

Texas Education Agency Performance-Based Monitoring

2015 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, 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 masked. The asterisk (*) is used as the masking character.

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 (*)
- 2) If the rate is 100% or rounds to 100% (except disproportionality rates printed on district reports):
Rate: print an asterisk (*)
Numerator: print an asterisk (*)
Denominator: print an asterisk (*)
- 3) If the rate is 0% or rounds to 0% (except disproportionality rates printed on district reports):
Rate: print an asterisk (*)
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