Updated Preliminary 2023 *A–F* Refresh Overview and Summary

A-F is Important for Texas Students

The *A–F* system was established by House Bill (HB) 22 in 2017 for the purpose of **continuously improving student performance** toward the goals of eliminating achievement gaps based on race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status and ensuring the state is a national leader in preparing students for postsecondary success.

Transparent and Meaningful Information for Texas Parents and Educators

Valid, reliable, comparable, and objective measures of student outcomes are key to ensuring *A–F* ratings are **fair, rigorous, and transparent** to properly empower parents and educators to celebrate successes while improving student supports.

A Refresh is Necessary to Ensure Texas is a National Leader for Students

Before *A–F*, Texas accountability rules were changed every year, with goals for students constantly increasing. With *A–F*, a commitment was made to maintain the same calculations and cut scores for **up to five consecutive years without annual changes**, to allow for better year-over-year performance comparisons. As schools emerge from the impact of COVID-19 both with new challenges and having achieved tremendous successes, we must set new goals for students to ensure Texas is a national leader in preparing students for postsecondary success.

There are several key design commitments built into *A–F* to help ensure it works as an effective, continuous improvement tool while accurately recognizing performance:

- The three-domain design of *A–F* reflects a commitment to recognize the better of student achievement or school progress while maintaining focus on the students most in need.
- Ratings are based on multiple valid and reliable outcomes measures, including graduation rates, multiple indicators of college, career, and military readiness at graduation, and multiple State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) tests, evaluated for both proficiency and growth. STAAR tests themselves are designed based on statewide expectations of what students should know and be able to do in each grade and are predictive of success in later grade levels.
- *A-F* cut scores are set using specific criteria based in the statutory goal of ensuring Texas is a national leader in preparing students for postsecondary success. This approach means ratings are never a fixed distribution, and it is mathematically possible for all schools to earn an *A* rating.

TEA Received Continuous Feedback and Listened to Stakeholders

Prior to A–F system implementation, TEA engaged in stakeholder conversations with parents, teachers, students, superintendents, school board members, business, and community leaders to find out how exactly the state should evaluate schools and report information publicly. These conversations have continued during the past five years, with the A–F system refresh reflecting more than two years of feedback from stakeholders.

Jul 2019–May 2022	Jun 2022	Jun 2022–Nov 2022	Nov 2022	Dec 2022–Mar 2023	Jan 2023	Feb 1, 2023	Spring 2023	Summer 2023	Sep 2023
Consult with advisory groups and stakeholders on potential *A–F* system adjustments.	Preliminary outline of accountability refresh framework published.	Regional feedback sessions with ESC and district data staff and superintendents.	Preliminary *A–F* refresh published, including feedback since June.	Gather additional feedback and train stakeholders on preliminary framework.	Release cut points and targets.	ESSA submission for Closing the Gaps.	Proposed 2023 *Accountability Manual* released for public comment and "What If" analysis provided.	Final 2023 *Accountability Manual* published.	Accountability ratings released. TXSchools.gov revised to caveat comparisons between 2022 and 2023.

Feedback Considered and Changes Made

A-F represents our collective goals for children. As a result, TEA extensively engages groups for feedback, offering a variety of specific refresh proposals for consideration, and gathering feedback throughout. For adjustments made based on feedback, a full summary of feedback, and changes made, see 2023 Accountability Development. A few examples:

College, Career, and Military Readiness (CCMR) calculations: TEA proposed potential weighting and gating methodology changes to calculating CCMR. Based on feedback, these changes won't be made. TEA is continuing to examine ways to improve the validity of the college prep indicator and explore ways to resolve validity concerns with certain industry-based certifications.

Growth calculations: TEA proposed changes to Student Progress to improve accuracy, including averaging and gating. Based on feedback, TEA is continuing with the "better of" approach for academic growth and relative performance.

Proposed Refresh Changes

Student Achievement Domain

STAAR Component:
- New proposal to include Algebra I EOC results for accelerated testers in both the middle school in which they take it and their future high school's *A-F* calculation. Accelerated testers would still need to take SAT/ACT math for inclusion in Closing the Gaps.

CCMR Component:
- Phase-in programs of study, in alignment with industry-based certification (IBC) updates.
- Work towards improved validity requirements for college prep courses and IBCs.
- Bring back reliable data collection for military enlistment (both US Armed Forces and TX National Guard).

Graduation Rate Component:
- New proposal to create an early graduation incentive. The proposal would not impact graduation rate calculations in Closing the Gaps.

School Progress Domain

Academic Growth Component:
- Use a transition table model to determine growth. Cut points with splits for "Did Not Meet" and "Approaches" into high and low, as well as point values to be determined.
- Incorporate accelerated learning performance into the Academic Growth component calculation.

Closing the Gaps Domain

Student Group Targets and Points:
- Set federal interim and long-term student group targets by school type.
- Award gradated outcomes (0–4 points) for performance and growth to these targets.
- Use super groups to adjust how current groups are categorized, to improve focus on at-risk students whose performance is not potentially reflected in the first two domains.

District Proportional Domain Ratings

- Calculate district domain ratings using a proportionality method to improve the alignment of district overall ratings with campus overall ratings.

Unique Alternative Education Accountability (AEA) System

- Focus on achievement and progress outcomes on re-testers.
- Include previous dropouts in CCMR and graduation indicators as a hold-harmless (dropouts are included in the numerator but not the denominator of the calculation).

Other

Expand the 3*F*s Gate:
- To align with Senate Bill (SB) 1365, if a campus or district earns three *D*s and/or *F*s, they cannot earn above 69 on their overall rating.

Closing the Gaps Domain, Part B:
- Add report-only Closing the Gaps, Part B: Results Driven Accountability (RDA) for districts only.

Cut Points:
- Update overall and domain cut scores that correspond to *A, B, C, D*, and *F*.

School Improvement:
- Targeted, and additional targeted identification and exit methodologies, will align with 0–4 points and focus on lowest performing groups and campuses.

Distinction Designations and Badges:
- Refine distinctions and develop badges that recognize district efforts to provide access and opportunities to meaningful activities.

Incorporate Extra and Co-curricular Activities:
- Continue data collection and analyses to add an extra/co-curricular student activity indicator pending legislative action for a future accountability cycle.