Columbus I.S.D. www.columbusisd.org
105 Cardinal Lane • Columbus, Texas • 78934 • (979) 732-5704 • fax: (979) 732-5960

2017 "A-F" State Accountability System

In 1983, HB 72 created state curriculum standards, a state assessment system and a state accountability system for public schools. The original intent was to insure all students were achieving basic skills in reading and math. The original intent has evolved into a current system that is rating and ranking students and schools based on college readiness/advanced standards measured by the state assessment STAAR. Neither higher education nor the workforce consider the STAAR assessments as a valid indicator for post-secondary success.

This week, the newest accountability system results were released based on an A-F rating system. There are 4 domains that will receive a letter grade, then an over-all campus and district letter grade. This new system was slated to go into effect for the 2017-2018 school year; however, the Legislature requested a trial run based on the 2015-2016 school data. The complexities of determining the letter grade for each domain far surpass any grading system used in our public schools for reporting student progress. There is no simple explanation for how the ratings were determined; therefore, this article shares the explanation for determining the ratings that was provided by the Texas Education Agency.

The political justification for moving to this system was to provide a performance grade for campuses comparable to the grades received on student report cards. The letter grades would be simple to understand! I will let you be the judge!

2016 Explanation of the A-F Accountability System:

Domains 1 – 3:

- Based on the STAAR/EOC tests only
- Points earned are based on number of tests administered on a campus, NOT the number of students taking the test!
- Points earned are based on percentages of tests meeting the indicator criteria

Domain I – Student Performance

Construction: All tests administered, all subjects tested, all grades tested, minimum size 40 - tests administered, not number of students

Indicators: Total points for this domain are based on a weighted formula:

- 1/3 of the total - passing the STAAR,

- 1/3 of the total - postsecondary readiness scores on the STAAR,
- 1/3 of the total - advanced scores on the STAAR.

Calculation: 1 point for each percentage passing the test, 1 point for each percentage of tests meeting postsecondary readiness, 1 point for each percentage of tests meeting advanced standard.

- Add the percentages (equivalent points) for each of the 3 areas and divide by 300 (highest possible points), which equals the points for Domain 1.

Domain 2 – Student Progress

Construction: Evaluates 10 student groups (all tests, 7 racial/ethnic groups, Special Education and English Language Learners), tests are combined across English Language Arts and Math, minimum size for all is 10, minimum size for each subgroup is 25

Indicators: Progress measure expectations (1 year's progress on current tests compared to prior year tests) & English Language Learner expectations

Calculation: 1 point for each percentage of test results making 1 year progress from prior year test results, 1 point for each percentage of test results exceeding 1 year progress from prior year test results.

Total points divided by maximum total points of 200 per student group meeting minimum size requirements. (maximum groups that could be assessed – 10)

Add percentages (equivalent points) and divide by 200 X the number of subgroups that met minimum-size requirements, which equals the points for Domain 2.

Translation – you receive no points for students/tests that did not make a full year's progress on the test compared to the prior year. A student that made 87 in math in the 4^{th} grade and 85 in math in the 5^{th} grade would not earn a point for this domain!

Domain 3 – Closing Performance Gaps

Construction: All tests, all subjects tested, all grades, economically disadvantaged students only, minimum size – 40 tests

Indicators: Total points are based on a weighted formula:

- 1/3 passing the STAAR,
- 1/3 postsecondary readiness scores on the STAAR,
- 1/3 advanced scores on the STAAR.

Calculation: Use Domain 1 assessment results for economically disadvantaged students only: 1 point for each percentage passing the test, 1 point for percentage of tests meeting postsecondary readiness, 1 point for tests meeting advanced standard.

Add the percentages (equivalent points) for each of the 3 areas and divide by 300 (highest possible points), calculate predicted score using formulas created by TEA for campus type, the difference between the actual Domain 1 score and predicted Domain 1 score is the Domain III score.

Formulas:

- Based on slope-intercept form: y= mx+b
- Specific formula is set is using statewide data from 2015-2016 for each district/campus type
- Two variables: y = predicted Domain I score, X = percentage of students who are economically disadvantaged (example: Elementary Campus: y= -.10992X + 47.31887, Middle School: y= -.18288X + 47.49244)

Grade: Calculate the predicted Domain 1 score using percentage of economically disadvantaged and the appropriate formula, calculate the actual Domain 1 score based on results of economically disadvantaged subgroup, subtract the predicted Domain 1 score from the actual Domain 1 score to get the Domain 3 score.

Domain IV – Postsecondary Readiness

Construction: All students, 7 racial/ethnic groups, Special Education, English Language Learnings

Indicators: Elementary – Chronic Absenteeism Rate only, Middle School – Chronic Absenteeism Rate and grades 7-8 Dropout Rate

High School: 4, 5, 6 year longitudinal graduation rate, Grades 9-12 dropout rate, graduates who completed a coherent sequence of career and technology courses, 12 or more hours of postsecondary credit, one or more AP/IB courses, met the TSI Benchmark on TSI, SAT or ACT, graduated under the recommended, distinguished or foundation plans.

Methodology:

Absenteeism – days of membership divided by days taught – determine which students are at or above 83%, determine percentage who were absent at least 10% of the days eligible to attend, subtract this percentage from 100 to determine the score, which is actually the percentage of students who are not chronically absent.

Calculation:

- Elementary School – Domain 4 score is based on attendance only
- Middle School – Domain 4 score is based on attendance and dropout only
- High School:
  - Graduation rate is 10% of the 35% that Domain IV Score contributes to the overall grade
  - 2014-2015 annual graduates who accomplished at least one of the following (20% of the 35% for the Domain IV Score):
    - Completed CTE sequence of courses
    - Complete 12 or more dual credit/postsecondary credit courses
    - Completed 1 or more AP/IB courses
    - Met the TSI benchmark on TSI, SAT or ACT
- Graduation Plan Rate is 5% of the 35% of the Domain IV Score.

It appears from the data released by the Texas Education Agency, the preliminary ratings do not include the completion data for CTE, dual credit, AP/IB or college readiness exams.

The newly developed A-F State Accountability System is NOT an accurate reflection of quality education, dedicated staff, supportive parents and students with a vast array of talents, interests and opportunities. This system does NOT take into consideration the vast diversity of our state or the available resources for meeting the high expectations required to achieve the desired outcomes.

Columbus ISD does not embrace a rating or ranking of our schools based on a state test administered on one specific date. Our focus is to provide a quality 21st century education that far exceeds the limited parameters of this state accountability design. Our schools are so much more than one test; our students are so much more than one score!

Sincerely,

Dr. Brian Morris
Superintendent of Schools