

Accountability & Assessment

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The Texas School Alliance comprises 37 of Texas' largest school districts, serving 40 percent of the state's total pupil enrollment (or nearly 2.2 million children). Our students represent 44 percent of the state's economically disadvantaged student population, 52 percent of its English Language Learners, and 45 percent of all at-risk students in the state. The organization works on issues that will improve educational quality for Texas students, particularly those in large and urban districts. TSA has adopted the following positions for the 86th Texas Legislature.

The Texas School Alliance (TSA) believes that the public education accountability system needs improvement, not abandonment. The system should be designed in a way that satisfies federal requirements as it moves all students towards postsecondary readiness. The system must align supports, interventions and sanctions—in that order—to restore credibility and renew general acceptance of accountability. The system also must improve its fairness, transparency, and utility via improved reporting of results. Finally, the member districts of the Texas School Alliance seek to restore a positive focus on student learning by mitigating overreliance on state assessments and eliminate the use of letter grades as ratings.

1

Align the state and federal assessment and accountability systems.

TSA is not alone in this recommendation; see also Recommendation #6 in the final report of the [Texas Commission on Next Generation Assessments and Accountability](#), and Goal #2 of the [Texas Education Agency's Strategic Plan](#).

Reduce state academic assessments to those required in ESSA: Reading/ELA and Mathematics annually in grades 3-8 and at least once in grades 9-12; and Science annually in the specified grade spans. Include the following features:

- Allow districts to substitute 'nationally recognized' tests for state-developed assessments and award credit equally and consistently in the accountability systems for the substitute assessment scores;
- Determine if changes are needed to IGC provisions given changes in the testing program;
- Weight graduation rates, CCMR indicators, and STAAR results equally in each of the domain calculations for high schools and districts;
- Award CCMR credit for any (1) dual credit / OnRamps course; and
- Award CCMR credit for any industry certification; and/or formalize the certification approval process.
- Require the state to pay for the SAT/ACT assessments required by the USDE approved Texas' ESSA Plan.

2 Align supports, interventions and sanctions — in that order — to restore credibility, promote shared responsibility for outcomes and renew acceptance of the accountability systems.

- Provide aligned support and training to public school educators, including professional development, access to instructional resources, and a reduction in the number of TEKS.
- Streamline sanctions, reduce overdependence on state assessment data and provide aligned, targeted supports and interventions for struggling students and campuses, including all of the following:
 - Make the provisions for individual graduation committees (IGCs) and TAKS graduation committees permanent, per Recommendation #9 of the Texas Commission on Next Generation Assessments and Accountability.
 - Publish the accountability rules and related manual by November 30 of the current school year.
 - Eliminate TEA's 'Forced Failure' Rule.
 - Eliminate PEG.
 - Limit the state's assignment of boards of managers to districts with egregious accountability issues; e.g. more than 10% of schools identified as 'Unacceptable'.
 - Eliminate high stakes testing for students in grades five and eight; continue to require delivery of accelerated instruction for any students who need it.
 - Eliminate requirements for costly, external professional service providers (PSPs) as leaders of school intervention teams; districts should have both control over and accountability for the supports given to struggling schools.

3 Improve state data reporting to ensure fairness, transparency and especially the utility of accountability system results.

- Limit STAAR results to no more than 50% of any domain calculation by including non-test based indicators such as: graduation plan endorsement rates, 9th gr. credit accumulation – on-track to graduate with cohort, Fine Arts course sequence completion, enrichment course completion rates for fine arts, P.E., and second language acquisition, extra-curricular participation rates (including UIL academics and clubs) full day Pre-K participation rates, elementary literacy and math academy participation rates, health and wellness indicators, school safety, etc.
- Advocate for redefining Alternative Education Accountability (AEA) campus performance targets in the Closing the Gaps Domain – including the use of extended graduation rates.
- Advocate for P-Tech high schools to use a 5-year graduation rate, rather than the 4-year rate that is currently required in the Closing the Gaps Domain.
- Advocate for the use of challenge points / bonus points / weights to each domain based on the extent to which educationally disadvantaged student groups make progress towards or meet performance targets.



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How Does Science Testing Work Under ESSA?

By [Alyson Klein](#) on October 15, 2018 7:26 AM



Welcome to another edition of "Answering Your ESSA" questions, where we try to get to the bottom of questions from readers about the Every Student Succeeds Act and its implementation. This week's question comes from an anonymous reader.

Question: How many states have included science testing in their plans, and what states will count science in their accountability system?

Answer: Every state will have to test students in science. The law, like its predecessor, the No Child Left Behind Act, requires states to test students in grades 3 through 8 and once in high school in reading and math. But states also have to test students at least three times in science, once in grade 3 through 5, once in grade 6 through 9, and once in grades 10 through 12.

Those science tests don't have to be used for accountability purposes, like they do for math and reading. But at least 19 states are choosing to make them part of their school rating systems anyway.

At least 14 states are using science as an indicator of school quality or student success, including Arkansas, Colorado, Delaware, Florida, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, Rhode Island, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, and Vermont.

And at least five are using science tests as a way to gauge schools academically, including Illinois, Kentucky, New York, North Carolina, and Oklahoma.

For more, [check out our inside look at state ESSA plans.](#)



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19 TAC Chapter 161. Commissioner's Rules Concerning Advisory Committees

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- §161.1001. Establishment of Advisory Committees.
- §161.1002. Texas Education Agency Operating Procedures.
- §161.1003. Advisory Committees.
- §161.1005. Assessment and Accountability Advisory Committees.

Use the following links to update your printed Texas Administrative Code (TAC). Tables of contents and subchapter files are available in Adobe Acrobat PDF format. This format provides the capacity to obtain printed copies from the Internet that are compatible with your printed copy of the TAC. The Adobe Acrobat Reader, required to access PDF files, may be obtained at www.adobe.com/prodindex/acrobat/readstep.html.



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[Chapter 161. Commissioner's Rules Concerning Advisory Committees](#)

Chapter 161. Commissioner's Rules Concerning Advisory Committees

§161.1001. Establishment of Advisory Committees.

The commissioner of education has authority to establish advisory committees and to appoint the membership of advisory committees. The commissioner may establish an advisory committee based on state or federal law or State Board of Education (SBOE) recommendation or as the commissioner deems expedient.

Statutory Authority: The provisions of this §161.1001 issued under the Texas Education Code, §7.055(b)(11).

Source: The provisions of this §161.1001 adopted to be effective April 20, 1994, 19 TexReg 2384; amended to be effective February 19, 1997, 22 TexReg 1636.

§161.1002. Texas Education Agency Operating Procedures.

The commissioner of education shall adopt and implement Texas Education Agency (TEA) operating procedures governing establishment and operation of public education advisory committees. For each committee listed in §161.1003 of this title (relating to Advisory Committees), the commissioner shall include the following information as an attachment to the operating procedures:

- (1) name of the committee;
- (2) purpose of the committee;
- (3) statutory authority under which the committee is established;
- (4) number of members; and
- (5) staff contact at TEA.

Statutory Authority: The provisions of this §161.1002 issued under the Texas Education Code, §7.055(b)(11).

Source: The provisions of this §161.1002 adopted to be effective April 20, 1994, 19 TexReg 2384; amended to be effective February 19, 1997, 22 TexReg 1636.

§161.1003. Advisory Committees.

The following public education advisory committees are in effect:

- (1) Charter School Proposal Evaluation Committee;
- (2) Educational Technology Advisory Committee;
- (3) Environmental Education Advisory Committee;
- (4) Commissioner's Advisory Council on the Education of Gifted Students;
- (5) HIV Program Review Panel;
- (6) Policy Committee on Public Education Information;
- (7) State Parent Advisory Council for Migrant Education;
- (8) Investment Advisory Committee on the Permanent School Fund;
- (9) Continuing Advisory Committee for Special Education;
- (10) State Textbook Committees; and
- (11) Title I, Committee of Practitioners/Texas Ed-Flex Committee.

Statutory Authority: The provisions of this §161.1003 issued under the Texas Education Code, §7.055(b)(11).

Source: The provisions of this §161.1003 adopted to be effective April 20, 1994, 19 TexReg 2384; amended to be effective February 19, 1997, 22 TexReg 1636; amended to be effective March 5, 1999, 24 TexReg 1384; amended to be effective March 2, 2003, 28 TexReg 1640.

§161.1005. Assessment and Accountability Advisory Committees.

- (a) The following words and terms, when used in this section, shall have the following meanings, unless the context clearly indicates otherwise.
- (1) **Advisory committee**--The Texas Technical Advisory Committee or any committee that advises the Texas Education Agency (TEA), the commissioner of education, or the State Board of Education regarding policies or implementation of requirements under the Texas Education Code (TEC), Chapter 39, Subchapter B, related to state accountability systems or the content or administration of an assessment instrument.
 - (2) **Agent**--Any person acting in a capacity that involves public representation of an entity, including an attorney, a lobbyist or public spokesperson, or a corporate officer. An employee, a contractor, or a consultant of an assessment instrument vendor is not an agent unless the duties of that relationship include public representation. Public representation does not include speaking at academic or similar conferences, publishing in academic or technical publications, serving as a fact witness or expert in litigation, or testifying in a legislative or rulemaking context if that testimony does not constitute lobbying.
 - (3) **Assessment instrument vendor**--An entity that by contract with the TEA develops or sells academic assessment instruments required to be administered under the TEC, §39.023 or §39.027, in Texas public schools serving prekindergarten through high school. Another state; an institution of higher education; or a school district, charter school, or other public school is not an assessment instrument vendor by virtue of developing, selling, or licensing assessment instruments if those instruments are not purchased by the TEA. An entity is not an assessment instrument vendor by virtue of offering psychological, physical, sight, hearing, or other assessments that are not directly measuring academic content.
 - (4) **Retained or employed**--Having formal employment, acting as an independent contractor, or consulting with an assessment instrument vendor for compensation if the duties of that relationship include working directly on an assessment instrument required under the TEC, §39.023 or §39.027. An individual is not retained or employed if the individual is compensated by an assessment instrument vendor for work that does not involve an assessment instrument required under the TEC, §39.023 or §39.027. An individual is not retained or employed by virtue of receiving reimbursement of expenses or for being reimbursed in accordance with an assessment contract if the TEA determines and requires the compensation under the contract.
- (b) A person who is retained or employed by or who acts as an agent of an assessment instrument vendor or a person who is an agent of an assessment instrument vendor may not be appointed to or serve on an advisory committee under this section. A person must be eligible under this section at the time of appointment to an advisory committee and must notify the commissioner and resign from the committee immediately upon becoming ineligible.
- (c) Nothing in this section shall be construed to disqualify an individual from appointment to an advisory committee based upon a relationship with an assessment instrument vendor prior to appointment to a committee. An advisory committee member may receive royalties or other compensation from an assessment instrument vendor that come due during the term of an appointment if the compensation was fully earned prior to appointment. An advisory committee member may not have or negotiate for any type of agreement for future employment or compensation with an assessment instrument vendor during the term of membership on the committee.
- (d) An individual is not employed or retained by or acting as an agent of an assessment instrument vendor if the individual represents a membership organization that has an assessment instrument vendor as a member.

- (e) Provisions of the TEC, §39.039, related to prohibitions on political contributions or activity by certain contractors are limited to agents or entities that have been contracted to develop or implement assessment instruments required under the TEC, §39.023 or §39.027.

Statutory Authority: The provisions of this §161.1005 issued under the Texas Education Code, §39.038 and §39.039.

Source: The provisions of this §161.1005 adopted to be effective June 19, 2014, 39 TexReg 4653.