
Growing suburban districts in San Antonio area make honor roll

By **Alia Malik** | August 16, 2018 | Updated: August 17, 2018 6:27am

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Photo: Billy Calzada /Staff Photographer

IMAGE 8 OF 10

Janet Lander makes a picture of her boys, Kai and Vance, at Van Raub Elementary School on Thursday.

The Comal, Boerne and Medina Valley independent school districts, three fast-growing systems on the fringes of Bexar County, received high grades from the Texas Education Agency in accountability ratings released this week, feeding their reputation as sought-after “destination districts.”

Boerne ISD, with almost 9,000 students in Kendall and northwestern Bexar counties, got an A with an overall score of 92 percent, while Medina Valley ISD, with about 5,000 students in Medina and western Bexar counties, got an A with 90 percent.

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Comal ISD, with about 23,000 students in Comal and northern Bexar counties, got a B with its score of 89.4 percent — one-tenth of a point short of an A.

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“I’m proud of this,” said Jodi Spoor, assistant superintendent of teaching and learning in Boerne ISD. “We do have some pretty amazing kids and some pretty amazing teachers.”

Under the newly redesigned accountability system, 70 percent of a district’s score and that of each of its schools is based on the best of three subscores, for overall student achievement, academic growth or performance relative to those at similar socioeconomic levels. The other 30 percent is based on the performance of students from different demographic subgroups relative to state targets.

How did your school and district score in the new TEA system?

Following new state legislation, the Texas Education Agency has designed a new academic accountability system that places more emphasis on student progress and relative performance. Enter an Bexar, Comal, Kendall or Medina County school or district name below to see how it performed.

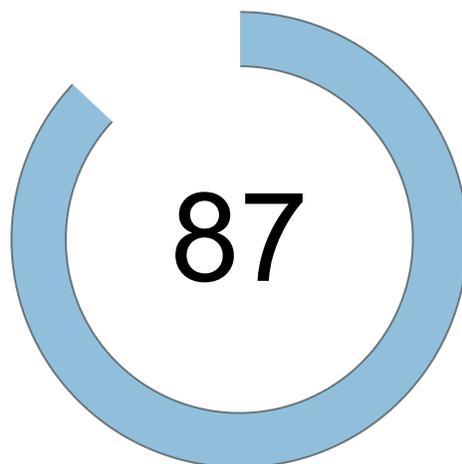
Search for an area elementary, middle or high school to see how they fared in this years rankings.

E.g. Judson Middle

Alamo Heights H S

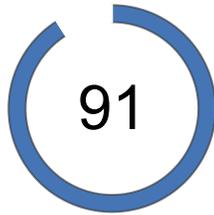
Number of economically disadvantaged students: **17.7%**

District: Alamo Heights ISD scored **89** out of **100** with a rating of **B**



Overall accountability score

The overall score is a merge of the four scores below. Closing the gaps is weighted at 30% with the best score among the other three factors making up the remaining 70%.



Student achievement score

Measures raw performance on standardized tests, as well as graduation rates and college and career readiness measures.



School performance: academic growth score

Measures how much students progressed year-over-year, rewarding students even if their raw score remains relatively low.



School performance: relative performance score

Measures student achievement compared with schools with similar percentages of economically disadvantaged students.



Closing the gaps score

Measures the relative performance of students from various demographic groups.

*Note: NR stands for "Not Rated"

Source: [Texas Education Agency](#)

Credit: Luke Whyte

Although her district did well, Spoor echoed superintendents all over the state in criticizing the new system as overly reliant on the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness and unfair to high-poverty school districts. About 17 percent of students in Boerne ISD and 29 percent in Comal ISD are considered “economically disadvantaged” based on federal criteria, compared with the statewide average of 59 percent.

“You will find every piece of data in the world that says when kids come to school from supportive environments where they are secure, where they feel safe, where they are not worried about survival, they do better,” Spoor said. “Nobody’s going to say that you don’t have a bit of an advantage when you don’t have kids who are struggling against poverty.”

But Comal ISD Superintendent Andrew Kim defended the accountability system from criticism that it's tied to student income by pointing to the relative performance subcategory that compares schools and districts to their peers with similar ratios of economically disadvantaged students.

He said Comal ISD takes students' backgrounds into account, but for every student, "we really address where they are and we make sure they see growth with us from an academic sense."

In a statement with Kerry Gain, assistant superintendent of curriculum and academic services, Kim said student academic growth was their priority.

"In Comal ISD, we embrace accountability and we own our student performance," Kim said in the statement. "Accountability is just one piece of puzzle that gives us an indication of how we're doing and whether or not our processes are working."

Fast-growing school districts have their own set of challenges. Spoor said the constant influx of new students adds difficulty for teachers who would otherwise be familiar with their needs from previous years. And Boerne's relative affluence means most parents work hours that leave little time to help educate their children at home, Spoor said.

Teachers in Boerne ISD keep tabs on continually changing state expectations and monitor students to make sure they're meeting targets, Spoor said. By popular demand, the district has also bolstered career and technical classes and gifted education, she said.

"Our community gets to decide what's important," Spoor said.

Search and compare all school accountability scores

Use the table below to search and compare the 2018 accountability ratings for different Bexar, Comal, Kendall or Medina County schools

Search:

School	Grades	Rating	Score
A Leal Jr Middle	06 - 08	Met Standard	78
Academy Of Creative Ed	10 - 12	Met Alternative Standard	85
Adams Hill EI	EE - 05	Met Standard	78
Advanced Learning Academy	PK - 11	Met Standard	81
Agnes Cotton Academy	PK - 07	Met Standard	69
Alamo Heights H S	09 - 12	Met Standard	87
Alamo Heights J H	06 - 08	Met Standard	88
Alan B Shepard Middle	06 - 08	Improvement Required	59
Allen EI	EE - 05	Met Standard	89
Alonso S Perales EI	PK - 05	Improvement Required	58

Showing 1 to 10 of 606 entries

Previous 2 3 4 5 ... 61 Next

Source: [Texas Education Agency](#)

Credit: Luke Whyte

In Medina Valley ISD, by contrast, 52 percent of students are economically disadvantaged. High numbers of students from various demographics, including economically disadvantaged and Hispanic, who met state targets boosted the district into “A” territory.

“Our focus will continue to be on the needs of each individual learner and increasing our performance year after year,” Superintendent Kenneth Rohrbach said in a prepared statement. He did not respond to an interview request Thursday.

Alia Malik covers several school districts and the Alamo Colleges District in the San Antonio and Bexar County area. Read her on our [free site](#), [mySA.com](#), and on our [subscriber site](#), [ExpressNews.com](#). | amalik@express-news.net | Twitter: [@AliaAtSAEN](#)



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