



2010-11 School Accountability Ratings: The “TPM Effect”

Accountability ratings are intended to communicate to the public how well one school or district is performing compared to others like it. But, we have *multiple accountability systems* that have produced *inconsistent ratings* based on *different measures of performance, different student groups and different performance standards*. As a result, school district officials have a hard time explaining and the public has a hard time understanding what the accountability ratings mean. The Texas Education Agency’s (TEA) sudden decision to discontinue using the Texas Performance Measure (TPM) in calculating the 2010-11 ratings will make it even more difficult for the public to discern what those accountability ratings are telling us about our public schools.

What are the accountability ratings?

An accountability rating is a “label” indicating how well one campus or district performed relative to other schools or districts. Texas schools and districts receive accountability ratings from the state and the federal governments each year. Each accountability system has different ratings.

The state system has five ratings: “Exemplary,” “Recognized,” “Academically Acceptable,” “Academically Unacceptable” and “Not Rated.” Those state ratings will change starting with 2012-13 school year.

The federal accountability system uses three ratings: “Meets Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP),” “Missed AYP” and “Not Rated.”

How are Accountability Ratings Calculated?

Campus and district accountability ratings are based on the percentage of students (in each student subgroup) who met the state’s “passing” standard on various performance measures.

However, the state and federal accountability systems calculate ratings using different performance measures, different groupings of students (“student subgroups”), and different “passing” standards. As a result, state and federal ratings do not always produce a consistent message about a campus or district’s performance. For example, over the last decade, there have been numerous instances where a campus received a state rating of “Academically Acceptable,” and a federal rating of “Missed AYP.”

What is the Texas Performance Measure (TPM)?

The Texas Projection Measure (TPM) is a calculation that estimates (or projects) whether a student who failed a TAKS test during the current school year is likely to pass the TAKS test in the next grade level. If so, the student is counted as “passing” for purposes of the *current year’s*

accountability rating. The TPM calculation considers (1) the student's current performance on TAKS, (2) the student's previous performance on TAKS, if available, and (2) the average TAKS scores from the student's campus. In short, accountability ratings using the TPM reflect *actual* and statistically *projected* student passing rates and tend to be higher than when ratings are based on *actual* passing rates alone.

During the 2011 legislative session, some legislators objected vehemently to TEA's use of the TPM in calculating accountability ratings. They argued that the TPM artificially increases ratings and gives the public a misleading message about their school and district's performance. In response, the commissioner of education announced in spring 2011 that the TPM would not be used to determine the 2010-11 accountability ratings, which would be released in summer 2011.

Why was the TPM created?

For many years, school officials objected that the state and federal accountability systems failed to adequately acknowledge and communicate a campus or district's *improvement* from year to year. In 2006, the state legislature directed the commissioner of education to develop and implement an accountability measure to demonstrate expected annual improvement in student achievement. The TEA developed and in 2009 adopted the TPM for purposes of calculating state and federal accountability ratings.

How has the use of the TPM impacted school districts?

Many districts have benefitted from the Texas Education Agency's implementation of the TPM which factored *improved* student performance into campus and district state and federal accountability ratings.

How will the decision not to use the TPM in calculating the 2010-11 ratings affect districts?

- The 2010-11 ratings are the last accountability ratings under the TAKS testing system. Without the benefit of the TPM, the 2010-11 ratings will reflect only *actual* student performance, not projected performance, as well. As a result of that change in how TEA determines ratings, the 2010-11 ratings for many campuses and districts will be lower than the 2009-10 ratings, even though student performance at those schools/districts may not have declined, and may even have increased over last year.
- The 2010-11 ratings will remain in effect for the next two years, while the state transitions to the new STAAR/EOC tests.
- When the state releases ratings in 2012-13, those ratings will be based on more rigorous STAAR/EOC tests and possibly a greater number of performance indicators, thus making it likely that the 2012-13 ratings will be lower than 2010-11 ratings.
- All of these facts are particularly concerning to districts because the state's accountability sanctions kick in after a campus or district has at least two consecutive years of low accountability ratings. And, the sanctions increase in severity with each successive year of low performance.
- Additionally, lower accountability ratings tend to make it more difficult to get voters to support a tax rate increase, which many districts are likely to need in light of the loss of \$5.3 billion in state funding over the next two school years.