

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) adopts an amendment to §97.1003, concerning local accountability systems. The amendment is adopted with changes to the proposed text as published in the October 18, 2024 issue of the *Texas Register* (49 TexReg 8455) and will be republished. The adopted amendment modifies the timeline for submission of a local accountability plan to TEA.

REASONED JUSTIFICATION: Section 97.1003 defines the requirements school districts and open-enrollment charter schools must meet if they choose to create a local accountability plan to assign an overall performance rating for a campus.

The amendment to §97.1003(f)(3) specifies that a local accountability plan, including its components, domains, and overall scaled scores and ratings, must be submitted to TEA on a timeline determined by the commissioner of education. This amended subsection removes the first week of July as the deadline. This change allows TEA to publish timelines that best fit the needs of districts and charter schools.

Based on public comment, §97.1003(f)(3) has been amended at adoption to state that the timeline will be published on the TEA website.

SUMMARY OF COMMENTS AND AGENCY RESPONSES: The public comment period on the proposal began October 18, 2024, and ended November 18, 2024. Following is a summary of public comments received and agency responses.

Comment: Red Oak Independent School District noted that the proposed language was vague and allowed for possible timelines that are not manageable. The commenter further suggested amending the rule to provide a broader window for timelines.

Response: The agency disagrees. The current rule has an incorrect date for the plan submission. The plan portion must be submitted months prior to the data submission, and timelines are subject to change as the program progresses. However, the rule language at adoption states the timeline will be posted on the agency website.

Comment: An individual commented that the timeline requiring school districts to submit a local accountability plan by the first week in July provides parents with a reliable date by which they can request a local accountability plan from a district. The commenter expressed concern that if the timeline is set by the commissioner, community members may not know when an accountability plan is to be submitted and made available. The commenter suggested that the commissioner be required to report the timeline so parents have confidence that the district is following the state's reporting requirements.

Response: The agency disagrees with continuing to specify the timeline in the rule because allowing the commissioner to set the timeline will allow more flexibility for school districts and charter schools. However, the agency agrees that the timeline should be made available and has changed the rule at adoption to state that the timeline will be posted on the TEA website.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY. The amendment is adopted under Texas Education Code, §39.0544, which requires the commissioner to adopt rules regarding the local assignment of campus performance ratings by school districts and open-enrollment charter schools.

CROSS REFERENCE TO STATUTE. The amendment implements Texas Education Code, §39.0544.

<rule>

§97.1003. Local Accountability System.

- (a) The local accountability system standards established by the commissioner of education under Texas Education Code (TEC), §39.0544, shall be used by school districts to develop a plan to locally evaluate the

performance of their campuses. For the purpose of this section, the term school district includes open-enrollment charter schools.

- (b) A local accountability plan created by a school district must include domain performance ratings assigned by the commissioner under TEC, §39.054, and performance ratings based on locally developed domains or sets of accountability measures.
 - (1) A locally developed domain or set of accountability measures is referred to as a plan component. Plan components must describe each item and the reason for its inclusion in the plan. A school district must assign each component to one of the following five domains: academics, culture and climate, extra- and co-curricular, future-ready learning, and locally determined. The weight of all plan components must equal 100%.
 - (2) Each campus with an approved school district plan is eligible to receive local accountability rating. A campus with an overall state accountability rating of C or higher based on ratings derived from student performance at the campus is eligible to combine an overall local accountability rating with the overall state accountability rating to determine the combined rating.
 - (3) For the purposes of assigning state accountability ratings, a campus that does not serve any grade level for which a State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR®) examination is administered is paired with a campus in its school district that serves grade levels for which STAAR® examinations are administered. A campus not rated under the state accountability system is not eligible to combine state and local ratings. Local accountability data for a campus without state ratings may be displayed on Texas Education Agency (TEA), school district, and campus websites but will not be combined with state accountability data. The state accountability manual adopted under §97.1001 of this title (relating to Accountability Rating System) provides information about campus ratings and eligibility for applicable years.
 - (4) A school district must create its local accountability plan based on school type. The four school types are elementary school, middle school, high school, and Kindergarten-Grade 12. The plan must include all campuses within a school type. The school district may also request to identify an additional school group within a school type for which to customize its local accountability plan. Otherwise, all campuses within a school type must be evaluated on a common set of components determined by the school district. A school district may also request to identify a campus rated under alternative education accountability provisions as a unique school type.
- (c) A school district may assign weights to each plan component described in subsection (b)(1) of this section, as determined by the district, provided that the plan components must in the aggregate account for no more than 50% of the combined overall performance rating. A local accountability plan may include no fewer than two and no more than ten components weighted between 5% and 60%.
- (d) Each plan component must contain levels of performance that allow for differentiation, with assigned standards for achieving the differentiated levels that are aligned to a letter grade of A, B, C, D, or F.
 - (1) In order to provide for the assignment of a letter grade of A, B, C, D, or F, a school district must use data collected by the district to calculate the current baseline average. The baseline data calculated by the school district is used to set standards for each level by setting the average at a C, or mid-level, with the higher A and B grades designating levels considered to be exceptional and good, respectively, and the lower D and F grades designating levels considered to need improvement and be unacceptable, respectively.
 - (2) A school district may choose to include a single component with a weight not exceeding 10% with the levels of differentiation based on the face value of the average performance level rather than the average performance level, or baseline, being set at the C or mid-level value.
 - (3) In the case of components where current baseline levels are not used to set the campus rating scale to a C or mid-level value, TEA may require the school district to re-evaluate the inclusion of the component on an annual basis.
- (e) Each plan component measure must meet standards for reliability and validity.

- (1) In terms of specific measures, tests, or ratings, a measure is considered reliable if it delivers consistent results across administrations.
 - (2) In terms of specific measures, tests, or ratings, a measure is considered valid if the resulting outcome represents what the test is designed to measure.
 - (3) Reliability and validity are closely related, and both must be evident for a measure, test, or rating to be included as component outcomes in a local accountability system plan.
- (f) Calculations for each plan component and overall performance ratings must be capable of being audited by a third party.
- (1) A school district must use a one-to-one correspondence when converting campus grades based on plan component measures to a standard scale of 30-100 where A=90-100, B=80-89, C=70-79, D=60-69, and F=30-59.
 - (2) Categorical data, or data not on a continuous scale, must be converted to the standard scale of A=90-100, B=80-89, C=70-79, D=60-69, and F=30-59 by assigning the maximum value for each scaled score interval with the corresponding category used in the campus rating scale.
 - (3) A school district is required to submit a local accountability plan that includes components, domains, and overall scaled scores and ratings to TEA on a timeline determined by the commissioner. The timeline will be published on the TEA website.
 - (4) All scaled scores and letter grades submitted by a school district are subject to audit. Any data discrepancies or any indication that data have been compromised may result in verification and audit of school district and campus data used to assign local accountability ratings. The audit process may include requests for data used for campus-level calculation of component and domain scaled scores.
 - (5) On an annual basis, TEA will randomly select school districts for local accountability audits, and, for each such audit, TEA will randomly select components for review. Selected school districts must submit the requested data for review within the timeframe specified. A school district must maintain documentation of its local accountability plan, along with all associated data used to assign campus ratings, for two years after the end of the plan implementation period.
 - (6) Responsibility for the accuracy and quality of data used to determine local accountability ratings rests with each school district. Superintendent certification of data accuracy during the ratings submission process shall include an assurance that calculations have been verified to ensure that all data were included as appropriate for all components.
 - (7) An appeal of a local accountability rating may be submitted by the superintendent or chief operating officer once ratings are released. The local accountability appeals timeline follows the appeal deadline dates and processes as described in the state accountability manual adopted under §97.1001 of this title for the applicable year.
- (g) A school district must produce a campus score card and make available on the district website an explanation of the methodology used to assign local accountability performance ratings. The campus score card shall include, at a minimum, the scaled score and rating for each component and domain along with the overall rating. A link to the local accountability ratings posted by the school district must be provided to TEA and may be included on the agency-developed school report card.
- (h) Ratings may be revised as a result of investigative activities by the commissioner as authorized under TEC, §39.057(d) and (e).