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# **ASAM School Performance**

**Alternative School Performance on ASAM Accountability  
Indicators**

**2002–03 to 2007–08**

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A Report to the  
California Department of Education  
Policy and Evaluation Division

Prepared by

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## Table of Contents

Executive Summary .....	2
Background and Overview .....	3
Summary of Statewide Change on ASAM Non-Test-Based Indicators .....	5
Indicator 1: Student Behavior .....	7
Indicator 2: Suspension.....	8
Indicator 3: Student Punctuality .....	8
Indicator 4: Sustained Daily Attendance .....	9
Indicator 5: Student Persistence .....	10
Indicator 6: Attendance .....	10
Indicator 11: Promotion to Next Grade (elementary school) .....	11
Indicator 12a/b: Course Completion (middle school).....	12
Indicator 12c: Average Course Completion (middle school) .....	12
Indicator 13a: Credit Completion (high school) .....	13
Indicator 13b: Average Credit Completion (high school).....	14
Indicator 14: High School Graduation .....	15
Indicator 15a: General Educational Development (GED) Completion.....	16
Indicator 15c: GED Section Completion.....	17
Pre-Post Test-Based Indicators: Indicators 8, 9, and 10 .....	17
Reporting of Pre-Post Data across Different Tests .....	18
Student-Level and School-Level Performance.....	19

## Executive Summary

This report provides a summary of overall ASAM school performance on each of the non-test-based indicators between 2002–03 and 2007–08, with emphasis on 2007–08 results. In addition, a separate section of the report describes ASAM school performance on the pre-post test-based measures in writing, reading, and mathematics for 2007–08.

For the non-test-based indicators, ASAM schools have reported decreases between 2006–07 and 2007–08 in three measures (punctuality, attendance, and middle school course completion rates), and modest improvements in persistence and high school credit completion rates. Improvements are also seen on both measures of GED performance (passage rate and percentage of sections passed). Since 2002–03, schools generally report gains on most non-test-based indicators. In many cases, however, such gain is modest, fluctuating, or unreliable due to the small number of schools that choose the indicator as one of the three upon which they report.

For the pre-post test-based indicators in writing, reading, and mathematics, the ASAM evaluates school-level performance by using a simplified metric: the percentage of students showing a significant gain (a growth in normalized scale score of 0.25 or more) between pre- and post-tests. In 2007–08, approximately 24 percent of students showed a normalized score gain of 0.25 or more, a decrease from 26 percent of students in 2006–07. There was wide variance across schools in the percentages of students showing a significant gain between pre- and post-tests.

## Background and Overview

The Alternative Schools Accountability Model (ASAM) was mandated in 1999 as part of California's Public Schools Accountability Act (PSAA). The State Board of Education (SBE) subsequently approved a total of 17 indicators that would be used to measure the performance of ASAM schools. The ASAM program, which operates to supplement the information provided by California's API system, has now collected seven years of performance data from more than one thousand participating alternative schools. Results for the 2002–03 through 2007–08 years are discussed in this report.

California's school districts and county offices operate the largest and most complex alternative education system in the United States. Designed to provide specialized assistance to students who are failing in a traditional school setting due to academic or behavioral problems, the system is unique nationally in terms of both size and scope. While most states opt to serve these students within the framework of regular district schools, California has chosen to develop specialized schools that serve only high-risk students, in many cases using separate physical facilities.

Perhaps the most important contrast between alternative and traditional schools is that alternative schools serve high-risk students whose participation is defined by specific educational or social needs, rather than by residential proximity or school feeder patterns. The majority of alternative-school students function far below grade level and are at risk of falling further below grade level. For many, appropriate learning objectives focus upon overcoming physical, mental, or other personal barriers. Others are recovered dropouts, pregnant and/or parenting, or incarcerated. In addition, these students often have extremely high levels of mobility, routinely moving in and out of programs and schools.

As adopted by the PSAA Advisory Committee and its Alternative Accountability Subcommittee, for the purpose of accountability, alternative schools were defined in the context of service to these student populations, as opposed to the contexts of school structure or instructional methodology. To be included in the ASAM, an alternative school was originally required to serve a population that consisted of 50 percent or more students who were

- at high risk for educational or behavioral failure,
- expelled or under disciplinary sanction,
- pregnant or parenting, or
- recovered dropouts.

In 2003, the SBE raised the minimum threshold for schools participating in the ASAM from those serving at least 50 percent high-risk students to those serving at least 70 percent high-risk students, and specified that students who were two or

more years behind in educational attainment were at high risk for educational or behavioral failure.

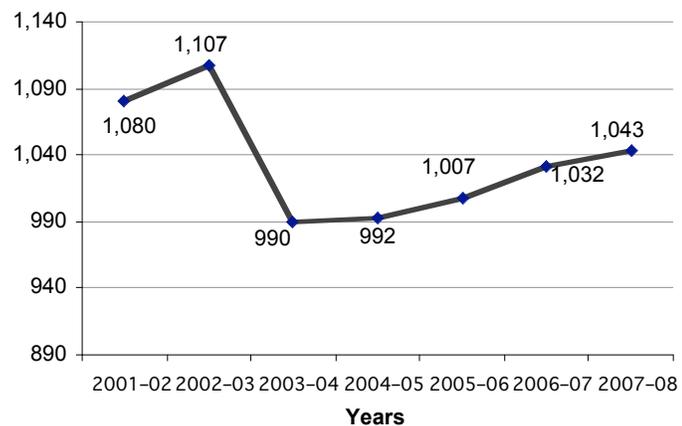
ASAM schools face separate state and federal accountability requirements. Under state requirements, alternative schools are held accountable through the ASAM program, rather than through the Academic Performance Index (API). Under federal requirements, however, ASAM schools must meet the same Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) criteria as all other schools. As a result, ASAM schools that have a sufficient number of valid Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) scores (approximately half of the total number of ASAM schools) receive an API for the purpose of federal reporting of AYP.

As noted earlier, the SBE approved 17 indicators that are used to measure the performance of ASAM schools. Approved indicators include 14 non-test-based measures and pre-post test-based measures of writing, reading, and mathematics. From the list of approved indicators, participating ASAM schools choose the three indicators that are most

closely related to the needs of, and services provided to, the high-risk student populations that they serve.

The information included in ASAM school reports varies for each school, but may include information about student expulsion recommendations, suspensions, punctuality, attendance, persistence, academic achievement, promotion, course/credit completion, graduation, and General Educational Development (GED) completion.

Figure 1  
**Active ASAM Schools**



In 2007–08, as shown in Figure 1, 1,043 schools were listed as “active” ASAM schools, reporting data as part of their participation in the ASAM. The number of active schools has grown slightly, by roughly 5 percent, since the SBE tightened eligibility rules in 2003.

Many ASAM schools are small and/or have sharply fluctuating enrollment from year to year. ASAM data are collected only for students enrolled for 90 days or longer, and are publicly reported only for schools supplying indicator data on 11 or more students. As a result, despite the increased number of schools participating in the ASAM, the numbers of schools reporting on each indicator vary significantly across years.

## **Summary of Statewide Change on ASAM Non-Test-Based Indicators**

This report provides a summary of overall ASAM school performance on each of the non-test-based indicators between 2002–03 and 2007–08, with emphasis on 2007–08 results. In addition, a separate section of the report describes ASAM school performance on the pre-post test-based measures in writing, reading, and mathematics for 2007–08.

For the non-test-based indicators, ASAM schools have reported decreases between 2006–07 and 2007–08 in three measures (punctuality, attendance, and middle school course completion rates), and modest improvements in persistence and high school credit completion rates. Improvements are also seen on both measures of GED performance (passage rate and percentage of sections passed). Since 2002–03, schools generally report gains on most non-test-based indicators. In many cases, however, such gain is modest, fluctuating, or unreliable due to the small number of schools that choose the indicator as one of the three upon which they report.

For the pre-post test-based indicators in writing, reading, and mathematics, the ASAM evaluates school-level performance by using a simplified metric: the percentage of students showing a significant gain (a growth in normalized scale score of 0.25 or more) between pre- and post-tests. In 2007–08, approximately 24 percent of students showed a normalized score gain of 0.25 or more, a decrease from 26 percent of students in 2006–07. There was wide variance across schools in the percentages of students showing a significant gain between pre- and post-tests. Table 1 summarizes overall school performance on all indicators. Descriptions of school performance on each ASAM indicator between 2002–03 and 2007–08 are included in the sections that follow.

<i>Table 1</i> <b>Summary of ASAM School Performance on Non-Test-Based Indicators</b>		
<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Indicator Description</b>	<b>Performance Summary</b>
Indicator 1: Student Behavior	Percentage of students receiving expulsion recommendations for inappropriate behavior	General decrease since 2002–03, with somewhat erratic (+/- 4%) change since 2004–05.
Indicator 2: Suspension	Percentage of students receiving one or more suspensions	Sharp decline from initial levels; modest and irregular increase since 2003–04.
Indicator 3: Student Punctuality	Percentage of students arriving at school on time	Modest changes (+/- 2%) between 2003–04 and 2006–07; sharp (6%) decline in 2007–08.
Indicator 4: Sustained Daily Attendance	Percentage of students attending school for a full day	Peak performance in 2003–04, 2005–06, and 2007–08. Relatively little variation (2%) across all years.
Indicator 5: Student Persistence	Percentage of students not dropping out	Except for sharply higher scores in 2005–06 (year of new NCEs rules), data since 2004–05 have shown modest increase to 56% success rate for keeping kids in school.
Indicator 6: Attendance	Percentage of average attendance	Data largely consistent (+/- 2%) since 2002–03. During past two years, 84% daily attendance reported.
Indicator 11: Promotion to Next Grade	Percentage of students promoted in elementary grades	Some increase since 2004–05. Too little variance across schools for indicator to be useful as a performance measure.
Indicator 12a/b: Course Completion	Percentage of courses passed in middle school	Generally stable (+/- 2%) across all years. Slight (1%) increase in 2007–08.
Indicator 12c: Average Course Completion	Average courses completed monthly in middle school	Generally stable (+/- 2%) across all years. Down by about one-third (0.3 courses/month) in 2007–08.
Indicator 13a: Credit Completion	Percentage of credits passed in high school	Very slight (0.5%) decrease in 2007–08. General stability (+/- 2%) across all years.
Indicator 13b: Average Credit Completion	Average credits earned monthly in high school	Up somewhat since 2003–04. 2007–08 rate highest (7.2%) since data collection began.
Indicator 14: High School Graduation	Percentage of students who graduated with 60 or more units at enrollment	Peaked in 2004–05 (81%), with modest decline since. Last 3 years very stable (77%).
Indicator 15a: GED Completion	Percentage of students who passed GED	Very few (11) schools in 2007–08 showed peak (83%) passage rate. Considerable variation (+/- 24%) over time.
Indicator 15c: GED Section Completion	Percentage of GED sections passed	Less variation (+/- 7%) over time. Increasing passage rates since 2005–06 (82%); high passage rates in 2007–08 (89%). Very few schools (13 in 2007–08) report.

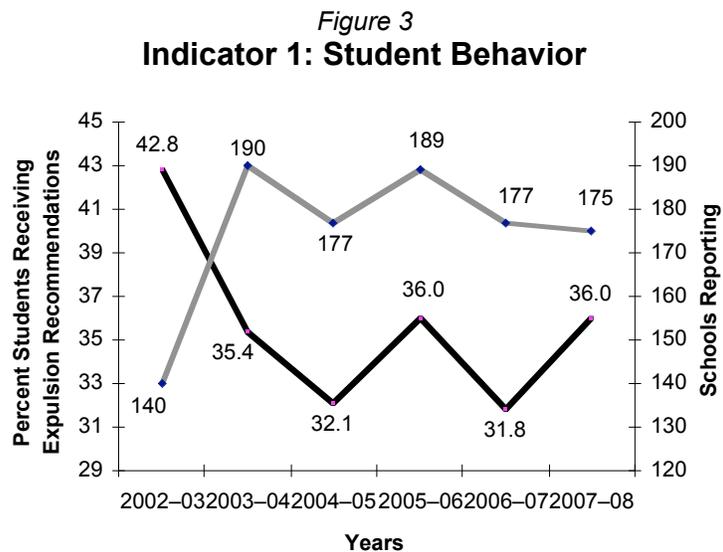
Overall scores on the non-test-based indicators have shown improvement in the period between 2002–03 and 2004–05, and only small, relatively uneven changes since then. School accountability systems presume linkages among the reporting of outcome data, decision-making at local or other levels, and the improvement of school performance with or without sanction or reward. As a program, the ASAM provides neither sanction nor reward, and, in the absence of much more extensive and definitive information, it is not possible to directly link the public reporting of school performance data to individual or aggregate changes in school behavior. Nonetheless, across most indicators, ASAM schools in 2007–08 appear to have recorded limited, but welcome, performance gains on many of the non-test-based measures.

**Indicator 1: Student Behavior**

This indicator requires schools to collect and report information on the number of long-term students<sup>1</sup> recommended for expulsion due to offenses under California’s *Education Code* Sections 48900(i) (committing obscene acts or engaging in habitual profanity or vulgarity) and 48900(k) (disrupting school activities or willfully defying the authority of school personnel).

In 2002–03, the criterion for this indicator was changed from the school-level frequency of recommendations for expulsion to the number of expulsion recommendations per capita. In its current form, the indicator is best understood as showing the school-level percentage of students who received one or more recommendations for expulsion based on the offenses listed above, whether or not the students were actually expelled by the local school board and/or school administrators.

Since 2002–03, and despite an increase in 2007–08, the school-level percentage of students who received an expulsion recommendation has fallen erratically, from about 43 to 36 percent, as shown in Figure 3.



<sup>1</sup> Long-term students are those who have been enrolled at a school for at least 90 continuous school days.

## Indicator 2: Suspension

Indicator 2 requires schools to collect and report information on the number of long-term students who have received an out-of-school suspension for any reason. As with Indicator 1, the criterion for this indicator was changed in 2002–03, from reporting the school-level frequency of suspensions to reporting the number of suspensions per capita. In its current form, the indicator is best understood as showing the school-level percentage of students who received one or more suspensions.

Between 2002–03 and 2007–08, the proportion of students receiving an out-of-school suspension declined from 38 percent to 35 percent, as shown in Figure 4. Over the past three years, however, school performance on this indicator has been relatively unchanged, varying by less than one percentage point since 2005–06.

Since 2003–04, the number of schools reporting this indicator for 11 or more students has been relatively consistent, ranging from 351 to 362.

Figure 4  
Indicator 2: Suspension

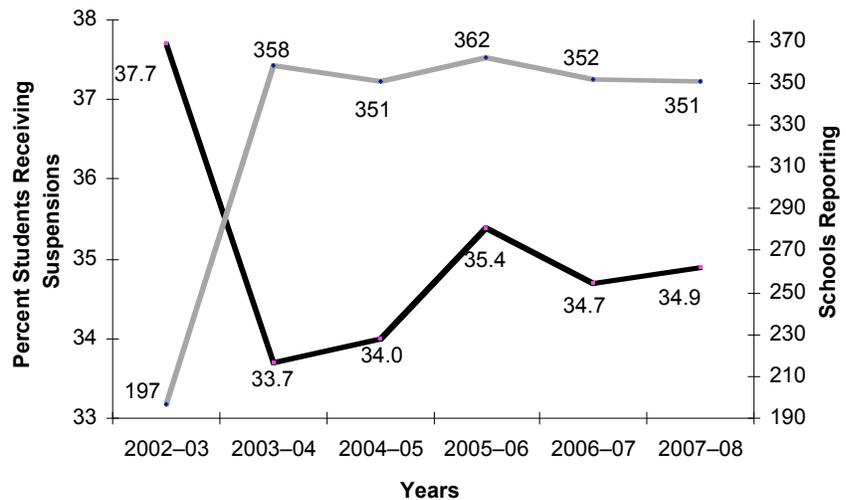
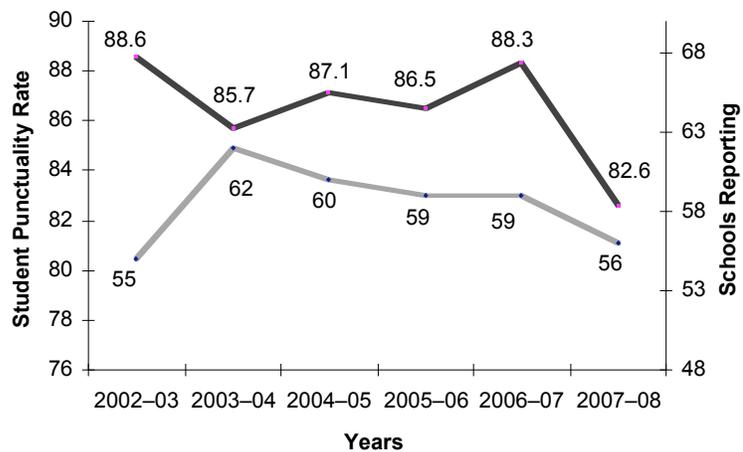


Figure 5  
Indicator 3: Student Punctuality



## Indicator 3: Student Punctuality

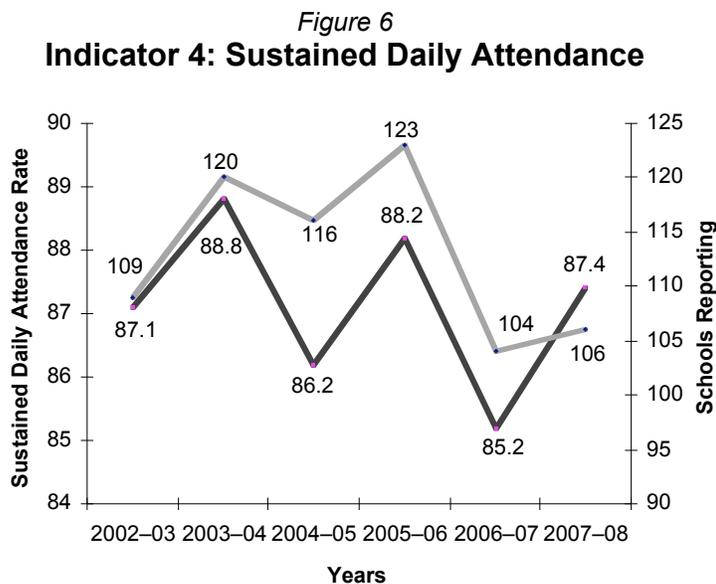
Among high-risk student populations, truancy and tardiness are major predictors of both academic failure and dropping out of school. Indicator 3 attempts to assess schools' performance in

encouraging students to arrive at school on time. In reporting on-time attendance among long-term students, ASAM schools selecting Indicator 3 were required to consider students as being “on time” if they were in class at the beginning of the first class on their assignment schedule. Schools were required to report punctuality data only for students receiving classroom-based instruction.

Until 2007–08, schools reporting on this indicator had shown a modest increase in school punctuality, from just under 86 percent in 2003–04 to over 88 percent in 2006–07, as shown in Figure 5. However, in 2007–08, schools reporting on this indicator showed a sharp drop (5 percent) in the percentage of students arriving at school on time. The number of schools reporting this indicator declined slightly, but the decrease in on-time attendance was not accounted for by changes in the number of reporting schools.

### Indicator 4: Sustained Daily Attendance

Indicator 4 represents the percentage of students who attended class for a full academic day. ASAM schools count students as completing an entire assigned instructional day when they are present in class during the first and last daily periods indicated on their assignment schedule.



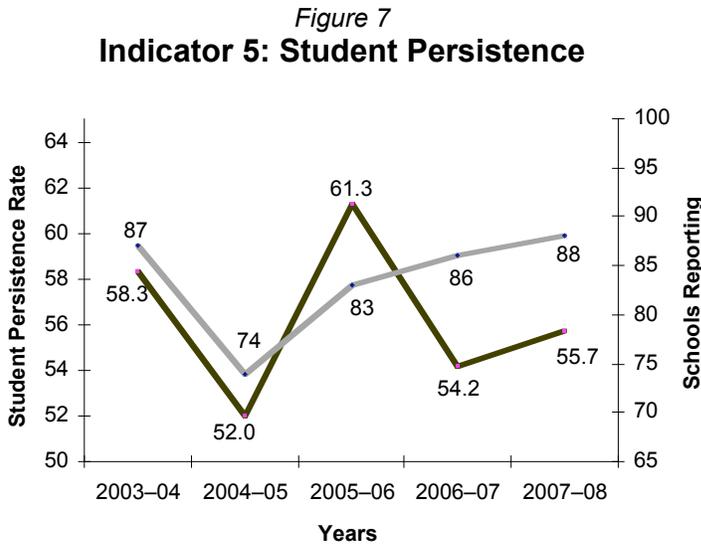
Overall, despite some year-to-year fluctuation, sustained attendance rates in ASAM schools have remained relatively consistent since 2003–04.

As shown in Figure 6, peak school performance on this indicator occurred in 2003–04 (88.8%) and in 2005–06 (88.2%), and was

almost matched by performance in 2007–08 (87.4%). Variation across all years has been minimal, totaling 3 percentage points or less.

### Indicator 5: Student Persistence

Student persistence is the percentage of long-term students who either continue their education or graduate. (This indicator can also be understood as representing



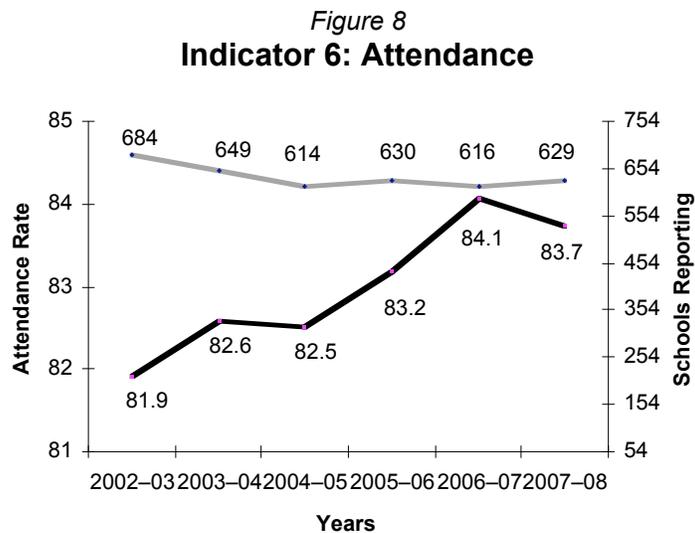
the opposite of the dropout rate.) Although the SBE approved Indicator 5 during the initial phases of ASAM development, changes were made in the CDE's definition and calculation of dropout rates in 2003. Because definitional changes made comparisons with earlier data misleading, data on this indicator are available only from 2003-04 forward (see Figure 7). With the exception of sharply higher scores in 2005-06 (the year of new National Center for

Educational Statistics rules), data since 2004-05 have shown a modest increase, to a 55 percent success rate for keeping students in school in 2007-08.

### Indicator 6: Attendance

For the purpose of ASAM reporting, students receiving classroom-based instruction are counted if Average Daily Attendance (ADA) is claimed for their attendance for any portion of an instructional day. Districts count students receiving instruction in the independent-study mode as "attending" if ADA is claimed for their attendance based on the time value of work completed.

As shown in Figure 8, attendance rates in ASAM schools have increased somewhat since 2002-03, from 81.9 percent to 83.7 percent.



Data have been largely consistent over time, with year-to-year change of less than 1 percent.

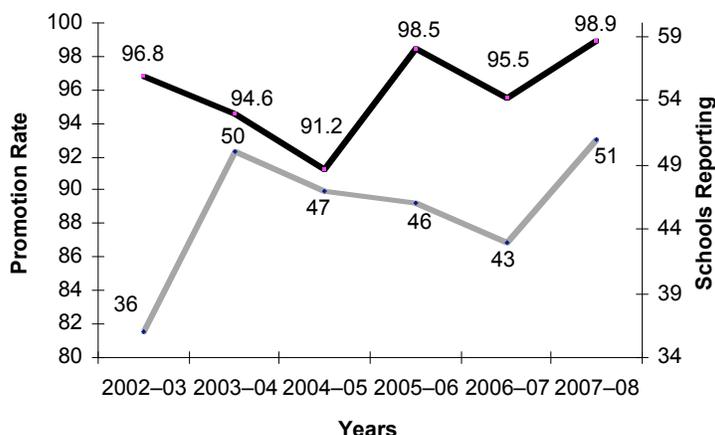
Indicator 6 was chosen by roughly two-thirds of ASAM schools, 629 of which reported data for 11 or more students in 2007–08.

**Indicator 11: Promotion to Next Grade (elementary school)**

Within the context of the ASAM, “promotion” refers to the rate at which long-term students in elementary grades are promoted to the next grade level. Relatively few ASAM schools serve a large number of elementary school-aged students. For example, in 2007–08, only 307 schools serving elementary school-aged students participated in the ASAM, enrolling a total of 1,048 long-term students out of the approximately 328,760 students served; of those 307 schools, only 51 had a sufficient number of students to meet the minimum reporting threshold (11 or more long-term students).

The small enrollment size of many schools choosing this indicator has led, in turn, to concerns over confidentiality. Data from very small schools serving fewer than 11 long-term students are collected, but are not publicly reported.

Figure 9  
**Indicator 11: Promotion to Next Grade (elementary school)**



Although California has barred so-called “social promotion,” the percentage of students promoted in ASAM schools has consistently been in the 90 percent range, as shown in Figure 9. For schools that met reporting requirements, these rates were over 96 percent in 2005–06, and almost 99 percent (98.9%) in 2007–08. The lack of variance in performance data across schools makes establishing performance thresholds on this indicator difficult.

**Indicator 12a/b: Course Completion (middle school)**

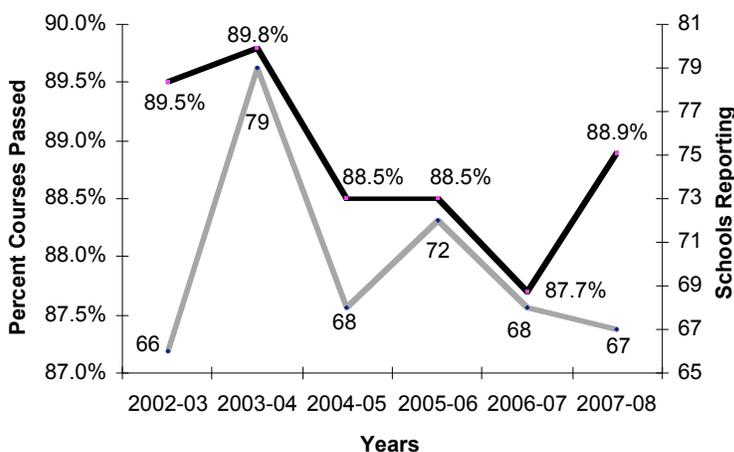
Indicator 12a/b is the percentage of courses that were successfully completed by students in grades 6 through 8. The rate is calculated by dividing the number of courses completed by long-term students, by the number of courses taken. Both numbers are reported to the CDE.

Under ASAM guidelines, if a student is not enrolled at the school when a course would normally be completed, the school uses the student’s grade at the time of withdrawal to determine whether the student would have passed the course. A “passing grade” is defined by district and school policy.

As shown in Figure 10, while there have been slight changes in year-to-year performance on this indicator, school mean passage rates have varied by only

2 percentage points or less over the 2002–03 to 2007–08 period. In 2007–08, almost 89 percent (88.9%) of long-term students enrolling in a course at a middle school were reported as successfully completing that course.

Figure 10  
**Indicator 12a/b: Course Completion (middle school)**



**Indicator 12c: Average Course Completion (middle school)**

Indicator 12c is the average number of courses completed by middle school students per month. As with Indicators 1 and 2, Indicator 12c was revised in 2002–03. In the original form of this indicator, schools were asked to report the total number of courses passed by all long-term students while enrolled in the school during the reporting year, as well as the total number of long-term students. Given schools’ widely divergent enrollment periods, especially across different types of ASAM schools, this indicator was refined in 2002–03 to incorporate a time-based component.

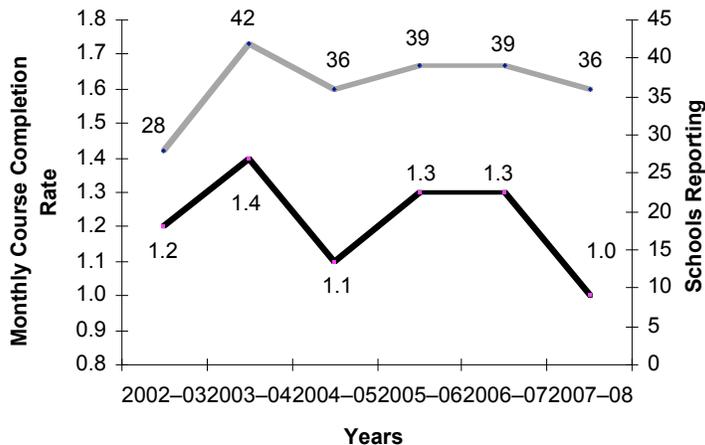
Currently, schools report on the number of courses passed, the number of long-term students, and the numbers of days the students were enrolled. The average number of courses passed per month is then calculated from these data.

As with Indicator 12a/b, if a student is not enrolled at the school when a course would normally be completed, ASAM guidelines for Indicator 12c require the school to use the student’s grade at the time of withdrawal to determine whether the student would have passed the course. A “passing grade” is again defined by district and school policy.

As shown in Figure 11, monthly course completion rate fell by almost one-third in 2007–08, after having remained constant between 2005–06 and 2006–07. Only a small portion of this decline appears related to a decrease in the number of middle schools that had 11 or more long-term students. Between 2006–07 and 2007–08, performance on this indicator declined.

Previous summary reports have noted that the usefulness of this measure could be improved by weighting course passage by considering the number of courses a student is expected to pass yearly. One alternative, which is being considered for ASAM Phase II, would be to restrict reporting of course information to academic courses that are required to be taught during middle school grades, and that have an established curricular framework and a well-developed rubric related to the California Standards Test.

*Figure 11*  
**Indicator 12c: Average Course Completion (middle school)**



Few other performance measures in any alternative accountability system elsewhere address relative rates of course completion or credit accumulation, or speed of educational progress.

**Indicator 13a: Credit Completion (high school)**

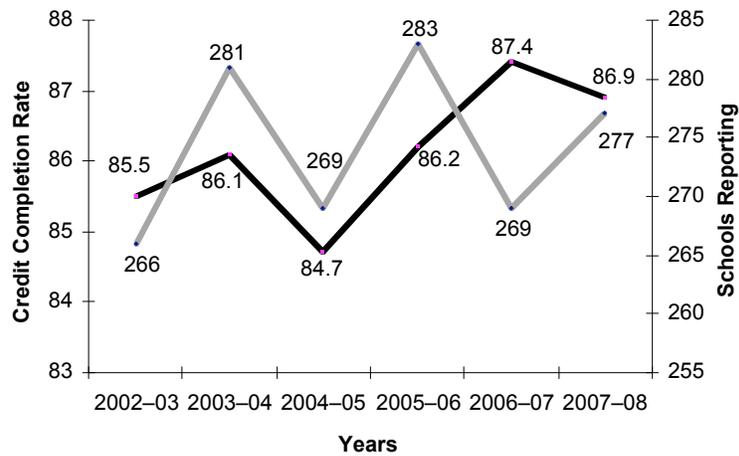
High school credit completion is the focus of Indicators 13a and 13b. Approximately 90 percent of ASAM schools in 2007–08 served students in high school. The percentage of high school–aged students is even higher; in 2007–08, almost 94 percent of long-term students enrolled in ASAM schools were of high school age.

Indicator 13a is the percentage of high school credits that were successfully completed. This indicator is calculated by dividing the number of high school credits passed by long-term students, by the number of credits taken. Both numbers are reported to the CDE. Under ASAM guidelines, only

credits that count toward a student's graduation requirements are included. Credits awarded for non-academic factors are specifically excluded from this measure.

As shown in Figure 12, school performance reported on this indicator has been relatively stable over time, increasing from a passage rate of 85.5 percent in 2002–03 to 86.9 percent in 2007–08. Year-to-year variations have been less than 2 percent.

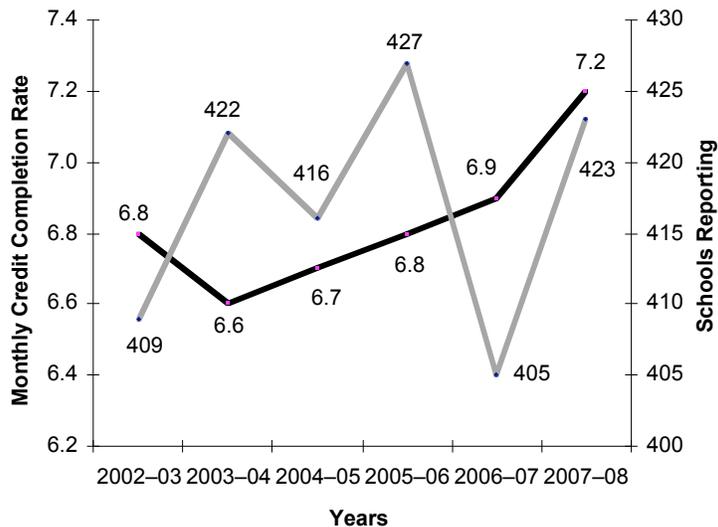
Figure 12  
**Indicator 13a: Credit Completion (high school)**



**Indicator 13b: Average Credit Completion (high school)**

Indicator 13b was also revised in 2002–03. In its original form, schools were asked to report the total number of credits earned by all long-term students while enrolled in the school during the reporting year, as well as the total number of long-term students; the average number of credits earned per student was then calculated from these data. Given schools' widely divergent enrollment periods,

Figure 13  
**Indicator 13b: Average Credit Completion (high school)**



especially across different types of ASAM schools, this indicator was refined to incorporate a time component.

In addition, a conversion factor adjusts units to a “standard” credit, based on an average of 220 high school credits required for graduation. ASAM schools vary in their graduation requirements, from 40 to 300 credits. The definitions of “high school credit” and “graduation requirements” are set by district policy.

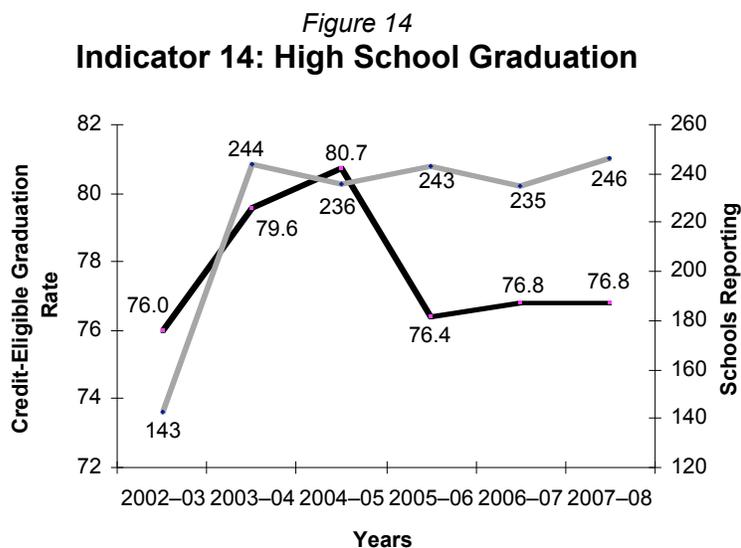
Schools currently report on the number of credits earned, the number of long-term students, the number of days those students were enrolled, and the number of credits required for graduation. From these data, the average number of credits earned per month is computed, and adjusted if necessary.

The mean rate for monthly credit accumulation in ASAM schools reporting on this indicator has increased to 7.2 in 2007–08, rising slowly but steadily since the 6.6 reported in 2003–04. See Figure 13. When the 7.2 credits earned monthly by students in ASAM schools in 2007–08 are compared with the 6.1 credits that students are required to earn monthly in traditional schools, it appears that ASAM students are amassing credits at a slightly higher rate than those in traditional schools, which helps to offset their often severe credit deficiencies.

### Indicator 14: High School Graduation

ASAM schools’ high school graduation rate differs significantly from that reported by the CDE in its yearly CBEDS report. Given the severe credit deficiency of most students enrolled in ASAM high school programs, this indicator was created to hold schools responsible for graduating only those students who stood a statistically realistic chance of graduating.

A “credit-eligible” student is defined as one who, in September of the year prior to the reporting year, had earned at least 65 percent of the number of high school credits required by the district for graduation or the number of credits normally expected of a student beginning 12<sup>th</sup> grade in the district (if it



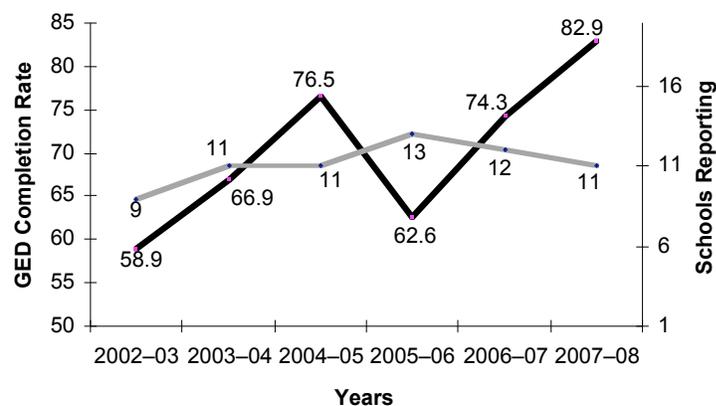
was a higher number), or as one who became credit-eligible and graduated during the reporting year.

The intent of this indicator was to accurately reflect the performance of schools that helped students earn credits at a higher-than-normal rate and not to penalize schools because many of their students who were chronologically juniors or seniors had earned less than one-quarter of the credits required for graduation.

Given widely varying district policies about either graduating students from ASAM schools or returning them to a traditional high school for the purpose of graduation, reporting schools were also allowed to count students who received their diploma from another high school within the reporting year as graduates.

As shown in Figure 14, the percentage of credit-eligible students graduating from ASAM schools peaked in 2004–05 at roughly 81 percent, and has shown an approximately 4 percent decline since. In 2007–08, almost 77 percent (76.8%) of long-term students graduated, a figure that has remained relatively unchanged since 2005–06.

Figure 15  
Indicator 15a: GED Completion



### Indicator 15a: General Educational Development (GED) Completion

For students far behind grade level in terms of credit accumulation, earning a California High School Equivalency Certificate is frequently a realistic and available option. The ASAM offers schools two indicators based upon rates of GED passage. Indicator 15a is defined as the percentage of long-term ASAM students who complete all GED requirements during the reporting year, either at the reporting school or at another school after leaving the reporting school. Indicator 15c is the percentage of GED sections passed during the reporting year, either at the reporting school or at another school.

Schools reporting on Indicator 15a collect data on the total number of students who successfully complete the GED requirements during the reporting year. The percentage of students who pass the exam is calculated by dividing that number by the number of test-eligible, long-term students who are or were enrolled in the

reporting school during the reporting year who attempted to pass the exam. For the purpose of computation, students who took a given exam more than once are counted only once.

Under current rules, GED tests must be administered by a certified GED test center. Scores are released only to the individuals taking the tests and are generally not available to schools, unless the school is a certified test center. As shown in Figure 15, for the 2007–08 year, only 11 schools that selected Indicator 15a reported data. More than half of the schools selecting this indicator were county court schools, many of which are certified GED test centers. GED passage rates have generally increased over the past seven years, rising from just under 59 percent to almost 83 percent in 2007–08.

### Indicator 15c: GED Section Completion

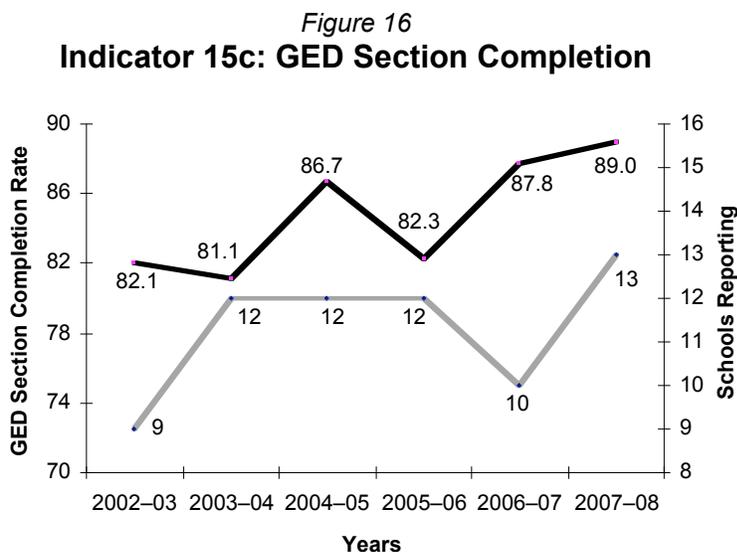
Indicator 15c represents the percentage of GED sections passed either at the reporting school or at another school during or after the student’s enrollment in the reporting school during a reporting year. The number of “passes” recorded by a school for a single year should

therefore be the total number of GED test sections passed by long-term students during the entire reporting year. Multiple attempts by a single student to pass a GED test section are not counted more than once.

The performance of ASAM schools on Indicator 15c has consistently been above 80 percent, but has fluctuated over time, showing no clear trend (see Figure 16). In 2007-08, only 13 schools reported data for this indicator, and those schools reported that students passed 89 percent of GED sections that were attempted.

### Pre-Post Test-Based Indicators: Indicators 8, 9, and 10

Schools participating in the ASAM may select one or more pre-post assessments as indicators of academic achievement. The three ASAM indicators that are based on pre-post tests are Indicator 8 (Writing Achievement), Indicator 9 (Reading



Achievement), and Indicator 10 (Mathematics Achievement). Currently, the CDE does not endorse a single testing instrument; instead, schools may select from among sixteen options. District and school staffs select the instrument that they believe would provide the best measure of their schools' accountability.

In 2007–08, ASAM schools reported data on ten pre-post instruments. Counts of reporting schools and tests administered are given in Table 2. Approximately one-third of ASAM schools (329) selected at least one pre-post indicator, and those schools reported pre-test data on 36,963 students. Matched post-tests were reported for 24,735 students.

Just over 91 percent of students tested were in high school (grades 9 through 12). Almost 7 percent were in either elementary (1.2%) or middle (5.3%) schools, and an additional 2 percent were post-high school (grade 13 or higher). Almost two-thirds (63%) of test takers were male. In terms of ethnicity, 56 percent were Hispanic, 23 percent white, and 14 percent African American. These proportions generally reflect the statewide ASAM school population.

*Table 2*  
**Pre-Post Tests Reported by ASAM Schools in 2007–08**

<b>Testing Instrument</b>	<b>Schools Reporting</b>	<b>Students Tested</b>	<b>Percentage of Tests Administered*</b>
CASAS Employability Competency System	3	105	0.3
CASAS Life Skills Series	19	3,715	10.1
Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test	43	6,775	18.3
Lightspan eduTest	1	74	0.2
NWEA Measures of Academic Progress (MAP)	47	5,703	15.4
PLATO Learning System	2	58	0.2
Renaissance STAR Math	56	6,233	16.9
Renaissance STAR Reading	126	10,597	28.7
Scantron Performance Series	13	1,882	5.1
Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE)	19	1,821	4.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>329</b>	<b>36,963</b>	<b>100.0</b>

\* Note: Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding.

### **Reporting of Pre-Post Data across Different Tests**

Given ten possible pre-post instruments and varying levels of utilization by schools, creating a common performance measure across different tests presents

a technical problem. As noted in the previous section, ASAM schools are currently allowed to use one or more of the SBE-approved instruments. Scores from different tests must be compared by means of statistics based on a standard error of measurement. Raw scores for each test are reported as publishers' scale scores. Normalized scale scores are computed to calculate student performance change between pre- and post-tests.

While this approach is not technically optimal, it serves as an available method for direct comparison of scores across tests. Technical problems that somewhat confound this comparison of student performance across tests and schools include concerns that (1) existing tests are designed to serve different purposes and to address different content and (2) none of the approved tests were explicitly designed to be used as a pre-post test. Furthermore, tests vary substantially in the degree to which the content is vertically articulated or linked in ways that support measuring growth over time. Finally, additional concerns remain regarding the equivalency and accuracy of using multiple tests with different administration, scoring, and reporting requirements.

Because of these concerns, for ASAM accountability purposes, school performance is calculated using a simplified metric: the percentage of students showing a minimal level of growth in standardized scores between pre- and post-tests. For the purpose of reporting, students who show a growth in normalized scale score of 0.25 or more between pre- and post-test scores are considered to have shown a "significant gain."<sup>2</sup>

### **Student-Level and School-Level Performance**

For the pre-post test-based indicators, a simplified measure of ASAM school performance is the percentage of students showing a statistically significant gain in pre-post test scores. As shown in Table 3, student-level data suggest that, across all tests in 2007–08, approximately 24 percent of students showed a normalized score gain of 0.25 or more. This was down from 26 percent in 2006–07.

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<sup>2</sup> Given a relatively high estimated error of the mean and relatively small numbers of students tested using a given assessment instrument, ASAM's Technical Design Group (TDG) set a threshold of 0.25 to compensate for measurement error. Scores that varied by more than 2.0 between pre- and post-tests were excluded from this analysis.

*Table 3*  
**Student-Level Performance: 2007–08 Percentages of Students Showing Significant Gain on Pre-Post Tests\***

	Elementary School	Middle School	High School	Post-High School	Total
Significant Gain	26.6	22.2	23.6	36.0	23.6
No Significant Change	58.6	56.0	52.0	28.0	52.3
Significant Loss	<u>14.8</u>	<u>21.6</u>	<u>24.4</u>	<u>36.0</u>	<u>24.1</u>
	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
	(n=546)	(n=1,267)	(n=22,868)	(n=25)	(n=24,701)

\*Note: Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding.

In 2007–08, with the exception of the 25 “grade 13” post–high school students who took a pre-post test, the grade levels of students tested made little difference in the percentages of students showing significant score gain between their pre- and post-tests. Slightly fewer than 27 percent (26.6%) of elementary students showed significant gain, followed by 23.6 percent of high school students and 22.2 percent of middle school students.

Across schools, the percentages of students showing significant gain varied widely, ranging from zero percent (31 schools) to 100 percent (4 schools). Table 4 shows school-level performance, in terms of the percentages of students with significant gains in their pre-post test results, in both 2006–07 and 2007–08.

*Table 4*  
**School-Level Performance: Comparison of 2006–07 and 2007–08 Percentages of Schools Showing Significant Pre-Post Test Score Gain**

Percent of Students Showing Significant Gain	Percent of Schools	
	2006–07	2007–08
10% or less	26	21
11–19%	15	16
20–29%	28	30
30–39%	23	15
40% or more	<u>8</u>	<u>18</u>
	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

*Table 5*  
**Test Type and Average Percentage of Students  
 Reporting Significant Pre-Post Test Gain in 2007-08**

	<b>Schools Reporting</b>	<b>Average Percentage Reporting Significant Gain</b>
CASAS Employability Competency System	3	39%
CASAS Life Skills Series	19	38%
Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test	43	19%
Lightspan eduTest	1	32%
NWEA Measures of Academic Progress (MAP)	47	5%
Renaissance STAR Math	56	33%
Renaissance STAR Reading	126	28%
Scantron Performance Series	13	10%
Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE)	<u>19</u>	<u>43%</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>329</b>	<b>Average 24%</b>

PLATO Learning System data not shown due to small number of tests administered.

Despite efforts to normalize both scale score and score gain, considerable variation exists, across instruments, in the percentages of students reported as having statistically significant pre-post test gains. In 2007–08, percentages ranged from a high of 43 percent for the TABE (administered by 19 schools) to a low of 5 percent for the NWEA MAP test (administered by 47 schools), as shown in Table 5.

As observed in previous annual reports, it remains difficult to assess whether these differences are due to actual school performance, procedures of administration, scoring protocols, test design, number of tests administered, or other factors.