

Alternative Education Accountability Procedures for 2005 and Beyond
Commissioner of Education Final Decisions
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This document includes accountability procedures developed for alternative education campuses (AECs) that qualify and are registered for evaluation under alternative education accountability (AEA) procedures. The new AEA procedures contain appropriate indicators for AECs with increased rigor phased in over time. AEA procedures do not apply to disciplinary alternative education programs (DAEPs) or juvenile justice alternative education programs (JJAEPs).

Overall Design: Improvement Model

1. Accountability Criteria. The overall design of AEA procedures is an improvement model. For each measure used in the ratings evaluation, AECs can meet the standard for *Academically Acceptable* by meeting **either** an absolute performance standard **or** an improvement standard.

Rationale: Improvement criteria allow a gate out of *Academically Unacceptable* and are incorporated without increasing the number of indicators and measures in the system. Higher absolute performance standards can be established without penalizing large numbers of AECs that realistically cannot be expected to reach these standards for several years, especially given that, by definition, AECs provide services for students at risk of dropping out of school. Conversely, lower performing AECs are rewarded for making gains. Since gains are required on each measure for which the absolute standard is not met, attention is given to each student group. This overall design parallels that of the standard accountability system.

2. AEC Rating Labels. AEA: *Academically Acceptable*
 AEA: *Academically Unacceptable*

Rationale: Using two of the same rating labels for AECs that are used for campuses and districts evaluated under the standard accountability system simplifies AEA procedures.

Alternative Education Campus Registration Requirements

AECs have been registering for evaluation under AEA procedures since 1995-96. Since 1999-00, AEC registration also governs the alternative education component of the CAMPUS-ID-OF-ACCOUNTABILITY data processing in the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) and attribution of AEC student data.

2005. AECs that were registered in 2003-04 were registered automatically in 2004-05. A rescission letter was required from those AECs that did not wish to continue AEA registration. A 2004-05 Alternative Education Accountability Campus Registration Form was required for each AEC that was not already on the list of registered AECs but wished to be evaluated under 2004-05 AEA procedures. There are 453 AECs registered for evaluation under AEA procedures in 2005. Registration for 2005 will not be re-opened. Residential Facilities and AECs of Choice must be registered to be evaluated under AEA procedures.

Residential Facility. Education services are provided to students in residential programs and facilities operated under contract with the Texas Youth Commission (TYC), students in detention centers and correctional facilities that are registered with the Texas Juvenile Probation Commission (TJPC), and students in private residential treatment centers (PRTC).

AEC of Choice. Alternative education programs provide accelerated instructional services to students at risk of dropping out of school. At-risk students enroll at AECs of Choice to expedite progress toward performing at grade level and high school completion.

1. Registration Criteria. To be evaluated under AEA procedures, each AEC must meet the following registration criteria.
 - a. The AEC must have its own county-district-campus number that is used for submitting PEIMS data and coding test answer documents;
 - b. The AEC must be identified in AskTED (Texas School Directory database) as an alternative campus;
 - c. The AEC must be dedicated to serving “students at risk of dropping out of school” as defined in Texas Education Code (TEC) §29.081(d);
 - d. The AEC must operate on its own campus budget;
 - e. The AEC must offer nontraditional methods of instructional delivery designed to meet the needs of the students served on the campus;
 - f. The AEC must have an appropriately certified, full-time administrator whose primary duty is the administration of the AEC;
 - g. The AEC must have appropriately certified teachers assigned in all areas including special education, bilingual education, and/or English as a second language (ESL) to serve students eligible for such services;
 - h. The AEC must provide each student the opportunity to attend a 7-hour school day;
 - i. If the campus serves special education students, the students must be placed at the AEC by their admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committee; and
 - j. Special education students must receive all services outlined in their current individualized education programs (IEPs). Limited English proficient (LEP) students must receive all services outlined by the language proficiency assessment committee (LPAC). Special education and LEP students must be served by appropriately certified teachers.

All requirements in criteria f. – j. may not apply to charter campuses (depending on the terms of the charter) or for community-based dropout recovery campuses established in accordance with TEC §29.081(e). The requirements in criteria i. apply to Residential Facilities only if students are placed in the facility by the district.

Rationale: Registration criteria are carried forward from the previous AEA procedures that restrict use of AEA procedures to campuses that offer nontraditional instructional programs and/or settings rather than programs within a regular campus.

2. At-Risk Registration Criterion. An additional at-risk registration criterion will be phased in beginning in 2006. Each AEC must have a minimum percentage of at-risk students enrolled on the AEC verified through current year PEIMS fall enrollment data in order to be evaluated under AEA procedures. The at-risk criterion will begin at 65% in 2006 and increase by five percentage points each year until it reaches 75% in 2008 where it is expected to remain as described below.

2005 – criterion not applied
2006 – 65% or higher at-risk student enrollment at the AEC
2007 – 70% or higher at-risk student enrollment at the AEC
2008 – 75% or higher at-risk student enrollment at the AEC

A safeguard will be incorporated for those campuses that fall below the at-risk requirement such as averaging the rate over multiple years.

Rationale: Implementation of an additional at-risk registration criterion recognizes that by definition AECs are designed to serve students at risk of dropping out of school, restricts use of AEA procedures to AECs that are dedicated to serving at-risk students, and enhances at-risk data quality.

Percent At-Risk Students in 2003-04

	All Campuses (2004 Accountability Universe)	Registered Alternative Education Campuses	Residential Facilities (TYC, TJPC, PRTC)	At-Risk Campuses (75% at risk)
Number of Campuses	7,813	357	77	800
% At-Risk Students	46%	82%	85%	89%

Source: PEIMS Fall Enrollment 2003-04.

Attribution of AEC Data

Under the previous AEA procedures, students' "home" or "sending" regular campuses were accountable for the performance of students enrolled on the AEC for fewer than 85 days. The AEC accountability rating was based on performance of students enrolled on the campus for 85 days or more.

The 85-day rule will be discontinued under the new AEA procedures. When the 85-day rule is discontinued, the accountability subset definition will govern whether or not test results are included in the performance indicators used for ratings. There are approximately 65 instructional days between the last Friday in October 2004 (PEIMS snapshot date) and the fourth week of February 2005 (TAKS testing). There are approximately 100 instructional days between the last Friday in October 2004 (PEIMS snapshot date) and the third week of April 2005 (TAKS testing).

Accountability subset does not apply to exit-level retesters.

1. 2005 Accountability. AEC test answer documents and 2003-04 leaver data are attributed according to current policies based on the 85-day rule.
2. 2006 Accountability. Campus accountability subset determines attribution of test data. 2004-05 leaver data are attributed to the AEC according to current policies based on the 85-day rule.
3. 2007 Accountability. Campus accountability subset determines attribution of AEC test data. 2005-06 leavers are attributed to the last campus attended.

Rationale: The 85-day rule was implemented before the use of a campus accountability subset in the state accountability system, which began in 2004. Under the campus accountability subset, only test results for students enrolled on the same campus from the PEIMS enrollment snapshot date (the last Friday in October) and the testing date are included in the campus performance measure. Campus accountability subset is consistently applied in both AEA procedures and the standard accountability system. Leavers are attributed to the last campus attended for all campuses. Because leaver data are prior-year data, it takes one additional year to discontinue the 85-day rule for leaver data. Under the 85-day rule, school districts have not registered some Residential Facilities for evaluation under AEA procedures because a regular campus will be accountable for students who are at the facility for fewer than 85 days, including students who have never attended a regular campus. Regular campuses may be reluctant to transfer students to AECs because they lose control of decisions about the students' education but may be held accountable for the students' performance. Also, the 85-day rule can be seen as overriding district decisions about intra-district transfers and campus accountability. The 85-day rule prevents districts from fully benefiting from TEC §39.072(d) – most students attend TYC facilities

for less than 85 days; therefore, most data are attributed to a regular campus and only performance attributed to the TYC facility is removed from the district performance measures. Inconsistency of TAKS and PEIMS data attribution under the 85-day rule is addressed. As required in statute, JJAEP and DAEP student data will continue to be attributed back to a student's home campus.

Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) Indicator

This indicator applies to AECs of Choice and Residential Facilities.

1. General TAKS Decisions Applicable to AEA Procedures. These decisions were made during development of the 2004 standard accountability system.

Grades. The TAKS results for English (grades 3-11) and Spanish (grades 3-6) are summed across grades and are evaluated for All Students and each student group that meets minimum size requirements.

Testing Window. Results for students given a make-up test within the testing window are included in the accountability measures.

Grade 3 Reading/Grade 5 Reading and Mathematics. Results from the first and second administrations of the grade 3 Reading tests and grade 5 Reading and Mathematics tests are incorporated into the TAKS indicator. (For students enrolled at the AEC for both administrations of the test, results of the second administration will be used for students who failed or were absent from the first administration.) This decision will be applied to grade 8 Reading and Mathematics beginning in 2008 when the social promotion testing requirements under the Student Success Initiative are extended to grade 8 subjects.

Student Passing Standard. The TAKS performance indicator is calculated as percent *Met Standard* using the student passing standard adopted by the State Board of Education (SBOE) for each specific year.

2. TAKS Progress Indicator

Indicator. AECs are evaluated on the average percentage of students who either pass the TAKS or have a Texas Growth Index (TGI) score that meets the student growth standard of 0 (zero) or higher and on students retesting who pass exit-level TAKS at the spring administration or in the previous fall or summer.

A TGI has been developed for campus and district accountability purposes to evaluate individual student growth from one year to the next on the TAKS. The TGI compares how students taking a TAKS subject test in one year perform on the same TAKS subject test in the next higher grade the following year. An individual TGI score indicates the amount of growth for each student in relation to the average growth of all students who performed at the same level in the base year. The TGI score of zero means that the year-to-year change in scaled score is equal to the average change. There is particular interest in using a student growth measure for evaluation of AECs. Through the feedback process, educators stated that many students attending AECs perform two or more grade levels below their enrolled grade level. One advantage of the TGI is that it provides a way to measure growth for a student who does not pass the test.

A TGI has been developed to measure growth in the same subject from the next lower grade level for the following subjects/grades. The calculation is limited to students who have test results in the same subject for two consecutive years, in consecutive grades:

- Reading/ELA – grades 4 through 11
- Mathematics – grades 4 through 11
- Social Studies – grade 11
- Science – grade 11

Subjects. TAKS results are summed across subjects.

TAKS Results Included in the AEC Evaluation in 2005

* 2004 for Required Improvement	2005
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TAKS grades 3-10: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Recalculated at Panel Recommended student passing standard ➤ TGI: 2003 to 2004, growth of 0 (zero) or higher ➤ Campus accountability subset 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TAKS grades 3-10: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Panel Recommended student passing standard ➤ TGI: 2004 to 2005, growth of 0 (zero) or higher ➤ Campus accountability subset
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TAKS grade 11 spring 2004 administration: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ First time testers ➤ Recalculated at 1 SEM student passing standard ➤ TGI: 2003 to 2004, growth of 0 (zero) or higher ➤ Campus accountability subset 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TAKS grade 11 spring 2005 administration: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ First time testers ➤ Actual student passing standard (1 SEM for most students) ➤ TGI: 2004 to 2005, growth of 0 (zero) or higher ➤ Campus accountability subset
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TAKS grades 11 and 12 spring 2005 administration: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Retesters ➤ Actual student passing standard ➤ Students who meet passing standard ➤ No accountability subset
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TAKS grades 11 and 12 fall 2004 administration: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Retesters ➤ Actual student passing standard ➤ Students who meet passing standard ➤ No accountability subset
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TAKS grades 11 and 12 summer 2004 administration: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Retesters ➤ Actual student passing standard ➤ Students who meet passing standard ➤ No accountability subset

* Beginning in 2006, prior year data will include students retesting who pass the exit-level TAKS in the spring or in the previous fall or summer.

Rationale: The TAKS Progress Indicator combines student growth, absolute performance, and includes results from the additional administrations of the exit-level test. All current year test results are included in the indicator, and the campus receives credit for all students who pass the test even if they do not show sufficient growth. The TAKS Progress Indicator also incorporates growth for students who do not pass the test if they have a TGI for that test. In addition, students who fail an exit-level test have an opportunity to retest and the AEC receives credit for subsequent passing scores. Summing results across subjects increases the number of TAKS test results on which AECs are evaluated.

3. Accountability Subset, Student Groups, Minimum Size Requirements, TAKS Standard, Special Analysis, and Required Improvement

Campus Accountability Subset. AEC ratings are based on test results for students enrolled on the campus on the PEIMS October enrollment snapshot date. (Accountability subset does not apply to exit-level retesters.)

Student Groups. TAKS performance is evaluated for All Students and for the following student groups that meet minimum size requirements:

- African American
- Hispanic
- White
- Economically Disadvantaged

Minimum Size Requirements. Student groups are evaluated if there are:

- 30 to 49 tests for the student group and the student group represents at least 10% of All Students tests; **or**
- at least 50 tests for the student group even if that represents less than 10% of All Students tests.

All Students performance is always evaluated. (See TAKS Progress Standard and Special Analysis below.)

TAKS Progress Standard. The *Academically Acceptable* standard for 2005 and 2006 is at least 40.0% on the TAKS Progress Indicator.

The TAKS Progress Indicator accountability standard will increase over time. The phase-in schedule will be revisited before 2007 to evaluate the effect of discontinuing the 85-day rule.

TAKS Progress Indicator Accountability Standard						
	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
<i>AEA: Academically Acceptable</i>	40%	40% *	45% *	45% *	50% *	50% *
TAKS Progress Indicator Definition	TAKS + TGI + Exit-Level Retesters					
Accountability Subset	85-day rule	Campus Accountability Subset **				

* Standards are subject to review annually and may be adjusted.

** Accountability subset does not apply to exit-level retesters.

Use of District Data. If the AEC does not meet the accountability standard based on results for fewer than 10 tests, or if there are no TAKS results for the AEC, then the AEC is evaluated on the district performance of at-risk students on the TAKS Progress Indicator.

If there are results for fewer than 10 at-risk tests in the district, then special analysis is conducted.

Special Analysis. AECs with TAKS results for fewer than 10 at-risk tests in the district will receive special analysis under circumstances similar to those used in the standard accountability system. Special analysis consists of analyzing current and past performance data to determine if the initial rating assigned under the automated evaluation process is an aberration or an indication of consistent performance.

Required Improvement. AECs that do not meet the *Academically Acceptable* standard for the TAKS Progress Indicator can meet the accountability criteria by demonstrating Required Improvement (RI). AEA RI is applied and calculated the same as in the standard accountability system – amount of improvement required to meet the standard in two years.

Rationale: Under the campus accountability subset, AECs are held accountable only for students whose learning they have had an opportunity to influence. Use of district results for at-risk students acknowledges that AECs are part of the overall district strategy for education of students at risk. Special analysis ensures that AECs with small numbers of students are rated fairly. Required Improvement provides a gate up to *Academically Acceptable*. Larger gains are required for AECs farther from meeting the TAKS performance standard.

Completion Rate (Grades 9–12) Indicator

This indicator applies only to AECs of Choice. Residential Facilities are not evaluated on Completion Rate.

1. Completion Rate Definition. Completion Rate II – count graduates, continuing students (students who return to school for a fifth year), and General Educational Development (GED) recipients in the definition of Completion Rate for AECs evaluated under AEA procedures.
2. AEC Ratings. Completion Rate II is evaluated for all AECs of Choice that have served grades 9–12 for the last five years. (See Use of District Rate below.)
3. Student Groups. Completion Rate II is evaluated for All Students and for the following student groups that meet minimum size requirements:
 - African American
 - Hispanic
 - White
 - Economically Disadvantaged
4. Minimum Size Requirements. Student groups are evaluated if the AEC Completion Rate class has:
 - at least 5 dropouts (non-completers) in the student group; **and**
 - 30 to 49 students in the student group and the student group represents at least 10% of All Students in the class; **or**
 - at least 50 students in the student group even if that represents less than 10% of All Students in the class.

Completion Rates are evaluated at the All Students level if there are:

- at least 5 dropouts (non-completers) **and**
- at least 10 students in the AEC Completion Rate class.

5. Completion Rate II Standard. The *Academically Acceptable* standard for 2005 and 2006 is at least a 75.0% Completion Rate.

Completion Rate II (Grades 9–12) Accountability Standard						
	2005 Class of 2004; 9 th grade 00-01	2006 Class of 2005; 9 th grade 01-02	2007 Class of 2006; 9 th grade 02-03	2008 Class of 2007; 9 th grade 03-04	2009 Class of 2008; 9 th grade 04-05	2010 Class of 2009; 9 th grade 05-06
<i>AEA: Academically Acceptable</i>	75.0%	75.0% *	TBD *	TBD *	TBD *	TBD *
Completion Rate Definition	Graduates + GED Recipients + Continued HS					
Dropout Definition	Current state definition	Current state definition	Phase-in NCES definition	Phase-in NCES definition	Phase-in NCES definition	NCES definition
Accountability Subset	85-day rule	85-day rule	None	None	None	None

* Standards are subject to review annually and may be adjusted.

6. Use of District Rate. If the AEC does not meet the accountability standard, or if the AEC has students in grades 9–12 but does not have a Completion Rate, then evaluate the AEC on Completion Rate II (including GED recipients) of at-risk students in the district. If the district does not meet minimum size requirements for All Students, then do not evaluate the AEC on Completion Rate.
7. Required Improvement. AECs that do not meet the *Academically Acceptable* standard for Completion Rate can meet the accountability criteria for Completion Rate by demonstrating RI. AEA RI is applied and calculated the same as in the standard accountability system – amount of improvement required to meet the standard in two years.

Rationale: The majority of feedback from AECs supports counting GED recipients as completers in the calculation of Completion Rate. Counting GED recipients as completers recognizes that many students attending AECs have very few credits, making a diploma difficult to earn; the GED program may be seen as the best or only option for many students attending AECs. Fifth-year continuing students are included so that students who take longer than four years to complete high school are not counted as leavers while they are still enrolled and working toward completion. Using the Completion Rate of at-risk students in the district allows use of a longitudinal measure for those AECs that have a completion/student status rate but also provides for evaluation of Completion Rates for AECs that do not have a longitudinal rate. The standards are held constant for 2005 and 2006 and will be revisited before 2007 to evaluate the effect of discontinuing the 85-day rule and phase-in of the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) dropout definition. Required Improvement provides a gate up to *Academically Acceptable*. Larger gains are required for AECs farther from meeting the Completion Rate performance standard.

Annual Dropout Rate (Grades 7–12) Indicator

This indicator applies to AECs of Choice and Residential Facilities.

1. Annual Dropout Rate Definition. The Annual Dropout Rate indicator is grade 7–12 dropouts as a percent of total students enrolled at the AEC in grades 7–12 in a single school year.
2. AEC Ratings. Use the grade 7–12 Annual Dropout Rate for AECs that have students in grades 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, and/or 12.

3. Student Groups. Annual Dropout Rates are evaluated for All Students and for the following student groups that meet minimum size requirements:
 - African American
 - Hispanic
 - White
 - Economically Disadvantaged

4. Minimum Size Requirements. Student groups are evaluated if the AEC has:
 - at least 5 dropouts; **and**
 - 30 to 49 students in the student group and the student group represents at least 10% of All Students in grades 7–12; **or**
 - at least 50 students in the student group even if that represents less than 10% of All Students in grades 7–12.

Annual Dropout Rates are evaluated at the All Students level if there are:

- at least 5 dropouts **and**
- at least 10 students in grades 7–12.

5. Annual Dropout Rate Standard. The *Academically Acceptable* standard for 2005 and 2006 is a 10.0% or less Annual Dropout Rate.

The 10.0% Annual Dropout Rate standard will be revisited before 2007 due to discontinuation of the 85-day rule and implementation of the NCES dropout definition in 2007.

Annual Dropout Rate (Grades 7–12) Accountability Standard						
	2005 from 2003-04	2006 from 2004-05	2007 from 2005-06	2008 from 2006-07	2009 from 2007-08	2010 from 2008-09
<i>AEA: Academically Acceptable</i>	10.0%	10.0% *	TBD *	TBD *	TBD *	TBD *
Dropout Definition	Current state definition	Current state definition	NCES definition	NCES definition	NCES definition	NCES definition
Accountability Subset	85-day rule	85-day rule	None	None	None	None

* Standards are subject to review annually and may be adjusted.

If the AEC does not meet the minimum size requirements, then do not evaluate the AEC on Annual Dropout Rate.

6. Required Improvement. AECs that do not meet the *Academically Acceptable* standard for Annual Dropout Rate can meet the accountability criteria for Annual Dropout Rate by demonstrating RI. AEA RI is applied and calculated the same as in the standard accountability system – amount of improvement required to meet the standard in two years.

Rationale: Despite past criticisms, Annual Dropout Rate focuses on the dropout prevention mission of AECs. If the 85-day rule is discontinued, then more AECs will have a Grade 7–12 Annual Dropout Rate on which to be evaluated. The standards are held constant for 2005 and 2006. Standards for 2007 and beyond are to be determined. Annual Dropout Rate standards for 2007 and beyond will be determined when campus data are available to set the standards on a dropout rate calculated under the NCES definition. Required Improvement provides a gate up to *Academically Acceptable*. Greater improvement (or a larger decline in dropouts) is required for AECs farther from meeting the Annual Dropout Rate performance standard.

State-Developed Alternative Assessment (SDAA) II Indicator

AECs will be evaluated on the same SDAA II indicator as in the standard accountability system. The performance standard for the SDAA II indicator is set at the same level as the TAKS standard of 40%.