
2008 AYP APPEALS GUIDELINES

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) appeals will generally request a review of one of the indicators used to determine the AYP status: Performance, Participation, and the Other Indicator.

General Guidelines Related to All Appeals

Appeals are only considered for the district or campuses specifically stated in the appeal letter, even if circumstances appealed and granted would result in a different AYP status for other campuses or the district. Texas Education Agency (TEA) staff will not make assumptions about district intent to appeal other campuses or the district AYP results.

TEA staff will not contact school districts for additional information if the documentation provided is not sufficient. The appeal will be evaluated based on information provided in the appeal packet and on the required AYP Appeal Form.

Appeals cannot be based on data used to evaluate the prior year AYP status.

Late Appeals are not considered

Late appeals will be denied on the principle that the stated appeal deadline must be enforced. The 2008 Adequate Yearly Progress Guide explicitly states that in order to maintain a fair appeals process, no late appeals will be considered. TEA legal counsel advised that if a late appeal was to be considered, all districts would need to be informed of the extension and given the opportunity to appeal late. A letter of appeal is considered late if it is postmarked after Friday, October 24, 2008.

Appeal of the USDE approved Texas AYP Workbook requirements are not considered

Appeals Related to the use of New Assessments

Appeals to the performance or participation indicators based on the use of tests results of the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) Accommodated, TAKS-Modified (TAKS-M), TAKS-Alternate (TAKS-Alt), or Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS) Reading as required by the United States Department of Education (USDE) approved 2008 Texas AYP Workbook are recommended to be denied.

Appeals Related to the Federal Cap and Campus Rankings

Appeals to the performance results due to the application of the federal 1% and 2% caps, the federal 2% campus ranking applied by TEA or submitted by school districts, or on the basis that the district's exception to the 1% cap was approved is recommended to be denied.

Justification: The USDE Flexibility Agreement on Inclusion of Students with Disabilities in AYP, signed November 30, 2005, allowed the use of existing state assessments for calculating AYP until the expiration of the agreement on December 1, 2007. Since that time, Texas developed or modified existing assessments, created new alternate assessments, and applied the federally required caps on proficient results from alternate assessments in order to comply with the requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB). The agency takes the position that consideration of appeals based on calculations required by the 2008 Texas AYP Workbook would violate USDE agreements, reviews, and regulations.

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Decision Guidelines for Performance and Participation Appeals

Appeals to the performance or participation indicators include the following categories.

Appeal of test answer document coding errors

Appeals based on assessment document coding errors will be recommended to be granted based on the submission of sufficient documentation. Appeals based on coding errors that occurred due to the administration of TAKS, TAKS (Accommodated), TAKS-M, Linguistically Accommodated testing (LAT) of TAKS or TAKS-M, or TAKS-Alt Reading/ELA or Mathematics tests include the following.

- Appeals based on test answer document coding errors of test version (TAKS Accommodated or TAKS-M), test language version (English or Spanish), or use of linguistic accommodations (LAT testing), or score code error.
- Appeals based on evidence that the economically disadvantaged status or ethnicity reported of students were not appropriately identified.
- Appeals based on evidence that students receiving special education services or limited English proficient (LEP) students currently served or exited and monitored students from LEP programs were not appropriately identified.
- Appeals based on TAKS-Alternate (TAKS-Alt) online test submission errors with evidence of proper documentation or validation of the administration of an assessment.
- Appeals based on test answer document coding errors of student information on the TELPAS Reading test.

Each appeal found in the above categories is recommended to be granted based on the following criteria:

- Assessment data, PEIMS Fall Enrollment data, and PEIMS Attendance data are used to confirm student information.
- Staff research establishing the history of the reported demographics is found to support the district's claim.

If the PEIMS data does not support the claim and if the district is attempting to change the demographics after the results are known, the appeal is denied.

Justification: Numerous changes to the 2008 test answer document which required extensive training and instruction of district test administrators explain the increase appeals based on coding errors. The test administration policies for the state assessment program do not allow districts to correct coding errors on the test answer documents after the documents have been submitted for scoring. Sufficient documentation regarding any miscoded answer documents must be included to grant this appeal. If districts submit the proper documentation, appeals will be granted to prevent coding or technical errors from affecting AYP status.

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Appeal of assessment administered

Appeals of the Grade 10 test results on the basis that students had not completed the appropriate number of credits for classification and assessment in Grade 10 are recommended to be denied, except in limited cases where students have transferred into the school district during the 2007-08 school year and the student's high school credits could not be determined prior to testing.

Justification: School districts must evaluate high school credit accrual of Grade 10 student transfers prior to identifying the appropriate assessment for the spring test administration. If school district includes documentation that indicates they applied due diligence in attaining transcript information from the sending school district yet failed to properly evaluate the appropriate grade level and assessment for students, the appeal may be granted. School district staff have several months prior to testing to evaluate high school credit accrual of all current students and administer appropriate grade level assessments. Appeals to the administration of an inappropriate assessment in which the student was not considered eligible, considered a testing irregularity, will not be considered.

Decision Guidelines for Participation Appeals

Participation appeals will be recommended to be granted for the following reasons, given that sufficient documentation is provided:

- Appeals based on test answer document coding errors of test version (TAKS Accommodated or TAKS-M), test language version (English or Spanish), or use of linguistic accommodations (LAT testing).
- Absences due to medical emergencies with documentation provided of an excused absence for medical reasons.

Justification: Sufficient documentation regarding any miscoded answer documents must be included to grant this appeal. Due to numerous changes to the 2008 test answer documents and test administration policies that do not allow districts to correct coding errors after the documents have been submitted for scoring, appeals will be granted to prevent coding or technical errors from affecting AYP status.

USDE guidelines allow states to exclude students from the participation indicator if they were absent during the testing period due to a medical emergency. Information on the reason for absence is not available at the state level; therefore, this provision can only be implemented through the appeals process.

Decision Guidelines for Appeals on the Other Indicator

AYP appeal for review of the other indicator (either Attendance or Graduation Rate) is recommended to be granted under the following conditions. These rules apply to evaluation of the other indicator and to use of the other indicator in the performance rate safe harbor provision.

Attendance Rate Appeals

- The appeal requests review of current year Attendance information and it does affect the AYP results of the other indicator of the campus or district.

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Justification: The prior year attendance data were used for the 2008 AYP indicator since the current year attendance data were not available when the preliminary AYP data were provided to districts. Current year attendance data may be substituted for the prior year data to ensure that the appeal decision is based on the most current data available. If the attendance indicator is reevaluated using 2007-08 attendance data, all measures based on attendance will be reevaluated. A district or campus cannot meet some 2008 AYP standards using 2006-07 Attendance Rates and meet other standards using 2007-08 Attendance Rates.

Graduation Rate Appeals

Accuracy of leaver data submitted to TEA by the district is a factor considered in evaluation of the merits of all Graduation Rate appeals.

- The appeal requests the exclusion of special education students with 5-year IEP plans from the graduation rate calculation and the change in the rate results in meeting the AYP requirement for other indicator or performance indicator (regardless of the results of the other indicator). A recalculated graduation rate is determined for a specific student group and must result in either 1) an improvement in the rate for the specific student group as required under performance improvement, or 2) reduces the denominator below the minimum size criteria for the student group.

Justification: USDE approved exclusion of special education students with 5 year (or longer) IEP from the graduation rate calculation. Texas does not collect information related to student IEPs and can only implement this provision through the appeals process. Students must continue to be enrolled in school and districts must provide documentation from the IEP.

- The appeal requests the exclusion of recent immigrant students assigned to the Class of 2007 cohort (students in their first year in a U.S. school in the 2006-07 school year) from the graduation rate calculation and the change in the rate results in meeting the AYP requirement for other indicator or performance indicator (regardless of the results of the other indicator). A recalculated graduation rate is determined for a specific student group and must result in either 1) an improvement in the rate for the specific student group as required under performance improvement, or 2) reduces the denominator below the minimum size criteria for the student group.

Justification: Per the May 20, 2004, USDE letter, recent immigrant LEP students assigned to the Class of 2007 cohort who are in their first year in U.S. schools in the 2006-07 school year may be excluded from the graduation rate calculation. This condition is not included in the completion rate methodology and the exclusion can only be implemented through the appeals process.

Decision Guidelines for Graduation Rate Appeals from Alternative Education Campuses

AYP appeals for review of the Graduation Rate from alternative education campuses require that the campus provide evidence the campus serves “students at risk of dropping out of school.” They may do this by either having registered as an Alternative Education Accountability (AEA) campus under the state accountability alternative education campus registration process, or showing that they are eligible for registration as an AEA campus but have chosen not to register.

District Appeals

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School district appeals are considered for appeal requests to remove students served in a Texas Youth Commission (TYC) facility, TYC contracted facility or halfway house who were included in the graduation rate calculation. Sufficient student identification information must be provided. The school district appeal is recommended to be granted when the recalculation excluding these students results in meeting the AYP graduation indicator requirements or the indicator no longer meeting minimum size requirements.

District appeal requests for a recalculation of the district graduation rate based on allowable appeals for alternative education campuses are not considered except for charter districts that are registered for evaluation under AEA procedures.

Campus Appeals

Alternative education campus appeals for a recalculation of the graduation rate are recommended to be granted when the recalculation results in meeting the AYP graduation indicator requirements. Appeal requests are considered for:

- An alternative education campus requests the exclusion of students who received a General Educational Development (GED) certificate. If the recalculated graduation rate does not meet the AYP standard, the prior year graduation rate is also recalculated to exclude GED recipients for a consistent measure of improvement in the graduation rate.
- An alternative education campus requests the exclusion of continuing students. If the recalculated graduation rate does not meet the AYP standard, the prior year graduation rate is also recalculated to exclude continuing students for a consistent measure of improvement in the graduation rate.
- An alternative education campus requests the exclusion of continuing students transferred to the campus in the fall following their expected graduation date. These are students who enter the campus in the fall of the 2007-08 school year after their classmates in the Class of 2007 have completed school. Sufficient student identification information must be provided.
- An alternative education campus requests that the Graduation Rate not be evaluated if the AEC did not have students enrolled in Grade 12 in the 2007-08 school year.
- An alternative education campus requests the exclusion of either GED or continuing students from the graduation rate calculation *as an appeal for the performance indicator* (regardless of the results of the other indicator). A recalculated graduation rate is determined for a specific student group and must result in either 1) an improvement in the rate for the specific student group as required under performance improvement, or 2) reduces the denominator below the minimum size criteria for the student group. The prior year graduation rate for the specific student group is also recalculated to exclude GED and/or continuing students for a consistent measure of improvement in the graduation rate.

Justification: The completion/student status rate is a longitudinal indicator that tracks individual students from the time they enter grade 9 to the fall following their expected graduation date. Students are classified at the end of this period as 4-year graduates, continuing students, GED recipients, or dropouts – the four components add to 100 percent. Including continuing students and GED recipients in the graduation rate calculation has a negative impact on alternative education

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campuses. The USDE National Center for Education Statistics includes only graduates and dropouts in their estimated completion rate. In addition, the longitudinal rate is calculated for campuses that serve grades 9 – 12 and classifies students as 4-year graduates. Alternative education campuses may not have any students enrolled in Grade 12 and as a result, the calculation of a 4-year longitudinal graduation rate is inappropriate.

Graduation Rate Appeals based on the School Leaver Provision are not considered

The 2008 Texas AYP Workbook, approved by the USDE, does not permit Texas to waive the use of the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) dropout definition, implemented in the 2005-06 school year. Therefore, graduation rate appeals requesting a “hold harmless” provision similar to the School Leaver Provision in state accountability cannot be considered.

Graduation Rate Appeals based on an expanded definition of recent immigrant limited English proficient (LEP) students are not considered

The 2008 Texas AYP Workbook, approved by the USDE, does not permit Texas to exclude recent immigrant limited English proficient (LEP) students from the Other indicator, specifically, Graduation Rate, when determining AYP status. Final federal regulations regarding the inclusion of LEP students in AYP issued on September 13, 2006, limit the definition of recent immigrants to students in their first year of enrollment in a U.S. school and only allow their exclusion from AYP *performance* results. These regulations do not extend the exclusion to the Other indicator. However, appeals to the Graduation Rate for the exclusion of recent immigrant LEP students in the Class of 2007 cohort who are in their first year in U.S. schools in the 2006-07 school year will continue to be considered. Appeals to the Graduation Rate for the exclusion of recent immigrant LEP students assigned to the Class of 2007 cohort who were in their first in U.S. school prior to the 2006-07 school year will not be considered.