



2011 Accountability System Frequently Asked Questions

Drop in Ratings from 2010 to 2011.

Q: I noticed that a large number of campus and district ratings dropped from 2010 to 2011. Why do so many schools and districts have ratings that look worse this year?

A: For 2011 it is much more difficult for a campus or district to be rated *Exemplary*, *Recognized*, or *Academically Acceptable* than it was in 2010. This is due to a significant increase in rigor in the system due to the following:

- Two new base indicators were added in 2011: Commended Performance and the English Language Learners Progress Indicator. This increased the maximum number of hurdles from 35 to 40.
- Use of the Texas Projection Measure (TPM) was discontinued for the 2011 accountability system.
- The TAKS indicator includes performance on the TAKS-Modified and the TAKS-Alternate assessments for all grades and subjects in 2011.
- The standards for TAKS science and mathematics increased by five points each.
- The completion rate methodology changed, resulting in more high schools being rated on Completion Rate in 2011.
- The standard for the dropout rate increased in rigor from less than or equal to 1.8% to less than or equal to 1.6% for 2011.

See the [2011 Accountability Manual](#) for more details.

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 [2011 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 40 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 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*. Also, a district whose performance is at the *Recognized* or *Exemplary* level can be held to a rating of *Academically Acceptable* if its underreported students exceed certain thresholds.

Comparing TAKS performance from 2010 to TAKS performance from 2011

Q: I checked the 2010 TAKS performance shown on the 2011 Data Tables with that shown on the 2009-10 AEIS reports, and the numbers don't match. Why is this?

A: In order to allow for "apples to apples" comparison, and to accurately calculate Required Improvement, the prior year (2010) TAKS results were recomputed to include performance on TAKS-Modified (TAKS-M) and TAKS-Alternate (TAKS-Alt) for all grades and subjects.

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 American Indian 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 2010-11, the population of students in Texas public schools was as follows: Asian 3.4%, African American 12.9%, Hispanic 50.3%, Native American 0.5%, Pacific Islander 0.1%, Two or More Races 1.6%, and White 31.2%.

For more information on the minimum size criteria used in the accountability system, please see Chapter 2 in the [2011 Accountability Manual](#).

Q: How are students who are coded as more than one race counted for accountability?

A: The federal government modified the definitions for ethnicity. Beginning with the 2011 accountability system, the TAKS indicator and the Annual Dropout Rate indicator, use student information coded using the new definitions. Those students who are designated Two or More Races will be evaluated in "All Students" and not among any of the individual racial student groups.

Q: What if the absence of students who are two or more races adversely affects my accountability rating?

A: A new provision, the Federal Race/Ethnicity Provision has been added to distribute certain multi-racial students into the African American and White student groups. Under the Federal Race/Ethnicity Provision, if the recalculated African American or White student group performance rates allow the district or campus to achieve a higher rating, the higher rating will be assigned. See [Appendix J](#) of the accountability manual for more details.

Q: How will I know if my district or campus has used the Federal Race/Ethnicity Provision?

A: If the provision was used, a message indicating that appears on the campus or district accountability data table.

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 [2011 Accountability Manual](#) for a complete explanation.

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 employ masking of assessment data, 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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