Texas Education Agency
Performance-Based Monitoring Division

2009-2010 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 exist 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. Revealing that 100 percent or 0 percent achieved the same result has been deemed to violate the privacy of all the students within the group.

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 the other years.

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 District Rate is 100% or rounds to 100%:
   Rate: print ">99%"
   Numerator: print an asterisk (*)
   Denominator: print an asterisk (*)

3) If the District 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 Representation[1] indicators and the Less Restrictive Environment 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 **Participation**[3] 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 Environment (LRE)** indicators**:**
    If a value is masked then print an asterisk (*) for all Numerators and Denominators for **all** the LRE indicators.

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[1] Representation Indicators: African American Representation, Hispanic Representation, and LEP Representation.
[2] Difference Indicators: The representation indicators plus Discretionary DAEP Placement, Discretionary In-School Suspension (ISS), and Discretionary Out-of-School Suspension (OSS).
[3] Participation Indicators: TAKS/TAKS(Accommodated), TAKS-M, and TAKS-Alt.