Regional Education Service Center Performance Standards and Indicators Manual

Introduction

About the Manual

The Regional Education Service Center Performance Standards and Indicators Manual is a resource that outlines the performance standards and indicators used by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) to evaluate the performance of ESCs and ESC executive directors. This manual details the performance standards and indicators, including student performance, economical and efficient products and services for school districts and charter schools, core services, state and federal grant implementation, fiscal responsibility, and public image.

Due to the diversity of districts and charter schools in each ESC region, the information contained in the manual is not intended to be used as a comparison tool of ESCs, but rather to provide a clear and consistent means of reporting data for annual performance evaluation. Although ESCs may not conduct business in the same manner or offer the same products and services due to the diverse needs across and within the different regions, the expectation is that products and services are offered in a manner that meets performance standards.

The manual has been designed to phase-in indicators that are not currently captured or available for reporting by ESCs. All standards and some indicators are to be implemented and reported in the 2014-2015 fiscal year as specified in the front of the manual. The indicators to be phased-in for implementation in the 2015-16 fiscal year are listed at the end of the manual.

Statutory Reference(s)

Texas Education Code (TEC), §8.101, states the following:

The commissioner shall establish performance standards and indicators for ESCs that measure achievement of objectives in TEC, §8.002. Performance standards and indicators must include the following:

(1) Student performance in districts served;
(2) District effectiveness and efficiency in districts served resulting from technical assistance and program support;
(3) Direct services provided or regionally shared services arranged by the service center which produce more economical and efficient school operations;
(4) Direct services provided or regionally shared services arranged by the service center which provide for assistance in core services; and
(5) Grants received for implementation of state initiatives and the results achieved by the service center under the terms of the grant contract.

The performance standards and indicators are intended to provide clear expectations of ESCs and ESC executive directors for products and services developed and provided to

school districts and charter schools. They are also intended to ensure compliance with the purposes of an ESC as outlined in TEC, §8.002, which are to:

(1) Assist school districts in improving student performance in each region of the system;
(2) Enable school districts to operate more efficiently and economically; and
(3) Implement initiatives assigned by the legislature or the commissioner.

In addition, TEC, §8.103(2), indicates that the Commissioner of Education will conduct an annual evaluation of each ESC executive director and ESC's performance on the indicators adopted under TEC, §8.101.

Guiding Principles

Accountable – ESCs are responsible and answerable to TEA and the Commissioner, the Texas Legislature, the ESC Board of Directors, stakeholders, customers, and the general public. Accountability comes in many forms and is used in all aspects of ESCs' daily business.

Communication – ESCs communicate with internal and external stakeholders in a manner that is clear, concise, and accurate.

Cost Effective – ESC decisions and business transactions have a greater benefit than cost.

Customer Centric – ESCs demonstrate putting customers and partners at the center of everything.

Efficient – ESCs maximize productivity of all personnel and capital resources of the center.

Ethical - ESC employees visibly demonstrate ethical, honest, and clear behaviors and outcomes and follow through to the best of their ability in the timeliest manner possible to produce results that benefit school districts, charter schools, and the public. ESCs adhere to the requirements of Texas Administrative Code §247.2 - Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators

Focused on Improvement of Student Performance – ESCs' main focus is student, school district, and charter school performance, both academically and financially. ESCs stress the importance of student improvement in activities, products, and services developed and provided to school districts and charter schools. ESCs analyze student improvements achieved.

Teamwork –ESCs operate as a system of twenty (20) education service centers with a unified approach to improve public education across the state in alignment with individual education service center strategic plans regionally designed to meet the unique needs of the school districts and charter schools within the region.

Transparent – ESCs ensure facts, figures, and processes are visible, predictable, and understood by all who come into contact with the ESCs.

Implementation of the following standards and indicators will occur in fiscal year 2014-15:

Performance Standard 1 – Student Performance in School Districts and Charter Schools Served TEC, §8.101(1)

ESCs impact student performance in school districts and charter schools served by providing programs, products, services, and resources to enhance teacher and school district leaders' effectiveness. ESC goals and objectives take into consideration student performance in school districts and charter schools served on an ongoing basis. Products and services developed by ESCs are developed and/or designed to assist school districts and charter schools in meeting student performance standards.

Indicator 1-1

Products and services provided by ESCs are developed and/or designed to increase student performance at all campuses in the region. Regional performance index reports are based on annual TEA performance data collected from school districts and charter schools for all four indexes (1 – Student Achievement, 2 – Student Progress, 3 – Closing Performance Gaps, and 4 – Postsecondary Readiness). The information analyzed is broken down by subject and ethnic/race groups, including special education, economically disadvantaged, and LEP.

ESCs annually report assistance provided to school districts and charter schools in the region for achieving standards of the TEA Accountability System. Reports are due no later than September 30.

Indicator 1-2

Regional college readiness data is based on annual TEA performance data collected from the school districts and charter schools. Information analyzed for each region includes attendance rate, AP/IB Results – Examinees >= Criterion, SAT/ACT Results at/Above Criterion, and College-Ready Graduates in both English Language Arts and Math. The information analyzed is broken down by ethnic/race groups, including special education, economically disadvantaged, and LEP.

Performance Standard 2 – School District and Charter School Effectiveness and Efficiency (Technical Assistance and Program Support) TEC, §8.101(2)

ESCs impact school district and charter school effectiveness and efficiency by providing programs, services, and resources to enhance teacher and school district and charter school leader effectiveness. ESC programs and services for technical assistance and program support enable school districts and charter schools to operate more effectively and efficiently. ESCs promote effective use of professional development funds and activities to support school district and charter school improvement.

Indicator 2-1
ESCs annually report the number of consulting and technical assistance contact hours delivered to school districts and charter schools. Contact hours include face to face, telephone, email, or other electronic media. Reports are due no later than October 31 of each year for the reporting period of September 1 through August 31.

Indicator 2-2
The percentage of school districts and charter schools in each region receiving standard achievement and above rating on Financial Integrity Rating System of Texas (FIRST) is assessed by TEA.

For school districts and charter schools that do not attain this rating, ESCs will report technical assistance provided in coordination with TEA. Reports are due no later than October 31.

Indicator 2-3
ESCs annually report on school finance related technical assistance provided to school districts and charter schools. The types of products and services provided to school districts and charter schools are listed and the total number of contact hours related to school finance technical assistance is reported no later than October 31.

Performance Standard 3 – Economical and Efficient School Operation TEC, §8.101(3)

ESC programs are made available to school districts and charter schools at a cost that enables the school districts and charter schools to operate more economically and efficiently while adequately covering the costs of the ESC. Programs, products, and services offered are priced based on a cost benefit analysis to ensure that pricing is fair and equitable. Savings achieved by school districts and charter schools as a result of purchasing products and services provided by an ESC as compared to similar products and services provided by other entities are also documented.

Indicator 3-1
ESCs biennially report school district and charter school cost efficiencies for products and services provided as compared to similar products and services provided by other entities through a statewide sampling of school districts and charter schools. Reports are due by December 1 in even numbered years.

Indicator 3-2
ESCs annually report the percentage of school districts and charter schools participating in cooperative agreements in the region. ESCs provide a listing and description of cooperative agreements provided to school districts and charter schools in the region. Reports are due no later than October 31. Cost efficiencies for cooperative agreements are included in the biennial report (reported in even numbered years) required in Indicator 3-1.

Cooperative agreements include interlocal agreements, memoranda of understanding (MOUs), shared service arrangements (SSAs), inter-agency agreements, contracts, or any other documented agreements between ESCs, an ESC and an LEA, or other governmental entity.

Performance Standard 4 – School District and Charter School Assistance in Core Services TEC, §8.101(4)

Each ESC provides core services as specified in TEC, §8.051, to develop, maintain, and deliver services to improve student, school district, and charter school performance. Core services funds (TEC, §8.121) appropriated by the Texas Legislature to ESCs (via General Appropriations Act, 83rd Legislature, Article III, Texas Education Agency, Rider 38) are utilized specifically for core services or for payment of necessary administrative and operational expenses of the center related to the provisions of core services.

Indicator 4-1
ESCs maintain core services for purchase by school districts and charter schools based on TEC, §8.051. ESCs annually report a listing and description of the core services provided to school districts and charter schools. Reports are due no later than October 31. Cost efficiencies for core services are included in the biennial report (in even numbered years) required in Indicator 3-1.

Indicator 4-2
ESCs annually report how state appropriated core services funding (TEC, §8.121) is utilized at the center to either provide core services or for the payment of necessary administrative and operational expenses of the center related to the provision of these services. Reports are due no later than January 31 for the reporting period September 1 through August 31.

Performance Standard 5 – State and Federal Grant Program Implementation and Results TEC, §8.101(5)

ESCs that receive grants and/or contracts from the state (TEA) or any other federal, state, local, private or public organization (TEC, §8.125) must spend funds in accordance with all programmatic guidelines and provisions of the grant and/or contract. ESCs will report to TEA on the progress and results of federal and/or state grants and/or contracts received from TEA in the fiscal year. Reports will assess quantitative and qualitative performance metrics developed by TEA and the ESC.

Indicator 5-1
TEA programs establish qualitative performance metrics for state and federal grants and/or contracts to accurately measure the quality of each state and federal grant and/or contract implemented by the ESC. ESCs report these metrics to TEA as required by the TEA program.

Indicator 5-2
ESCs comply with goals and performance metrics for federal and state grant awards or contracts received from TEA. ESCs monitor and evaluate the performance of the grant or contract and make adjustments as needed to ensure results through performance monitoring.

Performance Standard 6 – Effective and Efficient Fiscal and Operations Management

ESCs practice effective and efficient fiscal and operations management, including risk management, accounting, payroll, cash management, appropriate personnel policies and systems for staffing, and planning for appropriate use of technology and technological systems. All funds are managed effectively and efficiently with solid planning and budgeting, accurate monitoring, and transparent financial assessments.

Indicator 6-1
TEA will conduct federal grant sub-recipient monitoring based on risk assessment methodology. ESCs will have internal control systems and processes in place including but not limited to: policies and procedures related to managing federal/state grants; consolidating information systems to assist in managing grants; providing grant management training to staff and grantees; and coordinating programs with similar goals and purposes.

Indicator 6-2
ESCs are required to submit an annual single audit and if necessary will implement a corrective action plan to resolve all identified findings within 60 days.

Indicator 6-3
As evidenced in TEA federal grant sub-recipient monitoring, ESCs manage federal and state grant funds in a manner that demonstrates effective practices as evidenced by the following:

1) Accurate, current and complete financial reporting
2) Detailed accounting records
3) Effective internal controls
4) Budget controls to compare projected amounts to outlays
5) Allowable costs under cross-cutting and program specific rules
6) Source documentation
7) Cash management to minimize time between drawdown and disbursement

Indicator 6-4
ESCs annually report FTE count, job titles, descriptions, and salaries for each employee. Reports are due no later than January 31.

Indicator 6-5
ESCs annually report all sources of funding received and amounts expended from federal, state, local, private, and public entities. Reports are due no later than January 31 for the reporting period September 1 through August 31.

Performance Standard 7 - External Liaison and Public Image

ESCs establish and maintain positive and effective relationships with stakeholder groups, including school districts, charter schools, the legislature, and the citizens of Texas. ESC employees visibly demonstrate ethical, honest, and transparent behaviors and outcomes and follow through to the best of their ability in the timeliest manner possible in order to produce results that benefit school districts, charter schools, and the public.

Indicator 7-1

ESC annual satisfaction survey rates are determined by an annual Client Satisfaction Survey. The target for annual survey results is 4.50 on a 5.0 scale. Annual survey results are reported to TEA no later than December 31.

Implementation of the following indicators will occur in fiscal year 2015-16:

Performance Standard 1

Indicator 1-1 (will merge with Indicator 1-1 in fiscal year 2015-16)
ESCs annually report activities, products, and services provided to school districts and charter schools in the region for addressing and closing the student achievement gap between economically disadvantaged, rural, African-American, and Hispanic students as compared to their counterparts. Each region's report includes the following: regional data analysis; regional demographics and contributing factors; and the purpose, description, and cost analysis of new products and services developed and provided to school districts and charter schools for closing the student achievement gap. Reports are due no later than September 30.

The definition of rural can be found at the following link:

http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/perfreport/snapshot/2012/commtype.html.

Indicator 1-2 (will merge with Indicator 1-2 in fiscal year 2015-16)
ESCs annually report assistance and activities provided to school districts and charter schools in the region that support providing opportunities for all students to earn postsecondary credit while in high school.

Postsecondary education experiences may include services and activities proved by an ESC to school districts or charter schools, students, or families of high school students in high school/college dual credit courses, early college high school, career academies and Advanced Technical Centers, and general partnerships with institutions of higher education and/or the business community to mentor or provide assistance to high school students (e.g., Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) application assistance).

Indicator 1-3
ESCs annually develop and submit for Commissioner's approval regionally focused Annual Improvement Plans, required by TEC, §8.051(b). Annual plans are submitted no later than September 30 of each fiscal year.

Each region's plan for focus schools and/or underperforming or lowest performing campuses in the region includes the following: regional data analysis; regional demographics and contributing factors; improvement plan, which may include interventions, strategies, activities and tactics; and the purpose and description of new products and services developed and provided. Products and services included in the regionally focused Annual Improvement Plan are those specific to increasing student performance and do not include all other products and services a focus or underperforming or lowest performing school district or charter school in the region may purchase annually (e.g., business services, required professional development, etc.).

Final annual progress reports are due no later than August 31.

Indicator 1-4
ESCs evaluate professional development and workshop participants in professional development courses/classes and workshops designed to impact student performance. The survey instrument includes a rating for likelihood of classroom implementation of knowledge/skills gained in the workshop or professional development training. Annual summaries of workshop survey data are submitted to TEA by October 31 of each year. The data submitted will be for professional development and workshops conducted from September 1 through August 31 of each year.

Performance Standard 2

Indicator 2-3
ESCs annually report on extended professional development opportunities provided to school districts, charter schools, administrators, and teachers. Extended professional development opportunities include but are not limited to classroom observations and feedback, co-teaching/demonstration teaching, professional learning communities, instructional coaching, book studies, and action research cohort. The number of educators involved and the number of contact hours per region are due no later than October 31.

Indicator 2-4
ESCs annually report a summary of one extended professional development opportunity that has been especially effective in impacting student performance. Summaries are due no later than October 31.

Indicator 2-5
ESCs annually report the total number of individuals participating in professional development and learning through Regional Distance Learning and the number of distance learning events. The individuals captured in this indicator are school district and charter school personnel who utilize this service. Reports are due not later than October 31.

Indicator 2-6
ESCs annually report the total number of students enrolled in Regional Distance Learning for high school credit (e.g., foreign language or behavioral science courses not available at the school campus but offered by the ESC through distance learning). Reports are due not later than October 31.

Performance Standard 4

Indicator 4-3

Annual Client Satisfaction Surveys are conducted during the month of September of each year. Customers included in the survey will be at the superintendent level of school district and charter school administrations, but will include input from teachers, school administrators, and other workshop participants. Customer satisfaction for core services will be measured at a minimum in the following areas:

1) Training, updates, and technical assistance to school districts, charter schools, and campus personnel related to Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), state-approved assessment system, and Texas Academic Performance Report (TAPR) indicators and reports to increase student achievement.
2) Instruction in personal financial literacy as required by TEC, §28.0021.
3) Training and assistance to school districts and charter schools that qualify for special education, educationally disadvantaged, bilingual education, and/or gifted and talented funding sources.
4) Support and assistance for campuses, school districts, and charter schools designated as low performing according to State and Federal accountability systems.
5) Training and assistance to teachers, administrators, members of district boards of trustees, and members of site-based decision making committees.
6) Assistance specifically designed for a school district or charter school that is considered out of compliance with state or federal special education requirements.
7) Training, overview sessions, and assistance in complying with TEC, the Texas Administrative Code, and other state and federal guidelines for school district and charter school staff.
8) Training, technical assistance, updates, and overviews in support of the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) and the State Emergency Notification System (SENS).

Performance Standard 6

Indicator 6-6

ESCs annually report all grants and contracts over the amount of $100,000 that are received from any entity (includes federal, state, local, and private entities). The report includes the granting or contracting entity name, the amount of the grant or contract, the purpose of the grant or contract, and the effective beginning and ending grant or contract date. Reports are due no later than January 31 for the reporting period September 1 through August 31.

Performance Standard 7

Indicator 7-3
ESCs annually report the number of partnerships with other ESCs and external entities to expand and/or enhance product and service offerings to schools. Reports are due no later than October 31.