What is a Refined Area Based score?

From 2022, a Refined Area Based (RAB) score is used for a school's Capacity to Contribute (CTC) score when the school's 3-year average Direct Measure of Income (DMI) score cannot be used.

A CTC score applies to most non-government schools. It is a measure of the capacity of the parents and guardians responsible for students at a school to contribute financially to the operation of the school relative to capacity at other non-government schools. Each CTC score corresponds with a percentage by which the base amount of a school's Schooling Resource Standard (also known as an SRS) is discounted. These percentages are provided at subsection 54(3) of the Australian Education Act 2013.

A school's RAB score is based on family and household income information of the areas where parents and guardians of students at a school live. The data used is from the latest available Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Census of Population and Housing data combined with the latest available statement of addresses from the Student Residential Address and Other Information Collection (the Address Collection) completed by a school's approved authority each year.

When is the RAB score used?

As outlined in the Australian Education Regulation 2013 (the Regulation), a RAB score is used when a school's average DMI score cannot be used because:

- there is less than 3 years of information to calculate the average DMI score for the school for the year, or

- the number of parents and guardians for students at a school is too low to ensure that information about individuals cannot be identified from the DMI score, or

- the data available to calculate the DMI score does not meet the standards outlined in the Capacity to Contribute Data Validation and Quality Assurance Process

When an average DMI score cannot be used for one or more of these reasons, a RAB score will be used as the school's CTC score until an average DMI score can be calculated for the school.

How is the RAB score calculated?

RAB scores are calculated annually for eligible schools based on the latest student addresses provided in the Address Collection. The student addresses are linked to geographical areas as defined in the Australian Statistical Geography Standard known as Statistical Area Level 1s (SA1s).

The ABS uses data from the [Census of Population and Housing](#) to calculate dimension scores representing the household income and family income for every SA1. The average household income and average family income dimension scores are calculated for the school and these two average scores are then used to calculate a RAB score for the school.

The method for calculating the RAB score is set out in subsection 23(2) of the the Regulation.

What avenues are available to seek a review of a RAB-based CTC score?

An approved authority may seek an **internal review** of any CTC score determined by the Minister's delegate within 60 days of the determination being made. An internal review is a merits review of a decision made by an officer in a government agency by another officer in that agency who was not involved in making the original decision. An internal review is primarily concerned with whether procedural aspects of the decision were in accordance with relevant legislation or administrative policies.

If an approved authority is not satisfied with the outcome of an internal review, it may apply to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT) to have that decision **externally reviewed**. Information on applying for a review by the AAT can be found at www.aat.gov.au.

An approved authority can also make an application for a review of its CTC score, under section 53(2) of the Act, if it believes it does not accurately reflect the school community's capacity to contribute financially to the operation of the school. More information on the CTC review process and possible reasons to seek a review, including Guidelines and the application form, is available at the [department's website](#).