

<b>DATE:</b>	<b>December 19, 2019</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Amendment to the State's Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) State Plan</b>
<b>CATEGORY:</b>	<b>Notice</b>
<b>NEXT STEPS:</b>	<b>Share with appropriate staff</b>

This letter is to notify you of intent of the Texas Education Agency (TEA) to submit an amendment to adjust the Closing the Gaps domain graduation rate methodology used in the academic accountability system, as well as the methodology used to identify schools for support and improvement.

## Background

### *Graduation Rate*

Currently, the Closing the Gaps domain of the academic accountability system evaluates the four-year graduation rate for high schools, K–12s, and districts and requires student groups that are at or above 90 percent to exceed that rate by at least a tenth of a percent in the following year(s).

### *Federal School Improvement Identification*

If any Title I or non-Title I campus does not attain at least a 67 percent four-year federal graduation rate for the all students group, the campus is identified for comprehensive support and improvement.

In addition, as currently written in the state's ESSA plan, any Title I campus identified for targeted support and improvement for three consecutive years will be identified for comprehensive support and improvement the following school year.

## Amendment Requests

### *Graduation Rate Methodology*

In order to recognize the challenges faced by alternative education campuses and the potential negative implications for campuses and districts with small numbers, TEA is proposing the following methodology for the graduation rate component of the Closing the Gaps domain:

1. Did the student group meet the four-year long-term graduation rate target of 94.0%?
2. If #1 is no, did the student group meet the four-year interim graduation rate target of 90.0% **and** demonstrate improvement of at least 0.1% over the prior year rate?
3. If #1 and #2 are no, did the student group meet its four-year graduation rate growth target? The growth target is calculated as follows:

Did the student group demonstrate sufficient growth from the prior year in order to meet the long-term graduation rate target of 94.0% (i.e., a 10% decrease in the difference between the

prior year rate and the long-term target)? (See calculation template below.)

$$\begin{array}{r} \text{current year four-year} \\ \text{graduation rate} - \text{prior} \\ \text{year four-year} \\ \text{graduation rate} \end{array} \geq \frac{94.0 \text{ (long-term target)} - \text{prior year four-year graduation rate}}{10}$$

For example, the 2018 four-year federal graduation rate for the special education student group was 66.7%, and the 2019 four-year federal graduation rate was 70.0%. Using this methodology, the student group would meet the growth target as demonstrated below:

$$70.0 - 66.7 = 3.3 > 2.73 = \frac{94.0 - 66.7}{10}$$

4. If #1, #2, and #3 are no, did the student group meet the six-year interim graduation rate target? (Appendix A of the ESSA State Plan would be amended to add an interim target of 92.0% and a long-term target of 96.0%.)

#### *Federal School Improvement Identification*

In order to allow additional time for campuses to capture graduates, rather than using a four-year federal graduation rate to identify any Title I or non-Title I campus that does not attain at least a 67 percent graduation rate, TEA is proposing the use of the six-year federal graduation rate to identify these campuses for comprehensive support and improvement.

Additionally, to align with the intent of ESSA, TEA is proposing the escalation of Title I additional targeted support campuses to comprehensive support and improvement after three consecutive years, rather than escalating Title I targeted support and improvement campuses. The proposal will also include a delay in implementation—an additional targeted support identification in 2019, 2020, and 2021 for a Title I campus would result in comprehensive support and improvement implementation in the 2021–2022 school year.

#### **Comment Period**

All comments on this proposed amendment are due by Saturday, January 18, 2020, by electronic mail addressed to [performance.reporting@tea.texas.gov](mailto:performance.reporting@tea.texas.gov).

Once TEA has reviewed any comments received and has made any appropriate modifications to the proposed plan amendment, the comments will be submitted to the U.S. Department of Education (USDE) as part of the state's plan amendment request. When, and if, TEA receives USDE approval of the amendment, additional information will be provided to local education agencies on the impact to August 2020 accountability ratings and identification of schools for improvement. These methodology adjustments will not affect targets, cut points, or scaling methodologies used in the accountability system.

**For Further Information**

If you have any questions regarding this proposed amendment, please contact TEA's Performance Reporting Division at (512) 463-9704 or [performance.reporting@tea.texas.gov](mailto:performance.reporting@tea.texas.gov).

Sincerely,

Jamie Crowe

Executive Director, Performance Reporting