

Chapter 109. Budgeting, Accounting, and Auditing

Subchapter AA. Commissioner's Rules Concerning Financial Accountability

§109.1001. Financial Accountability Ratings.

- (a) The following words and terms, when used in this section, have the following meanings, unless the context clearly indicates otherwise.
- (1) Annual Financial Report (AFR)--The audited annual report required by Texas Education Code (TEC), §44.008, that is due to the Texas Education Agency (TEA) by no later than 150 days after the close of a school district's or an open-enrollment charter school's fiscal year.
 - (2) Ceiling indicator--An upper limit (the maximum score) at which a score from a standard limit of a specific indicator will result regardless of overall points.
 - (3) Debt--An amount of money owed to a person, bank, company, or other organization.
 - (4) Electronic submission--The TEA electronic data feed format required for use by school districts, open-enrollment charter schools, and regional education service centers (ESCs).
 - (5) Financial Integrity Rating System of Texas (FIRST)--The financial accountability rating system administered by TEA in accordance with TEC, §39.082 and §39.085. The system provides additional transparency to public education finance and meaningful financial oversight and improvement for school districts (School FIRST) and open-enrollment charter schools and charter schools operated by a public institution of higher education under TEC, Chapter 12, Subchapters D and E (Charter FIRST).
 - (6) Fiscal year--The fiscal year of a school district or an open-enrollment charter school, which begins on July 1 or September 1 of each year, as determined by the board of trustees of the district or the governing body of the charter holder in accordance with TEC, §44.0011.
 - (7) Foundation School Program (FSP)--The program established under TEC, Chapters 41, 42, and 46, or any successor program of state-appropriated funding for school districts in this state.
 - (8) Open-enrollment charter school--A charter school authorized by the commissioner of education under TEC, Chapter 12, Subchapter D.
 - (9) Public institution of higher education (IHE)--A public college or university eligible to operate a school district; an open-enrollment charter school; or a TEC, Chapter 12, Subchapter E, charter school authorized by the commissioner.
 - (10) Summary of Finances (SOF) report--The document of record for FSP allocations. An SOF report is produced for each school district and open-enrollment charter school by the TEA division responsible for state funding that describes the school district's or open-enrollment charter school's funding elements and FSP state aid.
 - (11) Texas Student Data System Public Education Information Management System (TSDS PEIMS)--The system that school districts and open-enrollment charter schools use to load, validate, and submit their data to TEA.
 - (12) Warrant hold--The process by which state payments issued to payees indebted to the state, or payees with a tax delinquency, are held by the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts until the debt is satisfied in accordance with Texas Government Code, §403.055.
- (b) TEA will assign a financial accountability rating to each school district, open-enrollment charter school, and charter school operated by a public IHE under TEC, Chapter 12, Subchapters D and E, as required by TEC, §39.082.
- (c) The commissioner will evaluate the rating system every three years as required by TEC, §39.082, and may modify the system in order to improve the effectiveness of the rating system. If the rating system has been

modified, TEA will communicate changes to ratings criteria and their effective dates to school districts, open-enrollment charter schools, and charter schools operated by public IHEs.

- (d) TEA will use the following sources of data in calculating the financial accountability indicators for school districts, open-enrollment charter schools, and charter schools operated by public IHEs.
- (1) AFR. For each school district, open-enrollment charter school, and charter school operated by a public IHE, TEA will use audited financial data in the district's or charter's AFR. The AFR, submitted as an electronic submission through the TEA website, must include data required in the Financial Accountability System Resource Guide (FASRG) adopted under §109.41 of this title (relating to Financial Accountability System Resource Guide).
 - (2) TSDS PEIMS. TEA will use TSDS PEIMS data submitted by the school district, open-enrollment charter school, or charter school operated by a public IHE in the calculation of the financial accountability indicators.
 - (3) Warrant holds. TEA will use warrant holds as reported by the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts in the calculation of the financial accountability indicators.
 - (4) FSP. TEA will use the average daily attendance (ADA) information used for FSP funding purposes for the school district, open-enrollment charter school, or charter school operated by a public IHE in the calculation of the financial accountability indicators.
- (e) TEA will base the financial accountability rating of a school district on its overall performance on the financial measurements, ratios, and other indicators established by the commissioner, as shown in the figures provided in this subsection. Financial accountability ratings for a rating year are based on the data from the immediate prior fiscal year.
- (1) The financial accountability rating indicators for rating year 2025-2026 are based on fiscal year 2025 financial data and are provided in the figure in this paragraph entitled "School FIRST - Rating Worksheet Dated July 2026 for Rating Years 2025-2026+." The financial accountability rating indicators for rating years after 2025-2026 will use the same calculations and scoring method provided in the figure in this paragraph.
[Figure: 19 TAC §109.1001\(e\)\(1\)](#)
 - (2) The financial accountability rating indicators for rating year 2026-2027 are based on fiscal year 2026 financial data and are provided in the figure in this paragraph entitled "School FIRST - Rating Worksheet Dated July 2026 for Rating Years 2026-2027+." The financial accountability indicators for rating years after 2026-2027 will use the same calculations and scoring method provided in the figure in this paragraph.
[Figure: 19 TAC §109.1001\(e\)\(2\)](#)
 - (3) The specific calculations and scoring methods used in the financial accountability rating worksheets for school districts adopted for prior rating years remain in effect for all purposes with respect to those rating years.
- (f) TEA will base the financial accountability rating of an open-enrollment charter school on its overall performance on the financial measurements, ratios, and other indicators established by the commissioner, as shown in the figures provided in this subsection. Financial accountability ratings for a rating year are based on the data from the immediate prior fiscal year.
- (1) The financial accountability rating indicators for rating year 2025-2026 are based on fiscal year 2025 financial data and are provided in the figure in this paragraph entitled "Charter FIRST - Rating Worksheet Dated July 2026 for Rating Years 2025-2026+." The financial accountability rating indicators for rating years after 2025-2026 will use the same calculations and scoring method provided in the figure in this paragraph.
[Figure: 19 TAC §109.1001\(f\)\(1\)](#)
 - (2) The financial accountability rating indicators for rating year 2026-2027 are based on fiscal year 2026 financial data and are provided in the figure in this paragraph entitled "Charter FIRST -

Rating Worksheet Dated July 2026 for Rating Years 2026-2027+." The financial accountability indicators for rating years after 2026-2027 will use the same calculations and scoring method provided in the figure in this paragraph.

[Figure: 19 TAC §109.1001\(f\)\(2\)](#)

- (3) The specific calculations and scoring methods used in the financial accountability rating worksheets for open-enrollment charter schools adopted for prior rating years remain in effect for all purposes with respect to those rating years.
- (g) TEA will base the financial accountability rating of a charter school operated by a public IHE on its overall performance on the financial measurements, ratios, and other indicators established by the commissioner, as shown in the figures provided in this subsection. Financial accountability ratings for a rating year are based on the data from the immediate prior fiscal year.
 - (1) The financial accountability rating indicators for rating year 2025-2026 are based on fiscal year 2025 financial data and are provided in the figure in this paragraph entitled "IHE Charter FIRST - Rating Worksheet Dated July 2026 for rating year 2025-2026." The financial accountability rating indicators for rating years after 2025-2026 will use the same calculations and scoring method provided in the figure in this paragraph.

[Figure: 19 TAC §109.1001\(g\)\(1\)](#)
 - (2) The financial accountability rating indicators for rating year 2026-2027 are based on fiscal year 2026 financial data and are provided in the figure in this paragraph entitled "IHE Charter FIRST - Rating Worksheet Dated July 2026 for rating year 2026-2027." The financial accountability rating indicators for rating years after 2026-2027 will use the same calculations and scoring method provided in the figure in this paragraph.

[Figure: 19 TAC §109.1001\(g\)\(2\)](#)
 - (3) The specific calculations and scoring methods used in the financial accountability rating worksheets for charter schools operated by a public IHE adopted for prior rating years remain in effect for all purposes with respect to those rating years.
- (h) The types of financial accountability ratings that school districts or open-enrollment charter schools may receive for the rating year 2014-2015 are as follows.
 - (1) P for pass. This rating applies only to the financial accountability rating for rating year 2014-2015 based on fiscal year 2014 financial data. In accordance with the procedures established in this section, a school district or an open-enrollment charter school will receive a P rating if it scores within the applicable range established by the commissioner for a P rating.
 - (2) F for substandard achievement. This rating applies to the financial accountability rating for rating year 2014-2015 based on fiscal year 2014 financial data. In accordance with the procedures established in this section, a school district or an open-enrollment charter school will receive an F rating if it scores within the applicable range established by the commissioner for an F rating.
- (i) The types of financial accountability ratings that school districts or open-enrollment charter schools may receive for the rating year 2015-2016 and all subsequent rating years are as follows.
 - (1) A for superior achievement. Beginning with the financial accountability rating for rating year 2015-2016 and all subsequent rating years, in accordance with the procedures established in this section, a school district or an open-enrollment charter school will receive an A rating if it scores within the applicable range established by the commissioner for an A rating.
 - (2) B for above standard achievement. Beginning with the financial accountability rating for rating year 2015-2016 and all subsequent rating years, in accordance with the procedures established in this section, a school district or an open-enrollment charter school will receive a B rating if it scores within the applicable range established by the commissioner for a B rating.
 - (3) C for standard achievement. Beginning with the financial accountability rating for rating year 2015-2016 and all subsequent rating years, in accordance with the procedures established in this

- section, a school district or an open-enrollment charter school will receive a C rating if it scores within the applicable range established by the commissioner for a C rating.
- (4) F for substandard achievement. Beginning with the financial accountability rating for rating year 2015-2016 and all subsequent rating years, in accordance with the procedures established in this section, a school district or an open-enrollment charter school will receive an F rating if it scores within the applicable range established by the commissioner for an F rating.
 - (5) No Rating. Beginning with the financial accountability rating for rating year 2016-2017 and all subsequent rating years, in accordance with the procedures established in this section, a school district receiving territory due to an annexation order by the commissioner under TEC, §13.054, or consolidation under TEC, Chapter 49, Subchapter H, will not receive a rating for two consecutive rating years beginning with the rating year that is based on financial data from the fiscal year in which the order of annexation becomes effective. After the second rating year, the receiving district will be subject to the financial accountability rating system established by the commissioner in this section.
- (j) The types of financial accountability ratings that charter schools operated by public IHEs may receive for the rating year 2016-2017 and all subsequent rating years are as follows.
- (1) P for pass. Beginning with the financial accountability rating for rating year 2016-2017 and all subsequent rating years, in accordance with the procedures established in this section, a charter school operated by a public IHE will receive a P rating if it scores within the applicable range established by the commissioner for a P rating.
 - (2) F for substandard achievement. Beginning with the financial accountability rating for rating year 2016-2017 and all subsequent rating years, in accordance with the procedures established in this section, a charter school operated by a public IHE will receive an F rating if it scores within the applicable range established by the commissioner for an F rating.
- (k) The commissioner may lower a financial accountability rating based on the findings of an action conducted under TEC, Chapter 39 or 39A, or change a financial accountability rating in cases of disaster, flood, extreme weather conditions, fuel curtailment, or another calamity.
- (l) A financial accountability rating remains in effect until replaced by a subsequent financial accountability rating.
- (m) TEA will issue a preliminary financial accountability rating to a school district, an open-enrollment charter school, or a charter school operated by a public IHE on or before August 8 of each year. TEA will base the financial accountability rating for a rating year on the data from the fiscal year preceding the rating year.
- (1) TEA will not delay the issuance of the preliminary or final rating if a school district, an open-enrollment charter school, or a charter school operated by a public IHE fails to meet the statutory deadline under TEC, §44.008, for submitting the AFR. Instead, the school district, open-enrollment charter school, or charter school operated by a public IHE will receive an F rating for substandard achievement.
 - (2) If TEA receives an appeal of a preliminary rating, described by subsection (n) of this section, TEA will issue a final rating to the school district, open-enrollment charter school, or charter school operated by a public IHE no later than 60 days after the deadline for submitting appeals.
 - (3) If TEA does not receive an appeal of a preliminary rating, described by subsection (n) of this section, the preliminary rating automatically becomes a final rating 31 days after issuance of the preliminary rating.
- (n) A school district, an open-enrollment charter school, or a charter school operated by a public IHE may appeal its preliminary financial accountability rating through the following appeals process.
- (1) The TEA division responsible for financial accountability must receive a written appeal no later than 30 days after TEA's release of the preliminary rating. The appeal must include adequate evidence and additional information that supports the position of the school district, open-

enrollment charter school, or charter school operated by a public IHE. Appeals received 31 days or more after TEA issues a preliminary rating will not be considered.

- (2) A data error attributable to TEA is a basis for an appeal. If a preliminary rating contains a data error attributable to TEA, a school district or an open-enrollment charter school may submit a written appeal requesting a review of the preliminary rating.
- (3) A school district, an open-enrollment charter school, or a charter school operated by a public IHE may appeal any other adverse issue it identifies in the preliminary rating.
- (4) TEA will only consider appeals that would result in a change of the preliminary rating.
- (5) The TEA division responsible for financial accountability will select an external review panel to independently oversee the appeals process.
- (6) The TEA division responsible for financial accountability will submit the information provided by the school district, open-enrollment charter school, or charter school operated by a public IHE to the external review panel members for review.
- (7) Each external review panel member will examine the appeal and supporting documentation and will submit his or her recommendation to the TEA division responsible for financial accountability.
- (8) The TEA division responsible for financial accountability will compile the recommendations and forward them to the commissioner.
- (9) The commissioner will make a final ratings decision.
 - (A) The commissioner may adjust a score for an indicator or the overall score upon appeal of the indicator(s) by the school district, open-enrollment charter school, or charter school operated by a public IHE.
 - (B) Upon appeal of the indicator for the timely submission of a complete AFR, the commissioner may adjust the overall score and rating as described in clauses (i)-(iii) of this subparagraph if the certificate of the board and the audit opinion letter from the external auditor for the school district's or charter school's AFR were signed on or before the due date of the AFR as required in TEC, §44.008.
 - (i) For a school district or charter school that has a failed preliminary FIRST rating with 85 to 100 points, deduct 15 points from the total points for an overall passing score if no other critical indicators were failed.
 - (ii) For a school district or charter school that has a failed preliminary FIRST rating with 70 to 84 points, adjust the overall score to 70 points for an overall passing score if no other critical indicators were failed.
 - (iii) For a school district or charter school that has a failed preliminary FIRST rating with total points less than the threshold for an overall passing score and/or the school district or charter school failed any other critical indicators, no adjustment to the points will be made for the overall score.
- (o) A final rating issued by TEA under this section may not be appealed under TEC, §7.057, or any other law or rule.
- (p) A financial accountability rating by a voluntary association is a local option of the school district, open-enrollment charter school, or charter school operated by a public IHE, but it does not substitute for a financial accountability rating by TEA.
- (q) Each school district, open-enrollment charter school, and charter school operated by a public IHE is required to report information and financial accountability ratings to parents, taxpayers, and other stakeholders by implementing the following reporting procedures.

- (1) Each school district, open-enrollment charter school, and charter school operated by a public IHE must prepare and distribute an annual financial management report in accordance with this subsection.
- (2) Each school district, open-enrollment charter school, and charter school operated by a public IHE must provide the public with an opportunity to comment on the report at a public hearing.
- (3) The annual financial management report for a school district, an open-enrollment charter school, or a charter school operated by a public IHE must include:
 - (A) a description of its financial management performance based on a comparison, provided by TEA, of its performance on the indicators established by the commissioner and reflected in this section. The report will contain information that discloses:
 - (i) state-established standards; and
 - (ii) the financial management performance of the school district, open-enrollment charter school, or charter school operated by a public IHE under each indicator for the current and previous year's financial accountability ratings;
 - (B) any descriptive information required by the commissioner, including:
 - (i) a copy of the superintendent's current employment contract or other written documentation of employment if no contract exists. This must disclose all compensation and benefits paid to the superintendent. The school district, open-enrollment charter school, or charter school operated by a public IHE may publish the superintendent's employment contract on its website instead of publishing it in the annual financial management report;
 - (ii) a summary schedule for the fiscal year (12-month period) of expenditures paid on behalf of the superintendent and each board member and total reimbursements received by the superintendent and each board member. This includes transactions on the credit card(s), debit card(s), stored-value card(s), and any other similar instrument(s) of the school district, open-enrollment charter school, or charter school operated by a public IHE to cover expenses incurred by the superintendent and each board member. The summary schedule must separately report reimbursements for meals, lodging, transportation, motor fuel, and other items. The summary schedule of total reimbursements should not include reimbursements for supplies and materials that were purchased for the operation of the school district, open-enrollment charter school, or charter school operated by a public IHE;
 - (iii) a summary schedule for the fiscal year of the dollar amount of compensation and fees received by the superintendent from an outside school district, open-enrollment charter school, charter school operated by a public IHE, or any other outside entity in exchange for professional consulting or other personal services. The schedule must separately report the amount received from each entity;
 - (iv) a summary schedule for the fiscal year of the total dollar amount of gifts that had a total economic value of \$250 or more received by the executive officers and board members. This reporting requirement applies only to gifts received by the executive officers and board members (and their immediate family as described by Texas Government Code, Chapter 573, Subchapter B, Relationships by Consanguinity or by Affinity) of the school district, open-enrollment charter school (or charter holder), or charter school operated by a public IHE (or charter holder) from an outside entity that received payments from the school district, open-enrollment charter school (or charter holder), or charter school operated by a public IHE (or charter holder) in the prior fiscal year and to gifts from competing vendors that were not awarded contracts in the prior fiscal year. This reporting requirement does not apply to reimbursement by an outside entity for travel-related expenses when the purpose of the travel was

- to investigate matters directly related to an executive officer's or board member's duties or to investigate matters related to attendance at education-related conferences and seminars with the primary purpose of providing continuing education (this exclusion does not apply to trips for entertainment purposes or pleasure trips). This reporting requirement excludes an individual gift or a series of gifts from a single outside entity that had a total economic value of less than \$250 per executive officer or board member; and
- (v) a summary schedule for the fiscal year of the dollar amount received by board members for the total amount of business transactions with the school district, open-enrollment charter school (or charter holder), or charter school operated by a public IHE (or charter holder). This reporting requirement is not to duplicate the items disclosed in the summary schedule of reimbursements received by board members; and
 - (C) any other information the board of trustees of the school district, open-enrollment charter school, or charter school operated by a public IHE determines to be useful.
- (4) The board of trustees of each school district, open-enrollment charter school, or charter school operated by a public IHE must hold a public hearing on the annual financial management report within two months after receiving a final financial accountability rating. The public hearing must be held at a location in the facilities of the school district, open-enrollment charter school, or charter school operated by a public IHE. The board must give notice of the hearing to owners of real estate property in the geographic boundaries of the school district, open-enrollment charter school, or charter school operated by a public IHE and to parents of school district, open-enrollment charter school, or charter school operated by a public IHE students. In addition to other notice required by law, the board must provide notice of the hearing:
- (A) to a newspaper of general circulation in the geographic boundaries of the school district, each campus of an open-enrollment charter school, or each campus of a charter school operated by a public IHE in one posting prior to holding the public meeting, providing the time and place of the hearing. The notice in the newspaper may not be earlier than 30 days or later than 10 days before the date of the hearing. If no newspaper is published in the county in which the district's central administration office is located or within the geographic boundaries of an open-enrollment charter school's campus or campus of a charter school operated by a public IHE, then the board must publish the notice in the county nearest to the county seat of the county in which the district's central administration office is located or in which the campus of the open-enrollment charter school or the campus of a charter school operated by a public IHE is located; and
 - (B) through electronic mail to the mass communication media serving the school district, open-enrollment charter school, or charter school operated by a public IHE, including, but not limited to, radio and television.
- (5) At the hearing, the school district, open-enrollment charter school, or charter school operated by a public IHE must provide the annual financial management report to the attending parents and taxpayers.
- (6) The school district, open-enrollment charter school, or charter school operated by a public IHE must retain the annual financial management report for at least three years after the public hearing and make it available to parents and taxpayers upon request.
- (7) Each school district, open-enrollment charter school, or charter school operated by a public IHE that received an F rating must file a corrective action plan with TEA, prepared in accordance with instructions from the commissioner, within one month after the public hearing of the school district, open-enrollment charter school, or charter school operated by a public IHE. The commissioner may require certain information in the corrective action plan to address the factor(s) that may have contributed to the F rating for a school district, open-enrollment charter school, or charter school operated by a public IHE.

Statutory Authority: The provisions of this §109.1001 issued under the Texas Education Code, §§12.104, 39.082, 39.083, 39.085, 39.087, as that section existed before expiration on September 1, 2023, and 39.151, as amended by House Bill (HB) 8, 89th Texas Legislature, 2nd Called Session, 2025.

Source: The provisions of this §109.1001 adopted to be effective August 6, 2015, 40 TexReg 4879; amended to be effective September 11, 2016, 41 TexReg 6685; amended to be effective May 15, 2017, 42 TexReg 2534; amended to be effective August 1, 2018, 43 TexReg 4973; amended to be effective October 6, 2019, 44 TexReg 5761; amended to be effective September 1, 2020, 45 TexReg 6112; amended to be effective January 5, 2022, 46 TexReg 9295; amended to be effective June 6, 2023, 48 TexReg 2844; amended to be effective June 13, 2024, 49 TexReg 4037; amended to be effective July 15, 2026, 51 Tex Reg 4563.