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Number of exemplary campuses increases

AUSTIN - Texas schools and districts earned a record high number of Exemplary ratings under the state's four-year-old accountability system, the Texas Education Agency announced today.

"A growing number of schools earned the state's top rating because their students excelled academically," said acting Commissioner of Education Robert Scott.

But tougher standards this year caused hundreds of schools and districts that were previously rated Recognized to drop to an Academically Acceptable rating. The number of campuses and districts earning the lowest rating, called Academically Unacceptable, also increased in 2007. Recurring low ratings can put a school in jeopardy of a state-ordered reorganization or closure.

"We're pleased that more schools earned an Exemplary rating, but the increase in the number receiving an Academically Unacceptable rating means we have significant work to do, particularly in the areas of math and science," Scott said. Performance on those two subject areas on the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) were the most common reasons a school received a low rating.

Ratings for individual districts, charter holders, and campuses can be found at <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/perfreport/account/index.html>.

Ratings are based on student performance on the TAKS and the State Developed Alternative Assessment II (SDAA II), dropout rates, and completion rates. However for 2007, a school leaver provision was in place in the accountability system that states a campus or district rating cannot be lowered because of performance on any of the following measures, alone or in combination: completion rate, annual dropout rate, or leaver data quality. This provision allows districts time to adjust to the new National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) dropout definition and the new data reporting requirements. It also ensures that ratings for districts that enrolled students displaced by Hurricane Katrina in 2005-2006 will not be adversely affected. Any school or district that avoided being rated Academically Unacceptable because of this provision will be required to address improving its graduation rates through the assignment of a technical assistance team and may be subject to additional interventions under the state monitoring system.

Exemplary

This year, 637 schools or 7.9 percent of the campuses in the state earned the prestigious Exemplary rating, compared to 564 schools or 7.1 percent with the top rating in 2006. These 637 schools educate more than 340,000 students. Twenty-seven school districts, including eight charter operators, earned the top rating, up from 19 last year.

An Exemplary rating means all student groups on the campus or in the district had 90 percent or more of their students pass each subject of the TAKS. The TAKS is given to students in grades 3-11 and covers English language arts/reading, writing, mathematics, science and social studies. The subjects tested vary at each grade level.

At least 90 percent passing is also required on the SDAA II, which is a test given to students with disabilities.

The Exemplary rating also requires a high school completion rate of 95 percent or higher, and a grade 7-8 dropout rate of 0.2 percent or less. Only five of the 637 schools and one district out of 27 receiving an Exemplary rating needed the school leaver provision to achieve this status.

“Those schools and districts achieved an extremely high level of academic performance and their communities can be justifiably proud of them,” Scott said.

Recognized

Twenty-nine percent of the schools, or 2,345 campuses, received the second highest rating called Recognized. These schools educate nearly 1.3 million students. There were 214 districts, including 27 charter holders, receiving this rating. Recognized school districts educate approximately 221,000 students and represent 17.5 percent of the districts and charter holders in the state.

In 2006, there were 2,826 schools and 337 districts and charter holders that were Recognized.

To achieve the Recognized rating, 75 percent of the total student body and each of the student groups – white, Hispanic, African American and economically disadvantaged – had to pass all TAKS subjects. In 2006, the standard was 70 percent.

Schools and districts achieving this sought-after rating also had to have 70 percent or more of those who took the SDAA II pass that exam.

The Recognized rating also required a high school completion rate of 85 percent, and an annual grade 7-8 dropout rate of 0.7 percent or less. Only 21 of the 2,345 campuses and two districts out of 214 receiving the Recognized rating needed the school leaver provision to achieve this status.

“Today’s results show that almost 20 percent of the districts and 37 percent of the schools earned one of the top two ratings,” Scott said.

Richardson ISD, with an enrollment of 33,972 students, was the largest district to earn a Recognized rating. “Richardson’s performance shows that an ethnically diverse district serving significant numbers of economically disadvantaged and limited English proficient students can provide an excellent education to all children,” Scott said.

Academically Acceptable

The rating category called Academically Acceptable covers the widest range of academic performance and consequently the largest group of schools and districts receive this rating. The required standards increased five percentage points for each TAKS subjects for this rating category in 2007.

To earn this rating, a school or district must meet the following standards:

- at least 65 percent of the tested students passed English language arts/reading, writing, and the social studies TAKS tests;
- at least 45 percent of the tested students passed the TAKS mathematics exam;
- at least 40 percent of the tested students passed the TAKS science test;

- at least 50 percent of the SDAA II tests taken were passed;
- at least 75 percent of the Class of 2006 graduated in four years or continued school;
- no more than 1 percent of the students in the seventh and eighth grades dropped out in one year.

About 46 percent of the state’s campuses, or 3,718 schools, earned a rating of Academically Acceptable. That compares to 3,190 schools that received this rating in 2006. Academically Acceptable schools educated more than 2.6 million students.

Seventy-five percent or 920 districts earned a rating of Academically Acceptable in the standard accountability system or a rating of AEA: Academically Acceptable in the alternative education accountability (AEA) rating system. In 2006, 809 districts or charter holders earned this rating.

Schools or districts that educate a high percentage of at-risk students may apply to be rated under the alternative rating procedures. Of those Academically Acceptable districts, 860 were rated in the standard system and 60 were rated under the alternative criteria.

About 7.5 percent of campuses and 10.4 percent of districts receiving an Academically Acceptable rating used the school leaver provision to avoid being rated Academically Unacceptable.

“For some schools and districts, this rating represents encouraging and hard-earned progress as they move up from an unacceptable rating. For others, the rating represents a disappointing drop from the Recognized level. In Texas, we increase the rigor of the system almost every year because we are constantly striving for excellence. Under this system, schools have to achieve steady progress just to maintain a rating,” Scott said.

Academically Unacceptable

Because of the five percent increase in ratings standards on TAKS, more schools and districts received the lowest rating. This year, 288 schools or 3.6 percent of the campuses received a rating of Academically Unacceptable. There were about 179,000 students enrolled in these schools. In 2006, there were 267 schools rated Academically Unacceptable.

Additionally, there were 13 alternative campuses rated in the alternative accountability system that received a rating of AEA: Academically Unacceptable. These schools have an enrollment of 2,404 students.

In 2006, 19 schools were rated AEA: Academically Unacceptable.

Fifty-one charter schools this year received unacceptable ratings from either the standard or the AEA rating procedures.

Fifty-seven school districts or charter holders received a rating of Academically Unacceptable, while two additional charter holders earned a rating of AEA: Academically Unacceptable. That compares to 47 districts that received the lowest rating in 2006 and another eight that were rated AEA: Academically Unacceptable.

The three most common reasons for an Academically Unacceptable rating for campuses were: failing TAKS science only (65 schools); failing mathematics only (40 schools); and failing mathematics and science (21 schools).

“Texas is addressing the math and science performance issues in many ways. For example, we have launched Texas Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (T-STEM) centers and networks to help us share best practices. The State Board of Education has adopted new secondary school math textbooks that will be in the schools this fall and new elementary math books will arrive in schools the following fall,” Scott said.

Not Rated

There were 676 schools and two charter holders that were not issued ratings in 2007. These are typically schools for which there are no TAKS results, such as pre-kindergarten-kindergarten campuses, or Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Programs (JJAEP).

High School Completion and Dropouts

Beginning in 2005-2006, dropout rates for Texas public schools are calculated according to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) dropout definition. Under the NCES definition, a dropout is a student who is enrolled in public school in grades 7-12, does not return to public school the following fall, is not expelled, and does not graduate, receive a General Educational Development (GED) certificate, continue school outside the public school system, begin college, or die. Adoption of the national dropout definition required a number of changes to the TEA definition. Some dates affecting dropout status were changed, and some groups of students who would not have been considered dropouts in previous years are now classified as dropouts. Adoption of the national definition also required changes in data collection and processing.

Out of 2,016,470 students enrolled in grades 7-12 in Texas public schools during the 2005-2006 school year, 51,841 students, or 2.6 percent, were reported to have dropped out. African American students had the highest dropout rate (3.8 percent), slightly higher than the rate for Hispanic students (3.5 percent), and nearly three times the rate for white students (1.3 percent).

For the 2005-2006 school year, the statewide annual dropout rate for grades 9-12 was 3.7 percent. There were significant gaps between dropout rates for white (1.8 percent) and African American (5.4 percent) and Hispanic (5.2 percent) students. There were 48,803 students who dropped out of grades 9-12 in 2005-2006.

Out of 283,698 students in the class of 2006 grade 9 cohort, 88.9 percent either graduated by 2006 or continued school the following year. An additional 2.3 percent received GED certificates. The Completion I (Graduates + Continuers) rate for white students (93.2 percent) was higher than for African American (85 percent) and Hispanic (84.9 percent) students. Because the dropout definition changed in 2005-2006, the definition of dropouts in the class of 2006 differed between the first three years of the cohort and the final year of the cohort.

The report, *Secondary School Completion and Dropouts in Texas Public Schools, 2005-2006*, is available at <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/research/>.

Consequences

Under Texas law, there are consequences and sanctions for low ratings. The first year a school receives an unacceptable rating, a Campus Intervention Team (CIT) is assigned to conduct an on-site evaluation and needs assessment, and work with the campus to draft a school improvement plan.

If a school is rated unacceptable for a second year, the CIT and the community begin drafting a reconstitution plan for the school, which typically involves replacing faculty.

The sanctions continue to increase with each successive year of poor performance. State law gives the commissioner of education the authority to close a habitually low-performing school. Additional information about sanctions is available at: http://www.tea.state.tx.us/pmi/accmon/2008/resources/AU_Campus_Framework_08.pdf.

The acting commissioner will soon issue sanctions against schools and districts that have had unacceptable ratings for the past four to five years.

Select Committee to Review State Accountability System

Senate Bill 1031 passed by the 80th Legislature, Regular Session, included a new requirement for a Select Committee on Public School Accountability to conduct a comprehensive review of the public school accountability system.

The committee must conduct an in-depth, comprehensive review of the public school accountability system to study the mission, organizational structure, and practices of similar systems in other states and the requirements established by federal law.

The bill requires that the governor, lieutenant governor, and speaker of the House of Representatives appoint the fifteen committee members and requires that the committee is co-chaired by the presiding officers of standing committees of each house of the legislature with primary jurisdiction over public education. An organizational meeting is required no later than October 1, 2007.

Additional information

Additional accountability information is available at <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/perfreport/account>.

Attached are various charts showing rating results.

- I. Campus Ratings by Rating Category (Table C.1)
- II. Campus Ratings with Enrollment (Table C.6)
- III. District Ratings by Rating Category (Table D. 1, V2)
- IV. Summary of Reasons for Being Academically Unacceptable (Table L.1)

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**Campus Ratings by Rating Category
For Four Years: 2004 through 2007
August 2007**

Accountability Rating	2004		2005		2006		2007	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
EXEMPLARY	518	6.6%	304	3.8%	564	7.1%	637	7.9%
RECOGNIZED	2,538	32.5%	1,909	24.1%	2,826	35.5%	2,345	29.1%
ACADEMICALLY ACCEPTABLE	3,579	45.8%	4,356	55.1%	3,190	40.1%	3,718	46.1%
ACADEMICALLY UNACCEPTABLE	95	1.2%	233	2.9%	267	3.4%	288	3.6%
NOT RATED: ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION	381	4.9%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
AEA: ACADEMICALLY ACCEPTABLE	0	0.0%	392	5.0%	396	5.0%	384	4.8%
AEA: ACADEMICALLY UNACCEPTABLE	0	0.0%	31	0.4%	19	0.2%	13	0.2%
AEA: NOT RATED - OTHER	0	0.0%	1	0.0%	2	0.0%	1	0.0%
NOT RATED: OTHER	700	9.0%	682	8.6%	692	8.7%	675	8.4%
NOT RATED: DATA INTEGRITY ISSUES	2	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
TOTAL	7,813	100.0%	7,908	100.0%	7,956	100.0%	8,061	100.0%

**Campus Ratings with Enrollment
August 2007**

Accountability Rating	Campus Count	Pct of All Campuses	2007 Enrollment	Pct of Total Enrollment
EXEMPLARY	637	7.9%	342,364	7.5%
RECOGNIZED	2,345	29.1%	1,279,736	28.0%
ACADEMICALLY ACCEPTABLE	3,718	46.1%	2,661,801	58.2%
ACADEMICALLY UNACCEPTABLE	288	3.6%	179,057	3.9%
AEA: ACADEMICALLY ACCEPTABLE	384	4.8%	43,483	1.0%
AEA: ACADEMICALLY UNACCEPTABLE	13	0.2%	2,404	0.1%
AEA: NOT RATED - OTHER	1	0.0%	780	0.0%
NOT RATED: OTHER	675	8.4%	67,308	1.5%
TOTAL	8,061	100.0%	4,576,933	100.0%

**District Ratings by Rating Category
For Four Years: 2004 through 2007
August 2007**

Accountability Rating	2004		2005		2006		2007	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
EXEMPLARY	19	1.5%	11	0.9%	19	1.5%	27	2.2%
RECOGNIZED	378	30.8%	172	14.0%	337	27.5%	214	17.5%
ACADEMICALLY ACCEPTABLE	712	58.0%	915	74.5%	733	59.7%	860	70.4%
ACADEMICALLY UNACCEPTABLE	24	2.0%	37	3.0%	47	3.8%	57	4.7%
NOT RATED: ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION	85	6.9%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
AEA: ACADEMICALLY ACCEPTABLE	0	0.0%	74	6.0%	76	6.2%	60	4.9%
AEA: ACADEMICALLY UNACCEPTABLE	0	0.0%	15	1.2%	8	0.7%	2	0.2%
NOT RATED: OTHER	9	0.7%	4	0.3%	7	0.6%	2	0.2%
NOT RATED: DATA INTEGRITY ISSUES	0	0.0%	1	0.1%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
TOTAL	1,227	100.0%	1,229	100.0%	1,227	100.0%	1,222	100.0%

**Summary of Reasons for Being Academically Unacceptable
Campus and District Counts
Standard Procedures
August 2007**

Reasons	2007	
	Campus	District
FAILED READING ONLY	12	1
FAILED WRITING ONLY	14	3
FAILED MATHEMATICS ONLY	40	4
FAILED SCIENCE ONLY	65	13
FAILED SOCIAL STUDIES ONLY	13	2
FAILED SDAA II ONLY	15	2
FAILED READING AND WRITING	7	0
FAILED READING AND MATHEMATICS	2	1
FAILED READING AND SCIENCE	9	0
FAILED READING AND SOCIAL STUDIES	2	0
FAILED WRITING AND MATHEMATICS	2	2
FAILED WRITING AND SCIENCE	5	1
FAILED WRITING AND SOCIAL STUDIES	1	2
FAILED MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE	21	6
FAILED MATHEMATICS AND SOCIAL STUDIES	4	0
FAILED MATHEMATICS AND SDAA II	2	0
FAILED MATHEMATICS AND ANNUAL DROPOUT RATE	9	0
FAILED MATHEMATICS AND COMPLETION RATE I	6	0
FAILED SCIENCE AND SOCIAL STUDIES	2	2
FAILED SCIENCE AND SDAA II	1	1
FAILED SCIENCE AND ANNUAL DROPOUT RATE	1	0
FAILED SCIENCE AND COMPLETION RATE I	2	0
FAILED SOCIAL STUDIES AND ANNUAL DROPOUT RATE	2	0
FAILED SOCIAL STUDIES AND COMPLETION RATE I	2	0
FAILED SDAA II AND COMPLETION RATE I	1	0
FAILED READING, WRITING & MATHEMATICS	3	0
FAILED READING, WRITING & SCIENCE	3	0
FAILED READING, MATHEMATICS & SCIENCE	5	3
FAILED READING, MATHEMATICS & SOCIAL STUDIES	1	0
FAILED READING, MATHEMATICS & COMPLETION RATE I	2	0
FAILED READING, SCIENCE & SOCIAL STUDIES	0	1
FAILED MATHEMATICS, SCIENCE & SOCIAL STUDIES	1	0
FAILED MATHEMATICS, SCIENCE & COMPLETION RATE I	7	0
FAILED MATHEMATICS, SOCIAL STUDIES & COMPLETION RATE I	1	0
FAILED MATHEMATICS, SDAA II & COMPLETION RATE I	1	0
FAILED READING, WRITING, MATHEMATICS & SOCIAL STUDIES	1	0

**Summary of Reasons for Being Academically Unacceptable
Campus and District Counts
Standard Procedures
August 2007**

Reasons	2007	
	Campus	District
FAILED READING, WRITING, SCIENCE & COMPLETION RATE I	1	1
FAILED READING, MATHEMATICS, SCIENCE & SOCIAL STUDIES	8	5
FAILED READING, MATHEMATICS, SCIENCE & SDAA II	1	0
FAILED READING, MATHEMATICS, SCIENCE & COMPLETION RATE I	1	0
FAILED READING, MATHEMATICS, SOCIAL STUDIES & ANNUAL DROPOUT RATE	1	0
FAILED READING, MATHEMATICS, SOCIAL STUDIES & COMPLETION RATE I	1	0
FAILED WRITING, MATHEMATICS, SCIENCE & SOCIAL STUDIES	1	1
FAILED MATHEMATICS, SCIENCE, SOCIAL STUDIES & COMPLETION RATE I	2	0
FAILED MATHEMATICS, SOCIAL STUDIES, ANNUAL DROPOUT RATE & COMPLETION RATE I	1	0
FAILED READING, WRITING, MATHEMATICS, SCIENCE & SOCIAL STUDIES	3	4
FAILED READING, MATHEMATICS, SCIENCE, SOCIAL STUDIES & COMPLETION RATE I	1	1
FAILED READING, MATHEMATICS, SCIENCE, SOCIAL STUDIES, SDAA II & COMPLETION RATE I	1	0
FAILED READING, MATHEMATICS, SCIENCE, SOCIAL STUDIES, ANNUAL DROPOUT RATE & COMPLETION RATE I	1	1
TOTAL	288	57

Completion Rate I and Annual Dropout Rate are included as reasons for being *Academically Unacceptable* because they are evaluated. Due to the School Leaver Provision they cannot be the only reason for the *Academically Unacceptable* rating.