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Growing number of districts and schools earn Gold Performance Acknowledgments because more students earn commended status on TAKS

AUSTIN – A growing number of Texas districts and schools today earned Gold Performance Acknowledgments because an increasing percentage of their students reached the prestigious Commended Performance level on the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS). Overall, approximately 74 percent of Texas school districts and 67 percent of campuses earned one or more Gold Performance Acknowledgments. In 2004, 69 percent of districts and 53 percent of campuses earned one or more Gold Performance Acknowledgments.

Gold Performance Acknowledgments or GPA's were created by the Texas Legislature in 2001 to recognize districts and campuses for high performance in areas that go above and beyond the basics. There are 11 different categories in which a GPA can be earned at the district level and 13 different categories at the campus level.

“The Gold Performance Acknowledgments provide an extra tip of the hat to high performing schools and districts. They reflect areas of academic performance that go beyond the measures used to determine state accountability ratings,” said Commissioner of Education Shirley J. Neeley. Neeley also noted that accountability ratings became final today and are available at: <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/perfreport/account/2005/index.html>.

Some of the GPA categories involve the top performance category called Commended Performance on TAKS. Schools or districts were eligible to receive a GPA for Commended Performance on the TAKS test if 20 percent or more of the students scored at the Commended Performance level on a subject area section of TAKS. To reach the Commended level, a student must receive a scale score of 2400 or higher on a TAKS subject area test. A score of 2100 is passing on a TAKS exam.

This year, 23.6 percent of the districts and 32.2 percent of the campuses received a GPA for Commended Performance on the Reading and/or English Language Arts section of the TAKS in 2005. In 2004, only 11.6 percent of the districts and 25.5 percent of the campuses earned a GPA in this category.

A Gold Performance Acknowledgment went to 33.0 percent of the districts and 29.1 percent of the campuses for Commended Performance on TAKS writing exams. That also represented a substantial increase over 2004 levels when 21.0 percent of the districts and 21.4 percent of the schools earned this accolade.

Strong increases were also seen on the social studies TAKS exam where 22.9 percent of the districts and 10.2 percent of the campuses earned a Gold Performance award in this area. In 2004, 13.6 percent of the districts and 6.7 percent of the campuses reached this level.

While increased performance was shown on the TAKS science and math exams, the gains were more modest in some areas. In mathematics, 8.6 percent of the districts and 20.9 percent of the campuses earned a GPA for Commended Performance. The previous year, only 5.5 percent of the districts and 16.0 percent of the campuses did so.

Commended Performance levels on the TAKS science test allowed 5.9 percent of districts and 18.9 percent of the campuses to earn a GPA. The previous year, 3.8 percent of the districts and 10.0 percent of the campuses did so.

“In 2003 when the state introduced the more rigorous TAKS, we asked our students and schools to rise to the challenge and take their performance to the next level. These Gold Performance Acknowledgments we are awarding today prove that they are doing just that,” Neeley said.

The Comparable Improvement (CI) indicators are new in 2005. These are campus-only acknowledgments as they depend on comparisons of a school’s performance to a group of 40 similar schools. Districts are not grouped and so CI is not available for them. Statewide, 1,632 campuses earned a CI acknowledgment in mathematics and 1,664 earned a CI acknowledgment in reading/English language arts. This represents approximately 21 percent of campuses for each subject area.

The Recommended High School Program (RHSP) indicator is the only GPA for which the standard increased in 2005. In order to be acknowledged on this indicator, districts and campuses had to have 60.0 percent or more of their graduates meet or exceed the requirements for the RHSP/Distinguished Achievement Program, up from 50.0 percent in 2004. The number of districts earning this accolade fell from 628 to 527 this year. Similarly, the number of campuses earning this acknowledgment fell from 830 to 696 this year. The standard for this indicator is scheduled to increase to 70.0 percent in 2006.

Attached is a complete list of GPA categories. Listings of GPA awards for local districts and campuses area available at: www.tea.state.tx.us/perfreport/account/2005/index.html.

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Gold Performance Acknowledgment Standards for 2005

Indicator	Description	Standard	Year Evaluated
Advanced Course/Dual Enrollment Completion	Percent of 9th-12th graders completing and receiving credit for at least one Advanced/Dual Enrollment Course	25.0% or more*	2003-04
AP / IB Results	Percent of 11th and 12th graders taking at least one AP or IB examination <i>AND</i>	15.0% or more <i>AND</i>	2003-04
	Percent of 11th and 12th grade examinees scoring at or above the criterion on at least one examination (3 and above for AP; 4 and above	50.0% or more*	

	for IB)		
Attendance Rate	Attendance Rate for students in grades 1-12, the total number of days present divided by the total number of days in membership.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District: 96.0% • Multi-Level: 96.0% • High School: 95.0% • Middle/Jr High: 96.0% • Elementary: 97.0% 	2003-04
Commended Performance: Reading/ELA	Percent of examinees scoring at or above the commended performance standard (scale score of 2400)	20% or more**	Spring 2005
Commended Performance: Mathematics	Percent of examinees scoring at or above the commended performance standard (scale score of 2400)	20% or more**	Spring 2005
Commended Performance: Writing	Percent of examinees scoring at or above the commended performance standard (scale score of 2400)	20% or more**	Spring 2005
Commended Performance: Science	Percent of examinees scoring at or above the commended performance standard (scale score of 2400)	20% or more**	Spring 2005
Commended Performance: Social Studies	Percent of examinees scoring at or above the commended performance standard (scale score of 2400)	20% or more**	Spring 2005
Comparable Improvement: Reading/ELA	Average Texas Growth Index (TGI) in TAKS Reading/ELA	Top Quartile (top 25%)* **	Spring 2005
Comparable Improvement: Mathematics	Average Texas Growth Index (TGI) in TAKS Mathematics	Top Quartile (top 25%)* **	Spring 2005
Recommended High School Program/DAP	Percent of graduates meeting or exceeding requirements for the RHSP/Distinguished Achievement Program	60.0% or more**	Class of 2004
SAT/ACT Results	Percent of graduates taking either the SAT or ACT <i>AND</i>	At least 70.0% of graduates <i>AND</i>	Class of 2004
	Percent of examinees scoring at or above the criterion score (SAT 1110; ACT Composite 24)	40.0% or more at or above criterion*	
TAAS / TASP Equivalency	Percent of graduates meeting/exceeding the TAAS/TASP	80.0% or more**	Class of 2004

	equivalency standards: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reading TLI \geq X-81• Mathematics TLI \geq X-77• Writing scale score \geq 1540		
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* Indicator evaluates performance for All Students & the following student groups: African American, Hispanic, and White. Economically Disadvantaged status is not available from the testing results.

** Indicator evaluates performance for All Students & the following student groups: African American, Hispanic, White, and Economically Disadvantaged.

*** Acknowledgment for Comparable Improvement is available to campuses only.