



**Alamo Heights Independent School District**  
*Office of the Superintendent*

---

7101 Broadway • San Antonio, Texas 78209 • Phone 210-824-2483

August 14, 2018

AHISD Parents and Community:

Students, teachers, and administrators in AHISD have been accountable to our community for our work since the district's inception, and you have come to expect our tradition of excellence. In Texas, accountability systems and standardized tests have come and gone over the years, and despite changes in our state accountability, our commitment to excellence in Alamo Heights remains constant.

This week, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) will assign A-F letter grades to every district across Texas. However, the new A-F rating system raises more questions than it offers answers. The stated intent of the new A-F rating system is to offer simplicity and transparency in judging the quality of a school district. The system misses the mark on both counts.

The letter grades being assigned to districts are primarily based on how students in grades 3-11 perform on a standardized test- the STAAR exams in the spring. Those scores are put through tortured calculations to arrive at a single letter grade and this methodology is neither simple nor clear. In Alamo Heights ISD, we have long cautioned against an over reliance on high stakes testing because it is a system based on a single test administration on one day of a student's performance in time, and it is not designed to measure a variety of important things valued by our community. The rich learning experiences that your children experience in Alamo Heights schools cannot be reduced to a single score on a single day.

In AHISD, we strive every day to celebrate the successes in our classroom while also taking a realistic and critical look at our curriculum, instructional practices, academic programs, and the wide range of student support systems and educational opportunities we provide for your children. Our community values rigorous instruction that results in profound learning instead of any kind of system that values teaching to a multiple choice test. In AHISD, we want to be accountable to our parents and our local community, both of whom value meaningful learning experiences for our students to best prepare them to excel academically and as confident, compassionate citizens with impeccable character and a global perspective.

Our district is committed to continual improvement to best meet our student needs. Through careful analysis of multiple data sources, authentic assessment opportunities, observations and feedback from stakeholders, we engaged in a multi-faceted and comprehensive needs assessment analysis annually. This is a collaborative process with input from teachers, parents, and students themselves that results in specific campus goals to improve student learning.

TEA's A-F accountability system will be in the news next week and beyond, and there will be pronouncements on all sides about the quality of public education. I caution us all to remember that simple is good, unless it is wrong and mis-leading. Instead of oversimplifying complex work like educating our children in public education, let's continue to rely on our greater aspirations for children in our schools and continue to work together to remain constant to the high standards set forth by our local community.

Sincerely,

Dana Bashara  
Superintendent of Schools