



HARLANDALE

INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Office of the Superintendent

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Dear Parents,

Beginning in August 2018, every school and district in Texas will receive a letter grade of A, B, C, D or F, based primarily on students' 2017 STAAR Test performance. To prepare for the implementation of these ratings in 2018, the state has issued a preliminary A-F rating based on 2016 testing data as a trial to show schools and districts what their rating would be had it been implemented this year. According to our state legislators, the reason for supporting the use of the new A-F rating is, it simplifies the explanation of school and district quality and helps improve student performance. I want to bring to your attention some concerns regarding this method or rating.

First, the notion that A-F ratings provide simplicity in understating school and district quality is misguided. The rules behind A-F appear simple on the surface but upon deeper analysis they are neither simple nor transparent. Rating a school or district with a single grade from a one-time testing event (STAAR), in addition to attendance, misrepresents a large proportion of what happens in our schools and fails to offer our community useful or accurate information about HISD schools. The reality and use of a single letter grade rating system alone has no significant research that can be attributed to offering corrective and/or continuous improvement options for schools.

It is very likely that a single letter grade system will align with a community's relative level of wealth. Other states that currently use this system have shown that grades of D or F are highly correlated with schools that serve large numbers of economically disadvantaged students, thus creating a false impression about our neighborhoods, students, and school community. While it may be tempting to praise or criticize schools based on the A-F ratings, I do not recommend this practice. A school rated an A or B may lead us to believe everything is fine at this campus, when there is always room for improvement. A grade of D or F may prompt a belief that everything about the school needs to be changed, when in fact many things may be working quite well. We believe no single rating label will ever be able to adequately capture the actual effort and effectiveness of our district and schools or the true impact we make on HISD students.

Harlandale ISD is **extremely proud** of what we have done on our campuses and we will continue to work hard in providing the best education for our students. I want to reassure you that Harlandale ISD teachers and staff are committed each and every day to provide a caring and rigorous environment for all students to be successful. Thank you for your support of Harlandale students, teachers and staff.

Sincerely,

Rey Madrigal

Superintendent

Students Today - Leaders Tomorrow