

Appendix I – Dropout Definition

Information in this appendix is provided for ease of reference. Topics covered here are largely excerpted from the publication, *Secondary School Completion and Dropouts in Texas Public Schools*, an annual report produced by the TEA Division of Accountability Research each summer. *Secondary School Completion and Dropouts in Texas Public Schools* should be consulted for complete details about all aspects of dropout and completion data collection, processing, and reporting. This publication can be accessed online at: ritter.tea.state.tx.us/research/reports.html.

In 2003, the Texas Legislature amended the Texas Education Code (TEC) to define dropouts for state accountability according to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) definition. Specifically, statute states that the Academic Excellence Indicators (TEC §39.051) include:

(b)(2) dropout rates, including dropout rates and district completion rates for grade levels 9 through 12, computed in accordance with standards and definitions adopted by the National Center for Education Statistics of the United States Department of Education;

Students who dropped out during the 2005-06 school year were the first to be reported using the NCES definition. Dropouts from the 2007-08 school year, which are evaluated for the 2009 ratings, continue to be defined using the NCES definition.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Leaver. A leaver may be any one of the following: a student who graduates, receives a General Educational Development (GED) certificate, continues high school outside the Texas public school system, begins college, is expelled, dies, or drops out.

Movers. A mover is a student who moves from one public school district to another, within Texas. A leaver record is not required for a mover. School districts may confirm that students have moved to other Texas public school districts by searching the PID Enrollment Tracking (PET) application. The final determination of whether students have moved is made by TEA.

Dropout. A dropout is a student who was enrolled in 2007-08 in a Texas public school in grades 7 – 12, but did not return to a Texas public school the following fall within the school-start window, was not expelled, did not graduate, receive a GED, continue high school outside the Texas public school system, begin college, or die.

School-Start Window. This is the period of time between the first day of school and the last Friday in September. The end of the school-start window is the day that students served in the prior year must return to school to not be considered leavers.

This year, as a result of Hurricane Ike, the 2008-09 School-Start Window for returning students was extended through Friday, October 24, 2008. The extension of the window was effective statewide to accommodate both the closing of some districts and the enrollment of students displaced as a result of the hurricane into other Texas public schools throughout the state.

OTHER INFORMATION

Residential Facilities. If the student moves to a facility served by a Texas public school district, no leaver code is necessary. For other situations, see the *PEIMS Data Standards*.

GED Recipients. If a student earned a GED prior to September 1, 2008, the student is not a dropout and no leaver code is necessary. For other situations, see the *PEIMS Data Standards*.

Migrant Students. Migrant students who return after the school-start window are not counted as dropouts.

Summer Dropouts. For state accountability purposes, summer dropouts are attributed to the school year just completed, based on the campus of enrollment on the final day of the previous school year.

LEAVER REASON CODES

School districts can submit 1 of 14 leaver reason codes for each leaver. One code is for students who graduate, and one is for students who drop out. The remaining 12 codes are for "other leavers"—students who: enroll in school outside Texas; enroll in Texas private school; enter home schooling; enter college early to pursue degrees; enroll in university high school diploma programs authorized by the State Board of Education; graduate outside Texas, enter Texas public school, then leave again; complete GEDs outside Texas; are expelled from school; are removed from school by Child Protective Services; are withdrawn from school for administrative reasons, such as nonresidence; return to their home countries; or die.

Table 41: PEIMS Leaver Reason Codes for 2007-08

Code	Leaver reason
Graduated or received an out-of-state GED	
01*	Graduated
85*	Graduated outside Texas, returned to school, and left again
86*	Completed GED outside Texas
Moved to other educational setting	
24*	Entered college early to pursue degree
60*	Withdrew for home schooling
66*	Removed from the district by Child Protective Services
81*	Withdrew from/left school to enroll in Texas private school
82*	Withdrew from/left school to enroll in school outside Texas
87*	Withdrew from/left school to enroll in a university high school diploma program authorized by the State Board of Education
Withdrawn by district	
78*	Expelled for criminal behavior and cannot return
83*	Administrative withdrawal for nonresidence, falsification of enrollment information, or failure to provide identification or immunization records
Other reasons	
03*	Deceased
16*	Returned to home country
98	Other (reason unknown or not listed above)

* Codes with an asterisk (*) are not included in the calculation of the dropout rate used for accountability purposes.
Source: Secondary School Completion and Dropouts in Texas Public Schools.

Table 41 is not a substitute for the detailed information and instructions available in the *PEIMS Data Standards*. Districts should consult the data standards as the source for instructions on coding leavers.

2009 LEGISLATIVE ACTION RELATED TO DROPOUTS

House Bill 3 (HB3) as passed by the 81st Texas Legislature during the 2009 Regular Session defined certain exclusions that the TEA must make when evaluating dropout and completion rates for accreditation and performance ratings. The exclusions can be grouped into five categories:

- Previous dropouts;
- ADA ineligible dropouts;
- Court-ordered GEDs, not earned;
- Incarcerated in facilities not served by Texas public schools; and,
- Refugees and asylees.

These five exclusions apply beginning with the 2011-12 school year. Final decisions regarding the transition to the use of dropout exclusions are yet to be made. Dropouts collected for the 2008-09 school year will be defined using the current definitions with no new exclusions applied.

