

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMPILATION OF PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Submitted to the Committee on Public Education
For HB 4514

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Hearing Date: April 20, 2023 8:00 AM

Warren Roane, Dr.
Humble Independent School District- Director of Accountability
Kingwood, TX

I am writing in favor of Section 4, related to Section 39.054. The reporting of separate domain scores is preferable to having an overall score, as the latter oversimplifies a very complex process of evaluating a campus or district. A single A-F score does not convey what areas are excellent and which areas need improvement. In order to calculate the 2022 A-F district score, I wrote a program with almost 15,000 lines of code. One number, one overall letter grade, cannot hope to convey the complexity that goes into generating the overall score. Instead of one grade, scores by domain areas will better relate the strengths and weaknesses of each school and district.

Cindy Triggs
Self / Retired
Georgetown, TX

Dear Representatives,
I strongly encourage you to vote against HB4514. The changes in this bill result in lower standards for a solid basic education. At a time when it is obvious that there is a lack of knowledge of history in our society and left-wing activists are promoting fictional accounts as history it is unconscionable to remove testing for social studies (e.g. history). The other metrics proposed for measuring accountable do not address the basic knowledge that students need to succeed as adults. We need to strengthen metrics and promote excellence in education by measuring math, reading, science and other basic knowledge and ensuring that students are competent in these areas.

Please promote excellence in education by voting "No" on HB4514.
Thank you.

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

I have represented the private sector for twenty-five years on my local workforce board. I am both the past chair of that board as well as the Texas Association of Workforce Boards.

Our current assessment and accountability system fails to appropriately measure all factors that influence student performance and school ratings. I believe that HB 4514 lends itself to better preparing our students for success. I am happy to SUPPORT HB 4514.

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 4514 does the following:

Removes social studies STAAR test in grade eight (test not required under federal ESSA provisions)
Adds new PK-8 non-test indicators beginning in 2023-2024 courses in enrichment curriculum, extra and co-curricular, state-developed school and student safety survey, teacher mentoring programs and professional development, chronic absenteeism, participation in full- day pre-K, middle school students who complete CTE courses or a course higher than grade level
Removes overall summative A-F district and campus performance rating
Limits scores on STAAR in student achievement and closing the gaps domain to no more than 50%

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

Sonia Gonzales
self
Lubbock, TX

I have a vested interest in this bill. I am currently an Elementary Principal in rural West Texas. We are more than just a Test Score. Limiting schores on STAAR in student acievement and closing the gaps domains to no more than 50% will allow schools to shine in other areas. Such as enrichment curriculums, attendance incentives, etc.

Mary Starling
Self/educator for 30 years
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 4514 proposed by Representative Allison encourages changes to public school accountability, including the assessment of academic performance, and district and campus performance standards and sanctions. 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.

Janelle Urioste
Self
Lakeway, TX

I am support of doing whatever it takes to remove high stakes testing from the schools. It takes away from the education of all students and does a lot of damage to smart, dyslexic kids like mine.

Denise Bleggi

Self

Frisco, TX

I support the de-emphasis on the high-stakes student testing. As a principal and parent I have interacted with 350 students and their families to collect feedback about other ways we can rate our schools. This bill supports positive changes. 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 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. By reducing the weight of EOC tests, there is room to show some of the truly meaningful student success that happens on campus.

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.

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.

Doniel Watts, Teacher

self

Houston, TX

Please approve

Todd Bloomer
Self
San Antonio, TX

I do like the student safety climate survey in this bill by Rep Allison. I think taking into consideration extra curricular participation and student attendance are factors that need to be considered

Greg Vaughn
Texas Association of Workforce Boards
Frisco, TX

The Texas Association of Workforce Boards (TAWB) respectfully submits the following testimony in SUPPORT of HB 4514 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 modified indicators of achievement included in HB 4514 will help provide a more accurate picture of public school performance and facilitate the ability of schools to align curriculum 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.

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. Please add measures that focus on extracurricular participation, how the mental health support (counselors, etc.) is positive affecting school climate, how is the leadership of the school affecting the climate of the staff, etc. If we don't start to focus on what makes a great school and we are just focusing on a test score, we are grading campuses and not giving them the appropriate grade whether they look better with STAAR or maybe not as good, but they are very well rounded. You have Non-Title schools that may have great scores but terrible student and staff climate. And, you have Title-1 Schools with poorer scores but great campus climate for students and staff. Please consider everything you can when making a grade for a campus.

Trista Bishop-Watt
Good Reason Houston
Houston, TX
HB 4514 - Opposed

Parents, students, and communities must know how academically effective our schools are so they can hold systems accountable for student learning. For this reason, we respectfully submit our concerns with the changes proposed in HB 4514.

By conflating academic outcomes with other factors, especially at 50% of scores, HB 4514 makes it difficult to untangle 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.

Further, most of the new measures proposed have not been properly modeled to assess feasibility and reliability, and districts have no onramp to prepare. Considering sanctions are tied to accountability, this could have significant unintended consequences. In the case of extracurricular activities, the TEA found that additional piloting would be necessary before the agency could implement the indicator. The Legislature would need to fund a five-year extracurricular indicator phase-in plan, which HB 4514 does not provide.

We recognize the additional indicators added by HB 4514 are important. Areas like pre-K participation, teacher mentorship, and productive school climates are inputs that drive outcomes and ones we personally promote in our work. They are not academic outcomes. Accountability must focus on academic outcomes so we can measure if our inputs are improving student learning.

Under the current accountability system, 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, in Houston we know that 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 focused solely 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 if we are investing resources in interventions that support student growth.

Schools can be recognized for areas of excellence outside core academic functions through designations added to school report cards. For areas of critical importance, like school safety, it could even be appropriate to institute a separate accountability system. The A-F accountability system must be reserved for the most crucial function of public schools: ensuring students can read, write, and do math on grade level.

Micah Arrott
Self
Odessa, TX

I am in favor of this bill as it relates to accountability for public schools.

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

Our students are more than just a letter grade!

Clarissa Riojas
myself
MCALLEN, TX

My name is Clarissa Riojas, and I'm a middle school ESL teacher in McAllen, TX. As a teacher, I know that there are so many great things happening on my campus. We have students participating in music, UIL, and theatre. There are students taking advanced mathematics and courses in film and robotics. Two of our students are headed to regionals for a Spanish spelling bee. Our counselors earned the CREST award, the highest award that school counselors can receive in the state of Texas. None of that will be measured at the end of the year due to accountability ratings relying heavily on the STAAR test. I am asking you to support HB 4514, legislation that if passed, would measure the quality of a school based on programs and services that actually matter. Currently, 100% of a school's accountability rating is based on STAAR. We can change that. The time for reform is now.

Kaitlyn Braddock
ECISD
Odessa, TX
FOR

Teresa Willison
ECISD
Odessa, TX
For

Toscha Reeves
Self
Palestine, TX

There's more to assessing a campus success than one test one day. Utilizing a variety of measuring prints the community works have a clearer picture of our public school effectiveness and growth. Investing parents engagement in the previews of grading schools would increase their rights and responsibilities for helping the process for increasing more effective community public schools

Carolyn Dower
self, retired nurse
AUSTIN, TX

I supportl HB 4514. There is more to being a good student than grades. PLEASE VOTE YES for HB 4514.

Courtney Beck
Sterling City ISD
Sterling City, TX

Our students deserve more than a pass/fail test.

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

I am FOR this bill because it will help create a more meaningful accountability system for our Texas public schools.

Sergio Trevino
Self
Weslaco, TX

I support this bill.

Maria Diaz, Dr Blainer Advocacy for HB3028

Maria Diaz
Houston, TX

We want the best for our school too motivation inspiration for teachers,students, this school are vulnerable because for the background we life in this are less attention, money, High criminals.

Lance Key
self
Corsicana, TX

I am in support of this bill.

Charlene Shafer
Self, retired teacher
Cypress, TX

No one test given on one day should measure a student or a school's performance. Particularly a test that is often written above grade level, has trick questions & is designed to cause failure. Now it's given on line with no opportunity for students who do not access the computer adequately. Stop building in failure for students & schools.

Kelley Thomas
Self - Consultant
Richardson, TX

Thank you for taking the time to hear this bill regarding taking a broader look at the A-F accountability system in practice today.

With 100% of grades 3-8 A-F score built solely on the STAAR outcomes, the full picture of what makes a school great is overlooked. It is time to consider what isn't being reviewed. We need to look beyond the STAAR and consider family engagement, student engagement, fine arts, and, physical education. Does the school offer a bilingual program or is it a focused magnet school program for the performing arts, science, math or language arts.

And what about Pre-K - 2nd grade? There is no direct way to hold these grade levels accountable when only STAAR scores are considered.

Flipping to grades 9-12, EOCs only look at five courses (a decision I fully support) and are the majority concentration of the resulting A-F rating. Add in the CCMR scores and more classes are reflected in the final letter grade but still so much is missing. Athletics, extra and co-curriculars, foreign language, CTE courses without approved certifications, family engagement and student engagement are just a few of the items that set one school apart from another.

It's time to measure what matters to our communities so they have the knowledge to make school choice decisions for their students with all the data.

Again, thank you for hearing this bill, I ask that it moves quickly out of Committee and is requested to be calendared as quickly as possible.

Shonda Wells
Self
Corsicana, TX

I believe a schools academic performance rating should be based on more than a once a year test. I believe they should look at the schools graduation rate, extra curricular achievements, Athletic achievements, vocational and college (dual credit) achievements etc.

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. My own kids, who are only in elementary school, have been stressed about the STAAR Test for weeks and dreading the test days. This emphasis on one test to measure how a child is learning and how a teacher is teaching, is not creating a healthy learning environment.

Kathryn Kizer

Self

Austin, TX

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

Eric Hemati

Self, Parent

Austin, TX

We like this!

Daphne Hoffacker

self

Austin, TX

Yas! Thank you!

Marlene Bullard

Self - Public School Educator and School Board Trustee

Tornillo, TX

My name is Marlene Bullard and I am in favor of HB4514. I am both an educator, actually a District Testing Coordinator, in a Texas public school and a school board member of a public school. Thank you for the opportunity to speak in favor of HB4514 and I am also on record of being in favor of HB4402.

Our public school districts are so much more than an A-F rating. Some of you might remember the time when our report cards had grades for more than reading and math? There were categories for student skills like penmanship, fine arts, writing, leadership and even citizenship. Those tend to not be on report cards now but yet our teachers and school districts that serve 5.5 million students in our public schools are still helping students with these skills. While those aren't found on report cards our students and districts deserve to be able to show growth and accountability using other measurements. We aren't opposed to accountability, we chose to educate our youth and that committed us to accountability. We just want the measurements to be more reflective of the work.

For example, Tornillo ISD where I serve on the board is a small, 800 student, rural district that is a Title I district and 60% English language learners. In Tornillo we provide students with opportunities they wouldn't otherwise have through in school and after school enrichment programs. Through partnerships, grants and staff grit our students participate in violin, starting at the elementary grades, esports and robotics just to name a few. These are areas that can and should be measured.

Tornillo is a "B" rated district by TEA but we also know there is so much more than a rating based on standardized testing. Our staff, like so many other public school district staff provide so much more to our students and communities. Students are participating in CTE courses that lead to certifications and skills in much needed positions in the workforce. And yet we have some of those same students who also go on to 4-year colleges to learn other skills and join other professions. These are also areas that should be measured.

This bill doesn't cut accountability but rather measures more areas of which our public school districts are involved in to make student progress and performance more meaningful for our students and their parents. By limiting the STAAR's weight and adding other indicators such as attendance, student involvement in above grade courses, extra and co-curricular activities and Career and Technology Courses not only are we holding our schools to a higher standard we are making the accountability more understandable to all our parents and truly measuring the work our educators and students are doing.

I appreciate your time and consideration for this worthy bill, HB4514.

Amy Woodell

PTA

Austin, TX

I support accountability for public schools and any other school receiving public money.

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.

Tracy Fisher

self

Coppell, TX

I support this bill. It improves the accountability system for our Texas kids.

Theresa S Neman, Mrs.

Self educator

Spring, TX

Texas has so much confidence in the redesigned STAAR test that the middle third of scores are referred to as the "zone of uncertainty." This means that TEA will set passing rates after kids take it.

What a bunch of bs.

Either create a worthwhile exam, or don't waste the money creating it.

Also, fully fund public schools and oppose all voucher bills. Texas deserves better than the muck in Austin right now.