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 fall 2003 semester was 14,831, or 16.5% of the district’s Grades K-6 enrollment of 89,798. The percent of students served ranged from 7% at Kindergarten to 22% at Grade 6.

The total DISD student population in Grades K-6 was 64.1% Hispanic, 28.9% African American, 5.7% White, 1.1% Asian American, and 0.3% Native American. The student population served by the elementary TAG program was 58.0% Hispanic, 30.9% African American, 8.8% White, 2.1% Asian American, and 0.3% Native American.

**Middle school program.** The number of students enrolled in middle school TAG Interdisciplinary Seminar courses was 2,051, or 9% of the district’s Grades 7-8 enrollment of 22,694.

The total DISD student population in Grades 7-8 was 58.0% Hispanic, 34.5% African American, 6.1% White, 1.0% Asian American, and 0.4% Native American. TAG Interdisciplinary Seminar Enrollment was 59.5% Hispanic, 31.5% African American, 6.6% White, 1.8% Asian American, and 0.6% 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 5,232 students in Grades 7-8 were enrolled in middle school Pre-AP classes during the fall semester of 2003 and 4,987 in spring 2004. Approximately 22% of middle school students were enrolled in at least one Pre-AP class during spring 2004.

In Grades 9-12, a total of 12,261 students were enrolled in Pre-AP and AP classes during fall 2003 and 11,164 in spring 2004. Slightly more than 31% of Grades 9-12 students were enrolled in at least one Pre-AP or AP class.

**Historical Enrollment**

TAG program. Enrollment in the elementary TAG program has remained at about the same level, 18% of the K-6 student population, since 1999-2000.

The percentage of each student ethnic group in the TAG program has differed from the percentage of the same group in the district population by less than 6 percentage points in each of the past five years.
Advanced Academic Courses. The percent of Grades 7-8 students enrolled in Pre-AP courses decreased from 29.4% of total Grades 7-8 enrollment in 1999-2000 to 22.3% of total Grades 7-8 enrollment in 2003-2004.

The decrease in Grades 7-8 Pre-AP enrollment was largely due to changes in the curriculum and structure of the middle school mathematics program. While the number of students in Pre-AP classes has temporarily decreased during the transition to a new course structure, the intended outcome is that more students will enter Grade 9 prepared for higher-level mathematics necessary for success on the Grades 10 and 11 TAKS.

The number of students enrolled in Grades 9-12 Pre-AP and AP classes increased 17% between 1999-00 and 2003-04, from 9,896 to 11,614. The increase in enrollment in advanced classes was greater than the total district 9-12 enrollment increase of 10% over the same time period.

Enrollment in advanced classes has increased among all student ethnic groups over the past five years. The percent of Grades 9-12 Hispanic students who enrolled in at least one advanced class increased from 24.7% to 28.0%; the percent of African American students, from 27.2% to 30.9%; the percent of White students, from 53.9% to 57.0%; the percent of Asian American students, from 55.4% to 66.1%; and the percent of Native American students, from 29.0% to 44.1%.

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 92.1% at Grade 5 to 98.0% at Grade 11. Passing rates of other district students ranged from 56.3% at Grade 5 to 81.9% at Grade 11. Commended Performance rates of TAG students ranged from 3.2% at Grade 10 to 48.9% at Grade 3. Commended Performance rates of other district students ranged from 0.3% at Grade 10 to 17.1% at Grade 3.

In mathematics, passing rates of TAG students ranged from 86.1% at Grade 9 to 98.2% at Grade 3. Passing rates of other district students ranged from 33.0% at Grade 9 to 79.5% at Grade 3. Commended Performance rates of TAG students ranged from 11.5% at Grade 7 to 44.7% at Grade 5. Commended Performance rates of other district students ranged from 1.1% at Grade 10 to 12.4% at Grade 3.

In writing, TAG students’ passing rates were 97.7% at Grade 4 and 98.7% at Grade 7, compared to passing rates of other district students of 80.6% at Grade 4 and 79.8% at Grade 7. Commended Performance rates of TAG students were 26.1% at Grade 4 and 33.6% at Grade 7, compared to 5.7% at Grade 4 and 5.2% at Grade 7 for other district students.

ITBS. Reading Comprehension scores of TAG students ranged from 56.7 NCEs at Grade 9 to 82.5 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 14.6 NCEs at Kindergarten to 21.5 NCEs at Grade 7. In mathematics, the difference ranged from 18.7 NCEs at Grade 3 to 23.3 NCEs at Grade 9.

Advanced Placement Examinations. A total of 7,567 Advanced Placement examinations were taken by district students in 2003-2004. Of these, 28.7% (N=2,184) received a passing score of 3, 4, or 5. The largest numbers of examinations taken were in English Language and Composition (1,651), English Literature and Composition (1,039), Spanish Language (650) and Calculus AB (554).

Passing rates were highest on the Spanish Language (86%), Calculus BC (85%), and Studio Art – 2D (72%) examinations. Passing rates were lowest on the Comparative Government and Politics (0%), U.S. Government and Politics (6%), and Microeconomics (7%) examinations.

Schools with the highest passing rates were the Talented and Gifted Magnet (62%) and the Booker T. Washington Arts Magnet (53%). Three schools had passing rates between 40% and 50%: the Science and Engineering Magnet (49%), Woodrow Wilson (44%), and the Education and Social Services Magnet (43%). Five schools had passing rates between 30% and 40%: North Dallas (38%), Bryan Adams (38%), Hillcrest (37%), Sunset (36%) and Adamson (36%).