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Texas Public Schools Today and Tomorrow: Call to Action and Agenda for Success

Student Performance in Texas Public Schools

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How well are students doing in Texas public schools? How do they compare with students in other states? Are Texas graduates equipped with the skills necessary to succeed in skilled employment, college, and vocational training? What must we do to raise student performance to a level of proficiency that is competitive nationally and internationally? The answers to these questions should frame a long-term agenda of comprehensive K-12 reform.

How well are elementary and middle school students doing in Texas?

This question must be considered in several different ways—looking at how students meet state standards, as well as national standards, by comparing performance of Texas students with their peers in other states, and by evaluating trends over time.

- Elementary and middle school students demonstrate very strong academic achievement on state assessments (TAKS), even though passing standards have increased almost annually. In 2004-05, 62 percent of students passed all of the state assessments.¹
- On the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), Texas scored at or above national average on all 4th and 8th grade tests in reading, writing, mathematics, and science with the exceptions of 8th grade reading and science, as shown in the following list.

| NAEP Performance | Texas | U.S. |
|---|-------|------|
| Grade 4 Math Scale Score | 242 | 237 |
| Grade 4 Math % Students at or Above Basic | 87 | 79 |
| Grade 4 Math % Students at or Above Proficient | 40 | 35 |
| Grade 4 Math % Students at or Above Advanced | 5 | 5 |
| Grade 8 Math Scale Score | 281 | 278 |
| Grade 8 Math % Students at or Above Basic | 72 | 68 |
| Grade 8 Math % Students at or Above Proficient | 31 | 28 |
| Grade 8 Math % Students at or Above Advanced | 6 | 6 |
| Grade 4 Reading Scale Score | 219 | 217 |
| Grade 4 Reading % Students at or Above Basic | 64 | 62 |
| Grade 4 Reading % Students at or Above Proficient | ●29 | 30 |
| Grade 4 Reading % Students at or Above Advanced | ●6 | 7 |
| Grade 8 Reading Scale Score | ●258 | 260 |
| Grade 8 Reading % Students at or Above Basic | ●69 | 71 |
| Grade 8 Reading % Students at or Above Proficient | ●26 | 29 |
| Grade 8 Reading % Students at or Above Advanced | ●2 | 3 |
| Grade 4 Science Scale Score | 150 | 149 |
| Grade 4 Science % Students at or Above Basic | 66 | 66 |
| Grade 4 Science % Students at or Above Proficient | ●25 | 27 |
| Grade 4 Science % Students at or Above Advanced | 2 | 2 |
| Grade 8 Science Scale Score | ●143 | 147 |
| Grade 8 Science % Students at or Above Basic | ●53 | 57 |
| Grade 8 Science % Students at or Above Proficient | ●23 | 27 |
| Grade 8 Science % Students at or Above Advanced | ●2 | 3 |
| Grade 4 Writing Scale Score | 154 | 153 |
| Grade 4 Writing % Students at or Above Basic | ●84 | 85 |
| Grade 4 Writing % Students at or Above Proficient | 29 | 27 |
| Grade 4 Writing % Students at or Above Advanced | 3 | 2 |
| Grade 8 Writing Scale Score | 152 | 152 |
| Grade 8 Writing % Students at or Above Basic | ●83 | 84 |
| Grade 8 Writing % Students at or Above Proficient | 31 | 30 |
| Grade 8 Writing % Students at or Above Advanced | 2 | 2 |

● Denotes Texas score is below U.S.

Source: National Assessment of Educational Progress, National Center for Education Statistics, <http://nces.ed.gov>. Writing data is from 2002, math and reading data is from 2005, and science data is from 2006.

- When Texas NAEP scores are broken down by ethnicity, 4th and 8th grade students outperformed the national average on tests of science, reading, and math.²
- Achievement gains by Texas 4th and 8th grade Hispanic and African students in NAEP reading and math shown below are narrowing the achievement gap, with the single exception of Hispanic 8th grade reading. Changes in the achievement gap suggest it will take approximately 65 years for Texas Hispanic and African-American students to erase educational disadvantages associated with—but not caused by—race and ethnicity. Today, 4th and 8th grade Hispanic and African-American students lag approximately two years of schooling behind their White/Anglo peers in Texas public schools (10 points on NAEP equates to one year of schooling). Despite this gap, Hispanic and African-American students are achieving larger academic gains in Texas than their peers in most other states.³

NAEP Grade 4 Reading Achievement Gap 1998-2005

| Texas Students | 1998 | | 2005 | | 1998-2005 Change in Gap | Time Required to Close the Gap |
|--------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| | Scores | Difference | Scores | Difference | | |
| White & Hispanic | 232 vs 206 | 26 | 232 vs 210 | 22 | -4 (Closing) | 44 Years |
| White & African-American | 232 vs 193 | 39 | 232 vs 206 | 26 | -13 (Closing) | 16 Years |

Sources: *National Assessment of Educational Progress, National Center for Education Statistics – NAEP State Reading 2002 Report, and The Nation’s Report Card Snapshot Report, State Reading 2003 & 2005.* Time required to close the gap calculated by dividing the 1998-2005 change in gap by 8 years and dividing the resulting number into the 2005 scale point difference [example: White & Hispanic Gap was calculated by (1) dividing 4 points by 8 (which is the number of years between 1998 & 2005) = .5 annual rate of change, and (2) dividing the 22 point gap for 2005 by .5).

NAEP Grade 8 Reading Achievement Gap 1998-2005

| Texas Students | 1998 | | 2005 | | 1998-2005 Change in Gap | Time Required to Close the Gap |
|--------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| | Scores | Difference | Scores | Difference | | |
| White & Hispanic | 272 vs 251 | 21 | 270 vs 248 | 22 | +1 (Widening) | n/a |
| White & African-American | 272 vs 245 | 27 | 270 vs 246 | 24 | -3 (Closing) | 63 Years |

Sources: Same as above.

NAEP Grade 4 Mathematics Achievement Gap 1996-2005

| Texas Students | 1996 | | 2005 | | 1996-2005 Change in Gap | Time Required to Close the Gap |
|--------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| | Scores | Difference | Scores | Difference | | |
| White & Hispanic | 242 vs 216 | 26 | 254 vs 235 | 19 | -7 (Closing) | 27 Years |
| White & African-American | 242 vs 212 | 30 | 254 vs 228 | 26 | -4 (Closing) | 65 Years |

Sources: National Assessment of Educational Progress, National Center for Education Statistics – NAEP State Mathematics 2000 Report, The Nation’s Report Card Snapshot Report, State Reading 2003 & 2005, and The Nation’s Report Card Mathematics 2005. Time required to close the gap calculated by dividing the point value of the 1996-2005 change in gap by 9 years and dividing the resulting number into the 2005 scale point difference.

NAEP Grade 8 Mathematics Achievement Gap 1996-2005

| Texas Students | 1996 | | 2005 | | 1996-2005 Change in Gap | Time Required to Close the Gap |
|--------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| | Scores | Difference | Scores | Difference | | |
| White & Hispanic | 285 vs 256 | 29 | 295 vs 271 | 24 | -5 (Closing) | 40 Years |
| White & African-American | 285 vs 249 | 36 | 295 vs 264 | 31 | -5 (Closing) | 52 Years |

Sources: Same as above.

- NAEP scores shown below indicate 4th and 8th grade reading proficiency is relatively low for all racial and ethnic groups in Texas public schools, but particularly low for Hispanic and African-American students (although state scores do approximate national average for reading At or Above Proficient). From 1998 to present, the percentage of students showing reading mastery slightly declined for Texas 4th and 8th grade students.

Texas NAEP Reading Grade 4

| | 1998 | | 2003 | | 2005 | | Scale Change 1998 - 2005 |
|------------------------|--------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-----------------------------------|
| | Scale | A/AP* | Scale | A/AP* | Scale | A/AP* | |
| | Nation | 215 | 29% | 216 | 30% | 217 | |
| Texas PS | 217 | 29% | 215 | 27% | 219 | 29% | +2 |
| Asian | 213 | 32% | 229 | 39% | 234 | 47% | +21 |
| Black/African American | 193 | 11% | 202 | 15% | 206 | 15% | +13 |
| Latino/Hispanic | 206 | 17% | 205 | 17% | 210 | 19% | +4 |
| White | 232 | 52% | 227 | 39% | 232 | 44% | 0 |

* A/AP signifies percent performing at or above proficiency

Texas NAEP Reading - Grade 8

| | 1998 | | 2003 | | 2005 | | Scale |
|------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------------|
| | Scale | A/AP* | Scale | A/AP* | Scale | A/AP* | Change |
| | | | | | | | 1998 2005 |
| Nation | 261 | 31% | 261 | 30% | 260 | 29% | -1 |
| Texas PS | 262 | 28% | 259 | 26% | 258 | 26% | -4 |
| Asian | 272 | 46% | 272 | 36% | 280 | 50% | +8 |
| Black/African American | 245 | 12% | 247 | 13% | 246 | 14% | +1 |
| Latino/Hispanic | 251 | 14% | 247 | 15% | 248 | 15% | -3 |
| White | 272 | 38% | 272 | 39% | 270 | 39% | -2 |

* A/AP signifies percent performing at or above proficiency

Sources for both Grade 4 and Grade 8 Reading tables: National Assessment of Educational Progress, National Center for Education Statistics – NAEP State Reading 2002 Report, and The Nation’s Report Card Snapshot Report, State Reading 2003 & 2005.

- NAEP scores shown below indicate that math proficiency is relatively high for all student groups in Texas public schools at 4th grade, but low for 8th grade. The state average for students achieving At or Above Proficient is 31 percent, a number that is relatively low although the state score is just above national average.

Texas NAEP Math - Grade 4

| | 1996 | | 2000 | | 2003 | | 2005 | | Scale |
|------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------------|
| | Scale | A/AP* | Scale | A/AP* | Scale | A/AP* | Scale | A/AP* | Change |
| | | | | | | | | | 1996 2005 |
| Nation | 222 | 20% | 226 | 25% | 234 | 32% | 237 | 35% | +15 |
| Texas PS | 229 | 25% | 233 | 27% | 237 | 33% | 242 | 40% | +13 |
| Asian | ** | ** | 247 | 48% | 258 | 62% | 264 | 72% | **+17 |
| Black/African American | 212 | 7% | 220 | 12% | 226 | 16% | 228 | 18% | +16 |
| Latino/Hispanic | 216 | 11% | 224 | 14% | 230 | 21% | 235 | 28% | +19 |
| White | 242 | 40% | 243 | 41% | 248 | 50% | 254 | 60% | +12 |

* A/AP signifies percent performing at or above proficiency

** 2000 - 2005 only. No data for 1996.

| | 1996 | | 2000 | | 2003 | | 2005 | | Scale |
|------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------------|
| | Scale | A/AP* | Scale | A/AP* | Scale | A/AP* | Scale | A/AP* | Change |
| | | | | | | | | | 1996 2005 |
| Nation | 271 | 27% | 274 | 26% | 276 | 27% | 278 | 29% | +7 |
| Texas PS | 270 | 24% | 275 | 24% | 277 | 25% | 281 | 31% | +11 |
| Asian | 299 | 57% | 292 | 42% | 303 | 58% | 308 | 61% | +9 |
| Black/African American | 249 | 5% | 252 | 6% | 260 | 8% | 264 | 13% | +15 |
| Latino/Hispanic | 256 | 8% | 266 | 14% | 267 | 13% | 271 | 19% | +15 |
| White | 285 | 33% | 288 | 37% | 290 | 38% | 295 | 46% | +10 |

* A/AP signifies percent performing at or above proficiency

Sources for both Grade 4 and Grade 8 Math tables: *National Assessment of Educational Progress, National Center for Education Statistics – NAEP State Mathematics 2000 Report, The Nation’s Report Card Snapshot Report, State Reading 2003 & 2005, and The Nation’s Report Card Mathematics 2005.*

How well are students in high schools doing in Texas?

This question also must be considered in several different ways—looking at how students meet state standards, as well as national standards, by comparing performance of Texas students with their peers in other states, and by evaluating trends over time.

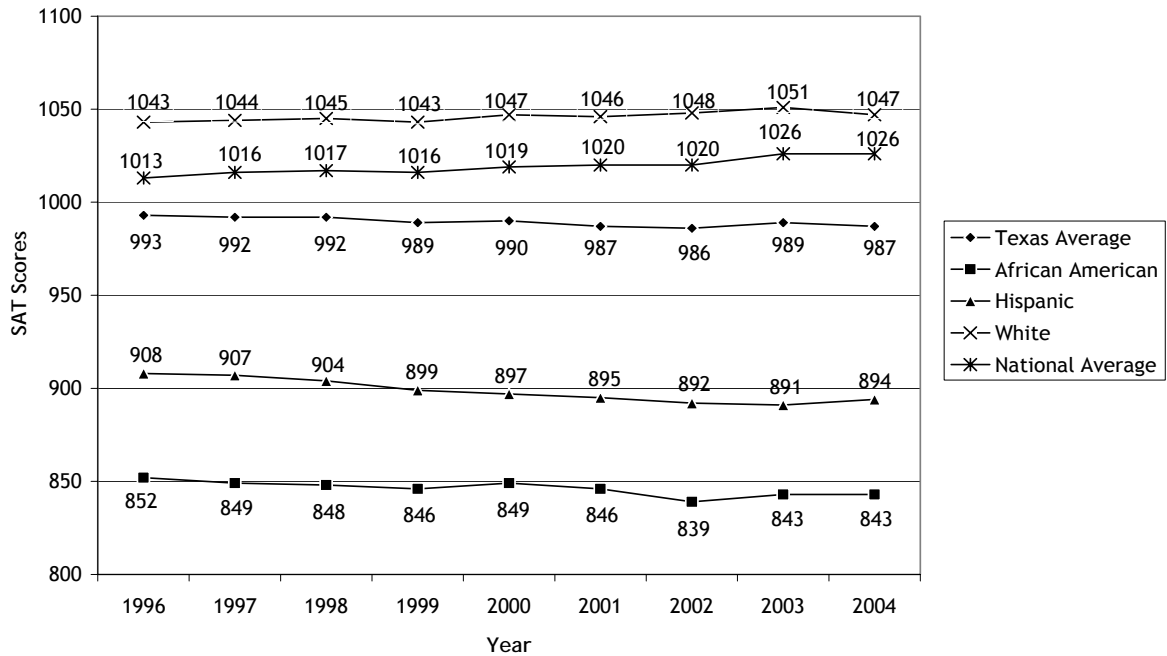
- Passing rates on state assessments provide limited information about student achievement because passing standards have been increased annually since 2003 when TAKS replaced TAAS. In 2005, 62 percent of students passed all tests, down from 68 percent passing all TAKS tests in 2005.⁴ From 1992 to 2002, the passing rate on all assessments increased from 44.6 to 85.3 percent.^{5/6} In 2005, 91 percent of the class of 2005 passed the 11th grade exit-level TAKS.⁷
- A sample of Texas students at grade 11 and grades 3-8 who took the Iowa Tests during the 2004-05 school year, generally scored above national average in middle school, but at or just below national average in most subject areas.⁸
- Between 2004 and 2005, there was an 11 percent increase in the number of Advanced Placement tests taken, with a 6 percent increase in the number of exams scored as 3+ (acceptable for college credit).⁹
- Enrollment in the state’s “college prep” curriculum, the Recommended/Distinguished Achievement High School Program, increased from 15 percent in 2000 to 68.5 percent in 2005.¹⁰
- Texas’ high school graduation rate, although one of the most important outcomes of the entire public education system is highly debated; numbers vary depending on how the

rate is calculated. Not debated is (1) the state graduation rate is slowly rising; and (2) today one out of four or five Texas students leave public schools before graduation.

- | | |
|---|--|
| ▪ Texas Education Agency ¹¹ | 84.6% Graduation Rate 2004 |
| ▪ Intercultural Developmental Research Assoc. ¹² | 64.0% Attrition Rate Remainder 2004 |
| ▪ The Graduation Project 2006 (<i>Education Week</i>) ¹³ | 66.8% Graduation Rate 2003 |
| ▪ Manhattan Institute ¹⁴ | 69.0% Graduation Rate 2003 |
| ▪ Urban Institute ¹⁵ | 65.0% Cumulative Promotion Rate 2001 |
| ▪ National Center for Education Statistics ¹⁶ | 75.5% Averaged Freshman Graduation Rate 2003 |

- On the College Board's test of postsecondary readiness, mean SAT scores of Texas high school students remained virtually unchanged from 1996 to 2004, while the achievement gap between student groups increased. Scores stagnate even though the percentage of Texas students taking the SAT continues to decline.¹⁷ Compared with scores of other states, Texas posted the 3rd lowest SAT scores in the nation in 2004.¹⁸ (2004 is the most recent year for which the Texas Education Agency's publication *Pocket Edition* identifies SAT scores of public school students, a number different from that reported by the College Board because the agency differentiates between public and private school scores.) As shown in the table below, the achievement gap between Texas Hispanic and White students widened by 18 points, while the gap between African-American and White students widened by 13 points in the years between 1996 and 2004. Also shown below is the gap between scores of Hispanic, African-American, and White students in Texas public schools in 2004; the difference between Hispanic and White scores and African-American and White scores was 153 points and 204 points, respectively.

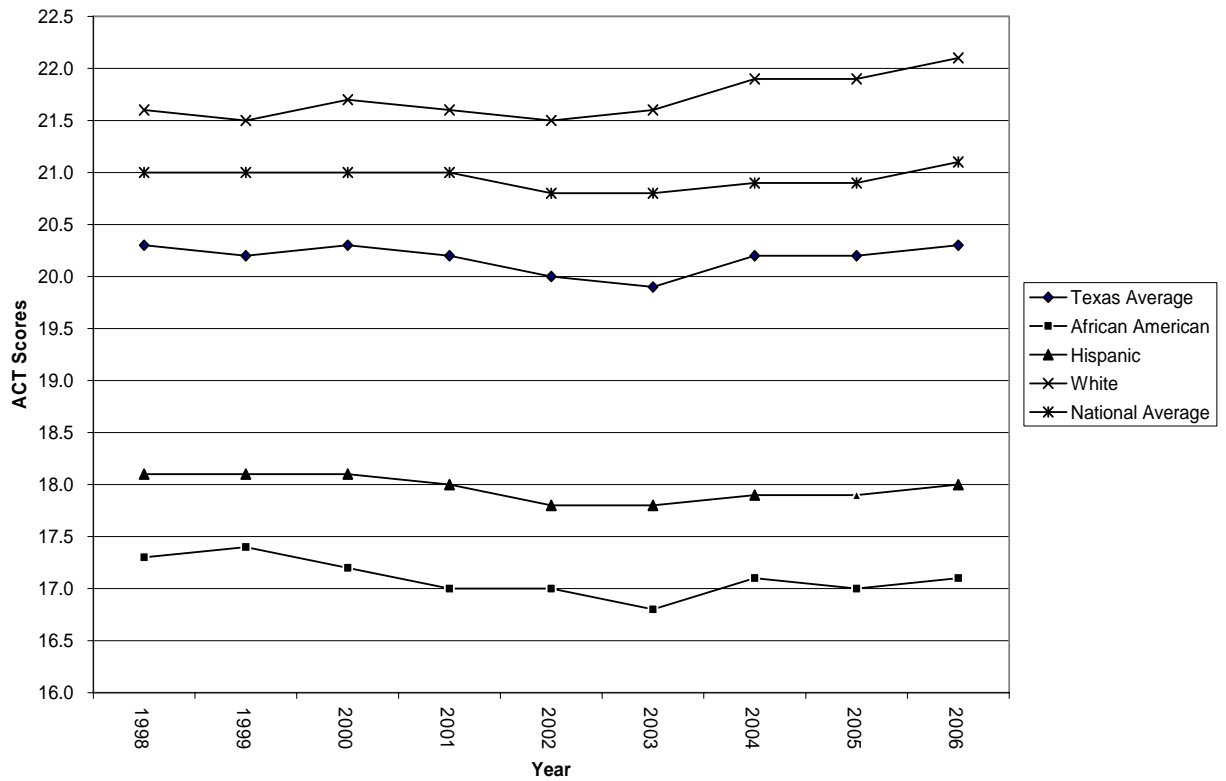
Mean SAT Scores of Texas Students



Sources: Texas Education Agency, Pocket Edition, Texas Public School Statistics 1996-97, 1997-98, 1998-99, 1999-2000, 2000-01, 2001-02, 2002-03 & 2003-04, and The College Board, 2005 College-Bound Seniors. Scores for 2005 are not included in this graph because public school scores have not yet been made available (College Board scores include private school test-takers).

- On the ACT test of postsecondary readiness, average scores of Texas high school students also remain substantially unchanged from 1998 to present, and the achievement gap between student groups continues to grow. Scores stagnate even though the percentage of students taking the ACT in Texas continues to decline.¹⁹ Only 18 percent of the graduating class of 2006 demonstrated the academic skills required for success in college freshman studies,²⁰ and in 2006 only five states posted lower ACT scores than Texas.²¹ As shown in the table below, the achievement gap between Texas Hispanic and White students, and African-American and White students both increased by .5 points between 1998 and 2005; in 2005, Hispanic and African-American students scored four points lower than their White counterparts in Texas public schools (a point gap that equates to an average ACT score that is approximately 20 percent lower than the score posted by White students).

Average ACT Composite Scores



Source: ACT, *The High School Profile Report, H.S. Graduating Class 2005*, and *State Composite for Texas, 2006*.

- SAT and ACT scores indicates the achievement gap between student groups continues to widen in Texas high schools, as shown below. The academic disadvantage carried by Hispanic and African-American students from elementary to high school persists through graduation.

SAT Achievement Gap 1996-2004

| Texas Students | 1996 | | 2004 | | 1996-2004 Change in Gap | Time Required to Close the Gap |
|--------------------------|-------------|------------|-------------|------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| | Scores | Difference | Scores | Difference | | |
| White & Hispanic | 1043 vs 908 | 135 | 1047 vs 894 | 153 | +18 (Widening) | n/a |
| White & African-American | 1043 vs 852 | 191 | 1047 vs 843 | 204 | +13 (Widening) | n/a |

ACT Achievement Gap 1998-2005

| Texas Students | 1998 | | 2005 | | 1998-2005 Change in Gap | Time Required to Close the Gap |
|--------------------------|--------------|------------|--------------|------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| | Scores | Difference | Scores | Difference | | |
| White & Hispanic | 21.6 vs 18.1 | 3.5 | 21.9 vs 17.9 | 4 | +.5 (Widening) | n/a |
| White & African-American | 21.6 vs 17.3 | 4.3 | 21.9 vs 17.0 | 4.9 | +.5 (Widening) | n/a |

Sources for both SAT and ACT Achievement Gap tables: Texas Education Agency, Pocket Edition, Texas Public School Statistics 1996-97, 1997-98, 1998-99, 1999-2000, 2000-01, 2001-02, 2002-03 & 2003-04, The College Board, College Bound Seniors 2004 SAT Scores & ACT Texas Report 2005.

- Weak postsecondary readiness constricts the pipeline from public schools to higher education and training. Only 63 percent of Texas graduates transition from high school to college—this is the 9th lowest rate in the nation.²² The percentage of students bridging from high school to higher education has not increased since 2000.²³
- Weak academics constrict the pipeline yet further once students reach higher education. Fifty-two percent of fulltime college freshman in state institutions of higher education require remedial courses,²⁴ and only 52 percent of students graduate from state universities in six years—Texas higher education graduation rate is 5th lowest in the nation.²⁵

What conclusions can be drawn about the academic strengths and weaknesses of Texas public schools?

Strengths

- ✓ The majority of students pass all grade-level state assessments despite rising passing standards
- ✓ Students in K-8 are generally scoring at or slightly above national average
- ✓ The achievement gap is slowly being reduced in K-8
- ✓ Each major ethnic group in K-8 outperforms the national average for their racial/ethnic peers
- ✓ K-8 Hispanic & African-American students achieve larger gains than peers in most states

Weaknesses

- ✓ K-8 Hispanic & African-American students lag two years of schooling behind Anglo classmates
- ✓ K-8 achievement gap is narrowing too slowly—65 years to close gap at current rate
- ✓ 8th grade reading performance is below national average and declining
- ✓ Proficiency achieved by K-8 in math and reading is too low to support advanced studies
- ✓ Although more high school students are taking a more rigorous curriculum, academic proficiency of graduates is unimproved
- ✓ Approximately one of four students fail to graduate from Texas public schools
- ✓ Of all graduates, only 17 percent acquire skills necessary to succeed in college, training, or work
- ✓ The achievement gap associated with race and ethnicity widens in Texas high schools

- ✓ Weak academic proficiency of high school graduates constricts the pipeline to postsecondary education and training
- ✓ Texas higher education graduation rate is 5th lowest in U.S.
- ✓ Key public school outcomes—graduation rate combined with postsecondary readiness—place Texans at a competitive disadvantage both nationally and internationally

What must Texans do to raise student achievement to the level of performance that is nationally and internationally competitive?

To equip Texas students with the skills required to compete in today’s global, knowledge-based economy, we must establish an agenda for comprehensive, systemic, and long-term reform. This agenda is outlined below and will be detailed in subsequent issue papers.

- *Higher Standards for Teaching and Learning:* Strengthen the state curriculum standards, the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), establish explicit, objective, and measurable benchmarks for academic proficiency K-12, and identify the reforms necessary for moving students enrolled in public schools from the current level of performance to a level of proficiency that is competitive both nationally and internationally.
- *New, Better Assessments:* Strengthen the state’s criterion-referenced assessments and supplement them with norm-referenced tests, add end-of-course exams for core high school courses, correlate exit assessments with post-secondary readiness expectations, and use results of value-added student assessments for teacher appraisals, teacher preparation, accreditation of teacher preparation programs, and the school accountability system, particularly for evaluating the performance of charter and alternative schools.
- *Higher Standards for Academic and Financial Accountability:* Significantly increase the state standards for school district and campus performance, eliminate the Alternative Accountability System and use results of value-added assessments for rating all schools, hold schools accountable for workplace/college readiness, as determined by the ACT and SAT, and accelerate serious consequences for underperforming districts and campuses. Develop and implement a financial accountability rating system that distinguishes among districts’ financial performance, brings additional transparency to education finance, and establishes productivity standards down to the campus level.
- *Attack the Reading Crisis:* Improve the system of accrediting, preparing, certifying, and evaluating K-8 teachers by assessing all according to the value they add to student reading proficiency; change state policies to give teachers responsibility for classroom instruction by replacing learner-centered instruction with teacher-centered instruction; establish credentials for a K-8 Reading Specialist; create a new, improved K-8 Texas Reading Initiative with revised rigorous standards for reading and reading assessments.
- *Increase Educator Effectiveness:* Expand alternative educator preparation and certification; expand new teacher mentoring; aggressively recruit non-traditional leadership for school administration; enhance professional development; create new career paths for teachers; adopt the Koret Texas Task Force recommendation for professional contracts for educators; introduce performance-based compensation for all educators based on value-added evaluation; and establish policies for mandatory remediation for ineffective educators leading to dismissal.
- *Accelerate Deregulation and Innovation:* Encourage districts to develop new, better ways of serving students, particularly for high school students, and allow wide-ranging authority at the district level for deregulation of human resource management as well as innovations in scheduling and delivery; establish new, rigorous standards for charter schools, with expanded authority for charters and equalized funding, and base continued accreditation on results of value-added assessments; adopt district and statewide public school choice; award scholarships to students with special education needs; provide district-funded transfers to students in failing schools; and establish a virtual/electronic high school program for all students in Texas public schools.

For more information, including access to other papers in this policy series, visit TIER at www.texaseducationreform.org.

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Endnotes:

¹ *Pocket Edition 2004-05, Texas Public School Statistics*, Texas Education Agency, Austin, TX, 2006.

² “Texas students outperform national average on three of four NAEP tests,” *Texas Education Agency News*, Oct. 19, 2005, <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/comm/page1.html>; and “Texas students outperform peer groups on NAEP science exam,” *Texas Education Agency News*, May 24, 2006, <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/comm/page1.html>.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Pocket Edition 2004-05 & 2003-04, Texas Public School Statistics*, Texas Education Agency, Austin, TX, 2006 & 2005.

⁵ *Pocket Edition 2001-02 & 1992, Texas Public School Statistics*, Texas Education Agency, Austin, TX, 2003 & 1993.

⁶ *Pocket Edition 1999-2000 & 2004-05, Texas Public School Statistics*, Texas Education Agency, Austin, TX, 2001 & 2006.

⁷ *2005 Comprehensive Annual Report on Texas Public Schools*, Texas Education Agency, Austin, TX, 2005, pg. 25.

⁸ Stephen B. Dunbar, Michelle A. Mengling and Sara C. Hennings, *Texas National Comparative Data Study*, Iowa Tests and The Riverside Publishing Company, prepared for the Texas Education Agency, 2006, pg. v, <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/student.assessment/resources/ncds/TXNCDS.pdf>.

⁹ *Texas Public Schools, Advanced Placement Program & Performance*, College Board, New York, NY 2006.

¹⁰ *Pocket Edition, 2000-01 & 2004-05, Texas Public School Statistics*, Texas Education Agency, Austin, TX, 2002 & 2006.

¹¹ *Pocket Edition, 2004-05, Texas Public School Statistics*.

¹² “Little improvement in Texas school holding power, Texas public attrition study 2004-05,” *IDRA Newsletter*, October 2005, Intercultural Developmental Research Association, <http://www.Newsltr/2005/Oct/Roy/htm>.

¹³ *Diplomas Count – Texas*, The Graduation Project, Editorial Projects in Education Research Center, *Education Week*, <http://www.edweek.org/rc>, 2006.

¹⁴ Jay P. Greene and Marcus A. Winters, *Leaving Boys Behind: Public High School Graduation Rates*, Manhattan Institute, 2006, http://www.manhattan-institute.org/html/cr_48.htm.

¹⁵ Daria Hall, *Getting Honest About Grad Rates*, The Education Trust, 2005, <http://www2.edtrust.org/edtrust>.

¹⁶ *The Averaged Freshman Graduation Rate for Public High Schools from the Common Core of Data: School Years 2002-03 and 2003-04*, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data, and U.S. Department of Education, 2006, <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2006/2006606rev.pdf>.

¹⁷ “Texas High Schools Today,” *Statewide Education Insights*, Texas, Standard & Poor’s School Evaluation Services, pg. 10, http://www.schoolmatters.com/pdf/state_reports/STX/pdf.

¹⁸ *2005 College-Bound Seniors Tables & Related Items*, Table 3, College Board, <http://www.collegeboard.com>.

¹⁹ “Texas High Schools Today.”

²⁰ *Act High School Profile Report: The Graduating Class of 2006 – Texas*, ACT, Figure 1.1, Austin, TX, 2006.

²¹ 2005 ACT National and State Scores, <http://www.act.org/news/data/05/states.htm>.

²² *Measuring Up 2004, The National Report Card on Higher Education*, National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, and *State Comparison Results: Index Scores Participation, 2005*, <http://www.higheducation.org>.

²³ *Closing the Gaps by 2015: 2005 Progress Report*, Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, Austin, TX, 2005, pg. 5.

²⁴ *Texas Public Community and Technical Colleges 2004 Statewide Fact Book*, Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, Austin, TX, 2005, pgs. IV-IX.

²⁵ *Closing the Gaps by 2015: 2005 Progress Report*, pg. 5, and *Measuring Up 2004, The National Report Card on Higher Education*, 2005.