

Accountability System for 2008 and Beyond – Alternative Education Accountability Procedures
Commissioner of Education Final Decisions
April 2008

These decisions apply to accountability procedures developed for alternative education campuses (AECs) that qualify and are registered for evaluation under alternative education accountability (AEA) procedures. The AEA procedures contain appropriate indicators for AECs with increased rigor phased in over time. An at-risk registration criterion restricts use of AEA procedures to AECs that serve large populations of at-risk students and enhances at-risk data quality. AEA procedures do not apply to disciplinary alternative education programs (DAEPs) or juvenile justice alternative education programs (JJAEPs).

The following issues affect many components of the AEA procedures.

- Small numbers of test results and mobility – AECs are smaller on average than regular campuses and have high mobility rates.
- Attribution of data – Attribution of data under the 85-day rule was discontinued in 2005-06. The long-term impact of phasing out the 85-day rule is unpredictable, since high mobility also affects attribution of data and complicates evaluation of AEC data.
- Residential Facilities – 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.

TAKS Progress Indicator

The Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) Progress indicator is a single performance indicator that sums TAKS results across grades (3-12) and across subjects. The numerator is the number of TAKS tests meeting the student passing standard **or** having a Texas Growth Index (TGI) score that meets the student growth standard of 0 (zero) or higher **and** TAKS exit-level retests meeting the student passing standard at the March and April/May administrations or in the previous October or July. The denominator is the number of TAKS tests taken **and** the number of TAKS exit-level retests meeting the student passing standard at the March and April/May administrations or in the previous October or July.

1. 2008 Standard. In April 2007, the Commissioner of Education announced final decisions on the 2008 accountability standard for the TAKS Progress indicator. The 2008 standard was published in the *2007 Accountability Manual* and adopted as commissioner rule by July 26, 2007. For 2008 accountability ratings, the TAKS Progress standard for *AEA: Academically Acceptable* remains 45% as shown in the following TAKS Progress Indicator table. Beginning in 2008, grade 8 science results will be included. TAKS (Accommodated) results will be phased in as shown in the following TAKS (Accommodated) Test Administration table.
2. 2008 Required Improvement (RI). TAKS Progress RI will be used in 2008 as it was in 2007. RI is calculated for All Students and each student group evaluated and is the amount of gain in percent *Met Standard* required to reach the current year standard in two years. For 2008 accountability, prior-year (2007) assessment results will be recalculated to include both grade 8 science and TAKS (Accommodated) results. This will make 2007 and 2008 performance comparable and enable the use of RI in 2008.
3. 2009 and 2010 Standards. The current phase-in plan for the TAKS Progress indicator in 2009 and 2010 will be maintained as shown in the following table. In 2010, the remaining TAKS (Accommodated) results will be phased in as shown in the following TAKS (Accommodated) Test Administration table.

TAKS Progress Indicator			
	2008	2009	2010
<i>AEA: Academically Acceptable</i>	45%	50%	50%
TAKS Progress Indicator	TAKS + TGI + Exit-Level Retests		
Accountability Subset	District and Campus Accountability Subsets Accountability Subset does not apply to exit-level retests		

Bold indicates an increase of five percentage points from the prior year.

TAKS (Accommodated) Test Administration					
	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Science (grades 5, 8, 10, and 11; grade 5 Spanish) Social Studies (grades 8, 10, and 11) English Language Arts (ELA) (grade 11) Mathematics (grade 11)	Report Only	Report Only	Use	Use	Use
Reading/ELA (grades 3–10; grades 3–6 Spanish) Mathematics (grades 3–10; grades 3–6 Spanish) Writing (grades 4 and 7; grade 4 Spanish)	n/a	n/a	Report Only	Report Only	Use

Rationale: Maintaining the phase-in plan as shown in the TAKS Progress Indicator table provides advance notice of standards and stable targets while other changes are taking place in the assessment program. The accountability standard is held constant between 2007 and 2008 when grade 8 science and TAKS (Accommodated) results are included for the first time and between 2009 and 2010 when results for all TAKS (Accommodated) subjects and grades are included for the first time.

Annual Dropout Rate (Grades 7–12) Indicator

Beginning with 2007 accountability, the definition of a dropout changed to comply with the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) definition. Under the NCES definition, a dropout is a student who is enrolled in Texas public schools in grades 7-12, does not return to Texas public school the following fall, is not expelled, and does not graduate, receive a General Educational Development (GED) certificate, continue high school outside the Texas public school system or begin college, or die.

Under AEA procedures, a grade 7-12 annual dropout rate is used. Therefore, registered AECs and charters evaluated under AEA procedures experience the full impact of implementing the NCES dropout definition. Below are six groups of students counted as dropouts by NCES that were not counted as dropouts under the state definition. All six definitional changes affect grade 7-12 dropout calculations.

- a. a student who withdraws (or is court-ordered) to enroll in an approved adult education GED preparation program and does not receive a GED certificate by August 31 of the school year in which the student left;
- b. a senior who meets all graduation requirements but does not pass the exit-level test;
- c. a student previously counted as a dropout;
- d. a student enrolled in school but not eligible for state Foundation School Program funds;
- e. a dropout for whom the last district of attendance cannot be determined; and,
- f. a student who returns to school after the school-start window.

For accountability in 2007 and beyond, the 85-day rule is phased-out completely. Campus accountability subset determines attribution of AEC test data. Leaver data are attributed to the last campus of attendance. These changes in attribution of data are certain to result in higher dropout rates; however, the long-term effects of the increase cannot be predicted. Two years of dropout data under the NCES definition will not be available for analysis until the 2009 development cycle.

As expected, the changes in dropout definition and attribution of leaver data resulted in higher dropout rates as shown in the table below. These data are excerpted from the 2006 and 2007 AEA State Data Tables.

Annual Dropout Rate (Grades 7–12) for AEA Campuses and Charters					
	All Students	African American	Hispanic	White	Economically Disadvantaged
2005-06	12.3%	12.1%	14.1%	9.2%	10.0%
2004-05	3.0%	2.9%	3.5%	2.1%	2.7%

1. 2008 Standard. In April 2007, the Commissioner of Education announced final decisions on the 2008 accountability standard for the Annual Dropout Rate indicator. The 2008 standard was published in the *2007 Accountability Manual* and adopted as commissioner rule by July 26, 2007. For 2008 accountability ratings, the Annual Dropout Rate standard remains 10.0% as shown in the following table.
2. 2008 Required Improvement. Annual Dropout Rate RI will be calculated in 2008. Two years of dropout rates under the NCES definition will be available. Dropout rates used in 2007 and 2008 will be comparable.
3. 2008 School Leaver Provision (SLP). In April 2007, the Commissioner of Education announced final decisions on the 2008 SLP for the Annual Dropout Rate indicator. Use of the 2008 SLP was published in the *2007 Accountability Manual* and adopted as commissioner rule by July 26, 2007. If the Annual Dropout Rate is the only indicator causing an *AEA: Academically Unacceptable* rating, then the AEC or charter is assigned the *AEA: Academically Acceptable* label. The SLP provision applies only to the Annual Dropout Rate indicator under AEA procedures in 2008.

Although some campuses will avoid being rated *AEA: Academically Unacceptable* in 2008 due to the application of the SLP, these same campuses may be subject to technical assistance team (TAT) intervention requirements in the 2008-09 school year, as required by commissioner rule, 19 TAC §97.1002, *Identification of Technical Assistance Team Campuses*. This is because campuses rated *AEA: Academically Acceptable* in 2008 are identified for TATs if their 2008 accountability results do not meet the 2009 accountability standards. The purpose of the TAT identification is to serve as an early warning system and, therefore, provide interventions that may prevent the campus from being rated *AEA: Academically Unacceptable* in the subsequent year. In addition, districts are subject to identification and intervention under the Performance-Based Monitoring (PBM) system for dropout rates and leaver reporting.

4. 2008 and Beyond Minimum Size Requirements. Beginning in 2008, a charter or AEC must have at least 10 dropouts (increased from 5) to be evaluated on the Annual Dropout Rate indicator.
5. 2008 and Beyond Student Groups Evaluated. Beginning in 2008, only the All Students group will be evaluated for the Annual Dropout Rate indicator. Student groups no longer will be evaluated separately.

6. 2008 and Beyond Use of District At-Risk Dropout Data. Beginning in 2008, AECs that do not meet the Annual Dropout Rate indicator standard or demonstrate RI will be evaluated for Annual Dropout Rate using data of at-risk students in the district (the district at-risk dropout rate).
7. 2009 School Leaver Provision (SLP). If the Annual Dropout Rate is the only indicator causing an *AEA: Academically Unacceptable* rating, then the AEC or charter is assigned the *AEA: Academically Acceptable* label. The SLP provision applies only to the Annual Dropout Rate indicator under AEA procedures in 2009.

Although some campuses will avoid being rated *AEA: Academically Unacceptable* in 2009 due to the application of the SLP, these same campuses may be subject to TAT intervention requirements in the 2009-10 school year, as required by commissioner rule, 19 TAC §97.1002, *Identification of Technical Assistance Team Campuses*. This is because campuses rated *AEA: Academically Acceptable* in 2009 are identified for TATs if their 2009 accountability results do not meet the 2010 accountability standards. The purpose of the TAT identification is to serve as an early warning system and, therefore, provide interventions that may prevent the campus from being rated *AEA: Academically Unacceptable* in the subsequent year. In addition, districts are subject to identification and intervention under the PBM system for dropout rates and leaver reporting.

8. 2009 Standard. For 2009 accountability ratings, the Annual Dropout Rate standard remains 10.0% as shown in the following table.
9. 2009 Required Improvement. Annual Dropout Rate RI will be applied.
10. 2010 Standard. The Annual Dropout Rate indicator standard for 2010 accountability ratings will be set during the 2009 accountability development cycle.

Annual Dropout Rate (Grades 7–12) Indicator				
	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%	10.0%	TBD
Dropout Definition	NCES definition			
Accountability Subset	School Leaver data are attributed to the last campus of attendance			

Rationale: 2007 was the first accountability year to evaluate grade 7-12 dropout rates using the new, more rigorous NCES definition. Changes in the dropout definition and attribution of data resulted in significantly higher dropout rates; however, the long-term effects of the changes to the Annual Dropout Rate are still unknown, since current data cannot be fully modeled using the new definition. Maintaining the 10.0% standard in 2008 and 2009 balances the impact of increased rigor in this indicator and provides advance notice of standards. Increasing the minimum size requirements from 5 to 10 dropouts and applying the School Leaver Provision for AECs and charters that would be labeled *AEA: Academically Unacceptable* in 2008 or 2009 are appropriate due to this indicator undergoing such significant change. Using district at-risk dropout data acknowledges that AECs are part of the overall district strategy for education of students at risk of dropping out of school and supports the dropout prevention mission of AECs. Evaluating only the All Students group is appropriate since many AECs and charters have small, highly mobile student populations resulting in the four student groups not being evaluated. Also, the at-risk registration criterion restricts use of AEA procedures to AECs that serve large populations of at-risk students thereby resulting in the All Students group being comprised primarily if not completely of students at risk of dropping out of school, which is the focus of AEA campuses and charters.

Completion Rate II (Grades 9–12) Indicator

The transition to the NCES dropout definition also impacts the Completion Rate II indicator. Beginning with 2007 accountability, the dropout component of the Completion Rate denominator changes. In 2007, only one of the four years in the cohort is affected. In 2008, two years of the cohort are affected, and so on, until 2010 when the Completion Rate denominator uses the NCES dropout definition for all four years of the cohort.

Under the NCES definition, the count of dropouts used in the Completion Rate calculation will be higher than the counts under the previous state definition. A larger denominator will cause completion rates to decline. The magnitude of this effect is unpredictable and current data cannot be modeled using the new definition; therefore, it is difficult to set appropriate standards. Two years of dropout data under the NCES definition will not be available for analysis until the 2009 development cycle.

Beginning with 2007 accountability, the 85-day rule is phased-out completely. Leaver data are attributed to the last campus of attendance. Changes in attribution of data will affect completion rates; however, the long-term impact cannot be predicted. Also, the completion rates used for 2007 through at least 2010 accountability will be affected by students displaced by Hurricane Katrina.

As expected, the changes in dropout definition and attribution of leaver data resulted in lower completion rates as shown in the table below. These data are excerpted from the 2006 and 2007 AEA State Data Tables.

Completion Rate II (Grades 9–12) for AEA Campuses and Charters					
	All Students	African American	Hispanic	White	Economically Disadvantaged
Class of 2006	77.3%	71.0%	75.1%	84.5%	74.8%
Class of 2005	90.7%	89.2%	89.7%	93.5%	90.4%

1. 2008 and 2009 Standards. In April 2007, the Commissioner of Education announced final decisions on the 2008 – 2010 accountability standards for the Completion Rate II indicator. The 2008 – 2010 standards were published in the *2007 Accountability Manual* and adopted as commissioner rule by July 26, 2007. However, for 2008 and 2009 accountability ratings, the Completion Rate II standard is revised from 75.0% to 70.0% as shown in the table below.
2. 2008 and Beyond Required Improvement. Completion Rate II RI will be applied.
3. 2008 and Beyond Minimum Size Requirements. Beginning in 2008, a charter or AEC of Choice must have at least 10 dropouts (increased from 5) to be evaluated on the Completion Rate II indicator.
4. 2008 and Beyond Student Groups Evaluated. Beginning in 2008, only the All Students group will be evaluated for the Completion Rate II indicator. Student groups no longer will be evaluated separately.
5. 2010 Standard. The Completion Rate II indicator standard for 2010 accountability ratings will be set during the 2009 accountability development cycle.

Completion Rate II (Grades 9–12) Indicator				
	2007 Class of 2006	2008 Class of 2007	2009 Class of 2008	2010 Class of 2009
<i>AEA: Academically Acceptable</i>	75.0%	70.0%	70.0%	TBD
Completion Rate Definition	Graduates + GED Recipients + Continuing Students			
Dropout Definition	Phase-in NCES definition			NCES definition
Accountability Subset	School Leaver data are attributed to the last campus of attendance			

Bold indicates a decrease of five percentage points from the prior year.

Rationale: Changes in the dropout definition and attribution of data resulted in significantly lower completion rates; however, the long-term effects of the changes to the Completion Rate are still unknown and current data cannot be fully modeled using the new definition. Revising the Completion Rate II standard from 75.0% to 70.0% for 2008 and 2009 and increasing the minimum size requirements from 5 to 10 dropouts are appropriate for AECs and charters due to this indicator undergoing such significant change. Evaluating only the All Students group is appropriate because many AECs of Choice and charters have small, highly mobile student populations resulting in the four student groups not being evaluated. Also, the at-risk registration criterion restricts use of AEA procedures to AECs that serve large populations of at-risk students thereby resulting in the All Students group being comprised primarily of students at risk of dropping out of school, which is the focus of AEA campuses and charters.

AEA Gold Performance Acknowledgments (AEA GPA)

The current GPA system acknowledges districts and campuses evaluated under standard accountability procedures for high performance on indicators other than those used to determine accountability ratings. To provide the same opportunity for acknowledgment of high academic achievement, GPA indicators will be reported for AECs and charter districts rated *AEA: Academically Acceptable* beginning with the 2008 accountability cycle.

While not all AEA campuses and charters have data for all of the existing GPA indicators, the 12 GPA indicators in the following table can be used to evaluate AEA campuses and charters. A significant difference between the current GPA system and the AEA GPA system is that the two Comparable Improvement indicators are inappropriate for AEA campuses and charters and will not be evaluated for AEA GPA purposes. The other significant difference between the current GPA system and the AEA GPA system relates to the Attendance Rate indicator. For AEA GPA purposes, one Attendance Rate standard of 95.0% will be applied to all AEA campuses and charters, rather than the three used in GPA calculations under standard accountability procedures.

1. 2008 and Beyond AEA GPA Indicators and Standards. The indicators in the following table will be evaluated for AEA GPA purposes at the same standards applied to the GPA indicators used for districts and campuses evaluated under standard accountability procedures.
2. Student Groups Evaluated. Only the All Students group will be evaluated for AEA GPA purposes. The All Students group is always evaluated; student groups are not evaluated separately.
3. Acknowledgment Categories. The three acknowledgment categories used under the current GPA system will be applied to AEA GPA: Acknowledged, Does Not Qualify, and Not Applicable. One of these acknowledgment categories will be reported for each AEA GPA indicator for each AEA campus and charter in late October following resolution of all appeals when the final ratings are released.

AEA GPA Indicators		2008 AEA GPA Standard
1	Advanced Course/Dual Enrollment Completion	≥25%
2	AP/IB Results	≥15% and ≥ 50%
3	Attendance Rate	95% (all AEA campuses and charters)
4 - 8	Commended Performance: Reading/ELA Mathematics Writing Science Social Studies	≥25%
9	Recommended High School Program/ Distinguished Achievement Program (RHSP/DAP)	≥80%
10	SAT/ACT Results	≥70.0% of graduates and ≥40.0% at or above criterion
11 - 12	Texas Success Initiative (TSI) – Higher Education Readiness Component: ELA Mathematics	≥55%

Rationale: Incorporating AEA acknowledgments into the state accountability system recognizes high performance on indicators other than those used to determine ratings and addresses educators' interest in recognizing performance above the *AEA: Academically Acceptable* level. To the extent possible, the AEA GPA system is aligned with the GPA system that acknowledges districts and campuses evaluated under standard accountability procedures. Analysis of data indicates that the current GPA standards are stringent for the majority of AEA campuses and charters. Evaluating only the All Students group is appropriate since many AEA campuses and charters have small student populations resulting in the four student groups not being evaluated.