

March 6, 2023

Governor Greg Abbott
Office of the Governor
P.O. Box 12428
Austin, Texas 78711-2428

Commissioner Mike Morath
Texas Education Agency
1701 N. Congress Avenue
Austin, Texas, 78701

The Honorable Brandon Creighton
Chairman, Senate Education Committee
P.O. Box 12068
Austin, Texas 78711

The Honorable Brad Buckley
Chairman, House Public Education Committee
P.O. Box 2910
Austin, Texas 78768

Dear Governor Abbott, Commissioner Morath, Chairman Creighton, and Chairman Buckley,

Over the past several months, the Texas Education Agency has been working on an “A-F Accountability Refresh” to roll out with the 2023 Accountability Ratings. The TEA states that the purpose of the refresh is to “refocus on goals that directly address post-pandemic student needs” and to “allow Texas to leverage lessons learned over the last five years to improve the rigor, transparency, and fairness of the accountability system.”

These are certainly admirable goals. However, we write today with significant concerns regarding the proposed update to the College, Career, and Military Readiness (“CCMR”) cut scores as part of the refresh and the fact that the TEA has chosen to implement this refresh at the same time as another major change, the redesigned STAAR exam. The undersigned districts have enrollment ranging from less than 100 to over 100,000 students, and collectively we educate more than 2.7 million Texas students. We request that the TEA pause its planned refresh so that the legislature can re-evaluate the accountability system holistically.

The TEA proposes to raise the cut score necessary for a high school to receive an “A” in the CCMR domain from a 60 to an 88, a nearly 47% increase in one year and apply this increased cut score to students who graduated in 2022. Districts no longer have any influence over the performance of those students, and it is unreasonable to apply new standards retroactively, particularly because these students will not benefit from the “improve[d] rigor, transparency, and fairness [of] the accountability system.”

According to materials published by the TEA, the newly proposed cut score was set for two primary reasons: 1) too many schools are performing above the 60 point threshold; and 2) 68% of students who are deemed college, career, or military ready, sustain postsecondary success one year after graduation.

The TEA states that one of the goals of the A-F Accountability System as a whole is to ensure that no forced distribution exists and that all schools have the opportunity to achieve an A rating. As a result, it is perplexing that the TEA would use the justification that too many schools are receiving an A for CCMR to raise the cut score.

Additionally, the fact that only 68% of students who are deemed college, career, or military ready are sustaining postsecondary success one year after graduation suggests that either the components used by the TEA to measure such readiness are inadequate, or that issues in higher education may be hindering otherwise prepared students from succeeding. Both of these likely play a role in this issue. For example, the TEA emphasizes a certain list of "industry-based certifications," however, many of those certifications are not truly of value in the workforce. But because the TEA emphasizes those certifications, many schools feel compelled to spend resources promoting them instead of focusing on other potential opportunities for students to become prepared for postsecondary success.

These significant changes to the cut score for CCMR will have drastic impacts to school ratings across Texas. The A-F system was designed to make it easier for the public to understand how schools are truly performing. But increasing the cut score for an A for CCMR by almost 47% in a single year will create the misconception that high performing schools are drastically declining, even if their CCMR performance actually improved. In the midst of a teacher shortage, the last thing school districts need is another false narrative that drives a wedge between schools and the families they serve. No public relations campaign from the TEA will be adequate to combat the misperception that our schools are suddenly worse than they were last year.

House Bill 977 would create an Assessment and Accountability Commission to fully review the current system and make recommendations regarding improvements to how we measure success and communicate school performance to parents. The legislature has used the commission model with great success to address other complex issues over the past few sessions and should apply this same model to the A-F Accountability System.

Moving forward with the planned refresh is irresponsible as it will cause significant confusion among the community, put increased pressure on teachers and other staff who are already at their breaking point, and wrest the policy decisions of how we should hold our schools accountable away from the elected representatives of the people leaving them in the hands of unelected bureaucrats. We urge the TEA to pause its accountability refresh and allow the legislature to examine the system and make the policy determinations of what Texans expect from their schools, as they were elected to do.

Sincerely,

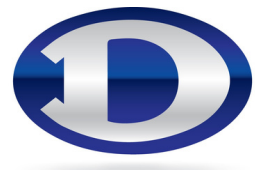
A+ Unlimited Potential	Atlanta ISD	Brock ISD	Cedar Hill ISD
Charter School	Austin ISD	Brownfield ISD	Celeste ISD
Abernathy ISD	Azle ISD	Brownsboro ISD	Channing ISD
Alamo Heights ISD	Bandera ISD	Buena Vista ISD	Chapel Hill ISD
Albany ISD	Bells ISD	Buffalo ISD	Chico ISD
Aldine ISD	Benjamin ISD	Burkburnett ISD	Chilton ISD
Aledo ISD	Beta Academy	Burkeville ISD	Claude ISD
Alief ISD	Birdville ISD	Burleson ISD	Clear Creek ISD
Allen ISD	Bland ISD	Caddo Mills ISD	Comal ISD
Alvin ISD	Blue Ridge ISD	Callisburg ISD	Coppell ISD
Alvord ISD	Bonham ISD	Campbell ISD	Corpus Christi ISD
Anahuac ISD	Bosqueville ISD	Canadian ISD	Corsicana ISD
Angleton ISD	Boyd ISD	Canyon ISD	Crawford ISD
Aransas County ISD	Brazosport ISD	Carrollton-Farmers	Cross Roads ISD
Argyle ISD	Bridgeport ISD	Branch ISD	Crowell ISD

Cushing ISD	Hays CISD	New Waverly ISD	Springtown ISD
Cypress-Fairbanks ISD	Honey Grove ISD	Newton ISD	Sudan ISD
Daingerfield-Lone Star ISD	Houston ISD	Northside ISD	Sundown ISD
Dallas ISD	Huffman ISD	Northwest ISD	Sunnyvale ISD
Damon ISD	Hull-Daisetta ISD	Oakwood ISD	Taylor ISD
Danbury ISD	Humble ISD	Odem-Edroy ISD	Tenaha ISD
Dayton ISD	Hutto ISD	Orange Grove ISD	Terrell ISD
Decatur ISD	Ingleside ISD	Palmer ISD	Texas School of the Arts
Del Valle ISD	Ingram ISD	Pampa ISD	Tornillo ISD
Denison ISD	Iowa Park CISD	Panhandle ISD	Treetops School
Denton ISD	Irving ISD	Paradise ISD	International
Detroit ISD	Italy ISD	Paris ISD	Trinity ISD
Dickinson ISD	Jacksboro ISD	Patton Springs ISD	Utopia ISD
Dodd City ISD	Jasper ISD	Pearland ISD	Van Alstyne ISD
Dr. M.L. Garza-Gonzalez	Jim Ned CISD	Pecos-Barstow-Toyah ISD	Van ISD
Charter School	Katherine Anne Porter	Pettus ISD	Vega ISD
Duncanville ISD	School	Pewitt CISD	Victoria ISD
Eagle Mountain-	Katy ISD	Pittsburg ISD	Waller ISD
Saginaw ISD	Kaufman ISD	Plains ISD	Warren ISD
East Chambers ISD	Keller ISD	Plano ISD	Water Valley ISD
Edgewood ISD	Kelton ISD	Poolville ISD	Waxahachie ISD
El Paso ISD	Kennedale ISD	Port Aransas ISD	Weatherford ISD
Era ISD	Kerens ISD	Pottsboro ISD	West ISD
Farmersville ISD	Ki Charter Academy	Pralrie Valley ISD	West Orange-Cove CISD
Fayetteville ISD	Kingsville ISD	Prairiland ISD	Westlake Academy
Flour Bluff ISD	Klein ISD	Prosper ISD	Charter School
Follett ISD	Knox City-O'Brien CISD	Queen City ISD	Wheeler ISD
Forestburg ISD	Krum ISD	Red Lick ISD	White Deer ISD
Forney ISD	La Vega ISD	Red Oak ISD	Whitewright ISD
Forsan ISD	Lago Vista ISD	Rice ISD	Whitney ISD
Fort Bend ISD	Lancaster ISD	Richardson ISD	Willis ISD
Fort Davis ISD	Leander ISD	Rio Hondo ISD	Wylie ISD
Fort Stockton ISD	Lewisville ISD	Riviera ISD	Zapata County ISD
Fort Worth Academy of	Liberty Hill ISD	Rockwall ISD	
Fine Arts	Liberty ISD	Rogers ISD	North Texas Commission
Fort Worth ISD	Liberty-Eylau ISD	Round Rock ISD	Texas ASCD
Freer ISD	Lipan ISD	Royse City ISD	Career and Technical
Frisco ISD	Little Elm ISD	S&S CISD	Association of Texas
Frost ISD	London ISD	Sands CISD	Raise Your Hand Texas
Fruitvale ISD	Lubbock ISD	Savoy ISD	
Gainesville ISD	Lubbock-Cooper ISD	Schertz-Cibolo-Universal	
Galena Park ISD	Lufkin ISD	City ISD	
Garland ISD	Mabank ISD	Sealy ISD	
Gatesville ISD	Mansfield ISD	Seguin ISD	
Graford ISD	McKinney ISD	Seminole ISD	
Grand Prairie ISD	Melissa ISD	Shallowater ISD	
Grandview ISD	Mesquite ISD	Slaton ISD	
Grapevine-Colleyville ISD	Miami ISD	Slidell ISD	
Gregory-Portland ISD	Miles ISD	South San Antonio ISD	
Groesbeck ISD	Montgomery ISD	Spearman ISD	
Hardin ISD	Mulshoe ISD	Splendora ISD	
Harlandale ISD	New Braunfels ISD	Spring Branch ISD	
Hawley ISD	New Diana ISD	Spring ISD	





DALLAS
INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT



FBISD



FORT WORTH
ACADEMY
OF FINE ARTS

Fort Worth
INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT



FRISCO ISD



GISD
GARLAND INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT



GRAND PRAIRIE
Independent School District



Goats

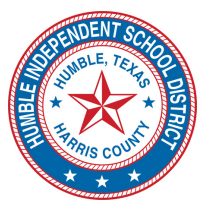


Hays
ISD



HUFFMAN
INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

HD



HUTTO ISD



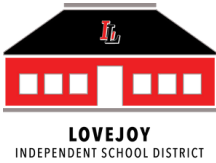
INGRAM
INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT



IRVING
Independent School District



KATY
Katy Independent School District



MCKINNEY
INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT



PLANO
Independent School District



POTTSBORO
INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT





ctat
CAREER & TECHNICAL
ASSOCIATION OF TEXAS

NORTH TEXAS COMMISSION

RAISE TEXAS
YOUR HAND TEXAS
ASCD
Connect Lead Influence