemptions for regular, LEP and special education students by subject for subgroup,
4. Attendance and dropout rates,
5. End-of-course exam participation,
6. Completion of the Recommended High School Program,
7. Student:Teacher ratio,
8. Administrative and instructional costs per pupil, and
9. TAAS/TASP Equivalency.

- ***How are the data distributed?***

Schools are required to give each parent a school report card that the Texas Education Agency develops.

- ***How are the data disaggregated?***

The AEIS is disaggregated by:

1. Ethnicity
2. Gender
3. SES
4. Special education
5. Subgroup (e.g. school)
6. Grade

## 7. Region.

### **The Texas State Accountability System**

- ***Student Accountability***

Students are held accountable for passing the four high school end-of-course examinations or the exit-level TAAS in order to graduate.

- ***School Accountability***

Schools are held accountable for student performance, attendance and dropout rates. These indicators must meet acceptable standards as determined by the measurement systems discussed below.

The **Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS)** is a statistical platform for campus, district, and statewide performance data. The AEIS matches demographic information with performance data to create a portrait of academic progress among campuses and districts. Although several AEIS indicators are used in the accountability ratings system, the system extends beyond the basic information used to categorize schools and districts.

The AEIS performance indicators include:

1. TAAS passing rate by grade, by subject, by all grades tested and by subgroup;
2. End-of-course examination passing rate;
3. Attendance rate for the full year;
4. Dropout rate by year;
5. High school completion rate;
6. Percent of high school students completing an advanced course;
7. Percent of graduates completing the Recommended High School Program;
8. AP and IB examination results;
9. TAAS/TASP equivalency rate; and
10. SAT and ACT examination participation and results.

TAAS results from special education, Spanish TAAS, and RPTE results are included in the AEIS. They are reported as separate subgroups.

The **Accountability Rating System** uses three base AEIS indicators - TAAS performance, dropout rate, and attendance rate - to calculate adequate yearly progress and categorize the performance of campuses and districts. TAAS results are calculated without end-of-course exams. TAAS results from special education, Spanish TAAS, and RPTE results are included in the ratings. The ratings system is broken into four performance levels which require fixed, absolute performance (in cases where two titles are given, the first is for the district and the second for the school):

1. **Exemplary**

TAAS: At least 90% of the total students and each student subgroup (African-American, Hispanic, White, and Economically Disadvantaged) passing each subject

Dropout: 1.0% or less for all students/groups

Attendance: at least 94.0% (grades 1-12)

## 2. **Recognized**

TAAS: At least 80% of the total students and each student subgroup passing each subject

Dropout: 3.5% or less for all students/groups

Attendance: at least 94.0% (grades 1-12)

## 3. **Academically Acceptable/ Acceptable**

TAAS: At least 50% of the total students and each student subgroup passing each subject

Dropout: 6.0% or less for all students/groups

Attendance: at least 94.0% (grades 1-12)

## 4. **Unacceptable/ Low-Performing**

TAAS: Below 50.0% of the total students and each student subgroup passing each subject

Dropout: above 6.0% for all students/groups

Attendance: below 94.0% (grades 1-12)

**Comparable Improvement (CI)** is a school-level measure of growth and comparison between similar schools and is used for the acknowledgement of schools, school awards, AEIS reports and school report cards. Each school has a unique comparison group of 40 schools in the state which closely matches it in the number of characteristics (ethnic background, SES, LEP, mobility of students). CI measures are based on the analysis of individual student growth on the **Texas Learning Index (TLI)** as applied to the TAAS reading and math tests in grades 3-8 as well as the exit exams. TLI growth scores are determined in the following ways:

- **Student TLI Growth** = current year score for an individual student less the prior year score in math or reading
- **Campus Average TLI Growth** = sum of the student TLI growth by subject / the total number of students by subject.

Once these are determined, schools are ranked in **quartiles** by TLI growth and this ranking is used for rewards. The number of students per school meeting or exceeding the **TLI growth standard** of 5 points (based on the TLI from the prior year) and whether students are **high or low performers** are also determined. A CI report is distributed with each campus AEIS report and includes the demographic information used to determine the comparison groups and the TLI growth measures.

Adequate Yearly Progress has been met when a school attains the “acceptable” rating (final definition).

## **Sanctions and Rewards**

Once a school has been identified as Low-Performing, interventions may include:

1. public notice and public hearing by the local school board
2. submission of the campus improvement plan for state review that addresses low performance areas
3. a hearing before the commissioner to discuss issues and plans for improvement

4. appointment of a special intervention team to conduct an on-site evaluation of the school to determine the cause for low performance, recommend actions, assist in the development of a CIP and to assist in the monitoring of the school
5. appointment of a board of managers from residents in the district to acts as the board, and
6. an order to close the school.

Students may request transfer to another school or district if low performance persists (through the Public Education Grant Program).

Schools achieving the rating of Exemplary, Recognized or Acceptable are eligible for the **Texas Successful Schools Award System (TSSAS)**. Once this criterion is met, the school qualifies as a TSSAS winner if the **comparable improvement quartile** rankings created from the TLI average growth indicator places the school in the top 25% quartile (Q1) of its unique comparison group in both reading and math. If a school qualifies it will receive \$4.43 for every eligible student enrolled. School awards fall between \$500 and \$5,000.

**Title I** schools may receive special recognition for student performance as well, beyond those ratings recommended by the federal government. Recognition categories are:

- Distinguished
- Honored, and
- Commended.

There are no monetary awards connected with these ratings.

- ***District Accountability***

Adequate yearly progress is defined for districts in the same way that it is for schools. See AEIS system for indicators and measures of district performance.

### **Sanctions and Rewards**

Once a district has been identified as Low-Performing interventions may include:

1. public notice and public hearing by the local school board,
2. submission of the district improvement plan for state review that addresses low performance areas, and
3. a hearing before the commissioner to discuss issues and plans for improvement.

Additionally, the low-performing label is reported to the public, with the consequence of bad publicity for the district.

- ***Subgroup Performance as an Indicator***

Subgroup performance is included as an indicator in Texas. Performance on the TAAS is measured by total student performance as well as each student subgroup. The required performance targets used in the ratings system include satisfactory performance in the following subgroups: African-American, Hispanic, White, and Economically Disadvantaged.

### **Identifying and Assisting Low Performing Schools**

- ***Identification***

Schools and districts are identified for program improvement if classified as Unacceptable/Low Performing in the Accountability Ratings System.

- ***Assistance***

Assistance in areas such as data analysis, identification of problems, information about promising practices and curriculum alignment is offered.

- ***Who provides the assistance?***

All of the **regional education service centers** (ESCs) have coordinated assistance teams that will often contact a district about services for schools and districts that have low ratings. Low-Performing schools **do not** have **special grants** or additional resources available to them.

- ***Does support to Title I schools differ?***

By virtue of their status, Title I schools get two additional sources of assistance:

- school support teams
- support personnel, located at each ESC, who oversee the support team activities and have specific responsibility for Title I schools. Title I schools may request assistance but are not mandated to access ESC assistance.

## **Alignment of the State Accountability System and Title I**

The Texas accountability system for all districts and schools and their students, including those in Title I school-wide and targeted assistance schools, use student performance on the TAAS as one of the base indicators to determine district accreditation status and campus ratings. AEIS is used for every component of the system, regardless of Title I.

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