

Chapter 3 – The Basics: *Additional Features*

As shown in *Chapter 2 – The Basics: Base Indicators*, districts and campuses can achieve a rating by meeting the absolute standards for the different indicators. However, under certain conditions, a campus or district can achieve a rating:

- by meeting *Required Improvement (RI)*; and/or
- by using the *Exceptions Provision*.

Additionally, under certain circumstances a district’s rating may be restricted to *Academically Acceptable*. These additional requirements for districts are explained in the last part of this chapter.

All additional features are applied and calculated automatically by TEA before ratings are released. Districts and campuses do not need to request the use of additional features.

Required Improvement to *Academically Acceptable*

Campuses or districts initially rated *Academically Unacceptable* may achieve an *Academically Acceptable* rating using the Required Improvement feature.

Who is evaluated for Required Improvement: Districts and campuses whose performance is *Academically Unacceptable* for any TAKS subject, Annual Dropout Rate, or Completion Rate I measure evaluated.

TAKS

Improvement Standard: In order for Required Improvement to move a campus or district to *Academically Acceptable*, the campus or district must have shown enough improvement on the deficient TAKS measures since 2007 to be able to meet the current year accountability standard in two years.

There are different standards for the *Academically Acceptable* rating for TAKS:

- *Reading/ELA*. Any measure below the standard must achieve enough gain to meet a standard of **70%** in two years.
- *Writing and Social Studies*. Any measure below the standard must achieve enough gain to meet a standard of **65%** in two years.
- *Mathematics*. Any measure below the standard must achieve enough gain to meet a standard of **50%** in two years.
- *Science*. Any measure below the standard must achieve enough gain to meet a standard of **45%** in two years.

Methodology: The *actual change* must be equal to or greater than the *Required Improvement*:

$$\begin{array}{c} \text{Actual Change} \\ \text{[performance in 2008] – [performance in 2007]} \end{array} \geq \frac{\begin{array}{c} \text{Required Improvement} \\ \text{[standard for 2008] – [performance in 2007]} \end{array}}{2}$$

Example: For 2008, a high school campus has performance above the *Academically Acceptable* standard in all areas except for their Economically Disadvantaged student group in TAKS mathematics; only 44% met the standard. Their performance in 2007 for the same group and subject was 34%.

First calculate their *actual change*: $44 - 34 = 10$

Next calculate the *Required Improvement*:

$$\frac{50 - 34}{2} = 8$$

Then compare the two numbers to see if the *actual change* is greater than or equal to the *Required Improvement*: $10 \geq 8$

Result: the campus meets Required Improvement, so its rating is *Academically Acceptable*.

Minimum Size Requirements: In order for Required Improvement to be an option, the district or campus must have test results (for the subject and student group) for at least 10 students in 2007.

Other Information:

- *Technical Assistance Team (TAT).* All campuses rated *Academically Acceptable* in 2008 are identified for technical assistance teams if their 2007-08 performance does not meet the accountability standards established for the 2009 accountability system. Some schools that have attained a rating of *Academically Acceptable* through Required Improvement may be identified for technical assistance teams. See *Chapter 16 – Responsibilities and Consequences* for more information.
- *Recalculation of Prior Year Results.* For purposes of calculating RI, the prior year assessment results will be rebuilt to include both grade 8 science and the selected grades and subjects for TAKS (Accommodated). See *Appendix D* for more details.
- *Rounding.* All improvement calculations are done on performance rates and standards that have been rounded to whole numbers. Required Improvement calculations are expressed as a percent, rounded to whole numbers. For example, 4.5% is rounded to 5%.

COMPLETION RATE I

Improvement Standard: In order for Required Improvement to move a campus or district to *Academically Acceptable*, the campus or district must have shown enough improvement on the deficient Completion Rate I measures between the classes of 2006 and 2007 to be at a standard of **75.0%** in two years.

Methodology: The *actual change* must be equal to or greater than the *Required Improvement*:

Actual Change		Required Improvement
[completion rate for class of 2007] minus [completion rate for class of 2006]	≥	$\frac{[75.0] - [\text{completion rate for class of 2006}]}{2}$

Minimum Size Requirements: In order for Required Improvement to be an option, the district or campus must have had at least 10 students (in the same student group) in the class of 2006 completion rate.

Other Information:

- *Technical Assistance Team (TAT)*. All campuses rated *Academically Acceptable* in 2008 are identified for technical assistance teams if their 2007-08 performance does not meet the accountability standards established for the 2009 accountability system. Some schools that have attained a rating of *Academically Acceptable* through Required Improvement may be identified for technical assistance teams. See *Chapter 16 – Responsibilities and Consequences* for more information.
- *Rounding*. All improvement calculations are expressed as a percent, rounded to one decimal point. For example, 2.85% is rounded to 2.9%, not 3%.

ANNUAL DROPOUT RATE

Improvement Standard: In order for Required Improvement to move a campus or district to *Academically Acceptable*, the campus or district must have shown enough decline in its dropout rate to be at **2.0%** in two years.

Methodology: The *actual change* must be equal to or less than the *Required Improvement*:

$$\begin{array}{c} \text{Actual Change} \\ [2006-07 \text{ dropout rate}] - [2005-06 \text{ dropout rate}] \leq \end{array} \begin{array}{c} \text{Required Improvement} \\ \frac{[2.0] - [2005-06 \text{ dropout rate}]}{2} \end{array}$$

This calculation measures *reductions* in rates, not gains as with TAKS or Completion Rate I results. The actual change in the dropout rate needs to be *less than or equal to* the Required Improvement for the standard to be met, and will involve negative numbers. Stated another way, the actual change needs to be a larger negative number than the Required Improvement number.

Example: In 2006-07, a middle school had performance at the *Academically Acceptable* level for all TAKS subjects. However, the dropout rate for their Hispanic student group was 2.2%. Their Annual Dropout Rate in 2005-06 for the same group was 3.0%.

First calculate their *actual change*: $2.2 - 3.0 = -0.8$

Next calculate the *Required Improvement*:

$$\frac{2.0 - 3.0}{2} = -0.5$$

Then we compare the two numbers to see if the *actual change* is less than or equal to the *Required Improvement*: $-0.8 \leq -0.5$

Result: the campus meets Required Improvement, so its rating is *Academically Acceptable*.

Minimum Size Requirements: In order for Required Improvement to be an option, the district or campus must have had at least 10 grade 7-8 students (in the same student group) in 2005-06.

Other Information:

- *Technical Assistance Team (TAT)*. All campuses rated *Academically Acceptable* in 2008 are identified for technical assistance teams if their 2007-08 performance does not meet the accountability standards established for the 2009 accountability system. Some schools that have attained a rating of *Academically Acceptable* through Required Improvement may be identified for technical assistance teams. See *Chapter 16 – Responsibilities and Consequences* for more information.
- *Floor*. No dropout rate floor is required to be able to use RI for the Annual Dropout Rate, either for moving to *Academically Acceptable*, *Recognized*, or *Exemplary*.
- *Rounding*. All calculations are expressed as a percent, rounded to one decimal point. For example, -1.875% is rounded to -1.9%, not -2%.

Required Improvement to *Recognized*

Who is evaluated for Required Improvement: Districts and campuses whose performance is at the high end of *Academically Acceptable* for any TAKS subject or Completion Rate I, and who also meet the minimum “floor” for current year performance. Campuses or districts that do not meet the 2.0% Annual Dropout Rate standard may also use RI to achieve a *Recognized* or *Exemplary* rating. See Annual Dropout Rate (below) for details.

TAKS

Improvement Standard: In order for Required Improvement to move a campus or district from *Academically Acceptable* to *Recognized*, the campus or district must have:

- performance ranging from 70% to 74% on the measure, and
- shown enough improvement on TAKS since 2007 to be at **75%** in two years.

Methodology: The *actual change* must be equal to or greater than the *Required Improvement*:

$$\begin{array}{c} \text{Actual Change} \\ \text{[performance in 2008]} - \text{[performance in 2007]} \geq \frac{\text{Required Improvement}}{2} \\ \frac{[75] - \text{[performance in 2007]}}{2} \end{array}$$

Minimum Size Requirements: For Required Improvement to be an option, the district or campus must have test results (for the subject and student group) for at least 10 students in 2007.

Other Information:

- *Standards*. The *Recognized* standard for the TAKS indicator (75%) is the same for all subjects.
- *Recalculation of Prior Year Results*. For purposes of calculating RI, the prior year assessment results will be rebuilt to include both grade 8 science and the selected grades and subjects for TAKS (Accommodated). See *Appendix D* for more details.
- *Rounding*. All improvement calculations are done on performance rates and standards that have been rounded to whole numbers. Required Improvement calculations are expressed as a percent, rounded to whole numbers. For example, 4.5% is rounded to 5%.

Example: For 2008, a district has performance above the *Recognized* standard in all areas except for their Economically Disadvantaged student group in TAKS science; only 70% met the standard. Their performance in 2007 for the same group and subject was 66%.

First determine if their current year performance is *at or above the floor* of 70%:

$$70 \geq 70$$

Next calculate their *actual change*: $70 - 66 = 4$

Then calculate the *Required Improvement*:

$$\frac{75 - 66}{2} = 5 \text{ (4.5 rounds to 5)}$$

Finally, compare the two numbers to see if the *actual change* is greater than or equal to the *Required Improvement*:

4 is not greater than or equal to 5

Result: the district does not meet Required Improvement, so its rating remains *Academically Acceptable*.

COMPLETION RATE I

Improvement Standard: In order for Required Improvement to move a campus or district from *Academically Acceptable* to *Recognized*, the campus or district must have:

- a completion rate ranging from 75.0% to 84.9% on the measure, and
- shown enough improvement on the deficient completion rate measures between the classes of 2006 and 2007 to be at **85.0%** in two years.

Methodology: The *actual change* must be equal to or greater than the *Required Improvement*:

Actual Change		Required Improvement
[completion rate for class of 2007] minus [completion rate for class of 2006]	≥	[85.0] – [completion rate for class of 2006] 2

Minimum Size Requirements: In order for Required Improvement to be an option, the district or campus must have had at least 10 students (in the same student group) in the class of 2006 completion rate.

Other Information:

- *Rounding.* All improvement calculations are expressed as a percent, rounded to one decimal point. For example, 2.85% is rounded to 2.9%, not 3%.

ANNUAL DROPOUT RATE

A campus or district cannot be prevented from a rating of *Academically Acceptable*, *Recognized*, or *Exemplary* if it has either met the absolute dropout rate standard or demonstrated dropout rate Required Improvement.

Because there is only one standard (2.0%) to meet for the Annual Dropout Rate, the same Required Improvement calculation is applied whether the campus or district is moving to *Academically Acceptable*, *Recognized*, or *Exemplary*. No performance floor is imposed when using RI for the dropout rate to achieve *Recognized* or *Exemplary*. See page 25 for the methodology and other details.

Exceptions Provision

The Exceptions Provision provides relief to larger campuses and districts with more diverse student populations who are evaluated on more measures. After application of Required Improvement, campuses or districts may still “gate up” to a higher rating by using exceptions. The Exceptions Provision can be applied to any of the 25 TAKS measures (5 subjects multiplied by 5 groups: All Students, African American, Hispanic, White, and Economically Disadvantaged). The Exceptions Provision does not apply to either Completion Rate I or Annual Dropout Rate indicators. Campuses and districts must meet minimum performance floors to be eligible to use this provision and other safeguards are applied.

As of 2008, the Exceptions Provision has been significantly modified:

- Campuses and districts may now use this provision to achieve an *Academically Acceptable*, *Recognized* or *Exemplary* rating; and
- The number of exceptions allowed has been expanded from three to four for achieving an *Academically Acceptable* or *Recognized* rating. One exception is now allowed for achieving an *Exemplary* rating.

Other Information:

- *Exceptions Applied Automatically.* There is no need for a district or campus to request that the Exceptions Provision be applied. Exceptions are automatically calculated and assigned prior to the release of ratings, but only if it will successfully move a campus or district to a higher rating. For example, a campus may be eligible for two exceptions, but if it actually needs three exceptions in order to raise its rating to *Academically Acceptable*, then no exceptions are used, and the campus remains *Academically Unacceptable*. This preserves the campus’s or district’s ability to use exceptions in the future. If the Exceptions Provision successfully moves a campus or district to a higher rating, the provision will be used. A campus or district cannot request that exceptions not be used.
- *Only for Assessment.* This provision applies to the TAKS, and not to Completion Rate I or Annual Dropout Rate indicators. That is, if a campus or district is *Academically Unacceptable* due to either the Completion Rate I or Annual Dropout Rate indicators, the Exceptions Provision is not applied.

USING EXCEPTIONS TO MOVE TO *ACADEMICALLY ACCEPTABLE* OR *RECOGNIZED*

A campus or district may use up to four exceptions in order to achieve a rating of *Academically Acceptable* or up to four exceptions in order to achieve a rating of *Recognized*. To be eligible to use any exceptions, the campus or district must be evaluated on at least five TAKS measures and must meet the appropriate performance floor(s).

The number of exceptions available for a campus or district is dependent on the number of assessment measures on which the campus or district is evaluated, as shown in the following table:

Exceptions for moving to <i>Academically Acceptable</i> or <i>Recognized</i>	
Number of Assessment Measures Evaluated	Maximum Number of Exceptions Allowed
1 – 4	0 exceptions
5 – 8	1 exception
9 – 11	2 exceptions
12 – 15	3 exceptions
16 or more	4 exceptions

Performance Floor:

Academically Acceptable. Performance on the measure to which the Exceptions Provision will be applied must be no more than five percentage points below the *Academically Acceptable* standard for reading/ELA, writing, and social studies, and no more than ten percentage points below the *Academically Acceptable* standard for mathematics and science. See the table below for the minimum performance needed in 2008 for each subject.

Recognized. Performance on the measure to which the Exceptions Provision will be applied must be no more than five percentage points below the *Recognized* standard for all subjects, meaning performance must range from 70% to 74% on the measure.

Floors			
<i>Academically Acceptable</i>		<i>Recognized</i>	
Mathematics	40%	All subjects	70%
Science	35%		
Reading/ELA	65%		
Writing & Social Studies	60%		

USING EXCEPTIONS TO MOVE TO *EXEMPLARY*

A campus or district may use one exception to gate up to a rating of *Exemplary*. To be eligible for this one exception, the campus or district must be evaluated on at least ten TAKS measures and meet the performance floor.

Performance Floor: Performance on the measure to which the Exceptions Provision will be applied must be no more than five percentage points below the *Exemplary* standard for all subjects, meaning performance must range from 85% to 89% on the measure.

Exceptions for moving to <i>Exemplary</i>	
Number of Assessment Measures Evaluated	Maximum Number of Exceptions Allowed
1 – 9	0 exceptions
10 or more	1 exception

PROVISION SAFEGUARDS

- *One-Time Use.* An exception will not be granted for the same measure for two consecutive years. For example, if a campus was granted an exception for white student science performance in 2007, the campus is not eligible for an exception for white student science performance in 2008. This safeguard applies regardless of the rating achieved when the exception was used. In the example below, the high school will not be able to use exceptions for economically disadvantaged performance in TAKS mathematics or science in 2009, even if the school needs the exceptions that year to achieve a *Recognized* rating.

Example. A large high school with a diverse population is evaluated on all student groups for reading/ELA, mathematics, science, and social studies, for a total of 20 measures. Their performance on all indicators meets the *Academically Acceptable* standards except for the performance of their economically disadvantaged students in mathematics (41%) and science (38%), and they did not demonstrate Required Improvement for either of these measures.

Performance on mathematics and science are within ten points of the standards (50% and 45%, respectively). Because they are evaluated on 16 or more assessment measures, (20) they are eligible to use up to four exceptions. Therefore, their performance in these two areas meets the Exceptions Provision requirements.

Result: the campus rating is *Academically Acceptable*. The two exception areas must be addressed in their campus improvement plan.

Note: Because of the one-time exception rule, the campus will not be eligible to use exceptions for either of these measures (economically disadvantaged students in mathematics and economically disadvantaged students in science) in 2009.

- *Other “Charged” Exceptions.* There are cases where a district or campus may be “charged” with an exception in the process of Special Analysis or in granting appeals. In these cases, the campus or district is not able to use that exception in the following year.
- *Move only one level.* The Exceptions Provision cannot be used to move up more than one rating level. For example, if a campus meets the *Exemplary* criteria on all accountability measures except for one assessment measure, and fails to meet the *Academically Acceptable* criteria on that one measure, the Exceptions Provision will only move the campus from *Academically Unacceptable* to *Academically Acceptable*.

A campus or district cannot use its allowable exceptions to achieve more than one rating level increase over its poorest performing measure. That is, an exception cannot be used for one deficient area to achieve *Academically Acceptable* and a second exception used for another deficient area to achieve *Recognized*.
- *Campus and District Improvement Plans.* Any campus or district that uses one or more exceptions must address performance on those measures to which the exceptions are applied in its campus or district improvement plan.

- *Technical Assistance Team (TAT)*. All campuses rated *Academically Acceptable* in 2008 are identified for technical assistance teams if their 2007-08 performance does not meet the accountability standards established for the 2009 accountability system. Schools that have attained a rating of *Academically Acceptable* through the Exceptions Provision will be identified for technical assistance teams. See *Chapter 16 – Responsibilities and Consequences* for more information.

Additional Issues for Districts

DISTRICTS WITH *ACADEMICALLY UNACCEPTABLE* CAMPUSES

Any district that has one or more campuses rated *Academically Unacceptable* cannot receive a rating of *Exemplary* or *Recognized*. However, the *AEA: Academically Unacceptable* rating for a campus does not prevent an *Exemplary* or *Recognized* district rating.

Beginning with the 2008 ratings cycle, some campuses are now identified within the accountability system as Texas Youth Commission (TYC) campuses or Texas Juvenile Probation Commission (TJPC) campuses. A rating of *Academically Unacceptable* on these campuses does not prevent an *Exemplary* or *Recognized* district rating. See *Chapter 6 – Special Issues and Circumstances* for more information about these campus types.

UNDERREPORTED STUDENTS

The Texas Education Agency must have leaver statuses on all grade 7-12 students who were enrolled at any time in the prior year (2006-07) but who did not continue in the current year (2007-08). These students may have left the district because they graduated, transferred to another district, dropped out, or for some other reason. Districts must report a leaver code for all leavers except those who moved (transferred) to another Texas public school district, earned a GED by August 31, or graduated in a prior school year. The determination of whether students are movers is made by TEA by checking other districts' enrollment and attendance records. (Districts may obtain preliminary information about whether students have moved to another district by searching the PID Enrollment Tracking (PET) application.)

Students without leaver records who cannot be confirmed by TEA to be returning students, movers, previous Texas graduates, or GED recipients become underreported students. See *Appendix I* for more information.

In order to maintain a rating of *Exemplary* or *Recognized*, districts must not exceed the accountability standards for underreported students.

Standard: Districts must meet the standard for both of the following measures in order to maintain a rating of *Exemplary* or *Recognized*:

- *Count of Underreported Students*: Must be fewer than or equal to 200.
- *Percent of Underreported Students*: Must be less than or equal to 5.0%.

Methodology:

$$\frac{\text{number of underreported students}}{\text{number of students served in grades 7-12 in previous school year}} \leq 5.0\%$$

Numerator: Underreported students are those 2006-07 students in grades 7–12 who are not accounted for by TEA as returning students, movers, previous Texas graduates or GED recipients, and for whom no school leaver record can be found.

Denominator: The denominator is an unduplicated count of students who were reported in enrollment in 2006-07 PEIMS submission 1 or in attendance in 2006-07 PEIMS submission 3.

Minimum Size Requirements: Districts with 5 or more underreported students will be evaluated.

Data Source and Year: PEIMS submission 1 (October 2006, October 2007); PEIMS submission 3 (June 2007)

Other Information:

- *School Leaver Provision for 2008.* A number of factors continue to impact school leaver data—change in the definition of a dropout, changes to the PEIMS leaver data collection, and the effect of students displaced by Hurricane Katrina on the 2005-06 dropout rate. Therefore, the School Leaver Provision will be applied in 2008 as it was in 2007. This means that a district’s underreported student count or rate cannot be the cause for a lowered rating.
- *System Safeguard.* Performance-Based Monitoring (PBM) will continue to evaluate this indicator at the 2008 standards in its Data Validation system. This will provide a safeguard feature to the use of the School Leaver Provision for this indicator in the state rating system.
- *Unduplicated Count.* The methodology eliminates any duplicate records. For example, students are not counted twice because they appear on both attendance and enrollment records.
- *Rounding.* This calculation is rounded to one decimal place. For example, 5.46% is rounded to 5.5%, not 5%.

ADDITIONAL STUDENTS IN DISTRICT RATINGS

Generally, districts are held accountable for the performance of all their students, including those who attend alternative education campuses that are registered for evaluation under AEA procedures. See *Chapter 6 – Special Issues and Circumstances* for more information on various campus situations and how they affect the district’s performance data.

Additionally, districts are responsible for the performance of students who are not in any campus accountability subset because they changed campuses within the district between the October “as of” date and the date of testing. See *Table 4* in *Chapter 2 – The Basics: Base Indicators* for more information on the accountability subset.