

Local Accountability System

Frequently Asked Questions



What is the local accountability system?

House Bill (HB) 22 (85th Texas Legislature, Regular Session, 2017) established the Local Accountability System (LAS) to allow districts and open-enrollment charter schools to develop local accountability system plans for their campuses. A district's local accountability plan provides stakeholders with detailed information about school performance and progress over time. Local accountability plans may vary by school type (elementary school, middle school, high school, and K-12) and by school group (magnet schools, early college high schools, etc.), but must apply equally to all campuses as applicable by school type and group. Once approved by the Texas Education Agency (TEA), it is expected that a plan be operational and relatively unchanged for three to five years.

What is a local accountability plan?

A local accountability plan is created at the district-level to measure campus outcomes that are not included in the state accountability system. A local accountability plan is a coherent set of outcomes based on district needs and goals for student achievement. Outcomes are measured through defined components based on valid and reliable data sources.

How does a district participate in the local accountability system?

As the first step, district staff should familiarize themselves with local accountability system guidelines and complete a notice of interest. District participation in the local accountability system requires attending TEA-sponsored training and submitting a local accountability plan that must be approved by TEA and may include review by an external panel.

Can a district participate in the local accountability system and other initiatives at the same time?

Yes. The local accountability system is flexible enough to allow districts to incorporate goals, or activities arising from related initiatives, into the district local accountability plan.

How does a district create a local accountability plan?

Interested districts are required to attend a TEA-sponsored training and may spend multiple years developing a local accountability system plan. The local accountability plan is the outcome of a district process that may include school board members, district staff, campus personnel, parents, students, and community stakeholders. The local accountability plan represents district priorities based on needs and goals for student outcomes. Districts are required to use baseline data to set campus goals in the local accountability plan.

For how many years does a district follow a local accountability plan?

Interested districts should commit to participating in the local accountability system for at least a five-year

period.

During the first year, districts participate in training opportunities sponsored by TEA to develop a plan. During this year, districts examine data, identify needs, develop a strategic plan, and determine data sources for measuring outcomes.

At least one year of baseline data for each data source is needed for inclusion in the plan. If at least one year of baseline data is not available, and the data source includes standards based on a nationally normed sample, that information may be used to set district goals as a substitution for baseline data.

Districts with approved plans move into an initial year of implementation. During the initial implementation year, officially combining local and state ratings for public dissemination is optional. In addition, districts may work with TEA to refine aspects of the plan for re-submission and finalization for the remaining three years of participation in the local accountability system.

After the initial year of implementation, the district plan is established, and local accountability ratings are required to be posted for each campus. For campuses receiving a “C” or higher on the state accountability system, the state and local accountability ratings are combined as outlined in the approved plan.

What if a district decides not to participate for the whole implementation period?

District participation is optional. There is no penalty for ceasing participation in the local accountability system. However, after one year of plan establishment, defined by TEA posting the officially combined state and local accountability system ratings for eligible campuses, the district is expected to participate for a minimum of an additional two years. If a district chooses not to participate for a minimum of two additional years, the plan will be considered void and a district will need to resubmit a plan(s) and receive approval from TEA to participate in the local accountability system at a later date.

How much of a commitment does participation require?

District commitment varies according to the individual characteristics and needs of districts. Interested districts are encouraged to learn more about the guidelines and complete a Notice of Interest (available on the TEA website) for additional information.

Does participation on the local accountability system require money?

There is no fee to participate in the local accountability system, however, district expenses vary according to the individual characteristics and needs of districts. Participation requires attending training sessions sponsored by TEA, developing a district-wide local accountability plan for different school types/groups, collecting data from participating campuses, calculating outcomes, and providing TEA with campus-level data during the summer following the school year for which the plan is applicable.

How many staff members do I need to dedicate to this?

The number of staff members dedicated to a local accountability plan varies according to the individual characteristics and needs of districts. Interested districts are encouraged to learn more about the guidelines and requirements of the local accountability system.

What are some examples of plan components?

The 2020 Local Accountability System Manual and appendices provide the most current information about process guidelines along with exemplars of plan components. Examples from previous years or other sources may no longer meet the current requirements of the local accountability system.

How does a district measure components and outcomes?

As required by statute, local accountability plan measures must contain levels that allow for differentiation (with assigned standards for achieving the differentiated levels) and provide for the assignment of a letter grade of A, B, C, D, or F. At least one year of baseline data measuring current levels is required. Current levels of achievement are used when assigning standards for achieving differentiated levels (i.e., campus letter grades) over the course of plan implementation.

What are the standards for reliability and validity?

Measures must also meet standards for reliability and validity. In terms of **specific measures, tests, or ratings**:

*A measure is considered **reliable** if it delivers consistent results across administrations.*

- ▶ Examples include forms of assessments that have been created and tested to be equivalent to each other and observational ratings conducted by trained and assessed raters who have reached a level of consistency with each other.

*A measure is considered **valid** if the resulting outcome represents what the test is designed to measure.*

- ▶ Examples include content-specific tests focused on the related content topic, surveys designed to capture beliefs and attitudes about certain topics, and rating protocols with clearly defined observational evidence.

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.

*In terms of the **overall local accountability system plan**, in addition to including reliable and valid measures:*

- ▶ *A plan is considered **reliable** if it is applicable over time across campuses.*
- ▶ *A plan is considered **valid** to the degree that the results show progress toward meaningful local student outcome goals.*

For more information, please reference the following.

- ▶ Popham, W. James (2018). *Assessment literacy for educators in a hurry*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

How are components and domains weighted?

Domains are weighted as the summation of component weights.

Ex: a domain with 3 components of 10%, 50%, and 20% would have a weight of 80% of overall plan. The plan could have from one to four additional components across different domain(s) for the remaining 20%.

Components may carry a weight of 5% to a maximum of 60% for a total of two to ten components per school type plan.

The **overall** local accountability rating and the combined rating for each campus are presented on the TEA/report card website. Districts are required to include domain component descriptions and ratings on district/campus websites.

What are scaled score conversions?

Districts must use a **one-to-one correspondence** when converting campus ratings for each component to a 30 to 100 scale for local accountability ratings. The floor of 30 was selected to align with the state accountability system that uses this same scale for the F rating.

How does the local accountability system plan impact a campus rating? Can my rating go down?

At the end of each applicable school year, districts and open-enrollment charter schools assign overall and domain-specific letter grade ratings of A–F for each campus, according to performance outcomes, as outlined in the approved local accountability plan. Campuses with an overall rating of A, B, or C under the state accountability system for the applicable year of the plan may combine state and local accountability ratings with the state rating contributing at least 50% of the combined rating. A combined campus rating could change as a result of the local accountability system by going up or going down. Campuses that are not rated under the state accountability system are not eligible to combine state and local ratings. However, the local accountability data for paired campuses, and other campuses not rated under the state accountability system, may be displayed on TEA, district, and campus websites.

How does the local accountability system impact my district rating?

The local accountability system plan campus ratings do not affect the state accountability system district rating. District ratings are determined by campus state accountability system ratings only; these ratings do not include local accountability system ratings.