

April 15, 2013

The Honorable Arne Duncan
Secretary of Education
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Ave., SW
Washington, DC 20202-6100

Subject: Request for Waiver under P.L. 107-110, Section 9401
To Reduce Duplication and Unnecessary Burden on the SEA and LEAs

Dear Secretary Duncan:

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) is requesting that the U.S. Department of Education (USDE) waive specific provisions of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), as amended by P.L. 107-110 No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001. The waiver requests are submitted under NCLB's Section 9401 waiver authority and would give TEA and more than 1,200 local education agencies additional flexibility while reducing duplication.

Our state's educational system is aligned with the three principles outlined in your provisional waiver application. We are hopeful that you and your staff will recognize the potential gains that Texas schools and students could make by better aligning the federal and state systems without costly and time-consuming duplication of effort.

The attached application document delineates the specific statutory provisions for which we are seeking waivers and provides the supporting documentation necessary for USDE's review of the evidence supporting our request. We appreciate your consideration of our request and look forward to working with you. If you have any questions or want further information, please contact Lizzette Gonzalez Reynolds, Chief Deputy Commissioner, at Lizzette.Reynolds@tea.state.tx.us or (512) 463-8629.

Sincerely,

Michael L. Williams
Commissioner of Education

**ESEA Flexibility Request
Submitted to the U.S. Department of Education
April 15, 2013**

**Submitted by
Texas Education Agency
1701 North Congress Avenue
Austin, Texas 78701-1494**

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Introduction

This document delineates the Texas Education Agency's specific requests for flexibility in implementing the provisions of ESEA and provides the supporting documentation necessary for review by USDE. It should be noted that TEA is submitting this request under Section 9401 waiver authority. To assist the Department in reviewing TEA's request, this document is organized according to the topics and sequence outlined in the "ESEA Flexibility Request" template.

Requested Waivers

To further support the implementation of Texas' College and Career Readiness Standards, assessment and accountability system, accountability intervention system, and teacher certification and principal accountability systems, and to avoid duplication and unnecessary burdens on the Texas Education Agency and local education agencies, TEA requests a waiver of the following statutory provisions:

1. Title I School Improvement Funds at LEA Level

Section 1003(a) requiring TEA to reserve 4% of its Title I, Part A allocation for school improvement activities and to distribute 95% to LEAs for use in Title I schools in improvement, corrective action, and restructuring.

Specifically, this waiver is requested to allow TEA to distribute 95% of the 4% reservation to Title I schools identified as priority, focus, or support schools and for systemic improvement at the LEA level to support the identified schools. Current regulations prohibit the use of any Title I School Improvement Program funds at the LEA level.

2. Accountability System

Section 1111(b)(2)(E-H) defining the calculation of Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), establishing of annual measurable objectives (performance targets) for AYP, 100% proficiency by the end of 2013-2014, and implementation of the respective requirements specified in Sections 1111 and 1116 and Section 1116(a)(1)(A-B) requiring the LEAs to make AYP determinations for schools.

Specifically, this waiver of the federal Accountability Performance Targets/Standards Setting Procedures is requested to allow TEA to replace the current AYP calculations and performance targets with the state's robust accountability rating system. Our system meets the intent and purposes of the ESEA statute. Flexibility would allow the state's existing systems of reform and interventions to guide the support and improvement of teaching and learning.

3. Support and Intervention

Section 1116(b) requiring the LEA to identify schools for improvement, corrective action, and restructuring with corresponding requirements for implementation.

Specifically, this waiver is requested to allow TEA to identify schools for graduated levels of

support and intervention based on the state accountability system rather than using the current AYP regulations.

4. Implementation of a Single Intervention System

Section 1116(b)(1)(E) and (e) and all corresponding provisions requiring the LEA to offer, in a federally prescriptive manner, school choice for schools for improvement, corrective action, and restructuring with corresponding requirements for implementation, and Section 1116(e) requiring the federally prescriptive implementation of supplemental educational services under Section 1116(b)(5, 7, and 8).

Specifically, this waiver is requested to allow TEA to use improvement activities better aligned to the state's accountability and intervention systems.

5. State Accountability System

Section 1116(c) requiring TEA to make determinations of AYP for LEAs and identify LEAs for improvement and corrective action with corresponding requirements for implementation.

Specifically, this waiver is requested to allow TEA to identify LEAs based upon school performance using the state accountability system rather than current AYP regulations.

6. Small, Rural and Low-Income Schools

Sections 6213(b) and 6224(e) requiring TEA to limit participation in, and use of funds under the Small, Rural School Achievement (SRSA) and Rural and Low-Income School (RLIS) programs based on whether an LEA has made AYP and is complying with the requirements in ESEA section 1116.

Specifically, this waiver is requested to allow an LEA that receives SRSA or RLIS funds to use those funds for any authorized purpose regardless of whether the LEA meets state accountability targets.

7. Intervention Regardless of Poverty Percentage

Section 1114(a)(1) requiring that a school have a poverty percentage of 40 percent or more in order to operate a schoolwide program.

Specifically, this waiver is requested to allow an LEA to implement schoolwide interventions in any of its support, focus, or priority schools, even if those schools do not have a poverty percentage of 40 percent or more.

8. Reward Schools

Section 1117(c)(2)(A) allowing TEA to reserve Title I, Part A funds to reward a Title I school that (1) significantly closed the achievement gap between subgroups in the school; or (2) has exceeded AYP for two or more consecutive years.

Specifically, this waiver is requested to allow TEA to use funds reserved under this section for any school that the state determines to be a reward school.

9. Funding Transferability

Section 6123 that limits the amount of funds an SEA or LEA may transfer from certain ESEA programs to other ESEA programs under the Funding Transferability provision.

Specifically, this waiver is requested to allow TEA and LEAs to transfer up to 100 percent of authorized program funds between those funds and into Title I, Part A.

10. School Improvement Grant

Section 1003(g)(4) and the definition of a Tier I school in Section I.A.3 of the School Improvement Grant (SIG) final requirements.

Specifically, this waiver is requested to allow TEA to award Texas Title I Priority Schools (TTIPS) SIG funds to an LEA to implement one of the four SIG models in any of the schools that the state determines are priority schools.

11. 21st Century Community Learning Centers

Sections 4201(b)(1)(A) and 4204(b)(2)(A) that restrict the activities provided by a community learning center under the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) grant program to activities provided only during non-school hours or periods when school is not in session.

Specifically, this waiver is requested to allow 21st CCLC funds to be used to support extended learning time during and after the school day to meet the identified needs of students, in addition to activities during non-school hours or periods when school is not in session.

12. Rank Ordering of Priority Schools

Section 1113(a)(3-4) and (c)(1) requiring an LEA to serve eligible schools under Title I, Part A in rank order of poverty and to allocate Title I, Part A funds based on that rank ordering.

Specifically, this waiver is requested to allow LEAs to serve a Title I-eligible high school with a graduation rate below 60 percent that TEA has identified as a priority school even if that school does not otherwise rank sufficiently high to be served under section 1113.

Assurances

This request is submitted under Section 9401. In submitting this request the Texas Commissioner of Education certifies that Texas' College and Career Readiness Standards, assessment and accountability system, accountability intervention system, and teacher certification and principal accountability systems are in alignment with the principles outlined in USDE's provisional waiver application.

In addition, the Texas Education Agency assures that:

1. It requests waivers of the above-referenced requirements based on its agreement to meet Principles 1 through 4 of the flexibility, as described throughout the remainder of this request.

2. It has adopted English language proficiency (ELP) standards that correspond to the State's college- and career-ready standards, consistent with the requirement in ESEA section 3113(b)(2), and that reflect the academic language skills necessary to access and meet the new college- and career-ready standards, no later than the 2013–2014 school year. (Principle 1)
3. It has developed and administered alternate assessments based on grade-level academic achievement standards or alternate assessments based on alternate academic achievement standards for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities that are consistent with 34 C.F.R. § 200.6(a)(2) and are aligned with the State's college- and career-ready standards. (Principle 1)
4. It has developed and administered ELP assessments aligned with the State's ELP standards, consistent with the requirements in ESEA sections 1111(b)(7), 3113(b)(2), and 3122(a)(3)(A)(ii). (Principle 1)
5. It will report annually to the public on college-going and college credit-accumulation rates for all students and subgroups of students in each LEA and each public high school in the State. (Principle 1)
6. If the SEA includes student achievement on assessments in addition to reading/language arts and mathematics in its differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system and uses achievement on those assessments to identify priority and focus schools, it has technical documentation, which can be made available to the Department upon request, demonstrating that the assessments are administered statewide; include all students, including by providing appropriate accommodations for English Learners and students with disabilities, as well as alternate assessments based on grade-level academic achievement standards or alternate assessments based on alternate academic achievement standards for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities, consistent with 34 C.F.R. § 200.6(a)(2); and are valid and reliable for use in the SEA's differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system. (Principle 2)
7. It will report to the public its lists of reward schools, priority schools, and focus schools at the time the SEA is approved to implement the flexibility, and annually thereafter, it will publicly recognize its reward schools as well as make public its lists of priority and focus schools if it chooses to update those lists. (Principle 2)
8. Once available, it will provide student growth data on current students and the students they taught in the previous year to, at a minimum, all teachers of reading/language arts and mathematics in grades in which the State administers assessments in those subjects in a manner that is timely and informs instructional programs, or it will do so no later than the deadline required under the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund. State statute requires that a data portal with student-teacher information be implemented to provide teachers and parents up-to-date information about a student's progress. These reports allow a teacher to determine if a student is making the necessary progress to be successful in subsequent

grades or courses. The data portal generates reports as soon as the teacher-student link information is available from the state's district data collection system, called PEIMS. Although the state does not currently provide statewide teacher-specific reports for all 327,000 teachers, districts are provided with the information to generate comprehensive reports at the district level. These teacher- and student-specific reports are available through the data portal. This system was designed with the safety and privacy of Texas students in mind, and is in compliance with current FERPA regulations. (Principle 3)

9. It will evaluate and, based on that evaluation, revise its own administrative requirements to reduce duplication and unnecessary burden on LEAs and schools. (Principle 4)
10. It has consulted with its Committee of Practitioners regarding the information set forth in its request.
11. It will provide all LEAs with notice and a reasonable opportunity to comment on the request and has attached a copy of that notice (*Attachment 1*) as well as copies of any comments it received from LEAs (*Attachment 2*).
12. It will provide notice and information regarding the request to the public in the manner in which the State customarily provides such notice and information to the public (*e.g.*, by publishing a notice in the newspaper; by posting information on its website) and has attached a copy of, or link to, that notice (*Attachment 3*).
13. It will provide to the Department, in a timely manner, all required reports, data, and evidence regarding its progress in implementing the plans contained throughout this request.
14. It will report annually on its State report card, and will ensure that its LEAs annually report on their local report cards, for the “all students” group and for each subgroup described in ESEA section 1111(b)(2)(C)(v)(II): information on student achievement at each proficiency level; data comparing actual achievement levels to the State’s annual measurable objectives; the percentage of students not tested; performance on the other academic indicator for elementary and middle schools; and graduation rates for high schools. It will also annually report, and will ensure that its LEAs annually report, all other information and data required by ESEA section 1111(h)(1)(C) and 1111(h)(2)(B), respectively.
15. It will submit to the Department for peer review and approval a copy of the guidelines that it will adopt by the end of the 2012–2013 school year. (Principle 3)

Consultation and Public Input

TEA has solicited input and provided for meaningful engagement of teachers and other stakeholder groups, not only in preparing this flexibility request, but throughout the process of developing, adopting, and implementing the state’s College and Career Ready Standards and

assessment and accountability systems. Information regarding the latter is included in subsequent sections of this document, which describe the development, adoption, and implementation process for major components of the Texas system. Information regarding the state's solicitation and receipt of input regarding this flexibility request is presented below and in Attachments 1, 2, and 3.

Solicitation of Input from Teachers and Their Representatives

TEA provided local administrators and teachers with notice and the opportunity to comment on this flexibility request. In doing so, we followed the state's usual procedures, i.e., through a letter to all LEAs that was (1) posted on the TEA website and (2) disseminated through TEA's "To the Administrator Addressed" electronic mail list server on September 6, 2012; see *Attachment 1a* for a copy of the letter. TEA personnel also presented and discussed the Intent to Apply for Waivers under Section 9401 with the state's Committee of Practitioners on September 18, 2012; see *Attachment 1b* for a copy of the meeting agenda. Comments on the flexibility request received from LEAs, teachers, and other stakeholders are included in *Attachment 2*.

In addition, thousands of Texas educators have served on one or more of the educator committees involved in the development of the Texas assessment program. These committees represent the state geographically, ethnically, by gender, and by type and size of school district. They routinely include educators with knowledge of the needs of all students, including students with disabilities and English language learners (ELLs). TEA will continue to engage these stakeholders going forward as we implement all aspects of this waiver including the development of evaluation tools.

Solicitation of Input from Other Diverse Stakeholder Groups

Pursuant to P.L. 107-110, Section 9401(3)(A)(iii), TEA provided notice and information regarding the agency's intent to apply for this waiver to the public in the manner in which TEA customarily provides such notice and information to the public, i.e., by posting to the TEA web site and by publishing a notice in the *Texas Register* on September 21, 2012. TEA will also provide notice and information regarding the waiver on April 19, 2013. (See *Attachment 3* for copies of the notice.)

In addition, TEA will work with Education Service Centers and the Texas Center for District and School Support to share new federal requirements that are a result of this waiver. In September, trainings will occur across the state on identification and interventions. Quarterly sessions with stakeholders including ESC staff, district and school personnel will focus on implementation and progress.

Stakeholder engagement has always been a part of Texas' process for developing statewide policies and standards. State standards are developed by a 15 member board who is publicly elected. They develop standards with input from educators, subject matter experts, and citizens.

In addition to posting the terms of the waiver online for public comment, Commissioner Williams has met with multiple superintendents and solicited their opinion on the provisions of this waiver. As TEA implements the terms agreed to in the waiver, the agency will engage

superintendents, the Texas Association of School Boards (TASB), the Texas Association of School Administrators (TASA), and teacher organizations.

Evaluation

At this time, TEA does not elect to collaborate with USDE in this voluntary evaluation process.

Overview of TEA's Request for ESEA Flexibility

Texas has been a national leader in the college- and career-readiness movement. We were the first state to develop and implement college and career readiness curriculum standards and the first state to assess those standards, and we will be the first to implement an accountability system to hold schools accountable for preparing students for post-secondary success.

Independent of federal requirements, Texas has developed and begun full implementation of a statewide system that surpasses the requirements of the ESEA statute. Three years ago, the state completed full implementation of the Texas College and Career Readiness Standards. This year we are transitioning to a consolidated, differentiated accountability and interventions system, with tiered interventions beginning in school year 2013-2014. Upon approval of this waiver request, Texas will have a single, differentiated accountability system. This differentiated accountability system is based on the state's rigorous new assessment program, the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR). Texas also continues to build upon its rigorous teacher certification system that is working to improve teacher and principal accountability to ensure high quality teaching and learning for all students.

Despite Texas' progress on these fronts, the failure of Congress to reauthorize ESEA has forced LEAs to operate within two (at times conflicting) accountability and intervention systems, while taking valuable resources and time away from focusing on improving student achievement. The federal requirements and guidelines of ESEA no longer adequately reflect the performance of the state's schools. For example:

- More graduates in the Class of 2012 scored a 3 or higher on at least one AP Exam than took AP Exams in 2002. Moreover, the number of Texas students taking the ACT reached an all-time high (110,180) in 2012, with Hispanic participation doubling over the past five years. Forty-eight percent of Texas students met the ACT college readiness benchmark on the mathematics test, compared to 46 percent nationally. Even with the rapid rise in participation, the ACT composite score rose from 20.7 in 2008 to 20.8 in 2012. The number of Hispanic students taking the SAT increased by 65 percent between 2007–08 and 2011–12. African American and Asian students also showed double-digit increases (42% and 29%, respectively). The mean SAT mathematics score remained stable or increased for all student groups over this time period.
- Based on USDE's new graduation rate calculation, Texas tied for the third highest high school graduation rate in the country for all students. Texas ranks number one in graduation rates for Asian, African-American, and white students.
- In 2011, every major ethnic group of Texas students significantly outscored their peers nationally on the eighth grade National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) science test, and Texas Hispanic and African-American students earned the second highest score on the eighth-grade mathematics test.
- Annual undergraduate degrees and certificates awarded to Hispanics have increased by 150% since 2000.

The Texas educational system is rigorous, responsive to the needs of the state's more than 1,200 local education agencies, and aligned with the three principles outlined in USDE's provisional

waiver application. Moreover, Texas already has adopted and has either completed or begun implementation of the key components described in those principles. Our request for flexibility is intended to avoid duplication and to further support the implementation of the state's system.

Principle 1: College- and Career-Ready Expectations for All Students

1.A Adoption of College- and Career-Ready Standards

As noted earlier, Texas was the first state in the nation to adopt college- and career-ready curriculum standards. The following paragraphs summarize the adoption process, with extensive supporting documentation provided in *Attachment 4*.

The Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills Curriculum Standards

Since 1998, K-12 education in Texas has been guided by the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) curriculum standards. The TEKS, codified in Title 19 of the Texas Administrative Code, Chapters 110-130, became effective in all content areas and grade levels on September 1, 1998. Statute required that the TEKS be used for instruction in the foundation areas of English language arts and reading, mathematics, science, and social studies. TEKS in the enrichment subjects (including health education, physical education, fine arts, career and technical education, technology application, and languages other than English) served as guidelines, rather than requirements. In 2003, the 78th Texas Legislature added enrichment subjects to the list of subject areas required to use the TEKS.

Incorporation of College- and Career-Ready Standards into the TEKS

In 2006, the 79th Texas Legislature required TEA and the state agency for higher education, the Texas Higher Education Coordination Board (THECB), to establish vertical teams composed of public school educators and faculty from institutions of higher education that would develop college- and career- ready standards in the areas of English/language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. The work of the vertical teams was organized in three phases. The first phase entailed a series of team meetings to create the college- and career-ready standards (CCRS) for the four subject areas. Phase two required the vertical teams to make recommendations as to how to align existing public school content standards with the CCRS. Phase three required the vertical teams to develop or establish instructional strategies, professional development materials, and online support materials for students who need additional assistance in preparing to successfully perform college-level work. Upon adoption of the TEKS at each phase teams also engaged in a series of gaps analyses first to ensure alignment between the adopted TEKS and the Texas CCRS. An additional phase of vertical teams also met to ensure appropriate alignment.

The THECB adopted the standards in January 2008. The Commissioner of Education approved the standards, and the State Board of Education (SBOE) incorporated them into the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) curriculum content standards as follows: English language arts and reading TEKS in 2008; mathematics and science TEKS in 2009; and social studies TEKS in 2010. *Attachment 4* includes a description of the State's standards adoption process (*Attachment 4a*), English language arts and mathematics gap analyses documents (*Attachment 4b*) evidence of the adoption of the college- and career-ready standards by the THECB (*Attachment 4c*), their approval by the Commissioner of Education and the Commissioner of Higher Education, (*Attachment 4d*), and the SBOE actions incorporating them into the TEKS standards (*Attachment 4e*).

The attachment also includes a copy of the college- and career-ready standards (*Attachment 4f*) and the findings from a comparison of the Texas standards with the national Common Core College Readiness Standards created by the Council of Chief State School Officers and the National Governors Association (*Attachment 4g*). The comparison, conducted by the Educational Policy Improvement Center and involving teams of higher education and public school educators and content educators, found that the Texas standards are more comprehensive than the Common Core standards, including additional areas of college readiness that are missing from the national standards. Overall, Texas standards in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics matched 92% and 75% of those in Common Core Standards, respectively. Breadth of coverage, or the extent to which matched standards are representative of content topics within each Common Core strand, was rated as strong for both content areas. Finally, the level of cognitive demand, or depth of knowledge, attributed to Texas standards was at or above that of the Common Core Standards for 90% of mathematics standards, and 71% of ELA standards.

In addition to comparison to the Common Core Standards, a 2010 study (see *Attachment 4h*) conducted by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board of the extent to which college admission and placement tests assess the Texas standards found that, on average, performance expectations contained within the standards were both more rigorous and cognitively demanding than the test items from the ACT, SAT, ACCUPLACER, COMPASS, ASSET, and the Texas Higher Education Assessment.

During 2011-2012, the cycle of review and revision of the TEKS standards continued with the comprehensive revision of the K-12 mathematics TEKS, which once again raised the bar to ensure the necessary rigor for college and career readiness. The SBOE adopted these new math TEKS in April 2012 (see *Attachment 4i*).

The English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS) were created in response to a USDE Monitoring Visit in 2008. Prior to the development of the ELPS, Texas implemented English as a Second Language (ESL) TEKS that imbedded in the English language arts/Reading TEKS, and the USDE indicated that it was not clear that the English language acquisition standards were to be addressed in conjunction with all foundation subject areas. Since the Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment Standards (TELPAS) were already being implemented, the agency formed a committee comprised of educators and administrators from throughout the state to develop ELPS that were aligned to TELPAS. The TELPAS includes standards for the four language domains of listening, speaking, reading, and writing with the proficiency levels of beginning, intermediate, advanced, and advanced high. Once the ELPS were written, the committee completed an alignment of the ELPS with the Grade 4 content standards. The proposed ELPS were then submitted to the State Board of Education for approval and were adopted in 2008. As part of the periodic review and revision of the TEKS and related standards, the agency plans to initiate review and revision of the ELPS in the coming year. This review will follow the same process that the SBOE uses for review and revision of the TEKS that includes appointment of review committees comprised of educators, parents, business and industry leaders, and employers to recommend revisions to the standards. The committees will be asked to ensure proper alignment with the CCRS as well as the state's prekindergarten guidelines. Prior to adoption of any revisions to the ELPS the SBOE will conduct public hearings and solicit input from educators throughout the state.

All state level Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills professional development is required to incorporate connections with the English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS) and the College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS). Within the Linguistic Instructional Alignment Guide (*Attachment 4j*), explicit connections between the ELPS and the CCRS for each of the linguistic domains have been incorporated in an effort to support teachers' understandings of the connections between the two. With this understanding, teachers incorporate activities that strengthen both language development and college and career readiness.

1.B Transition to College- and Career-Ready Standards

Texas has already made the transition to statewide use of the college- and career-ready standards. This transition has included (1) incorporation of the standards into the TEKS, as described above; (2) provision of instructional strategies, professional development materials and activities, and online support materials for local educators; (3) resources for students who may need additional assistance, including English Learners, students with disabilities, and other high-need populations; and (4) alignment of statewide assessments to the standards as incorporated into the TEKS. Additional information about these activities is provided in the following paragraphs, in Section 1.C addressing the state's student assessment program, and in *Attachment 5*.

Resources for Students Who Are English Language Learners

Resources that support both language development and content understanding for the 838,494 English language learners (ELLs) in Texas who speak over 120 languages are housed on the The Texas English Language Learner Web Portal (www.elltx.org) and are available to educators and parents throughout the state. This website includes resources, tools and training materials that are designed to support educators in effectively serving ELLs and also in improving content knowledge and English proficiency. Examples of the resources available on this state include the following:

1. The Texas English Language Learner Instructional Tool (TELLIT) Courses

These courses help teachers learn how to address the linguistic, cognitive, and affective needs of English language learners. Course participants are able to view video segments of teachers using effective strategies that enhance mathematics, science, and social studies instruction and promote academic achievement of ELL students.

TELLIT Math Linguistic Environment Course
TELLIT Math Cognitive Learning Environment Course
TELLIT Math Affective Learning Environment Course

TELLIT Science Linguistic Learning Environment Course
TELLIT Science Cognitive Learning Environment Course
TELLIT Science Affective Learning Environment Course

TELLIT Science Linguistic Learning Environment Course
TELLIT Science Cognitive Learning Environment Course
TELLIT Affective Learning Environment Course

2. Professional Service Provider (PSP) Training – Math

This course provides Professional Service Providers with a tool that can be used in providing feedback and exploring perceptions with campus administrators about what is occurring in mathematics instruction for ELLs. During this course, participants learn about the role of the PSP in the classroom-observation process, including pre-observation and post-observation tasks.

3. Accelerating Language Acquisition for Secondary English Language Learner Online Course

This online course provides self-paced professional development training for content area teachers in secondary classrooms. The course presents skills and strategies for teaching academic language to facilitate the content learning of English language learners (ELLs).

4. ELPS Face-to-Face Academies in all content areas (Science, Social Studies, ELAR, Mathematics) - These face to face professional development sessions provide participants with an exploration of ways to increase achievement for ELLs using the ELPS. In this face-to-face session, participants examine the ELPS and practice writing language objectives using the four linguistic domains of: listening, speaking, reading and writing. The resources contain specific strategies that will enable teachers to incorporate the ELPS in their classrooms.

5. ELPS Online Academy Overview – This online course assists in the understanding of how the ELPS provide cross-curricular second language acquisition essential knowledge and skills for listening, speaking, reading, and writing to provide a common framework for instruction in content area classrooms.

6. Implementing the ELPS Online Modules in all content areas (Science, Social Studies, ELAR, Mathematics) - This online course assists teachers in understanding how to apply the ELPS cross-curricular student expectations and linguistic accommodations in an English language arts lesson. A focus on the integration of the ELPS into lesson planning and instructional practices in support of ELL success is addressed. In addition, a variety of instructional strategies that assist ELLs in both language development and content acquisition are explored in order to promote academic success.

7. ELPS Resource Supplement - This resource is accessible as part of the ELPS Academy online course and is available for download and printing. The resource contains the ELPS, College and Career Readiness Standards, Response to Intervention information, and processing activities aligned to the face-to-face and online modules.

8. ELPS Linguistic Instructional Alignment Guide (Resource) - The purpose of the ELPS Instructional Alignment Guide is to support content area teachers in the identification of the essential components for providing instruction commensurate with English language learners' linguistic needs. This tool allows teachers to see connections among *English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS)*, *ELPS-TELPAS Proficiency Level Descriptors (PLDs)*, *College Career Readiness Standards (CCRS)* and *Linguistic*

Accommodations. The consistent integration of these components is critical in lesson planning in order to meet the linguistic and academic needs of English language learners.

9. ELPS Linguistic Instructional Alignment Guide (ELPS LIAG) Trainer of Trainer online course

The purpose of this online trainer of trainer course is to build capacity on how to deliver professional development sessions on the use of the ELPS LIAG. The goal is for trainers to increase knowledge and understanding on the use of the ELPS LIAG and its components.

- 10. A+Rise Online Tutorial** - This online tutorial course assists 9th-12th secondary educators in the use of the A+Rise program in order to access instructional strategies for ELPS implementation effectively.

Support for Teachers Serving Students with Disabilities - College and Career Ready Standards

The State of Texas has a long history of providing high quality professional development/training opportunities to all educators providing general and special education instruction and related services to the State's 439,675 (2011-12 Child Count - Ages 3-21) students with disabilities. Professional development/training is provided through local school districts/charter schools and the 20 Regional Educational Service Centers. In more recent years, Project Share has made available online professional development/training offerings for educators across a variety of topics, including the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), which is the State's curriculum framework (See Attachment Excerpt from Project Share Web Page). As stated above, the TEKS contain our State's College and Career Ready Standards. Professional development/training focused on the TEKS is available to all educators. Additionally, all the TEKS professional development/training offerings also contain response to intervention strategies for teachers to support students who struggle with curriculum content.

Current professional development/training offerings made available to all educators related to the TEKS ensures students with disabilities have teachers who have participated in high quality TEKS/subject matter professional development/training. Since more than 65% (AFDR) of students with disabilities (ages 6-21) are served in the general education classroom 80%, by a general education teacher, it is critically important to maintain our current efforts to support general education teachers through our existing professional development/training offerings in conjunction with the following long standing state initiatives:

1. The Texas State Budget Appropriations Act contains a Rider that requires the Texas Education Agency to reserve 10.5% (over 2yrs) of IDEA federal funds (state set-aside) to provide professional development regarding access to the general curriculum. These funds are distributed to all 20 Regional Education Service Centers for the provision of the professional development. TEA will reserve ~\$10,850,428 over the next two years for this purpose.

Rider 19. Professional Development for the Provision of Access to the General Curriculum for Students with Disabilities in the Least Restrictive

Environment. Out of the federal discretionary funds awarded to the Texas Education Agency through the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Part B and appropriated above, the Commissioner shall set aside 10.5 percent during the biennium to fund capacity building projects, including follow-up professional development and support, for school districts to provide access to the general curriculum in the least restrictive environment for students with disabilities and Response to Intervention (RtI) processes for struggling learners in general education settings.

2. In addition to Rider 19 (above), the Texas Education Agency established a Statewide Leadership project at Region 20 Education Service Center (ESC). Region 20 ESC (located in San Antonio) provides statewide leadership in the area of Access to the General Curriculum. The AGC Network (All 20 ESCs) develops a framework for statewide collaboration through a comprehensive planning process. Priorities in professional development and technical assistance focus on ensuring that all students with disabilities will gain access to and show progress in the general curriculum through curricular/instructional adaptations in the least restrictive environment. Region 20 ESC is responsible for establishing and coordinating a 20 ESC network for accessing the general curriculum. The purpose of the 20-region network is to ensure ongoing communication among ESCs about state-level needs assessment processes, planning, implementing, and evaluating statewide activities. See Attachments titled “Access to the General Curriculum” and “AGC Statewide Leadership” for more information regarding the Access to the General Curriculum Statewide Leadership function and Access to the General Curriculum Project resources. The purpose of both Rider 19 and the AGC ESC network is to create professional development opportunities, and tools and resources for all educators so students with disabilities have access to, and make progress in, the general curriculum (the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), which includes the Texas College and Career Readiness Standards).

All current professional development/training offerings through local school districts, the 20 ESCs, and Project Share matched with training related to accessing the general education curriculum through accommodation/modification provides all student with disabilities with high quality instruction in the TEKS, and is individualized based on the student's needs. The 20 ESCs offer additional high quality professional development/training opportunities specific to special education teachers supporting the general education teachers and/or providing direct instruction to students with disabilities to ensure all educators have access to the knowledge necessary to deliver high quality instruction in the TEKS content standards.

In addition to local, and regional evaluation systems used to determine the effectiveness of professional development/training opportunities, the Texas Education Agency will analyze the following data sets:

- 2013-14 district and Statewide Accountability Ratings (specific to the performance of students with disabilities);
- 2013-14 STAAR performance information (across all three state assessments – STAAR, STAAR-Modified and STAAR-Alt);
- 2013-14 Performance Based Monitoring Analysis System (PBMAS) Special Education Performance Levels; and
- 2013-14 Program Monitoring and Interventions Staging (specific to special education indicators 1-5, and 9-11 – See Attachment - 2012 Performance-Based Monitoring Analysis System State Longitudinal Report)

This analysis will be used to determine the effectiveness of the professional development/training, and whether additional/specific efforts need to be developed/made available to educators, for the 2014-15 school year, regarding TEKS content instruction for students with disabilities. These additional/specific efforts could include, but will not be limited to:

1. Assignment of local school district interventions/improvement planning specific mentoring and/or professional development/training related to TEKS content instruction for educators serving students with disabilities;
2. Development of supplemental TEKS content/subject guides for the educators to provide access to instructional practices that work offered by fellow teachers from across the state that have been successful with students who continue to struggle in the TEKS;
3. Revision of current Professional Development/Training offerings to integrate additional accommodations and/or modifications to ensure alignment of standards, instruction, and the needs of students with disabilities; and/or
4. Development of specific professional development/training (both online and face-to-face) related to the provision of TEKS instruction for all educators of students with disabilities.

Professional Development and Other Supports for Local Educators

Recognizing the level of rigor of the new curriculum requirements and the need to support the state's more rigorous student graduation requirements (which require four years of math, science, social studies and English language arts as the default graduation plan), the Texas Legislature committed significant funding toward professional development to support implementation of the new TEKS. The state's system of 20 Regional Educational Service Centers (ESCs) serves as a primary vehicle for ensuring that all local educators have access to the professional development they need. Providing leadership to the ESCs, TEA has developed and deployed professional development addressing the incorporation of the CCRS into the TEKS and the instructional implications of the new standards; supporting the use of diagnostics, data, and technology in implementing the TEKS; and facilitating the use of student-centered strategies including Response to Intervention, Gifted and Talented approaches, and strategies to strengthen academic language among English Learners.

Online support materials are provided through TEA's online portal for Texas teachers, known as Project Share (see *Attachment 5a* for a description), and are available to all Texas LEAs. These materials include lessons, aligned to the TEKS and CCRS, that supplement classroom instruction and provide additional practice for students during and beyond traditional school hours.

As the state has worked toward college and career readiness, literacy has remained a top priority. The Texas Legislature continues to commit significant resources toward the Texas Adolescent Literacy Academies (TALA), which support teachers in grades 6-8 in the use of diagnostic instruments and intensive instructional strategies that build proficiency in reading and comprehension for all middle school students. Through these academies, English language arts teachers also have received training in how to administer and interpret the results of the Texas Middle School Fluency Assessment (TMSFA), an instrument designed to measure key reading skills in middle school students. TMSFA materials and training are available at no cost to LEAs and open-enrollment charter schools that serve middle school students. In addition to face-to-face trainings, TALA and TMSFA professional development courses are also available through Project Share.

TEA also has taken the initiative to develop the *Middle-School Students in Texas: Algebra Ready (MSTAR)* and *Texas Response to Curriculum Focal Points (Grades K-8)*, which are used in mathematics professional development academies that are available in both face-to-face and online environments. These materials address key "focal points" contained within the mathematics TEKS that target algebra readiness for grades K-8.

Provision of Resources for Students

As noted above, TEA's online portal, Project Share, includes significant resources and professional development opportunities for teachers. In addition, it provides engaging online resources and support materials for students (see *Attachment 5b* for examples). Many of the Project Share student resources are provided in both English and Spanish versions to further support English Language Learners and the teachers who work with them. English/Spanish resources include a series of videos that explain secondary math and science concepts, algebra-readiness universal screeners and diagnostic assessments, and a math and science item bank that

teachers can draw from when creating formative and summative assessments. Project Share also provides OnTRACK Lessons for core secondary English, math, science, and social studies subjects. The OnTRACK Lessons, which are developed at the state level and electronically distributed to all Texas districts for use at the local level, include lessons designed to supplement classroom instruction and to provide accelerated instruction for struggling students, particularly those who are at risk for not meeting curricular expectations and/or not passing state assessments.

Alignment of Assessments to the College- and Career-Ready Standards

Please see section 1.C, below, for more information on this topic.

1.C Development and Administration of Annual, Statewide, Aligned, High-Quality Assessments That Measure Student Growth

Texas already has developed and begun annually administering statewide aligned, high-quality assessments that measure student growth in reading/language arts and in mathematics in at least grades 3-8 and at least once in high school in all LEAs. The state launched its first statewide student assessment program in 1979 to bring common standards to the measurement of students' academic achievement. From this early Texas Assessment of Basic Skills to the new State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR), Texas has steadily increased the rigor, expanded the scope, and raised the performance standards measured on its assessments. The STAAR program began operational testing in the 2011-2012 school year. A description of the development and critical features of the STAAR system are provided in the following paragraphs.

Overview of the STAAR Assessment Program

With the creation of the STAAR assessment program, the Texas Legislature continued its efforts to improve the state's education system using statewide assessments. STAAR represents a more unified, comprehensive assessment program that incorporates the state's rigorous college and career readiness standards. TEA set broad goals for the STAAR assessment program that include the following:

- The performance expectations on STAAR were established such that they raise the bar on student performance to a level where graduating students are postsecondary ready.
- The focus of student performance at high school shifted to end-of-course (EOC) assessments in twelve courses, and those assessments, where appropriate, will be linked to college and career readiness.
- In reading and mathematics, the grades 3–8 tests are linked from grade to grade to the college-and career-readiness performance standards for the Algebra II and English III assessments.
- Individual student reports provide comprehensive, concise results that are easily understood by students and parents. Assessment results will be available to a wide variety of individuals (as appropriate) through the state's education data portal.

The most significant changes that TEA has implemented under the STAAR program are summarized below.

General changes:

- High school, grade-based testing represented by the previous state assessment, the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS), was replaced with course-based EOC assessments.
- A data portal was implemented to give students, parents, and educators access to authorized information on student achievement.

Rigor:

- Content standards for the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) — the source for the state’s K–12 instructional curricula as well as the basis for the state assessment program — have been strengthened to include college-and career-readiness content standards, as described earlier.
- New test blueprints (the number of items on the test for each reporting category) emphasize the assessment of the content standards that best prepare students for the next grade or course.
- Assessments have increased in length at most grades and subjects, and overall test difficulty has increased by including more rigorous items.
- The rigor of items has increased by assessing skills at a greater depth and level of cognitive complexity. In this way, the tests are better able to measure the growth of higher-achieving students.
- In science and mathematics, the number of open-ended (griddable) items on most tests has increased to allow students more opportunity to derive an answer independently without being influenced by answer choices provided with the questions.
- Performance standards are set so that they require a higher level of student performance than was required on the TAKS assessments.
- To validate the level of rigor, student performance on STAAR assessments has been compared with results on standardized national and international assessments.

Postsecondary readiness:

- College-and career-readiness content standards have been fully incorporated into the TEKS, and these TEKS are assessed on the STAAR EOC assessments. This helps ensure students are prepared for their freshman year of college without the need for remediation, prepared to enter the workforce, or prepared to serve in our nation’s military.
- Performance standards on assessments were vertically aligned to ensure college readiness, using empirical data gathered from studies that linked performance in grades three through 12 from year to year. Performance standards will be reviewed at least once every three years and, if necessary, adjusted so that the assessments maintain a high level of rigor.
- Texas law defines college readiness as “the level of preparation a student must attain in English language arts and mathematics courses to enroll and succeed, without remediation, in an entry-level general education course for credit in that same content area for a baccalaureate degree or associate degree program.”

Measures of progress:

- Measures of student progress, based on the more rigorous standards for STAAR assessments, are being developed and implemented. Progress measures are being phased in over several years as data for the new program become available, with initial implementation scheduled

no later than Fall 2013. (See additional information and timeline under Principle 2, section 2.A.)

- Progress measures are designed to provide an early-warning indicator for students who are not on track to meet the passing standard, may not be successful in the next grade or course, may not be ready for advanced courses in mathematics and English in high school, or may not be postsecondary ready in mathematics and English.

Process for Setting STAAR Performance Standards

TEA has engaged and will continue to involve a wide range of stakeholders in the development and implementation of the STAAR program (see Educator Review of STAAR Assessments, *Attachment 6a*). Following the development of the new STAAR test design, standard-setting advisory panels composed of diverse groups of stakeholders (i.e., business leaders, superintendents, and regional service center representatives) made recommendations regarding where the performance standards should be set within each subject area. These panels provided TEA, the commissioner of education, and the commissioner of higher education with recommendations (for English III and Algebra II) for establishing cut scores and for matching the cut scores with the policy definitions that relate to performance on each assessment. The performance standards were developed to comply with legislative requirements for setting several performance standards for each STAAR EOC assessment. In addition, the validity of the STAAR assessments is integral to meeting the long-range educational goals of the state as well as for the overall defensibility of the assessment program. To provide evidence of the validity of the STAAR assessments, empirical studies were conducted in various stages of the standard-setting process.

TEA has conducted extensive research to support the standard-setting process. Studies focused on creating links between STAAR assessments and other measures of students' knowledge and skills. Some studies linked students' scores on STAAR assessments to corresponding course grades. Another set of studies linked STAAR assessments to established national and international assessments, such as SAT, ACT, NAEP, and PISA. Additional studies linked STAAR assessments to other assessments (THEA and ACCUPLACER) used by Texas colleges and universities to place students in credit-bearing courses. Finally, research was conducted to link STAAR scores to corresponding grades in entry-level, credit-bearing college courses. To support reliable and meaningful score interpretations, links between two assessments were based on the same students taking STAAR and one of the comparison assessments listed above.

TEA and THECB have agreed on the performance standards for college-and career-readiness on the Algebra II and English III EOC assessments. Moving forward, TEA and THECB will periodically review the performance standards and will make adjustments if data indicate this is appropriate. The thoroughness of the studies and research, as well as the checks and balances incorporated into the process, will provide a reliable and objective measure of college and career readiness. TEA and THECB will continue to collaborate to improve the assessment of the college and career readiness of graduating high school students.

Addressing the State's Diverse Student Populations

In response to changes in federal and state legislation, the Texas assessment program has broadened in recent years to better assess the state's diverse student populations. Since the

inception of TAKS in 2003, the assessment program has evolved to include linguistically accommodated testing for eligible English language learners, English language proficiency measures through the K–12 Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS), and two separate assessments for some students receiving special education services. The Texas student assessment program includes as many students as possible in the STAAR, while also providing options for alternate assessments for eligible students receiving special education services whose academic achievement and progress cannot be measured appropriately with the general assessments. The alternate assessments for eligible students who receive special education services include STAAR Modified and STAAR Alternate and reflect the general STAAR program. TEA has also developed Spanish versions of STAAR in grades 3–5 in accordance with state statute. In addition, TEA has developed online versions of STAAR with built-in, standardized linguistic accommodations for eligible ELLs in grades 3–8 and high school.

STAAR Modified and STAAR Alternate. STAAR Modified assessments have been developed for all content areas for grades 3–8 that are part of the general STAAR program and for nine of the STAAR EOC assessments (English I, II, and III, Algebra I, geometry, biology, world geography, world history, and U.S. history). Modified assessments are not being developed for Algebra II, chemistry, or physics as these courses are not required in order for students to graduate on the Minimum High School Program (MHSP), and all students taking STAAR Modified assessments are automatically on the MHSP because they are receiving modified instruction. The MHSP is general high school diploma that students may opt into by meeting one of three criteria and upon agreement in writing by the student, the student’s parent/guardian, and a school administrator. Primary differences in course requirements between the Recommended High School Program (RHSP), the default program and the MHSP include the following: the MSHP does not require credits in foreign language, requires one fewer mathematics credit, two fewer science credits, one fewer social studies credit, and requires at least one academic elective that is not required in the RHSP (see *Attachment 6b* for current graduation credit requirements).

The STAAR Modified assessments cover the same content as the general STAAR assessments but have been modified in format and test design. The modified assessments are designed for eligible students receiving special education services who can make academic progress even though they may not reach grade-level achievement standards in the same time frame as their non-disabled peers. Performance standards were set so that they require a higher level of student performance than was required on TAKS–Modified assessments. Each STAAR Modified assessment consists primarily of multiple-choice questions addressing the content of the assessed curriculum for the grade-level subject. Item modification guidelines specify how to modify test questions from the general assessment in a way that preserves the integrity of the knowledge or skill being assessed.

By the 2014-2015 school year, Texas will require students currently participating in STAAR Modified to take the general assessments and will discontinue the modified assessment program. Texas has long been a leader in the development and administration of accessible tests for students served by special education. Elements of universal design have been incorporated into the item development process for all state assessments to help ensure accessibility for diverse student populations. In addition, Texas has continued to expand its list of allowable

accommodations on statewide assessments to both reflect instructional practices and to provide more meaningful assessments of all students. As the state transitions students from alternate assessments based on modified achievement standards to the general assessments by 2014-2015, Texas will make use of the practices it has followed for a number of years to ensure the reliability and validity of the results of the statewide assessment program.

Committees of Texas educators will play a significant role in planning for the transition from STAAR Modified to STAAR. Advisory committees will be convened beginning in fall 2013 to develop guidelines for ensuring accessibility of the assessments and to outline a plan for supporting students, parents, and educators during the transition period. In addition, assessment and special education staff at the TEA will collaborate and participate in meetings with professional organizations in the field to obtain guidance and recommendations for making the transition as seamless as possible.

One major way to help ensure student success on the more rigorous standards of the general assessment is to ensure they have access to grade-level content. Because one of the eligibility criteria for participating in STAAR Modified is for students to receive modified instruction in the relevant subject or course, it will be critical that students are provided the instructional support to be successful on the general assessment. This will require coordinated efforts across multiple divisions at the TEA to ensure that professional development is made available for educators, and that parents and stakeholders are informed about the changes to assessment policies. At a minimum a question and answer document will be provided to school districts and posted on the TEA's website that will contain information about the elimination of the modified assessments and the transition to the general assessment.

Enhanced accommodation procedures during testing will be put into place for qualifying students. These accommodations may be integrated into an online interface or may be delivered by test administrators in a paper-based test. In addition, the accommodations manual that has been developed for the STAAR program will be revised to reflect changes in accommodations policies.

Training will be provided to district testing coordinators and special education coordinators to provide technical assistance regarding the integration of the enhanced accommodations into IEPs, as well as classroom instruction and classroom assessments so that students are adequately prepared to make use of these accommodations during statewide testing.

STAAR Alternate is based on alternate academic achievement standards and is designed for students with significant cognitive disabilities receiving special education services who meet the participation requirements for the program. This assessment is not a traditional paper or multiple-choice test. Instead, it requires teachers to observe students as they complete state-developed assessment tasks linked to the grade-level TEKS. Teachers then evaluate student performance based on the dimensions of the STAAR Alternate rubric and submit results through an online instrument. The STAAR Alternate assessments reflect the same increased rigor and focus of the general and modified assessments.

English Language Learners and the STAAR Program. The number of English Learners in Texas public schools has risen steadily during the past decade from about 570,000 in 2000–2001 to more than 838,000 (or about 1 in 6 students) by the 2011–2012 school year. ELLs are a diverse group of students who know English to varying degrees when they enter U.S. schools and have widely differing educational and sociocultural backgrounds. Both state and federal regulations require ELLs to be taught and tested over the same grade-level academic skills as other students. TEA has developed Spanish versions of STAAR in grades 3–5 in accordance with state statute. In addition, TEA has developed online versions of STAAR with built-in, standardized linguistic accommodations for eligible ELLs in grades 3–8 and high school. TELPAS will continue to measure the progress ELLs make in learning English language.

Plan for Measurement of Student Progress

In 2006, Texas expanded its reporting of student performance to include a measure of student progress when legislation from HB 1 (79th Texas Legislature, Third Called Session, 2005) required the commissioner of education to determine a method for measuring annual improvement in student achievement. Additionally, HB 3 (81st Texas Legislature, 2009) required that performance standards be tied to a measure of college readiness.

With the implementation of the STAAR program, Texas is considering growth measures to determine if students (1) are on-track to meet performance standards in a subsequent year, (2) are prepared for advanced courses, and (3) are projected to meet college-and career-readiness performance standards.

The following table outlines the general steps and timeline for implementing and reporting measures of student progress for the STAAR program. A number of different types of growth measures will be considered to meet state and federal requirements for STAAR reporting and for using a growth measure for state and federal accountability. Also under consideration is a measure of expected academic performance for ELLs that sets challenging but achievable goals to meet grade-level academic content standards for ELL students in accordance with a timeline based on their years in U.S. schools.

Steps in the Process for Implementing and Reporting Measures of Student Progress for STAAR Assessments	Timeline
Identify the most appropriate student progress measures for the STAAR program	November 2010 – May 2011
Empirically evaluate the identified measures	June 2011 – October 2011
Obtain advisory group and expert advice	November 2011 – August 2012
Reevaluate plans for measures of student progress after spring 2012 and spring 2013 STAAR administrations (review of proposed measures and empirical data; additional advisory group and expert advice also may be gathered)	Summer 2012 and Summer 2013
Obtain approval of the new measures of student progress	Summer 2013
Implement and report new measures of student progress for the STAAR program	No later than Fall 2013

Provisions for Peer Review through the U.S. Department of Education

TEA submitted STAAR Modified for peer review by USDE in May 2012. The state had developed a plan to submit STAAR 3-8, STAAR 3-8 Alternate, STAAR EOC, and STAAR EOC Alternate for peer review in three phases, according to the following schedule:

Phase I: January 2013

- Content Standards (1): Critical elements 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4
- Statewide Assessment System (3): Critical elements 3.1, 3.4, 3.7

Phase II: May 2013

- Achievement Standards (2): Critical elements 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.6
- Statewide Assessment System (3): Critical elements 3.5, 3.6
- Technical Quality (4): Critical elements 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6
- Inclusion (6): Critical elements 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 6.4
- Reports (7): Critical elements 7.1, 7.2, 7.3, 7.4

Phase III: December 2013

- Achievement Standards (2): Critical elements 2.5
- Alignment (5): Critical elements 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.4, 5.5, 5.6

TEA has been successful at obtaining USDE peer review approval for its state assessment system in the past, and is prepared to submit documentation on STAAR that demonstrates the state assessment program meets all aspects of a high quality assessment system. Peer review notes from the initial submission for STAAR Modified that provide evidence that the assessment program meets these criteria are included in *Attachment 6c*. On December 21, 2012, USDE suspended the peer review process pending further notice. TEA is continuing to work on all of the required elements detailed above as a part of the STAAR Technical Digest. When USDE sets a new timeline for peer review submissions, TEA will resume submissions and adjust the schedule accordingly. Also attached is the outline for the 2011–2012 Technical Digest (*Attachment 6d*), which will form the basis for the STAAR peer review submission.

Principle 2: State-Developed Differentiated Recognition, Accountability, and Support

2.A Development and Implementation of a State-Based System of Differentiated Recognition, Accountability, And Support

This section provides a detailed description of the state's differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system, its alignment with the principles of the federal system, and provisions for integrating the two systems. Supporting documentation may be found in *Attachment 7*.

Background on the State's Accountability System

For some time, Texas schools and LEAs have been held accountable under two systems: the state accountability system, mandated by the Texas Legislature, and the federal system, created by the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act. Texas led the nation in the introduction of a statewide accountability system as a foundation for public education reform when, in 1993, the Texas Legislature enacted statutes mandating the creation of the Texas public school accountability system to rate LEAs and evaluate schools. A viable and effective accountability system could be developed in Texas because the state already had the necessary supporting infrastructure in place comprised of a student-level data collection system; a state-mandated curriculum; and a statewide assessment tied to the curriculum, the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS).

A new accountability system was designed in 2004 following introduction of a new state assessment program replacing the TAAS, the TAKS. This change coincided with the 2002 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act via NCLB, which extended federal accountability requirements that previously applied only to Title I schools and LEAs to all schools and LEAs. Designing an accountability system that met the demands of implementing the new TAKS system; reporting TAKS results and a longitudinal completion rate; meeting other state requirements; and adhering to the new federal regulations presented the state with new challenges. One challenge was keeping the performance improvement of low-performing students a priority, while improving the performance of top-performing students who must compete with other top-performing students across the nation. Additionally, new state accountability requirements expanded the system in one direction with more subjects and grades, while federal accountability requirements expanded the system in another direction with more student groups.

Under the provisions of Texas Education Code (TEC), Chapter 39, and the ESEA Title I School Improvement Program (SIP), the state is required to provide interventions to improve low-performing schools. TEC, Chapter 39, establishes a related system of interventions and sanctions for LEAs and schools, including charter schools. Interventions may include the appointment of campus intervention teams, monitors, conservators, management teams, and boards of managers and also may include required hearings, public notifications, and the development of improvement or corrective action plans. School-level interventions required in state statute include the appointment of an intervention team to any school that fails to meet

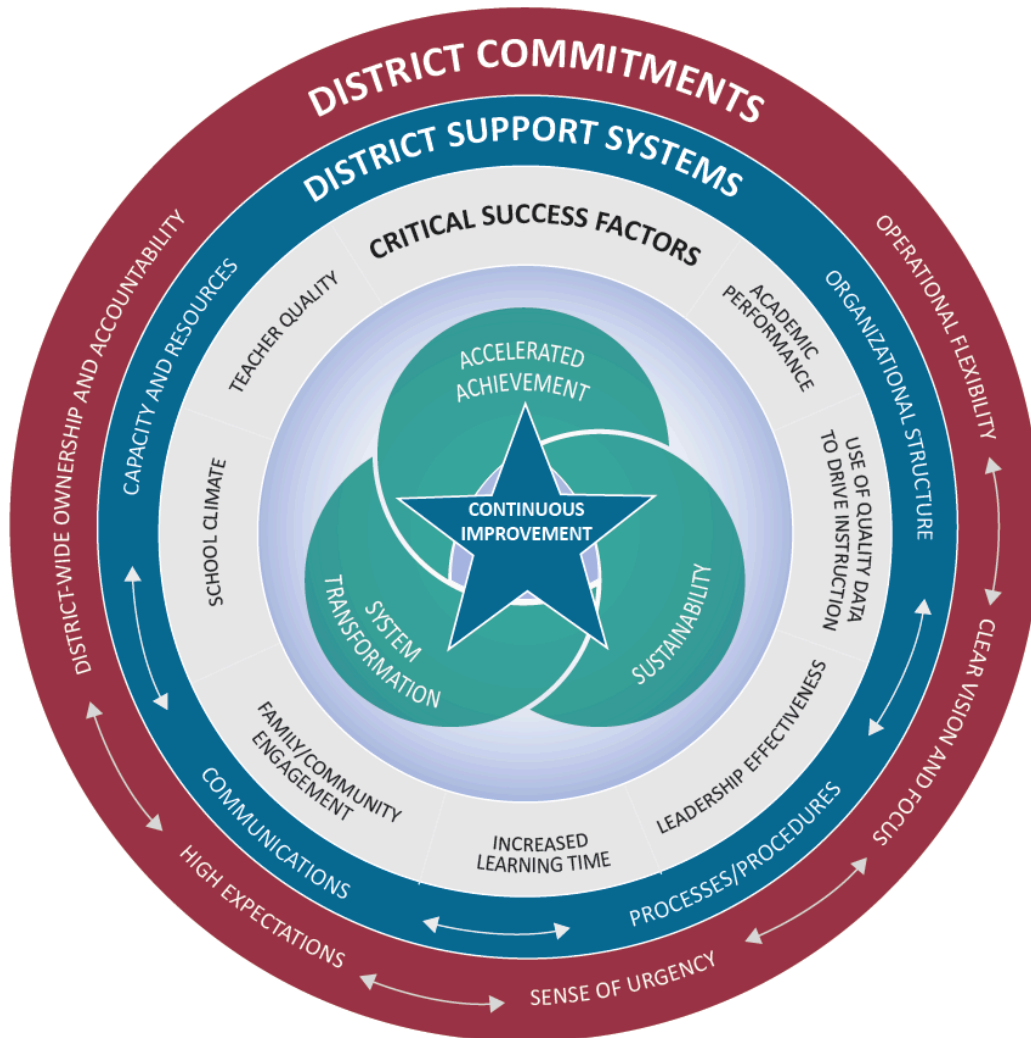
established performance standards, with escalated interventions imposed as a result of continuing low performance. Those graduated interventions include school reconstitution, the possible appointment of a monitor or conservator to provide LEA-level oversight, and a potential order of campus repurposing, alternative management, or closure (see Campus Intervention Matrix, *Attachment 7a*). The statute also establishes certain sanctions for LEA-level underperformance, including, but not limited to, LEA closure.

Similarly, the framework of support implemented by Texas under the federal accountability system includes the appointment of external technical assistance providers to support low-performing schools, with escalated interventions imposed as a result of continuing low performance. Those interventions may include student-level supports, corrective actions, school restructuring, and alternative governance.

The State's Framework for Continuous District and School Improvement

As part of the state's evolving efforts to align the state and federal accountability systems, TEA established the Texas Center for District and School Support (TCDSS), a state-level entity that functions to coordinate, in conjunction with TEA, system-level leadership for school improvement efforts under both the federal and state systems. In collaboration with the TCDSS, TEA developed a research-based framework for continuous district and school improvement. The framework outlines a cohesive system of intervention and the implementation of policies and practices that establish the environment and support needed to effectively impact low-performing schools. Designed to aid in the development of both district and campus improvement planning, the framework provides a common language and process for addressing the school improvement challenge. It is designed to show the aligned leadership and systems of support at the state, regional, district, and campus levels that will build the capacity necessary to turn around low-performing schools in Texas. Service providers, working collaboratively with district and school leadership, help facilitate district and campus supports that are aligned to the framework. The graphic on the following page illustrates the framework's key components, processes and outcomes; more detailed information about each component is provided in the narrative and tables following the illustration.

Texas Framework for Continuous District and School Improvement



Outcomes. The overarching goal of the framework is a state of continuous improvement for campuses, districts and the state. The end goal of the system of support, reflected in the center of the illustration, is accelerated achievement, sustainability, system transformation, and continuous improvement. The table below describes these four outcomes in more detail.

Outcome	Description
Accelerated Achievement	Accelerated achievement is rapidly attained improvement resulting from an intense and urgent focus on identified areas of need. As barriers to achievement are uncovered and addressed, significant gains are accomplished and performance gaps are reduced.
Sustainability	Sustainability is the institutionalization of effective systems and processes that maintain progress over time, regardless of changing conditions. Districts ensure capacity for continuity, safeguard successful

Outcome	Description
	practices, and maintain commitment to continuous improvement.
System Transformation	System Transformation is the comprehensive change of expectations and behaviors, resulting in sustained innovation and success. Transformation is reflected in all aspects of the organization through fully functioning and effective processes.
Continuous Improvement	Continuous Improvement is the result of the dynamic interaction of organizational commitments and support systems ensuring the effective implementation of all Critical Success Factors. When these elements are integrated and fully operational, the outcomes of accelerated achievement, sustainability, and system transformation are produced.

Critical Success Factors. The framework’s critical success factors capture seven areas to address in improvement efforts. Whether campus interventions are being provided through the district, local Education Service Center, or the Texas Center for District and School Support, sharing a common language around resources is essential. The seven Critical Success Factors (CSFs) provide a common language to anchor the work of school improvement across Texas and create opportunity to match resources to needs. These factors reference the USDE turnaround principles and will be part of the statewide intervention system. Schools connecting individual needs to the CSFs can easily choose from customized resources provided across the state. The table below describes each CSF in more detail.

Critical Success Factor	Description
Academic Performance	The foundational CSF. By focusing on data driven instruction that targets the use of ongoing monitoring of instruction, schools can increase performance for all students. Curricular alignment, both horizontally and vertically, is also an essential component of this CSF.
Use of Quality Data to Drive Instruction	Emphasizes data disaggregation training and ongoing communication of data to improve student learning outcomes. A focus of this CSF is utilizing data to drive decisions.
Leadership Effectiveness	Targets the need for leadership on the campus to exercise operational flexibility and the effective use of data and resources. Providing job-embedded professional development to build capacity of campus leaders is a vital part of this CSF.
Increased Learning Time	Necessitates flexible scheduling that allows time for additional instructional minutes, enrichment activities and staff collaborative planning time. This CSF also confirms as a requisite, an instructionally-focused calendar.
Family/Community Engagement	Calls for increased opportunities for input from parents and the community, as well as the necessity for effective communication and access to community services.

Critical Success Factor	Description
School Climate	Recognizes increased attendance and reduced discipline referrals as indicators of a positive and welcoming environment. Increased attendance in extracurricular activities is another sign that students feel supported by an affirming school climate.
Teacher Quality	Focuses on the need to recruit and retain effective teachers while also supporting current staff with job-embedded professional development. A locally developed appraisal and evaluation system informs personnel decisions in order to ensure quality teaching and learning.

District Support Systems. District support systems are vital as they have a significant impact on campus success. The most effective road to improvement is through the district. District support systems that should be in place and characteristics related to the effectiveness of these systems are presented in the following table.

District Support System	Description
Organizational Structure	The district organizational structure has clearly delineated roles and responsibilities for personnel that focus on teaching and learning with accountability and impact on student achievement. The district eliminates barriers to improvement, redefines staff roles and responsibilities as necessary, and empowers staff to be responsive in support of school leadership.
Processes/Procedures	Priority is placed upon teaching and learning when establishing and implementing systemic operational protocols that guarantee accountability, availability of resources, and their effective use.
Communications	A clearly defined process that ensures a consistent message is being sent, received, and acted upon using multiple, effective delivery systems. Proactive efforts are engaged by district level staff to establish effective internal communication systems and transparent external communication practices. Communication is focused on a shared and clear vision for continuous improvement which streamlines collaborative efforts toward student success.
Capacity and Resources	The district organization strategically utilizes internal and external human capital and necessary resources to meet all needs for a successful learning environment. Expertise is purposefully cultivated and sustained through targeted recruitment, retention and succession planning.

District Commitments. An additional focus on the role of districts in continuous improvement is on district commitments that are essential to sustainable transformation. Critical district commitments are described in more detail in the table below.

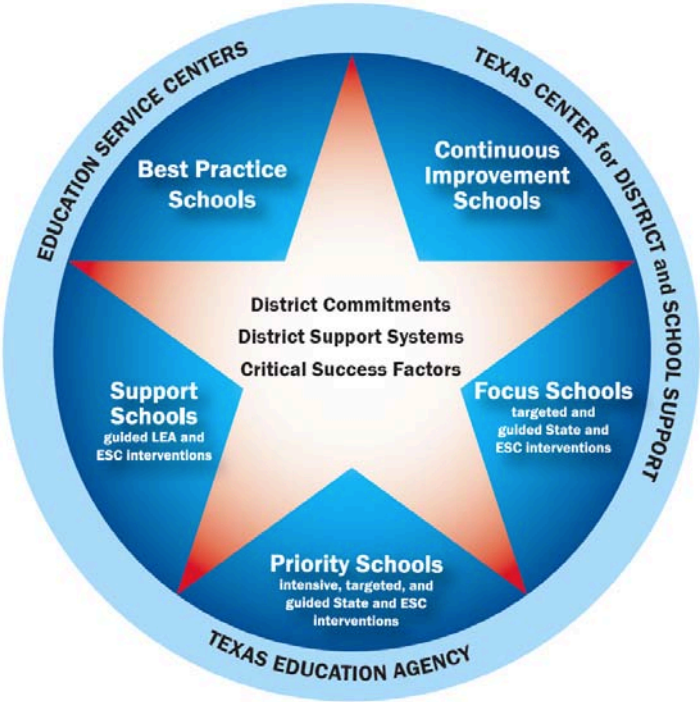
District Commitment	Description
Operational Flexibility	The district permits the agility to shift resources, processes, and practices in response to critical needs identified. The district's ability to address the needs of all students is contingent upon allowing customized approaches, expedition of resources, and departures from standard practice when the need is substantiated.

Clear Vision and Focus	The district strongly articulates a focus on student achievement as its primary work. Clear plans across the district are developed to address increasing performance for all students on all campuses. This vision is embraced and embedded in daily practice by all staff members.
Sense of Urgency	District staff, compelled by an intolerance of failure and dissatisfaction with deficits of the current state, set a priority and press for rapid action to change ineffective practices and processes that impede student success.
High Expectations	Explicit, rigorous standards are in place for student learning with adult and student confidence that success is attainable. These expectations are pervasively evident and understood by all with a commitment to providing a timely response and/or adjustment when goals are not met.
District-Wide Ownership and Accountability	Throughout the district, leadership recognizes and accepts responsibility for all current levels of performance and transparently interacts with stakeholders to plan and implement improvement initiatives. The district is engaged in continuous review of systemic, district-wide practices to ensure effective impact on critical need areas, such as low-performing campuses.

In summary, the Texas Framework for Continuous District and School Improvement supports district ownership and investment so that meaningful change can take place at the school level. The framework reflects a retooling of how the state supports low-performing schools, shifting more focus to developing central office teams to lead the work, and providing a structure to organize, deliver, and monitor the supports provided. Implementation of the framework is supported through the components of the Texas School Support System, described below.

The Texas School Support System.

With the increase in identified low-performing districts and schools, there is a need to mobilize the statewide support that is available to provide assistance to districts as they work with their campuses on improvement. TEA, the TCDSS, and the network of regional Education Service Centers are committed to working with districts to provide support to campuses. The Texas School Support System, depicted graphically to the right, categorizes schools according to identified needs across levels of increased assistance and intervention. *Best practice schools* have effective approaches to school success that can serve as resources to others across the state. *Continuous improvement schools* have systems and commitments that focus on their improvement efforts and they are continuously progressing toward better performance. *Support schools* have identified areas of needed improvement and are working with their district and regional education service center to positively impact the identified areas. *Focus schools* have



also identified areas of needed improvement and are working with their district, regional education service center, and have some statewide interventions targeting areas of need. *Priority schools* have multiple identified areas of needed improvement. They receive intensive, targeted, and guided district, education service center, and state interventions.

The structure of the Texas School Support System aligns state and federal accountability systems into a single system of support, and recognizes that sustainable transformation is the result of district commitments, district systems, and campus institutionalization of critical success factors. Schools are required to engage in the Texas Accountability Intervention System due to identified low performance in the state and/or federal accountability systems.

A System Characterized by Increasing Rigor. Primary features of the state-defined rating system since 1993 have been increasing rigor by raising the standards progressively over time; including new assessments as they become available; and incorporating more students in the LEA and school evaluations. In 2009, the Texas legislature enacted House Bill 3, making significant changes to parts of the Texas Education Code (TEC) relating to public school accountability that continue the trend toward greater rigor. These changes shift the focus of the state accountability system from meeting satisfactory standards on the state assessments to meeting both satisfactory and college-ready standards as measured by new STAAR assessments that are linked to postsecondary readiness.

The focus of HB 3 is the state-defined academic accountability ratings and distinction designations. However, state-defined accountability is part of the state's proposed integrated accountability system for Texas public schools and LEAs, the Texas Accountability Intervention System (TAIS). Changes to the state assessment program and accountability ratings will be reflected throughout the larger system of public school accountability. Three major components of the integrated accountability system will use STAAR assessment results to evaluate campuses and/or LEAs. State accountability ratings and federal accountability status will feed into multiple other processes that identify campuses and/or LEAs for interventions, sanctions, or rewards. Consequently, decisions made during the state accountability development process will extend beyond the state accountability ratings. The following goals have guided development of the new, state-defined accountability system:

1. Focus on LEA/school performance changes from minimum standards to standards based on postsecondary readiness.
2. Increase rigor of college readiness standards incrementally to ensure that Texas performs among the top ten states in postsecondary readiness by 2020.
3. Assign recognized and exemplary distinction ratings based on higher levels of student performance on college readiness standards rather than higher percentages of students performing at the satisfactory level.
4. Award schools distinctions for achieving the top quartile in terms of overall individual student progress and closing performance gaps among student groups.
5. Assign schools distinctions on broader indicators of excellence beyond results on state assessments.
6. Aggregate reports providing detailed academic and financial information that is relevant, meaningful, and easily accessible to the public.

7. Align state and federal accountability requirements to the greatest extent possible.

The Need for a Single Integrated System

Despite the best efforts of all parties, the implementation of two systems often results in a confusing mix of requirements that detract attention from the overall goal—improved performance for all students. To support this goal, and to create optimal learning environments and sustainable increases in student achievement, a coordinated, effective statewide system of support for struggling schools and LEAs is essential. With this flexibility request, TEA is proposing to implement a single accountability system with tiered interventions beginning in school year 2013–2014. With USDE approval, a waiver will allow Texas to implement one integrated system built on the following three components that are designed to meet state and federal accountability requirements for all campuses and LEAs.

- The Performance Index Framework is designed to meet state statutory requirements using four performance indexes that determine the state accountability rating labels that are assigned to each LEA and campus.
- The System Safeguards are designed to meet federal requirements by requiring all campuses and districts to meet ambitious, but achievable, annual measurable objectives (AMOs) for each student group evaluated.
- The Texas Accountability Intervention System (TAIS) identifies campuses and LEAs for interventions, sanctions, and rewards based on the accountability rating labels assigned based on state requirements and the outcomes of the system safeguards.

Texas Accountability System for All Campuses and LEAs		
Performance Index Framework and Accountability Rating Labels (meets state legislative requirements)	System Safeguard Targets* (meets federal requirements)	Texas Accountability Intervention System (TAIS)
<i>Met Standard or Met Alternative Standard</i>	Met All System Safeguard Targets	No Interventions required
<i>Met Standard or Met Alternative Standard</i>	Missed One or More System Safeguard Targets	Interventions required
<i>Improvement Required</i>		

*** System Safeguard Targets are based on Performance, Participation, Federal Graduation Rates, and Excessive Use of Alternate Assessments (use of alternate assessments applies to districts only)**

A single system will foster the coordination of technical assistance and interventions to facilitate systemic change. One robust intervention system will allow for a focus on LEA involvement and sustainability for struggling schools through graduated levels of intervention. Furthermore, tiered interventions based on individual school needs that consider multiple variables will target and streamline interventions. Full implementation of the TAIS will allow LEAs to focus on creating accelerated, sustainable and systemic transformation in Texas schools to significantly increase student achievement. This conceptual approach moves beyond the classification of schools and requires LEAs to clearly articulate commitments and provide for necessary support to implement improvement strategies for low-performing schools. This provides LEAs with the opportunity to target the critical success factors of the Texas Framework for Continuous District and School Improvement described earlier.

Each district or school required to engage in the TAIS must collect and analyze data; conduct a needs assessment to determine factors contributing to low performance; develop an improvement plan addressing all areas not meeting the required performance standard; and monitor the implementation of the improvement plan. Schools must also establish a campus intervention team consisting of:

1. A Professional Service Provider (PSP), a TEA-approved member responsible for assuring implementation of all intervention requirements and reporting progress to the agency;
2. A District Coordinator of School Improvement (DCSI), an individual assigned by the district and approved by TEA, and who is a district-level employee in a leadership position in school improvement, curriculum and instruction, or another position with responsibility for student performance; the DCSI is responsible for ensuring district support for the academic achievement of each campus; and
3. The Campus Leadership Team (CLT), made up of key school leaders and membership determined by the principal and/or the district; the CLT is responsible for developing, implementing, and monitoring the improvement plan; monitoring student performance; and determining student interventions and support services.

Relying on decades of school improvement research to identify critical success factors that elevate expectations and lead schools on a path of continuous improvement, the TAIS is designed to specify the foundational systems, actions, and processes to transform Texas' schools. TAIS distinguishes levels of assistance for schools by incorporating the state and federal accountability labels into an aligned system of support (see *Attachment 7b* for an overview of the TAIS). Success will require purposeful actions and thoughtful planning by analyzing data, determining needs, developing focused plans for improvement, and monitoring the impact of those plans. The Texas School Support System will assist schools with these actions, placing them on a path toward attaining the outcomes central to the Framework for Continuous District and School Improvement. The following sections provide detailed descriptions of the state's efforts in aligning state and federal requirements and the proposed system for 2013 and beyond.

Texas Accountability System Safeguards

The Texas Accountability System Safeguards are designed to meet federal accountability requirements by requiring all campuses and districts to meet ambitious, but achievable, annual measurable objectives (AMOs) for each student group evaluated.

The table Provided in Section 2.B shows the disaggregated safeguard measures and federal targets or annual measurable objectives (AMOs). Performance rates, participation rates, graduation rates, and limits on use of STAAR Alternate and STAAR Modified are calculated to meet federal requirements and federal targets have been set for these indicators.

Results for federal accountability purposes will be reported for any cell that meets accountability minimum size criteria (i.e., All Students—no minimum size criteria; if denominator is less than 10, data are aggregated across two or three years; Student Groups—denominator greater than or equal to 25).

The Texas Accountability System Safeguards apply the same AMO targets to all districts and campuses, including charter districts and alternative education campuses. Alternative education campuses that primarily serve at-risk students have modified performance index targets for state accountability rating labels only, yet these campuses must meet the same performance, participation, and federal graduation rate targets that are required for all Texas school districts and campuses.

Federal Performance Rate Targets

Uniform federal performance rate targets are applied to seven student groups in the reading/English language arts and mathematics subject areas. The seven student groups evaluated are all students, African American, Hispanic, White, economically disadvantaged, students receiving special education services, and English language learners.

Federal Participation Rate Targets

Participation rates targets of 95% that are applied to the STAAR assessments are unchanged from the targets applied to the TAKS assessments in the federal accountability evaluations in prior years. Participation rate targets are applied to the seven student groups evaluated for performance in the reading/English language arts and mathematics subject areas.

Federal Graduation Rate Goals and Targets

Texas is required by state statute to use the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) dropout definition and No Child Left Behind (NCLB) graduation rate calculation. The four-year graduation rates follow a cohort of first-time ninth graders through their expected graduation three years later. The five-year rates follow the same cohort of students for one additional year.

Goal: The long term statewide goal for the four-year graduation rate is 90.0 percent. High schools and school districts that do not meet the 90.0 percent graduation rate goal must meet either an annual target or a growth target for the four-year graduation rate, or an annual target for the five-year graduation rate.

Four-Year Graduation Rate Annual Target: For 2013 accountability determinations, 78.0 percent of students graduate with a regular high school diploma in four years.

Four-Year Graduation Rate Growth Target: The growth target is a 10.0 percent decrease in difference between prior year graduation rate and the 90.0 percent goal.

Five-Year Graduation Rate Target: For 2013 accountability determinations, 83.0 percent of students graduate with a regular high school diploma in five years.

All districts and campuses that fail to meet graduation rate targets are subject to interventions. The interventions require districts and campuses to develop focused plans for improvement. If graduation rates do not improve and the district or campus fails to meet federal accountability targets in the next accountability cycle, the level of assistance and intervention increases.

Assistance and Intervention

TAIS was implemented following release of the 2012 state accountability ratings and 2012 federal adequate yearly progress designations. TAIS distinguishes levels of assistance for Title I and non-Title I campuses and districts by incorporating the state and federal accountability labels into an aligned system of support. Support Schools are assigned to one of two intervention stages, LEA guided interventions and Education Service Center (ESC) guided interventions. Focus Schools receive targeted and guided state and ESC interventions. Priority Schools receive intensive, targeted, and guided state and ESC interventions.

Districts and campuses are also subject to supports and interventions for failure to meet disaggregated system safeguard targets. As described earlier, the TAIS determines the level of intervention and support the campus or district receives, and is based on performance history as well as the current year state accountability rating and performance on the safeguard measures.

2.B Establishment of Ambitious but Achievable Annual Measurable Objectives

Texas proposes the following ambitious, yet achievable, AMOs for the state, LEAs, and each campus for the 2013 through the 2020 school years.

Accountability System Measures and Safeguard (AMO) Targets Proposed AMOs for 2013 - 2020 (Option B) Based on 2012 State Proficiency Rates at Phase in 1 Level II Standards								
	Year	All Students	African American	Hispanic	White	Econ. Disadv.	ELL	Special Educ.
Performance Rates								
Reading/ELA	2012 State Rates (Phase-in)	79%	71%	73%	88%	71%	50%	58%
	2012-2013	75%	75%	75%	75%	75%	75%	75%
	2013-2014	79%	79%	79%	79%	79%	79%	79%
	2014-2015	83%	83%	83%	83%	83%	83%	83%
	2015-2016	87%	87%	87%	87%	87%	87%	87%
	2016-2017	91%	91%	91%	91%	91%	91%	91%
	2017-2018	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%
	2018-2019	98%	98%	98%	98%	98%	98%	98%
	2019-2020	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Mathematics	2012 State Rates (Phase-in)	77%	65%	73%	86%	69%	58%	55%
	2012-2013	75%	75%	75%	75%	75%	75%	75%
	2013-2014	79%	79%	79%	79%	79%	79%	79%
	2014-2015	83%	83%	83%	83%	83%	83%	83%
	2015-2016	87%	87%	87%	87%	87%	87%	87%
	2016-2017	91%	91%	91%	91%	91%	91%	91%
	2017-2018	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%
	2018-2019	98%	98%	98%	98%	98%	98%	98%
	2019-2020	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Participation Rates								
Reading	2013 through 2020	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%
Mathematics	2013 through 2020	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%
Federal Grad. Rates								
4-year longitudinal rate	2012-2013	78.0%	78.0%	78.0%	78.0%	78.0%	78.0%	78.0%
	2013-2014	80.0%	80.0%	80.0%	80.0%	80.0%	80.0%	80.0%
	2014-2015	83.0%	83.0%	83.0%	83.0%	83.0%	83.0%	83.0%
5-year longitudinal rate	2012-2013	83.0%	83.0%	83.0%	83.0%	83.0%	83.0%	83.0%

Accountability System Measures and Safeguard (AMO) Targets Proposed AMOs for 2013 - 2020 (Option B) Based on 2012 State Proficiency Rates at Phase in 1 Level II Standards								
	2013-2014	85.0%	85.0%	85.0%	85.0%	85.0%	85.0%	85.0%
	2014-2015	88.0%	88.0%	88.0%	88.0%	88.0%	88.0%	88.0%
Federal Limits on Proficient Results on Alternative Assessments								
Modified	2012-2013 and 2013-2014	2% for the All Students Group						
Alternate	2013 through 2020	1% for the All Students Group						

Texas selects the Option B method to set rigorous AMOs in each content area for the state, LEAs, and schools for each student group. (See ESEA Flexibility Request for Window 3, page 13 at <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/guid/esea-flexibility/index.html>).

The following comparisons to the AYP requirements for Texas schools in prior years demonstrate the rigor of the proposed AMOs for 2013 and beyond.

- As described in Section 1.C, the emphasis on postsecondary readiness in the new STAAR assessment program, in comparison with the previous TAKS assessments, directly impacts the rigor of the performance indicator AMOs evaluated in the system safeguards.
- The starting point of the AMOs of 75% for every student group is aligned with 2011-12 statewide proficiency rates on average across all student groups in reading/ELA and mathematics. The AMOs then increase annually to the goal of 100% proficiency for all student groups by the 2019-20 school year. In 2002-03, the AMO starting point in the first year of the prior AYP system was 33% for mathematics and 47% for reading/English language arts. An AMO of 75% or higher was not required in the prior AYP system until the ninth year (2010-11) for reading/English language arts (80%) and mathematics (75%).
- The minimum size criteria of 25 will be applied to all racial/ethnic, students with disabilities, and English language learners student groups in the system safeguard system. These criteria are significantly more rigorous than the minimum size criteria in prior AYP system of 50, in which the student group was required to comprise at least 10 percent of all students up to 200 students; groups of 200 student or more met the criteria even if that group represents less than 10% of all students.

As shown in the table above, a uniform set of AMOs for each student group requires that the special education and the ELL student groups achieve significantly higher rates of progress in order to eliminate the achievement gap between these student groups and all other student groups by 2020.

In May 2010, the USDE approved the graduation rate goal and targets for Texas following the graduation rate peer review, as required by the October 2008 Title I regulations. The graduation

rate targets approved for Texas are increased over time to ensure that the Texas reaches the goal of 90%. The approved growth target approved by the USDE in May 2010 for the four-year graduation rate is a 10.0 percent decrease in the difference between the prior year rate and the 90% goal. All districts and campuses must meet the federal graduation rate AMO targets for either the four-year or five-year adjusted cohort graduation rates as part of the underlying System Safeguards. Failure to meet one or more of the AMO graduation rate targets triggers the Texas Accountability Intervention System (TAIS) which requires intervention activities.

2.C Reward Schools

This section presents the method the state will use to identify its highest-performing and high-progress schools as reward schools. The broadening of distinction designations compared to the state's previous accountability system is also noted.

To meet statutory requirements, the basic accountability ratings must identify satisfactory and unsatisfactory schools and LEAs and describe conditions that trigger state monitoring and interventions. In addition to the basic accountability ratings, LEAs and schools are eligible for distinction designation ratings for recognized or exemplary performance.

Texas has a long history of recognizing high performance by students in academics beyond those required to receive an acceptable accountability rating and this will continue with campus distinction designations for schools in the top 25% in annual improvement, schools in the top 25% of those demonstrating ability to close performance gaps, and schools that meet criteria for academic performance in English language arts, mathematics, science, or social studies. Academic achievement distinction designations in reading/English language arts and mathematics will be assigned to campuses in August 2013 concurrent with the release of the accountability ratings. These distinctions will include indicators based on performance at the Advanced standard on STAAR, attendance rates, completion of advanced/dual enrollment courses, and SAT and ACT performance and participation.

Under HB 3, schools will also be awarded distinctions in four new areas: fine arts, physical education, 21st Century Workforce Development programs, and second language acquisition programs. The criteria and standards for distinctions will depend on advice and guidance from committees comprised of individuals who practice as professionals in the content area relevant to the distinction designation; educators and other individuals with subject matter expertise in the content area; and community leaders, including leaders from the business community.

A Texas reward school will be a Title I school that receives distinction designations based on math and reading performance, and at the high school level, is also among the Title I schools with the highest graduation rates.

Reward high progress schools will be identified as Title I school in the top 25% in annual improvement and/or schools in the top 25% of those demonstrating ability to close performance gaps based on system safeguards. Any school that has significant achievement gaps across subgroups that are not closing will not be considered a reward school. Schools are identified for the top 25% in annual improvement by achieving the top quartile (top 25%) of performance on

the STAAR progress measure in relation to a comparison group of similar schools. Each school is compared to a unique group of 40 other public schools (from anywhere in the state) that closely matches that school on the following characteristics: campus type, campus size, percent economically disadvantaged students, mobility rates (based on cumulative attendance), and percent of English language learners. Schools that achieve the top 25% in annual improvement have outperformed their peers in terms of growth in student achievement from the prior school year.

Additional Information on calculating the progress measure:

Step 1. Determine if the student should receive a STAAR progress measure.

In order to receive a progress measure, a student must meet **ALL** of the following criteria within the same content area (reading, mathematics, or writing):

- Have a valid score from the prior year and the current year
- Have tested in successive grade levels or end of course (EOC) tests in the prior year and the current year. Students who took the same grade-level or EOC test in the prior year and the current year will not receive a progress measure. Students who skipped a grade level between the prior year and the current year, with the exception of grade 7 mathematics to Algebra I, will not receive a progress measure.
- Have taken the same version or type of test in the prior year and the current year (i.e., STAAR, STAAR Modified, or STAAR Alternate)
- Have taken tests in the same language in the prior year and the current year (i.e., English or Spanish)

Note that students identified as limited English proficient (LEP) and tested in Spanish language test versions must also meet the criteria above. LEP students tested in English language test versions will not receive a STAAR progress measure.

If a student does not meet one or more of these criteria, the student will not receive a progress measure. Some students may meet the criteria and receive a progress measure for one content area but not another.

The following steps apply for students who took STAAR tests. Additional documentation for STAAR Modified and STAAR Alternate progress measures will be posted in fall 2013.

Step 2. Compile the needed information to compute a STAAR progress measure.

In order to calculate the progress measure, the following student information is needed:

- Test information from the current year, including
 - Grade level
 - Content area
 - Test language (English or Spanish)
 - Scale score
 - Raw score

- Performance level (Level I, Level II, or Level III) based on the performance standards in place in the current year (phase-in 1, phase-in 2, or final recommended)
- Test information from the prior year, including
 - Grade level
 - Content area
 - Test language (English or Spanish)
 - Scale Score
 - Performance level (Level I, Level II, or Level III) based on the performance standards in place in the prior year (phase-in 1, phase-in 2, or final recommended)
- Gain score = Current-year scale score – Prior-year scale score

Step 3. Compute STAAR progress measure.

Use the “Guide to Computing STAAR Progress Measures” and Table 1 on the following pages to calculate a student’s STAAR progress measure.

These schools are encouraged to continue to participate in the improvement process and are given greater autonomy on how to implement the interventions based on their findings. Schools are recognized for their accomplishments and are invited to participate at the annual Advancing Improvements in Education (AIE) conference. AIE provides over 100 breakout sessions to over 2000 participants and includes national speakers on improvement and turnaround.

2.D Priority Schools

This section provides a description of the state’s methodology for identifying the lowest 5% of Title I schools as priority schools. Interventions and supports for identified schools are also described, as is a plan to identify effective district-based turnaround strategies, develop leadership capacity for these schools, and institutionalize such systems and supports.

Identification

A Texas priority school will be a school that, based on the most recent data available, has been identified as being among the lowest-performing in the state. The agency will generate a list that rank orders Title I schools in the state based on proficiency on the statewide reading and mathematics assessments, and graduation rates.

Texas priority schools will include Tier I or Tier II SIG schools, schools with graduation rates less than 60%, and the lowest achieving schools, ranked by the difference between school performance and proficiency targets. The total number of schools will equal 5% of Title I campuses in Texas.

Explanation of Data Run to Determine List of Priority Schools

1. Count the number of Title I schools in Texas
2. Multiply the number of Title I schools in Texas by 5%
3. The resulting value is the number of Title I schools in the state that are to be identified as Priority schools
4. Place the SIG schools on the Priority list
5. Subtract the number of SIG schools from the number of identified Priority schools
6. The resulting value represents the number of schools that should be identified as Priority schools based on the definition as it relates to graduation rate and achievement
7. For high schools, identify schools where the graduation rate is less than 60%
8. Subtract this count from the number of schools to be identified based on graduation and achievement
9. Rank the Title I schools based on their achievement results on reading and math system safeguards at the All Student level from lowest achievement to highest achievement

10. Identify the schools that will make up the remainder of the number of Priority schools

As the information needed to define this category will not be available until Summer 2013, a list of Priority Schools will be provided by the end of August 2013.

System Safeguards

Accountability System Safeguards include participation rates, graduation rates, and limits on the use of alternate assessments. These have been calculated to meet federal requirements and federal targets. Results will be reported for any subgroup that meets accountability minimum size criteria as described previously. Failure to meet the safeguard target for any reported cell must be addressed in the campus or district improvement plan. Campuses will be encouraged to work with the regional Education Service Center Turnaround Teams if they have areas of underperformance within the system safeguards. Based on the modeling assumptions described above, the estimated percentage of campuses that will not meet one or more of the federal accountability targets for performance rates, participation rates, or federal graduation rates more than 50% in 2013.

Interventions and Supports

Priority schools will be assigned a professional services provider (PSP), to engage in the continuous improvement process, and address and correct areas of campus low performance. Districts also must designate a district coordinator of school improvement (DCSI). The PSP will be selected, trained, monitored and evaluated each year. Both the PSP and the DCSI work together to support the campus through the improvement process and identified interventions. This improvement process includes addressing each of the Critical Success Factors described earlier in section 2.A.

In addition, state statute defines the duties of the PSP, including facilitating data analysis and development of a needs assessment; working on curriculum and instruction; addressing teacher quality; reviewing principal performance; and recommending which educators to retain (see full statutes TAC 97.1063 and 97.1064 in *Attachment 7d*). The PSP's role is to monitor progress and to ensure (1) an increase in quality instruction; (2) effective leadership and teaching; and (3) that student achievement and graduation rates for all students, including English learners, students with disabilities, and the lowest achieving students, improves.

Additional Information on Professional Service Providers

PSPs are experienced, successful educators with experience in campus or district turnaround who have qualified by (1) submitting a resume and applying for membership in the PSP Network, overseen by the TEA and the Texas Center for District and School Support (TCOSS), (2) undergoing a thorough screening, including reference checks and interviews, (3) being trained in the Texas Accountability Intervention System (TAIS), (4) receiving annual training at the PSP Network Conference around effective strategies to facilitate school change and improvement, including turnaround principles, development of leadership, school organization and design, rigorous instructional program that serves all learners, data-driven decision-making, culture and climate, facilitating parent and community involvement, and student supports and intervention strategies, (5) providing monthly progress reports (based on their role in each campus

improvement process) that are reviewed and discussed by TEA and TCDSS, (6) participating in ongoing professional development based on state, district, and campus need, (7) receiving an annual evaluation based on campus performance, principal and district feedback, and review of monthly progress reports.

PSPs that do not perform as expected on their annual evaluation or who do not adhere to the PSP Code of Ethics are replaced. PSPs are replaced if they have not made an impact after three years on a campus. Criteria for replacement also include failure to achieve Met Standard in the accountability index system and/or failure to achieve significant, sustained progress on safeguard system targets.

Additional external providers are reviewed and approved via the agency's Request for Qualification, Request for Proposal, and Request for Application process. Related reviews are currently in process for the Texas Educator Pipeline project and the District Turnaround Leadership Institute.

Attachments (previously submitted): 2012 PSP Summer Institute Agenda
PSP Evaluation Process
PSP Job Description

With respect to increasing the quality of instruction and improving outcomes for all students, the PSP monitors the progress of the campus and provides monthly reports. Additionally, the DCSI provides quarterly updates on the progress of identified campuses and works with the PSP and TEA staff to develop sustainability plans once the campus *meets safeguard targets*. As prescribed in current state statute (TAC 97.1063i), the PSP will continue to work with the campus until the campus satisfies all performance standards for a two-year period. Therefore, interventions will continue for at least three years. Additional information on specific interventions are included in the sections on Priority and Focus schools below.

Applying Principles of School Turnaround

In addition to the interventions and supports noted above, TEA is also in the process of posting a Request for Proposals to establish proof points for effective district-based turnaround strategies that can be replicated statewide. The purpose of the District Turnaround Leadership Initiative (DTLI) is to enable districts to own the processes and develop the leadership necessary to swiftly and systematically diagnose, intervene, and provide ongoing support to low-performing campuses, thus rapidly and permanently improving the performance of the students. The successful bidder, in cooperation with the USDE-funded Texas Comprehensive Center and institutions of higher education and/or educator preparation programs, will institutionalize systems, processes and procedures that enable districts to reform struggling campuses.

As referenced in the section on Texas Framework for Continuous and District and School Improvement, the Critical Success Factors build on the USDE turnaround principles. Priority schools will work with districts and state personnel to align their intervention efforts with these principles:

- providing strong leadership by: (1) reviewing the performance of the current principal; (2) either replacing the principal if such a change is necessary to ensure

- strong and effective leadership, or demonstrating to the SEA that the current principal has a track record in improving achievement and has the ability to lead the turnaround effort; and (3) providing the principal with operational flexibility in the areas of scheduling, staff, curriculum, and budget;
- ensuring that teachers are effective and able to improve instruction by: (1) reviewing the quality of all staff and retaining only those who are determined to be effective and have the ability to be successful in the turnaround effort; (2) preventing ineffective teachers from transferring to these schools; and (3) providing job-embedded, ongoing professional development informed by the teacher evaluation and support systems and tied to teacher and student needs;
 - redesigning the school day, week, or year to include additional time for student learning and teacher collaboration;
 - strengthening the school's instructional program based on student needs and ensuring that the instructional program is research-based, rigorous, and aligned with State academic content standards;
 - using data to inform instruction and for continuous improvement, including by providing time for collaboration on the use of data;
 - establishing a school environment that improves school safety and discipline and addressing other non-academic factors that impact student achievement, such as students' social, emotional, and health needs; and
 - providing ongoing mechanisms for family and community engagement.

Additional/Expanded Information on Interventions for Priority Schools

Priority and Focus schools are required to align their improvement process (data analysis, needs assessment, improvement plan, and monitoring) around the ESEA turnaround principles and the critical success factors (designed based on the School Improvement Grant (SIG) requirements and closely aligned to the turnaround principles).

Interventions for priority schools will align with all of the ESEA flexibility turnaround principles and CSFs. Each of the ESEA principles is listed below with their corresponding Critical Success Factor. Examples of interventions are provided in italics.

Tier I and Tier II SIG schools will be implementing federal priority requirements in 2013-14 as they have already begun the turnaround process. For the remaining priority schools, the timeline of implementation is as follows:

- providing strong leadership (**Critical Success Factor: Leadership Effectiveness**)
 - *2013-14: SIG Priority schools will have a campus intervention team (CIT) assigned that is composed of a professional service provider (PSP) and the district coordinator of school improvement (DCSI); all members of the CIT are approved by the Texas Education Agency (TEA, or the agency). PSPs are experienced, successful educators, with experience in school and district improvement and turnaround, who have been trained in the Texas Accountability Intervention System (TAIS) and received annual training at the PSP Network Conference around effective strategies to facilitate school*

change and improvement, including turnaround principles, development of leadership, school organization and design, rigorous instructional program that serves all learners, data-driven decision-making, culture and climate, facilitating parent and community involvement, and student supports and intervention strategies. As part of the application and interview process, PSPs are questioned around specific skill sets (including core content knowledge, leadership, working with students with disabilities, and providing bilingual and/or ELL instruction and support). Priority schools are provided a list of approved PSPs with skills that match the identified need of the campus. Priority schools may select from that list of PSPs.

- 2013-14 Non-SIG Priority schools will work with the TCDSS and regional ESCs and participate in the improvement cycle as part of the TAIS. Data Analysis, needs assessments, and improvement plans will be centered on identifying the model for turnaround that will have the biggest impact on student performance, planning for implementation of the model in the 2014-15 school year, and determining the ability of the current principal to serve as a turnaround leader. ESCs and TCDSS will provide guidance on how to identify traits of a turnaround leader, and resources to build turnaround educator pipelines so that campuses can replace leaders with turnaround principals as needed.
- Schools in priority School status are required to engage in reconstitution planning if they continue to underperform following the first year interventions. Principals who have been employed by the campus in that capacity may not be retained by the campus, unless the CIT determines the retention of the principal will be more beneficial to student achievement and campus stability. Principals that are retained at the campus will be provided training and support by the CIT, and will be further supported by the regional education service center (ESC). A list of Campus Intervention Team duties includes stipulations that the CIT will determine interventions and staff development for campus administrators.
- Principals of priority schools will participate in targeted training, including the Advancing Improvement in Education (AIE) conference.
- ensuring that teachers are effective and able to improve instruction (**Critical Success Factor: Teacher Quality**)
 - 2013-2014 SIG Schools CITs are required to conduct a needs assessment that includes assessment of staff quality and preparation for the assignment, determination of compliance with class size limitations, and the assessment of the quality, quantity, and appropriateness of instructional materials, including the availability of technology-based instructional materials. The CIT must make recommendations for professional development for instructional staff, and, as appropriate, determine interventions for specific teachers. The CIT also must examine teacher recruitment and retention strategies and incentives for highly

- qualified teachers. TEA, ESCs, and TCDSS staff will provide guidance and resources for non-SIG priority schools to complete the assessment of staff quality.
- 2013-14 SIG schools CIT members work with principals on implementation of effective teacher observation and feedback strategies. Such observations are targeted at teacher actions, student engagement, effective use of questioning, alignment with the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), and instructional rigor. The observation protocol results in immediate feedback to the teacher and, as appropriate, determination of ongoing and job embedded professional development. TEA, ESCs, and TCDSS staff will provide guidance and resources for non-SIG priority schools to complete the assessment of staff quality in 2013-14.
 - Interventions for teachers that address the needs of all students will include, as appropriate, training in: Response to Intervention (RtI) and/or tiered interventions, sheltered instruction, accommodated/modified instruction for students with learning differences, positive behavior interventions, data informed instruction, effective use of allocated learning time, extended learning opportunities, and instructional collaboration between/among general education and special program teachers.
 - Online professional development and collaboration via Project Share, and through the Texas English Language Learner Instructional Tool (TELLIT) coursework, sheltered instruction online training, and the ELL web portal.
 - Multiple online courses that emphasize RtI strategies. One example is the MSTAR Academy II training that emphasizes research-based Tier II strategies from the [IES Practice Guide for Assisting Struggling Students with Mathematics: Response to Intervention \(RtI\) for Elementary and Middle Schools](#) and engages participants in how to identify students needing Tier II support in mathematics and meet their instructional needs. Participants learn how to interpret results of the MSTAR Universal Screener; use the screener results and other forms of data to make instructional decisions; and provide practical strategies for implementing evidence-based interventions for students receiving Tier II mathematics support.(Additional examples available, if required).
- redesigning the school day, week, or year to include additional time for student learning and teacher collaboration (**Critical Success Factor: Increased Learning Time**)
 - 2013-2014 SIG schools: the CIT needs assessment and recommendations process requires the CIT to identify any needed changes in school procedures or operations, whether resources should be reallocated, and whether the campus should request waivers from state requirements and/or to fund extended year services for students who are unsuccessful on state assessment. ESCS and TCDSS

will provide resources and guidance on how non-SIG priority schools can begin to address increased learning time in 2013-2014 and fully implement in 2014-15.

- *Additionally, for Priority Schools required to reconstitute, the campus must implement campus redesign, approved by the commissioner of education, that: provides a rigorous and relevant academic program; provides personal attention and guidance; promotes high expectations for all students; and addresses comprehensive school-wide improvements that cover all aspects of a school's operations, including, but not limited to, curriculum and instruction changes, structural and managerial innovations, sustained professional development, financial commitment, and enhanced involvement of parents and the community.*
- *Resources and lessons learned from our participation in the SIG work will be utilized for future priority schools*
- strengthening the school's instructional program based on student needs and ensuring that the instructional program is research-based, rigorous, and aligned with State academic content standards (**Critical Success Factor: Use of Quality Data to Drive Instruction/Academic performance**)
 - *Campus improvement planning processes are organized around the turnaround principles and CSFs (including Academic Performance, Quality Data, Leadership Effectiveness, Learning Time, Family and Community Support, School Climate, Teacher Quality), and around a research-based systemic approach that focuses on Curriculum and Assessment, Instruction, Culture and Climate, Parent and Community Engagement, Adult Advocates, Academic Supports and Interventions, Behavior and Social Skills Development, and Personalized Environment. By organizing improvement planning around the CSFs and by focusing on improvement of major systems that impact teaching and learning, dropout rates, and graduation rates, the TAIS provides a framework for development of a strong instructional program that addresses student needs.*
 - *Curriculum and Instruction program improvement processes require the campus to assess rigor, relevance, and alignment to the TEKS (state academic content standards), and to address in the improvement plan the means by which these programs will be strengthened.*
 - *Campuses and LEAs in interventions will submit periodic reports on their progress toward full implementation of the targeted improvement plan. These progress reports will include data showing the impact of the plan initiatives and strategies, and the January progress report includes benchmark and/or CBA data for the first semester.(2013-2014 SIG priority schools; 2014-2015 non-SIG priority schools)*
- using data to inform instruction and for continuous improvement, including by providing time for collaboration on the use of data(**Critical Success Factor: Use of Quality Data to Drive Instruction/Academic performance**)

- *Each priority school will work with the through the improvement cycle that includes extensive data analysis. A data analysis guidance document and related training has been created and will be provided to each school and their DCSI and PSP.*
- *Two examples of ESC designed resources specifically focused on data analysis include the Formative Assessment Success Tracker (FAST) and the Transformational Teacher Cadre*
- establishing a school environment that improves school safety and discipline and addressing other non-academic factors that impact student achievement, such as students’ social, emotional, and health needs (**Critical Success Factor: School Climate**)
 - *Each priority school will work with the through the improvement cycle that includes extensive focus on factors that influence school environment.*
 - *Two examples of ESC-designed resources specifically focused on school environment include the Warming up the Classroom Climate and Culture & Climate Improvement Targets (C2IT)*
- providing ongoing mechanisms for family and community engagement (**Critical Success Factor: Family/Community Engagement**).
 - *Each priority school will work with the through the improvement cycle that includes extensive focus on factors that influence family and community engagement.*
 - *Two examples of ESC-designed resources specifically focused on family and community engagement include The Parent Connection-Go Social and Grown Locally: Parent Power Community Capacity*

As mentioned above, each priority campus has a campus intervention team. In addition, priority schools have a state support specialist who works with the district and campus staff. These support specialists facilitate conference calls that provide an opportunity for the CIT (including the DCSI and the PSP), the TCDSS, and the regional ESC to participate in a conversation around progress and next steps.

Attachment (previously submitted): TAIS and improvement process

Timeline for Implementation of Intervention Process for Priority Schools

The table below presents the implementation timeline for 2012–2013 identified priority schools.

Activity	Timeline
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Activity	Timeline
Accountability ratings released	August 8, 2013
Parent notification/public notice/hearing (as required)	August 15, 2013
District submits names of PSP and DCSI	September 9, 2013
Data analysis, needs assessment, improvement plan completed; improvement plan submitted for approval	October 31, 2013
PSP progress reports	Monthly
Quarterly review of improvement process progress	November 2013, February 2014, June 2014
Reconstitution Plan drafts submitted (as required)	October 2013 – January 2014
Final Reconstitution Plan approved (as required)	June 2014

In addition, the PSP and DCSI will determine the implementation timeline for specific activities for each individual campus based on the data analysis, needs assessment and improvement plan for each school.

All identified priority schools will participate in the TAIS intervention system and continuous improvement cycle. Implementation of all the turnaround principles will be targeted at a SIG schools during the 2013-2014 year, with all priority schools fully implementing in 2014-2015.

Exiting Priority Status

To exit priority status, a campus must make significant progress toward meeting AMOs for two consecutive years following interventions and no longer fit the criteria to be identified as a priority campus. Significant progress is defined as reducing the gap between campus performance and AMO by at least fifty percent. If a priority school **makes significant** progress toward meeting the AMOs for two consecutive years following intervention, the campus will implement improvement interventions based on the TAIS during the third year with reduced support from the TEA and/or the Texas Center for District & School Support (TCDSS), and increased support from the regional ESC.

Texas monitors the progress of priority and focus schools via monthly PSP, campus and district reports. Site visits to campuses provide additional information. Ongoing conversations are focused on impact of interventions and progress toward academic achievement. Formative reviews allow for mid-course adjustments as necessary.

Schools in priority and focus status are required to engage in reconstitution planning if they continue to miss the safeguards created for the federal system following a year of interventions. The reconstitution plan will include the required turnaround principles. Requirements of Texas Education Code (TEC) §39.107, Reconstitution, Repurposing, Alternative Management, and Closure stipulate the following: *Reconstitution requires the removal or reassignment of some or all campus administrative and/or instructional personnel, taking into consideration proactive measures the district or campus has taken regarding campus personnel; and the implementation of a campus redesign, approved by the commissioner of education.* Principals who have been employed by the campus in that capacity may not be retained by the campus, unless the CIT determines the retention of the principal will be more beneficial to student achievement and campus stability. Principals that are retained at the campus will be provided training and support

by the CIT, and will be further supported by the regional education service center (ESC). TEC §39.106, Campus Intervention Team Duties, includes stipulations that the CIT will determine interventions and staff development for campus administrators.

For Priority Schools that continue to fail to improve, if the commissioner determines that the campus is not fully implementing the updated targeted improvement plan or if the students enrolled at the campus fail to demonstrate substantial improvement in the areas targeted by the updated plan, the commissioner may order repurposing, alternative management, or closure of the campus.

Additionally, after implementation of the improvement plan in year three of priority status, the commissioner may order a hearing to be held before the commissioner or the commissioner's designee at which the president of the board of trustees, the superintendent, and campus principal must appear and explain the campus's low performance, lack of improvement, and plan's for improvement. Following the hearing the commissioner will issue directives to the campus regarding the actions the campus will be required to take, including continuation of interventions, planning for repurposing, alternative management, or closure, or integration of a school community partnership team in the intervention process. The commissioner may establish a school community partnership team composed of members of the campus-level planning and decision-making committee and additional community representatives, as determined appropriate by the commissioner.

All priority schools will participate in three years of interventions.

In addition to other interventions and sanctions, the commissioner may order a school district or campus to acquire professional services at the expense of the district or campus to address the applicable financial, assessment, data quality, program, performance, or governance deficiency.

Attachments(Previously submitted): Site Visit Report Template
Campus Improvement Planning Workbook

2.E Focus Schools

This section describes the state's methodology for identifying and providing intervention supports for focus schools.

Identification

Texas focus schools will be Title I schools that have the widest gaps in student performance between student groups. Schools will be ranked based on the largest gaps of performance between student groups and the AMO target of 75%. Ten percent of Title I schools, not otherwise identified as priority schools, will be identified as focus schools using this methodology.

Explanation of Data Run to Determine List of Focus Schools

1. Count the number of Title I schools in Texas
2. Multiply the number of Title I schools in Texas by 10%
3. The resulting value is the number of Title I schools in the state that are to be identified as Focus schools

4. Using achievement results across the federally required subject areas and student groups, calculate the gap between the student groups and the AMO target of 75%
5. Sum the differences and rank order the campuses
6. Remove any identified Priority schools
7. Identify the 10% Focus schools

Additional Information on Interventions for Focus schools

Focus schools will participate in the TAIS and improvement process, and implement interventions based on the Critical Success Factors (CSFs) and turnaround principles when applicable (based on data analysis and needs assessment).

Examples of possible interventions (based on the results of the improvement process cycle and the CSFs/turnaround principles) include:

- Improve Academic Performance
 - Transformational Teach Institute (TTI)
- Curriculum Audits Increase Leadership Effectiveness
 - Leaders' Portfolio
- Enlist, Educate, Empower, Evaluate (4E) Increase Teacher Quality
 - Peer Observation Data-Driven Dialogue (PODZ)
 - Teacher Quality Portfolio
- Products, on-line courses, websites, and assessments developed to identify, assess, and provide instruction to English Language Learners, underperforming students in core content areas, strategies to close the achievement gap, and to assist struggling students identified as underperforming through the Response to Intervention (RTI) process. For example, participation in the Elementary Students in Texas: Algebra Ready (ESTAR) Academy I examines the big ideas in the grades K-2 mathematics TEKS that prepare students for success in algebra. Participants engage in hands-on, student-centered activities and lessons designed to provide connections to and strengthen participants' knowledge of the elementary mathematics that is critical for success in algebra; and explore how to embed the [English Language Proficiency Standards \(ELPS\)](#) into instruction as well as how to differentiate instruction to align with the expectations of [Response to Intervention \(RtI\)](#).

As the information needed to define this category will not be available until Summer 2013, a list of Focus Schools will be included by the end of August 2013.

System Safeguards

Accountability System Safeguards include participation rates, graduation rates, and limits on the use of alternate assessments. These have been calculated to meet federal requirements and federal targets. Results will be reported for any subgroup that meets accountability minimum size criteria. Failure to meet the safeguard target for any reported subgroup must be addressed in the

campus or district improvement plan. Campuses will be encouraged to work with the regional Education Service Center Turnaround Teams if they *miss a system safeguard*. Based on the modeling assumptions described above, the estimated percentage of campuses that will not meet one or more of the federal accountability targets for performance rates, participation rates, or federal graduation rates is more than 50% in 2013.

Timeline for Implementation of Intervention Process for Focus Schools

The table below presents the implementation timeline for 2012–2013 identified focus schools.

Activity	Timeline
Accountability ratings released	August 8, 2013
Parent notification/public notice/hearing	August 15, 2013
District submits names of PSP and DCSI	September 9, 2013
Data analysis, needs assessment, improvement plan completed; improvement plan submitted for approval	October 31, 2013
PSP progress reports	Monthly

All identified focus schools will begin interventions aligned with the reason for identification in 2013-2014. At least one intervention impacting instruction must begin by the end of the first semester.

Exiting Focus Status

To exit focus status, schools will need to close achievement gaps between student groups by 50%.

To exit focus status, a campus must make significant progress toward closing achievement gaps of student groups, and no longer fit the criteria to be identified as a focus campus. Significant progress is defined as reducing the gap between student group performance and AMO by at least fifty percent.

If a focus school does makes significant progress toward meeting the AMOs for two consecutive years following intervention, the campus will implement improvement interventions based on the TAIS during the third year with reduced support from the TEA and/or the Texas Center for District & School Support (TCDSS), and increased support from the regional ESC.

Texas monitors the progress of priority and focus schools via monthly PSP, campus and district reports. Site visits to campuses provide additional information. Ongoing conversations are focused on impact of interventions and progress toward academic achievement. Formative reviews allow for mid-course adjustments as necessary.

All focus schools will participate in three years of interventions.

In addition to other interventions and sanctions, the commissioner may order a school district or campus to acquire professional services at the expense of the district or campus to address the applicable financial, assessment, data quality, program, performance, or governance deficiency.

2.F Provision of Incentives and Support for Other Title I Schools

As mentioned earlier, the campuses and districts included in Texas' differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system include all campuses and districts administered by the Texas Education Agency regardless of program or type of public school. Campuses will be encouraged to work with the regional Education Service Center Turnaround Teams.

As part of the state's evolving efforts to align the state and federal accountability systems, TEA established the Texas Center for District and School Support (TCDSS), a state-level entity that functions to coordinate, in conjunction with TEA, system-level leadership for school improvement efforts under both the federal and state systems. In collaboration with the TCDSS, TEA developed a research-based framework for continuous district and school improvement. The framework outlines a cohesive system of intervention and the implementation of policies and practices that establish the environment and support needed to effectively impact low-performing schools. Designed to aid in the development of both district and campus improvement planning, the framework provides a common language and process for addressing the school improvement challenge. It is designed to show the aligned leadership and systems of support at the state, regional, district, and campus levels that will build the capacity necessary to turn around low-performing schools in Texas. Service providers, working collaboratively with district and school leadership, help facilitate district and campus supports that are aligned to the framework. The overarching goal of the framework is a state of continuous improvement for campuses, districts and the state. The end goal of the system of support, reflected in the center of the illustration, is accelerated achievement, sustainability, system transformation, and continuous improvement. The framework's critical success factors capture seven areas to address in improvement efforts. Whether campus interventions are being provided through the district, local Education Service Center, or the Texas Center for District and School Support, sharing a common language around resources is essential. The seven Critical Success Factors (CSFs) provide a common language to anchor the work of school improvement across Texas and create opportunity to match resources to needs. These factors reference the USDE turnaround principles and will be part of the statewide intervention system. Schools connecting individual needs to the CSFs can easily choose from customized resources provided across the state.

With the increase in identified low-performing districts and schools, there is a need to mobilize the statewide support that is available to provide assistance to districts as they work with their campuses on improvement. TEA, the TCDSS, and the network of regional Education Service Centers are committed to working with districts to provide support to campuses. The Texas School Support System, depicted graphically to the right, categorizes schools according to identified needs across levels of increased assistance and intervention. *Best practice schools* have effective approaches to school success that can serve as resources to others across the state. *Continuous improvement schools* have systems and commitments that focus on their improvement efforts and they are continuously progressing toward better performance. *Support schools* have identified areas of needed improvement and are working with their district and regional education service center to positively impact the identified areas.

The structure of the Texas School Support System aligns state and federal accountability systems into a single system of support, and recognizes that sustainable transformation is the result of district commitments, district systems, and campus institutionalization of critical success factors.

Schools are required to engage in the Texas Accountability Intervention System due to identified low performance in the state and/or federal accountability systems.

2.G Provisions for Building SEA, LEA, and School Capacity to Improve Student Learning

As noted earlier, the Texas Center for District and School Support (TCDSS) has evolved to support LEAs and schools around school improvement and interventions. Initial coordination efforts to align systems focused on similar intervention requirements for schools that were identified as academically unacceptable in the state accountability system and were subject to the school improvement program under federal accountability requirements. Evolving from early work on the accountability system was the creation of the TAIS, which is built upon the best aspects of both the state and federal systems. TEA determined that the fundamental issues for underperforming campuses are the same in both systems, and students with academic needs are often the same regardless of the identification process. Therefore, the TAIS was designed to assist LEAs and schools to focus on engaging in the improvement process as opposed to completing and checking off state and federal requirements. The comprehensive Texas system continues to develop along with ongoing investments in improving the initial system. Along these lines, partnerships have been built between TEA, ESCs, Texas LEAs and schools that have strengthened the accountability and improvement processes.

The TAIS provides a variety of connected supports, opportunities, and incentives to monitor and adapt interventions to engage districts and campuses in the improvement process. The campus intervention team will ensure timely and comprehensive monitoring and technical assistance for the implementation of interventions. Staff at TEA, the TCDSS, and the network of regional Education Service Centers will provide assistance to the campus interventions teams and assess progress on leading indicators and student outcomes at identified schools and adapt services and support to better meet specific campus- and district-level needs.

Under NCLB, many LEAs were required to reserve 20 percent of the districts' Title I allotments to implement choice and/or Supplemental Educational Services (SES). With approved waivers, funds that the LEA previously reserved to meet requirements of ESEA section 1116(b)(10) will be used to support the implementation of interventions in an LEA's Focus Schools or Priority Schools in accordance with allowable use of Title I funds. Once the LEA demonstrates that sufficient resources are available to support interventions in its Priority and Focus schools, funds may be used to support instructional programs at the district-level or by providing Title I funds in school allocations under ESEA section 1113(c). An LEA may also reserve funds to support the implementation of interventions in an LEA's Focus Schools or Priority Schools in accordance with allowable use of Title I funds. Although, the SEA will not require LEAs to use the funds in a specific way, all decisions must be made based on an LEA's careful analysis of local capacity and based on a comprehensive needs assessment. The LEA must demonstrate in its Title I Application that resources have been allocated to its Priority and Focus schools sufficient to support the interventions described.

Additional Information on Building SEA, LEA, and School Capacity to Improve Student Learning:

Interventions for Local Education Agencies

LEAs identified for interventions due to the systems safeguards must, with the assistance of the ESC turnaround team, engage in the district-level TAIS process, which also relies on data analysis, needs assessment, improvement planning, and monitoring of progress under the plan. The District Intervention Team is responsible for engagement in the TAIS; the Intervention Team must include representative professional staff, including, if practicable, at least one representative with the primary responsibility for educating students with disabilities, parents of students enrolled in the district, business representatives, and community members. The board, or the board's designee, will periodically meet with the district-level committee to review the district-level committee's deliberations. The TEA and/or TCDSS will review all submissions, including the improvement plan and monitoring documentation.

LEAs that continue to be identified as missing system safeguards after engagement in interventions for one year are subject to requirements of TEC §39.102, which offers the commissioner the option of invoking one or more of the following sanctions:

- (1) issue public notice of the deficiency to the board of trustees;*
- (2) order a hearing conducted by the board of trustees of the district for the purpose of notifying the public of the insufficient performance, the improvements in performance expected by the agency, and the interventions and sanctions that may be imposed under this section if the performance does not improve;*
- (3) order the preparation of a student achievement improvement plan that addresses each student achievement indicator under Section 39.053(c) for which the district's performance is insufficient, the submission of the plan to the commissioner for approval, and implementation of the plan;*
- (4) order a hearing to be held before the commissioner or the commissioner's designee at which the president of the board of trustees of the district and the superintendent shall appear and explain the district's low performance, lack of improvement, and plans for improvement;*
- (5) arrange an on-site investigation of the district;*
- (6) appoint an agency monitor to participate in and report to the agency on the activities of the board of trustees or the superintendent;*
- (7) appoint a conservator to oversee the operations of the district;*
- (8) appoint a management team to direct the operations of the district in areas of insufficient performance or require the district to obtain certain services under a contract with another person.*

Attachment (provided in initial submission): District TAIS Workbook

The campuses and districts included in Texas' differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system include all campuses and districts administered by the Texas Education Agency regardless of program or type of public school.

Building Capacity (General)

TEA and the TCDSS collaborate regularly including monthly group meetings and weekly project-based meetings. The TCDSS facilitates meetings for the ESC Turnaround Teams on a regular basis. TEA, TCDSS, and ESCs collaborate on the selection of PSPs, the PSP Summer

Training, trainings for LEAs and campuses on the TAIS process, presentations at the Advancing Improvement in Education conference and on the site-visits conducted on campuses. In addition, regular monitoring conversations with LEAs and campuses include TEA, TCDSS, the ESC regional representative, the PSP, and the DCSI. The Intervention Stage and Activity Manager (ISAM) online system is accessible by TEA, TCDSS, ESCs, LEAs, campuses, DCSIs and PSPs and provides a portal for monthly reports, improvement plans, and correspondence. It is searchable by LEA and campus.

Texas works closely with the Texas Comprehensive Center, the Edvance Center of State Productivity, and other entities to stay current on turnaround research and practices. Previous collaborators and/or trainers have included: Public Impact, Sam Redding/CII, Lauren Rhim, University of Virginia School Turnaround Program, Edvance, and Mass Insight. In addition, USDE conferences and trainings are used to develop capacity at the state-level and to network and learn from other states.

Attachments (provided in earlier submissions): TAIS
 Campus Intervention Planning (draft)
 Sample DSS Agenda

LEA Accountability

LEAs and schools are held accountable for improving school and student performance and their achievements are reviewed via monthly campus, district, and PSP reports (based on the turnaround principles and CSFs).

The TAIS was designed with a LEA focus and district capacity is addressed via specific trainings for DCSIs and LEA staff. LEA-focused meetings have included the District Sustainability Summit, and the District Institute-Rethinking Central Office. Districts will be held accountable for student achievement and interventions will be based on specific district areas of need. TEA, TCDSS, and ESCs will work regionally to provide professional learning and content area support. District Improvement Plans will be required to include identified areas of need and will be part of the ongoing monitoring of interventions at the district and campus level. If goals are not met within a two year period, the district policies and procedures will be reviewed and specific districts will be identified to receive a district level on-site review based on achievement data.

Additionally, as previously described, to build LEA capacity the commissioner may: order a hearing to be held before the commissioner or the commissioner's designee at which the president of the board of trustees of the district and the superintendent shall appear and explain the district's low performance, lack of improvement, and plans for improvement; arrange an on-site investigation of the district; appoint an agency monitor to participate in and report to the agency on the activities of the board of trustees or the superintendent; appoint a conservator to oversee the operations of the district; appoint a management team to direct the operations of the district in areas of insufficient performance; or require the district to acquire professional services under a contract with qualified another person or entity.

The DCSI will work in collaboration with TEA , TCDSS, and ESC staff to implement the TAIS.

Principle 3: Supporting Effective Instruction and Leadership

3.A Develop and Adopt Guidelines for Local Teacher and Principal Evaluation and Support Systems

This section provides a description of the state’s guidelines for local teacher and principal evaluation and support systems. Beginning with information regarding the current system, the section describes progress the state has made toward developing and piloting new appraisal systems focused on improving practice and raising student achievement, as well as on the state’s efforts to hold educator preparation programs accountable for the quality of their graduates.

3.A.i. Teacher Evaluation and Support Systems

The Texas approved instrument for evaluating teachers, the Professional Development and Appraisal System (PDAS), is currently used by 86 percent of LEAs in the state and has been in place since 1997. As research has routinely emphasized, the number one in-school factor for increasing student achievement is the effectiveness of the teacher, and since 2009 Texas has made significant strides to improve both the quality of its educator preparation programs and the quality of individual teacher evaluations so that teachers and administrators have more meaningful feedback on student learning and growth. In acknowledging the vital roles teachers play in student achievement, TEA is currently revising the State’s approved instrument for evaluating teachers.

During this revision process, TEA is committed to developing a system that will be used for continual improvement of instruction by teachers and principals. This holistic system will include multiple measures of teacher performance that will be developed, piloted, refined and implemented statewide over the next three school years. Texas is committed that the assurances and descriptions highlighted below will be included in the final system.

- Use of system for continual improvement, providing timely and useful feedback and to inform personnel decisions. The basis for these assurances will be focused on HB 2012 (83rd Regular Legislative Session) and build off of current language in Texas Education Code 21.352 (c) and Texas Administrative Code Chapter 150.1004. Language contained in all of these sections focuses on the need for more frequent and timely observations and walk-throughs for all teachers, especially for new, inexperienced teachers. Additionally, it directs districts to provide the results of the evaluation in a timely manner to ensure that it is used as a developmental tool by the teacher to improve his/her overall performance.
- TEA will align professional development tools and resources to specific domains and competencies in the evaluation system to encourage a continual growth cycle for all

teachers. Built into the evaluation system will be a teacher self-assessment tool that will allow for all individual educators, in consultation with their campus leadership team or principal to identify key areas for improvement and track his/her growth towards those goals.

- The teacher and principal evaluation will provide meaningful differentiation on performance using at least three performance levels such as measures of teaching practice, professional responsibilities and including student achievement growth as a significant measure. Current commissioner rule related to teacher appraisal outlines eight domains for the teacher appraisal system along with the four performance levels to be used for each domain. Over the course of the next development phase, the number of domains that are included in the teacher appraisal system may change; TEA, however, is committed to maintaining the four performance levels to rate teachers in each domain.
- Current commissioner rule requires the use of four performance levels on the summative evaluation for all teachers and principals: 1) exceeds expectations, 2) proficient, 3) below expectations, and 4) unsatisfactory. We intend to continue using these performance levels in the updated evaluation system. Current rules also outline specific requirements to districts that directs teachers and principals to receive a hardcopy of their summative evaluation within 10 days of the final appraisal.
- The teacher and principal evaluation systems will use valid measures in determining performance levels. TEA views student learning and professional practice as the cornerstones for any appraisal system and is currently developing and piloting various tools (including value-added measures, new observation rubrics, and campus climate surveys) to accurately measure the performance of teachers and principals.

Our timeline includes the development of these tools during the 2013-2014 school year and piloting in 40 school districts in the 2014-2015 school year.

Following the final year of piloting, TEA will undertake the task of updating rules to reflect a new, holistic system that includes all of the components with statewide rollout of the new evaluation system to begin in the 2015-2016 school year.

We expect to have substantial public feedback throughout this process both through our steering committees and the public comment periods that are incorporated into both the State Board for Educator Certification rules and commissioner rules.

- Through our stakeholder input process over the next year TEA will determine the most appropriate measures for utilizing student growth as a significant measure in evaluations. Over the past three years, the Agency has been working with outside contractors, most recently American Institutes for Research (AIR) to develop both a campus-wide and individual teacher value-add metric. In September 2013, TEA will share initial results of the value-add metric with campus leaders and teachers of the initial pilot schools. We will continue to refine the model and gauge the appropriateness of its use in the evaluation system. Additionally, we will begin exploring ways to provide districts with

resources and guidelines for developing locally-based measures of student growth to be used at the district and campus levels.

- We believe that any measure must accurately measure the change in student achievement for an individual student between two or more points in time. Possible measures for this include the use of performance on state assessments at the campus and individual teacher level, team or individual student-learning objectives, and performance on district-based assessments.
- TEA will update rules related to continuing professional education requirements that reflect the need to tie professional development obtained by educators with results from their evaluations. Finally, the Agency will utilize the reporting infrastructure already in place and reinstitute district-level data collections and monitoring on the usage and results of teacher evaluations, including information on if a district utilizes the five-year waiver provision and the percentage of teachers that are evaluated each year. Pursuant to the ESEA flexibility waiver requirements districts shall perform annual or more frequent evaluations with no more than three years in between.
- The Agency will implement random spot checking of LEAs to monitor compliance coupled with providing technical assistance to ensure they receive the necessary support needed. As a result of the spot monitoring, if the Agency finds a district is not complying with state law by implementing the state model or a system that has the same components as the state model, the Agency will direct districts to comply with state law and will take enforcement action to ensure implementation is consistent with the guidelines.

Stakeholder Involvement

During the Fall of 2011, the TEA created the Teacher Effectiveness Workgroup, comprised of members from the agency's Educator Initiatives department, the USDE-funded Texas Comprehensive Center, Educate Texas (a public-private education initiative of the Communities Foundation of Texas), and the Region XIII Education Service Center. This workgroup examined literature on promising and state practices on evaluating educator effectiveness, including different appraisal models from across the nation, to help inform the development of a new Texas system. As a key resource, the workgroup reviewed and used the National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality's publication, *A Practical Guide to Designing Comprehensive Teacher Evaluation Systems: A Tool to Assist in the Development of Teacher Evaluation Systems*.

Additionally, from December 2011 to December 2012, TEA participated in the Texas Teaching Commission. This group was convened by a statewide nonprofit, Educate Texas, and was comprised of 17 stakeholders representing teachers, administrators, business and community members**. Over the course of 13 face-to-face meetings and multiple conference calls, this group reviewed research, heard expert testimony, and developed consensus on a broad number of issues related to preparation, induction, evaluation, professional development, and compensation for teachers. The culmination of this work resulted in the development of 63 policy recommendations related to the continuum of teacher quality in Texas. Of those

recommendations, 18 were specifically directed at TEA and the State Board for Educator certification. Since the release of the report in December 2012, TEA and SBEC have undertaken the steps to adopt many of the recommendations, including reexamining current efforts underway related to development of value-added modeling and new observations rubrics.

With the Texas Teaching Commission's foundational recommendations identified, TEA will now engage in the process of bringing together multiple steering committees, primarily comprised of teachers and principals, to develop robust standards and tools for the evaluation system. These groups will also provide input on how the overall system and guidelines will be developed.

Following the work of the Teaching Commission, TEA is in the process of creating a Teacher Standards Steering Committee that will be hosted and facilitated by the Texas Comprehensive Center at SEDL. This group will be composed of approximately 25 teachers and principals who represent the geographic, ethnic, and teaching diversity in the state. We will take additional steps to ensure that there is adequate representation from special education, English language learners, and early childhood educators. An initial meeting will occur in August 2013 with quarterly face-to-face meetings and regular conference calls over the next two years to develop new teaching standards, observation rubric, and provide input on development of the overall evaluation system.

The work of this steering committee will be the basis for revised commissioner rules on the state-approved appraisal system. That process includes an extensive public comment period that will seek input from educators and the general public from across the state.

Components of New State Approved Evaluation System

Classroom Observations and Feedback

The initial pilot incorporates two nationally recognized observation rubrics by Teachscape and the National Institute for Excellence in Teaching. These two frameworks offer more robust and timely feedback to teachers on their practice through more frequent, targeted observations and timely input of results. The initial pilot of these two rubrics in the 2012–2013 school year focuses on 100 campuses from across the state; the phase two pilot will continue in the 2013–2014 school year.

Piloting more robust and meaningful teacher evaluation systems in these campuses will inform decisions on the development and execution of the statewide implementation in the 2015–2016 school year.

Student Growth and Learning

The social, emotional, and academic growth of students is the purpose of any educational system. TEA is committed to finding a valid and reliable way for measuring the growth of our students over the course of a school year and providing that information to teachers and principals. Over the past three years, the Agency has been working with outside contractors (most recently AIR) to develop both a campus-wide and individual teacher value-add metric. In September 2013, TEA will share initial results of the value-add metric with campus leaders and teachers of the initial pilot schools. We will continue to refine the model and gauge the appropriateness of its

use in the evaluation system. Additionally, we will begin exploring ways to provide districts with resources and guidelines for developing locally-based measures of student growth to be used at the district and campus levels.

Professional Engagement and Growth

Upon completion of the new Texas Teaching Standards, TEA will undertake the task of developing new self-evaluation tools to support teachers’ personal growth and learning. Core components of these tools will include all facets of a teacher’s participation in the school environments, such as collaboration, establishing individual and team goals, and professional responsibilities. These tools will be piloted simultaneously with the observation rubric in the 40 pilot districts during the 2014-2015 school year.

Timeline for Development

Key Milestone or Activity	Detailed Timeline	Party or Parties Responsible
Meet with Education Service Center Appraisal Advisory ¹ group to gather input on strengths and weaknesses of current system—begin development of new training materials for teacher appraisal system	Meet quarterly beginning in May 2013	TEA
Initial meeting of Texas Teaching Standards Steering Committee – create rough draft of standards	August 2013	TEA Texas Comprehensive Center
2nd meeting of Texas Teaching Standards Steering Committee – approve draft standards	September 2013	TEA Texas Comprehensive Center
Review of draft standards by Center for Great Teachers and Leaders	October 2013	Texas Comprehensive Center
Release draft standards for public comment	December 2013	TEA
3 rd meeting of Texas Teaching Standards Steering Committee to review revision of standards based on public comment	January 2014	TEA Texas Comprehensive Center

¹ TEA currently works with one lead Education Service Center and an existing Education Service Center Professional Development Appraisal System Advisory Group (ESC PDAS Advisory Group) to standardize training, introduce and refine training materials, and refine teacher evaluation in districts that use PDAS.

Key Milestone or Activity	Detailed Timeline	Party or Parties Responsible
Finalize teaching standards	February 2014	TEA
4 th meeting of Texas Teaching Standards Steering Committee to develop observation rubric that is aligned with new teaching standards	February 2014	TEA Texas Comprehensive Center
Select 40 pilot districts for new observation tool	March 2014	TEA Education Service Centers
Teacher guidelines will be finalized and submitted to ED	May 2014	TEA
Finalize draft observation rubric for pilot year	May 2014	TEA Texas Comprehensive Center
TEA submits copies of the teacher standards, draft observation instruments and training materials to ED	May 2014	TEA
Train pilot districts on new rubric and protocols	Summer 2014	TEA Education Service Centers
Pilot new rubrics with on-going monitoring, support, and professional development for pilot districts	2014-2015 School Year	TEA Education Service Centers
Update commissioner rules related to teacher appraisals based on results from the pilot	2014-2015 School Year	TEA
Begin statewide rollout of training on new evaluation system	Summer 2015	TEA Education Service Centers/Contract with outside entity with proven results in successful statewide implementation
Begin rollout of new evaluation system statewide	2015-2016 School Year	TEA Education Service Centers/Contract with outside entity with proven results in successful statewide implementation
Provide on-going monitoring, support, and professional	Quarterly basis beginning fall 2015	TEA Education Service

Key Milestone or Activity	Detailed Timeline	Party or Parties Responsible
development for pilot districts		Centers

Interstate Collaboration

TEA is working with the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) regarding their State Collaborative on Educator Effectiveness (SCEE). Given the work the Agency is undertaking, this collaborative is viewed as an important opportunity to engage other state leaders and take the lessons learned from their work building state systems for evaluating and supporting all teachers.

3.A.ii. Principal Evaluation and Support Systems

Texas recognizes that school leadership is critical to the success of recruiting and retaining top teachers and fostering an environment where student learning flourishes. To that end, SB 1383 (82nd Regular Legislative Session) was codified in Section 21.3541 of the Texas Education Code. This statute directs TEA to accomplish the following initiatives:

- establish and administer a comprehensive appraisal and professional development system for public school principals;
- establish a consortium of nationally recognized experts on educational leadership and policy to assist in developing the system and make recommendations about the training, appraisal, professional development, and compensation of principals; and
- establish school leadership standards and a set of indicators of successful school leadership to align with such training, appraisal, and professional development.

TEA expects to complete the new school-leadership standards by the end of 2013 with plans to begin the development and pilot of the principal evaluation system during the 2014-2015 school year. TEA commits that the new system will:

- be used for continual improvement of instruction;
- meaningfully differentiate performance using at least three performance levels;
- use multiple valid measures in determining performance levels, including as a significant factor data on student growth for all students, and other measures of professional practice;
- evaluate principals on a regular basis;
- provide clear, timely, and useful feedback, including feedback that identifies needs and guides professional development; and
- will be used to inform personnel decisions.

Overview of work to date:

February 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TEA Commissioner invited 12 key stakeholders to become members of the Principal Advisory Committee (Committee included 15 stakeholders, 3 TEA partners, and 2 TEA staff)
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March 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● First meeting of the Principal Advisory Committee. The committee was provided pre-reading information that included the following documents: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Overview of the Collaborative Project between TEA and Alliance to Reform Education Leadership (AREL) ○ Gateways to the Principalship: State Power to Improve the Quality of School Leaders ○ A New Approach to Principal Preparation: Innovative Programs Share Their Practices and Lessons Learned ○ AREL Framework ● Outcomes of this meeting included the opportunity for members to review: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The rationale for the proposed changes in state policy ○ The current state laws and policies governing the principal ○ Best practices in principal preparation and state policies regulating them ○ The proposed plan for addressing changes in policy and practice ○ Their role and expectations for guiding implementation of the plan ● General project introduction and overview, with validation from committee members for the case for change and the strategies for implementing the changes. The advisory group provided feedback for amendments to the design of the collaborative project
April 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Second meeting of the Principal Advisory Committee. The outcomes for this meeting included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Validation of the recommendations from the first meeting and review changes planned as a result of the input provided ○ Presentations from three external experts provided by AREL: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Erika Hunt—Center for the Study of Education Policy at Illinois State University—facilitated the state of Illinois’ large-scale policy reform that revised standards for principal certification and preparation ○ Steve Tozer--Center for Urban Education Leadership at University of Illinois Chicago—advised the Illinois state change process and directs a preparation program which results in highly effective principals ○ Ben Fenton—Chief Strategy Officer and Co-Founder of New Leaders—works with other states involved in large-scale policy change ● Committee produced the first draft of a set of competencies that principals should acquire in order to be effective leaders and improve student achievement
June 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Meeting of Educator Preparation Programs (EPPs) that are currently approved to grant principal certification in Texas ● The outcomes for this meeting included the opportunity for members to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Understand the goals and scope of the project to review, revise, and make internally consistent all of the policies and procedures that affect principal standards for preparation, certification, appraisal and on-going professional development and to reflect on best practices that will result in highly effective school principals

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Review and comment on core documents and research that support the process ○ Review and respond to the proposed principal framework defining the competencies of principals that should drive all other policies and procedures ● Members demonstrated support for the project goals and provided feedback on each stated objective. The feedback included the need for alignment of state standards for principal certification with assessment of aspiring principals and standards for principal preparation programs. Additionally, support for an evaluation system for principals that provides support for professional development was expressed.
June 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Third meeting of the Principal Advisory Committee. The outcome of this meeting included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Reaching consensus on the concepts for the competency framework and next steps in the process ○ Reaching consensus on the concepts for the preparation program standards and next steps in the process ○ Reviewing the communication plan and website content ● Committee produced first draft of desired characteristics of high-quality principal preparation programs. This initial draft included characteristics in four major areas: (1) Vision/Mission; (2) Culture of High Expectations; (3) Leadership; (4) Operations/System Development
June 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Focus groups at state principal conferences were held: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ June 13, 2012 – Texas Association of Secondary School Principals ○ June 14, 2012 – Texas Association of Elementary School Principals ○ June 26, 2012 – Texas Association of School Administrators ● These groups comprised of elementary, secondary principals and superintendents provided input in the following areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The skills, knowledge, and dispositions required of effective principals ○ The principal's role in relationship to student achievement ○ The preparation and development of effective principals ● Focus group data will inform revisions of competencies and program characteristics and development of next steps
September 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Fourth meeting of the Principal Advisory Committee ● Final review of committee recommendations for principal standards and key characteristics of effective principal preparation programs. The recommendations were based on the four major areas: (1) Vision/Mission; (2) Culture of High Expectations; (3) Leadership; (4) Operations/System Development. These formed the basis of the work accomplished by a writing team of national experts.
Winter 2012-2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Writing team of national experts requested from AREL to develop an initial draft of proposed standards for principals
Spring 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Draft standards reviews and approved by Steering Committee members

August 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft standards presented to State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) for initial review
August 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public comment period on draft standards
September 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TEA staff considers and incorporates public comments into final standards document
October 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SBEC reviews and votes on final standards
December 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State Board of Education takes final action on standards pending SBEC approval
January 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selection process to choose an outside entity to assist in developing statewide principal evaluation system
February-April 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold multiple stakeholder meetings to inform work on new principal evaluation system. Meetings will ensure the inclusion of teachers and principals especially those working in low-income areas and with priority student populations such as English Language Learners and Students with Disabilities
March 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select pilot districts
May 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principal guidelines will be finalized and submitted to ED
May 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalize development of pilot evaluation tool and adopt guidelines for key components of new evaluation system.
June 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TEA submits copies of the principals standards, evaluation guidance and training materials to ED
Summer 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Train pilot districts
2014-2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pilot new evaluation in 40 districts
Spring 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin statewide rollout of training on new evaluation system
2015-2106	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin rollout of new evaluation system statewide
Quarterly basis beginning fall 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide on-going monitoring, support, and professional development for pilot districts
July 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TEA submits copies of the teacher standards, draft observation instruments and training materials to ED

Educator Preparation Program Accountability

In 2009, the 81st Texas Legislature passed Senate Bill 174, which amended sections of the Texas Education Code related to accountability for educator preparation programs. The purpose of the accountability system for educator preparation is to assure that each EPP is held accountable for the effectiveness of graduates from their program. Moving forward, the accreditation status of an EPP will be determined based on the following performance standards:

- The passing rate on certification examinations taken by EPP candidates
- The results of beginning teacher appraisals by principals
- The improvement in student achievement of students taught by a beginning teacher for the first three years following certification
- The frequency, duration, and quality of field supervision of beginning teachers

Above and beyond basing accreditation on these performance standards, TEA plans to provide data to educator preparation programs that will help identify areas that will increase the effectiveness of their programs. Ultimately, TEA plans to see an increase in the quality of educator preparation based on multiple measures of accountability that will lead to increased student achievement in Texas, including ensuring that EPP instruction is aligned with the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) and the Texas College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS).

Overview of Legislation

- Went into effect June 19, 2009 (TEC 21.045)
- SBEC approved rules on February 5, 2010
- Accountability system comprised of four standards
 - Standard 1: Pass rates on certification exams
 - Standard 2: Principal appraisal of beginning teachers
 - Standard 3: Beginning teacher's impact on student achievement
 - Standard 4: Support to beginning teachers

3.A.iii. SEA Assurance

The TEA assures the US Department of Education that it will submit to the Department a copy of the teacher and principal guidelines and related materials as they are developed by May 2014.

3. B Ensure LEAs Implement Teacher and Principal Evaluation and Support Systems

This section addresses the state's process for ensuring that each LEA develops, adopts, pilots, and implements evaluation and supports systems consistent with the state's guidelines yielding high-quality local teacher and principal evaluation systems.

Teacher Evaluation Implementation

Current Texas Education Code [TEC 21.352] requires LEAs to use the state-developed evaluation system *or* a locally developed system that contains the same components as the state system. As mentioned earlier, 86 percent of school districts in the state presently use PDAS, Texas's approved instrument for teacher evaluation, while new state law requires that districts conduct frequent and regular observations of all teachers (HB 2012, 83rd Regular Legislative Session). At the core, Texas believes in the ability of local districts to implement comprehensive evaluation systems that work best in their communities. TEA believes that most of our more than 1000 independent school districts have used the state-approved appraisal system due to the quality of tools and training provided by the Agency and education service centers. Additionally, districts have embraced the system because of the collaborative nature of the rollout as opposed to implementing a top-down approach.

Due to the cost-effectiveness of using the state system, desire from districts for a better measure of teacher effectiveness, and historical precedent, TEA anticipates that most districts will want to

use the newly approved teacher evaluation standards, observation instruments, self-assessments, student growth measures and related tools and training. Although Texas has not had a standardized principal evaluation system, TEA anticipates most districts will also use that tool as we plan to rollout both systems simultaneously beginning in the 2015 school year.

TEA currently works with one lead Education Service Center (ESC 13) and an existing Education Service Center Professional Development Appraisal System Advisory Group (ESC PDAS Advisory Group) to standardize training, introduce and refine training materials, and refine teacher evaluation in districts that use PDAS. TEA will continue to utilize that infrastructure and leverage that expertise to provide training, monitor implementation, and refine the revised teacher appraisal system when it launches statewide.

In coordination with the ESC PDAS Advisory Group, TEA will develop procedures and best practices for the 14 percent of districts using locally-developed evaluation systems. This guidance will be used by each of the regional ESCs to provide ongoing support and guidance to districts using locally developed plans to ensure consistent implementation of evaluation systems across the state. TEA and the ESCs will have these materials developed prior to the 2014-2015 school year to assist any district not using the new state evaluation system.

TEA will revive data collection of teacher evaluations through the current reporting system that is coordinated by ESC 13. Prior to 2011 the Agency and ESC 13 regularly collected data on the usage and results of the state-approved evaluation system in accordance with commissioner's rule. The creation of a more robust and significant evaluation system makes this data tool more relevant. During the pilot years, these data will provide useful comparisons between existing pilot and newly developed appraisals. During statewide implementation, these data will enable TEA to monitor LEA use of teacher appraisals, with the concurrent ability to adapt and intervene as required. In addition, the Agency will implement random spot checking of LEAs to monitor compliance coupled with providing technical assistance to ensure they receive the necessary support needed. As a result of the spot monitoring, if the Agency finds a district is not complying with state law by implementing the state model or a system that has the same components as the state model, the Agency will require districts to comply with state law and revert to implementing the state model and will take enforcement action to ensure implementation as needed.

Additionally, TEA will update Texas Administrative Code (TAC) Chapter 150 to provide specific guidance on what components should be included in a locally developed system. In accordance with newly legislated HB 2012(83rd Regular Legislative Session), administrative rules will reflect the expectations that evaluations happen on a regular and timely basis including multiple observation walkthroughs, measures of student learning, and provide an opportunity for teacher self-reflection. Finally, the Agency will set guidance for districts on the appropriate use of evaluations to help inform career decisions for all teachers.

Principal Evaluation Implementation

Current statute and commissioner's rules allow districts to implement their own principal evaluation systems based on state established standards. Because of Texas's commitment to local

control, we will continue to follow this model with the new principal standards. However, in addition to standards, Texas will have new principal evaluation instruments. While many districts will continue to use or adapt their current principal evaluation instruments, many will chose to use the new TEA principal evaluation system.

By mirroring the system currently used for teacher evaluation, TEA will establish a lead ESC for principal evaluation, and an advisory group to facilitate training, standardization, refinement and development of the principal evaluation system. TEA will leverage that expertise to provide training, monitor implementation, and refine the revised principal evaluation tools when they launch statewide.

Districts which opt to continue using their existing principal evaluation tools, or elect to adapt their tools to the new standards, will be supported in their efforts as long as the components are state approved. The Agency will implement spot checking of random LEAs to monitor compliance coupled with providing technical assistance to ensure they receive the necessary support needed. As a result of the spot monitoring, if the Agency finds a district is not complying with state law by implementing the state model or a system that has the same components as the state model, the Agency will require districts to comply with state law and revert to implementing the state model and will take enforcement action to ensure implementation as needed.

TEA still has the data collection systems it used to gather data for Phase II of the Education Fund under the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund (CFDA Number 84.394). These data, especially those for Descriptor/Indicators (a)(2) – Part 1, (a)(2) – Part 2, (a)(6) and (a)(7) will allow TEA to monitor LEA use of principal appraisals, with the concurrent ability to adapt and intervene as required.