



**PRESS RELEASE  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**FOR MORE INFORMATION:**

Jamie Fails, Director of Communications  
830-459-6018

**WILLIS ISD TO JOIN LAWSUIT AGAINST  
TEXAS EDUCATION AGENCY**

*Schools across Texas continue to fight the efforts to disparage public education*

**WILLIS (Sept. 14, 2023)** - Willis ISD campuses are rated annually by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) with an A through F letter grade. The rating system relies heavily on performance measures, methods and procedures rooted in students' performance on the annual standardized assessment, STAAR.

Unfortunately, the TEA and Commissioner Mike Morath have not finalized the rules or methodologies that will be used to evaluate schools for the 2022-23 or 2023-24 school years.

**Texas statute dictates that TEA must present the accountability rating system and grading criteria to Texas school districts BEFORE the grading year begins. The statute also requires that TEA release the prior year's accountability ratings by August 15.**

Not only did TEA not release the rating system in the 2022-23 school year, they also weren't planning to release the official ratings until Sept. 26. In fact, just this week, TEA announced that they are holding accountability ratings for an additional month past Sept. 26 to re-evaluate some scoring areas.

Willis ISD first urged TEA to re-evaluate the accountability system refresh in March 2023 in a joint letter co-signed by 250 Texas school districts and education organizations. You can read that letter [HERE](#).

The Willis ISD Board of Trustees this week passed a resolution to allow the district to join a coalition of Texas Public School Districts in a formal lawsuit challenging the A-F (Refresh) Accountability Rating system. The goal is to halt the publication of all district accountability ratings in Texas for this year due to Texas Education Code requirements not being met by the TEA.

The lawsuit cites how the commissioner has failed to provide school districts with “a document in a simple, accessible format that explains the accountability performance measures, methods, and procedures that will be applied” for the 2022-23 and 2023-24 school years.

**The lawsuit seeks an injunction to prevent the commissioner from issuing new ratings using the retroactively applied, yet-to-be-finalized measures.**

One big issue with the “refreshed” A-F accountability system is that TEA is raising the threshold to earn an A in college, career and military readiness (CCMR) performance from 60% to 88% for 2023. Yet the 88% threshold for the fall 2023 accountability ratings will be based on the performance of 2022 graduates — former students who matriculated 15 months ago.

Willis ISD supports implementing increased standards; however, school districts across Texas should receive adequate notice of how the standards will be applied.

The coalition petitions the court to postpone the implementation of this new system until at least next year and to retain the district’s present rating for the current year.

###