

**The Greater Austin Chamber of Commerce
2005 Community Progress Report on
the Austin Independent School District**



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Purpose

If the Austin region is to participate fully in the global economy, our residents must graduate, complete a well-rounded course of academic study and demonstrate college and workplace readiness in math, writing and English/Language Arts. The Austin Independent School District Board of Trustees agrees. They target these goals as well as an effort to close the achievement gap between different demographic groups as part of their 2005-2010 Strategic Plan. This Community Progress Report looks at AISD progress on these key indicators and suggests where more rapid gains may be needed.

Findings

Austin ISD has made significant student learning gains in all performance categories across all student subpopulations over the last few years. Key indicators for employers are high school graduation, completion of a well-rounded course of study, passing rates on TAKS exit tests and college and workplace readiness. These have all improved—in some cases dramatically. This is true even though the percentage of economically disadvantaged and English language learners in the district has increased. However, there is a long way to go when fewer than half of our students graduate ready for college or career and achievement gaps between different groups persist. We recommend that the district focus ever more urgently on closing the gaps between different socioeconomic and ethnic groups, and on ensuring that a much greater percentage of our student population graduate college and career ready.

In the last five years, the student composition at AISD has changed significantly. The proportion of students considered economically disadvantaged because of eligibility for subsidized lunch increased by one-quarter, from 48 percent to 58 percent. English-language learners increased by more than 20 percent in those five years, to become 22.8 percent of the AISD student population. For AISD to continue its upward trajectory, even greater gains will be needed with these two populations.

High School Preparation for College and Workplace

The percentage of students who complete a well-rounded course of study and pass the TAKS exit tests are on track. Improvement in both areas has been dramatic. However, high school graduation and college and career readiness is far below the standard needed for today's innovation economy. Greater improvement is especially needed among Hispanic and African American students. AISD recognizes this and is working on redesigning their high schools in innovative ways they hope will meet these expectations.

Middle School Preparation for High School

Middle school performance pales when compared with impressive elementary and high school performance gains on TAKS tests. Despite Austin's national preeminence in 8th grade reading and math based on recent NAEP (National Assessment of Educational Progress) results, assessments show African American and Hispanic student academic performance is significantly below desired levels. Greater improvement gains are necessary to ensure high school success.

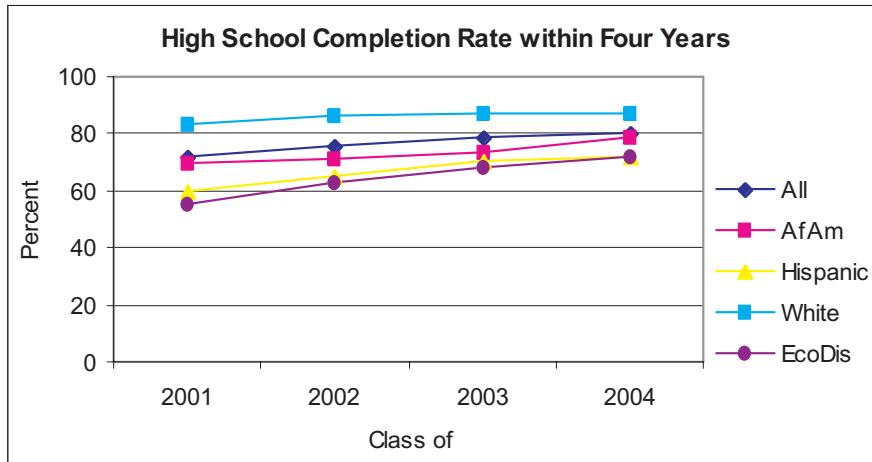
Elementary School Preparation for Middle School

Fifth grade reading and math expectations still require progress, though the improvement curves are dramatic and laudable. Despite Austin's national preeminence in 4th grade reading and math, assessments show student academic performance in some groups is significantly below desired levels. At the 3rd grade level, student reading performance is nearing optimum levels on TAKS objectives students must meet for promotion to the next grade.

High School Preparation for College and Workplace

High School Graduation

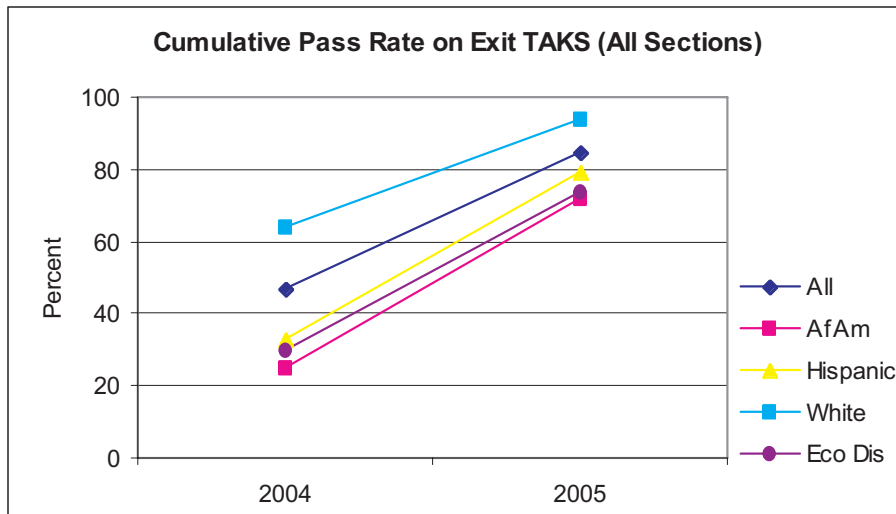
High school completion is achieved when a student graduates with a high school diploma and passes all relevant exit assessments within four years after entering high school. GED recipients and students who need longer than four years are not counted as graduating by this definition. Class of 2005 data will be available by March 2006.



	2001	2002	2003	2004
All	72	76	79	80
AfAm	70	71	74	79
Hisp	60	65	70	72
White	84	86	87	87
EcoDis*	55	63	68	72

High School TAKS Passage

This measure represents the percentage of students who pass all four TAKS exit tests before the end of their 12th grade year.



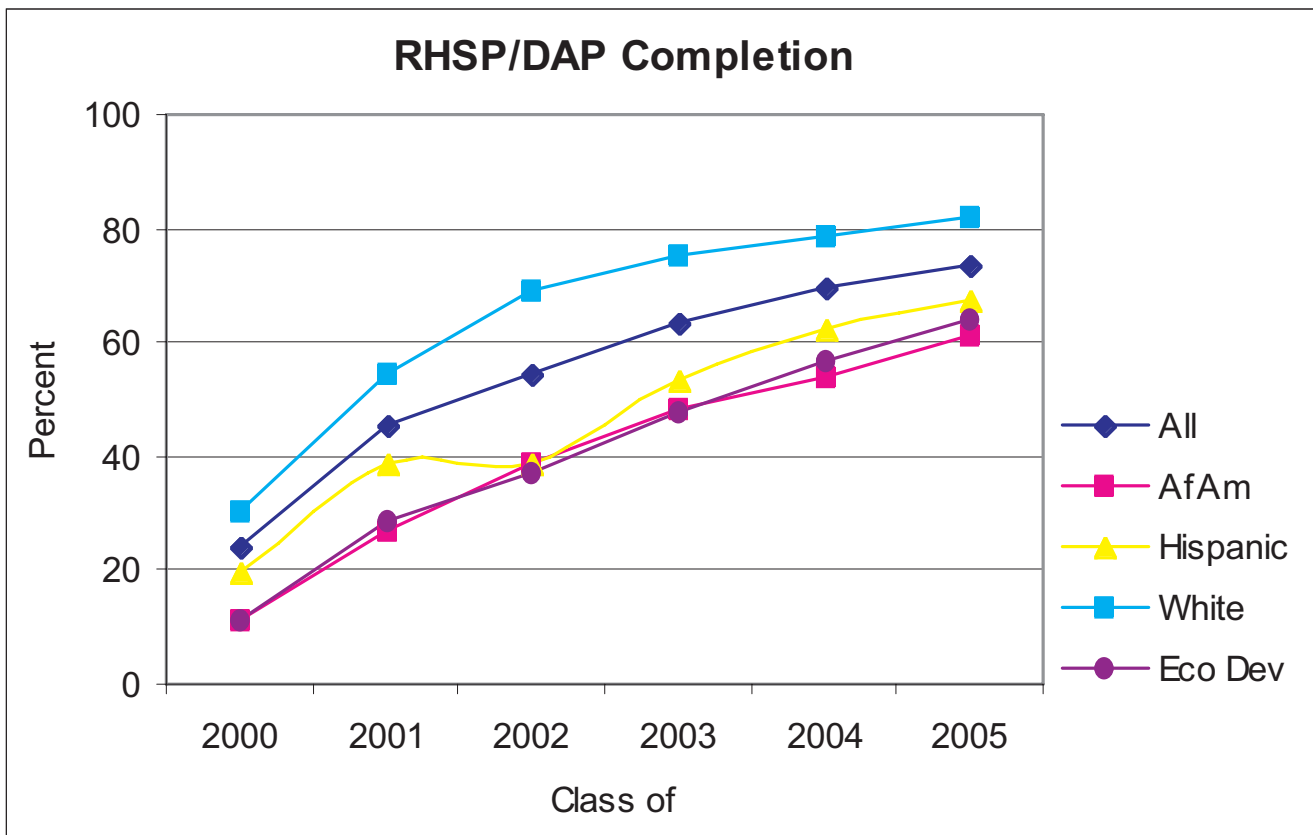
	2004	2005
All	47	85
AfAm	25	72
Hispanic	33	79
White	64	94
EcoDis*	30	74

*Economically Disadvantaged

Recommended/Distinguished High School Program Completion

Completion of a well-rounded curriculum such as the Recommended or Distinguished courses of study better prepares a student for success in higher education and the workplace. This measure shows the percent of all AISD high school graduates who complete either the Recommended High School Program or the Distinguished Achievement Plan, including special education students.

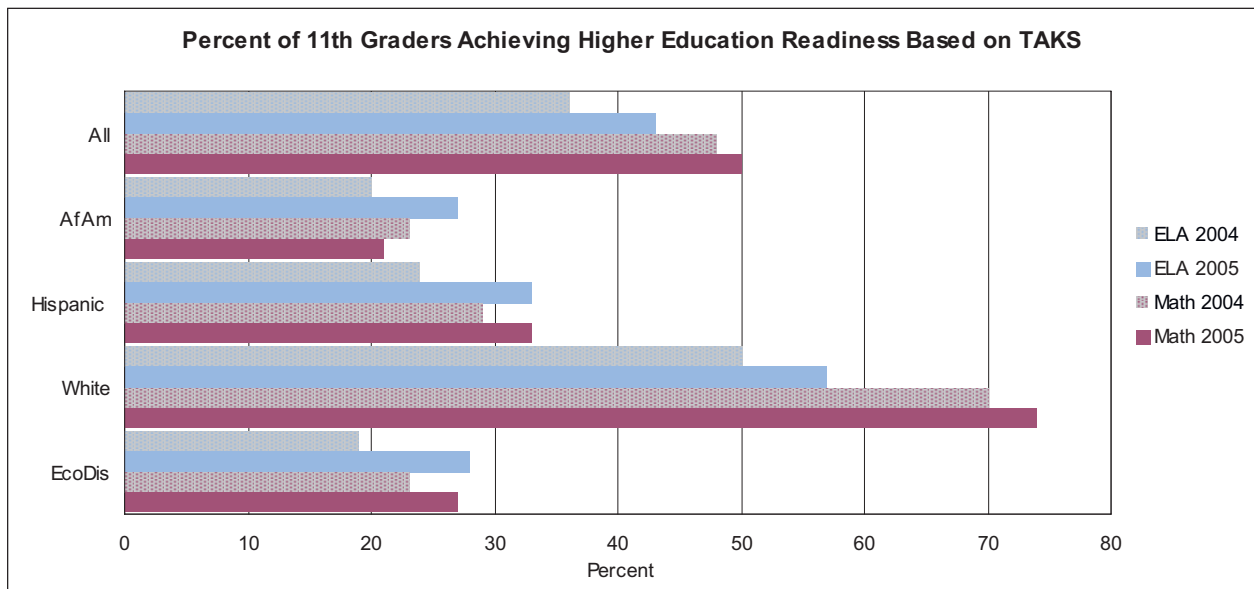
	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
All	24	45	54	64	69	74
AfAm	11	27	39	48	54	61
Hispanic	19	39	39	54	62	67
White	31	55	69	75	79	82
EcoDev*	11	29	37	48	57	64



College/Workplace Readiness

The Higher Education Readiness Component measures a student's preparation based on the 11th grade exit level TAKS test in math and English/Language Arts. Students are considered ready for success in higher education or the workplace if they meet or exceed this score. This graph and table only show the percentage reaching the minimum score on their initial TAKS test and does not include students who reach that standard through their performance on the ACT, SAT or other measures. That measure is not publicly available at this time.

	All	AfAm	Hisp	White	EcoDis*
ELA**04	36	20	24	50	19
ELA**05	43	27	33	57	28
Math04	48	23	29	70	23
Math05	50	21	33	74	27

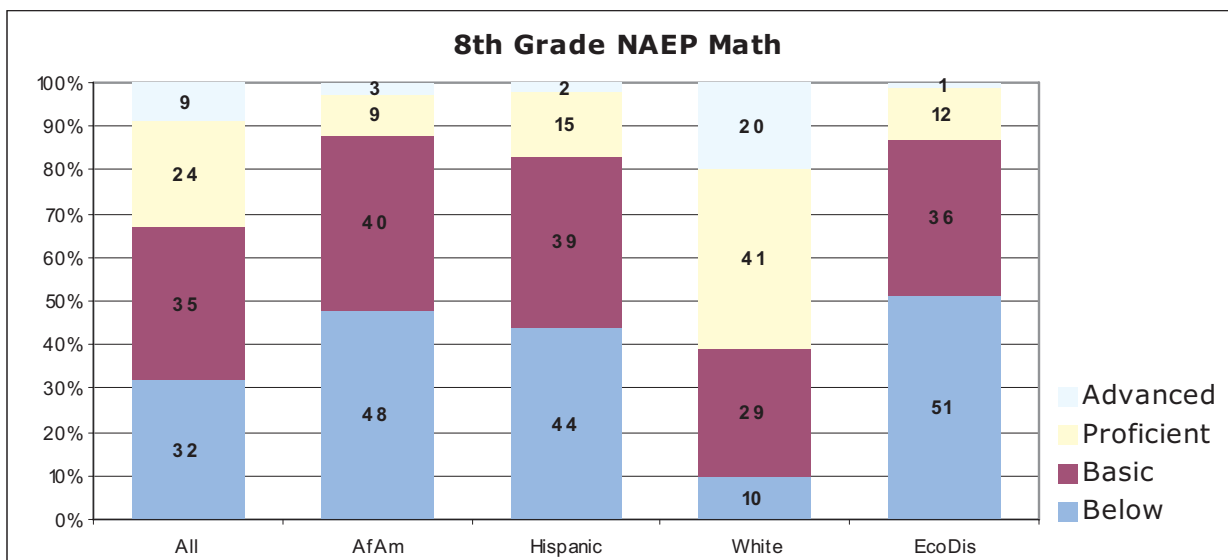
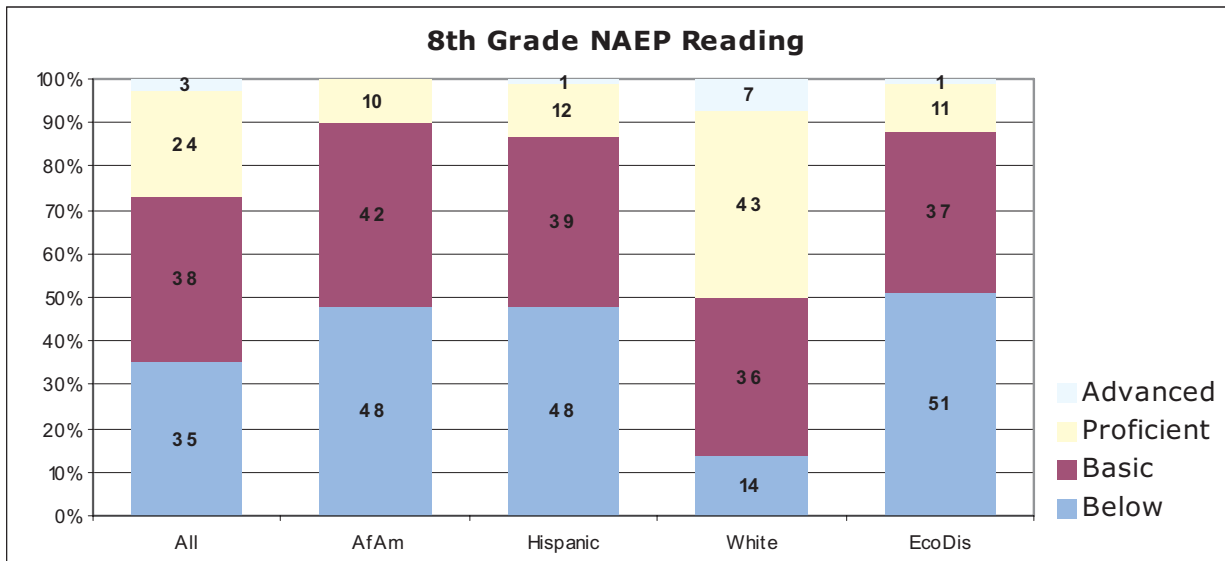


*Economically Disadvantaged

**English/Language Arts

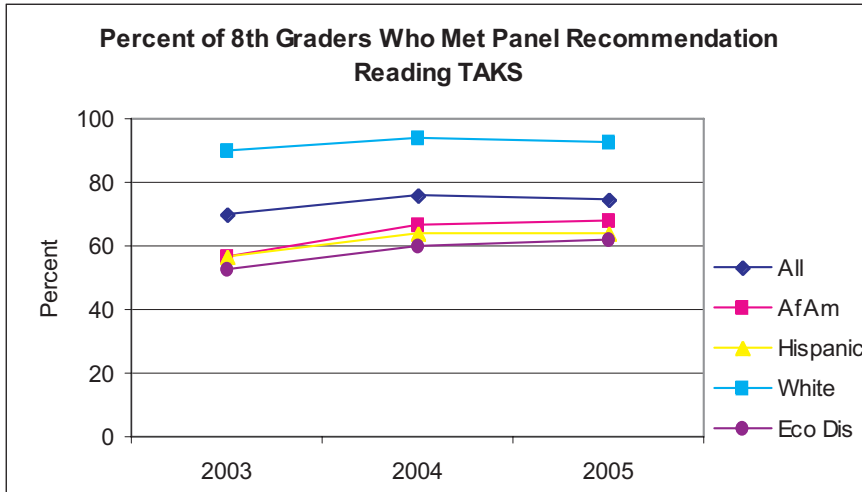
Middle School Preparation for High School

The National Assessment of Educational Progress was provided to a representative sample of AISD 8th grade students for the first time in spring 2005. Students who achieved the proficiency or advanced performance level on NAEP should have an above or on grade level comprehension of 8th grade academic knowledge and skills. AISD students will next take the NAEP in 2007.



8th Grade Reading TAKS

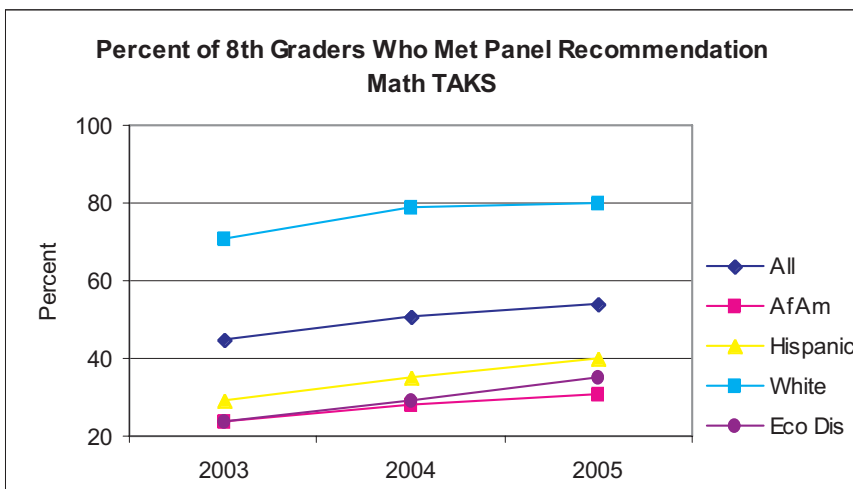
This measure determines the percentage of AISD 8th grade students on track in reading for high school level work. It shows the percentage of students who met the State Board of Education's 2005 panel recommendation on the reading TAKS.



	2003	2004	2005
All	70	76	75
AfAm	57	67	68
Hispanic	57	64	64
White	90	94	93
EcoDis*	53	60	62

8th Grade Math TAKS

This measure determines the percentage of AISD 8th grade students who meet the panel recommendation on the math TAKS test, which means they are on track in math as they enter high school.

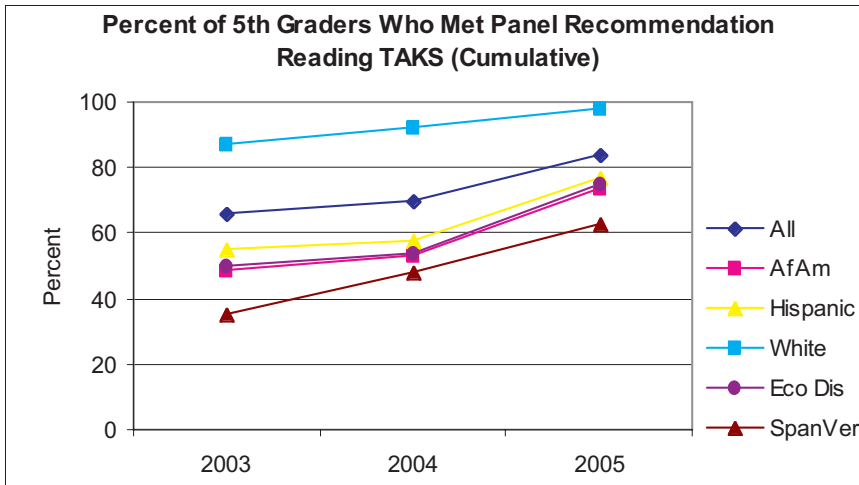


	2003	2004	2005
All	45	51	54
AfAm	24	28	31
Hispanic	29	35	40
White	71	79	80
EcoDis*	24	29	35

Elementary School Preparation for Middle School

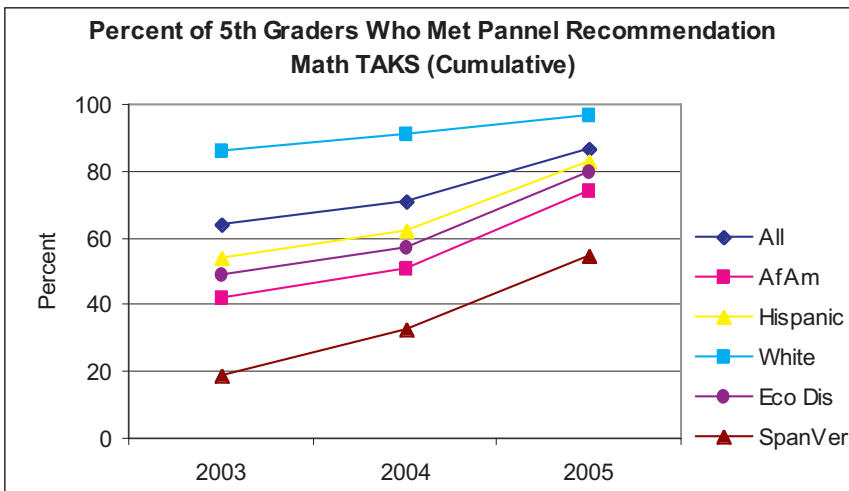
5th Grade TAKS

This measure shows the percentage of AISD elementary school students prepared for middle school reading by meeting the State Board of Education's 2005 panel recommendation on the 5th grade reading TAKS. The Spanish version group shows performance of students who took the Spanish language version of the 5th grade reading TAKS.



	2003	2004	2005
All	66	70	84
AfAm	49	53	74
Hispanic	55	58	77
White	87	92	98
EcoDis*	50	54	75
Spanish-version	35	48	63

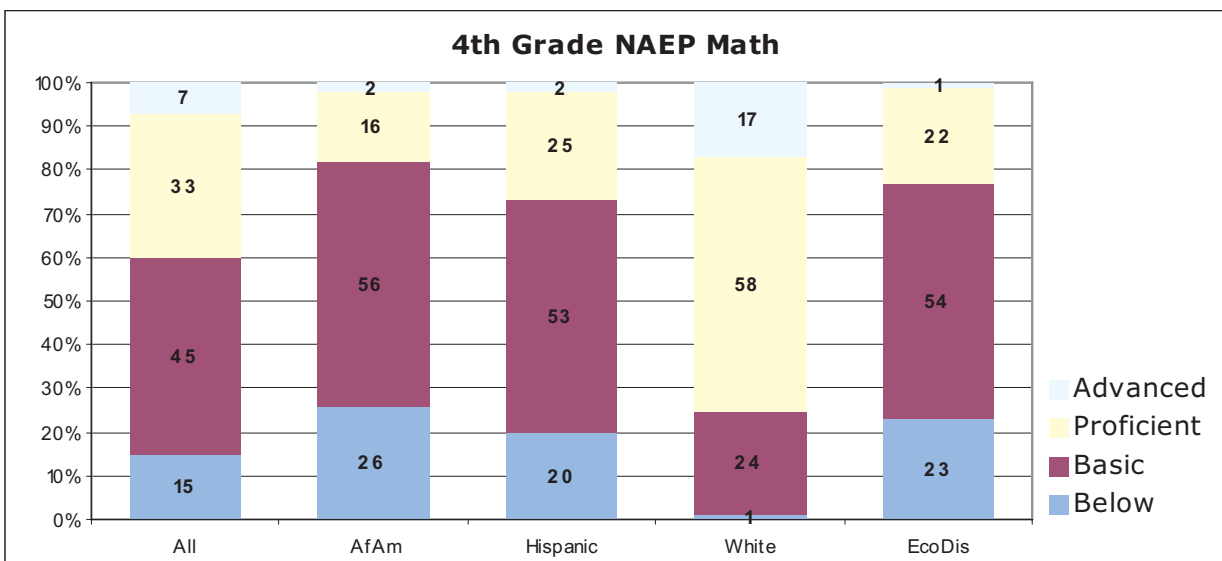
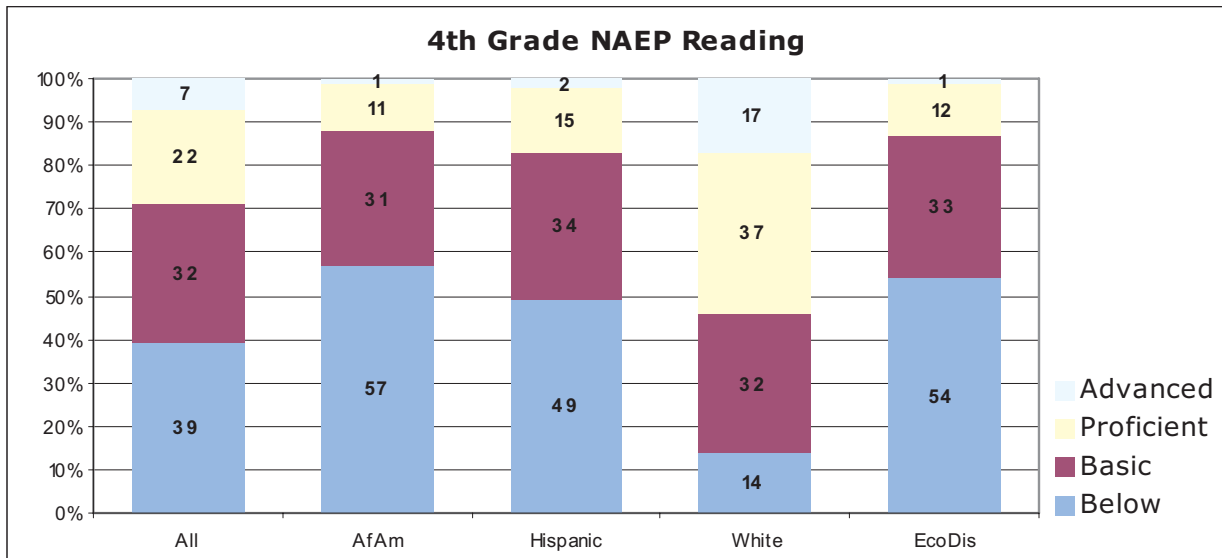
This measure shows the percentage of AISD elementary school students prepared for middle school math as measured by meeting the 2005 panel recommendation on the 5th grade math TAKS.



	2003	2004	2005
All	64	71	87
AfAm	42	51	74
Hispanic	54	62	83
White	86	91	97
Eco Dis*	49	57	80
Spanish-version	19	33	55

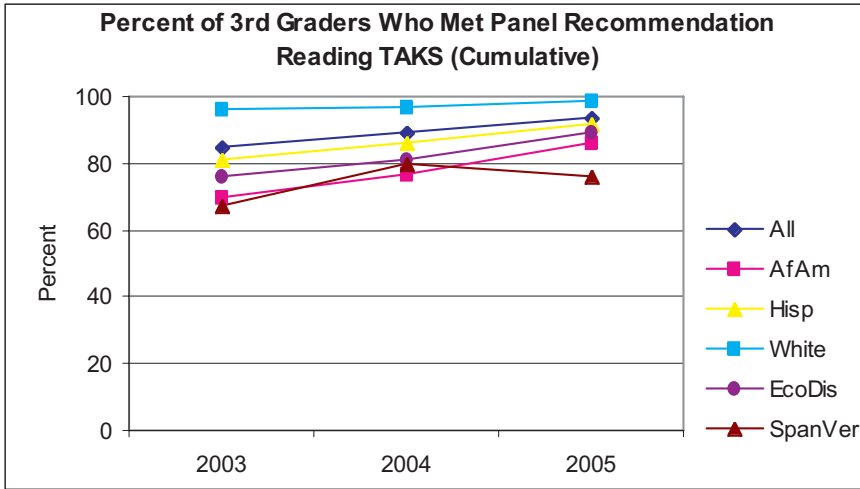
National Assessment of Educational Progress

The National Assessment of Educational Progress was given to a representative sample of AISD 4th grade students for the first time in spring 2005. Students who achieved the proficiency or advanced performance level on NAEP should have a good comprehension of 4th grade-level academic knowledge and skills. AISD students will next take NAEP in 2007.



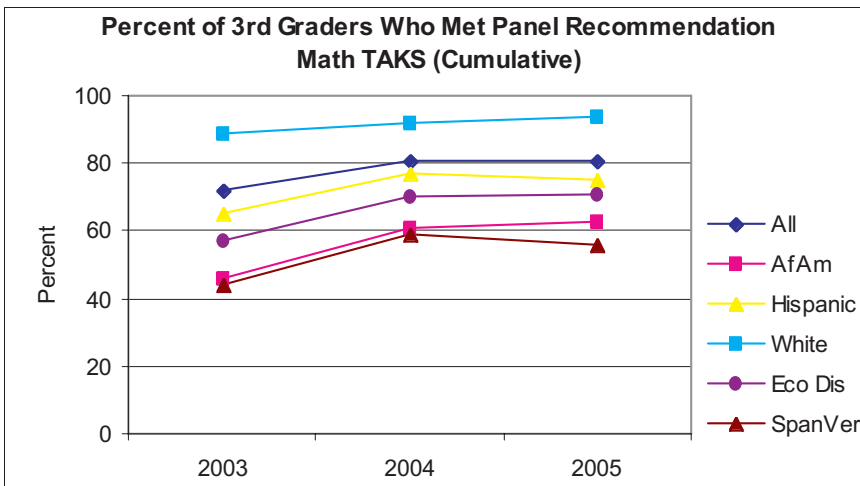
3rd Grade TAKS

This measure shows the percentage of AISD third graders who have demonstrated sufficient reading skills to meet the assessment requirement to be promoted to fourth grade.



	2003	2004	2005
All	85	89	94
AfAm	70	77	86
Hisp	81	86	92
White	96	97	99
EcoDis*	76	81	89
Spanish-version	67	80	76

This measure shows the percentage of AISD third graders who can demonstrate math skills at the level of the panel recommendation.



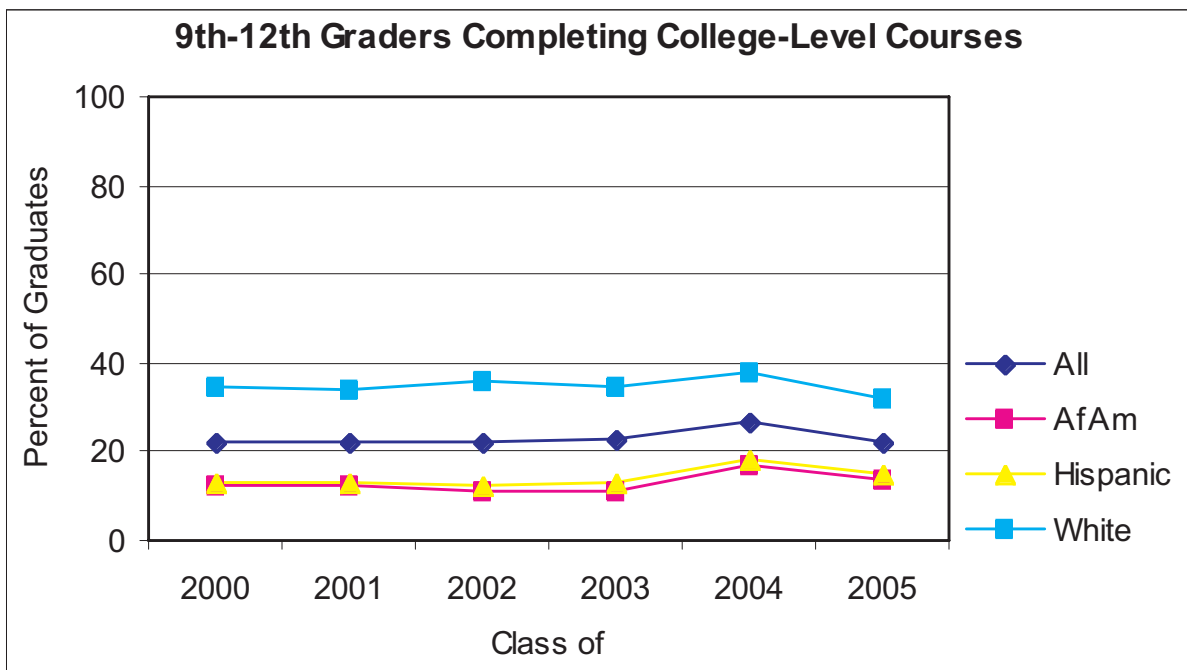
	2003	2004	2005
All	72	81	81
AfAm	46	61	63
Hispanic	65	77	75
White	89	92	94
Eco Dis*	57	70	71
Spanish-version	44	59	56

Other Measures

College-Level Course Completion by High School Students

This measure represents the percentage of 9th to 12th grade students who are enrolled in a course that potentially earns college-level credit, which includes “dual” credit, Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate courses. 2005 completion data for economically disadvantaged students will not be released from TEA until December 2006.

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
All	22.5	22.2	22.3	22.9	26.6	21.9
AfAm	12.6	12.3	11.4	11.3	16.7	14.0
Hispanic	13.1	13.2	12.4	13.2	18.5	15.1
White	34.7	34.0	35.8	34.7	37.8	31.8
EcoDis*	10.2	9.7	10.0	9.7	14.9	—



AISD Snapshot* (as of 12/05/2005)

Enrollment:	81,172
2005 Graduates	3,745
Percent Non-White	72.1%
Percent Economically Disadvantaged	60.2%
Percent English Language Learners	23.6%
Campuses	112
Employees	10,714
05-06 Tax Rate	\$1.623 per \$100 valuation
05-06 Operations Budget w/o state recapture	\$520 million
05-06 Operations Budget with state recapture	\$666 million

*Preliminary data as reported to TEA through PEIMS for fall 2005. Subject to change in January 2006.

About the Greater Austin Chamber of Commerce Progress Report

This first Community Progress Report, developed and issued by the Greater Austin Chamber of Commerce Task Force, is focused initially on AISD's success in high school completion rates and college/workplace readiness. It monitors additional student performance indicators that predict success before high school. In subsequent years, the Task Force will be open to partnering with additional business organizations and area school districts.

The Community Progress Report at this time does not monitor and evaluate the school district on inputs such as spending, teacher experience, class size, public outreach and other possible indicators. The Task Force relied mainly on data supplied from the Texas Education Agency or AISD.

The Community Progress Report does not compare AISD with other area, Texas or U.S. school districts. The intent of this report is to compare Austin performance to our expectations, not the relative performance of other communities.

If you have questions, please contact Drew Scheberle, Vice President of Education and Workforce Development at the Greater Austin Chamber of Commerce, 512.322.5628 or dscheberle@austinchamber.com.

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