

Overview

In December, we received our official campus report cards on 2015-16 STAAR testing results, which we are all very familiar with. In January, TEA released a new report called the A-F Ratings. This is a result of a new law passed by the Legislature in 2015 requiring the Commissioner to develop an A-F system for all Texas schools. TEA tells us that this report “demonstrates one possible, but not necessarily final approach” to determining the method for assigning grades to campuses.

How we did

Unfortunately, even though AISD campuses all received “Met Standard” and some distinctions on STAAR, we did not score highly on the A-F report at any campus. About 55% of the ratings are based on STAAR testing – student achievement, student progress, and closing performance gaps. The remainder of the score comes from postsecondary readiness measures (35%) and community and student engagement evaluations (10%). Attached is a summary of our scores at each campus. As educators, we are very familiar with A-F grades, and normally an A is a score of 90 – 100, and so on. In TEA’s system, however, the cut points are not typical and have little relevance. For example, in Domain IV, Student Attendance, a score of 95.6 for AMS resulted in a C. It would take a 99 or higher to receive an A in this domain. A score of 91 is considered to be a D, and in other domains, we see similar results at each campus. In Domain II, Student Progress, there is only a spread of 17 points between a rating of A and a rating of F at the elementary level.

Impact on our staff and community

AISD teachers and staff work hard every day to teach all of our students. We strive to provide a well-rounded education, and have great schools and staffs. This report does not reflect all of the wonderful things going on in our schools. Unfortunately, we are judged on one day’s performance on one test, when actually the entire year is so meaningful in the lives of all of our students. This is just another tool that TEA has developed, and is not a true picture of what we do every day in AISD.

How you can help

Your opinion counts! Contact our state legislators and let them know how you feel about these ratings:

- Senator Bryan Hughes Email bryan.hughes@senate.state.tx.us
- Rep. Chris Paddie
Phone 903-935-1141 Email chris.paddie@house.state.tx.us

Concerns about this system

Many educators across Texas believe that this report is an invalid, disconnected reflection of school quality. We have a number of concerns about this system, including:

- Most of the results are based on STAAR testing, which has been proven to be unreliable and invalid.
- No allowances are made for schools that serve a high number of economically disadvantaged students who encounter educational obstacles on a daily basis.
- The tireless efforts of skilled and caring teachers will be marginalized, leading to poor morale and the eventual loss of our greatest resources to districts that receive higher ratings.
- Input from stakeholders was not considered in the creation of this system.
- Little value was placed on the multitude of great things happening in our schools, including fine arts, athletics, UIL academic competitions, career and technology, science, and much more.
- Public perception of our schools will be damaged by these reports.
- While possible to score all A’s on this system, it is statistically improbable for schools with high numbers of economically disadvantaged students.
- Scoring is not based on traditional A-F grading systems.