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ATPE releases statement on A-F state accountability rating system

State's largest educators association urges further study and caution in interpreting results

AUSTIN, Texas — The Texas Education Agency (TEA) issued the first round of A-F letter-grade ratings to Texas public school districts on August 15. [The Association of Texas Professional Educators](#) (ATPE), the state's largest educator group, has long voiced concerns about utilizing an A-F rating system for the Texas public school system and now urges further study of the new system's impact.

“Educators across Texas have opposed assigning overly simplistic letter grades that may unfairly label schools and their staff and students as failures,” said **Jennifer Mitchell**, ATPE Governmental Relations Director. “Many educators worry that A-F will stigmatize schools with accountability grades based disproportionately upon data from high-stakes standardized tests.”

The new “[A-F](#)” [accountability rating system](#) was created by the Texas Legislature in 2013 and modified in 2015 and 2017. The system relies upon largely test-based formulas to designate each district and campus a letter grade. The initial district ratings will apply to the 2017-18 school year.

Individual campuses will continue to receive ratings based on the older “Met Standard/Improvement Required” system until the first campus A-F ratings are released in August 2019. On a positive note, TEA Commissioner **Mike Morath** [recently reported](#) that Texas saw a historic reduction in the number of campuses identified as requiring improvement for the 2017-18 school year. A total of 260 campuses showed notable improvement from one year to the next.

“ATPE recognizes that under any accountability system so heavily determined by test scores, there will be winners and losers,” said Mitchell. “It is important not to overestimate the significance of poor grades assigned to some school districts, but it is equally vital to look behind the letter grades of those schools that have shown improvement. Additional study, [much like research commissioned by ATPE in the past to examine the factors influencing successful school turnaround](#), is warranted with the roll-out of this new system.”

For more on the A-F accountability system, visit ATPE's advocacy blog at teachthevote.org/news.

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About the Association of Texas Professional Educators (ATPE)

ATPE has been a strong voice for Texas educators since 1980. It is the leading educators' association in Texas with approximately 100,000 members statewide. With its strong collaborative philosophy, ATPE speaks for classroom teachers, administrators, future, retired and para-educators and works to create better opportunities for Texas's five million public school students. ATPE is the ally and the voice of Texas public education. Learn more about ATPE at atpe.org.