



## How Ratings are Assessed

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### Rating Worksheet

With the passage of House Bill 3, 81<sup>st</sup> Legislative Session, the 65% instructional expenditure ratio requirement was repealed. This resulted in the deletion of prior indicators 13 and 14 related to the 65% instructional expenditure ratio requirement for the ratings issued by the Texas Education Agency in the summer of 2010. This also resulted in the deletion of provisions for posting the check register on the school district's Internet site, under the 2010 amendment of Title 19, Texas Administrative Code, Chapter 109, Subchapter AA, Commissioner's Rules Concerning Financial Accountability Rating System.

The questions a school district must address in completing the worksheet used to assess its financial management system can be confusing to non-accountants. The following is a layman's explanation of what the questions mean—and what your district's answers can mean to its rating.

#### **1. Was total Fund Balance less Reserved Fund Balance greater than Zero in the General Fund?**

School districts must legally have a fund balance to ensure adequate funding for operations. This indicator is designed to ensure that your district has a positive amount of fund balance cash (savings) that is not designated or "reserved" for a specific purpose. In other words, "Does your district have funds set aside for a rainy day?"

#### **2. Was the Total Unrestricted Net Asset Balance (Net of Accretion of Interest for Capital Appreciation Bonds) in the Governmental Activities Column in the Statement of Net Assets Greater than Zero? (If the District's Five-Year Percent Change in Students was a 10% Increase or More then Answer Yes)**

This indicator simply asks, "Did the district's total assets exceed the total amount of liabilities (according to the very first financial statement in the annual audit report)?" Fortunately this indicator recognizes that high-growth districts incur large amounts of debt to fund construction, and that total debt may exceed the total amount of assets under certain scenarios.

#### **3. Were there NO disclosures in the Annual Financial Report and/or other sources of information concerning default on bonded indebtedness obligations?**

This indicator seeks to make certain that your district has paid your bills/obligations on bonds issued to pay for school construction, etc.

#### **4. Was the Annual Financial Report filed within one month after the November 27 or January 28 deadline depending upon the district's Fiscal Year end date (June 30 or August 31)?**

A simple indicator. Was your Annual Financial Report filed by the deadline?



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### **5. Was there an Unqualified Opinion in the Annual Financial Report?**

A “qualification” on your financial report means that you need to correct some of your reporting or financial controls. A district’s goal, therefore, is to receive an “unqualified opinion” on its Annual Financial Report. This is a simple “Yes” or “No” indicator.

### **6. Did the Annual Financial Report NOT disclose any instance(s) of material weakness in internal controls?**

A clean audit of your Annual Financial Report would state that your district has no material weaknesses in internal controls. Any internal weaknesses create a risk of your District not being able to properly account for its use of public funds, and should be immediately addressed.

### **7. Did the district’s academic rating exceed academically unacceptable?**

This indicator simply asks whether the district’s accreditation status is in good standing.

### **8. Was the three year average percent of total tax collections (including delinquent) greater than 98 percent?**

This indicator measures your district’s success in collecting the taxes owed to

you by your community’s businesses and homeowners, placing a 98 percent minimum collections standard. You must collect based upon a three-year average more than 98% of your taxes, including any delinquent taxes owed from past years. A district earns up to five points under this indicator based upon its relative performance.

### **9. Did the comparison of PEIMS data to like information in the Annual Financial Report result in an aggregate variance of less than 3 percent of expenditures per fund type (Data Quality Measure)?**

This indicator measures the quality of data reported to PEIMS and in your Annual Financial Report to make certain that the data reported in each case “matches up.” If the difference in numbers reported in any fund type is 3 percent or more, your district “fails” this measure.

### **10. Were Debt-Related Expenditures (net of IFA and/or EDA allotment) less than \$350 per student? (If the district’s five-year percent change in students was a 7 percent increase or more, or if property taxes collected per penny of tax effort were more than \$200,000, then the district receives 5 points.)**

This indicator shows the Legislature’s intent for school districts to spend money on education, rather than fancy buildings, by limiting the amount of money district’s can spend on debt to \$350 per student. Fortunately, the



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Legislature did allow for fast-growth schools to exceed this cap. A district earns up to five points under this indicator based upon its relative performance.

### **11. Was there NO disclosure in the Annual Audit Report of Material Noncompliance?**

NO disclosure means the Annual Audit Report includes no disclosure indicating that the school district failed to comply with laws, rules and regulations for a government entity.

### **12. Did the district have full accreditation status in relation to financial management practices? (e.g. no conservator or monitor assigned)**

Did TEA take over control of your district due to financial issues such as fraud or having a negative fund balance? If not, you pass this indicator.

### **13. Was the aggregate of Budgeted Expenditures and Other Uses LESS THAN the aggregate of Total Revenues, Other Resources and Fund Balance in General Fund?**

Did you overspend your budget? Your district will receive a negative rating on this measure if your total expenditures and other uses for the fiscal year exceeded your total funds available.

### **14. If the district's Aggregate Fund Balance in the General Fund and**

**Capital Projects Fund was LESS THAN zero, were construction projects adequately financed? (Were construction projects adequately financed or adjusted by change orders or other legal means to avoid creating or adding to the fund balance deficit situation?)**

Did you over-spend on school buildings or other capital projects? This indicator measures your district's ability to construct facilities without damaging your Fund Balance.

### **15. Was the ratio of Cash and Investments to Deferred Revenues (excluding amount equal to net Delinquent Taxes Receivable) in the General Fund greater than or equal to 1:1? (If Deferred Revenues are less than Net Delinquent Taxes Receivable, then the district receives 5 points)**

This indicator measures whether or not your district has sufficient cash and investments to balance Fund Balance monies such as TEA overpayments (deferred revenues). In other words, your District should have fund balance monies of its own that are at least equal to those dollars that are there due to overpayments from TEA, and you should not be spending "next year's" monies this year. A district earns up to five points under this indicator based upon its relative performance.

### **16. Was the Administrative Cost Ratio less than the historic standard in State Law?**



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This indicator measures the percentage of their budget that Texas school districts spent on administration. Did you exceed the cap in School FIRST for districts of your size?

### 17. Was the Ratio of Students to Teachers within the ranges shown below according to district size?

This indicator measures your pupil-teacher ratio to ensure that it is within TEA recommended ranges for district's of your student population range. For example, districts with a student population between 500 and 999 should have no more than 22 students per teacher and no fewer than 10 students per teacher. A district earns up to five points under this indicator based upon its relative performance.

Indicator 17 District Size – No. of Students	Ranges for Ratios	
	Low	High
<500	7	22
500 – 999	10	22
1,000 – 4,999	11.5	22
5,000 – 9,999	13	22
=> 10,000	13.5	22

### 18. Was the Ratio of Students to Total Staff within the ranges shown below according to district size?

This indicator measures your pupil-staff ratio to ensure that it is within TEA-recommended ranges for district's of your student population range. For example, districts with a student

population between 500 and 1,000 should have no more than 14 students per staff member and no fewer than 5.8 students per district employee. A district earns up to five points under this indicator based upon its relative performance.

Indicator 18 District Size – No. of Students	Ranges for Ratios	
	Low	High
<500	5	14
500 – 999	5.8	14
1,000 – 4,999	6.3	14
5,000 – 9,999	6.8	14
=> 10,000	7.0	14

### 19. Was the Total Fund Balance in the General Fund more than 50 percent and less than 150 percent of Optimum according to the Fund Balance and Cash Flow Calculation Worksheet in the Annual Financial Report?

Your district's audit provides an optimum General Fund "Fund Balance" for your district. Your district should have no less than one-half and no more than one and one-half times this amount in your Fund Balance, counting both reserved and unreserved fund balances. A district earns up to five points under this indicator based upon its relative performance.

### 20. Was the decrease in Undesignated Unreserved Fund Balance less than 20 percent over two Fiscal Years? (If 1.5 times Optimum Fund balance is less than total Fund Balance in General Fund or if Total Revenues the General exceeded Operating Expenditures in



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Fund, then the district receives 5 points)

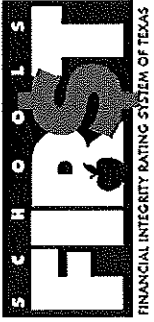
Are you “feeding off of your Fund Balance” to pay for salaries or other district operating expenses? This indicator notes rapid decreases in your undesignated Fund Balance (those dollars not designated as a “land fund” or “construction fund”) or emergency fund. A district earns up to five points under this indicator based upon its relative performance.

**21. Was the Aggregate Total of Cash and Investments in the General Fund more than \$0?**

Does your district have cash in the bank, and/or investments?

**22. Were Investment Earnings in all funds (excluding Debt Service Fund and Capital Projects Fund) more than \$20 per student?**

Are you using your cash or reserve fund (Fund Balance) monies wisely? A district earns up to five points under this indicator based upon its relative performance.



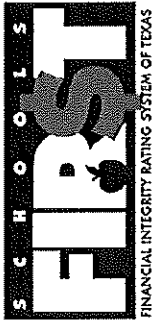
# Disclosures

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Reporting requirements for the financial management report for Schools FIRST public hearing are found in **Title 19 Texas Administrative Code Chapter 109, Budgeting, Accounting, and Auditing, Subchapter AA, Commissioner's Rules Concerning Financial Accountability Rating System**. This rule describes requirements for the five (5) disclosures explained below that are to be presented as appendices in the Schools FIRST financial management report.

## **1. Superintendent's Employment Contract**

The school district is to provide a copy of the superintendent's employment contract that is effective on the date of the Schools FIRST hearing in calendar year 2010. In lieu of publication in the Schools FIRST financial management report, the school district may choose to publish the superintendent's employment contract on the school district's Internet site. **If published on the Internet**, the contract is to remain accessible for twelve months.



# Disclosures

## 2. Reimbursements Received by the Superintendent and Board Members for Fiscal Year 2009

For the Twelve-month Period Ended August 31, 2009 Description of Reimbursements	Superintendent	Board Member 1	Board Member 2	Board Member 3	Board Member 4	Board Member 5	Board Member 6	Board Member 7
	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Meals								
Lodging								
Transportation								
Motor Fuel								
Other								
<b>Total</b>	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$

**Note** – The spirit of the rule is to capture all “reimbursements” for fiscal year 2009, regardless of the manner of payment, including direct pay, credit card, cash, and purchase order. Reimbursements to be reported per category include:

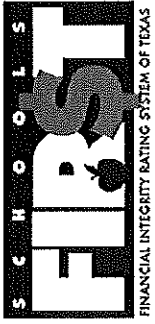
**Meals** – Meals consumed off of the school district’s premises, and in-district meals at area restaurants (excludes catered meals for board meetings).

**Lodging** - Hotel charges.

**Transportation** - Airfare, car rental (can include fuel on rental), taxis, mileage reimbursements, leased cars, parking and tolls.

**Motor fuel** – Gasoline.

**Other** - Registration fees, telephone/cell phone, internet service, fax machine, and other reimbursements (or on-behalf of) to the superintendent and board member not defined above.



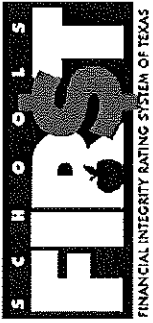
# Disclosures

### 3. Outside Compensation and/or Fees Received by the Superintendent for Professional Consulting and/or Other Personal Services in Fiscal Year 2009

For the Twelve-Month Period Ended August 31, 2009	
Name(s) of Entity(ies)	\$
Total	\$

**Note** – Compensation does not include business revenues from the superintendent’s livestock or agricultural-based activities on a ranch or farm. Report gross amount received (do not deduct business expenses from gross revenues). Revenues generated from a family business that have no relationship to school district business are not to be disclosed.



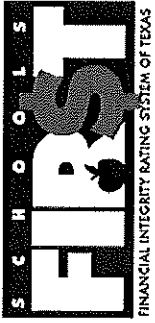


# Disclosures

## 4. Gifts Received by the Executive Officer(s) and Board Members (and First Degree Relatives, if any) in Fiscal Year 2009

For the Twelve-Month Period Ended August 31, 2009									
	Superintendent	Board Member 1	Board Member 2	Board Member 3	Board Member 4	Board Member 5	Board Member 6	Board Member 7	
Summary Amounts	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$

**Note** – An executive officer is defined as the superintendent, unless the board of trustees or the district administration names additional staff under this classification. Gifts received by first degree relatives, if any, will be reported under the applicable school official.



# Disclosures

## 5. Business Transactions Between School District and Board Members for Fiscal Year 2009

For the Twelve-Month Period Ended August 31, 2009	Board Member 1	Board Member 2	Board Member 3	Board Member 4	Board Member 5	Board Member 6	Board Member 7
Summary Amounts	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$

Note - The summary amounts reported under this disclosure are not to duplicate the items reported in the summary schedule of reimbursements received by board members.

October 20, 2010

For further information,  
contact: James Monaco  
(940) 668-0060

### ***Aubrey ISD Announces Fiscal Accountability Rating***

Aubrey Independent School District Officials announced that the district received a rating of “Superior Achievement” under Texas’ new Schools FIRST financial accountability rating system. The rating system measures the quality of a school district’s financial management and reporting.

This is the eighth year of Schools FIRST (Financial Accountability Rating System of Texas), a financial accountability system for Texas school districts developed by Texas Education Agency in response to Senate Bill 875 of the 76<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature in 1999. The primary goal of Schools FIRST is to achieve quality performance in the management of school districts’ financial resources, a goal made more significant due to the complexity of accounting associated with Texas’ school finance system.

“We are very pleased with Aubrey ISD’s Schools First rating,” said Aubrey ISD Superintendent James Monaco, “as it shows that our district is making the most of our taxpayer’s dollars. This rating shows that Aubrey’s schools are accountable not only for student learning, but also for achieving these results cost-effectively and efficiently.”

The Schools FIRST accountability rating system assigns one of four financial accountability ratings to Texas school districts, with the highest being “Superior Achievement,” followed by “Above-Standard Achievement,” “Standard Achievement” and “Substandard Achievement.” Districts with serious data quality problems may receive the additional rating of “Suspended-Data Quality.” Districts that receive the “Substandard Achievement” or “Suspended-Data Quality” ratings under Schools FIRST must file a corrective action plan with the Texas Education Agency.