



*Internal Audit Department*

**COURSE GRADE AND GRADE-LEVEL CHANGES AUDIT - PHASE III**  
**SCOPE: 11/11/13 – 2/20/14**  
**AND**  
**SUMMARY OF ALL THREE PHASES OF**  
**GRADE-LEVEL AND COURSE GRADE CHANGES**

Prepared by:  
Internal Audit

**2013-2014**

**Final**

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **BACKGROUND**

Internal Audit conducted this audit to evaluate changes to students' course grades and grade-levels to determine compliance with policies and regulations. This is Phase III of three phases for these audits included in the Board approved 2013-2014 Internal Audit Plan.

### **OBJECTIVE(S) AND SCOPE**

To audit records for fourteen high schools to determine whether changes in course grades and/or grade-level classification between November 11, 2013 through February 20, 2014, were accurate and in accordance with District policies and regulations.

### **LIMITATIONS**

When a Request for High School Change in Placement form or High School Grade Change Form could not be located, testing for approval and posting dates could not be conducted.

### **SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

Refer to Exhibit 1 for a comparison of findings for all three phases of this audit.

#### **Grade-Level Changes**

1. Noncompliance with District's Administrators' Reference Guide (pages 519, 521-523) standard operating procedures of documents required to be filed in student Cumulative Records Folder (CUM) and five day requirement to make grade-level changes.
  - a. Four campuses did not have Request for High School Change in Placement forms in some of the student CUMs we reviewed.
  - b. Ten campuses did not have all the required attachments to the Request for High School Change in Placement form.
  - c. Between 15% and 70% of the grade-level changes at seven high schools were not made within the required five day limit.

#### **Course Grade Changes**

1. Noncompliance with District's Administrators' Reference Guide (pages 522-523) standard operating procedures for making course grade changes: Documents required to be filed in student CUMs, required signatures, principal approval prior to change, and three day requirement to change the grade.
  - a. Two campuses used an incorrect High School Grade Change Form.
  - b. Two campuses did not place High School Grade Change Form in 7%-50% of the students' CUMs.
  - c. One of the 16 campuses had the teacher signature missing on the High School Grade Change Form.
  - d. Two campuses made between 20% and 71% course grade changes prior to the principal's signature of approval.
  - e. At nine campuses, 12 of 33 course grade changes were not made within the required three day limit.
2. Incorrect transcription of courses and/or grades from other districts as required by Texas Education Agency Minimum Standards for Academic Achievement Record (AAR).
  - a. At six campuses, nine students' course credit and/or grades earned in other districts were posted on the EPISD transcript with incorrect course number, credit, and/or grade.

### **SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. Administration should ensure principals, counselors, and registrars complete grade-level changes as required by policies and regulations. Additional training should be conducted and may include the use of technology to increase effectiveness and follow-up to assure compliance. Training and other means of implementing corrective actions should be documented.

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

2. Chief School Officers should direct principals to provide documentation showing the students' transcripts listed in Table 7 were reviewed and corrected. Documentation for corrections should also be filed in the students' CUMs. It should be determined if enrolled, withdrawn, or graduated students be notified of these correction. Principals should follow-up and determine the cause for the errors at their campus. Principal should implement an appropriate action to address the cause of the errors.

### **ANALYSIS OF MANAGEMENT RESPONSE & CORRECTIVE ACTION**

A Corrective Action Plan (CAP) was provided outlining the activities to be implemented. The CAP appears to be sufficient to address the reportable findings outlined in this report. Attached is the complete report, which includes more detailed findings and recommendations for those readers who would like further details.

### **CONCLUSIONS**

Principals, counselors, and registrars are not following policies, procedures, and recordkeeping when making grade-level and course grade changes. Management should implement a system to ensure compliance. This may include record reviews, use of technology and mentoring to assure compliance. In addition, quality assurance controls are needed for transferring course credits for students from outside the District.

The District implemented new procedures for grade-level and course grade changes for the 2013-14 school year. The procedures were delineated in the District's Administrators' Reference Guide and there was evidence of stakeholder training. The recurrence of error findings during the audit phases demonstrate training and monitoring provided was not sufficient to properly support the implementation of new procedures and use of new forms.

The District should consider requiring written action plans to fully implement new procedures. The plans should include appropriate planning components such as name(s) of project leads, goals, and objectives, timelines, communication, training, monitoring, evaluation and plan adjustments, and revisions.

Attached is the complete report, which includes more detailed findings for those readers who would like further details.

**COURSE GRADE AND GRADE-LEVEL CHANGES AUDIT - PHASE III**  
**SCOPE: 11/11/13 – 02/20/14**

**ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND**

This audit is part of the Board approved 2013-14 Internal Audit Plans as a result of the recommendations made in the United States Department of Education (USDE) audit report of the District. This is Phase III of the three scheduled phases for course grade and grade-level change audits.

District Policy EIE (Local): Academic Achievement, Retention, and Promotion requires use of the Request for High School Change in Placement form to change a student's grade-level. In addition, the District's Administrators' Reference Guide contains the procedures and regulations for changing a student's grade-level and the use of Request for High School Change in Placement form. The Request for High School Change in Placement form requires the attachment of the following: copy of transcript, Standardized Testing Report, and Audit Sheet. In addition, the District has implemented a TEAMS user notification that informs the pertinent campus staff when a student's credits do not match the student's grade-level classification.

District Policy EIA (Legal): Academic Achievement, Grading/Progress Reports states a course grade issued by a teacher is final but may be changed due to errors. The District's Administrators' Reference Guide requires campuses to use the High School Grade Change Form signed by teacher and principal and filed in the student's CUM.

**WORK PERFORMED**

Reviewed the following:

- District Policy EI (Local): Academic Achievement-1/23/12
- District Policy EIA (Legal)-10/19/11 (Local)-1/7/13: Academic Achievement, Grading/Progress Reports to Parents
- District Policy EIC (Local): Achievement and Class Ranking-1/23/12, 9/24/13, and 2/25/14
- District Policy EIE (Local): Academic Achievement, Retention, and Promotion-1/7/13 and 3/25/13
- District Policy FD (Local): Admissions-8/17/11
- TEA Minimum Standards for the Academic Achievement Record (AAR) 2012
- Administrators' Reference Guide, Promotion of Students, Exhibit A, page 137
- Administrators' Reference Guide, Grade-Level Changes, pages 519, 521-523
- Administrators' Reference Guide, Standard Operating Procedures for Processing Transcripts, Appendix B and C, pages 522-523
- Reviewed a minimum of 15 CUMs or 100% for campuses with less than 15 at secondary campuses between March 17, 2014 through April 3, 2014.

**FINDINGS/RECOMMENDATIONS**

Refer to Exhibit 1 for a comparison of findings for all three phases of this audit.

**GRADE-LEVEL CHANGES**

1. **Finding:** Noncompliance with the District's Administrators' Reference Guide grade-level changes standard operating procedures for documents required to be filed in student CUMs and five day limit when making grade-level changes.
  - a. Three campuses did not have the Request for High School Change in Placement form in some of the students' Cumulative Records Folder (CUM) reviewed.

**Table 1- Error Rates for Request for High School Change in Placement Form Not in CUM**

Campus	Grade-Level Change Form Not in CUM
Chapin	7% (1 of 15)
Coronado	7% (1 of 14)
SAPC	100% (1 of 1)
Sunset	13% (2 of 15)

- b. Ten campuses did not have all the required attachments to the Request for High School Change in Placement form.

**Table 2 – Error Rates for Required Documents Not Attached to Request for High School Change in Placement Form**

Campus	Transcript	Standardized Testing Report	Audit Sheet
Bowie	0	0	17% (2 of 12)
Burges	0	13% (2 of 15)	73% (11 of 15)
Chapin	0	29% (4 of 14)	0
Coronado	0	0	7% (1 of 14)
El Paso	7% (1 of 15)	20% (3 of 15)	7% (1 of 15)
Franklin	20% (3 of 15)	33% (5 of 15)	7% (1 of 15)
Irvin	0	0	40% (6 of 15)
Jefferson	50% (4 of 8)	63% (5 of 8)	25% (2 of 8)
Sunset	13% (2 of 15)	33% (5 of 15)	73% (11 of 15)
Telles	0	0	75% (6 of 8)

- c. Between 15% and 70% of the grade-level changes at seven high schools exceeded the required five day limit.

**Table 3 – Error Rates for Exceeding Five Day Limit**

Campus	Grade-Level Changes Not Made Within Five Day Limit
Andress	23% (3 of 13)
Austin	29% (4 of 14)
Burges	17% (2 of 12)
Coronado	40% (4 of 10)
El Paso	15% (2 of 13)
Irvin	25% (3 of 12)
Jefferson	70% (7 of 10)

**Recommendations:** Corrective Action Plan activities, for similar Phase II report findings, should also address the findings outlined above.

#### **COURSE GRADE CHANGES**

1. **Finding:** Noncompliance with District’s Administrators’ Reference Guide (pages 522-523) standard operating procedures for making course grade changes: Documents required to be filed in student CUMs, required signatures, principal approval prior to change, and three day requirement.
  - a. Two campuses used an incorrect form and two campuses did not have all the High School Grade Change Forms in the students’ CUMs reviewed.

**Table 4 – Error Rates for Incorrect Form and Form Not in CUM**

Campus	Incorrect Form Used	High School Grade Change Form Not in CUM
Coronado	100% (6 of 6)	7% (1 of 6)
Sunset	100% (2 of 2)	50% (2 of 4)

- b. Austin had one High School Grade Change Form missing the teacher’s signature out of two reviewed. (Exhibit 1, Number, 13)
  - c. Two campuses made some course grade changes prior to the principal’s signature of approval.

**Table 5 –Error Rates for Change Prior to Principal’s Approval**

Campus	Grade Change Made Prior to Principal’s Signature of Approval
Coronado	20% (1 of 5)
Franklin	71% (5 of 7)

- d. A total of 12 of 33 course grade changes at nine campuses exceeded the three day limit.

**Table 6 – Error Rate for Changes Exceeding Three Day Limit**

Campus	Grade Changes Exceeding Three Day limit
Burges	25% (1 of 4)
Chapin	33% (1 of 3)
Coronado	20% (1 of 5)
EPHS	100% (2 of 2)
Franklin	14% (1 of 7)
Irvin	50% (1 of 2)
Jefferson	75% (3 of 4)
SAPC	50% (1 of 2)
Sunset	25% (1 of 4)

- e. Nine students at six campuses had course credit and/or grades earned in other districts which were posted on the EPISD transcript with incorrect course number, credit, and/or grade.
2. The course grade errors could impact grade point average (GPA) which affects rank. In addition, there is a possibility of taking a course twice, delaying acquisition of credits, and not having the required state course credits for graduation.

**Table 7– Campuses with Incorrect Transcription of Course Number, Credit, and/or Grade on Transcript**

Student	Campus	Wrong Grade	Wrong Course	Missing Courses	Wrong Year	Notes
A (Active)	Austin		X			Wrong Courses: Pathway to Success posted as CAREERP1 (Trex), TH1 posted as TH2 (Trex)
A (Withdrawn-not graduated)	Bowie		X			Wrong Courses: Spanish 1 missing from AAR (Trex), Prin of Tech posted as BUSMI (Trex), SUBATH1 posted as SUBATH2 (Trex), missing local credit 1.0 (Trex)
A (Active)	Burges			X		Missing Courses: Missing SSSPAN1 and SSSPAN2 – from Mexico
A (Active)	Coronado	X				Wrong Grade: Incorrect Grade for Dance 1 (96) (GS and CCRP show a 92)
A (Active)	Jefferson	X				Wrong Grade: US HIST grade should be an 85
B (Withdrawn-not graduated)	Jefferson	X	X			Wrong Grade: Incorrect grades given to: ENG1, READ1, ALG1, BIO, IPC, WGEO Wrong Course: Incorrect Special Explanation coding given to SPTSS3 (Trex)
C (Active)	Jefferson	X	X			Wrong Course: SSSPAN1 should be SPAN1 Wrong Grades: Incorrect grades for TSDATAE, ALG1 should only receive .5 credit, was given 1.0 (Trex)
A (Withdrawn-graduated)	Chapin		X			Wrong Course: Local Credit posted as IND ENG. (Trex)
B (Active)	Chapin		X			Wrong Course: ALG 3 – given ADV Quant Reasoning. Did not find notes or documentation for this. Out of State ALG3.

**Recommendations:**

- a. Chief School Officers should direct principals to provide documentation showing students listed in Table 7 transcripts were reviewed and corrected. Documentation for corrections should also be filed in students' CUMs. It should be determined if students enrolled, withdrawn, or graduated need to be notified of corrections.
- b. Principals should follow-up and determine the cause for the errors at their campus. Principal should implement an appropriate action to address the cause of the errors.

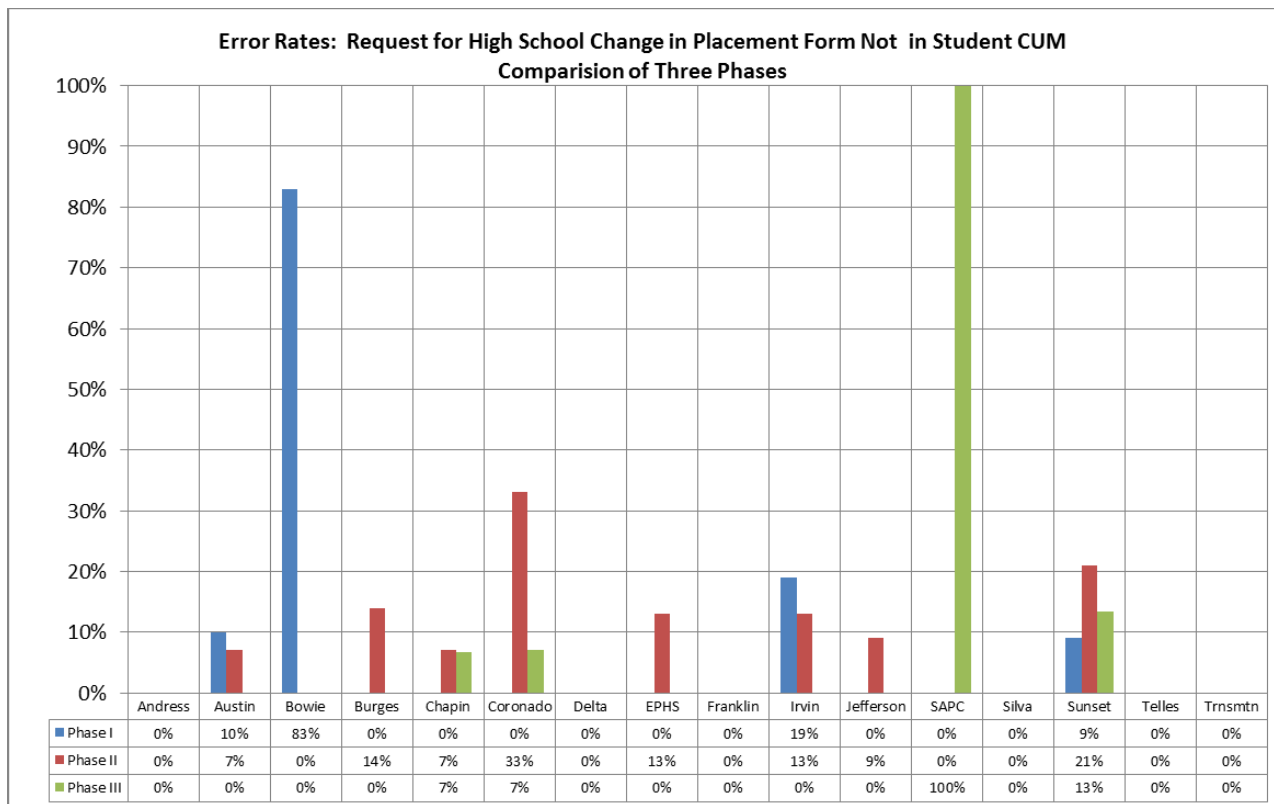
*Internal Audit Department*

**Grade-Level and Course Grade Changes Audit  
Comparison of Three Phases**

**Purpose:** To compare the error rates between the three phases for each area tested and identify trends.

**Grade-Level Changes Findings:**

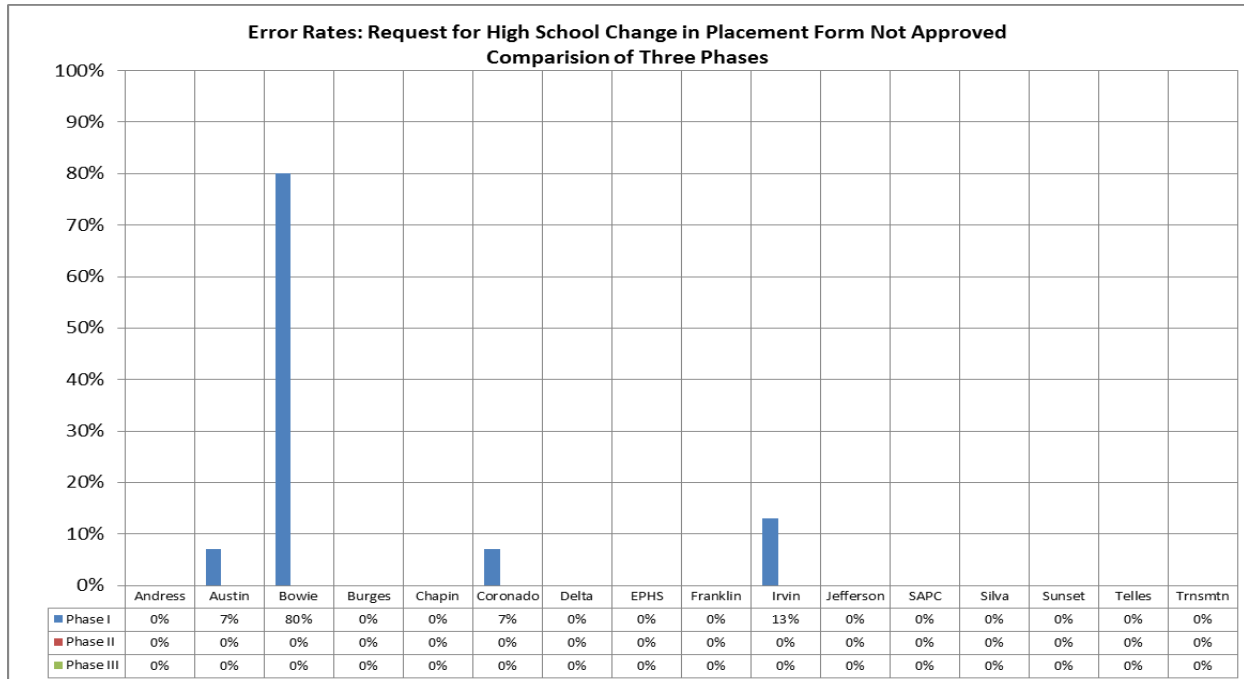
1. Request for High School Change in Placement forms not in CUMs
  - a. Sunset - Forms were not located in all three phases.
  - b. Coronado and Chapin - Forms were not located in Phases I and II.
  - c. Andress, Delta, Franklin, and Telles had no errors in all three phases.





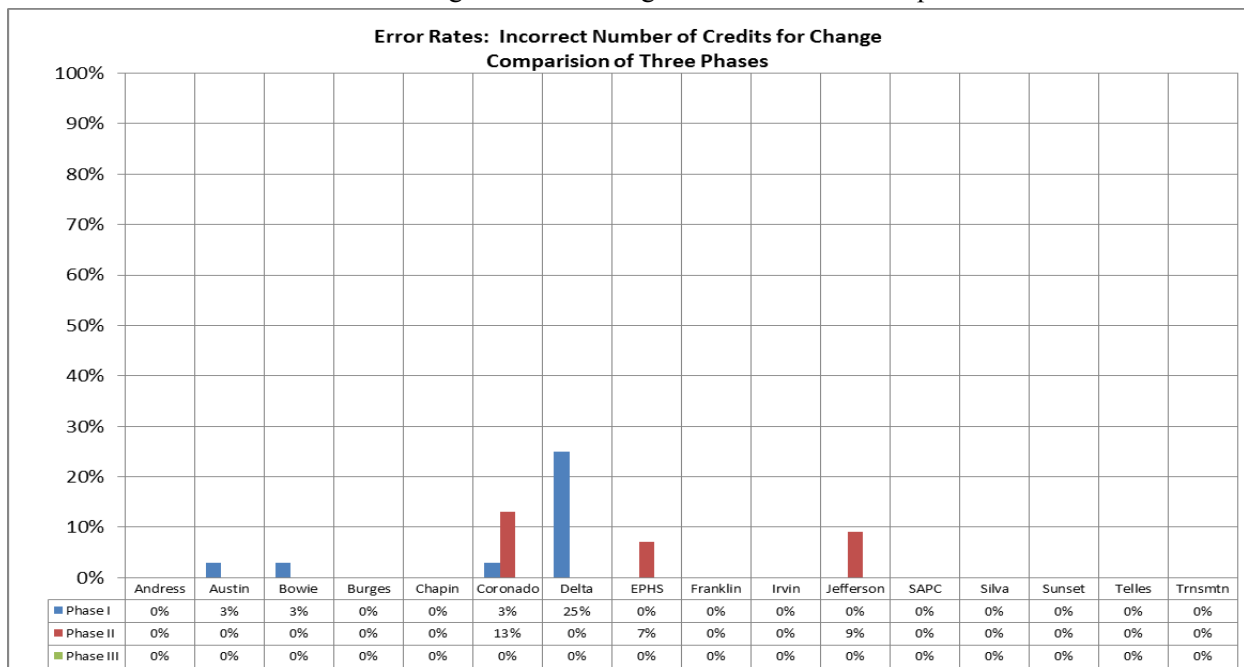
**Internal Audit Department**

2. Request for High School Change in Placement forms were not approved: No errors at all campuses after Phase I.



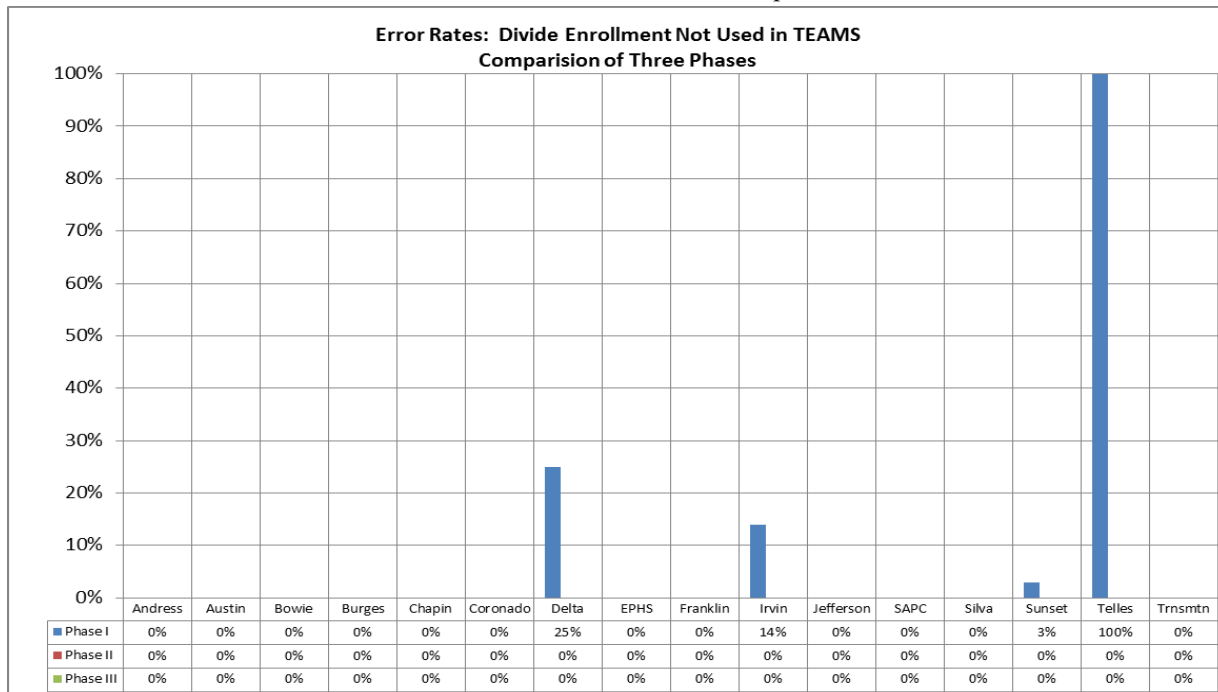
3. Approval by counselor: The procedure changed to include approval by counselor for the 2013-2014 school year and was not tested for Phase I since it was not a requirement for 2012-2013. There was 100% compliance with this requirement at all campuses.

4. Correct number of credits for the grade level change: No errors at all campuses after Phase II.

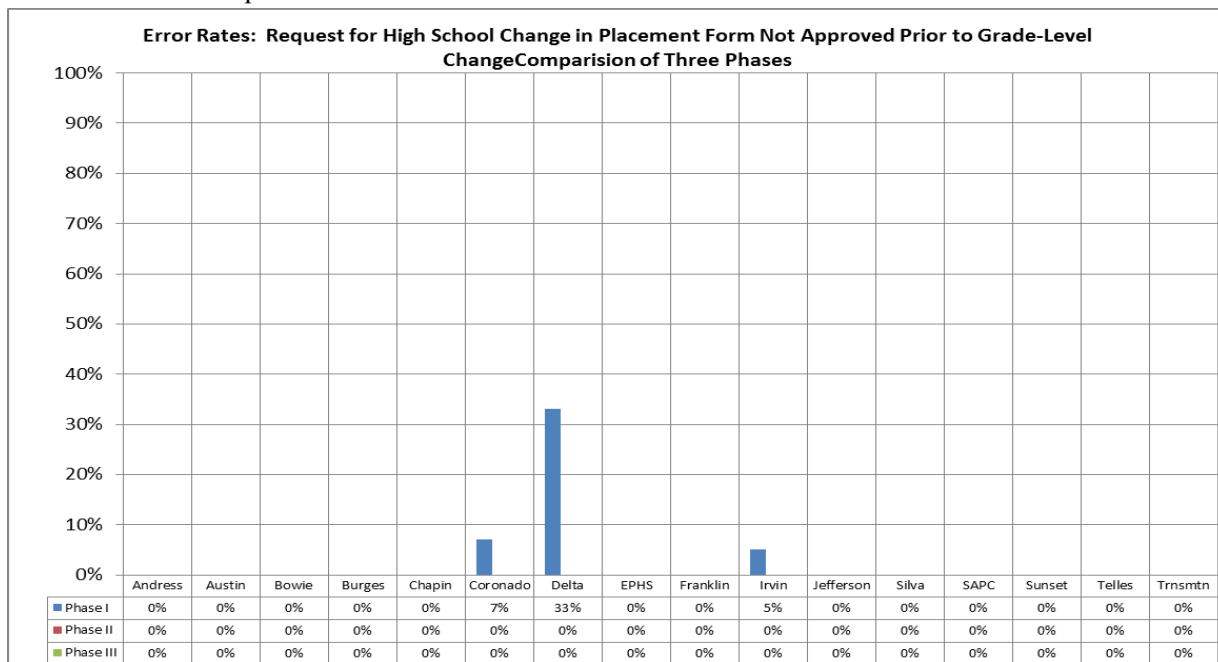


**Internal Audit Department**

5. Divide Enrollment was used in TEAMS: No errors at all campuses after Phase I.

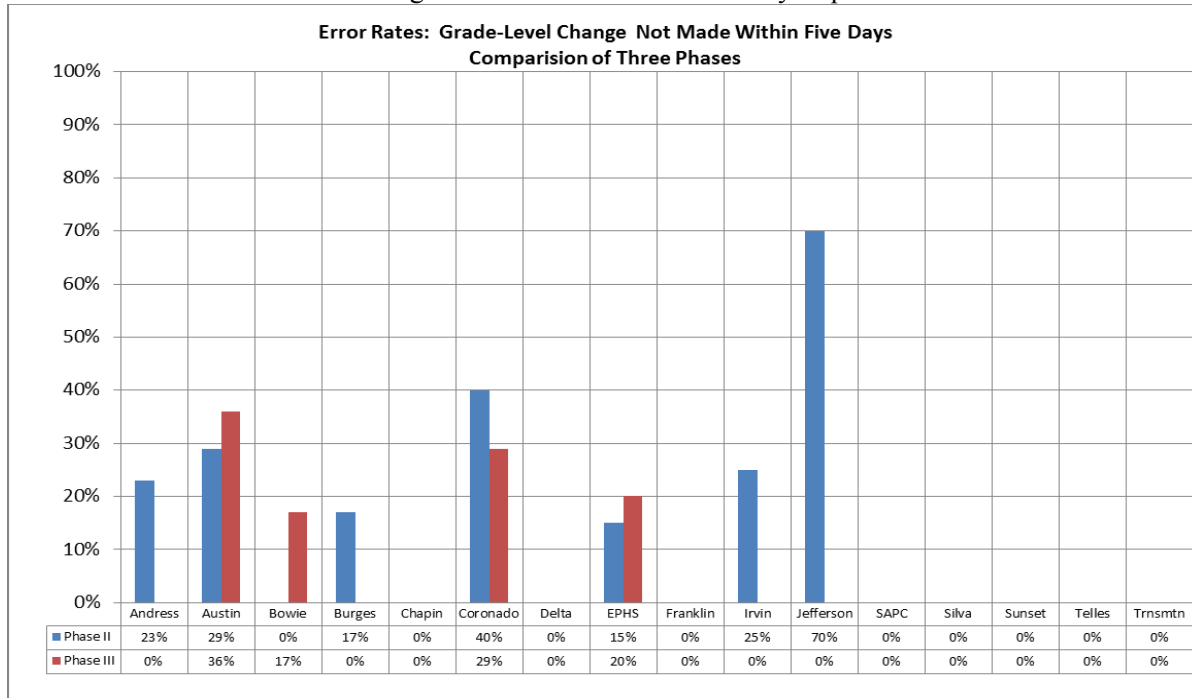


6. Request for High School Change in Placement forms not approved prior to grade-level change: No errors at all campuses after Phase I.

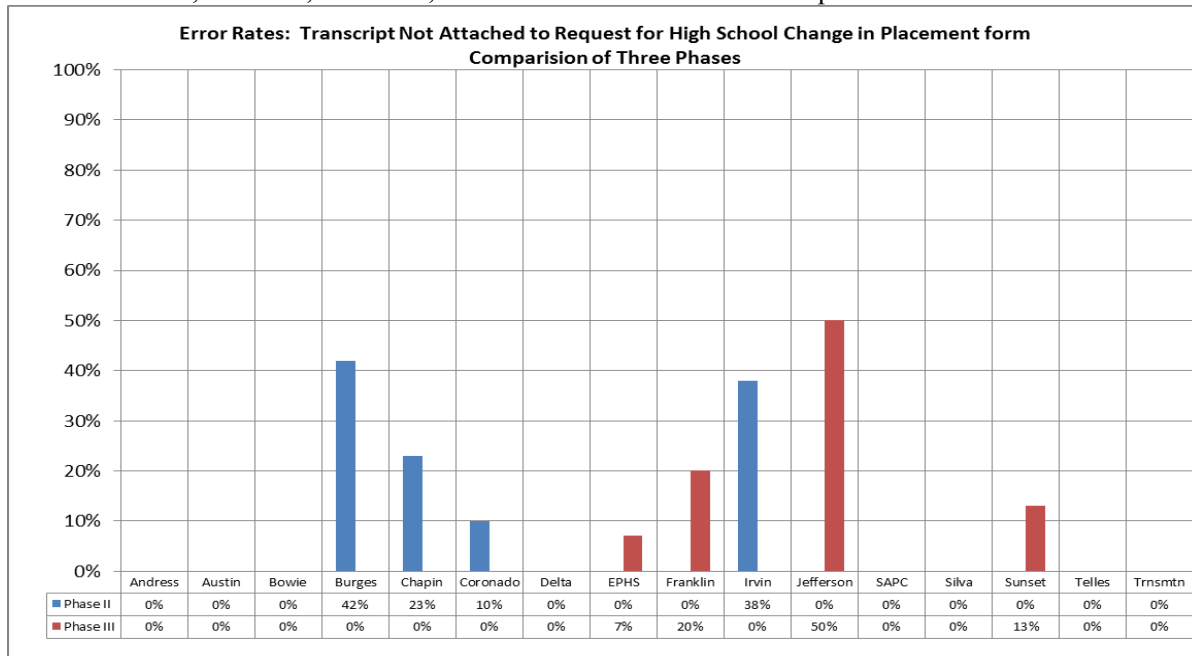


**Internal Audit Department**

7. Grade-level change not made within the required five days:
  - a. Austin, Coronado, and El Paso – Grade-level changes were not made within the five day requirement in Phases II and III.
  - b. Bowie – Grade-level changes not made within the five day requirement in Phase II.

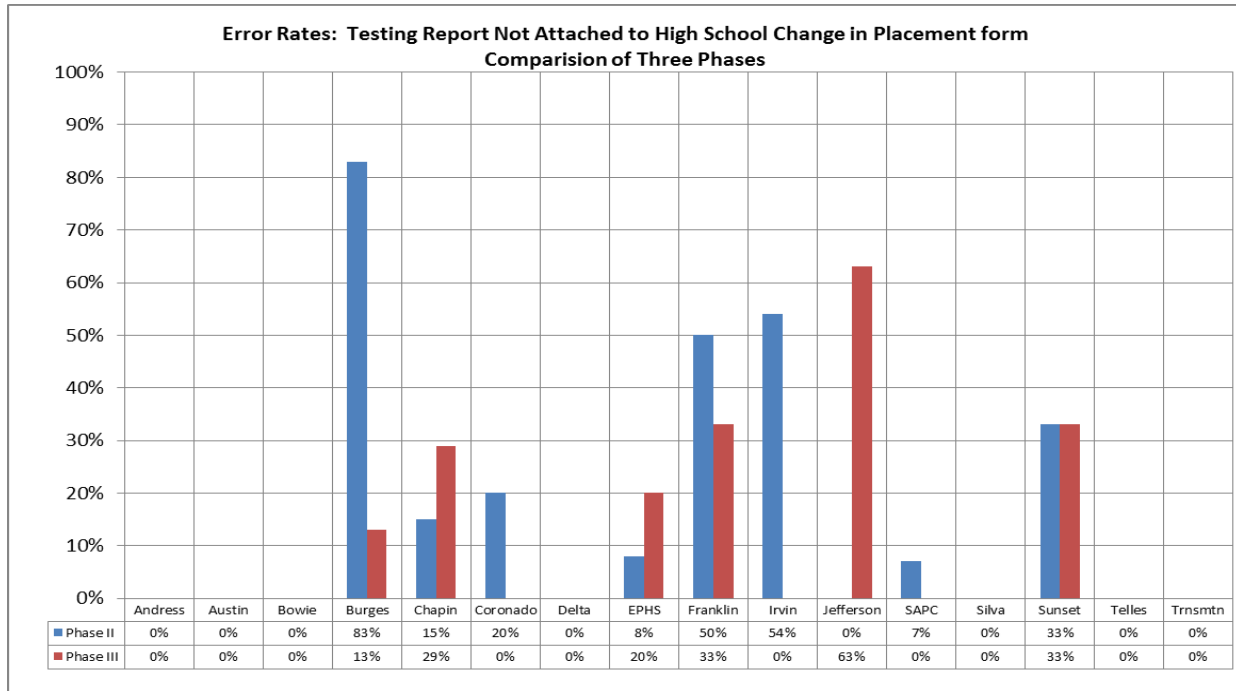


8. Transcript was not attached to Request for High School Change in Placement forms:
  - a. El Paso, Franklin, Jefferson, and Sunset did not have transcript attached to form in Phase III.

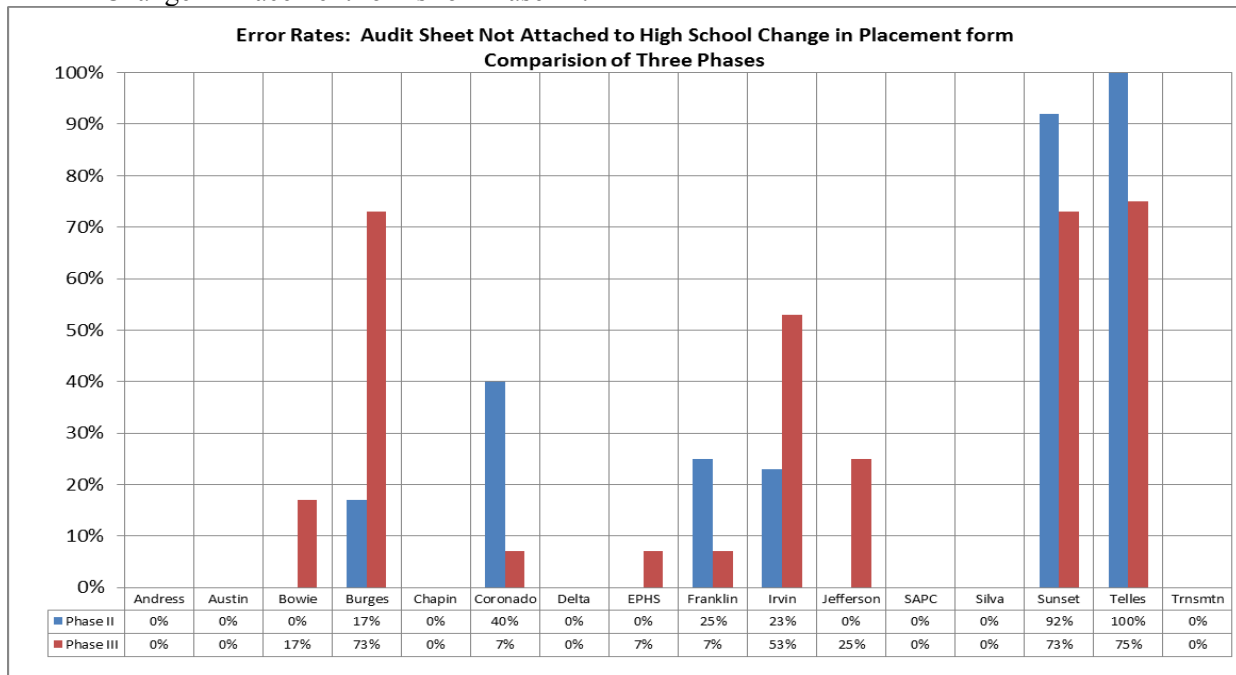


**Internal Audit Department**

9. Testing report was not attached to Request for High School Change in Placement forms:  
a. Burges, Chapin, El Paso, Franklin, and Sunset did not have testing report attached to form for Phases II and III.



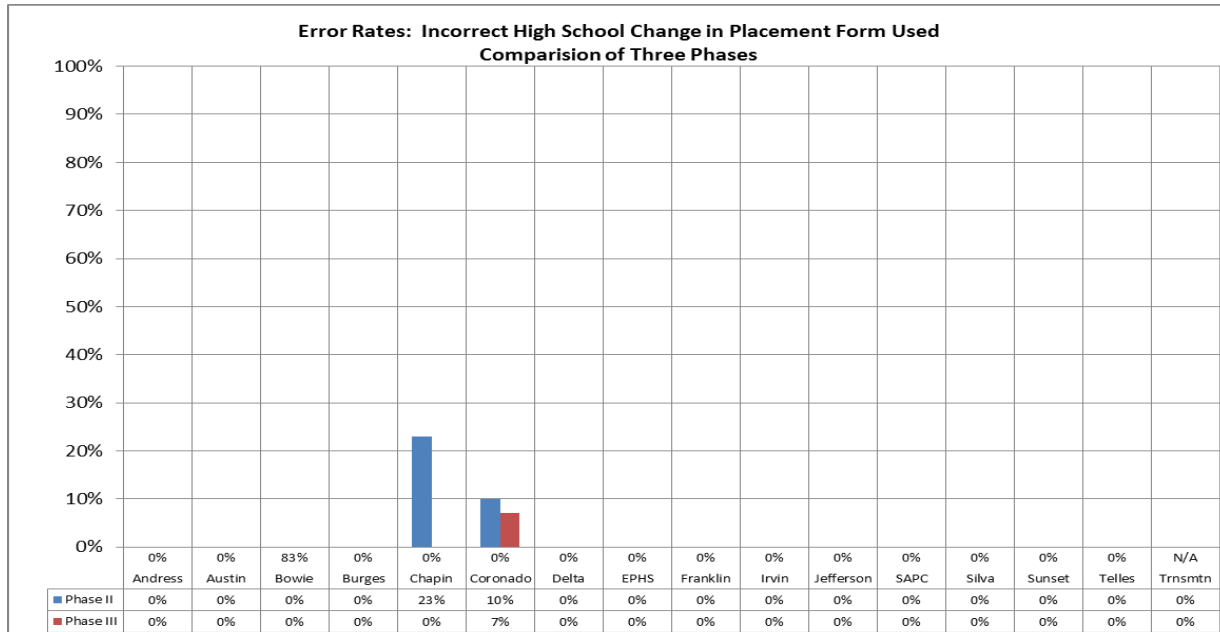
10. Audit sheet not attached to Request for High School Change in Placement forms:  
a. Burges, Coronado, Franklin, Irvin, Sunset, and Telles did not have testing report attached to Request for High School Change in Placement forms for Phases II and III.  
b. Bowie, El Paso, and Jefferson did not have testing report attached to Request for High School Change in Placement forms for Phase III.



**Internal Audit Department**

**11. Incorrect Request for High School Change in Placement forms used:**

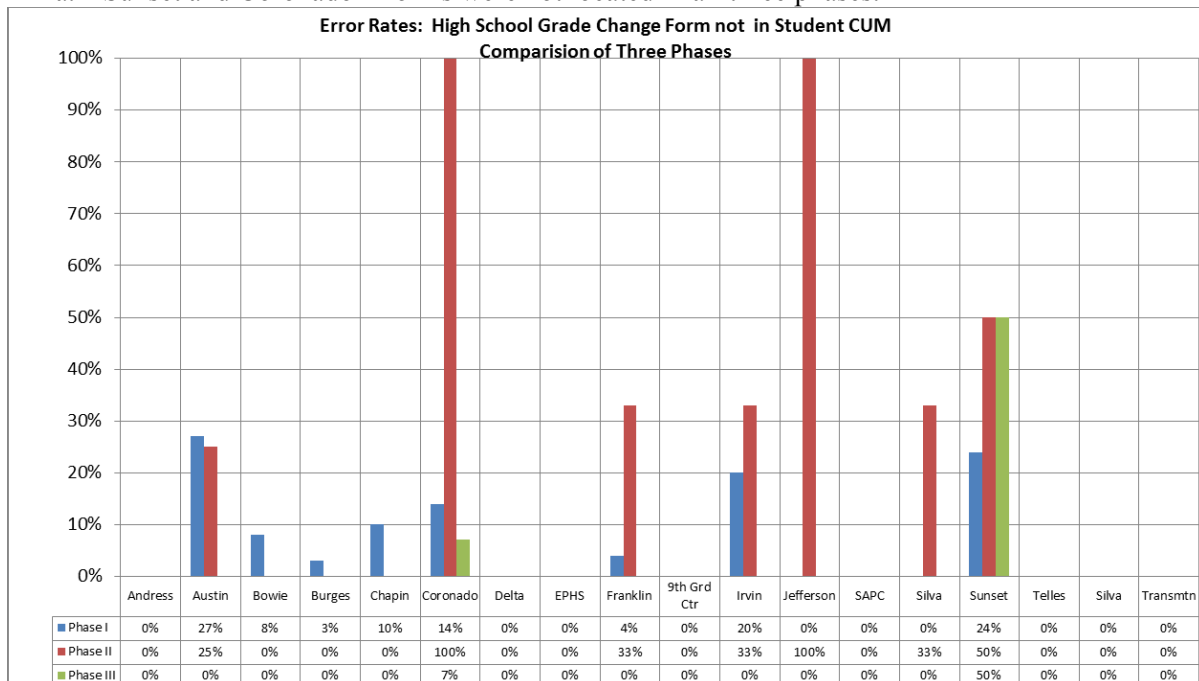
- a. Coronado used incorrect form in Phases II and III.



**Course Grade Changes Findings:**

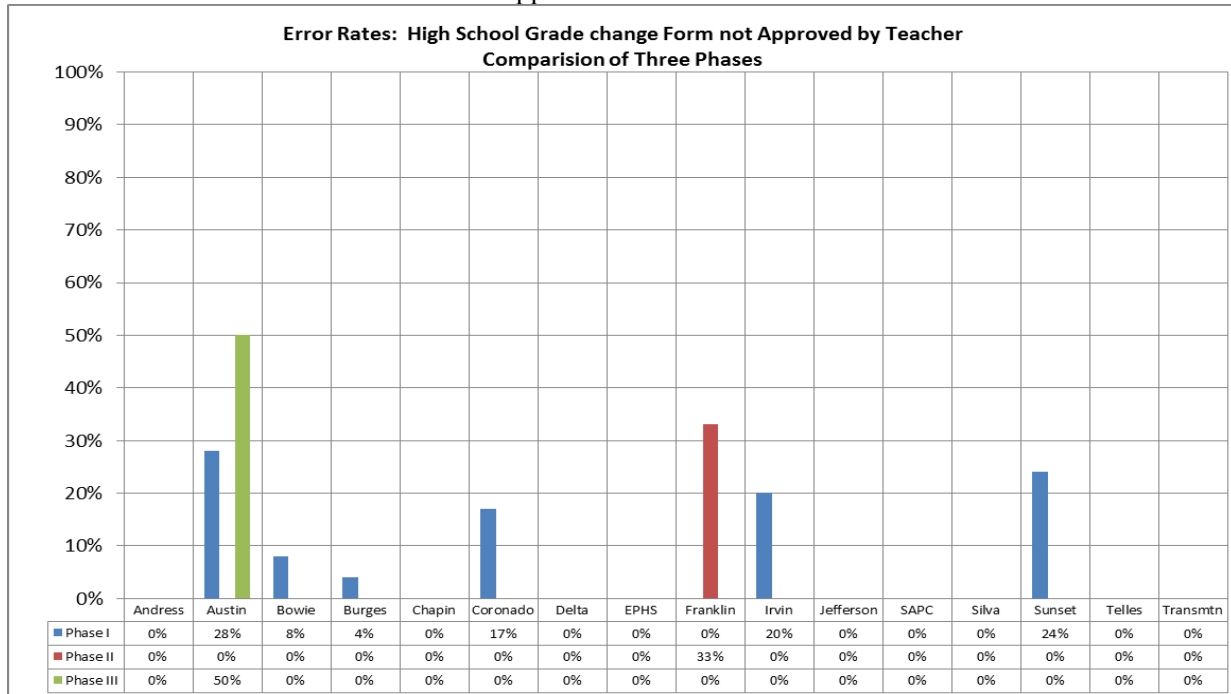
**12. High School Grade Change Forms not in CUMs:**

- a. Sunset and Coronado - Forms were not located in all three phases.



**Internal Audit Department**

13. High School Grade Change Forms without teacher approval:  
a. Austin had forms without teacher approval in Phase I and III.



14. Incorrect High School Grade Change Forms used:  
a. Coronado and Sunset used incorrect form in Phases II and III.

