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Eighty-six percent of Texas school districts meet AYP

AUSTIN – Eighty-six percent of Texas school districts and 79 percent of the schools met 2007 Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) standards, despite a substantial increase in the performance targets by which they are judged in this federal evaluation system.

This year to earn a label called “Meets AYP,” the schools and districts had to test at least 95 percent of their students and at least 60 percent of the students had to pass the reading/English Language Arts test and at least 50 percent had to pass the mathematics exam. This represented a seven-percentage point increase in the reading performance target and an eight-percentage point increase in the math target. Schools and districts can also meet AYP by showing significant performance improvement.

State tests in grades 3-8 and 10 that are used to determine these scores are the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS), TAKS-Alternative, State Developed Alternative Assessment II, Locally Developed Alternative Assessment, the Reading Proficiency Test in English and the Linguistically Accommodated Test.

High schools and districts are also rated on the 2006 graduation rate, while elementary and middle schools are rated on attendance rates as well as test scores and participation. Data for all students, as well as African American, Hispanic, white, economically disadvantaged, special education and limited English proficient are analyzed.

“Although we substantially raised the performance standards, the majority of Texas public schools met the standards. Many had math and reading passing rates that were well above the targets,” said acting Commissioner of Education Robert Scott.

“However the increasing standards did result in fewer schools and districts making AYP. They must take action right away to improve their educational program,” he said.

The preliminary 2007 results show that 86 percent or 1,056 school districts and charter holders met AYP requirements, compared to 88 percent or 1,079 districts in 2006. This year, 12 percent or 149 of the districts missed AYP, as did 11 percent or 132 last year. Both years, one percent of the districts were not rated.

At the school level, 79 percent or 6,374 schools met AYP standards in contrast to 82 percent or 6,516 schools last year. Nine percent or 737 of the schools missed AYP in 2007, compared to 541 or 7 percent in 2006. Twelve percent of the schools in 2007 were not rated for a variety of reasons that include being a new school, a pre-kindergarten-kindergarten campus or a disciplinary alternative education campus.

The most common reason a school missed AYP was math performance only or both reading and math performance. The requirement that at least 95 percent of the students be tested

caused very few schools to miss AYP. The graduation rate indicator was the most common reason that districts missed AYP in 2007.

AYP ratings for schools and districts are available at: <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/ayp/>.

School Improvement Program

If a school misses AYP for two years in a row for the same reason – math performance for example – and participates in the federal Title I program, the federal No Child Left Behind law requires that the schools move into a School Improvement Program (SIP) to aid the students.

A school that has missed AYP for two years is in Stage 1 School Improvement. The 114 schools in Stage 1 are required to take a number of actions, including preparing a campus improvement plan with input from their community and offering high quality professional development designed to address the issues on the campus. The schools, by Aug. 27, must also send letters notifying families that their children may transfer out of these schools to other schools designated by the district. The district must provide transportation to those who transfer.

Ninety-eight schools are in Stage 2, having missed AYP requirements for three years in a row. They must offer supplemental educational services (SES), such as tutoring to students, as well as continuing the corrective actions begun while in Stage 1.

This year, 47 schools move to Stage 3. Because of four years of poor performance in the same indicator, these schools must continue to make supplemental educational services and transfer options available to students. The school district must enact at least one sanction from a list that includes replacing staff that deal with the relevant subject, lengthening the school year or school day, decreasing management level at the campus, appointing an outside expert, restructuring the internal organization, or fully implementing a new curriculum that is based on scientifically proven successful educational strategies.

Twenty-three schools have reached Stage 4, after missing AYP requirements for five consecutive years in the same indicator. The school must continue to offer transfers to students. It must offer supplemental educational services or other supplemental services to students who remain at the school. The district must provide technical assistance to attempt to correct the school's shortcomings.

The school must also take one additional dramatic action such as:

- replacing the principal and staff;
- opening as a charter school;
- turning the school over to a private management company that has demonstrated effectiveness;
- having the state take over the school;
- or any other major change to school governance.

Two charter schools have reached Stage 5 after having six years of substandard performance. They are the Richard Milburn Academy of Killeen and I Am That I Am Academy in Dallas. Both schools missed AYP this year because of math performance.

Along with continuing to provide supplemental services and transfer options to students, these schools must carry out one of the following restructuring options:

- replace the principal and staff;
- contract with a private management company that has demonstrated effectiveness;
- have the state takeover the school;
- or any other major restructuring of school governance.

Complete information about the sanctions imposed when schools enter the School Improvement Program is available at: http://www.tea.state.tx.us/nclb/titleia/sip/2007-08/2007-08_sip.html.

A list of schools in the School Improvement Program is available at: http://www.tea.state.tx.us/nclb/titleia/sip/2007-08/Documents/ti_pre_sip_list.pdf . The list of districts in the School Improvement Program is available at: http://www.tea.state.tx.us/nclb/titleia/sip/2007-08/Documents/ti_pre_sip_district.pdf.

AYP ratings may be appealed up to Sept. 7 but a school or district on the SIP list must begin to implement the required actions while awaiting the results of the appeal.

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