

Chapter 6—Distinction Designations

Districts and campuses that demonstrate acceptable performance are eligible to earn distinction designations. Acceptable performance is defined as an overall rating of *A*, *B*, or *C* for the rating year.

Distinction designations are awarded for achievement in several areas and are based on performance relative to a group of campuses of similar type, size, grade span, and student demographics.

Distinction Designations

Distinction designations are awarded in the following areas:

- Academic Achievement in Reading/Language Arts (RLA) (campus only)
- Academic Achievement in Mathematics (campus only)
- Academic Achievement in Science (campus only)
- Academic Achievement in Social Studies (campus only)
- Top 25 Percent: Comparative Academic Growth (campus only)
- Top 25 Percent: Comparative Closing the Gaps (campus only)
- Postsecondary Readiness (district and campus)

Distinction Designation Labels

The Distinction Designation Reports show one of the following labels for each distinction designation:

Distinction Earned. The district or campus demonstrates acceptable performance and meets the criteria for the distinction designation.

No Distinction Earned. The district or campus does not demonstrate acceptable performance or does not meet the criteria for the distinction designation.

Not Eligible. The district or campus does not have results to evaluate for the distinction designation, is not rated, is evaluated by alternative education accountability (AEA) provisions, or is a campus paired with a feeder campus for accountability evaluation.

Campus Comparison Groups

Each campus is assigned to a unique comparison group comprised of Texas schools that are most similar to it. To determine the campus comparison group, each campus is identified by school type (See the school types chart in “Chapter 1—Accountability Overview” for more information) then grouped with 40 other campuses from anywhere in Texas that are most similar in grade levels served, size, percentage of students who are economically disadvantaged, mobility rate, percentage of emergent bilingual students, percentage of students receiving special education services, and percentage of students enrolled in an Early College High School program. Each campus has only one unique campus comparison group. There is no limit on the number of comparison groups to which a campus may be a member. It is possible for a campus to be a member of no comparison group other than its own or a member of several comparison groups.

A campus earns a distinction designation if it is in the top quartile (Q1) of its comparison group for at least 33 percent (for high schools and K–12 campuses) or 50 percent (for elementary and middle schools) of the indicators used to award the distinction.

- For an indicator to be used to evaluate campuses for a distinction designation, at least 20

campuses in the comparison group must have data for that indicator. If fewer than 20 campuses have data for the indicator, it cannot be used to evaluate campuses for the distinction. This often affects campuses with non-traditional grade spans.

- When campuses have scores that tie in the Top 25 Percent: Comparative Academic Growth and Top 25 Percent: Comparative Closing the Gaps distinctions, the top ten campuses in the group are awarded the distinction. If the tie occurs at the ten-campus point, the campuses that tie with campus ten will be awarded the distinction.
- Campuses will not have access to the performance data of other campuses and will not know where they rank in their comparison groups until the public release of all accountability data.

For details on how campus comparison groups are constructed, please see “Appendix E—School Types and Campus Comparison Groups.”

Academic Achievement in RLA

An Academic Achievement Distinction Designation (AADD) is awarded to campuses for outstanding achievement in RLA based on outcomes of several performance indicators.

Who is Eligible: Campuses that demonstrate acceptable performance.

Student Groups: Performance of only the all students group is used.

Minimum Size: Minimum size is determined separately for each indicator.

- *Attendance Rate.* Minimum size is based on total days in membership. If a campus has fewer than 1,800 total days in membership (e.g., 10 students x 180 school days) attendance cannot be used to evaluate the campus for this distinction.
- *Assessments (STAAR, AP/IB, SAT, and/or ACT).* Minimum size is 10 students for each assessment. If a campus has fewer than 10 test takers for an assessment, any indicator relying on that assessment cannot be used to evaluate the campus for this distinction.
- Participation.
- *AP/IB: RLA.* Minimum size is 10 students enrolled in grades 11 and 12.
- *Advanced/Dual-Credit Course Completion: RLA.* Minimum size is 10 students in grades 9 through 12 who complete at least one course.
- *SAT/ACT Participation.* Minimum size is 10 reported annual graduates.

AADD RLA Indicators:

- Attendance Rate
- Accelerated Student Learning: RLA
- Retest Growth: RLA
- Grade 3 RLA Performance (Masters Grade Level)
- Grade 4 RLA Performance (Masters Grade Level)
- Grade 5 RLA Performance (Masters Grade Level)
- Grade 6 RLA Performance (Masters Grade Level)
- Grade 7 RLA Performance (Masters Grade Level)
- Grade 8 RLA Performance (Masters Grade Level)
- English I Performance (Masters Grade Level)
- English II Performance (Masters Grade Level)

- SAT/ACT Results for Accelerated Testers (Masters Grade Level)
- AP/IB Examination Participation: RLA
- AP/IB Examination Results (Examinees \geq Criterion): RLA
- SAT/ACT Participation
- Average SAT Score: Evidence-Based Reading and Writing (EBRW)
- Average ACT Score: RLA
- Advanced/Dual-Credit Course Completion Rate: RLA (grades 9–12)

Methodology:

Step 1: Determine a campus' performance on each indicator that applies to it and for which it has data.

Step 2: Compare that campus' performance for each indicator within the campus comparison group.

Step 3: Determine if the campus is in the top 25 percent of its campus comparison group.

- High schools and combined elementary/secondary schools (K–12) must be in the top quartile (Q1) for 33 percent or more of all the indicators for which they have data.
- Middle schools, junior high schools, and elementary schools must be in the top quartile for 50 percent or more of all the indicators for which they have data.

Please see “Appendix H—Data Sources” for a description of the source of data for each indicator.

Other information:

- *Accelerated Student Learning: RLA.* The RLA accelerated learning data as defined in School Progress, Part A: Academic Growth.
- *Retest Growth: RLA.* The percentage of English I and/or English II end-of-course (EOC) retests that earned Approaches Grade Level or above in the current cycle.
- *Advanced/Dual-Credit Course Completion: RLA.* The advanced/dual-credit course completion rate for RLA includes students enrolled in grades 9 through 12.
- *Assessments.* A complete list of AP and IB assessments used to award this distinction is available in Appendix H.
- *Attendance Rate.* This is based on student attendance for the entire school year for students in grades 1–12. The attendance rate indicator applies to all four subject area distinctions.
- *Sole Indicator.* Attendance Rate cannot be the sole indicator used by a campus to attain an AADD; however, a campus may earn an AADD based on another sole indicator.

Example Campus Calculation:

<p><i>Example:</i> Colonial High School is fictional but typical of Texas high schools with varied performance on the 11 indicators for this distinction. To determine whether it has earned the distinction, its performance is compared to its unique campus comparison group for each of its 11 indicators. It must be in the top quartile (Q1) for at least 33 percent of the indicators to earn the AADD in RLA.</p>												
Step 1	Determine Colonial HS performance on its 10 indicators.	Attendance rate	Accelerated Student Learning: RLA	Retest Growth: RLA	English I Performance	English II Performance	AP/IB RLA Results	AP/IB RLA Participation	SAT/ACT Participation	Average SAT Score: EBRW	Average ACT Score: RLA	Advanced/Dual-Credit Course Completion
		93.3%	2%	5%	8%	9%	72%	48.9%	90%	1079	23.5	18.5%
Step 2	Compare performance to campuses in Colonial HS Comparison Group.							Q1	Q1	Q1		Q1
							Q2				Q2	
					Q3	Q3						
		Q4	Q4	Q4								
Step 3	Is performance in the top quartile?	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Result:		Performance on 4 of 11 indicators is Colonial High in Q1, which is greater than 33 percent of indicators; School earns an AADD in RLA.										

Academic Achievement in Mathematics

An AADD is awarded to campuses for outstanding achievement in mathematics based on outcomes of several performance indicators.

Who is Eligible: Campuses that demonstrate acceptable performance.

Student Groups: Performance of only the all students group is used.

Minimum Size: Minimum size is determined separately for each indicator.

- *Attendance Rate.* Minimum size is based on total days in membership. If a campus has fewer than 1,800 total days in membership (e.g., 10 students x 180 school days) attendance cannot be used to evaluate the campus for this distinction.
- *Assessments (STAAR, AP/IB, SAT, and/or ACT).* Minimum size is 10 students for each assessment. If a campus has fewer than 10 test takers for an assessment, any indicator relying on that assessment cannot be used to evaluate the campus for this distinction.
- Participation
- *AP/IB: Mathematics.* Minimum size is 10 students enrolled in grades 11 and 12.
- *Advanced/Dual-Credit Course Completion: Mathematics.* Minimum size is 10 students in grades 9 through 12 who complete at least one course.
- *Algebra I by Grade 8 Participation.* Minimum size is 10 students enrolled in grade 8.
- *SAT/ACT Participation.* Minimum size is 10 reported annual graduates

AADD Mathematics Indicators:

- Attendance Rate
- Accelerated Student Learning: Mathematics
- Retest Growth: Mathematics
- Grade 3 Mathematics Performance (Masters Grade Level)

- Grade 4 Mathematics Performance (Masters Grade Level)
- Grade 5 Mathematics Performance (Masters Grade Level)
- Grade 6 Mathematics Performance (Masters Grade Level)
- Grade 7 Mathematics Performance (Masters Grade Level)
- Grade 8 Mathematics Performance (Masters Grade Level)
- Algebra I by Grade 8 Performance (Meets Grade Level)
- Algebra I by Grade 8 Participation
- Algebra I Performance (Masters Grade Level)
- SAT/ACT Results for Accelerated Testers (Masters Grade Level)
- AP/IB Examination Participation: Mathematics
- AP/IB Examination Results (Examinees \geq Criterion): Mathematics
- SAT/ACT Participation
- Average SAT Score: Mathematics
- Average ACT Score: Mathematics
- Advanced/Dual-Credit Course Completion Rate: Mathematics (grades 9–12)

Methodology:

Step 1: Determine a campus' performance on each indicator that applies to it and for which it has data.

Step 2: Compare that campus' performance for each indicator within the campus comparison group.

Step 3: Determine if the campus is in the top 25 percent of its campus comparison group.

- High schools and combined elementary/secondary schools (K–12) must be in the top quartile (Q1) for 33 percent or more of all the indicators for which they have data.
- Middle schools, junior high schools, and elementary schools must be in the top quartile for 50 percent or more of all the indicators for which they have data.

Please see Appendix H for a description of the source of data for each indicator.

Other information:

- *Accelerated Student Learning: Mathematics.* The mathematics accelerated learning data as defined in School Progress, Part A: Academic Growth.
- *Retest Growth: Mathematics.* The percentage of Algebra I EOC retests that earned Approaches Grade Level or above in the current cycle.
- *Algebra I by Grade 8 Participation:* The Algebra I by Grade 8 Participation indicator limits the denominator to grade 8 students based on rating year TSDS PEIMS Fall enrollment. The numerator is Algebra I assessments taken in either the current or any prior school year as reported in the consolidated accountability file (CAF) cumulative history section.
- *Algebra I by Grade 8 Performance:* The Algebra I by Grade 8 Performance indicator limits the denominator to grade 8 students based on rating year TSDS PEIMS Fall enrollment. The numerator is Algebra I assessments at the Meets Grade Level standard or above taken in either the current or any prior school year as reported in the CAF cumulative history section.
- *Advanced/Dual-Credit Course Completion: Mathematics.* The advanced/dual-credit course completion rate for mathematics includes students enrolled in grades 9 through 12.
- *Assessments.* A complete list of AP and IB assessments used to award this distinction is available

in Appendix H.

- *Attendance Rate.* This is based on student attendance for the entire school year for students in grades 1–12. The attendance rate indicator applies to all four subject area distinctions.
- *Sole Indicator.* Attendance Rate cannot be the sole indicator used by a campus to attain an AADD; however, a campus may earn an AADD based on another sole indicator.

Academic Achievement in Science

An AADD is awarded to campuses for outstanding achievement in science based on outcomes of several performance indicators.

Who is Eligible: Campuses that demonstrate acceptable performance.

Student Groups: Performance of only the all students group is used.

Minimum Size: Minimum size is determined separately for each indicator.

- *Attendance Rate.* Minimum size is based on total days in membership. If a campus has fewer than 1,800 total days in membership (e.g., 10 students x 180 school days) attendance cannot be used to evaluate the campus for this distinction.
- *Assessments (STAAR, AP/IB, and/or ACT).* Minimum size is 10 students for each assessment. If a campus has fewer than 10 test takers for an assessment, any indicator relying on that assessment cannot be used to evaluate the campus for this distinction.
- Participation.
- *AP/IB: Science.* Minimum size is 10 students enrolled in grades 11 and 12.
- *Advanced/Dual-Credit Course Completion: Science.* Minimum size is 10 students in grades 9 through 12 who complete at least one course.

AADD Science Indicators:

- Attendance Rate
- Grade 5 Science Performance (Masters Grade Level)
- Grade 8 Science Performance (Masters Grade Level)
- EOC Biology Performance (Masters Grade Level)
- Retest Growth: Science
- ACT Results for Accelerated Testers (Masters Grade Level)
- AP/IB Examination Participation: Science
- AP/IB Examination Results (Examinees \geq Criterion): Science
- Average ACT Score: Science
- Advanced/Dual-Credit Course Completion Rate: Science (grades 9–12)

Methodology:

Step 1: Determine a campus' performance on each indicator that applies to it and for which it has data.

Step 2: Compare that campus' performance for each indicator within the campus comparison group.

Step 3: Determine if the campus is in the top 25 percent of its campus comparison group.

- High schools and combined elementary/secondary schools (K–12) must be in the top quartile (Q1) for 33 percent or more of all the indicators for which they have data.

- Middle schools, junior high schools, and elementary schools must be in the top quartile for 50 percent or more of all the indicators for which they have data.

Please see Appendix H for a description of the source of data for each indicator.

Other information:

- *Retest Growth: Science.* The percentage of Biology EOC retests that earned Approaches Grade Level or above in the current cycle.
- *Advanced/Dual-Credit Course Completion: Science.* The advanced/dual-credit course completion rate for science includes students enrolled in grades 9 through 12.
- *Assessments.* A complete list of AP and IB assessments used to award this distinction is available in Appendix H.
- *Attendance Rate.* This is based on student attendance for the entire school year for students in grades 1–12. The attendance rate indicator applies to all four subject area distinctions.
- *Sole Indicator.* Attendance Rate cannot be the sole indicator used by a campus to attain an AADD; however, a campus may earn an AADD based on another sole indicator.

Academic Achievement in Social Studies

An AADD is awarded to campuses for outstanding achievement in social studies based on outcomes of several performance indicators.

Who is Eligible: Campuses that demonstrate acceptable performance.

Student Groups: Performance of only the all students group is used.

Minimum Size: Minimum size is determined separately for each indicator.

- *Attendance Rate.* Minimum size is based on total days in membership. If a campus has fewer than 1,800 total days in membership (e.g., 10 students x 180 school days) attendance cannot be used to evaluate the campus for this distinction.
- *Assessments (STAAR and/or AP/IB).* Minimum size is 10 students for each assessment. If a campus has fewer than 10 test takers for an assessment, any indicator relying on that assessment cannot be used to evaluate the campus for this distinction.
- Participation.
- *AP/IB: Social Studies.* Minimum size is 10 students enrolled in grades 11 and 12.
- *Advanced/Dual-Credit Course Completion: Social Studies.* Minimum size is 10 students in grades 9 through 12 who complete at least one course.

AADD Social Studies Indicators:

- Attendance Rate
- Grade 8 Social Studies Performance (Masters Grade Level)
- EOC U.S. History Performance (Masters Grade Level)
- Retest Growth: Social Studies
- AP/IB Examination Participation: Social Studies
- AP/IB Examination Results (Examinees >= Criterion): Social Studies
- Advanced/Dual-Credit Course Completion Rate: Social Studies (grades 9–12)

Methodology:

Step 1: Determine a campus' performance on each indicator that applies to it and for which it has data.

Step 2: Compare that campus' performance for each indicator within the campus comparison group.

Step 3: Determine if the campus is in the top 25 percent of its campus comparison group.

- High schools and combined elementary/secondary schools (K–12) must be in the top quartile (Q1) for 33 percent or more of all the indicators for which they have data.
- Middle schools, junior high schools, and elementary schools must be in the top quartile for 50 percent or more of all the indicators for which they have data.

Please see Appendix H for a description of the source of data for each indicator.

Other information:

- *Retest Growth: Social Studies.* The percentage of US History EOC retests that earned Approaches Grade Level or above in the current cycle.
- *Advanced/Dual-Credit Course Completion: Social Studies.* The advanced/dual-credit course completion rate for social studies includes students enrolled in grades 9 through 12.
- *Assessments.* A complete list of AP and IB assessments used to award this distinction is available in Appendix H.
- *Attendance Rate.* This is based on student attendance for the entire school year for students in grades 1–12. The attendance rate indicator applies to all four subject area distinctions.
- *Sole Indicator.* Attendance Rate cannot be the sole indicator used by a campus to attain an AADD; however, a campus may earn an AADD based on another sole indicator.

Top 25 Percent: Comparative Academic Growth

A distinction designation for outstanding academic growth is awarded to campuses whose School Progress, Part A domain raw score is ranked in the top 25 percent (Q1) of campuses in its campus comparison group.

Who is Eligible: Campuses evaluated on School Progress, Part A and demonstrate acceptable performance.

Methodology: Campuses are arranged in descending order per School Progress, Part A raw scores. If the School Progress, Part A raw score for a campus is within the top quartile of its comparison group, it earns a distinction for student progress.

For more information on the School Progress domain, please see “Chapter 3—School Progress Domain.”

Top 25 Percent: Comparative Closing the Gaps

A distinction designation for outstanding performance in closing student achievement gaps is awarded to campuses whose Closing the Gaps domain raw score is ranked in the top 25 percent (Q1) of campuses in its campus comparison group.

Who is Eligible: Campuses evaluated on Closing the Gaps domain and demonstrate acceptable performance.

Methodology: Campuses are arranged in descending order per their Closing the Gaps domain raw scores. If the Closing the Gaps raw score for a campus is in the top quartile of its comparison group, it

earns a distinction for closing student achievement gaps.

For more information on the Closing the Gaps domain, please see “Chapter 4—Closing the Gaps Domain.”

Postsecondary Readiness

Both districts and campuses that demonstrate acceptable performance are eligible for a distinction designation for outstanding academic performance in attainment of postsecondary readiness. To earn a distinction for postsecondary readiness, an elementary or middle school must be in the top quartile for at least 50 percent or more of all the indicators for which they have data, high schools and K–12 campuses must have at least 33 percent of their indicators in the top quartile of their campus comparison groups, and districts must have at least 55 percent of all their campuses’ postsecondary indicators in the top quartile.

Who is Eligible: Multi-campus districts and campuses that demonstrate acceptable performance.

For single-campus districts and charter schools that share the same prior year performance data as its only campus, the campus is eligible to earn a postsecondary readiness distinction designation, but the district or charter school is *not* eligible to earn the district postsecondary readiness distinction designation.

Student Groups: Performance of the all students group only

Minimum Size: The all students group must have a minimum size of 10.

Postsecondary Readiness Indicators for Campuses:

- Percentage of STAAR Results at Meets Grade Level or Above Standard (All Subjects)
- Percentage of Grade 3–8 Results at Meets Grade Level or Above in Both RLA and Mathematics
- Four-Year Longitudinal Graduation Rate
- Four-Year Longitudinal Graduation Plan Rate
- TSI Criteria Graduates
- College, Career, and Military Ready Graduates
- SAT/ACT Participation
- AP/IB Examination Participation: Any Subject

Methodology:

Elementary and Middle Schools: Elementary and middle schools must be in the top quartile (Q1) for 50 percent or more of all the indicators for which they have data.

High Schools: High schools and combined elementary/secondary schools (K–12) must be in the top quartile (Q1) for 33 percent or more of all the indicators for which they have data.

Districts: A district must have at least 55 percent of its campuses’ postsecondary indicators in the top quartile (Q1). See the sample district calculation at the end of this chapter.

Districts with fewer than five campus-level postsecondary indicators are not eligible for the postsecondary readiness distinction.

Example Postsecondary Readiness Campus Calculation:

<p><i>Example:</i> Beta High School is fictional but typical of Texas high schools with varied performance on the eight indicators for this distinction. To determine whether it has earned the distinction, its performance is compared to its unique campus comparison group for each of the seven indicators for which Beta High School had data. It must be in the top quartile (Q1) for at least 33 percent of the indicators to earn the Postsecondary Readiness Distinction Designation.</p>								
Step 1	Determine Beta HS performance on its eight indicators.	STAAR Meets Grade Level or Above Standard 47%	Graduation Rate 87.7%	Graduation Plan Rate 85.9%	TSI Criteria Graduates 79%	College, Career, and Military Ready Graduates 85%	SAT/ACT Participation 94.4%	AP/IB Participation 49.6%
Step 2	Compare performance to campuses in Beta HS Comparison Group.			Q1	Q1	Q1	Q1	
		Q2	Q2					
								Q3
Step 3	Is performance in the top quartile?	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Result:		Performance on four of seven indicators is in Q1, which is greater than 33 percent of indicators. Beta High School earns a Postsecondary Readiness Distinction Designation.						

Other Information:

Percentage of STAAR Results at Meets Grade Level or Above Standard (All Subjects). This indicator measures the total percentage of STAAR results in all subjects at the Meets Grade Level or above standard.

Percentage of Grade 3–8 Results at Meets Grade Level or Above Standard in Both RLA and Mathematics. This indicator measures the percentage of students in grades 3–8 who were administered the RLA and mathematics STAAR and achieved the Meets Grade Level or above standard on both assessments.

Four-Year Longitudinal Graduation Plan Rate. This indicator uses the rate comprised of students who graduate with Recommended High School Plan (RHSP) or Distinguished Achievement Plan (DAP) or Foundation High School Plan with an Endorsement (FHSP-E) or Foundation High School Plan with a Distinguished Level of Achievement (FHSP-DLA) or Texas First Early High School Completion Program with a Distinguished Level of Achievement (Texas-First-DLA).

Texas Success Initiative (TSI) Criteria Graduates. This indicator measures the percentage of graduates meeting the TSI college readiness standards in both RLA and mathematics; specifically, meeting the college-ready criteria on the TSIA1 and/or TSIA2 assessment, SAT, ACT, or by successfully completing and earning credit for a college prep course as defined in TEC §28.014 and TEC §51.338, in both RLA and mathematics. The criteria for successful completion of a college prep course should be in alignment between an LEA and the partnering IHE(s). In accordance with TEC §51.338(e), upon successful completion of a college prep course, students earn a TSI exemption from the partnering IHE(s) in that content area. Students should only be reported as successfully completing a course if they have met TSI exemption requirements. The assessment results considered for 2026 Accountability include TSI1 and/or TSIA2 through October 2025, SAT and ACT results through the July 2025 administration, and course completion data via TSDS PEIMS. See Appendix H for additional information.

Methodology. A complete description of the methodology and data sources used in determining each of the indicators in the table above is in Appendix H.

Example District Postsecondary Readiness Calculation:

<i>Example:</i> A sample district has 12 campuses. Each campus has either 2 or 8 possible indicators for this distinction.			
School	Grade Span	Postsecondary Indicators in Top Quartile for This School	Maximum Possible Postsecondary Indicators
High School A	9–12	7	7
High School B	9–12	6	7
Middle School C	6–8	0	2
Middle School D	6–8	1	2
Middle School E	6–8	1	2
Middle School F	6–8	1	2
Elementary G	PK–5	2	2
Elementary H	PK–5	1	2
Elementary I	PK–5	2	2
Elementary J	PK–5	2	2
Elementary K	PK–5	0	2
Elementary L	PK–5	2	2
Total		25	36
Result:	Performance on 25 of 36 indicators is in Q1, or 69 percent, which is greater than 55 percent. This sample district earns a Postsecondary Readiness Distinction Designation.		