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TEA releases 2015 accountability ratings

AUSTIN – The Texas Education Agency (TEA) today released the 2015 state accountability ratings for more than 1,200 school districts and charters, as well as the more than 8,600 campuses statewide. The ratings reveal that 94 percent of school districts and charters across Texas have achieved the rating of *Met Standard*.

Districts, campuses and charters receive one of three ratings under the accountability system: *Met Standard*, *Met Alternative Standard*, or *Improvement Required*. School district ratings (including charter operators) by category in 2015 are as follows:

2015 RATING	DISTRICT	CHARTER	TOTAL	PERCENT
Met Standard/Alternative	983	168	1,151	94.4%
Met Standard	983	136	1,119	91.8%
Met Alternative Standard	N/A	32	32	2.6%
Improvement Required	40	17	57	4.7%
Not Rated	1	10	11	0.9%
TOTAL	1,024	195	1,219	100.0%

“The 2015 state accountability system takes into account a number of factors unique to the 2014–2015 school year,” said Commissioner of Education Michael Williams. “As in previous years, most districts, charters and campuses met the state standards, which reflects well on our public education system and for the economic future of our state.”

The 2015 ratings are based on a system that uses a range of indicators to provide greater detail about the performance of a district or charter and individual campuses throughout the state. The performance index framework includes four areas:

- **Student Achievement** – Provides a snapshot of performance across all subjects
- **Student Progress** – Measures year-to-year student progress by subject and student group
- **Closing Performance Gaps** – Emphasizes the academic achievement of economically disadvantaged students and the lowest performing racial/ethnic student groups
- **Postsecondary Readiness** – Emphasizes the importance of earning a high school diploma that provides students with the foundation necessary for success in college, the workforce, job training programs or the military

Due to the changes in the state assessment program last school year, for 2015 accountability, a campus or district must meet the target on either Index 1 or Index 2 plus meet the target on Index

3 and Index 4. The performance target for Index 1 was also increased from 55 percent in 2014 to 60 percent in 2015.

In April, Commissioner Williams announced that results of 2015 State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR®) in mathematics for grades 3–8 would be excluded from the 2015 state accountability system. The commissioner reached his decision following numerous discussions with math teachers, parents, and superintendents across the state regarding new curriculum standards in mathematics. New rigorous math standards were adopted by the State Board of Education in April 2012 with implementation for grades K–8 in the 2014–2015 school year.

In addition, results from STAAR Accommodated (STAAR A) and STAAR Alternate 2 (a redesign of the original STAAR Alternate) were also excluded from the 2015 state accountability system. The U.S. Department of Education no longer allows Texas to use modified assessments (such as the STAAR Modified), which had been used for students receiving special education services that met certain participation criteria. Those students were administered the STAAR Accommodated this year. In addition, House Bill 5, passed by the Texas Legislature in 2013, required TEA to redevelop the STAAR Alternate test which is designed for the state’s most cognitively disabled students. STAAR Alternate 2 was administered for the first time this school year.

Educators, school board members, business and community representatives, professional organizations, parents and legislative representatives from across the state provided assistance and advice to TEA during development of the current accountability system. An overview of the substantial differences in state accountability between 2014 and 2015 (in PDF format) is available on the TEA website at

http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/perfreport/account/2015/20150205mtg/2015%20Acctb_Commissioner%20Final%20Decisions_Final_April%208.pdf.

Under the 2015 state accountability system, campus ratings (including charter campuses) by category and school type are as follows:

2015 RATING	ELEM	MIDDLE	HS	K-12	TOTAL	PERCENT
Met Standard/Alternative	4,166	1,555	1,453	298	7,472	86.4%
Met Standard	4,166	1,544	1,221	272	7,203	83.3%
Met Alternative Standard	0	11	232	26	269	3.1%
Improvement Required	426	102	43	39	610	7.1%
Not Rated	62	56	285	161	564	6.5%
TOTAL	4,654	1,713	1,781	498	8,646	100.0%

Campuses that receive an accountability rating of *Met Standard* are also eligible for distinction designations. Distinction designations are awarded to campuses based on achievement on performance indicators compared to a group of 40 campuses of similar type, size and student demographics.

Distinction designations can be earned by campuses for:

- Academic Achievement in Reading/English Language Arts;
- Academic Achievement in Mathematics;
- Academic Achievement in Science;
- Academic Achievement in Social Studies;
- Top 25 Percent: Student Progress;
- Top 25 Percent: Closing Performance Gaps; and
- Postsecondary Readiness.

In 2015, 4,388 campuses that achieved the *Met Standard* rating earned some type of distinction designation. However, only 153 high schools, middle schools and junior high schools earned a distinction designation in all seven categories that were evaluated for that campus.

In addition, districts and charters (except for those comprised of only one campus) are eligible to receive a distinction designation for postsecondary readiness. The distinction takes into account factors such as graduation rates, ACT/SAT participation and performance, Career and Technical Education (CTE) graduates and dual credit course completion rates. Postsecondary readiness is the only distinction at the district level. Twenty-four school districts and charters earned this distinction for 2015.

“Earning any type of distinction under the state accountability system is commendable and should be a source of pride in that community,” said Commissioner Williams. “Achieving all seven distinctions on a campus or a district-level postsecondary readiness distinction reflects extraordinary work while affirming a strong commitment to students.”

Independent of the state’s accountability system, all school districts are required to evaluate the district’s performance and the performance of each campus in regard to community and student engagement. Although these locally-assigned ratings must be posted on district websites by Aug. 8, they are separate from the state accountability ratings. TEA will post the locally-determined community and student engagement ratings on the agency’s website by Oct. 1.

Districts, charters, and campuses can appeal the rating assigned on Aug. 7. TEA will release the final 2015 ratings based on the outcomes of the appeals in late October or early November.

Parents and the general public seeking a quick overview of the state accountability system and what goes into the annual ratings of schools, districts and charters can watch an informational animation video at <http://youtu.be/cbEgrdijuc8>.

To view the 2015 state accountability ratings for districts, charters and campuses (plus distinction designations earned at the campus and district level), visit the Texas Education Agency website at <http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/perfreport/account/2015/index.html>.

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