

# A BRIGHT FUTURE AHEAD

INCREASE COLLEGE READINESS  
CLOSE ACHIEVEMENT GAPS

AUSTIN  
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE  
PRESENTS

## 2008 Leander 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 Leander 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 LEANDER ISD\*

The Leander Independent School District is one of the fastest growing school districts in the state of Texas, educating more than 26,000 students the 2007-08 school year. The 2008 Texas Education Agency Accountability Ratings showed 22 of 29 traditional Leander ISD campuses (76 percent) ranked either Recognized or Exemplary. An indicator of Leander ISD's enhanced overall student learning is that the district saw increased performance in all five subgroups on all five tested subjects district wide, meaning all 25 TAKS-related performance indicators increased from last year. Leander ISD opened three new campuses this year and will see growth continue in 2009 as two additional elementary campuses are slated to open, as well as the fifth high school.

Our vision is that every student is encouraged, supported and challenged to achieve the highest levels of knowledge, skills and character. Together, we will:

1. Improve the academic performance of all students, while eliminating the link between economic disadvantage and low achievement;
2. Ensure that all students read at or above grade level;
3. Prepare all students to be college and career ready, while preserving our focus on the needs of the whole student; and
4. Strive to do right and good by all, while maintaining an unwavering commitment to our culture of continuous improvement and learning.

We strive to give our students an edge in both the college admissions process and the global market. Some of these opportunities include: AP, IB and pre-AP/IB Programs; Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID); Texas Scholars; Leander ISD Career Passport Program; partnership with the College Board to administer the PSAT to all Leander ISD 10th & 11th graders; and Leander ISD Career Development System, which is a seamless array of career-planning opportunities and experiences for all students, such as COOL Week, ACC's Early College Start Program (which includes dual and tech prep college courses), Senior Project and the Academic and Career Excellence-Student Leadership classes.

The commitment by our parents and support of our community to be involved in providing a first-rate education sets Leander ISD apart from others. Leander ISD's more than 10,000 registered volunteers donated more than 200,000 hours of time, talent and expertise to Leander ISD students last school year.

\* Provided by Leander 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.

## LEANDER ISD SNAPSHOT

Enrollment	26,443	2007-08 Operations Budget without State Recapture	\$189,323,850
2008 Graduates	1,357	Average Percent Daily Attendance for Grades 6 - 12	95%
Percent Non-White	30%	Percent of Graduates who took SAT or ACT Exam*	81%
Percent Economically-Disadvantaged	17%	Percent of 12th Grade Students Enrolled in a Tech-Prep 2 <sup>†</sup> and/or 3 <sup>††</sup> Sequential Course of Study	23%
Percent English Language Learners	5%	Average Teacher Salary	\$45,264
Number of Campuses	33	Average Teacher Years of Experience	10
Number of Employees	3,386		
2008-09 Tax Rate (\$ per \$100 valuation)	\$1.334		

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

\*Indicator lags one year

<sup>†</sup>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.

<sup>††</sup>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.

### OVERVIEW

The Chamber's Progress Report Task Force can report that Leander ISD has made significant improvements in student achievement, college readiness and college enrollment and has reduced achievement gaps over the past six years.

The biggest need for improvement is in high school graduation rates, which fell in the most recent year to 80% overall and to 59% for economically disadvantaged students. Direct to college enrollment rates jumped seven percentage points due to the district's 2008 focus. College and career readiness and high school graduation TAKS test passing rates both continued their steady climbs. Middle school is the big story for 2008. With eighth grade students expected in 2008 to pass math and English TAKS to ensure promotion to high school, passing rates in those subjects dramatically improved and gaps in performance began to narrow. Elementary student TAKS passing rates are now nearly 90%.

Leander ISD enrollment grew 9% year over year, necessitating bond issues and significant management focus to stay ahead in organizational structure, hiring and facilities. Nearly 20% of students now receive free or reduced-price lunch. Five percent are 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 arrest the slow slide in high school graduation and begin to make gains.
- The Task Force recommends that Leander ISD establish key measures and performance targets which include all key indicators in the Progress Report.
- The consistent hiring of Transition Coordinators at each high school should accelerate college readiness and college enrollment gains. The Task Force hopes these positions will continue to enjoy the support of the Board and Administration.
- Trustees should develop a timeline and metrics which specifically define what closing the achievement gap means and should measure parent and community involvement.





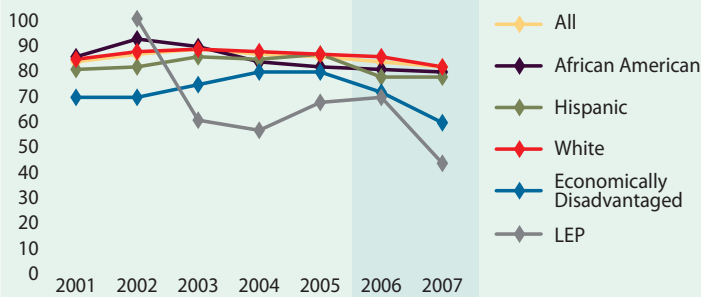
## HIGH SCHOOL PREPARATION FOR COLLEGE/CAREER TASK FORCE FINDINGS:

- High school completion rate declined for the most recent year, due in part to higher graduation expectations and a stricter definition for completion. The gap in performance between white and non-white students remained the same with the new stricter definition, and the gap between economically disadvantaged and all students increased significantly.
- Across the board, 2008 TAKS graduation test passing rates are higher than a year ago. Only 7% now finish their senior year and have not passed all graduation tests.

### 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



	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
All	83	86	88	86	85	83	81
African American	85	92	89	83	81	80	79
Hispanic	80	81	85	84	86	77	77
White	84	87	88	84	86	85	81
Economically Disadvantaged	69	69	74	79	79	71	59
LEP*	n/a	100	60	56	67	69	43

\*Limited English Proficient

### 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.

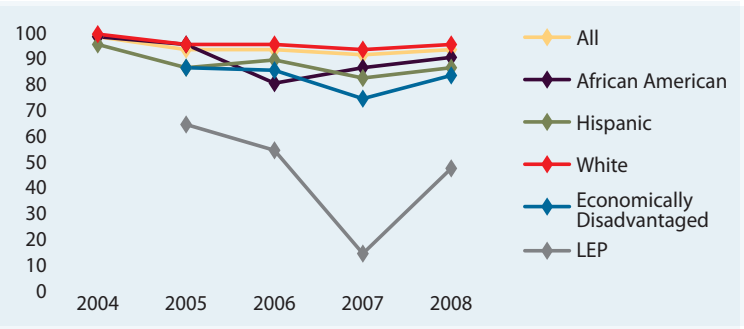
Source: AEIS

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

	2004*	2005	2006	2007	2008
All	98	93	93	91	93
African American	98	95	80	86	90
Hispanic	95	86	89	82	86
White	99	95	95	93	95
Economically Disadvantaged	n/a	86	85	74	83
LEP**	n/a	64	56	14	47

\*TAAS Scores; data represents 11th grade met standards on all tests on TAAS.

\*\*Limited English Proficient



- College and career readiness rate grew from 50% to 53%.
- Direct to college enrollment rate reached 67% after out-of-state college enrollment was taken into account for the first time.
- Nearly every high school senior passed the TAKS writing test and 75% demonstrated the ability to write at a college-ready level.

## COLLEGE/CAREER READINESS

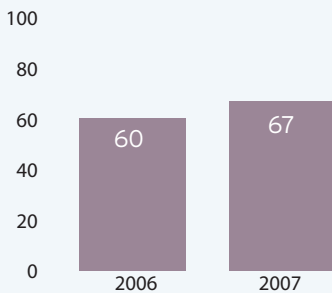
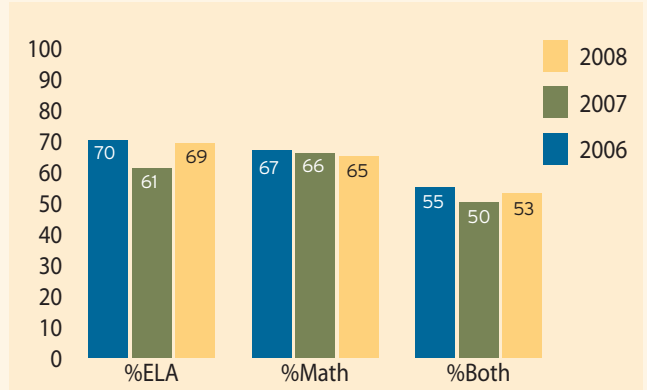
The task force considers students ready for success in higher education or the high-performance workplace if they meet or exceed the following performance standard(s):

**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; Leander ISD manual calculations



## DIRECT TO COLLEGE ENROLLMENT RATE

Percent of 2006 high school graduates enrolled in Texas community colleges or four-year degree-granting institutions by the fall following graduation. This does not include students enrolled in out-of-state colleges and universities or students who do not have Social Security numbers.

Source: Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB)

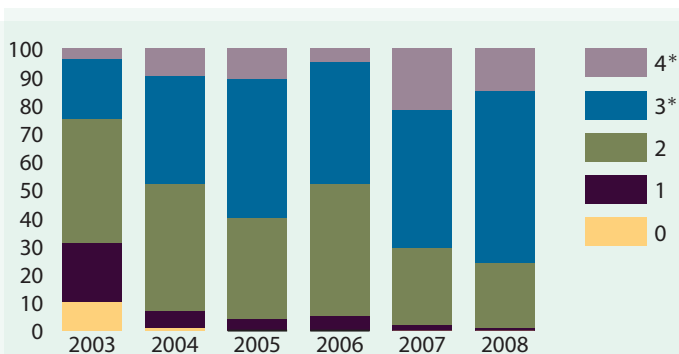
Percent of 2007 high school graduates enrolled in community colleges or four-year degree-granting institutions in Texas or outside the state by the fall following graduation. The figure presented here is probably an underestimate of actual college enrollment in the semester following high school graduation because constraints on state data collection systems limit the ability to locate each student who does not have a Social Security number.

Source: THECB, National Student Clearinghouse and Ray Marshall Center Student Futures Project reports

## 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*	4	10	12	5	22	14
3*	21	37	49	43	49	61
2	44	45	36	47	27	23
1	21	7	4	5	2	1
0	10	1	0	0	0	0



## MIDDLE SCHOOL PREPARATION FOR HIGH SCHOOL TASK FORCE FINDINGS:

For the 2007-08 school years, 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.

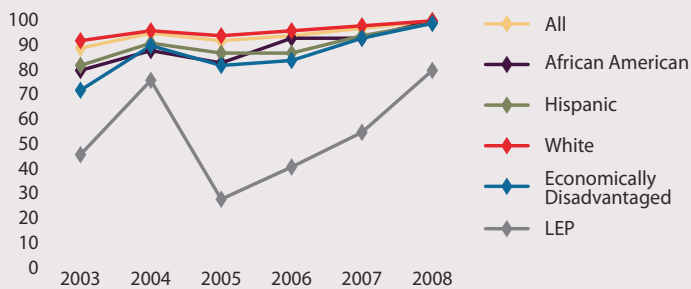
- Eighth grade reading TAKS passing rates increased three percentage points to 99%, functionally every student in eighth grade.

### 8TH GRADE TAKS

These measures display 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 2007-2008 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\*



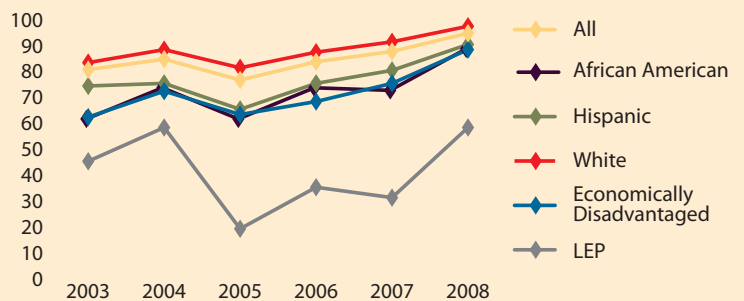
	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
All	88	94	91	93	96	99
African American	79	87	82	92	92	99
Hispanic	81	90	86	86	93	98
White	91	95	93	95	97	99
Economically Disadvantaged	71	89	81	83	92	98
LEP**	45	75	27	40	54	79

\* 2003-07 results reflect a single test administration in each year. Results for 2008 are cumulative, reflecting multiple test administrations that year.  
\*\*Limited English Proficient

#### PERCENT OF 8TH GRADERS WHO MET PANEL RECOMMENDATION MATH TAKS\*

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
All	81	85	77	84	88	95
African American	62	74	62	74	73	89
Hispanic	74	75	65	75	80	90
White	83	88	81	87	91	97
Economically Disadvantaged	62	72	63	68	75	88
LEP**	45	58	19	35	31	58

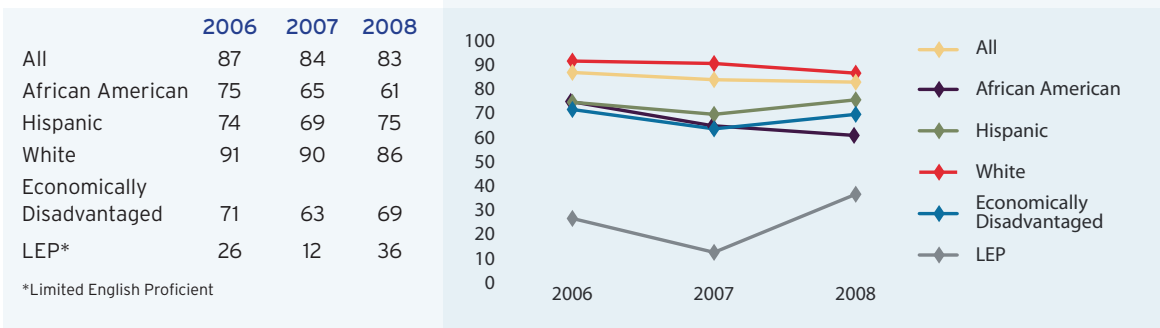
\* 2003-07 results reflect a single test administration in each year. Results for 2008 are cumulative, reflecting multiple test administrations that year.  
\*\*Limited English Proficient



- Eighth grade math TAKS passing rates increased by seven percentage points with huge gains for African Americans, Hispanics, English learners and the economically disadvantaged thereby shrinking achievement gaps.
- In science, where students did not need to pass TAKS for promotion, passing ratings are consistent year over year, with an 83% overall passing rate.



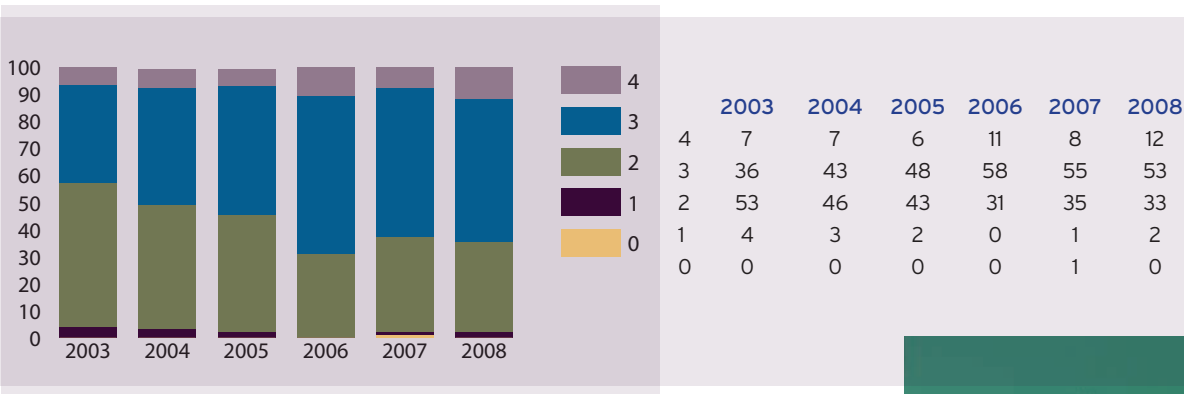
PERCENT OF 8TH GRADERS WHO MET PANEL RECOMMENDATION SCIENCE TAKS



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 Leander 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. Fifth grade reading and math TAKS passing rates are 97% overall, with African Americans and Hispanics both above 90%. English learners are the only group with passing rates below 80%. The achievement gap in fifth grade passing rates has also closed from 40 percentage points in some instances to less than 25 percentage points over six years. After a one year drop in third grade reading, 2008 reading TAKS passing rates are now the highest since TAKS was first administered.

### 5TH GRADE TAKS

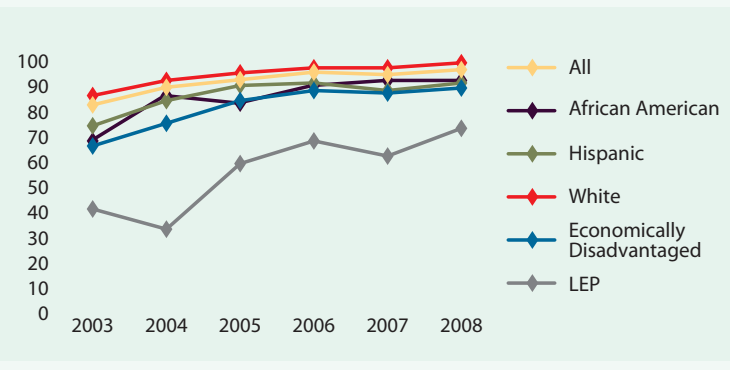
This measure shows the percent of fifth grade students prepared for middle school reading and math by meeting or exceeding the State Board of Education panel's recommended standards on the fifth grade reading and math TAKS. Beginning with the 2004-05 school year, fifth grade students were required to 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

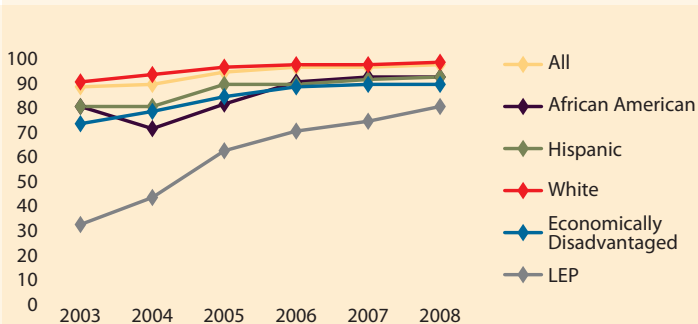
#### PERCENT OF 5TH GRADERS WHO MET PANEL RECOMMENDATION READING TAKS (CUMULATIVE)\*

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
All	83	90	93	96	95	97
African American	68	86	83	90	92	92
Hispanic	74	84	90	91	88	91
White	86	92	95	97	97	99
Economically Disadvantaged	66	75	84	88	87	89
LEP**	41	33	59	68	62	73

\*2003-04 results reflect a single test administration in each year. Results for 2005-08 are cumulative, reflecting multiple test administrations that year.  
\*\*Limited English Proficient



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



	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
All	88	89	94	96	96	97
African American	80	71	81	90	92	92
Hispanic	80	80	89	89	91	92
White	90	93	96	97	97	98
Economically Disadvantaged	73	78	84	88	89	89
LEP**	32	43	62	70	74	80

\*2003-04 results reflect a single test administration in each year. Results for 2005-08 are cumulative, reflecting multiple test administrations that year.  
\*\*Limited English Proficient



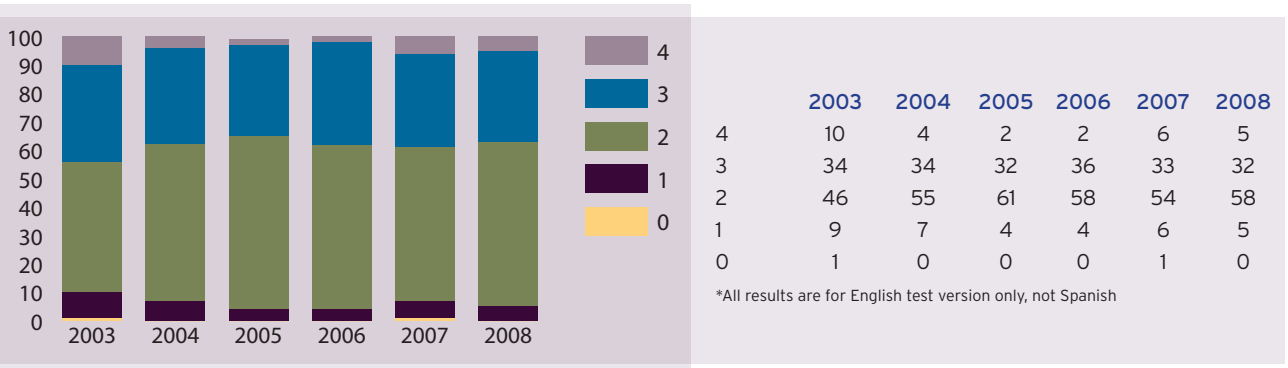
# ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PREPARATION FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL

## 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

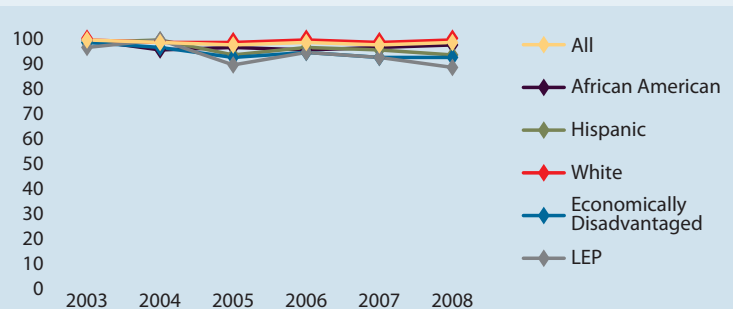
Percent of third grade students who demonstrated sufficient reading and math skills to meet the State Board of Education panel's recommended standard on the third grade reading and math TAKS.

Source: TAKS reports

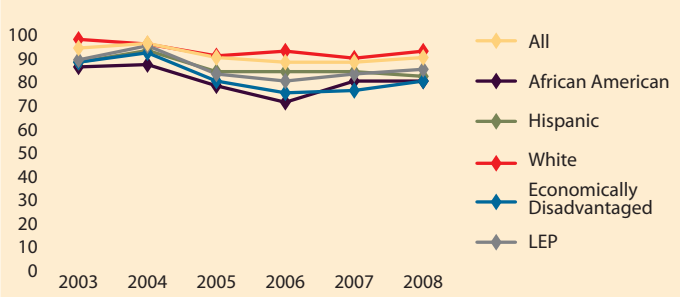
### PERCENT OF 3RD GRADERS WHO MET PANEL RECOMMENDATION READING TAKS (CUMULATIVE)\*

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
All	99	98	97	98	97	98
African American	99	95	96	95	96	97
Hispanic	98	99	93	96	95	93
White	99	98	98	99	98	99
Economically Disadvantaged	98	96	92	94	92	92
LEP**	96	99	89	94	92	88

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



PERCENT OF 3RD GRADERS WHO MET PANEL RECOMMENDATION MATH TAKS\*



	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
All	94	96	90	88	88	90
African American	86	87	78	71	80	80
Hispanic	88	93	84	84	84	82
White	95	97	92	90	89	92
Economically Disadvantaged	88	92	80	75	76	80
LEP**	89	95	83	80	83	85

\*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 Leander 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 Leander ISD with other area, Texas or U.S. school districts. The intent of this report is to compare Leander 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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