Texas Education Agency
Performance-Based Monitoring

2011-Curent Year PBMAS Masking Rules

"Masking" refers to the use of special symbols to conceal data for the purpose of protecting student confidentiality. The Performance-Based Monitoring Analysis System (PBMAS) masks data in order to comply with the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Data is masked by concealing information that could lead to the identification, either directly or indirectly, of a student. There are two cases in which a student could be identified:

1. When very few students in a group are evaluated, it may be possible to identify a particular student or students within the group.

2. When all the students in a group have the same result, e.g. all passing or all failing, it may be possible to identify all the students within the group. Revealing that all (or no) students in a group achieved the same result violates the students' individual privacy, even if the result achieved is a positive one.

PBMAS masks numerators, denominators and percentages (rates) according to the procedure below. State standards and performance levels **are not** masked. In general, the asterisk (*) is used as the masking character. PBMAS also uses the following characters:

- **>99%** – when a rate is 100 percent or a calculation rounds to 100 percent
- **<1%** – when a rate is 0 percent or a calculation rounds to 0 percent

Procedure

The following rules are listed in order of priority. The masking rules are applied to each year of data independently of other years of data that may be available.

Step 1: Masking for all Indicators

1) If the number of students in the denominator is less than 5 (including 0):
Rate: print an asterisk (*)
Numerator: print an asterisk (*)
Denominator: print an asterisk (*)

Step 2: Additional Masking for all Indicators

2) If the rate is 100% or rounds to 100%:
Rate: print ">99%"
Numerator: print an asterisk (*)
Denominator: print an asterisk (*)

3) If the rate is 0% or rounds to 0%:
Rate: print "<1%"
Numerator: print an asterisk (*)
Denominator: print an asterisk (*)

4) If the difference between the numerator and the denominator is less than 3:
Rate: print the rate
Numerator: print an asterisk (*)
Denominator: print an asterisk (*)

5) If the numerator is less than 5 (including 0):
Rate: print the rate
Numerator: print an asterisk (*)
Denominator: print an asterisk (*)

Step 3: Additional Masking

The following rules are used for certain PBMAS indicators to prevent the ability to calculate numerators, denominators, or rates of related indicators that were masked by previous rules.

6) If the **SPED Representation** indicator is masked:
Print an asterisk (*) for the numerators and denominators of all the student group representation[1] indicators and the less restrictive environments indicators.

7) If the indicator is a **difference**[2] indicator:
If a value is masked then print an asterisk (*) for the rates, numerators, and denominators for **that** indicator, except for the percentage difference.

8) If the indicator is a special education **student assessment participation** indicator:
If a value is masked then print an asterisk (*) for the rate, numerator, and denominator for **that** indicator only.

9) If the indicator is any one of the **less restrictive environments (LRE)** indicators**:**
If a value is masked then print an asterisk (*) for all numerators and denominators for **all** the LRE indicators.

[1] Student group representation indicators: African American (Not Hispanic/Latino) Representation, Hispanic Representation, and LEP Representation.
[2] Difference indicators: The student group representation indicators plus Discretionary DAEP Placements, Discretionary In-School Suspensions (ISS), and Discretionary Out-of-School Suspensions (OSS).