

# A BRIGHT FUTURE AHEAD

INCREASE COLLEGE READINESS  
CLOSE ACHIEVEMENT GAPS

AUSTIN  
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE  
PRESENTS

2008  
San Marcos CISD  
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 San Marcos CISD 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 SAN MARCOS CISD\*

San Marcos CISD is dedicated to partnering with the larger community of San Marcos in creating growth and opportunity in the Central Texas Region. Partnerships with Texas State University, Austin Community College, the San Marcos Chamber of Commerce, the E3 Alliance and other organizations provide opportunities for dialogues and collaborative projects, enhance educational opportunities for everyone in the community and support the mission of the San Marcos Chamber of Commerce in improving the lives of our community members through leadership and education.

San Marcos CISD is working to remove barriers to college access for its students. Thanks to a generous grant from the Pioneer Foundation, San Marcos High School is one of very few high schools nationwide to offer the ACT test to all juniors during the school day. Through a partnership with Austin Community College in the College Connection programs, over 95% of students graduating from San Marcos CISD are already accepted into ACC upon graduation. Dual credit courses and articulated courses offer San Marcos students opportunity to accrue college credit while still in high school. The number of students enrolled in Career Technical Education courses, most notably those taking coherent sequences of courses, continues to grow each year as does the number of certifications available to and attained by students. San Marcos CISD is working to expand the number of certifications available to students in a dual enrollment program pilot with Gary Job Corps.

\* Provided by San Marcos CISD

## 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

The Chamber's Progress Report Task Force can report that San Marcos CISD has made improvements over the past six years in direct to college enrollment, graduation TAKS passing rates, reduced achievement gaps and eighth grade math and reading.

The biggest needs for improvement are in high school graduation rates, which fell in the most recent year, and fifth and third grade math TAKS passing rates, which fell for a second straight year. Direct to college enrollment 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 required for the first time in 2008 to pass math and reading TAKS to ensure promotion to ninth grade, passing rates in those subjects dramatically improved and gaps in performance finally began to narrow.

## SAN MARCOS CISD SNAPSHOT

Enrollment	7,418	2007-08 Operations Budget without State Recapture	\$55,647,254
2008 Graduates	410	Average Percent Daily Attendance for Grades 6 - 12	95%
Percent Non-White	78%	Percent of Graduates who took SAT or ACT Exam*	58%
Percent Economically-Disadvantaged	61%	Percent of 12th Grade Students Enrolled in a Tech-Prep 2 <sup>+</sup> and/or 3 <sup>++</sup> Sequential Course of Study	50%
Percent English Language Learners	9%	Average Teacher Salary	\$45,943
Number of Campuses	10	Average Teacher Years of Experience	12
Number of Employees	1,063		
2008-09 Tax Rate (\$ per \$100 valuation)	\$1.370		

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.

San Marcos CISD student composition has been changing. Sixty percent of its students now receive free or reduced-price lunch. More than one in 11 is classified as learning English. These trends make for more challenges, while community and employer expectations for student performance are rising.

To meet these challenges and expectations, San Marcos CISD is in the process of reorganizing fifth and six grade education. Beginning in the 2009-10 school year, the district will have six elementary campuses, two more than it currently has. Fifth and sixth grade will no longer be housed in one comprehensive intermediate school. Instead, fifth grade will be part of each elementary campus, and sixth grade will become part of the two middle school campuses. This organization into smaller, more structured learning environments is designed to help make stronger curricular connections between lower elementary grades and fifth grade, reduce the number of transitions between campuses during the course of schooling in San Marcos CISD and increase support for instruction.

### TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Trustees and Administration should direct additional resources to make gains in high school graduation rates.
- Trustees and Administration should incorporate performance targets for all key indicators in the Progress Report into their planning and incorporate information on progress towards meeting those goals into their public reporting process.
- Trustees and Administration should closely monitor district efforts to improve college readiness and direct to college enrollment rates for the Class of 2010.
- Demonstrating significant improvement, 80% of eighth grade students met grade level math standards. Trustees should continue support of summer programs and consider what other interventions will better prepare the remaining 20% of students for success.
- Trustees and Administration should determine whether a pilot strategic compensation program can be focused on the most pressing performance issues, which the Task Force identified above as findings.
- Trustees should develop 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:

- High school graduation rate declined in 2007 to 75%, partly due to higher graduation expectations and a stricter definition of completion. The gap in completion rates between white and non-white students increased significantly.
- TAKS graduation test passing rate jumped six percentage points to 89% and rose dramatically for Hispanic, African American and economically disadvantaged students, narrowing achievement gaps.

### 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

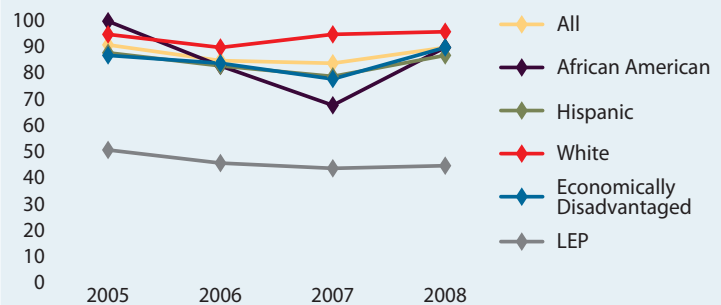
This measure represents the percent of students in each cohort who passed all four Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) graduation tests before the end of their 12th grade year. The number of items that needed to be answered correctly for a student to have met the passing standard increased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

	2005	2006	2007	2008
All	90	84	83	89
African American	99	82	67	89
Hispanic	87	82	78	86
White	94	89	94	95
Economically Disadvantaged	86	83	77	89
LEP*	50	45	43	44

\*Limited English Proficient



- College and career readiness rate rose slightly this year to 29%.
- Direct to college enrollment reached 36% in 2007 and grew by six percentage points to 42% in 2008.
- Over the past six years, writing performance has improved, culminating in an overall passing rate of more than 90%. The percentage of students able to write at college-ready levels doubled over that same period, reaching 44%.

## COLLEGE/CAREER READINESS

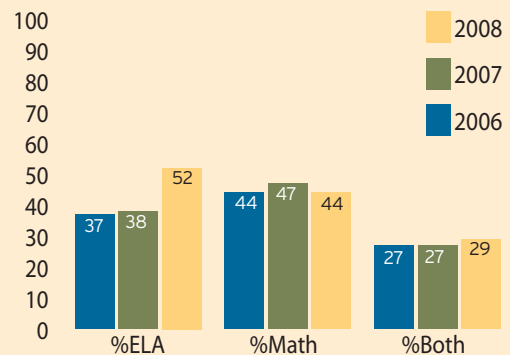
The task force considers students ready for success in higher education or the high-performance workplace if they meet or exceed the following performance standard(s):

**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.

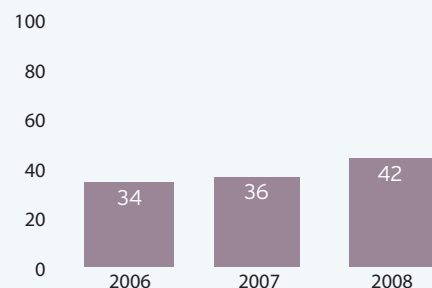
Source: AEIS and San Marcos CISD calculations



## DIRECT TO COLLEGE ENROLLMENT RATE

Percent of 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.

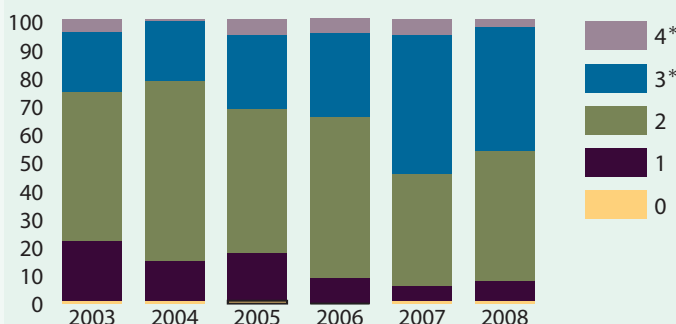
Source: Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board



## 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*	3	1	5	3	5	3
3*	21	21	26	30	49	44
2	53	64	51	57	40	46
1	21	14	17	9	5	7
0	1	1	1	0	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 ensure promotion to 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.

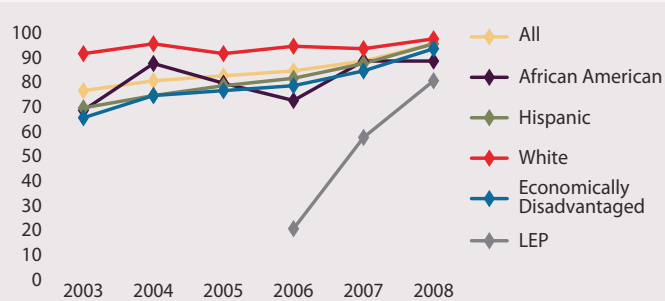
- Eighth grade reading TAKS passing rates increased seven percentage points overall and nearly 10 percentage points for economically disadvantaged students. This is the sixth year for such increases across nearly all subgroups.

### 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)



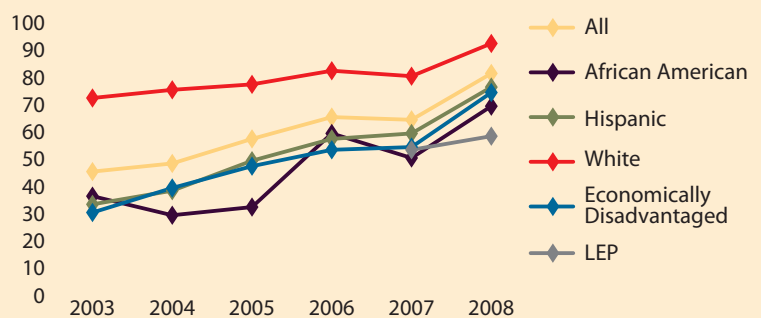
	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
All	76	80	82	84	88	95
African American	68	87	79	72	88	88
Hispanic	69	74	78	81	87	95
White	91	95	91	94	93	97
Economically Disadvantaged	65	74	76	78	84	93
LEP*	**	**	**	20	57	80

\*Limited English Proficient  
\*\* Data not available

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

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
All	45	48	57	65	64	81
African American	36	29	32	59	50	69
Hispanic	33	38	49	57	59	76
White	72	75	77	82	80	92
Economically Disadvantaged	30	39	47	53	54	74
LEP*	**	**	**	**	53	58

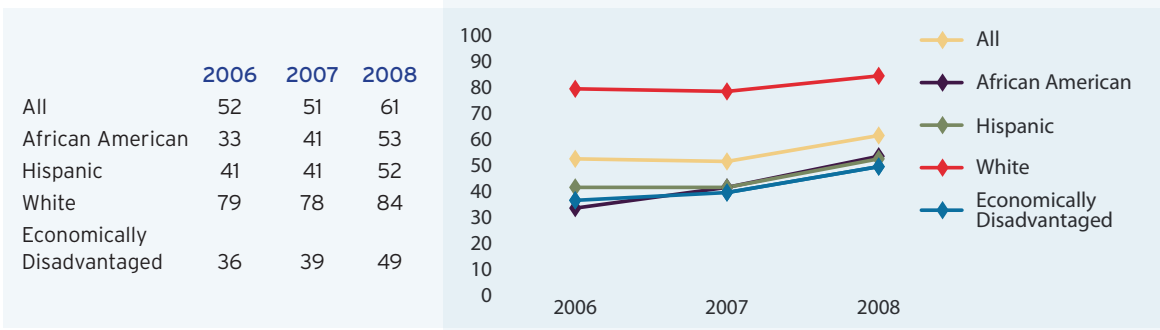
\*Limited English Proficient  
\*\* Data not available



- Eighth grade math TAKS passing rates increased by nearly 15 percentage points in a year, with huge gains for African American, Hispanic and economically disadvantaged students. However, much improvement remains to ensure most students are ready for high school algebra.
- In science, where students did not need to pass TAKS for promotion, passing rates improved by 10 percentage points to a 61% overall passing rate.



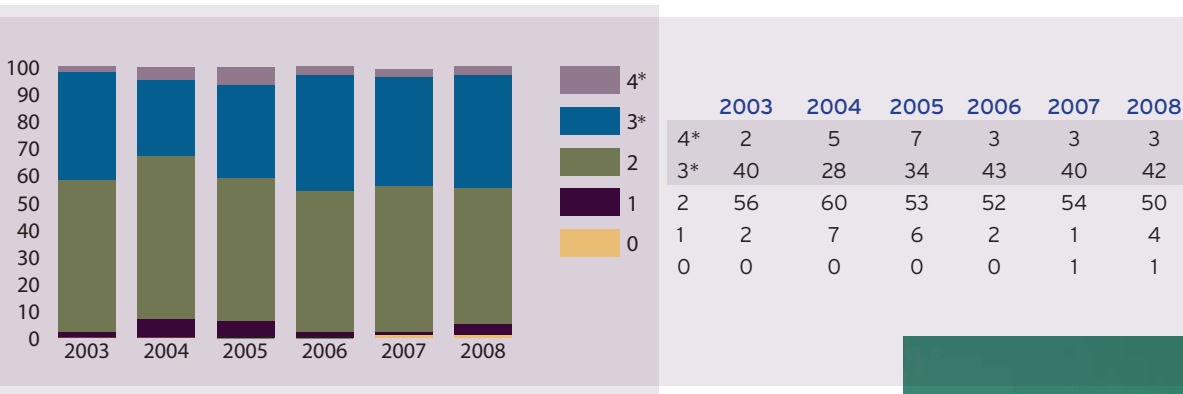
PERCENT OF 8TH GRADERS WHO MET PANEL RECOMMENDATION SCIENCE TAKS

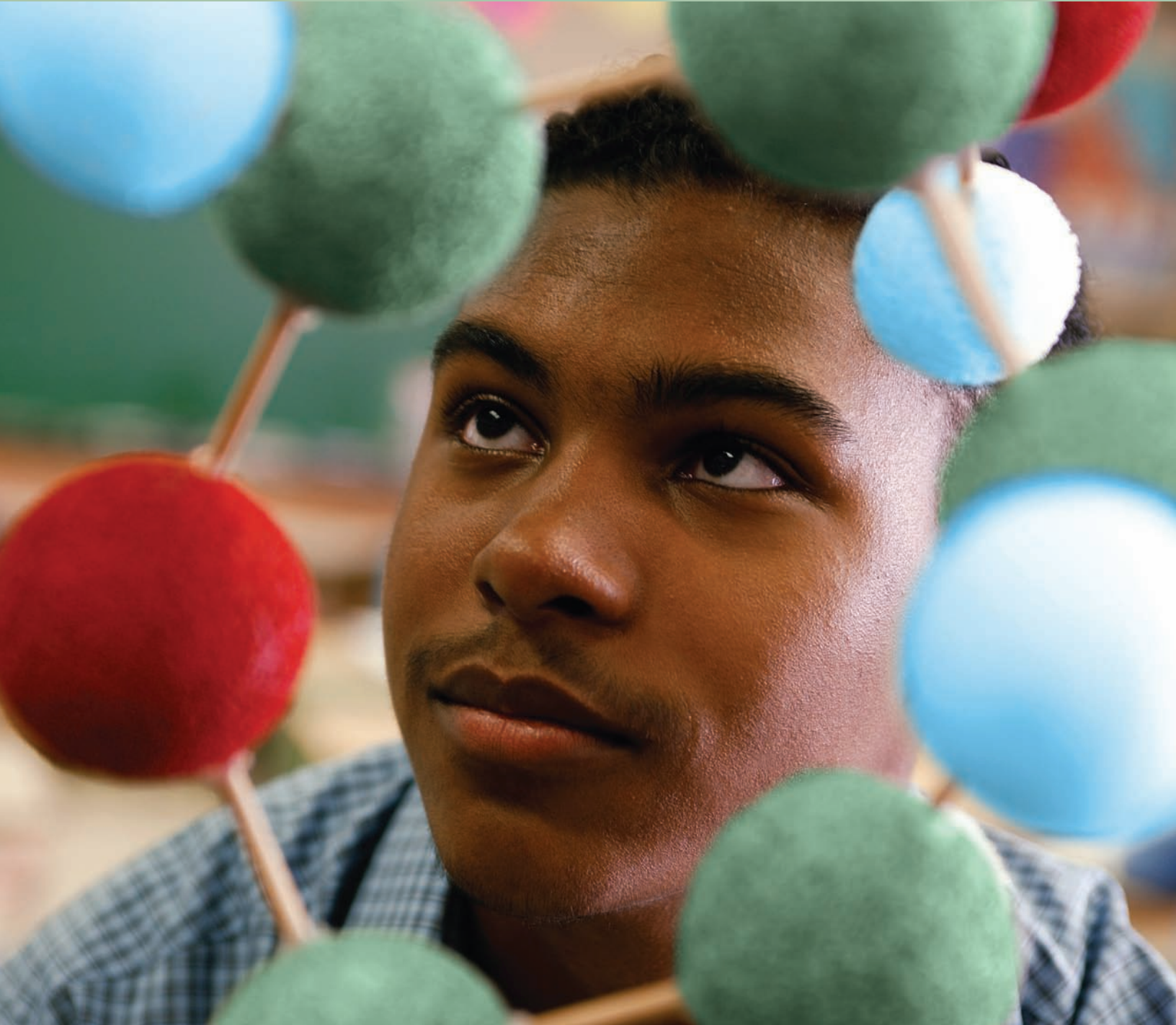


7TH GRADE WRITING TAKS

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:

- Fifth grade reading TAKS passing rates remained steady at 85%.
- Fifth grade math TAKS passing rates dropped for the second straight year.
- Overall third grade reading TAKS passing rates are above 90%.
- Third grade math TAKS passing rates also dropped for a second straight year to 81% from a high of 88%.

### 5TH GRADE TAKS

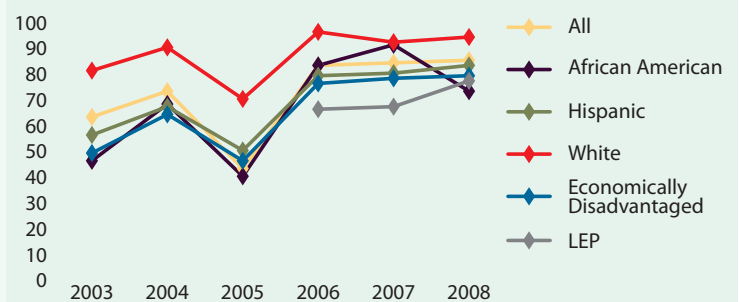
This measure shows the percent of fifth grade students prepared for middle school reading and math by meeting or exceeding the State Board of Education panel's recommended standards on the fifth grade reading and math TAKS. Beginning with the 2004-05 school year, fifth grade students were required to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

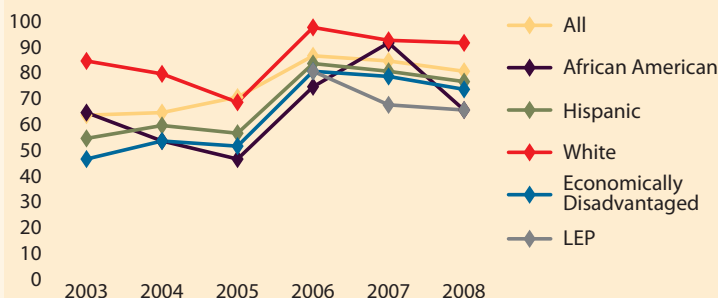
#### PERCENT OF 5TH GRADERS WHO MET PANEL RECOMMENDATION READING TAKS (CUMULATIVE)

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
All	63	73	43	83	84	85
African American	46	68	40	83	91	73
Hispanic	56	67	50	79	80	83
White	81	90	70	96	92	94
Economically Disadvantaged	49	64	46	76	78	79
LEP*	**	**	**	66	67	77

\*Limited English Proficient  
\*\* Data not available



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



	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
All	63	64	70	86	84	80
African American	64	53	46	74	91	65
Hispanic	54	59	56	83	80	76
White	84	79	68	97	92	91
Economically Disadvantaged	46	53	51	80	78	73
LEP*	**	**	**	80	67	65

\*Limited English Proficient  
\*\* Data not available



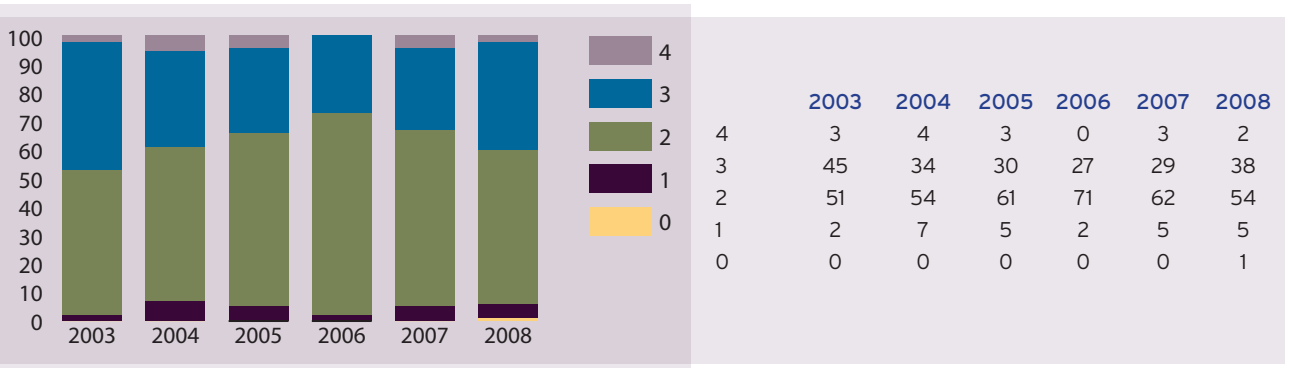
## ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PREPARATION FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL

### 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

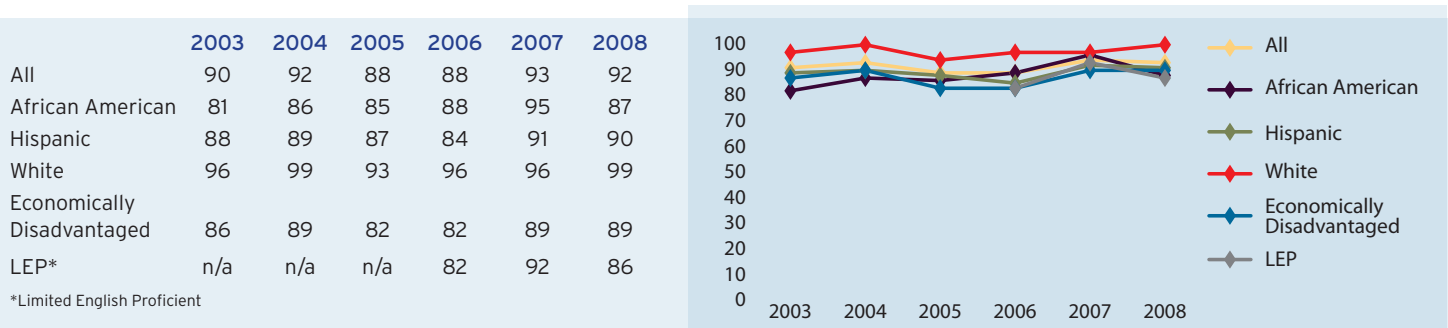


### 3RD GRADE TAKS

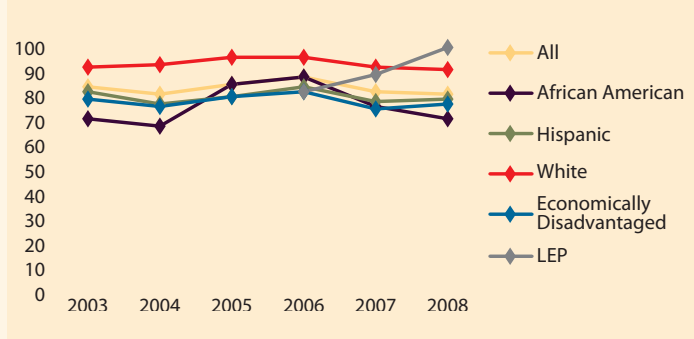
Percent of third grade students who demonstrated sufficient reading and math skills to meet the State Board of Education panel's recommended standard on the third grade reading and math TAKS.

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	84	81	85	88	82	81
African American	71	68	85	88	76	71
Hispanic	82	77	80	84	78	79
White	92	93	96	96	92	91
Economically Disadvantaged	79	76	80	82	75	77
LEP*	**	**	**	82	89	100

\*Limited English Proficient  
\*\* Data not available



## 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 San Marcos CISD'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 San Marcos CISD with other area, Texas or U.S. school districts. The intent of this report is to compare San Marcos CISD'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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