



2023 A-F Refresh Overview and Summary

Updated: March 2023



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. 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](#).



2023 Ratings Will Be Different

State law requires updates to standards to continuously improve student performance and ensure Texas is a national leader in preparing students for postsecondary success. Prior to 2017, accountability standards and cut points were raised each year. A-F enables apples-to-apples comparisons by updating standards less frequently. However, this results in larger changes when the updates occur. This year is different with the updated standards. Therefore, 2022 and 2023 ratings cannot be compared side-by-side. It is possible that a campus with an A in 2022 may improve in 2023 and yet receive a B.

Improvement in College, Career, and Military Readiness (CCMR) Points Needed to Raise the Bar to Meet Texas's Definition of Excellence

- In 2017, cut points for CCMR were set for the first time under A-F. District and stakeholder feedback five years ago recommended a cut point of over 90 percent as the percentage of CCMR graduates that represented excellence and should generate an A. However, very few campuses performed at that level in 2017 (average performance was 47 percent), so the cut point was set at 60 percent.
- CCMR performance has skyrocketed, with average performance now at 65 percent. Given these improvements, and the statutory objective of A-F to make Texas a national leader in preparing students for postsecondary success, the cut point for an A has been adjusted to 88 percent. This raises the bar to begin to meet Texas's definition of excellence for CCMR.

Student Achievement Domain

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).

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 different point values.
- Incorporate accelerated learning performance into the Academic Growth component calculation.

District Proportional Domain Ratings

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

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.

Unique Alternative Education Accountability (AEA) System

- Focus on achievement and progress outcomes of 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 3Fs Gate:

- To align with Senate Bill (SB) 1365, if a campus or district earns three Ds and/or Fs, 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 Other Performance Information:

- Refine distinctions and highlight other performance information that recognize district efforts.

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.