

**Contact**

Casey McCreary | Associate Executive Director, Education Policy | [cmccreary@tasanet.org](mailto:cmccreary@tasanet.org) | 512-477-6361

***TASA Statement on A-F Public School Accountability System***

AUSTIN – Regardless of the results of the Texas Education Agency’s first issuance of letter-grade ratings to Texas public school districts, the Texas Association of School Administrators (TASA) will continue to advocate for the establishment of a more comprehensive, community-based public school accountability system that looks beyond high-stakes, multiple-choice exams. The ratings, set to be released Aug. 15, are based on the state’s new A-F Public School Accountability System. TASA and many school leaders across the state believe there is a better way to define school success and accountability.

“We believe in a strong accountability system, but we ask this question: To whom should we be accountable and for what?” said TASA Executive Director Kevin Brown. “School districts should be accountable to their local communities first, and the measures of accountability should represent the complex work that schools do to prepare children for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, including teaching innovation, leadership, critical thinking and real-world problem solving. Parents want their children to do rigorous, engaging work that sparks a lifelong love of learning, not prep for a multiple-choice test that colleges and businesses don’t even consider. To think that one letter grade somehow accurately reflects the complex work of hundreds of teachers and thousands of students on one campus, let alone an entire district, is really an insult to their hard work. We expect more for our children and our schools.”

TASA also opposes A-F district and campus rating systems, says TASA Legislative Chair Doug Williams, superintendent of Sunnyvale ISD, because: “While letter grades seem simple, no one can explain why a district receives an A or an F. Numerous pages of complicated calculations are used to reduce district performance measures — mainly standardized test scores — into a single letter grade. There is also no guidance on how to raise a low grade, making it a punitive system. So, A-F systems are neither transparent nor useful for improvement.”

TASA is not alone in its opposition to A-F school ratings. In 2016-17, nearly [600 school district boards of trustees](#) representing 2.87 million students, as well as a number of chambers of commerce and statewide organizations, adopted resolutions opposing the A-F school rating system.

In addition, according to a [2016 survey conducted by the State Board of Education](#), an overwhelming majority of Texans say they do not want a public school accountability system based primarily on students’ standardized test scores. The survey also showed that most Texans also agree that public school accountability should provide a way to identify areas of support needed for underperforming schools as well as identify areas of effective best practices used by high-performing campuses and districts.

“We believe that Texas students would be better served by a comprehensive, [community-based accountability system](#),” said Brown. “Such systems look beyond high-stakes, multiple-choice tests to meaningful assessments that have value for students, parents, and teachers, as well as measures what each community deems important in promoting college and career readiness.”

TASA is helping to further community-based accountability in Texas by facilitating the [Texas Public Accountability Consortium](#) (TPAC), a group of 51 Texas school districts working to build on the success of community-based accountability systems already in use in [districts around the state](#) by developing next-generation measures and assessments that would enable wider use of such systems.

“TPAC is working to demonstrate that a well-crafted community-based accountability system can better communicate the quality of effort by a school and district than the state’s standardized, test-centric accountability system, which fails to provide a full picture of what is actually taking place in a school,” Brown said.

TASA is the professional association for Texas school administrators, providing professional learning and networking opportunities, legislative advocacy, and targeted communications to support the work of superintendents and other school leaders. TASA’s mission is to promote, provide and develop leaders who create and sustain student-centered schools and develop future-ready students.