

Rising to the top: Region One's 'miraculous' success story

By **Ron Whitlock** - August 18, 2019



EDINBURG, RGV – The executive director of Region One Education Service Center says it is almost miraculous that schools districts and charter schools in South Texas are performing as well as any in the state.

Rio Grande Guardian editor Steve Taylor interviewed Cornelio Gonzalez for a [Facebook LIVE](#) show the day after the Texas Education Agency [released](#) its 2019 STAAR accountability rankings. Every school district in Region One achieve an "A" or "B."

There was not a "C" or "D" in sight and certainly no failing "F" grades.

"We are very proud of the results that our schools in Region One have obtained," Gonzalez said.

"All our school districts, all our charter schools, every one of them was high performing, according to the state's accountability ratings. So, these are very exciting times for us. We are very proud."

Gonzalez said his office was drilling down into the information provided by TEA.

"We did not have a single "F." We did not have a single "D." And, surprisingly, we did not have a "C" district or charter school. All our schools are either an "A" or a "B," and that is truly amazing. Everybody in Region 1 should be celebrating because this is almost sort of a miracle."

Asked how he reacts to cynics who say the rankings must be skewed because South Texas, with a large number of socio-economically challenged and immigrant families, cannot be doing this well, Gonzalez said

"We have experienced this throughout the years. This is the sixth year in a row that Region One schools have been the highest performing schools in the state of Texas. Very often, this information is not analyzed anywhere. We do it in Region One, we compare ourselves with the rest of the state and we know that we have the highest scores.

"I know it is unbelievable because 30 years ago when I started in education, this area was the lowest performing area in the state. When the state started the testing program, our scores were the worst. Nowadays they are the best. It is kind of amazing, how did this happen? This is a transformation that took 30 years to happen. We are very excited to be where we are now."

Region One serves seven counties, all the way from the Port Isabel area to Laredo. The region has 474,000 students and 26,000 teachers. There are 37 school districts and ten charter schools.

Next week, Region One has a public hearing so the general public can learn more about the TEA accountability rankings. The hearing takes place Aug. 22 at the Region One offices in Edinburg, starting at 11 a.m.

"We invite everyone to come and witness the official presentation of the scores of all the schools in the Region One area. It is a global view of the whole region," Gonzalez said.

Asked what he put the success of Valley school districts and charter schools down to, Gonzalez said:

"It is very important to realize it is not one individual or one small group of people. We have the highest poverty rates in the whole state, we have the highest percentage of English-language learners in the whole state, and yet at the same time we have the highest performance in the whole state. That is pretty marvelous. If you think about it, the challenges are so big.

"How is that even possible? You cannot attribute it to a small group of people. I attribute it to the whole culture of our community. We understand as a whole that unless we get our children educated, unless we make sure they graduate from high school and move on to college, we cannot improve the quality of life for them and our grandchildren and the entire community."

Gonzalez said he tells his staff to imagine what it would be like to live in a region where every child goes to college. "The impact would be tremendous. The change in every family, if every family had children that were not only graduating from high school but were going to college, the socio-economic impact on the whole area would be tremendous."

Asked if the region's strong family values play a part in the region's educational success, Gonzalez said:

"I remember when I was growing up, my father would say, I am poor, I cannot leave you a big inheritance, don't expect it from me. But you can expect that I am going to make sure you get an education. That is what he would tell all of us and I believe that is what is happening in every family in our region. That is why things are looking this way. Every family together is committed to making sure our children get educated."

On top of this the region has great superintendents, principals, teachers, and school board members, the Region One leader said.

"Everybody in our community is committed to making sure that our children have a better life than the one we went through. We all want the best for our kids, that is why we want them to get educated, because we want them to have a better life. And the best way to do is through education."

Gonzalez said one only has to look at the number of social clubs and entities that provide college scholarships to see how much commitment there is to education.

"There is a concern among all the citizens in our towns and communities, it does not matter how small or big, every community wants their children to go into higher education. We know that finishing high school is no longer enough. They have to go one year, or two years to college, hopefully four years or more. We know that going to college changes the economic opportunities for them and that is what we want for the kids."

Ron Whitlock

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EDUCATION

Loose rules let Texas districts boost ratings by claiming military enlistments

Jacob Carpenter | on August 30, 2019



Photo: Melissa Phillip, Houston Chronicle / Staff Photographer

IMAGE 1 OF 3

In this August file photo, Texas Education Commissioner Mike Morath speaks during a press conference about academic accountability ratings at Stephens Elementary in Aldine ISD. Morath has been a strong ... [More](#)

In Hearne ISD, a rural school district home to about 800 pupils northwest of College Station, students have scored poorly on the state's standardized tests for years, and 2019 was no exception.

In the past, Hearne's abysmal test scores resulted in "improvement required" or failing grades from the state, prompting a gradual increase in state oversight of the rural district. This year, however, Hearne received a B rating under Texas' A-through-F accountability system, one of the largest improvements in the state.

The biggest reason for the spike: Hearne reported that nearly half of its 2018 Class of 51 graduates enlisted or intended to enlist in the military — a rate 11 times greater than the state average — even though federal data shows few of those students ultimately signed up for the armed forces. The district's military enlistment total dramatically improved a key metric used to calculate Hearne's 2019 accountability rating, allowing the district to overcome its test scores.

"They had to do something to indicate intent to enlist," Hearne ISD Superintendent Adrain Johnson said. "We do not have, and I don't know if the military receives, a list of how many actually enlisted."

In dozens of districts across Texas, school administrators reported far-above-average rates of graduates joining the armed forces in 2018, allowing them to drive up state accountability ratings, mask poor standardized test performance and avoid failing grades from the Texas Education Agency, a Houston Chronicle analysis has found. Educators in those districts appear to have taken advantage of loose rules issued by the TEA for classifying students as "enlisted" or "intending to enlist," calling into question the validity of some state accountability ratings.

According to data released in mid-August, 62 districts and 100 campuses reported that at least 15 percent of seniors enlisted or intended to enlist in the military following graduation in 2018, more than triple the state average of 4.2 percent. In several districts, the above-average enlistment rate helped boost accountability ratings by one or two letter grades.

At the same time, other Texas districts used stricter standards for classifying students as enlisted or intending to enlist, stunting their accountability ratings. In the most extreme case, Houston likely could have **staved off state sanctions**, including **the expected replacement** of the district's school board, if long-failing Wheatley High School had claimed just two more students from its 160-member 2018 graduating class had enlisted or intended to join the military.

The wide disparities in reported military enlistments illustrate how Texas' new academic accountability system remains susceptible to claims of unfairness, despite extensive efforts to craft an impartial, equitable framework.

The results also highlight potential pitfalls with accountability systems that delegate discretion to school district administrators, who have incentives to push the boundaries of rules.

“It highlights concerns we have with the current system,” said Michael Love, Houston ISD’s assistant superintendent of career readiness. “I think with that structure, there is some room for a variety of results. I think we’re seeing it right now when it comes to certain districts, when we see how it has impacted their overall accountability ratings.”

TEA officials did not grant an interview or respond directly to written questions for this story. In a statement, TEA spokesman Jake Kobersky said data reported by districts “is subject to validation verification” and follow-up investigation. The agency did not address whether it is auditing any districts or plans to change criteria for classifying graduates as enlisted.

“Intentional submission of false data is not tolerated,” Kobersky said. “Texas parents and students deserve transparent and accurate information about our public schools.”

Good intent?

Each year, Texas rates more than 1,000 districts and 1,800-plus high schools using complex formulas rooted in three data points: standardized test scores, graduation rates and “college, career and military readiness,” or CCMR. Districts receive CCMR accountability points for every graduating senior from the prior year’s class who meets one of 11 metrics, which include earning an associate’s degree, gaining an industry-based certification or planning to enlist in the military.

For some districts and high schools, the CCMR score can serve as a large percentage of final ratings. Even if a district or school performs woefully low on standardized tests, it can receive a B- or C-level grade with a high CCMR score.

Most metrics within the CCMR score are determined by test results or verifiable data. However, Texas educators are unable to confirm whether graduates joined the military, largely because the Department of Defense does not share enlistment data with the TEA.

As a result, the TEA gives districts significant discretion in determining whether students intend to enlist, including “a senior survey, contact with a local recruiter, or any other method.”

“We kind of assume good first intent and that people are going to do right by the rules of the system, and, hopefully, that if the agency decided to go to a particular district and audit their records, they would be able to justify it,” said Keith Haffey, the executive director for assessment and compliance at Spring Branch ISD and a member of two state advisory groups overseeing academic accountability development.

On HoustonChronicle.com: [Houston-area schools fare better than state average on A-F grading system](#)

Without clear standards for classifying students as enlisted or intending to enlist, Texas school districts used various standards in 2018, producing huge disparities in results.

In Kingsville ISD, home to 3,300 students near Corpus Christi, administrators counted students as intending to enlist if they put their names on a sign-in sheet when a military recruiter spoke at the high school, a practice the district’s new superintendent called “a red flag.” Kingsville received failings grades for standardized test performance and growth this year, but its claimed 46 percent enlistment rate helped boost the district’s overall grade to a B.

“At the time, they would have recruiters go into the history class and the recruiter would talk about enlisting in the Army, and so all of those students were given credit as ‘intent to enlist,’” said Kingsville Superintendent Elida Bera, who took over as the district’s leader in November 2018. “Are we changing our practice? Yes, we are. Will that have an impact on our scores next year? Probably.”

In 2,800-student Pecos-Barstow-Toyah ISD, located in the Permian Basin, Superintendent Jose Cervantes chalked up the district’s 34 percent enlistment rate to improved recordkeeping. The district received an overall B grade despite D-grade scores on standardized tests.

“We’re tracking where every student is going after they graduate or before they graduate,” Cervantes said. “We, as a district, weren’t tracking that. We got hardly any CCMR points for accountability.”

However, federal data suggests few students from those districts joined the armed forces before or shortly after graduation. Combined, Kingsville and Pecos-Barstow-Toyah reported that 157 graduates from their classes of 2018 enlisted or planned to enlist. Department of Defense data shows only 27 people from Kleberg and Reeves counties, home to Kingsville and Pecos-Barstow-Toyah, respectively, joined the armed forces between October 2017 and September 2018..

Locals within range

A large majority of Texas districts reported fewer than 8 percent of graduates enlisting or intending to enlist, including nearly all of the large Houston-area **districts**. Still, local districts used various methods for classifying students as intending to enlist.

In Deer Park ISD, which declared an enlistment rate of 20 percent, administrators relied on student surveys to identify intent, district spokesman Matt Lucas said. Deer Park’s well-above-average rate did not significantly contribute to the district’s A accountability rating, largely because students scored well on standardized tests and met multiple criteria for post-secondary readiness.

High school administrators in Houston ISD relied on multiple tactics to find students planning to enlist, including conversations with seniors and documented contacts with recruiters. The district’s 5 percent enlistment rate narrowly exceeded state averages and had little impact on its B-grade accountability rating.

However, three of Houston ISD’s 40-plus high schools reported far-above-average enlistment rates, helping them earn C grades despite mediocre-to-poor test scores. They were Wisdom High School at 34 percent, Waltrip High School at 17 percent and Houston Math, Science and Technology Center at 17 percent.

Love, the district’s assistant superintendent of career readiness, said Houston ISD administrators will be reviewing enlistment rates in some schools and instituting a

district-wide form for documenting students who plan to join the armed forces.

“I do think there’s a certain range that we want to stay in, for the most part, that would closely mirror the state averages over the past five years,” Love said.

Haffey, the Spring Branch executive director, said his district awards credit for enlistment once military officials contact administrators to request a student’s transcript, one of the region’s strictest thresholds. About 1 percent of Spring Branch seniors enlisted or planned to enlist in 2018.

TEA officials have the authority to audit districts suspected of reporting manipulated or false data, and issue harsh sanctions against those found guilty of misconduct. As a result, Haffey cautioned against eliminating or dismissing the state’s accountability system due to outlier results.

“We can’t dwell on the small numbers of entities that may look to play the system and game the system, because that could cause you never to get anywhere,” Haffey said. “If you write policy to cover every single possibility that could occur, your policy is going to be lengthy and long-winded, if you ever get it completed.”

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Good afternoon, Performance Reporting bulletin members.

Welcome to this week's update.

Have a coworker who needs to sign up? Bulletin subscriptions can be managed on TEA's website at <https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/TXTEA/subscriber/new>.

What's New in Performance Reporting

A–F Development

Performance Reporting has completed a series of Training of Trainers TETNs with the regional educational service centers (ESCs). Each TETN focused on one domain in the new accountability system and highlighted specific areas where we are asking for feedback. Following each training, we released a survey to get specific feedback from ESC, district, and campus staff. We have extended the deadlines for the first two surveys; the deadline to respond to all three surveys is 5:00 p.m. Thursday, November 30.

The presentation slides used in these trainings are available on the Performance Reporting Resources webpage at <http://tea.texas.gov/perfreport/resources/index.html>. Narrated versions of these presentations will be posted on <http://tea.texas.gov/A–F> in the coming weeks.

The Performance Reporting Resources site also hosts the archives of our weekly bulletins. The first weekly bulletin was released October 6, 2017.

Do you have feedback related to the development of the A–F accountability system? We have an email account set up just for that. Send feedback related to development of the new accountability system to feedbackAF@tea.texas.gov.

2017 Accountability Appeal Decisions

Performance Reporting has completed reviewing the 2017 accountability ratings appeals. The department received 66 appeals: 52 campus-level appeals and 14 district-level appeals. Response letters were mailed to districts earlier today; they are also available on TEASE Accountability. Final 2017 accountability ratings will be released to the public on Tuesday, November 14th.

This Week's FAQ

How do districts collect, report, and document that a student has enlisted or intends to enlist in the U.S. armed forces so the student can be counted in the new indicator for college, career, and military readiness?

Each district decides how to collect this data. This may be a senior survey, contact with a local recruiter, or any other method. Each district must maintain supporting documentation.

Each fall districts will report military enlistment for the graduating class from the previous year in the PEIMS TSDS submission. Districts will use element EI589 to indicate whether students enlisted in or intend to enlist in the U.S. Armed Forces. These data were first collected in the fall 2017 PEIMS TSDS collection for 2017 graduates. The data may be updated any time until the January resubmission deadline.

Performance Reporting Calendar

November 10— Notification of accountability appeal decisions sent to districts (mail and TEASE)

November 14— 2017 final academic accountability ratings released (TEASE and public web)

November 14— 2018–19 Final PEG list released (TEASE and public web)

November 16— 2017 final Texas Academic Performance Report released (TEASE and public web)

Early December 2017— Notification provided to districts selected to participate in the local accountability systems pilot program

December 2017—2017 Texas School Accountability Dashboard released (public web)

December–January—2016–17 School Report Card and Federal Report Card released (public web)

Contact Information

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Want to help a Texas school system affected by Hurricane Harvey? [Click here to find out how.](#)

DATE:	September 26, 2019
SUBJECT:	2019 Released STAAR Assessments
CATEGORY:	STAAR Assessments
NEXT STEPS:	Share with appropriate staff

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) will release in PDF format the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR®) and STAAR Spanish tests that were administered during spring 2019.

The tests, answer keys, and item rationales will be posted on the Student Assessment [STAAR Released Test Questions](#) page of the TEA Website as they become available during the month of October.

The release this year was delayed due to cost. A significant amount of current funding is supporting new item development for future programs mandated by recently enacted legislation. However, in response to educator feedback about the usefulness of the tests in preparing students, the agency is providing a scaled-back release that includes PDF versions of the assessments. This year there will be no online STAAR Practice Test, and the ability to order 2019 printed released tests will not be available.

For questions about the 2019 STAAR tests, email Student.Assessment@tea.texas.gov or call 512-463-9536.

Texas Education Agency
Student Assessment Division

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) proposes amendments to §§97.1061, 97.1063, and 97.1064, concerning interventions and sanctions for campuses, campus intervention teams, and campus turnaround plans. The proposed amendments would implement the statutory provisions in accordance with Senate Bill (SB) 1488, SB 1566, and House Bill (HB) 2263, 85th Texas Legislature, 2017. The proposed amendments would also clarify intervention activities required in Texas Education Code (TEC), Chapter 39A, Accountability Interventions and Sanctions.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND JUSTIFICATION: Section 97.1061, Interventions and Sanctions for Campuses, establishes the required interventions for campuses that receive an unacceptable rating and describes some of the duties of the campus intervention team (CIT). The proposed amendment to this section would align with the agency's current intervention framework and changes from the 85th Texas Legislature, 2017, as follows.

Subsection (a) would be modified to remove the requirement to engage in the Texas Accountability Intervention System (TAIS), as this framework is no longer used by the agency.

Subsection (b) would be modified to update the reference to the TEC. SB 1488, 85th Texas Legislature, 2017, moved provisions of TEC, Chapter 39, to TEC, Chapter 39A.

Subsection (h) would be replaced to align with HB 2236, 85th Texas Legislature, 2017, which removed the requirement for a CIT for campuses that receive an acceptable performance rating the year immediately after receiving an unacceptable performance rating.

Section 97.1063, Campus Intervention Team, defines the members of the CIT and their responsibilities. The proposed amendment to this section would include adding the principal's direct supervisor as a member of the CIT, incorporating a conforming rule change for the external CIT member (the professional service provider was removed in a rule change under §97.1051), and updating TEC references due to changes from the 85th Texas Legislature, 2017, as follows.

Subsection (a) would be modified to update references to the TEC. SB 1488, 85th Texas Legislature, 2017, moved provisions of TEC, Chapter 39, to TEC, Chapter 39A.

Subsection (b) would be modified to update the required members of the CIT. Current paragraph (1) would be deleted to remove the requirement for a professional service provider (PSP) to conform to rules changes in §97.1051. The agency's updated school improvement framework and processes no longer include a PSP. The agency will still require a CIT member who is not employed by the district, and this CIT member will be vetted by the agency or its technical assistance provider. Proposed new paragraph (2) would add the requirement for the campus principal's direct supervisor to be a member of the CIT, if the district coordinator of school improvement (DCSI) is not the principal's direct supervisor. Proposed new subsection (c) would add the requirement for an education professional who is not employed by the campus or district to assist in conducting the needs assessment.

Section 97.1064, Campus Turnaround Plan, describes who must develop a campus turnaround plan, what the plan should include, and timelines for submission of the plan. The proposed amendment to this section would include alignment to changes in TEC from the 85th Texas Legislature, 2017, timeline clarifications, and a general description of the methodology used by the agency to approve or reject turnaround plans, as follows.

Subsection (a) would be modified to update the reference to the TEC. SB 1488, 85th Texas Legislature, 2017, moved elements of TEC, Chapter 39, to TEC, Chapter 39A.

Subsection (d) would be modified to move the statements regarding stakeholder input on a completed turnaround plan as part of subsections (d) and (e) to make it clearer that stakeholder input on the completed plan is separate from the requirement to solicit stakeholder input in plan development. Subsection (e) would also be modified to update the reference to the TEC. SB 1488, 85th Texas Legislature, 2017, moved provisions of TEC, Chapter 39, to TEC, Chapter 39A.

Subsection (f) would be modified to align the required components of the Campus Turnaround Plan to the required components stated in TEC, §39A.105. It would also add the requirement that the plan include how the board of

trustees will support the oversight of academic achievement and student performance, per SB 1566, 85th Texas Legislature, 2017.

Proposed new subsection (h) would implement the timeline requirements per TEC, §39.107(b-10). Proposed new paragraph (3) would describe the methodology used to make a determination on the approval of a turnaround plan.

Proposed new subsection (i) would implement the timeline requirements for submitting modified turnaround plans created per TEC, §39.107(b-11).

Proposed new subsection (k) would clarify the requirement, per TEC, §39A.106, that the commissioner-approved turnaround plan must be implemented once the campus receives a third consecutive unacceptable performance rating.

Proposed new subsection (l) would specify that the commissioner may appoint a conservator, monitor, management team, or board of managers per TEC, §39A.102.

The proposed amendments to 19 TAC §§97.1061, 97.1063, and 97.1064 also include technical edits to conform to Texas Register style and formatting requirements.

FISCAL IMPACT: Tim Regal, associate commissioner for instructional support, has determined that for the first five-year period the proposal is in effect there are no additional costs to state or local government, including school districts and open-enrollment charter schools, required to comply with the proposal.

LOCAL EMPLOYMENT IMPACT: The proposal has no effect on local economy; therefore, no local employment impact statement is required under Texas Government Code, §2001.022.

SMALL BUSINESS, MICROBUSINESS, AND RURAL COMMUNITY IMPACT: The proposal has no direct adverse economic impact for small businesses, microbusinesses, or rural communities; therefore, no regulatory flexibility analysis, specified in Texas Government Code, §2006.002, is required.

COST INCREASE TO REGULATED PERSONS: The proposal does not impose a cost on regulated persons, another state agency, a special district, or a local government and, therefore, is not subject to Texas Government Code, §2001.0045.

TAKINGS IMPACT ASSESSMENT: The proposal does not impose a burden on private real property and, therefore, does not constitute a taking under Texas Government Code, §2007.043.

GOVERNMENT GROWTH IMPACT: TEA staff prepared a Government Growth Impact Statement assessment for this proposed rulemaking. During the first five years the proposed rulemaking would be in effect, it would limit an existing regulation. A campus would no longer be required to work with a professional service provider throughout the year. A campus would only work with a non-district person during the need assessment.

The proposed rulemaking would not create or eliminate a government program; would not require the creation of new employee positions or elimination of existing employee positions; would not require an increase or decrease in future legislative appropriations to the agency; would not require an increase or decrease in fees paid to the agency; would not create a new regulation; would not expand or repeal an existing regulation; would not increase or decrease the number of individuals subject to its applicability; and would not positively or adversely affect the state's economy.

PUBLIC BENEFIT AND COST TO PERSONS: Mr. Regal has determined that for each year of the first five years the proposal is in effect, the public benefit anticipated as a result of enforcing the proposal would be ensuring appropriate interventions and sanctions for districts and campuses. There is no anticipated economic cost to persons who are required to comply with the proposal.

DATA AND REPORTING IMPACT: The proposal would have no data and reporting impact.

PRINCIPAL AND CLASSROOM TEACHER PAPERWORK REQUIREMENTS: The TEA has determined that the proposal would not require a written report or other paperwork to be completed by a principal or classroom teacher.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: The public comment period on the proposal begins September 20, 2019, and ends October 21, 2019. A request for a public hearing on the proposal submitted under the Administrative Procedure Act must be received by the commissioner of education not more than 14 calendar days after notice of the proposal has been published in the Texas Register on September 20, 2019. A form for submitting public comments is available on the TEA website at

[https://tea.texas.gov/About_TEA/Laws_and_Rules/Commissioner_Rules_\(TAC\)/Proposed_Commissioner_of_Education_Rules/](https://tea.texas.gov/About_TEA/Laws_and_Rules/Commissioner_Rules_(TAC)/Proposed_Commissioner_of_Education_Rules/). Comments on the proposal may also be submitted to Cristina De La Fuente-Valadez, Rulemaking, Texas Education Agency, 1701 North Congress Avenue, Austin, Texas 78701.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY. The amendments are proposed under Texas Education Code (TEC), §39.107(b-10), which requires the commissioner to approve or reject turnaround plans by June 15 of each year and outline concerns with rejected turnaround plans in writing; TEC, §39.107(b-11), which requires the district to modify a rejected turnaround plan with assistance from agency staff. The modified plan must be submitted within 60 days of its rejection. The commissioner must approve or reject the modified plan within 15 days of its submission; TEC, §39A.051, which requires the commissioner to assign a campus intervention team to campuses whose performance is below any standard under TEC, §39.054(e); TEC, §39A.052, which defines the education professionals that may be included on the campus intervention team; TEC, §39A.053, which requires the campus intervention team to conduct an onsite needs assessment and describes the requirements of that needs assessment; TEC, §39A.054, which requires the campus intervention team to make recommendations based on the needs assessment; TEC, §39A.055, which requires the campus intervention team to assist the campus in developing, submitting to the commissioner, and monitoring a targeted improvement plan; TEC, §39A.056, which requires the campus intervention team to provide notice of the public meeting regarding the development of the targeted improvement plan; TEC, §39A.058, which requires the board of trustees, assisted by the campus intervention team, to submit the targeted improvement plan to the commissioner for approval; TEC, §39A.059, which describes the campus intervention team's responsibilities in assisting the campus in implementing the targeted improvement plan; TEC, §39A.060, which describes the continuing duties of the Campus Intervention Team; TEC, §39A.101, which requires the commissioner to order a campus that has received two consecutive unacceptable ratings to develop a campus turnaround plan; TEC, §39A.115, which authorizes the commissioner to adopt rules necessary to implement TEC, Chapter 39A, Subchapter C, Campus Turnaround Plan; TEC, §39A.251, which applies the interventions and sanctions to charters in the same manner as they apply to school districts and campuses; TEC, §39A.252, which requires the commissioner to adopt rules applying the interventions and sanctions to open enrollment charter schools; and TEC, §39A.902, which requires the commissioner to annually review performance of public schools and determine the appropriate levels of sanctions or interventions. It prohibits the commissioner from raising the accreditation or performance rating unless the district has demonstrated improved student performance. It also requires the commissioner to increase the level of sanction or intervention due to lack of improvement.

CROSS REFERENCE TO STATUTE. The amendments implement Texas Education Code, §§39.107(b-10) and (b-11), 39A.051, 39A.052, 39A.053, 39A.054, 39A.055, 39A.056, 39A.058, 39A.059, 39A.060, 39A.101, 39A.115, 39A.251, 39A.252 and 39A.902

<rule>

§97.1061. Interventions and Sanctions for Campuses.

- (a) If a campus's performance is below any standard under Texas Education Code (TEC), §39.054(e), the campus shall engage in interventions as described by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) [the Texas Accountability Intervention System (TAIS) continuous improvement process] .
- (b) The commissioner shall assign members to a campus intervention team (CIT) as outlined in §97.1063 of this title (relating to Campus Intervention Team) and TEC, §39A.052 [~~§39.106~~] .

- (c) The campus shall establish a campus leadership team (CLT) that includes the campus principal and other campus leaders responsible for the development, implementation, and monitoring of the targeted improvement plan.
- (d) The campus intervention team shall:
 - (1) conduct a data analysis related to areas of low performance;
 - (2) conduct a needs assessment based on the results of the data analysis, as follows.
 - (A) The needs assessment shall include a root cause analysis.
 - (B) Root causes identified through the needs assessment will be addressed in the targeted improvement plan and, if applicable, campus turnaround plan;
 - (3) assist in the creation of a targeted improvement plan, as follows.
 - (A) Input must be gathered from the principal; campus-level committee established under TEC, §11.251; parents; and community members, prior to the development of the targeted improvement plan, using the following steps.
 - (i) The campus must hold a public meeting at the campus. The campus shall take reasonable steps to conduct the meeting at a time and in a manner that would allow a majority of stakeholders to attend and participate. The campus may hold more than one meeting if necessary.
 - (ii) The public must be notified of the meeting 15 days prior to the meeting by way of the district and campus website, local newspapers or other media that reach the general public, and the parent liaison, if present on the campus.
 - (iii) All input provided by family and community members should be considered in the development of the final targeted improvement plan submitted to the TEA [Texas Education Agency (TEA)].
 - (B) The completed targeted improvement plan must be presented at a public hearing and approved by the board of trustees.
 - (C) The targeted improvement plan must be submitted to the commissioner of education for approval according to TEA procedures and guidance; and
 - (4) assist the commissioner in monitoring the implementation of the targeted improvement plan. The campus will submit updates to the TEA as requested that include:
 - (A) a description of how elements of the targeted improvement plan are being implemented and monitored; and
 - (B) data demonstrating the results of interventions from the targeted improvement plan.
- (e) If a campus is assigned an unacceptable rating under TEC, §39.054(e), for a second consecutive year, the campus must engage in the processes outlined in subsections (a), (b), (c), and (d) of this section, and the campus must develop a campus turnaround plan to be approved by the commissioner as described in §97.1064 of this title (relating to Campus Turnaround Plan).
- (f) If a campus is assigned an unacceptable rating under TEC, §39.054(e), for a third or fourth consecutive year, the campus must engage in the processes outlined in subsections (a), (b), (c), and (d) of this section, and the campus must implement the commissioner-approved campus turnaround plan as described in §97.1064 of this title (relating to Campus Turnaround Plan).
- (g) If a campus is assigned an unacceptable rating under TEC, §39.054(e), for a fifth consecutive year, the commissioner shall order the appointment of a board of managers to govern the district or closure of the campus.
- (h) If a campus was assigned an unacceptable rating in the prior year but met standard in the current year, the CIT will continue to work with the campus until the campus meets all the performance standards under TEC, §39.054(e), for a two-year period.

~~[(h) If a campus was assigned an unacceptable rating in the prior year but met standard in the current year, the campus will continue to engage in TAIS activities outlined in subsection (a) of this section with the following exceptions:]~~

~~[(1) the campus may release its CIT based on criteria set annually by the TEA; and]~~

~~[(2) the campus that developed a turnaround plan may modify that plan as described in §97.1064 of this title.]~~

- (i) Based on a campus's progress toward improvement, the commissioner may order a hearing if a campus's performance is below any standard under TEC, §39.054(e).
- (j) Interventions and sanctions listed under this section begin upon release of preliminary ratings and may be adjusted based on final accountability ratings.

§97.1063. Campus Intervention Team.

(a) The campus intervention team (CIT) shall perform the duties outlined in Texas Education Code (TEC), §§39A.053, 39A.054, 39A.055, 39A.056, 39A.058, 39A.059, 39A.060, and 39A.101 ~~§39.106 and §39.107~~, and oversee the activities outlined in §97.1061(a) of this title (relating to Interventions and Sanctions for Campuses) and §97.1064 of this title (relating to Campus Turnaround Plan).

(b) The CIT must include:

~~[(1) a professional service provider (PSP); and]~~

~~(1) [(2)]~~ a district coordinator of school improvement (DCSI). The DCSI must submit qualifications to the Texas Education Agency (TEA) for approval ; and ; ~~and~~ ;

~~(2)~~ the campus principal's direct supervisor, if the DCSI is not the campus principal's direct supervisor.

~~(c) An education professional, approved through an application either by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) or the TEA's technical assistance provider, who is not an employee of the campus or district, shall assist with the needs assessment as described in TEC, §39A.053.~~

~~(d) [(e)]~~ The CIT shall perform the duties referenced in subsection (a) of this section in collaboration with the campus leadership team (CLT) as outlined in §97.1061(c) ~~§97.1061(a)~~ of this title and §97.1064 of this title.

~~(e) [(d)]~~ CIT members as defined in subsection (b) of this section and the campus principal shall attend TEA-sponsored trainings on interventions and sanctions.

§97.1064. Campus Turnaround Plan.

(a) If a campus is assigned an unacceptable rating under Texas Education Code (TEC), §39.054(e), for two consecutive years, the campus must develop a campus turnaround plan to be approved by the commissioner of education in accordance with TEC, §§39A.103-39A.107 ~~§39.107~~.

(b) A charter campus subject to this section must revise its charter in accordance with §100.1033 of this title (relating to Charter Amendment). The governing board of the charter performs the function of the board of trustees for this section.

(c) The district may request assistance from a regional education service center or partner with an institution of higher education in developing and implementing a campus turnaround plan.

(d) Within 60 days of receiving a campus's preliminary accountability rating the district must notify parents, community members, and stakeholders that the campus received an unacceptable rating for two consecutive years and request assistance in developing the campus turnaround plan. All input provided by family, community members, and stakeholders must be considered in the development of the final campus turnaround plan submitted to the Texas Education Agency (TEA).

- ~~[(1) The district shall notify stakeholders of their ability to review the completed plan on the district website at least 30 days before the final plan is submitted to the board of trustees as described in TEC, §39.107(b-3).]~~
- ~~[(2) All input provided by family, community members, and stakeholders must be considered in the development of the final campus turnaround plan submitted to the Texas Education Agency (TEA).]~~
- (e) The district shall notify stakeholders of their ability to review the completed plan and post the completed plan on the district website at least 30 days before the final plan is submitted to the board of trustees as described in TEC, §39A.104. The district shall provide the following groups an opportunity to review and comment on the completed plan before it is submitted for approval to the board of trustees:
- (1) the campus-level committee established under TEC, §11.251. If the campus is not required to have a campus-level committee under TEC, §11.251, the district shall provide an opportunity for professional staff at the campus to review and comment on the campus turnaround plan;
 - (2) teachers at the campus;
 - (3) parents; and
 - (4) community members.
- (f) A campus turnaround plan must include:
- (1) a detailed description of the method for restructuring, reforming, or reconstituting the campus;
 - ~~(2) [(1)]~~ a detailed description of the academic programs to be offered at the campus, including instructional methods, length of school day and school year, academic credit and promotion criteria, and programs to serve special student populations;
 - ~~(3) [(2)]~~ a detailed description of the budget, staffing, and financial resources required to implement the plan, including any supplemental resources to be provided by the district or other identified sources;
 - ~~(4) [(3)]~~ written comments received from stakeholders described in subsection (e) of this section; ~~and~~
 - ~~(5) [(4)]~~ the term of the charter, if a district charter is to be granted for the campus under TEC, §12.0522 ; and ~~;~~
 - ~~(6) a detailed description for developing and supporting the oversight of academic achievement and student performance at the campus, approved by the board of trustees under TEC, §11.1515.~~
- (g) Upon approval of the board of trustees, the district must submit the campus turnaround plan electronically to the TEA by March 1 unless otherwise specified.
- ~~(h) Not later than June 15 of each year, the commissioner must either approve or reject any campus turnaround plan prepared and submitted by a district.~~
- ~~(1) The commissioner's approval or rejection of the campus turnaround plan must be in writing.~~
 - ~~(2) If the commissioner rejects a campus turnaround plan, the commissioner must also send the district an outline of the specific concerns regarding the turnaround plan that resulted in the rejection.~~
 - ~~(3) In accordance with TEC, §39A.107(a), the commissioner may approve a campus turnaround plan if the commissioner determines that the campus will satisfy all student performance standards required under TEC, §39.054(e), not later than the second year the campus receives a performance rating following the implementation of the campus turnaround plan. In order to make that determination, the commissioner will consider the following:~~
 - ~~(A) an analysis of the campus and district's longitudinal performance data, which may be used to measure the expected outcomes for the campus;~~
 - ~~(B) the district's success rate in turning around low-performing campuses, if applicable; and~~

- (C) evaluation of the efficacy of the plan, with consideration given to whether the turnaround plan is sufficient to address the specific and expected needs of the campus.
- (i) A district must submit a modified campus turnaround plan if the commissioner rejected the district's initial submission.
 - (1) The modified plan must be created with assistance from TEA staff, as requested by the district.
 - (2) The modified plan must be made available for stakeholder comment prior to board approval and be approved by the board prior to submission to the TEA.
 - (3) The district must submit the plan no later than the 60th day from the date the commissioner rejected the initial campus turnaround plan.
 - (4) The commissioner's decision regarding the modified plan must be given in writing no later than the 15th day after the commissioner receives the plan.
- (j) ~~(h)~~ A campus may implement, modify, or withdraw its campus turnaround plan with board approval if the campus receives an academically acceptable rating for the school year following the development of the campus turnaround plan.
- (k) A campus that has not received an academically acceptable rating for the school year following the development of the campus turnaround plan must implement its commissioner-approved campus turnaround plan with fidelity until the campus receives an acceptable performance rating for two consecutive school years.
- (l) The commissioner may appoint a monitor, conservator, management team, or board of managers for a school district that has a campus that has been ordered to implement an updated targeted improvement plan. The commissioner may order any of the interventions as necessary to ensure district-level support for the low-performing campus and the implementation of the updated targeted improvement plan. The commissioner may make the appointment at any time during which the campus is required to implement the updated targeted improvement plan.

Education

Achievement gaps in schools driven by poverty, study finds

By [Laura Meckler](#)

September 23 at 12:01 AM

High concentrations of poverty, not racial segregation, entirely account for the racial achievement gap in U.S. schools, a new study finds.

The research, released Monday, looked at the achievement gap between white students, who tend to have higher scores, and black and Hispanic students, who tend to have lower scores. Researchers with Stanford University wanted to know whether those gaps are driven by widespread segregation in schools or something else.

They found that the gaps were “completely accounted for” by poverty, with students in high-poverty schools performing worse than those from schools with children from wealthier families.

“Racial segregation appears to be harmful because it concentrates minority students in high-poverty schools, which are, on average, less effective than lower-poverty schools,” concluded the paper by academics, led by Sean F. Reardon, professor of poverty and inequality in education and senior fellow at the Stanford Institute for Economic Policy Research.

The study examined scores from hundreds of millions of tests over the last decade by students in thousands of school districts. Researchers found a “very strong link” between racial school segregation and academic achievement gaps. Every school district with “even moderately high” segregation had a large achievement gap, they found.

The reason, they conclude, is because of exposure to poor schoolmates. After controlling for racial differences in school poverty, the study found that segregation no longer predicts achievement gaps.

“Racial segregation matters, therefore, because it concentrates black and Hispanic students in high-poverty schools, not because of the racial composition of their schools, per se,” the study says.

In an interview, Reardon explained that a district such as Atlanta has high racial segregation, with white students in generally wealthier schools than black students, and also has high racial achievement gaps. But in Detroit, where all the students tend to be poor, the achievement gaps are smaller, he said.

Nonetheless, he concludes that because race and poverty are so closely related, the only way to close the gap is to racially integrate schools. He pointed to those who advocate that schools think less about integration and instead try to improve all schools. That hasn't worked, he said.

"If you want to be serious about decreasing achievement gaps," he said, "you have to take on segregation."

On Monday, Stanford is launching a [new website](#) that maps test scores and other data for every public school and school district in the United States. The site allows users to explore the relationship between test scores and socioeconomic status and segregation and to compare schools and districts in a state or with other similar places.

Laura Meckler

Laura Meckler is a national education writer covering national trends, federal policy and the Education Department. She came to The Washington Post from the Wall Street Journal, where her beats included presidential politics, the White House, health care, immigration and demographics. [Follow](#) 

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