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2012 AYP requirements rise

AUSTIN - Forty-four percent of Texas campuses met Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) targets this year due to a substantial increase in requirements, the Texas Education Agency announced today.

Under this federal school accountability system, a school or district this year met AYP requirements if 87 percent or more of their students passed the state reading/English language arts test; 83 percent of their students passed the state mathematics test; 95 percent of their students participated in the state testing program and, depending on the grade level, had either a 75 percent graduation rate or a 90 percent attendance rate. Twenty-eight percent of Texas districts met these high standards.

These requirements are comparable to Recognized or Exemplary level performance in the 2011 state accountability system. No state ratings are being issued this summer because the accountability system must be retooled to use results of the new State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR)™.

The state's request to use a similar approach with the federal system and carry over the 2011 AYP ratings into 2012 as the state transitions to the new testing program was denied by the U.S. Department of Education.

Under the current structure of the No Child Left Behind Act, the passing standards in the federal accountability system must rise to passing rates of 100 percent on the mathematics and reading tests by 2014. This means steep increases in the requirements each year now through 2014. Last year, a passing rate of 80 percent on the reading/English language arts test and 75 percent on math test were required to meet AYP. That year 50 percent of the districts and 66 percent of the campuses met AYP requirements.

Along with the graduation or attendance figures, 2012 AYP evaluations are based on 10th grade Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) results and scores on the STAAR tests for grades 3-8. Because passing standards have not been set yet for the STAAR for elementary and middle school grades, the Texas Education Agency conducted a bridge study to determine the raw score on the STAAR that is equivalent to the TAKS passing standards. These equivalency scores were then used in the AYP calculations for this year only.

Using this methodology, 3,773 schools and 339 school districts met AYP requirements. Additional AYP information is available at <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/ayp/>.

Districts or campuses that miss AYP for the same reason (reading, mathematics, graduation rate, or attendance rate) for two or more years and receive Title I funds move into the school improvement program and are subject to sanctions. Title I funds are federal funds that are to be used for the education of low-income students.

Non-Title I schools that miss AYP must revise their already existing campus improvement plans to address the reasons that the campus missed AYP.

The majority of Title I districts and campuses that missed AYP are in Stage 1, having missed AYP for the same reason for two years in a row.

Of the 513 Title I districts that missed AYP, 285 or 56 percent of them are in Stage 1 of the School Improvement Program. Among campuses, 976 or 84 percent of the total 1,159 Title I schools that missed AYP are in Stage 1. These districts or campuses must develop an improvement plan and campuses must offer students the option to transfer to a school that meets AYP requirements.

Schools or districts that are in Stage 2-5 face stronger sanctions at each additional stage. A school that has reached Stage 2 sanctions, for example, must offer tutoring to its students.

The Texas Education Agency is revamping the Supplemental Educational Services (SES) or tutoring component with the intent of enhancing the quality of tutoring services provided to students. The new statewide SES system is expected to be available by the time school starts.

At Stage 5, which is the most advanced intervention level, a school must adopt an alternative form of governance. Fifty-nine schools have reached this level. Along with offering transfer and tutoring options, a school at Stage 5 could:

- reopen as a charter school;
- replace all or most of the school staff;
- contract with a private management company to operate the school;
- turn the school's operation over to TEA; or
- adopt any other major restructuring of school governance.

If a school has been at Stage 5 for two or more years, agency staff will meet with the campus and district staff to discuss ways to revise the restructuring plan to make it more successful.

A list of schools subject to the sanctions and additional information about the School Improvement Program are available at http://www.tea.state.tx.us/index4.aspx?id=4459&menu_id=798.

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