

# Advanced Academic Services Program, 2004-05

REIS05-156-4

## At a Glance

In November 1996, *The Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted/Talented Students* was adopted by the State Board of Education to create a model for designing quality program services that meet the needs of advanced and gifted learners. In the Dallas Independent School District, these program services consist of two components: (1) the Talented and Gifted Program (TAG), Grades K-8, and Advanced Academic Courses, Grades 7-12. The K-6 TAG component serves identified gifted students who are nominated, screened, and selected by an Admission, Review and Exit (ARE) committee. In Grades 7-8, the TAG Interdisciplinary Seminar is typically offered to identified students as an elective course. Secondary students in Grades 7-12 may enroll in Pre-Advanced Placement (Pre-AP) or Advanced Placement (AP) courses. In addition, four magnet schools (Polk Vanguard, Spence Academy, Travis Vanguard and Academy, and the TAG Magnet High School) serve identified gifted students from across the district.

### TAG Program Enrollment

**Elementary program.** The number of students served in the elementary TAG program during the spring 2005 semester was 13,651, or 15.5% of the district's Grades K-6 enrollment of 88,264. The percent of students served ranged from 6% at Kindergarten to 20% at Grade 5.

The total DISD student population in Grades K-6 was 65.6% Hispanic, 27.8% African American, 5.3% White, 1.0% Asian American, and 0.2% Native American. The student population served by the elementary TAG program was 59.7% Hispanic, 27.8% African American, 9.2% White, 2.3% Asian American, and 0.3% Native American.

**Middle school program.** The number of students enrolled in middle school TAG Interdisciplinary Seminar courses was 1,669, or 8% of the district's Grades 7-8 enrollment of 21,780.

The total DISD student population in Grades 7-8 was 59.4% Hispanic, 33.6% African

American, 5.7% White, 1.0% Asian American, and 0.3% Native American. TAG Interdisciplinary Seminar Enrollment was 59.2% Hispanic, 31.2% African American, 6.7% White, 2.6% Asian American, and 0.4% Native American.

TEA guidelines state that an "exemplary" program is one in which "the population of the gifted/talented program reflects the population of the total district or has for two of the past three years." The DISD elementary and middle school TAG program meets TEA standards for "exemplary" performance according to this criterion.

### Advanced Academic Courses, Grades 7-12

Curriculum for Pre-Advanced Placement (Pre-AP) and Advanced Placement (AP) courses is differentiated to include a wider range and greater depth of the subject matter covered in the regular class. The purpose of these courses is to prepare students early in their careers for participation in advanced course work.

A total of 5,469 students in Grades 7-8 were enrolled in middle school Pre-AP classes during the fall semester of 2004 and 5,293 in spring 2005. Approximately 25% of middle school students were enrolled in at least one Pre-AP class during spring 2005.

In Grades 9-12, a total of 12,032 students were enrolled in Pre-AP and AP classes during fall 2004 and 11,735 in spring 2005. Almost 32% of Grades 9-12 students were enrolled in at least one Pre-AP or AP class.

### Historical Enrollment

The percent of Grades 7-8 students enrolled in Pre-AP courses decreased from 28.9% of total Grades 7-8 enrollment in 2000-01 to 22.3% in 2003-04, but increased to 24.6% in 2004-05.

In Grades 9-12, Pre-AP and AP enrollment increased 20% between 2000-01 to 2004-05, from 9,768 to 11,735. The increase in enrollment in advanced classes was greater

than the total district 9-12 enrollment increase of 7% over the same time period.

Enrollment in advanced classes has increased among all student ethnic groups over the past five years. For Hispanic students in Grades 9-12, percentage enrollment in advanced classes increased from 23.3% to 28.5%; for African American students, from 26.5% to 29.5%; for White students, from 52.5% to 60.1%; for Asian American students, from 59.5% to 61.9%; and for Native American students, from 27.4% to 44.2%.

### Achievement Outcomes of TAG Students

**TAKS.** Passing rates and Commended Performance rates of TAG students exceeded those of other district students at all grade levels in all subjects.

In reading, passing rates of TAG students ranged from 86.6% at Grade 10 to 97.3% at Grade 11. Passing rates of other district students ranged from 45.4% at Grade 5 to 79.9% at Grade 11. Commended Performance rates of TAG students ranged from 9.0% at Grade 10 to 60.0% at Grade 6. Commended Performance rates of other district students ranged from 1.4% at Grade 10 to 18.5% at Grade 6.

In mathematics, passing rates of TAG students ranged from 81.0% at Grade 9 to 96.1% at Grade 3. Passing rates of other district students ranged from 26.7% at Grade 9 to 66.3% at Grade 3. Commended Performance rates of TAG students ranged from 17.5% at Grade 10 to 55.2% at Grade 6. Commended Performance rates of other district students ranged from 1.8% at Grades 7 and 9 to 13.6% at Grade 6.

In writing, TAG students' passing rates were 98.0% at Grade 4 and 97.4% at Grade 7. Passing rates of other district students were 79.8% at Grade 4 and 68.5% at Grade 7. Commended Performance rates of TAG students were 32.7% at Grade 4 and 45.1% at Grade 7, compared to 8.1% at Grade 4 and 8.2% at Grade 7 for other district students.

**ITBS.** Reading Comprehension scores of TAG students ranged from 56.7 NCEs at Grade 9 to 82.9 NCEs at Kindergarten. Mathematics Total scores of TAG students ranged from 61.9 NCEs at Grade 9 to 84.4 NCEs at Kindergarten.

Reading and mathematics scores of TAG students exceeded those of other district students. In reading, the difference ranged

from 15.3 NCEs at Kindergarten to 24.8 NCEs at Grade 8. In mathematics, the difference ranged from 20.1 NCEs at Grade 1 to 25.6 NCEs at Grade 7.

**Advanced Placement Examinations.** District students took a total of 8,514 Advanced Placement examinations in 2004-05, an increase of 10.3% over 7,716 examinations taken in 2003-04. The passing rate (the percent of students receiving a 3, 4, or 5) increased slightly, from 28.9% to 30.0% (N=2,556). The largest numbers of examinations taken were in English Language and Composition (1,893), English Literature and Composition (1,217), U. S. History (1,017), Spanish Language (757) and Calculus AB (624).

Passing rates for exams taken by 10 or more students were highest on the Studio Art-3D (85.7%), Studio Art-Drawing (81.8%), and Calculus BC (80.6%) examinations. Passing rates were lowest on the Microeconomics (7.3%), U. S. History (9.8%), U.S. Government and Politics (13.1%), and English Language and Composition (14.6%) examinations.

Schools with the highest passing rates were the Talented and Gifted Magnet (65.2%), Science and Engineering Magnet (63.9%) and Booker T. Washington Arts Magnet (55.9%). Hillcrest had the highest passing rate of any comprehensive high school (44.5%). Three schools had passing rates between 30% and 40%: they were the Education and Social Services Magnet (38.0%), Woodrow Wilson (38.0%), Adamson (36.4%), and Bryan Adams (33.5%).

### Recommendations

- The Advanced Academic Services department should be commended for expanding administrator, teacher, parent and community training opportunities in 2004-05. Also of note is the departmental website, accessible to parents and community, which provides program information and student nomination in English and Spanish.
- While AP passing rates are increasing, results continue to vary widely across schools. Despite AP incentive programs now in place at all district high schools, 13 schools had passing rates below 20%, including 8 with passing rates below 10%. Program management should increase efforts to ensure that curriculum and instruction in advanced classes are equivalent in all district schools.