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Strengthened accountability measure will keep Texas schools on path to excellence

AUSTIN- The Texas Education Agency today released accountability ratings for 8,526 public schools and 1,228 districts. The ratings are based on high school completion rates, dropout rates and passing rates on the state test, the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS).

Increasing standards and the elimination of the Texas Projection Measure (TPM) resulted in fewer schools and districts earning an Exemplary accountability rating in 2011.

Although this is the last year of the TAKS-based accountability system, there are a number of changes that have increased its rigor and impacted ratings in preparation for the new rating system that will begin in 2013.

“Each year, we raise the bar to push our schools to keep growing and improving. These changes will help prepare schools and districts for the new accountability system in 2013, which will be based on the new State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR™) and are also in response to House Bill 3 passed by the Texas legislature in 2009,” said Commissioner of Education Robert Scott.

Changes to the system include:

- The elimination of the TPM, which was used for the 2009 and 2010 ratings.
- The inclusion of additional results for more than 119,000 students receiving special education services who were tested on the TAKS-Modified and TAKS-Alternate assessments.
- The inclusion of a measure for English language learners based on TAKS passing standards and progress on the Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS) reading, an assessment that measures a student’s English reading proficiency and progress.
- Increasing the TAKS indicator standards for the Academically Acceptable rating by five points each for mathematics and science.
- Adding a new commended performance indicator.
- Increasing the rigor of the annual dropout rate for grades 7-8 from 1.8 percent to 1.6 percent for the Recognized and Exemplary rating categories.

The TPM was eliminated as a result of public opposition to the use of the measure, including a unanimous vote against further use of test score projections on House Bill 500.

Because of this change to the system and the others listed above, the number of Exemplary districts fell from 241 in 2010 to 61 this year while the number of campuses earning the highest rating dropped from 2,637 in 2010 to 1,224 today.

Those that earned the highest rating had passing rates on the TAKS of 90 percent or higher, a high school completion rate of 95 percent or better, at least 25 percent of students at the

Commended Performance level, at least 60 percent of ELL students meeting progress criteria, and a grade 7-8 annual dropout rate of 1.6 percent or less.

“Communities should be very proud of these high performing schools and districts that are meeting these rigorous standards,” Scott said.

Conversely, the number of districts with the state’s lowest rating, Academically Unacceptable, increased from 37 last year to 88 in 2011. The number of Academically Unacceptable campuses increased from 104 to 569. Although an increase, only about 7 percent of the districts and campuses in the state received this rating.

The [requirements for each rating category](#) can be found in the 2011 Accountability Manual.

The 2008 ratings were the last ratings issued prior to the two-year inclusion of TPM in 2009 and 2010. When the 2008 and 2011 ratings are compared, an increase is seen in the number of districts and campuses that earned an Exemplary or Recognized rating, even though the ratings criteria has increased significantly during that time. For example, 43 districts were rated Exemplary in 2008 compared to 61 in 2011.

This year, the most common reason that a district or campus earned the lowest rating was due to TAKS mathematics only with the second most common reason being a combination of mathematics and science.

Below are the number of districts or campuses that earned a rating in either the standard or alternative education accountability procedures rating systems and the percent it represents of the total. An attached chart shows historical comparisons from 2005 to 2011.

2011 Ratings category	Districts	Campuses
Exemplary	61 (5.0%)	1,224 (14.4%)
Recognized	422 (34.4%)	2,825 (33.1%)
Academically Acceptable	655 (53.3%)	3,285 (38.5%)
Academically Unacceptable	88 (7.2%)	569 (6.7%)
Not Rated	2 (0.2%)	623 (7.3%)

Key resources

Accountability ratings: <http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/perfreport/account/2011/index.html>

Accountability manual: <http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/perfreport/account/2011/manual/index.html>

Completion and dropout rates: http://www.tea.state.tx.us/acctres/dropcomp_index.html