

A BRIGHT FUTURE AHEAD

INCREASE COLLEGE READINESS
CLOSE ACHIEVEMENT GAPS

AUSTIN
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
PRESENTS

2008
Austin ISD
Community Education
Progress Report





PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to assist the Metro Austin region in effectively participating in the global economy by consistently maintaining key indicators associated with preparing students for higher education and employment. The Community Education Progress Report examines Austin ISD progress on key indicators in order to support strategic planning and identify where more rapid gains may be necessary to achieve our purpose and goals.

ABOUT AUSTIN ISD*

For more than 125 years the Austin Independent School District has met the educational needs and unique interests of its students and has remained committed to ensuring that every child is prepared for success in college and meaningful careers.

Austin schools today resonate with an enriched diversity in families and the cultural traditions they bring, and also diversity in faculty, course offerings and community partnerships. Austin ISD students benefit from joint programs between the school district and the community's outstanding institutions of higher education, and also with Austin's diverse business and cultural communities.

Today, Austin ISD serves more than 82,500 students on 113 campuses. Thanks to a committed corps of teachers and administrators, and strong community support, Austin students continue to meet tougher state and federal academic standards.

Austin ISD earned an Academically Acceptable rating as a district in 2008, and 34 Austin campuses earned Exemplary or Recognized ratings under the state accountability system. Ninety-six of the district's campuses achieved Adequate Yearly Progress under the federal school accountability system in 2008.

When compared with Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Houston, Los Angeles, New York, San Diego and other urban school districts, Austin students continue to have among the highest math, reading, writing and science scores in the country, according to the National Assessment of Educational Progress, also known as the "Nation's Report Card."

* Provided by Austin ISD

GOAL

The report focuses on tracking progress toward two of the Chamber's main goals as outlined in Opportunity Austin and the Chamber-led initiative 20,010 by 2010:

- Increase higher education student enrollment in the Austin region by 20,010 by 2010.
- Close the achievement gaps between different demographic, economic and ethnic groups.

OVERVIEW

During this time of transition to a new superintendent, the Chamber's Progress Report Task Force can report that Austin ISD has made significant improvements in student achievement and college and career readiness and has reduced achievement gaps over the past six years.

The biggest need for improvement is in high school graduation rates, as defined on page four of this report. The graduation rate for members of the Class of 2007 whose families' income levels qualified them for free or reduced-price lunch was 63%.

College and career readiness rates improved, due to the district's 2008 focus. Direct to college enrollment and high school graduation TAKS test passing rates both continued their steady climbs. Middle school is the

AUSTIN ISD SNAPSHOT

Enrollment	82,181	2007-08 Operations Budget without State Recapture	\$667,526,910
2008 Graduates	3,900	2007-08 Operations Budget with State Recapture	\$784,721,568
Percent Non-White	74%	Average Percent Daily Attendance for Grades 6 - 12	92%
Percent Economically-Disadvantaged	61%	Percent of Graduates who took SAT or ACT Exam*	81%
Percent English Language Learners	28%	Percent of 12th Grade Students Enrolled in a Tech-Prep 2 ⁺ and/or 3 ⁺⁺ Sequential Course of Study	16%
Number of Campuses	120	Average Teacher Salary	\$44,563
Number of Employees	11,100	Average Teacher Years of Experience	11
2008-09 Tax Rate (\$ per \$100 valuation)	\$1.163		

Source: Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS), Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS), Local budget data

*Indicator lags one year

[†]Percent of 12th grade students enrolled in a sequential course of study, which develops occupational knowledge, skill, and competencies relating to a career concentration. The student should have a four-year plan of study to take two or more career and technology education courses for three or more credits.

⁺⁺Percent of 12th grade students who follow an approved Tech-prep high school plan of study leading to postsecondary education and training. The student should have a four-year secondary plan of study that includes two or more career and technology education courses for three or more credits. The plan must also provide at least one option for articulated and/or concurrent credit at the postsecondary level.

big story for 2008. With eighth grade students expected in 2008 to pass math and reading TAKS to ensure promotion to high school, passing rates in those subjects dramatically improved and gaps in performance finally began to narrow. Elementary student TAKS passing rates are now nearly 90%.

Austin ISD student composition has been rapidly changing, though student enrollment slightly dropped for the first time in years. A far greater proportion of its students now receive free or reduced-price lunch, up 25% over the last seven academic years. More than one in four is classified as learning English. These trends make for more challenges, while community and employer expectations for student performance are rising.

TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Trustees and Administration should direct sufficient resources to address low graduation rates and gaps between student groups.
- The Task Force appreciates that all key indicators in the Progress Report are included in Austin ISD's strategic plan. We expect the district will now establish targets for 2009-10, as it committed in the FY2009 budget, and focus the next budget to secure desired and appropriate student growth.
- Trustees and Administration should determine whether high school redesign strategies and pilot strategic compensation programs are sufficiently focused on the most pressing performance issues: high school graduation, college and career readiness and direct to college enrollment.
- The Task Force should closely collaborate with Austin ISD efforts to improve college and career readiness and direct college enrollment rates for Class of 2010 high school seniors.
- Task Force should develop procedures, timelines and metrics which specifically define what closing the achievement gap means and should measure parent and community involvement.





HIGH SCHOOL PREPARATION FOR COLLEGE/CAREER

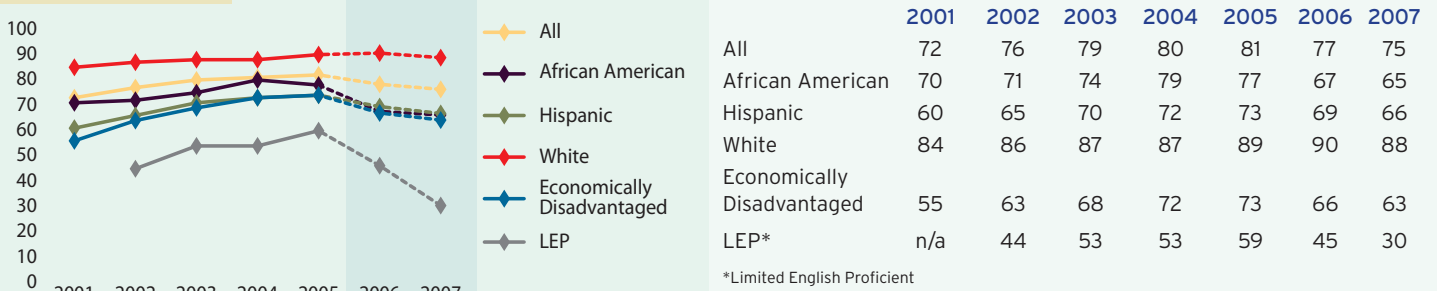
TASK FORCE FINDINGS:

- Student graduation rate is low. The gap in performance between white and non-white students is 22 percentage points. Limited English Proficient student graduation rate is 30%.
- In reviewing these data it is important to note that the decreases in graduation rates are due, in part, to a change in methodology for calculating graduation rates.

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION RATE

High school graduation is achieved when a student earns 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 graduates under this definition. **The methodology for calculating this rate changed in the 2005-06 school year, and the impact of that change will continue to be evident until all the data used to prepare the graduation rate are coming in under a uniform methodology. As such, graduation rates for the Classes of 2006 and 2007 are not directly comparable to those of prior years.**

Source: AEIS

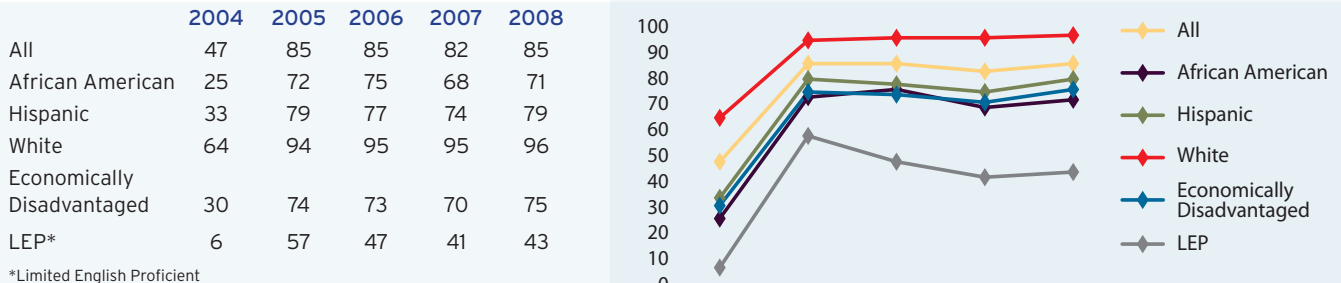


HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION TAKS PASSAGE

This measure represents the percent of students in each cohort who passed all four Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) graduation tests before the end of their 12th grade year. The number of items that needed to be answered correctly for a student to have met the passing standard increased each year for the Classes of 2005-2007. Thereafter, the passing standard remains the same.

Source: AEIS

CUMULATIVE PASSING RATE ON EXIT-LEVEL TAKS (ALL SECTIONS)



- TAKS graduation test passing rates for 2008 were higher than the previous year's. Still, 15% of those who finish their senior year have not passed all graduation tests.
- The college and career readiness rate grew from 39% to 43%.
- Direct to college enrollment rate grew for the seventh straight year, to 63%, due, in part, to Austin ISD's Project Advance and increased efforts from district and community partners.

COLLEGE/CAREER READINESS

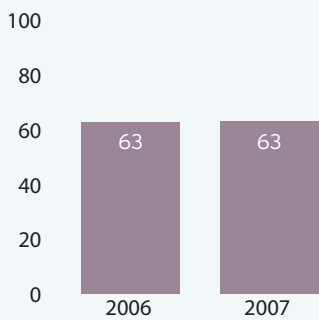
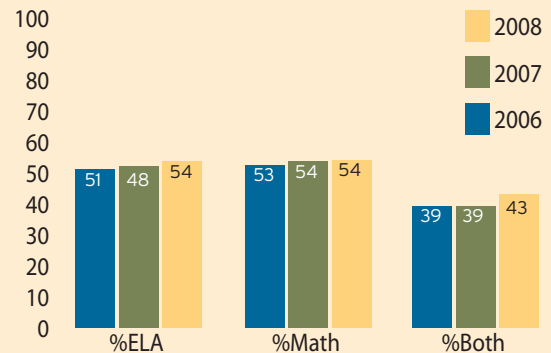
The task force considers students ready for success in higher education or the high-performance workplace if they meet or exceed the following performance standard(s):

English/Language Arts (ELA), meet at least one of the following: Scale score of at least 2200 on the ELA exit-level TAKS with a 3 or more on the essay, OR composite score of at least 1070 on the SAT with a minimum score of 500 on Critical Reading component OR composite score of at least 23 on the ACT with a minimum score of 19 on the English component.

Math, meet at least one of the following: Scale score of at least 2200 on the math exit-level TAKS, OR composite score of at least 1070 on the SAT with a minimum score of 500 on the math component OR composite score of at least 23 on the ACT with a minimum score of 19 on the math component.

Both: Students who have achieved college readiness in both ELA and math through any of the above formulas.

Source: AEIS and Austin ISD's manual calculations based on TAKS and College Board results.



DIRECT TO COLLEGE ENROLLMENT RATE

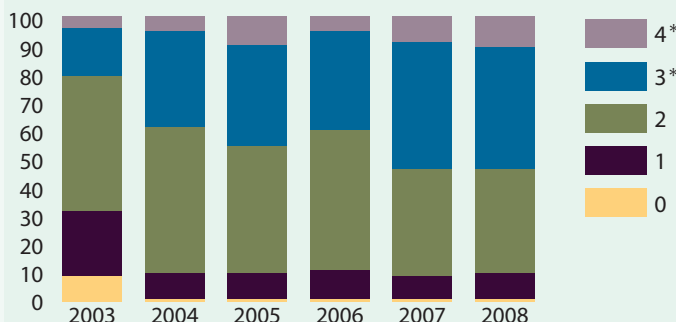
Percent of high school graduates enrolled in community colleges or four-year degree-granting institutions in Texas or outside the state by the fall following graduation. The figures presented here are probably an underestimate of actual college enrollment in the semester following high school graduation because constraints on state data collection systems limit the ability to locate each student who does not have a Social Security number.

Source: Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB), National Student Clearinghouse

HIGH SCHOOL EXIT-LEVEL ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS TAKS (WRITING)

Percent of students who score a 0, 1, 2, 3 or 4 on the written composition component of the TAKS exit-level ELA exam. A student passes the writing section of TAKS with a score of 2 or above. **A student demonstrates college readiness in writing with a score of 3 or higher.***

Source: TAKS Reports



	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
4*	2	5	9	4	9	11
3*	17	34	36	35	45	43
2	48	52	45	50	38	37
1	23	9	9	10	8	9
0	9	1	1	1	1	1



MIDDLE SCHOOL PREPARATION FOR HIGH SCHOOL TASK FORCE FINDINGS:

For the 2007-08 school year, eighth grade students needed to pass TAKS in reading and math to demonstrate readiness for high school and ensure promotion to the ninth grade. Although eighth graders who fail the TAKS may still be promoted if their parents and school staff agree they can succeed at the higher grade, bypassing the TAKS passing requirement generally does not prepare students for success.

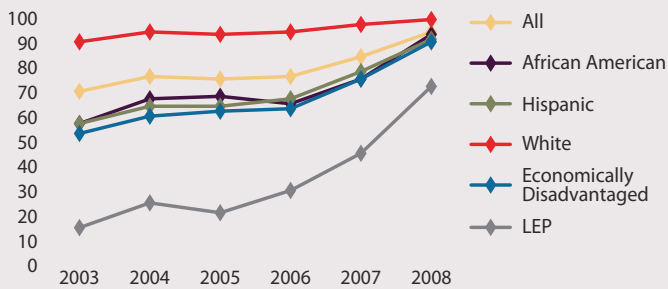
- Eighth grade reading TAKS passing rates increased 10 percentage points in a year and nearly doubled for economically disadvantaged students. This is the sixth year for such dramatic increases across all subgroups.

8TH GRADE TAKS

This measure displays the percentage of eighth grade students who met or exceeded the State Board of Education panel's recommended standard on the eighth grade TAKS tests. This measure determines the percentage of eighth grade students on track or prepared for high school-level course work. Eighth grade students were required to meet the panel-recommended standard by the end of the 2007-08 school year in math and reading in order to ensure promotion to ninth grade. However a student who fails TAKS may still be promoted if a grade placement committee composed of a student's parent and school staff agree he or she can succeed at the higher grade. The eighth grade science test was first administered in 2006. While the passing standard has been phased in over time, results reported here reflect the panel-recommended standard – in effect for spring 2008 – for science each year.

Source: TAKS reports

PERCENT OF 8TH GRADERS WHO MET PANEL RECOMMENDATION READING TAKS (CUMULATIVE)



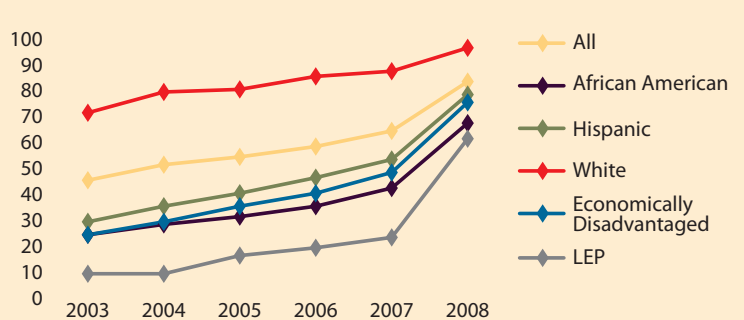
	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
All	70	76	75	76	84	94
African American	57	67	68	65	75	93
Hispanic	57	64	64	67	78	91
White	90	94	93	94	97	99
Economically Disadvantaged	53	60	62	63	75	90
LEP*	15	25	21	30	45	72

*Limited English Proficient

PERCENT OF 8TH GRADERS WHO MET PANEL RECOMMENDATION MATH TAKS (CUMULATIVE)

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
All	45	51	54	58	64	83
African American	24	28	31	35	42	67
Hispanic	29	35	40	46	53	78
White	71	79	80	85	87	96
Economically Disadvantaged	24	29	35	40	48	75
LEP*	9	9	16	19	23	61

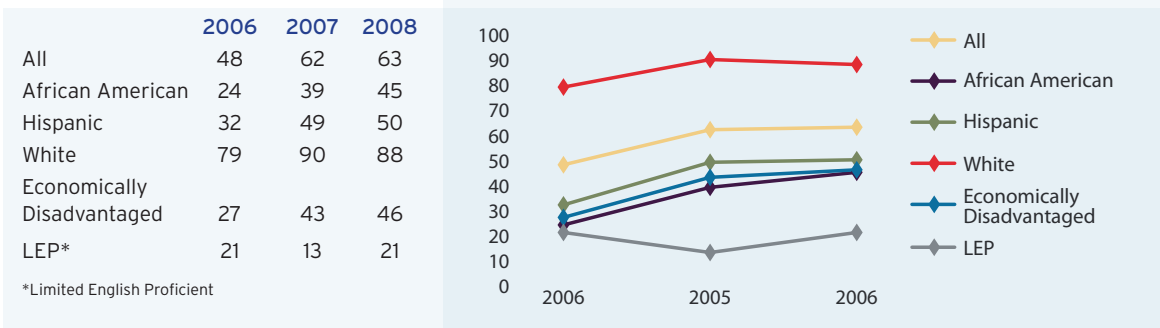
*Limited English Proficient



- Eighth grade math TAKS passing rates increased by nearly 20 percentage points in a year, with huge gains for African Americans, Hispanics, English learners and the economically disadvantaged.
- In science, where students did not need to pass TAKS for promotion, passing rates are flat year over year, with a 63% overall passing rate.



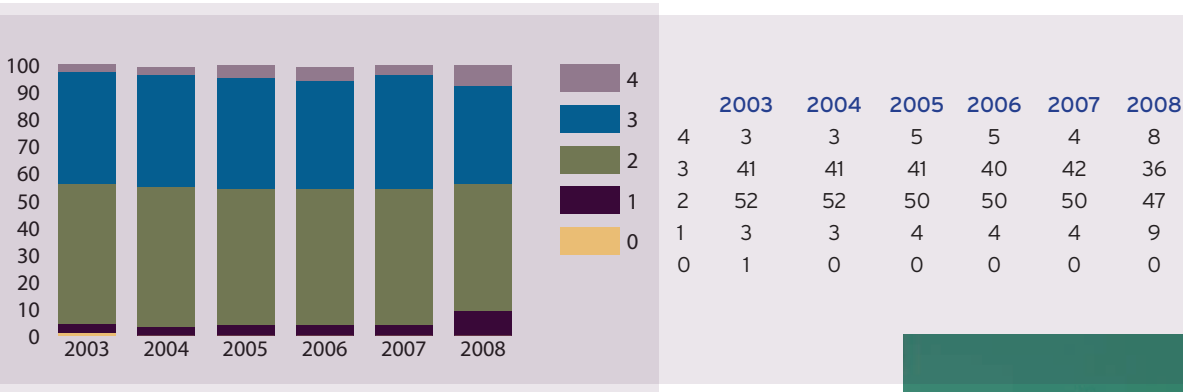
PERCENT OF 8TH GRADERS WHO MET PANEL RECOMMENDATION SCIENCE TAKS



7TH GRADE WRITING TAKS

Percent of students who score a 0, 1, 2, 3 or 4 on the seventh grade writing TAKS. A student passes the writing section of TAKS with a score of 2 or higher and earns a Commended Performance award with a score of 3 or higher.

Source: TAKS reports





ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PREPARATION FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL

TASK FORCE FINDINGS:

Elementary school performance remains the strongest among Austin ISD's three levels. Strong passing rates can be seen in third and fifth grade, where students must pass TAKS in certain subjects to meet the assessment promotion requirement. The gap between various students groups' fifth grade TAKS passing rates has also closed from more than 40 percentage points in some cases to less than 16 percentage points over six years. After a one year drop in third grade reading TAKS passing rates, 2008 passing rates are now the highest since TAKS was first administered.

5TH GRADE TAKS

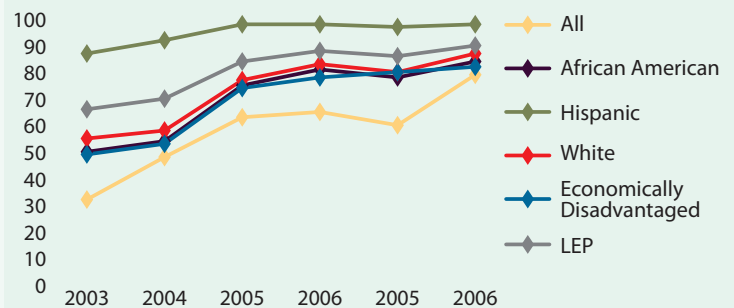
This measure shows the percent of fifth grade students prepared for middle school reading and math by meeting or exceeding the State Board of Education panel's recommended standards on the fifth grade reading and math TAKS. Beginning with the 2004-05 school year, fifth grade students were required to meet panel recommendation for promotion to middle school, although a student can bypass this requirement with approval of a grade placement committee.

Source: TAKS reports

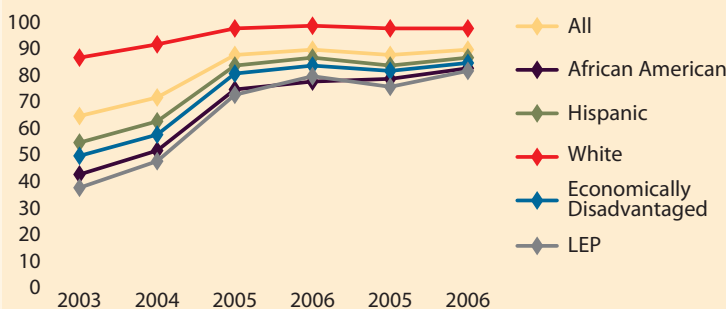
PERCENT OF 5TH GRADERS WHO MET PANEL RECOMMENDATION READING TAKS (CUMULATIVE)*

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
All	66	70	84	88	86	90
African American	49	53	74	78	80	82
Hispanic	55	58	77	83	80	87
White	87	92	98	98	97	98
Economically Disadvantaged	50	54	75	81	78	84
LEP**	32	48	63	65	60	79

*All results are for English test version only, not Spanish
 **Limited English Proficient



PERCENT OF 5TH GRADERS WHO MET PANEL RECOMMENDATION MATH TAKS (CUMULATIVE)*



	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
All	64	71	87	89	87	89
African American	42	51	74	77	78	82
Hispanic	54	62	83	86	83	86
White	86	91	97	98	97	97
Economically Disadvantaged	49	57	80	83	81	84
LEP**	37	47	72	79	75	81

*All results are for English test version only, not Spanish
 **Limited English Proficient



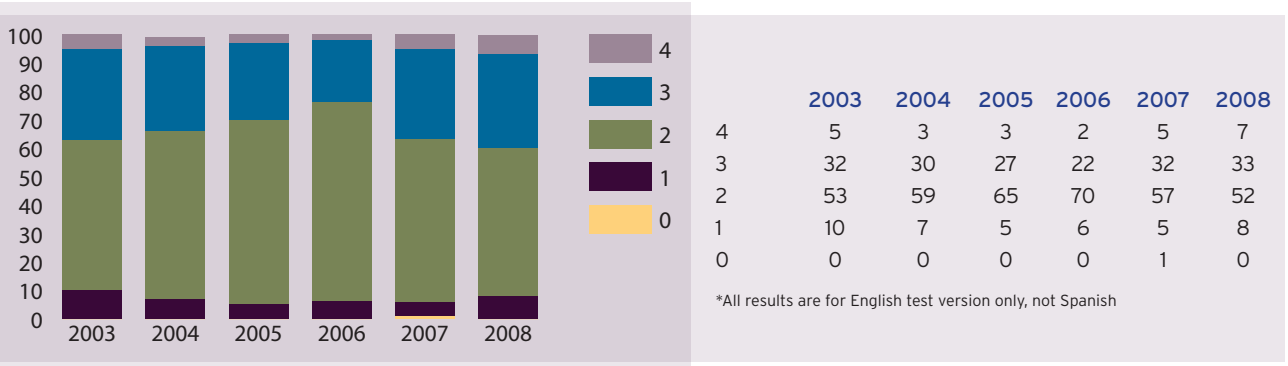
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PREPARATION FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL

4TH GRADE WRITING TAKS

Percent of students who score a 0, 1, 2, 3 or 4 on the fourth grade writing TAKS. A student passes the writing TAKS with a score of 2 or higher and earns a Commended Performance award with a score of 3 or higher.

Source: TAKS reports

4TH GRADE WRITING TAKS*

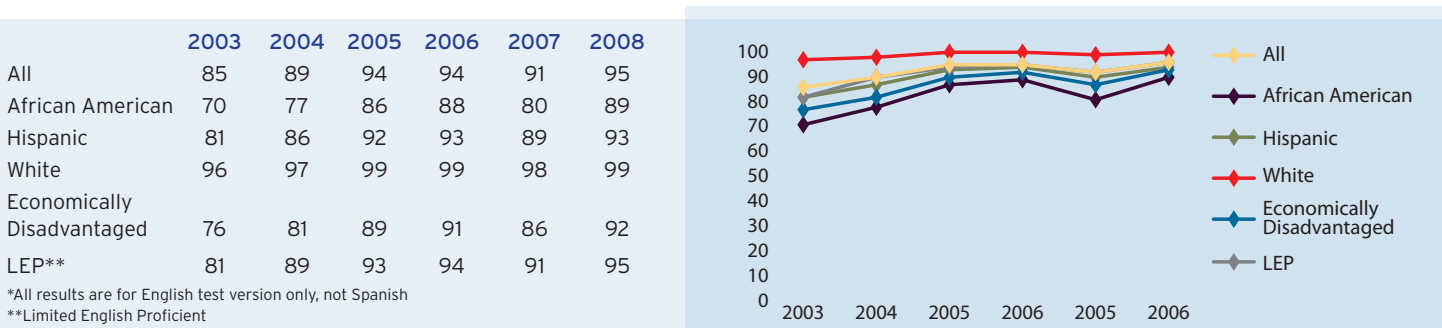


3RD GRADE TAKS

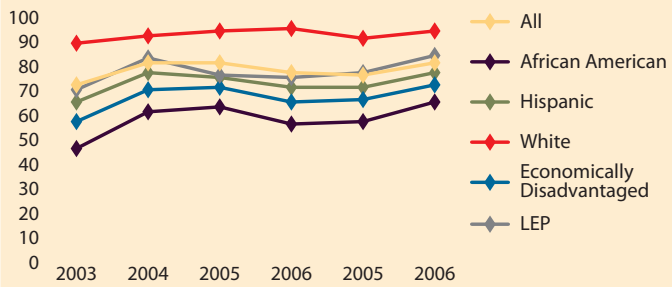
Percent of third grade students who demonstrated sufficient reading and math skills to meet the State Board of Education panel's recommended standard on the third grade reading and math TAKS.

Source: TAKS reports

PERCENT OF 3RD GRADERS WHO MET PANEL RECOMMENDATION READING TAKS (CUMULATIVE)*



PERCENT OF 3RD GRADERS WHO MET PANEL RECOMMENDATION MATH TAKS (CUMULATIVE) *



	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
All	72	81	81	77	76	81
African American	46	61	63	56	57	65
Hispanic	65	77	75	71	71	77
White	89	92	94	95	91	94
Economically Disadvantaged	57	70	71	65	66	72
LEP**	70	83	76	75	77	84

*All results are for English test version only, not Spanish
 **Limited English Proficient



ABOUT THE AUSTIN CHAMBER COMMUNITY EDUCATION PROGRESS REPORT

This Community Education Progress Report, developed and issued by the Austin Chamber of Commerce Progress Report Task Force, is a tool for the community to track performance trends in area school districts. It is focused on Austin ISD's success in high school completion rates and college/career readiness and enrollment, and monitors additional student performance indicators that predict success leading up to high school. The Task Force is enthusiastic about partnering with additional business organizations to support continued improvement of educational outcomes and is expanding to include other area school districts in this and subsequent years. The Progress Report does not compare Austin ISD with other area, Texas or U.S. school districts. The intent of this report is to compare Austin ISD's performance to our task force expectations, not the relative performance of other communities.

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

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