

This is a new rule.

6A-1.099822 School Improvement Rating for Alternative Schools.

(1) Purpose. The purpose of this rule is to implement the requirements of Sections 1008.34 and 1008.341, Florida Statutes.

(2) School Eligibility.

(a) Definition of an alternative school for accountability purposes. An alternative school, for purposes of school accountability improvement ratings, is any school that provides dropout prevention and academic intervention services pursuant to Section 1003.53, Florida Statutes, and has students referred to the school by another school in any district. Charter schools can be designated as alternative schools for the purposes of school accountability improvement ratings if the school's charter explicitly states that the mission of the charter school is to provide dropout prevention and academic intervention services through alternative education. This definition does not include "second chance schools" as defined by Section 1003.53, Florida Statutes, educational programs operated or contracted by Department of Juvenile Justice facilities, or district school board programs that serve students officially enrolled in dropout retrieval programs.

(b) In school year 2007-2008, and annually thereafter, school districts will have the opportunity to identify alternative schools for accountability purposes in compliance with the above guidelines. Those identified schools will have the option of earning a school grade, pursuant to Section 1008.34, Florida Statutes, or a school improvement rating, as outlined in subsection (5) of this rule.

(3) Accuracy of Data.

(a) Prior to the calculation of School Improvement Ratings for Alternative Schools, as described in subsection (5) of this rule, alternative schools will be identified in a cumulative list according to primary service type as designated in the Department of Education's Master School Identification file.

(b) Districts will be given the opportunity to review the cumulative list and submit additions and/or deletions, as necessary, to the Department of Education. Documentation required to make an addition or deletion to the list of alternative schools shall include, at a minimum:

1. Statement of the current mission of the school;
2. Description of the targeted student population;
3. Explanation of enrollment procedures; and
4. Verification that a majority of enrolled students are at-risk, low-performing students exhibiting discipline or attendance problems.

(4) Student Inclusion.

(a) As outlined in Section 1008.341(3), Florida Statutes, the calculation of a school improvement rating shall include the aggregate scores of students assigned to and enrolled in the alternative school during the October or February FTE count.

(b) As outlined in Section 1008.34(3)(b)3., Florida Statutes, the following students are not included in the accountability calculations for alternative schools:

1. Students subject to district school board policies for expulsion for repeated and/or serious offenses;
2. Students who are in dropout-retrieval programs who have officially been designated as

dropouts; and

3. Students who are in programs operated or contracted by the Department of Juvenile Justice.

(5) Procedures for Calculating School Improvement Ratings for Alternative Schools.

(a) The school improvement ratings for alternative schools will be considered fully implemented with the following accountability elements:

1. The school improvement rating shall be based on a comparison of student learning gains for the current year and previous year. The learning gains definition will be consistent with the learning gains definition for school grades defined in Rule 6A-1.09981, FAC. The school improvement rating shall be calculated for each alternative school that has chosen to be rated by this method and:

a. Has a minimum of ten (10) eligible students with valid Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) scores in reading in the current and two previous years; and

b. Has a minimum of ten (10) eligible students with valid Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) scores in math in the current and two previous years.

2. The school improvement rating shall be designated as following:

a. “Improving” means the schools with students making more academic progress than when the students were served in their home schools. In order for a school to earn an “improving” designation, the percent of students making learning gains in reading and math in the current year must be at least five percentage points higher than the percent of the same students making learning gains in the prior year in their home school.

b. “Maintaining” means schools with students making progress equivalent to the progress made when the students were served in their home schools. In order for a school to earn a “maintaining” designation, the percent of students making learning gains in reading and math in the current year must be less than five percentage points above or below the percent of the same students making learning gains in the prior year in their home school.

c. “Declining” means schools with students making less academic progress than when the students were served in their home schools. In order for a school to earn a “declining” designation, the percent of students making learning gains in reading and math in the current year must be at least five percentage points lower than the percent of the same students making learning gains in the prior year in their home school.

3. The Commissioner shall withhold the designation of a school’s improvement rating if performance data is determined to not accurately represent the progress of the school.

Circumstances under which a school’s performance data may be considered to not accurately represent the progress of the school include: ~~Unless performance data can be determined to accurately represent the progress of the school, the Commissioner is authorized to withhold the designation of a school’s improvement rating or designate the school in a lower improvement rating category. If less than ninety (90) percent of the school’s student population eligible for inclusion in the designation of the school’s improvement rating were assessed, the school’s improvement rating shall be designated incomplete (I) for at least thirty (30) days or until the data are determined by the Commissioner to accurately represent the performance of the school.~~

a. Less than ninety (90) percent of the school's student population eligible for inclusion in the designation of the school's improvement rating were assessed;

b. Circumstances identified before, during, or following the administration any state assessment where the validity or integrity of the test results are called into question and are subject to an investigation or review as determined by the Department.

The school's improvement rating shall be designated incomplete (I) until the state, district, and/or local investigation(s) are complete. If, following the completion of investigations, data are determined to accurately represent the performance of the school, a school improvement designation reflecting that data will be reported.

4. Pursuant to Section 1008.341, Florida Statutes, schools that improve at least one level or maintain an "improving" rating are eligible for school recognition awards pursuant to Section 1008.36, Florida Statutes.

5. If a school earns a "declining" rating, the school is subject to the same requirements as a school designated School Performance Grade F as outlined in Rule 6A-1.09981, FAC.

6. After the initial issuance of the school improvement ratings, school districts shall have the opportunity to review and submit for state review any appeal of the calculation as outlined in Rule 6A-1.09981(9)(c), FAC.

(6) Crediting of Student Performance at the Alternative School to the Home School for the Purposes of Calculating the Home School's School Grade. If an alternative school chooses to be evaluated through a school improvement rating rather than a school grade, the student performance of eligible students (identified in Section 1008.34(3)(b)3., Florida Statutes) shall be included in the students' home school's grade as well as the alternative school's school

improvement rating.

(7) Definition of Home School. “Home School” is defined as the school the student was attending when assigned to an alternative school, pursuant to Section 1008.34, F.S.

(a) Limitations on Students Credited Back. Student performance data will only be credited back to the home school if:

1. The student was referred to the alternative school by the home school; and
2. The student’s grade level at the alternative school is within the same grade configuration as the student’s home school.

(b) Eligible students’ performance will be included in the calculation of the home school’s overall percentage of students making learning gains in reading and in math.

(c) Eligible students’ performance will be included in the home school’s grade calculation as long as the student is enrolled in a grade level at the alternative school that is offered by the student’s home school.

Specific Authority 1008.34, 1008.341 FS. Law Implemented 1008.34, 1008.341 FS. History –

New