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## 2009 Accountability System Frequently Asked Questions

### Exemplary campuses but *Acceptable* district

**Q:** All the campuses in our district are *Exemplary* or *Recognized*, but the district is rated *Acceptable*. How can that be?

**A:** It is often the case that individual schools have higher ratings than their district. Any one of a number of situations may explain it:

- First of all, there are fewer students at the school level. That is, while schools and districts are held accountable for the performance of all students, the individual student groups (African American, Hispanic, White, and Economically Disadvantaged) must have at least 30 students to be considered in the ratings system. For that reason, an elementary school might be judged on only 7 or 8 indicators because it had very few students taking (for example) 5th grade TAKS science. On the other hand, at the district level, where science is tested in grades 5, 8, 10, and 11, there may be enough students in each group, so the district is held accountable for the performance of every student group in science.
- Second, students who move from campus to campus within the same district during the school year may have their results removed from each campus's performance. However, their results are included in the district's performance. This is referred to as the *Accountability Subset*. See Chapter 2 in the [2009 Accountability Manual](#) for more information.
- Third, elementary and middle schools are not accountable for the Completion Rate indicator. As a result, districts are more likely to be held accountable for all 35 indicators, while many schools are held accountable for fewer than 10 indicators.
- Finally, a district's rating is held to *Academically Acceptable* if any of its campuses is are rated *Academically Unacceptable* or if certain problems are found with the quality of the district's data leaver reporting.

**Q:** I carefully checked the performance of my district on every indicator, and it appears they should be rated *Recognized*, but the state rated them *Acceptable*. How can this be?

**A:** A district whose performance is at the *Recognized* or *Exemplary* level can be held to a rating of *Academically Acceptable* if it has one or more campuses rated *Academically Unacceptable*.

### Texas Projection Measure (TPM) and Status by Measure Columns

**Q:** Why does the 2009 Data Table look different from the 2008 Data Table?

**A:** The Texas Projection Measure is a new feature in the 2009 Accountability System. As a result, several new columns were added to the data tables. The tables are now arranged to allow a simple step-by-step process to determine a rating. The first set of columns show the percent that met the TAKS standard. That is followed by columns showing whether or not the school or district met Required Improvement. The TPM column follows, listing the number and the percent meeting the standard with TPM. The percent meeting the standard with TPM can be used to elevate the rating of an indicator. Finally, another new feature—the Status by Measure columns—shows the status of each evaluated TAKS measure, beginning with Met Standard, then after applying Required Improvement, TPM, and Exceptions, ending with the final status of the measure in the \*\*\* summary column. For more information on how to read the data tables, see Chapter 4 in the [2009 Accountability Manual](#); for more information regarding TPM, see Chapter 3.

### Ethnic Groups that Count Toward Rating

**Q:** Why is it that the groups looked at to determine a school's rating do not include Asian students? What happens to the scores that do not fall under the White, Hispanic, African American, or economically disadvantaged?

**A:** The performance of all students—regardless of ethnicity—is included as part of *All Students*. The performance of White, Hispanic, African American, and economically disadvantaged student groups is looked at if there are enough students to comprise a statistic of reliable size. Ethnic groups with very small populations statewide, such as Asian/Pacific Islander and Native American are not considered separately because there are rarely enough of them in a given school or district to count as an additional indicator. Again, the performance of these students is not omitted; it is included with *All Students*.

The ethnic groups that are part of school and district accountability comprise at least 10% of the state population. For 2008-09, the population of students in Texas public schools was as follows: African American 14%, Hispanic 47%, Native American 0.3%, Asian/Pacific Islander 3.4%, White 35%.

For more information on minimum size in accountability, please see Chapter 2 in the [2009 Accountability Manual](#).

### Mobility

**Q:** What happens when a student comes to my school just a week before the TAKS test? We try hard to get them ready for the tests, but it's difficult with so little time. Will their performance affect our rating?

**A:** No, students who change schools after the PEIMS snapshot date (end of October) and before the date of testing are taken out of the accountability subset. Please see Chapter 2, Table 4 in the [2009 Accountability Manual](#) for a complete explanation.

### Completion Rate

**Q:** My high school improved on TAKS over last year's performance, and their Completion rate was the same. This year they received a lower rating. How can this be?

**A:** Last year, with the School Leaver Provision in place, high schools and districts were not adversely affected by their Completion or Dropout rates. In 2009, the School Leaver Provision is no longer in place, and school and district ratings may be affected by their Dropout and Completion rates.

### Masking

**Q:** Why does the data table for my school show >99% under Percent Met Standard? I know that 100% of the students passed that test!

**A:** The accountability data tables now employ more masking of assessment data than has been used in the past, in order to comply with the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). For more detailed information, please see the [Explanation of Masking](#).

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## 2009 Accountability | Performance Reporting

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