MEMORANDUM   January 16, 2014

TO: Board Members

FROM: Terry B. Grier, Ed.D.
                Superintendent of Schools

CONTACT: Carla Stevens, Research and Accountability, (713) 556-6700

SUBJECT: **TEA DESIGNATIONS OF REWARD, PRIORITY AND FOCUS SCHOOLS**

For some time, Texas schools and districts have been held accountable under two systems: the state accountability system, mandated by the Texas Legislature, and the federal system, created by the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act.

Despite the best efforts of all parties, the implementation of two systems often results in a confusing mix of requirements that detract attention from the overall goal—improved performance for all students. To support this goal, and to create optimal learning environments and sustainable increases in student achievement, a coordinated, effective statewide system of support for struggling schools and districts is essential.

As a result, on September 30, 2013, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) received approval from the U. S. Department of Education (USDE) for a request to waive specific provisions of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), as amended by P.L. 107-110 No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001. The waiver approval gives TEA and more than 1,200 districts additional flexibility while reducing duplication. Most importantly the waiver allows TEA to utilize the state's accountability system, in lieu of the federal accountability system known as Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP).

With this flexibility, TEA has implemented a single accountability system with tiered interventions (replacing AYP) beginning in the school year 2013–2014. The integrated system is comprised of three components that are designed to meet state and federal accountability requirements for all campuses and districts.

- Performance Index Framework – State Accountability System
- System Safeguards
- Texas Accountability Intervention System (TAIS)

The state's accountability system was developed around a performance index framework designed to meet state statutory requirements using four performance indexes:
        Index 1. Student Achievement
        Index 2. Student Progress
        Index 3. Closing Performance Gaps
        Index 4. Postsecondary Readiness

These four indexes determine the state accountability rating labels that are assigned to each district and campus. For the 2012-2013 school year, campuses were required to meet a predetermined target on each of the four indexes (see **Table 1**). Campuses that met all four

indexes received a rating of **Met Standard** and campuses that missed one or more indexes received a rating of **Improvement Required**.

Table 1. Accountability Targets			
Index	**Level**	**Non-AEA*** **Target**	**AEA**** **Target**
Index 1: Student Achievement	All	50	25
Index 2: Student Progress	High Schools/Multi	17	9
	Middle Schools	29	9
	Elementary Schools	30	N/A
	Districts	21	9
Index 3: Closing Performance Gaps	All	55	30
Index 4: Postsecondary Readiness	All	75	45

***Non-AEA** Non Alternative Education Accountability ***AEA** Alternative Education Accountability*

Campuses that received an accountability rating of "Met Standard" were also eligible for the following distinction designations in 2013 (campuses evaluated under alternative education accountability (AEA) provisions were not eligible for distinction designations):

- Top 25% Student Progress
- Academic Achievement in Reading/English language arts (ELA)
- Academic Achievement in Mathematics

Campus distinction designations are based on campus performance in relation to a comparison group of campuses. Each campus is assigned to a unique comparison group of 40 other public schools (from anywhere in the state), that closely matches that school on the following characteristics: campus type, campus size, percent economically disadvantaged students, mobility rates (based on cumulative attendance), and percent of students with limited English proficiency.

In addition to meeting the targets for each of the four indexes, campuses were required to meet performance, participation and graduation rates in order to meet federal requirements of *ambitious but achievable* annual measurable objectives (AMOs) for each student group evaluated under the state's accountability system. **Table 2** shows the disaggregated safeguard measures and federal targets or annual measurable objectives (AMOs). Performance rates, participation rates, graduation rates, and limits on use of STAAR Alternate and STAAR Modified were calculated to meet federal requirements. Federal targets have been set for these indicators.

Table 2. System Safeguard Rates (All Students, African American, Hispanic, White, Economically Disadvantaged and Students with Disabilities).

Performance Rates

Year	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18	18-19	19-20
Math	75%	79%	83%	87%	91%	95%	95%	100%
Reading/ELA	75%	79%	83%	87%	91%	95%	98%	100%

Participation Rates

Year	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18	18-19	19-20
Math	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%
Reading/ELA	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%

Federal Graduation Rates

Year	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015
4-year Longitudinal Rate	78.0%	80.0%	83.0%
5-year Longitudinal Rate	83.0%		

Federal Limits on Proficient Results on Alternative Assessments

Modified	2012-2013 and 2013-2014	2% for the All Students Group
Alternate	2013 through 2020	1% for the All Students Group

For the All Students group, the minimum size criteria of 25 or more tests are not applied in order to ensure that campuses and districts with very small numbers of students tested are still evaluated for federal accountability purposes. Specifically, small numbers analyses are conducted when there are fewer than ten test results in the current year. For the system safeguards evaluated for 2013 federal accountability, a two-year uniform average is computed based on the current year (2013) and prior year (2012) results. If there are ten or more test results available when both years are combined, then the two-year uniform average is used to evaluate the All Students group in 2013. In future years, a three-year uniform average will be used since STAAR test results will be available across three years beginning in 2014.

Under the state accountability system, campuses will receive one of three additional designations, in lieu of AYP, as detailed in **Table 3.**

Table 3. NCLB Designations in Lieu of AYP

Accountability Ratings	System Safeguard Targets	Texas Accountability Intervention System (TAIS)	Additional NCLB Designation in Lieu of AYP
Met Standard or Met Alternative Standard	Met All Safeguards	No Interventions Required	Possible Reward School
Met Standard or Met Alternative Standard / Improvement Required	Missed One or More System Safeguard Targets	Intervention Required	Focus School or Priority School

The total number of campuses that are being monitored for improvements as a result of the state accountability system and the additional NCLB designations are 94. These campuses are categories below in **Table 3b**. **Table 7**, in **Appendix A**, provides a roster of these campuses along with the reason each campus is being monitored for improvements.

Table 3b. Number of Campus Monitored for Improvements and Reason				
	NCLB Designation			
	N/A	Focus	Priority	Total
N/A		1	5	6
Met Standard		29	3	32
1st Year IR	9			9
1st Year IR + Safeguards	7	17	13	37
2nd Year IR + Safeguards	1	2	5	8
3rd Year IR + Safeguards			1	1
4th Year IR + Safeguards			1	1
Totals	17	49	28	94

Identification of Priority and Focus Schools

Using data obtained from the 2013 Accountability Reports, TEA has generated a list of priority and focus schools based on statewide reading and mathematics assessments, and graduation rates. Priority schools include a combination of Tier I and II Texas Title I Priority Schools (TTIPS), Title I schools with graduation rates less than 60%, and the lowest-performing Title I schools based on achievement results on reading/math system safeguards at the All Students level. Ten percent of Title I schools, not otherwise identified as priority schools, are considered focus schools, and include campuses with the widest gaps between reading/math performance of the federal student groups (7) and safeguard targets of 75%.

Criteria for identification are:

Priority
- TTIPS grantees
- Title I high schools with graduation rates less than 60%; and/or
- Title I schools with lowest achievement on reading/math system safeguards at the All Students level

Focus
- Title I schools ranked by the widest gaps between reading/math performance of the federal student groups (7) and safeguard targets of 75%

Using the criteria above, TEA identified a total of 28 HISD campuses as Priority campuses (see **Appendix A, Table 5**) and 49 HISD campuses as Focus campuses (see **Appendix A, Table 6**). The reasons for the classification of Priority campuses is summarized in Table 4b and detailed in **Table 6** in **Appendix A**.

Table 4a. Total Designations, in Lieu of AYP		
Designations	**Total**	**Campus Names**
Reward	TBD Spring 2014	
Priority	28	See **Table 5**
Focus	49	See **Table 6**

Table 4b. Reasons for Priority School Designations	
Reasons	**Total**
TTIPS	2
Grad Rate	1
Math and Reading Performance	22
TTIPS & Math and Reading Performance	1
TTIPS, Grad Rate & Math and Reading Performance	1
Grad Rate & Math and Reading Performance	1

Intervention Requirements of Priority and Focus Schools

Priority and focus schools are required to begin and/or continue engaging in the Texas Accountability Intervention System (TAIS) improvement process and align it around critical success factors (CSFs, see **Appendix B**) and the ESEA turnaround principles (see **Appendix C**). The district is responsible for assisting identified schools in all aspects of the school improvement process, which include data analysis, needs assessment, and developing, implementing, and monitoring a plan for improvement. To exit priority or focus status, a school must make significant progress for two consecutive years following interventions and no longer fit the criteria to be identified as a priority or focus school. During school year 2013-14, the following interventions will be required for identified schools:

- **Priority TTIPS schools** will:
  a. continue implementing current TTIPS requirements and engaging in the TAIS improvement process of data analysis, needs assessment, improvement planning, and implementation and monitoring of activities at the district and school level; and
  b. ensure the ESEA turnaround principles continue to be addressed in all plans and activities required through the TTIPS grant.

- **Priority non-TTIPS schools will:**
  a. designate a District Coordinator of School Improvement (DCSI);
  b. participate in required trainings to be announced by the Texas Center for District and School Support (TCDSS), including attendance at the 2014 Advancing Improvement in Education (AIE) conference; and
  c. through engaging in the TAIS improvement process referenced above, evaluate current school staff and create a plan which will be submitted at the end of the 2013-14 school year that addresses the ESEA turnaround principles (see **Appendix C**). This plan, based on the turnaround principles, will be fully implemented by the school in the 2014-15 school year.

- **Focus schools will:**
  a. designate a district contact;
  b. review ESEA turnaround principles and identify, implement, and include in 2013-14 campus improvement plan, no less than one instructional intervention specifically targeted to address closing existing achievement gaps; and
  c. include reasons for identification and targeted instructional interventions in the school's 2013-14 campus improvement plan that will be fully implemented during the school year 2014-15.

- **Priority and focus schools *already identified as Improvement Required* under the state accountability system** will:
  a. continue the requirements outlined previously by TEA; and
  b. embed the applicable priority or focus interventions described above into current improvement work.

Technical Assistance to Priority and Focus Schools

The Division of School Improvement and Support provides technical assistance through the TCDSS at Education Service Center (ESC) Region 13. The TCDSS office will contact district and school administrators to provide more detailed information about trainings and support services. TCDSS, partnered with local ESC Turnaround Teams, will support districts and schools in the TAIS school improvement process and in meeting intervention requirements of the waiver.
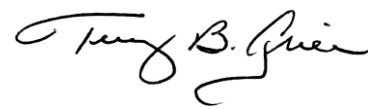
Reward Schools
To align with the Texas Title I, Distinguished Schools designation, Texas will continue recognizing high performance with school distinction designations in performance and progress for schools meeting reward criteria. A high performing reward school will be identified as a Title I school with distinctions based on reading and math performance. In addition, at the high school level, a reward school will be a Title I school with the highest graduation rates. A high progress school will be identified as a Title I school, in the top 25% in annual improvement; and/or a school in the top 25% of those demonstrating ability to close performance gaps based on system safeguards. Schools earning the Reward designation will be announced by TEA in the Spring of 2014.

Administrative Response
During the development of Campus Improvement Plans, all campuses were provided with guidance documents detailing the specific accountability and safeguard measures required to be addressed in the improvement plan. Schools designated as Improvement Required under TEA accountability were assigned Professional Service Providers (PSP's) to facilitate the development of the Campus Improvement Plan. The PSP's provided training the School Support Officers (SSO's) and campus personnel in the Texas Accountability Improvement System (TAIS) process. This process culminated in the development of Targeted Improvement Plans with a narrow focus on accountability measures and safeguards. Strategies supported at the district level included extended school days, Direct Reading, departmentalization, expansion of AP curriculum, PreK-2 Extended Year, SAT preparation, and High School Digital Transformation (PowerUp).

Should you have further questions, please contact my office or Carla Stevens in the Department of Research and Accountability at (713) 556-6700.

_____TBG

Attachments

  cc: Superintendent's Direct Reports
               Chief School Officers
               School Support Officers
               Nancy Gregory
               Altagracia Guerrero
               Lupita Hinojosa
               Sowmya Kumar

Appendix A

Table 5. 2013-2014 Priority Schools List		
Number	**Campus Name**	**Priority Reason**
High Schools		
101912094	Harper	Grad Rate, Math/Reading Performance
101912006	Jones HS	TTIPS
101912007	Kashmere HS	TTIPS, Math/Reading Performance
101912009	Lee HS	TTIPS
101912477	North Forest HS	TTIPS, Grad Rate, Math/Reading Performance
101912349	Reach HS	Grad Rate
101912018	Wheatley HS	Math/Reading Performance
101912019	Worthing HS	Math/Reading Performance
Middle Schools		
101912476	Forest Brook	Math/Reading Performance
101912456	High School Ahead	Math/Reading Performance
101912300	Inspired West	Math/Reading Performance
101912163	Sugar Grove	Math/Reading Performance
101912371	Young Scholars	Math/Reading Performance
Elementary Schools		
101912102	Alcott	Math/Reading Performance
101912110	Blackshear	Math/Reading Performance
101912140	Dogan	Math/Reading Performance
101912475	Elmore	Math/Reading Performance
101912154	Foster	Math/Reading Performance
101912168	Hartsfield	Math/Reading Performance
101912473	Hilliard	Math/Reading Performance
101912180	Isaacs	Math/Reading Performance
101912378	Kandy Stripe	Math/Reading Performance
101912185	Kashmere Gardens	Math/Reading Performance
101912179	McGowan	Math/Reading Performance
101912232	Ross	Math/Reading Performance
101912479	Shadydale	Math/Reading Performance
101912243	Thompson	Math/Reading Performance
101912247	Young	Math/Reading Performance

Table 6. 2013-2014 Focus Schools List

Number	Campus Name	Number	Campus Name
High Schools		**Elementary Schools**	
101912001	Austin HS	101912104	Almeda
101912329	Hope Academy	101912125	Burrus
101912310	Houston MST	101912123	Codwell
101912011	Milby HS	101912358	Cook
101912024	Scarborough HS	101912132	Coop
101912023	Sharpstown HS	101912383	De Anda
101912014	Sterling HS	101912115	Durham
101912017	Westbury HS	101912144	Durkee EL
Middle Schools		101912271	Foerster EL
101912041	Attucks MS	101912470	Fonwood ECC *(formerly Fonwood EL)*
101912042	Black MS	101912155	Franklin
101912045	Deady MS	101912283	Garcia
101912046	Edison MS	101912058	Gregory Lincoln (K-8)
101912078	Fleming MS	101912262	Grissom
101912072	Fondren MS	101912369	Gross
101912047	Fonville MS	101912170	Helms
101912052	Henry MS	101912174	Highland Heights
101912053	Hogg MS	101912187	Kelso
101912054	Jackson MS	101912194	Lewis
101912340	Las Americas MS	101912298	Martinez, R.
101912059	Long Academy	101912227	McNamara
101912056	Welch MS	101912210	Northline
101912082	Williams MS	101912223	Pugh
		101912382	Reagan Education Center (K-8)
		101912225	Reynolds
		101912257	Whidby
		101912127	Woodson School (K-8)

Table 7. Campuses Monitored for Improvement and Reason		
Campus Name	**Improvement Required**	**NCLB**
ADVANCED VIRTUAL ACADEMY	1st Year IR + Safeguards	N/A
ALCOTT EL	1st Year IR + Safeguards	PRIORITY
ALMEDA EL	Met Standard	FOCUS
ANDERSON EL	1st Year IR	N/A
ATTUCKS MS	2nd Year IR + Safeguards	FOCUS
AUSTIN HS	Met Standard	FOCUS
BASTIAN EL	1st Year IR + Safeguards	N/A
BLACK MS	Met Standard	FOCUS
BLACKSHEAR EL	2nd Year IR + Safeguards	PRIORITY
BURNET EL	1st Year IR	N/A
BURRUS EL	Met Standard	FOCUS
CODWELL EL	Met Standard	FOCUS
COOK EL	Met Standard	FOCUS
COOP EL	Met Standard	FOCUS
CRESPO EL	1st Year IR	N/A
DEADY	Met Standard	FOCUS
DEANDA EL	Met Standard	FOCUS
DOGAN EL	1st Year IR + Safeguards	PRIORITY
DURHAM EL	Met Standard	FOCUS
DURKEE EL	1st Year IR + Safeguards	FOCUS
EDISON MS	Met Standard	FOCUS
ELMORE EL	N/A	PRIORITY
FLEMING MS	Met Standard	FOCUS
FOERSTER EL	1st Year IR + Safeguards	FOCUS
FONDREN MS	Met Standard	FOCUS
FONVILLE MS	Met Standard	FOCUS
FONWOOD ECC	N/A	FOCUS
FOREST BROOK MS	N/A	PRIORITY
FOSTER EL	1st Year IR + Safeguards	PRIORITY
FRANKLIN EL	1st Year IR + Safeguards	FOCUS
GARCIA EL	2nd Year IR + Safeguards	FOCUS
GARDEN VILLAS EL	1st Year IR + Safeguards	N/A
GREGORY LINCOLYN	Met Standard	FOCUS
GRISSOM EL	1st Year IR + Safeguards	FOCUS
GROSS	Met Standard	FOCUS
HALPIN EARLY CHILDHOOD CTR	1st Year IR	N/A

Table 7 cont. Campuses Monitored for Improvement and Reason		
Campus Name	Improvement Required	NCLB
HARPER ALTERNATIVE	Met Standard	PRIORITY
HARTSFIELD EL	1st Year IR + Safeguards	PRIORITY
HELMS EL	1st Year IR + Safeguards	FOCUS
HENRY MS	Met Standard	FOCUS
HIGH SCHOOL AHEAD ACADEMY	2nd Year IR + Safeguards	PRIORITY
HIGHLAND HTS EL	1st Year IR + Safeguards	FOCUS
HILLARD EL	N/A	PRIORITY
HOBBY EL	1st Year IR + Safeguards	N/A
HOGG MIDDLE	1st Year IR + Safeguards	FOCUS
HOPE ACADEMY	Met Standard	FOCUS
HOUSTON MATH SCIENCE AND TECH	1st Year IR + Safeguards	FOCUS
INSPIRED FOR EXCELLENCE ACADEMY WEST	1st Year IR + Safeguards	PRIORITY
ISAACS EL	1st Year IR + Safeguards	PRIORITY
JACKSON MIDDLE	1st Year IR + Safeguards	FOCUS
JONES H S	3rd Year IR + Safeguards	PRIORITY
KANDY STRIPE	2nd Year IR + Safeguards	PRIORITY
KASHMERE GARDENS EL	1st Year IR + Safeguards	PRIORITY
KASHMERE H S	4th Year IR + Safeguards	PRIORITY
KELSO EL	1st Year IR + Safeguards	FOCUS
LAS AMERICAS	1st Year IR + Safeguards	FOCUS
LAURENZO EARLY CHILDHOOD CTR	1st Year IR	N/A
LEE HS	Met Standard	PRIORITY
LEWIS EL	Met Standard	FOCUS
LONG ACADEMY	1st Year IR + Safeguards	FOCUS
MACGREGOR EL	1st Year IR	N/A
MARTINEZ C EL	1st Year IR + Safeguards	N/A
MARTINEZ R EL	Met Standard	FOCUS
MCGOWEN EL	1st Year IR + Safeguards	PRIORITY
MCNAMARA EL	Met Standard	FOCUS
MILBY HS	Met Standard	FOCUS
MONTGOMERY EL	1st Year IR	N/A
NORTH FOREST HS	N/A	PRIORITY
NORTHLINE EL	1st Year IR + Safeguards	FOCUS
PETERSEN EL	1st Year IR + Safeguards	N/A
PUGH EL	1st Year IR + Safeguards	FOCUS
REACH CHARTER HS	Met Standard	PRIORITY
REAGAN K-8	Met Standard	FOCUS
REYNOLDS EL	Met Standard	FOCUS
ROSS EL	1st Year IR + Safeguards	PRIORITY
SCARBOROUGH H S	1st Year IR + Safeguards	FOCUS

Table 7 cont. Campuses Monitored for Improvement and Reason		
Campus Name	Improvement Required	NCLB
SHADYDALE EL	N/A	PRIORITY
SHARPSTOWN HS	Met Standard	FOCUS
STERLING H S	1st Year IR + Safeguards	FOCUS
SUGAR GROVE ACADEMY	1st Year IR + Safeguards	PRIORITY
THOMPSON EL	1st Year IR + Safeguards	PRIORITY
TINSLEY EL	1st Year IR	N/A
WAINWRIGHT EL	1st Year IR + Safeguards	N/A
WASHINGTON H S	2nd Year IR + Safeguards	N/A
WELCH MS	Met Standard	FOCUS
WESTBURY HS	Met Standard	FOCUS
WHEATLEY H S	2nd Year IR + Safeguards	PRIORITY
WHIDBY ES	Met Standard	FOCUS
WILLIAMS MS	Met Standard	FOCUS
WOODSON SCHOOL	1st Year IR + Safeguards	FOCUS
WORTHING H S	2nd Year IR + Safeguards	PRIORITY
YOUNG EL	1st Year IR + Safeguards	PRIORITY
YOUNG LEARNERS	1st Year IR	N/A
YOUNG SCHOLARS ACADEMY FOR EXCELLENCE	1st Year IR + Safeguards	PRIORITY

Appendix B

Critical Success Factors

Critical Success Factors (CSFs) capture seven areas to address in improvement efforts. Whether campus interventions are being provided through the district, local Education Service Center, or the Texas Center for District and School Support, sharing a common language around resources is essential. The seven Critical Success Factors provide a common language to anchor the work of school improvement across Texas and create opportunity to match resources to needs. These factors reference the USDE turnaround principles and will be part of the statewide intervention system. The seven Critical Success Factors are:

(1) Academic Performance: The foundational CSF. By focusing on data driven instruction that targets the use of ongoing monitoring of instruction, schools can increase performance for all students. Curricular alignment, both horizontally and vertically, is also an essential component of this CSF.
(2) Use of Quality Data to Drive Instruction: Emphasizes data disaggregation training and ongoing communication of data to improve student learning outcomes. A focus of this CSF is utilizing data to drive decisions.
(3) Leadership Effectiveness: Targets the need for leadership on the campus to exercise operational flexibility and the effective use of data and resources. Providing job-embedded professional development to build capacity of campus leaders is a vital part of this CSF.
(4) Increased Learning Time: Necessitates flexible scheduling that allows time for additional instructional minutes, enrichment activities and staff collaborative planning time. This CSF also confirms as a requisite, an instructionally-focused calendar.
(5) Family/Community Engagement: Calls for increased opportunities for input from parents and the community, as well as the necessity for effective communication and access to community services.
(6) School Climate: Recognizes increased attendance and reduced discipline referrals as indicators of a positive and welcoming environment. Increased attendance in extracurricular activities is another sign that students feel supported by an affirming school climate.
(7) Teacher Quality: Focuses on the need to recruit and retain effective teachers while also supporting current staff with job-embedded professional development. A locally developed appraisal and evaluation system informs personnel decisions in order to ensure quality teaching and learning.

Source: Adapted from the Texas Accountability Intervention System (TAIS) framework developed by TEA and TCDSS.

Appendix C

USDE Turnaround Principles

(1) Providing strong leadership by:
   a. Reviewing the performance of the current principal;
   b. Either replacing the principal if such a change is necessary to ensure strong and effective leadership, or demonstrating to TEA that the current principal has a track record in improving achievement and has the ability to lead the turnaround effort; and
   c. Providing the principal with operational flexibility in the areas of scheduling, staff, curriculum, and budget;
(2) Ensuring that teachers are effective and able to improve instruction by:
   a. Reviewing the quality of all staff and retaining only those who are determined to be effective and have the ability to be successful in the turnaround effort;
   b. Preventing ineffective teachers from transferring to these schools; and
   c. Providing job-embedded, ongoing professional development informed by the teacher evaluation and support systems and tied to teacher and student needs;
(3) Redesigning the school day, week, or year to include additional time for student learning and teacher collaboration;
(4) Strengthening the school's instructional program based on student needs and ensuring that the instructional program is research-based, rigorous, and aligned with State academic content standards;
(5) Using data to inform instruction and for continuous improvement, including by providing time for collaboration on the use of data;
(6) Establishing a school environment that improves school safety and discipline and addressing other non-academic factors that impact student achievement, such as students' social, emotional, and health needs; and
(7) Providing ongoing mechanisms for family and community engagement.

Source: Adapted from the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) turnaround principles.