

2019 Local Accountability System Manual

for Texas Public School Districts and Campuses



Office of Governance and Accountability
Performance Reporting Department

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**2019 Local Accountability
System Manual
Chapters 1-3**

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Chapter 1—Local Accountability System Overview

About this Manual

The *2019 Local Accountability System Manual* is a guide to explain the requirements of creating a local accountability system.

Overview of the 2019 Local Accountability System

House Bill 22 (85th Texas Legislature, Regular Session 2017) established Local Accountability Systems (LAS), which allow districts and open-enrollment charter schools to develop plans to locally evaluate campuses. LAS provides an opportunity for districts and open-enrollment charter schools to voluntarily submit local campus data which is combined with state accountability outcomes to determine the overall campus rating. This process is designed to encourage schools to focus on student outcome-based components shaped around local long-term goals identified by community and stakeholder feedback. This may provide a broader view of district or open-enrollment charter school performance and impact. Texas Education Code (TEC) §39.0544 requires that LAS plans be valid and reliable. LAS plans must also allow for differentiation and must be auditable.

Who is Rated?

All campuses with an overall state accountability rating of *C* or higher are eligible to combine an overall LAS rating with the overall state accountability rating to determine the summative rating. The LAS rating may contribute up to 50 percent of the combined overall rating for the campus.

School Types

Districts and open-enrollment charter schools decide which school types (elementary school, middle school, high school, or K–12) participate in the LAS process and must include all campuses in the district that have common data components. The district or open-enrollment charter school may also request to identify an additional school group within a school type for which to customize the LAS plan.

For example, a district may request to identify a school group consisting of elementary-level magnet schools and design a LAS plan with components unique to that group. Otherwise, all campuses within a school type must be evaluated on a common set of district-determined components. Districts and open-enrollment charter schools submit LAS ratings for all campuses within the school types identified in the approved LAS plan. Districts and open-enrollment charter schools may also request to identify schools rated under alternative education accountability (AEA) provisions as a unique school type.

Phases of the LAS Process

1. Plan Development
 - Districts and open-enrollment charter schools invite community stakeholders to identify community values and desired student outcomes.
 - District and stakeholder groups evaluate data and local initiatives to set goals which impact student success and growth.
2. Plan Submission and Approval
 - Districts and open-enrollment charter schools submit a LAS plan for technical review by agency staff. TEA LAS staff and district staff work collaboratively to refine plans in preparation for approval. Although collaboration with the agency is not required to develop a LAS plan, it is highly recommended to avoid approval-related issues at the time of plan submission.
 - A third-party panel reviews and approves or denies the final LAS plan.
3. Plan Implementation
 - Districts, open-enrollment charter schools, and campuses implement plans with fidelity.
 - Districts, open-enrollment charter schools, and campuses collect, calculate, and process data.
4. Ratings Submission and Approval
 - Districts and open-enrollment charter schools submit component, domain, and overall scaled scores and ratings for each LAS campus by the July 1, 2019, submission deadline.
 - TEA verifies overall scaled score calculations using LAS domain outcomes and weights as approved in the final LAS plan. TEA calculates overall ratings for LAS campuses by weighting the overall LAS scaled score at the proportion determined by the district in combination with the state accountability overall scaled score.
 - TEA releases the combined overall scaled score and rating for LAS campuses in TEAL on August 14, 2019.
 - TEA posts the combined overall scaled score and rating at <https://txschools.gov/> and TEA public websites along with the LAS and state overall and domain scaled scores and ratings on August 15, 2019.
 - Districts and open-enrollment charter schools must post LAS domain and overall ratings, rationales for goals, and methodologies for calculations on the campus website(s).
 - Districts and open-enrollment charter schools must provide TEA with the campus website link for display on <https://txschools.gov/> along with LAS outcomes on each campus report card.

Chapter 2—LAS Plan Design, Submission, and Approval

Plan Development Process

Prior to submitting an LAS plan, districts and open-enrollment charter schools should engage in a data review and goal setting process, similar to processes used for Lone Star Governance (LSG), System of Great Schools (SGS), Community-Based Accountability System (CBAs), Equity Plan Root Cause analysis, or other district processes that include community involvement and a feedback process. As part of the plan submission process, districts and open-enrollment charter schools submit a summary of the data review and goal setting process, including the rationale for the domains and components selected for inclusion in the LAS plan.

Districts and open-enrollment charter schools are encouraged to work with education service center (ESC) LAS representatives for technical assistance during the creation and implementation of LAS plans. During the implementation cycle, local staff should work with stakeholders and the local community during the spring and summer prior to the school year during which the LAS plan is to be implemented. TEC §39.0544 (b)(1) states the following:

The plan may be approved only if after review

- the agency determines the plan meets the minimum requirements under this section and agency rule;
- at the commissioner’s discretion, an audit conducted by the agency verifies the calculations included in the plan; and
- if at least 10 school districts or open-enrollment charter schools have obtained approval of locally developed accountability, the plan is subject to a review panel appointed by the commissioner.

Once plans are approved, districts and open-enrollment charter schools must begin preparing for the statutorily required LAS plan communication process. By July 1, 2019, districts and open-enrollment charter schools are required to submit LAS component and domain ratings and scaled scores as well as the overall LAS rating and scaled scores to TEA. TEA calculates overall ratings for LAS campuses by weighting the overall LAS scaled score at the proportion determined by the district in combination with the state accountability overall scaled score. Campuses that earn an overall rating of *C* or better under state accountability have both the state and LAS overall grades posted on the campus report cards along with a combined overall grade. Campuses that earn a *D* or *F* have the LAS grade displayed on the campus report card but do not receive a combined overall grade.

Typically, district or open-enrollment charter school LAS plans are approved for a three-year period. Beginning with the 2018–19 school year, the first year of district participation in LAS is a pilot year, and ratings are for informational purposes only. At the end of each three-year period, the district or open-enrollment charter school has the option to continue with the LAS process and, if needed, to modify the approved LAS plan. If a significant local change occurs

during the three-year period such that a part of the plan is no longer viable, the district or open-enrollment charter school may request a modification to the approved LAS plan. Districts and open-enrollment charter schools must notify TEA by June 1 to request modification of an approved plan. A school district or open-enrollment charter school approved to assign local accountability ratings must comply with TEC §39.0544(e)(1). Failure to do so subjects the district or open-enrollment charter school to agency actions and interventions under TEC Chapters 39 and 39A.

Timeline for 2018–19 LAS Plan and Data Submissions

Deadline	Submission
March 15, 2019	<p><i>Notification of intent for LAS plan submission for the 2018–19 school year deadline.</i></p> <p>TEA works with districts and open-enrollment charter schools and provides feedback for plan revision, if requested until the LAS plan is submitted to TEA. Notifications must be sent to LAS@tea.texas.gov. Each notification email receives a notification of receipt.</p>
May 20, 2019	<p><i>LAS plan submission deadline.</i></p> <p>Plan submissions must be submitted to LAS@tea.texas.gov. Each plan submission receives a notification of receipt.</p>
July 1, 2019	<p><i>LAS scaled score and rating submission deadline.</i></p> <p>Scaled scores and ratings for each LAS component, domain, and overall must be submitted to LAS@tea.texas.gov. All submission emails receive a notification of receipt.</p>
August 15, 2019	<p><i>Combined overall rating deadline for TEA.</i></p> <p>2017–18 LAS pilot campuses who submitted a LAS plan and received “what if” scaled scores and ratings for 2017–18 receive combined overall scaled scores and ratings in TEAL and on the public website reflecting the outcome of combined state and LAS ratings released.</p>
September 13, 2019	<p><i>“What if” Combined overall rating deadline for TEA.</i></p> <p>New 2018–19 cohort campuses who submit a LAS plan and previous 2017–18 pilot campuses who are submitting a LAS plan for the first time receive “what if” ratings reflecting the outcome of combined state and LAS ratings for informational purposes only.</p>

Domains

A LAS plan is organized by the following domains as determined by the district

- Academics
- Culture and Climate
- Extra and Co-Curricular
- Future-Ready Learning
- One optional locally-determined domain

Components

Districts and open-enrollment charter schools use the information gathered during the data review and goal setting process to identify the components to include in each domain. A plan consisting of a single domain must contain a minimum of two components. For plans involving two or more domains, the minimum number of components is three across all domains. Districts and open-enrollment charter schools must have at least one year of baseline data for each component included in the LAS plan. Components may not duplicate measures currently included in the state accountability system. Districts and open-enrollment charter schools must provide the following information for each component as part of the LAS plan approval process:

Component Criteria

Criteria	Explanation
School Type/Group	Identify which school type/group is evaluated on each component.
Metric	Provide information on the measures to be used for each component.
Rationale	Describe the district rationale for including each component in the LAS plan, including the information used to identify the component as a key area of focus for the district. Describe the relevance and utility (equitable, rigorous, growth-focused, and quality of impact) of each component.
Data Source/Vetting	Indicate by whom the metric was developed and the vetting conducted. Describe from whom data are collected for each measure (e.g. all first graders, middle school students in RtI).
Data Collection Protocol	Describe the data collection protocols for each measure, such as sampling/assessment design, staff training for data collection and handling, data collection timeline, monitoring processes for data collection, and data storage plan.
Baseline Data	Provide current baseline data for each measure, including a frequency distribution based on proposed cut points.

Criteria	Explanation
Methodology and Scaling	Provide the cut points and scaling for each component and describe the processes used for determining cut points and scaling. Include any minimum size requirements applicable to each component. At the component and domain level, all ratings must be scaled on a 0–100 scale, with A=90–100, B=80– 89, C=70–79, D=60–69, and F=<60.

Component Weighting and Rigor

Components must be weighted based on the rigor of the component design and equity among the student demographic population on the campus. TEA staff and the LAS review panel provide feedback and suggestions if needed. Component scores must be rounded to the first decimal place, and domain scores must be rounded to a whole number. The following examples are provided to assist districts and open-enrollment charter schools when determining component rigor and weight.

Level of Rigor	Components
Less Rigorous (Weight Range=10–20%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summative participation data • Open surveys with no sampling design or demographic analysis • Program performance for initiatives involving less than 10 percent of campus enrollment, not including disaggregated performance measures
(Weight Range=10%–40%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disaggregated summative participation data • Targeted surveys with limited sampling design and/or demographic analysis • Program performance for initiatives involving 11–20 percent of campus enrollment, not including disaggregated performance measures
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of participation through the growth lens • Targeted surveys with limited sampling design and demographic analysis • Program performance for initiatives involving 21–40 percent of campus enrollment, not including disaggregated performance measures

Level of Rigor	Components
(Weight Range=10%–40%) (continued)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disaggregated analysis of participation through the growth lens • Targeted surveys with proficient sampling design and demographic analysis • Program performance for initiatives involving 41–60 percent of campus enrollment, not including disaggregated performance measures
<p style="text-align: center;">More Rigorous</p> (Weight Range=10%–60%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disaggregated analysis of participation through the growth lens incorporating target goals based on historical data • Targeted surveys with rigorous sampling design and demographic analysis based on historical data • Equity among student populations is measured • Disaggregated analysis of student performance on a designated measure with an emphasis on equity across student populations • Program performance for initiatives involving more than 60 percent of campus and/or grade level enrollment, not including disaggregated performance measures

LAS Component Samples

The following samples are provided to give districts additional guidance about expectations for component design.

Sample Component 1: Percentage of middle school students successfully completing one or more advanced courses (Pre-AP, Algebra I, etc.)

Overview: Research confirms that a student’s path to college begins in middle school, with a strong correlation between advanced courses taken in middle school and college admission. Middle school courses build the foundation for advanced courses in high school. A review of course enrollment data since 2017 of graduating students (four-year) who successfully transition to college or career within one year of graduation revealed a strong correlation with successful completion of one or more advanced classes in middle school. This data was then shared with parents, former students, and other stakeholders who confirmed successful completion of advanced classes in middle school is a high leverage area. As a result, the district has adjusted the processes for scheduling, staffing, and systems of support for students to increase successful completion of advanced classes.

- Successful completion of an advanced course is defined as scoring at 75 or higher on a district developed end-of-course exam. The end of course exams for all advanced middle school classes will be administered during a three-week window in May. Students will receive accommodations as specified by 504 and/or IEP determinations.

- To calculate the campus rating, the number of students successfully completing an advanced course, as defined above, will be divided by the total number of students on campus. Students who successfully complete more than one advanced course will only be counted once for purposes of this measure.
- The district has collected one year of baseline data for each exam and has used that data to set the following cut-points for campus performance on this measure: 90% = A, 80% = B, 70%=C, 60%=D, <60 = F. The baseline data shows that the highest percentage successfully completing a single course on any campus was 80 percent. Ultimately, the goal is to have 100 percent passing every course, but the current goal is set at 90 percent to push performance as a district.
- Using baseline data from the previous year and the proposed cut-points, the frequency distribution of ratings would be: As =0, Bs =2, Cs =4, Ds =2, Fs =1.

Technical Feedback

1. Areas of Strength

- The district has engaged in careful analysis, using data and stakeholder feedback, to identify factors contributing to student graduation and post-secondary readiness.
- The plan reflects a systemic approach to addressing this area by reviewing and refining district processes that impact course enrollment (scheduling, staffing, etc.) and successful course completion (staffing, support, etc.).
- The plan reflects rigorous, yet reasonable, goal-setting using baseline data, intended to increase district performance.

2. Areas for Growth

Although the district has set a high target for successful completion of one or more advanced courses, this component could be strengthened by setting targets to ensure all student groups are demonstrating comparable levels of success. The use of disaggregated data could strengthen this component and help ensure more equitable outcomes for all students.

Sample Component 2: Percentage of high school teachers receiving training in sheltered instruction for English learners to integrate language and content instruction

Technical Feedback:

Although sheltered instruction has been shown to be an effective strategy, this component looks only at the percentage of teachers participating in training. To be considered for inclusion in the LAS plan, at a minimum the district must incorporate a process for evaluating effective implementation of the strategy, involving rubric-based observation of teacher implementation that includes a training and calibration process for observers.

Sample Component 3: Performance of campus Academic Decathlon at regional competition

Technical Feedback:

This component represents the performance of a very small percentage of student enrollment. While we recognize and celebrate outstanding performance by one or more students, the intent of LAS is to provide a broader perspective of district impact on student performance beyond assessment results. The narrow scope of this component does not provide a broader perspective.

If the district believes achieving a high degree of proficiency in specified areas is an important and noteworthy skill, perhaps the component could be restructured to provide information about the percentage of students reaching proficiency level or better by a designated time of the year and strengthened by ensuring all student groups represented at the campus are reaching comparable levels of proficiency.

Sample Component 4: Percentage of kindergarten students demonstrating kindergarten readiness at the beginning of the school year as defined by the Texas Kindergarten Entry Assessment (TX-KEA)

Research is clear that schools do not create the “gap” but that effective and targeted instruction in prekindergarten through second grade can greatly reduce the gap by the time students reach third grade. To better understand the effectiveness of district instruction, the district has reviewed two years of data from the TX-KEA and the subsequent performance of students in kindergarten and first grade. Based on that analysis, the district has determined that students achieving a certain score at the beginning of first grade are more likely to close the gap with year over year gains in kindergarten and first grade. Based on these findings, the district has revised the prekindergarten curriculum, provided training in areas of need identified by data, and has adjusted staffing to strengthen instruction in prekindergarten classes across the district.

- The district has collected two years of baseline data and has used that data to set the following cut-points for campus performance on this measure: 90% of students scoring XX or better = A, 80% = B, 70%=C, 60%=D, <60= F. The baseline data shows that the highest percentage students achieving a 60 or better on any campus was 75 percent. Ultimately, the goal is to have 100 percent achieving a 60 or higher but the goal is set at 90 percent to push the performance as a district.
- Using baseline data from the previous year and the proposed cut-points, the frequency distribution of ratings would be: As = 0, Bs = 0, Cs = 9, Ds = 4, Fs = 2.
- The TX-KEA will be administered during a six-week window in September through October. Students will receive accommodations as specified by 504 and/or IEP determinations.

Technical Feedback

1. Areas of Strength
 - The district has engaged in careful analysis using data to identify factors related to accelerating student readiness for kindergarten.

- The plan reflects a systemic approach to addressing the issue by reviewing and refining district processes that impact effective instruction (training, staffing, etc.).
- The plan reflects rigorous, yet reasonable, goal-setting using baseline data, intended to increase district performance.

2. Areas for Growth

Although the district has set a high target for student performance, this component would be strengthened by setting targets to ensure all student groups are demonstrating comparable levels of success. The use of disaggregated data would strengthen this component and help ensure more equitable outcomes for all students.

Sample Component 5: Tenth Grade Student Engagement Survey by Student Population

Many years of research have shown that student perceptions strongly correlate with learning outcomes and can be an important improvement tool for school systems. The survey has been administered to students in grades 9-12 for three years. Results are provided to the district by the vendor via secure upload. Analysis over the past three years combined with community feedback has identified tenth grade as a critical time for student engagement in the district. The district has used the most recent data to establish a baseline and the trajectory of data from the last three years to establish cut-points for the proposed LAS plan.

1. Using baseline data from the previous year and the proposed cut-points, the frequency distribution of ratings would be: $A_s=3$, $B_s=10$, $C_s=11$, $D_s=3$, $F_s=2$.
2. The surveys are available in four languages and are conducted twice a year during a two-week window approximately halfway through both the fall and spring semester.
3. Students receive unique links that allow the district to analyze how survey participation matches grade level demographics, however, individual responses are anonymous unless the student mentions possible harm to self or others. The survey program provides an override to alert district administrators in the event of that situation.
4. At the end of the first week of each survey administration period, participation rates are reviewed to allow the campus to provide additional opportunities for survey completion if needed. Campuses with participation rates that differ by more than 10 percent for each student group will not have this data included for LAS ratings.
5. Cut-points for each student group are as follows: 90 percent of students rating engagement at 90 or better= A , 80% = B , 70%= C , 60%= D , <60= F .

Technical Feedback

Areas of Strength

- The survey process includes disaggregated analysis and appropriate safeguards to ensure representative participation.
- The plan reflects a systemic approach to review and refine survey administration processes.

- The plan reflects rigorous, yet reasonable, and sets goals using baseline and trajectory data, intended to increase campus performance.

Required District Postings

TEC §39.0544 (a)(5)(6) and §39.0544 (e)(2) require districts and open-enrollment charter schools produce and display a campus score card on the campus website. The campus score card should include at a minimum the scaled score and rating for each component, domain, and for LAS overall. Districts and open-enrollment charter schools are required to include an explanation of the goals for components, domains, and methodologies chosen to produce LAS ratings. Districts and open-enrollment charter schools must also include the methodology for how goals were derived from local community and stakeholder feedback and the rationale for each goal. A link to each campus website must be provided to the agency and is included on the school report card located on <https://txschools.gov/>.

Chapter 3—LAS Ratings, Audits, and Appeals

LAS Ratings Submission Process

For each campus in an identified school type, all scaled component and scaled domain scores and ratings must be submitted to the agency in addition to the overall LAS score and rating. An agency-provided scaling tool is available to assist with the scaling process. In order to combine LAS scores with state accountability scores, each LAS component and domain score is required to be scaled to a 0–100 range, with the following cut points:

Cut Points	Rating
90–100	<i>A</i>
80–89	<i>B</i>
70–79	<i>C</i>
60–69	<i>D</i>
<60	<i>F</i>

Scores should be rounded as follows according to usual rounding conventions:

- Component scores rounded to one decimal place;
- Domain scores are rounded to the nearest whole number

LAS Ratings Review Process

TEA verifies the LAS campus overall scaled scores submitted by districts and open-enrollment charter schools. Any data discrepancies and/or any indication that data have been compromised may result in an audit of LAS data. The audit process may include requests for data used for campus-level calculation of component and/or domain scaled scores.

On an annual basis, TEA randomly selects districts or open-enrollment charter schools for a LAS audit, and, for each such audit, TEA randomly selects components for review. Districts and open-enrollment charter schools selected must submit the requested data for review within the timeframe specified. Districts and open-enrollment charter schools must maintain documentation of the LAS plan development process along with all associated data for campus ratings for two years. Suggested documentation could include meeting dates, agendas, handouts, and sign-in sheets in accordance with locally-established policies and procedures.

LAS Ratings Appeal Process

Due to the diversity and number of districts, open-enrollment charter schools, and campuses in Texas, as well as the range of data sources eligible for inclusion in LAS, there may be situations that are not specifically addressed in this manual. If an approved LAS data source is unintentionally affected by unforeseen circumstances, such as natural disasters and test administration issues, the commissioner of education will consider those circumstances and the impact in determining whether or how that data source will be used to calculate ratings for the LAS.

A successful LAS appeal is usually limited to situations such as a calculation error attributable to the Texas Education Agency or testing contractor. Accurate data is fundamental to local accountability ratings. LAS depends upon the responsible collection and submission of data by school districts and open-enrollment charter schools. Responsibility for the accuracy and quality of data used to determine local accountability ratings, therefore, rests with each district and open-enrollment charter school. Superintendent certification of data accuracy during the LAS ratings submission process includes an assurance that calculations have been verified to ensure that all data were included as appropriate for all LAS components.

Appeals may be submitted by the superintendent or chief operating officer once ratings are released. Districts and charter schools may appeal a LAS rating by mailing the appeal letter along with all supporting documentation to: Attention: Performance Reporting Division/LAS Appeal, Texas Education Agency, 1701 Congress Avenue, Austin, Texas 78701. Appeals not signed by the district superintendent or chief operating office of the charter school are denied. Appeals must be postmarked or hand-delivered no later than September 13, 2019, by 5:00 p.m. CDT to be considered. Commissioner’s decisions are mailed in the form of response letters to each district and charter school that filed an appeal by the September 13, 2019, deadline.

LAS Appeals Timeline

August 15—State Accountability and LAS Ratings Released (TEAL and TEA Public Website)

August 15–September 13—LAS Appeals Window

September 13—LAS Appeals Deadline

December—LAS Appeal Decisions Released

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