

# College and Career Readiness Department: 2006-2007

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## At a Glance

Established in September 2005, the College and Career Readiness Department is responsible for providing a wide range of high-quality college preparatory tools and services for students and their families, and involving leaders at all levels in establishing policies, programs, and practices to facilitate student transitions toward postsecondary achievement. With its focus of educating and graduating students ready for college and careers, the department directly implements numerous activities (e.g., SAT/ACT preparatory courses) and manages several district programs and departments: Talented and Gifted (TAG), Advanced Placement (AP), and Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) programs; Smaller Learning Communities (SLC); Career and Technology Education (CTE) Department; and Dual Credit (DC) program.

### College and Career Readiness Questionnaire

A random sample of students in CTE, DC, AVID, AP, and DC courses were surveyed. A total of 3,800 students provided usable surveys for analysis. Major findings are presented below, grouped according to the five categories of questions.

**College entrance exams and preparatory courses:** The majority of respondents have taken the *PSAT*; however, less than 20 percent have taken the *ACT* or *SAT*. Only a quarter of the grades 10 through 12 respondents had not yet taken a college entrance exam.

The majority of respondents have not taken a college exam preparatory course. Of those who have not yet completed a course, over three-quarters desire to do so.

**Plans after graduation:** The majority of respondents plan to attend a 4-year college after high school graduation. Technical/trade school was the least popular educational choice.

**College admissions process:** Less than a quarter of the grade 12 students had not begun the college admissions process, while over 75 percent of the students in grades nine through 11 had not done so.

**Knowledge of college and careers:** Over a quarter of the respondents did not have an understanding of college admissions or financial aid requirements.

However, level of understanding increased as grade level increased. On the other hand, over 80 percent of the respondents understand college scholarship opportunities and academic requirements for college.

**Adequacy of High School experience:** Overall, respondents were positive towards their high school experience, with over 85 percent believing they had been prepared for college or a career.

### ACT/SAT Districtwide Initiatives

The College and Career Readiness Department oversaw two major ACT/SAT Districtwide Initiatives: (a) ACT Districtwide Testing Initiative, and (b) Superintendent's Scholars program. Each initiative was a product of the district goal of increasing student participation and performance on college entrance exams and designed to prepare students for college entrance exams.

The ACT Districtwide Testing Initiative was implemented in two parts: (a) training conducted by the Princeton Review of one English and one math teacher from each of the district high schools; and (b) implementation of ACT prep sessions by teachers receiving the Princeton Review's ACT Districtwide Teacher-2-Teacher Training. Overall, a total of 40 teachers were trained, with 21 of these English teachers and the remaining 19 math teachers. Twenty-one schools sent at least one teacher to the training. Of these schools, 10 (48%) implemented an ACT prep session on their school campus.

Any interested grade nine through 12 student in the district was eligible to participate in the Superintendent's Scholars program, offered during summer school. Eight summer school sites provided the program: Carter, Lincoln, Molina, North Dallas, Pinkston, Samuell, Smith, Spruce, and White. Overall, 135 students participated in the program, with 32 taking the ACT and 103 taking the SAT preparatory courses.

### District Performance Targets: Preliminary Findings

The 2006-2010 Dallas Independent School District Improvement Plan established performance targets in order to assist in meeting its vision of becoming a premier school district within five years. The targets

identify the area-specific performance standards for targeted student populations. Several pertain to college preparation and are therefore pertinent to the evaluation of the College and Career Readiness Department. Figure 1 presents actual 2006-2007 TAKS subtest performance in comparison to established targets, examining the percentage of students participating, passing, and commended for grades nine through 11 as well as the percentage of students meeting the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) standard for grade 11. Across ethnicity and special populations, three performance targets were met: English and Math THECB and percentage passing TAKS Social Studies.

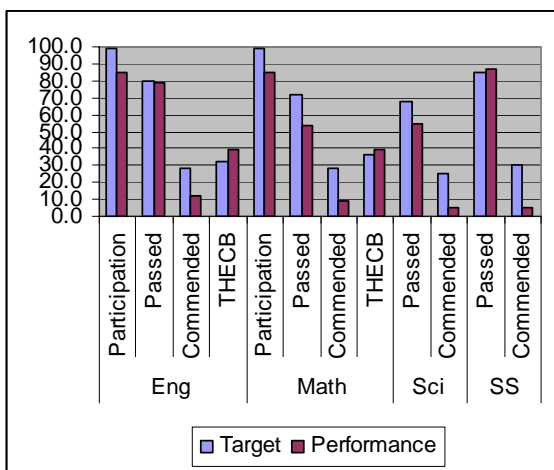


Figure 1. 2006-2007 TAKS subtest results, actual and targeted performance.

### Advanced Placement (AP)

AP incentive programs are partnerships among district schools, area businesses, and the philanthropic community, whereby a private donor provides incentives for students, teachers, and schools to increase AP participation. Three AP incentive programs operate within the district: Roger A. Enrico (RAE), LAMPS<sup>4</sup>, and Texas Instruments Foundation (TIF). The TIF offered incentives to AP math, English and science teachers and students at nine district schools: Adams, Carter, Hillcrest, Molina, North Dallas, Skyline, Wilson, and Schools for the Talented and Gifted, and Science and Engineering at Yvonne A. Ewell Townview Center. The RAE foundation and LAMPS<sup>4</sup> offered incentives to AP math and English teachers and students. The RAE foundation funded AP incentive programs in five high schools: Kimball, Roosevelt, Seagoville, Sunset, and Jefferson. LAMPS<sup>4</sup> was implemented in nine district schools: Adamson, Lincoln, Madison, Pinkston, Samuell, Smith, SOC, Spruce, and Conrad.

Table 1 presents Pre-AP and AP enrollment and the number of students taking and passing AP exams

by AP incentive program. Across AP incentive programs, a total of 6,098 students enrolled in at least one AP course. Across subject areas and AP incentive program, 9,257 AP exams were taken by district students. The passing rate was 27 percent.

Table 1

Pre-AP/AP Enrollment and AP Exams by AP Incentive Program

	TIF	RAE	LAMPS <sup>4</sup>	Total
Pre-AP/AP Enrollment				
Pre-AP	5,903	1,388	1,852	9,143
AP	4,329	732	1,037	6,098
Total	7,960	1,803	2,415	12,178
AP Exam				
Taken	6,828	1,179	1,250	9,257
Passed	2,198	197	114	2,509

### Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID)

The mission of AVID is to ensure that all students, especially the least served students in the academic middle, will (a) succeed in rigorous curriculum; (b) complete a rigorous college preparatory high school degree plan; (c) enter mainstream school activities; (d) increase enrollment in four-year colleges; and (e) become educated, responsible participants and leaders in a democratic society. Major components of AVID are AVID students and parents; AVID staff—coordinator, teachers, site team, and tutors; AVID professional development; AVID curriculum; and AVID elective.

During the 2006-2007 school year, 14 high schools and eight middle schools participated in the AVID program. The AVID program served a total of 426 middle (grades seven and eight) and 800 high school (grades nine through 12) students.

### Career and Technology Education (CTE)

Career and technical programs enable students to gain entry-level employment in a high-skill, high-wage job and/or to continue their education. During 2006-2007, a total of 21,980 high school and 12,999 middle school students enrolled in at least one CTE course. During fall 2006 and spring 2007, over half of the district's high school and close to one-third of the middle school student population enrolled in at least one CTE course.

### Dual Credit (DC)

Dual Credit courses are college courses taken by high school students for which students earn both college and high school credit. During 2006-2007, six schools offered dual credit courses on their respective campuses: Adams, Jefferson, Early College, Pinkston, Townview, and Skyline. Skyline provided students with the most course offerings. A total of 445 and 434 students enrolled in one or more DC courses in the fall 2006 and spring 2007,

respectively. Of these, 293 students were enrolled in at least one year-long dual credit course.