

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMPILATION OF PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Submitted to the Committee on Public Education
For HB 4402

Compiled on: Friday, April 21, 2023 12:27 AM

Note: Comments received by the committee reflect only the view of the individual(s) submitting the comment, who retain sole responsibility for the content of the comment. Neither the committee nor the Texas House of Representatives takes a position on the views expressed in any comment. The committee compiles the comments received for informational purposes only and does not exercise any editorial control over comments.

Hearing Date: April 20, 2023 8:00 AM

Warren Roane, Dr.
Humble Independent School District
Kingwood, TX

I am concerned about the section of the bill pertaining to 39.0236, specifically, the proposed through-year assessment. As the timing and content of the assessment will be set by the Texas Education Agency, in order for students to perform successfully on the assessment they will have to be taught the respective content and skills by the test date. This will imply or create a defacto state scope and sequence of the curriculum (TEKS) for each tested subject. This removes local control from districts, campuses, and teachers, and places curricular decisions in the hands of the state test vendor. Will there be some safeguards added to the bill so that the through-year assessment does not create lock-step teaching to the test throughout the state of Texas?

Diana Weber
Self-Teacher
Seguin, TX

Support of HB 4402 adding indicator to reflect the development of "an indicator, adopted and implemented in accordance with Section 39.0533, that accounts for extracurricular and cocurricular student success". This is a significant predictor of student success and encourages involvement and support of students in and out of the classroom. Our goal as an education system should be to develop well-rounded individuals and support them their interests and helping them grow in leadership through extra-curricular and co-curricular programs.

Kathie Thompson
Detroit ISD
Bogata, TX

School districts accountability process needs to focus on students abilities throughout the year. Growth should be measured at various times during the year and not just one time at the end of the year.

Tyane Dietz, Ms.
Self/Project Manager
Lufkin, TX

I have served the workforce development system for twenty-five years as a board member representing the private sector. I am the past chair of my local workforce board, as well as a past chair of the Texas Association of Workforce Boards.

Our current compliance based accountability system does not best situate a student for future success. We need an accountability system that measures results important to the business community and that will better address employer needs. I am happy to SUPPORT HB 4402.

Tessia Brixey
self
Sugar Land, TX

As our state and federal testing and accountability ratings systems have evolved over time, concerns from educators, administrators, parents, and community members regarding the emphasis on high-stakes student testing have increased. Reforming the A-F accountability system to de-emphasize STAAR and incorporate more measures of student learning and campus outputs would enable Texas to make meaningful progress in student performance.

HB 4402 does the following:

Removes high-stake testing for high school graduation

Adds new non-test based indicators beginning in 2023-2024 including courses in extra and co-curricular, parent and student satisfaction, and physical fitness assessments

Limits the STAAR test to only the federally required subjects

Establishes a through-year standardized assessment that must be administered at least three times every school year

Student performance on STAAR tests cannot account for more than 60% of any single domain rating for grades 3-8 and no more than 40% for grades 9-12

Please reform our accountability system for the sake of our students.

Mary Starling
Self
Sugar Land, TX

As an educator for 30 years in high poverty/at risk schools - the accountability system has strangled our ability to meet the needs of students where they are. Indicators related to year's growth and other ways we support student and family SEL would be a much better way to give accountability for our work.

Hope King
Myself
Livingston, TX

HB 4402 proposed by Representative Bell encourages changes to the high school graduation requirements and accountability rating system for assessing campus and district performance. Accountability, while important should not be based on one test or one day. Students should be rewarded for their extracurricular involvement and growth as a student as well. One test, one day a year is not enough to decide whether a student or teacher is capable. However, due to the high stakes of the STAAR test, this is exactly what we do right now in schools across the state. By limiting the STAAR to only federally required subjects, establishing a through-year assessment showing student growth, and removing the high stakes of STAAR testing, we will brighten our future.

Denise Bleggi

Self

Frisco, TX

I support the changes in favor of de-emphasizing the emphasis on high-stakes student testing. As our state and federal testing and accountability ratings systems have evolved over time, concerns from educators, administrators, parents, and community members regarding the emphasis on high-stakes student testing have increased. Reforming the A-F accountability system to de-emphasize STAAR and incorporate more measures of student learning and campus outputs would enable Texas to make meaningful progress in student performance.

MARY WILLIAMS

SELF / SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

HOUSTON, TX

STAAR EOC testing in subject beyond the federal mandates takes up student and teacher time for no real purpose.

STAAR pass rates consume teachers and their ability to provide meaning education beyond the test to students. No matter how you say it, teachers will teach what they get measured on. When their students are not successful on this one indicator on this ONE day, it is demoralizing. In high poverty, high mobility districts with high English second-language learners, the toll is high when our accountability rests so heavily on the pass rates.

Teachers are teaching and students are learning. This one test requires that all learners end in the same place, no matter where they started. It is a test that is built for students who don't have the issues of high poverty schools. Our schools make great strides every year; however, that is overshadowed by a system that relies so heavily on the current testing outcomes.

Stacy Kimbriel

self, educator

Plano, TX

The current accountability systems, particularly for elementary schools, focus on the results of a one-day snapshot of a child's academics. Our children and our schools should be measured and accounted for by markers that demonstrate their growth in many areas of the curricular program offered at school. I am a proponent of a system that is developed locally with goals set in partnership with our school community and local school board. I do believe that schools need to be accountable for their programs and dollars, but there is a way to do it that is not so stressful and developmentally inappropriate for elementary students. Thank you for working to ensure that we measure what matters in our schools.

Doniel Watts, Teacher

self

Houston, TX

Please approve

Todd Bloomer

self

San Antonio, TX

Thank you for considering other indicators that allow for accountability ratings for high schools.

Michael Semmler

Self

Richmond, TX

The Texas accountability system has to include more measures to show a well rounded school and not focus all of the attention on STAAR scores. At the High School level, we all know CCMR is important and is a huge part of the accountability system. Don't force students to go through classes in CTE in a sequence if they are not happy with the strand. Allow High School students to try different electives to figure out what they really want to do. Right now, the changes to CCMR will cause most High Schools in the state of Texas drop a letter grade or two. Let's all talk together and do what's right for Texas with the Accountability System.

Micah Arrott

Self

Odessa, TX

I am in favor of this bill as it relates to school accountability.

Trista Bishop-Watt

Good Reason Houston

Houston, TX

HB 4402 - Opposed

We respectfully submit our concerns with the changes proposed in HB 4402. While we support the adoption of through-year assessments, which allow districts to more effectively monitor progress throughout the year, we regretfully must oppose the proposed changes to accountability calculations.

Parents, students, and communities deserve to know how academically effective our public schools are so they can hold systems accountable for student learning. The current A-F accountability system was structured to clearly differentiate school quality for academic outcomes. Students who attend an A- or B-rated school are 1.8 times more likely to be reading on grade level and 2.7 times more likely to be college ready by graduation than students attending D- and F-rated schools.

Because of our accountability system, we are able to see how our kids in Houston are learning and where there are gaps in need of additional resources. In the Houston region, around 10% (6% in Texas) of our schools are D- and F-rated. For student achievement alone, 45% (nearly half) are D- and F-rated. That represents 225,291 students who attend a school that needs additional support so that they can achieve on the level that Texas recognizes as basic proficiency.

This is a concerning picture, but because we have an accountability system that solely focuses on student academic outcomes, we know how our students are doing academically. By shining a light on this data, parents and community members are empowered to advocate for much needed resources and hold systems accountable for student learning. School districts and organizations like ours are able to effectively monitor progress and ensure we are investing resources in interventions that support student growth.

We do recognize the additional indicators added by HB 4402 are important. We want our kids to thrive in extracurricular activities and our parents to be happy with their child's school. However, these indicators are not academic outcomes for students. Schools can be recognized and rewarded for areas of excellence outside core academic functions through designations or badges added to school report cards. In fact, we would love to work collaboratively to implement a functional system for parents to provide feedback regarding their experience with public school campuses. However, the A-F letter grade must be reserved for the most crucial function of public schools: ensuring students can read, write, and do math on grade level.

The more separate indicators are added to any overall measure, the harder it is to parse how a campus is doing in any given area. By conflating academic outcomes with other factors, HB 4402 creates a system where parents and community members would have trouble untangling how prepared students are academically. Considering only 44% of students in Houston (52% in Texas) are reading on grade level by 3rd grade, a focus on academic accountability must remain undiluted.

Greg Vaughn, Executive Director
Texas Association of Workforce Boards
Frisco, TX

The Texas Association of Workforce Boards (TAWB) respectfully submits the following testimony in SUPPORT of HB 4402 to the House Higher Education Committee.

TAWB represents the 28 Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs) in Texas and the more than 700 business and community leaders across Texas who serve as volunteers on those boards. The 28 LWDBs in Texas are responsible for the planning, oversight, and evaluation of workforce development activities in their respective areas, with key functions including Employer Engagement, Workforce Stakeholder Partnerships, Career Pathways Development and Coordination with Education & Training Providers.

We believe the changes to the high school graduation requirements included in HB 4402 will help provide a workforce in Texas with the knowledge and skills required to meet the needs of industry in Texas.

We wish to thank the members of the House Public Education Committee for this opportunity to share information we trust will be helpful to you in your deliberations. TAWB stands ready to provide additional information during the 88th Texas Legislature.

Alycia Elkins-Smith
Self, stay at home parent
CEDAR PARK, TX

Our students are more than just a letter grade!

Kaitlyn Braddock
ECISD
Odessa, TX

FOR. Students & teachers deserve more & ARE MORE than the results of one test.

Ellen Akers, Dr.
Self - Director of Curriculum and Instruction
League City, TX

I support HB 4402 as a needed change to the current accountability system and the high stakes testing environment we have created. It would be fiscally responsible to eliminate any STAAR tests not required under ESSA for federal accountability. While EOC exams would still be required at the high school level for accountability, the removal of a condition for graduation would eliminate barriers for receiving a diploma for some of our most high risk students such as special education, dyslexic, and language acquisition students. The successful completion of rigorous coursework should satisfy graduation requirements without the additional stress of passing a high stakes test on one day. Accountability should measure the success of the whole child and the whole school which would be enhanced by indicators such as participation in fine arts, parent and community satisfaction and physical fitness indicators. Thank you for your consideration of this important bill.

Kevin Wroblewski, Mr.
Myself
Croaby, TX

Please pass this bill and reduce the stress on students, teachers, and families so teaching and learning can be enjoyable.

Teresa Willison, Principal
ECISD
Odessa, TX

For

Karl Miller, HS Principal
ECISD
Odessa, TX

Please support this legislation.

Carolyn Dower
self, retired nurse
AUSTIN, TX

Please support bill HB 4402. The STAAR test should not be criteria for graduating. There is more to being a good student than grades (says this once 'freezes at test taking' intelligent woman!).
SUPPORT HB 4402.

Audrey Ash, Dr.
self - Assistant Superintendent, Burkburnett ISD
Burkburnett, TX

I am FOR this bill in order to create a more meaningful accountability system for our Texas public schools.

Sergio Trevino
Self
Weslaco, TX

I support this bill.

Lance Key
Self
Corsicana, TX

I am in support of this bill.

Charlene Shafer
Self, retired teacher
Cypress, TX

Our students & schools deserve better. No one test given on one day should cause failure. We need multiple measures & tests that actually measure mastery of the content.

Amanda Wolff
Self, teacher
Harker Heights, TX

It is not fair that schools are solely rated on their performance on state standardized testing without taking into account pass/fail rates of students or any other classroom instructional material. It's outlandish that we teach TO THE STAAR. Schools should have the ability to be assessed on the overall performance of their students.

Shonda Wells
Self
Corsicana, TX

I do not believe a "once a year test" passing rate is an accurate measurement of a schools overall performance. I believe the state should also look at other things such as graduation rates, extra curricular activity achievements , college (dual credit) and vocational achievements.

Julie Mitchell

Self

Corsicana, TX

I am a teacher who has returned to the classroom after many years. I have been surprised by the emphasis on the STAAR Test and how that emphasis has a negative impact on student mental health, teacher morale, and instruction time. Educators know and parents know that a test result can not accurately define a child's success or abilities. It also can't define their ability to function in college or in the work place. I have smart, creative, kind students who are so deflated by their test scores. I know fantastic teachers who make great strides with their students, but those strides won't be measured by a test score. Our students and our schools deserve to have other measures of success.

Kathryn Kizer

Self

Austin, TX

For. Our kids are more than just a letter grade.

Kellie Rapp, Dr

self, principal

Frisco, TX

I have served as an educator in Texas for 29 years. This session, many bills have been filed in support of changes to the accountability system, which shows that this is a topic of great importance. Currently at the elementary level STAAR test results account for 100% of the A-F rating. When I surveyed parents recently at a school event, they were surprised that other measures such as school safety or reading level growth in Kinder-2nd grade was not included in our current system. Including additional indicators in school accountability would benefit parents as they seek to determine the best choice of school for their needs. I am in support of making changes to the accountability system to add additional indicators beyond the STAAR test. Great schools are determined by more than student performance on a standardized test. Thank you for your consideration of this bill.

Becky Shaheen

Self

Austin, TX

I am for this bill and any bill that measures what matters and reduces the emphasis on STAAR or any other future state assessment.

Emily Lee, Chief Instructional Officer
DeKalb ISD
De Kalb, TX
ON - HB 4402

We appreciate the attention and needed to the current and revised 2023 accountability system.
We need multiple measures. Our students are more than a STAAR exam.

Points of agreement:

- max of 60% STAAR achievement for elem. and middle schools
- need for parent and satisfaction surveys

Points of concern:

- physical fitness assessment, districts and campuses have little to no control over the outcomes

Points of addition:

- add the full day prek participation from HB 4514
- leave the freshman exams for math, rdg, and science. for accountability and for graduation requirements as to prove student readiness on a rigorous assessment, then after freshman year students can focus on dual credit, ACT, TSIA-2, and aligned program of study courses
- consider adding school safety language from HB 4514 to the parent and student surveys

Thank you for your service!

Tracy Fisher
self
Coppell, TX

I am in support of this bill that puts more focus on other measures of accountability.

Audrey Mayo
Self-Teacher
Harker Heights, TX

Thank you for being open to updating our current accountability system. I urge you to add additional indicators besides just STAAR and EOC's. Update the system to show what good things are happening in our schools.

Hearing Date: April 20, 2023 8:00 AM

Theresa Williams, Superintendent

Plano ISD

Plano, TX

House Public Education Committee

Texas State Capitol

E2.036

1100 Congress Avenue

Austin, TX 78701

Dear Chairman Buckley and Committee Members:

Plano ISD's legislative priorities include support for legislation that creates meaningful and fair assessments and accountability standards. Our district supports HB 4402 in its effort to adjust the accountability system so one single test does not significantly impact a student or district. We applaud the efforts to examine the STAAR exam for opportunities for improvement to make it a more effective assessment tool.

Plano ISD supports a comprehensive accountability system that includes more than just test scores and, instead, takes into account the incredible work our teachers and schools do to ensure our students experience success in college, a career or military service after they graduate.

Thank you for your consideration of this written testimony in support of HB 4402.

Sincerely,

Dr. Theresa Williams

Plano ISD Superintendent