



Dear Governor Abbott, Lieutenant Governor Patrick, Speaker Burrows, and Members of the Texas Legislature,

As business and civic leaders deeply invested in the economic vitality of our state, we write today to reiterate our strong support for a rigorous public school accountability system for Texas.

Texas currently ranks 11th out of 12 in peer states in postsecondary attainment rates, and academic outcomes in PK-12 are suffering with fewer than half of students meeting grade-level expectations in 2024. These combined headwinds contribute to a hurdle in economic development that will prevent Texas from meeting future workforce needs.

We have been staunch proponents of Texas' testing and accountability system to measure progress and ensure Texas has a clear return on investment for the \$85 billion spent annually on K-12 public education. To this end, we urge you to prioritize a rigorous and transparent public school accountability system as a foundation for Texas' continued prosperity that align with the following three themes:

Focus on academic indicators: Ensure the A-F formula remains focused on academic outcomes, rather than non-academic inputs like participation in extracurricular activities. We need to know if students are learning the knowledge and skills necessary to succeed after graduation. More options for A-F points is not a solution that results in a more transparent system. In fact, the inclusion of non-academic indicators results in a diluted accountability system. Non-academic indicators inflate A-F results and create confusion for parents and business decision makers, hide deficiencies in student achievement, and reduce the urgency to reform underperforming schools.

Test against state standards: We should seek innovations in testing, allowing for shorter tests, faster results, and a through-year model that can drive targeted support for students -- but we should do so in a manner that protects alignment to Texas standards. Replacing a Texas-specific assessment with a nationally norm-referenced assessment could potentially jeopardize federal education funding and risks severing the link between what our students are taught and what they are tested on. As we scale high-quality instructional materials and the work of Chairmen Buckley and Creighton with HB 1605 (88R), we should ensure tight alignment between classroom instruction and our state assessments.

Limit litigation: Ongoing litigation related to A-F, often led by districts representing a small percentage of Texas' K-12 enrollment, has resulted in years-long delays in the release of performance ratings to parents of 5.4 million students and has politicized school improvement, leaving communities and businesses without timely data to make informed decisions and direct resources. We encourage the Legislature to affirm that accountability decisions should be resolved through the legislative process and by the Commissioner of the Texas Education Agency, not prolonged litigation.



We respectfully ask you to safeguard integrity, fairness, and rigor in school accountability. Thank you for ensuring Texas remains a great state to learn, live, work, and do business.

Respectfully,

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US Department of
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