At-a-Glance

The College and Career Readiness Department was responsible for providing a wide range of high-quality college preparatory tools and services for students and their families that were focused on educating and graduating students ready for college and careers. Of the numerous programs that the department implemented and managed, this evaluation focused on the Advanced Placement (AP) Program, the SAT Reasoning Test (SAT) and American College Test (ACT), and the Dual Credit (DC) program. The AP Program was further analyzed by linking the program with the Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) program and the Destination Graduation (DG) program. In addition, student enrollment rates in postsecondary institutions were examined using data provided by the National Student Clearinghouse. Finally, a summary of the College Board report for 2007-08 has been provided.

Advanced Placement Program

In 2008-09, high schools in the Dallas Independent School District participated in one of three AP incentive programs: Texas Instruments Foundation (TIF), Roger A. Enrico (RAE), or LAMPSSSSS. TIF offered incentives to 12 high schools with a total of 5,736 AP students and 8,343 Pre-AP students. Combined, RAE and LAMPSSSSS served 12 high schools with a total of 2,396 AP students and 4,429 Pre-AP students. A total of 8,234 students (23.8 percent of the district) were enrolled in at least one AP course, and 13,668 students (39.5 percent of the district) were enrolled in at least one Pre-AP course. Female students had higher enrollment rates than male students in both Pre-AP and AP courses. Hispanic students had the highest enrollment numbers, followed by African American, white, Asian, and American Indian students.

From 2005-06 through 2008-09, student enrollment rates for Pre-AP/AP courses and AP exams increased (Figure 1). On average, 80 percent of students who enrolled in at least one AP course ended up taking at least one AP exam. However, the passing rate of AP exams relative to exams taken was low (28.7 percent). In 2008-09, the overall district performance targets for AP exams taken and passed were not met. Only white students exceeded the district performance targets related to the AP Program.

The AVID program was a nationwide initiative designed to help students, especially the least served students in the academic middle, prepare for and succeed in college. In 2008-09, 18 high schools participated in the AVID program, and 95.3 percent of the total number of participants (1,736 of 1,822) took at least one Pre-AP or AP course.

The DG program was an educational initiative, funded by the United Way of Metropolitan Dallas (UWMD), to give students the motivation and foundation they needed to successfully graduate from high school. In 2008-09, 712 students from three high schools participated in the program, and 43.8 percent of the total number of participants took at least one Pre-AP or AP course.

The ACT/SAT

The College and Career Readiness Department provided ACT/SAT preparation classes at Dallas ISD high schools during the school year and summer school. The department oversaw three such programs in 2008-09: ACT/SAT Teacher-to-Teacher Training, districtwide spring SAT preparation sessions, and the Superintendent’s Scholars Program. During the summer of 2009, 89 students enrolled in the ACT preparatory classes and 161 students enrolled in the SAT preparatory classes of the Superintendent’s Scholars Program.

From 2005-06 to 2008-09, the number of high school students taking the ACT and the SAT increased for grades nine through 12, and for graduating seniors (Figure 2). In 2008-09, more female students than males took the tests, and African American and Hispanic students were the major ethnicities taking the tests. About 21.3 percent of graduating seniors in 2008-09 took the ACT, 47.9 percent took the SAT, and 54.5 percent took either the ACT, SAT, or both. These participation rates were lower than the district’s performance target (70.0 percent) on test participation, and none of the ethnic groups met the performance target.
Figure 2: Number of students taking the ACT/SAT: 2005-06 through 2008-09.

From 2005-06 to 2008-09, the ACT composite score remained steady with a score of 17 for grades nine through 12, and for graduating seniors. This score was lower than the criterion score of the district’s performance target (a composite score of 24). Similarly, the SAT composite scores were over 200 points below the criterion score of the district’s performance target (a composite score of 1,100). In 2008-09, only 9.3 percent of graduates who took the ACT and/or SAT met the criterion of the district’s performance target. The performance target (percent who met criterion) was set at 50.0 percent in 2008-09. By ethnic group, white students were close to meeting their performance target; however, less than 10 percent of Hispanic and African American students met the criterion of the district’s performance target.

From 2005-06 to 2008-09, the number of students taking the PSAT/NMSQT increased by 15.0 percent. Most of students taking the PSAT/NMSQT were in either grade 10 or grade 11, and more female students than male students took the test. More Hispanic students than African American and white students took the PSAT/NMSQT. Over the years, the composite scores of the PSAT/NMSQT ranged from 108 to 116 when the possible score range was from 60 to 240 points.

**Dual Credit**

Dual credit courses were provided to high school students that allowed students to earn both high school and college credit. In 2008-09, less than two percent of the district’s high school students took at least one dual credit course. The majority of those students fell in one of three categories: grade 12, Hispanic, or economically disadvantaged. Skyline High School provided students with the most dual credit course offerings. About 95 percent of the students in the dual credit program took only one dual credit course per semester.

**Enrollment in Postsecondary Institutions**

Student enrollment information in postsecondary institutions was based on the data provided by the National Student Clearinghouse. As of June 2009, 38.3 percent (2,440 of 6,370) of the district’s graduates in 2007-08 were enrolled in a postsecondary institution. From 1999-00 to 2007-08, 47.9 percent of those enrolled were attending two-year public institutions and 38.5 percent were attending four-year public institutions. Fifty-three percent of those students were attending college full-time while 36.8 percent were attending college part-time. Nearly 85.2 percent of students enrolled in postsecondary institutions attended Texas institutions.

**Summary of the College Board Report for 2007-08**

Considering the years 2003-04 through 2007-08, an average of 7,272 high school sophomores and 5,295 juniors took the PSAT/NMSQT while an average of 3,215 high school seniors took the SAT (the SAT Reasoning Test) each year. The numbers of students taking the SAT Subject Tests were relatively low compared to the numbers of students taking the SAT (range: 2.8 percent to 5.1 percent) (Figure 3).

The mean scores on the SAT were higher for those who also took the PSAT/NMSQT as high school sophomores or juniors. During 2007-08, the mean score on the critical reading for students who also took the PSAT/NMSQT was 471, compared to 362 by students who did not take the PSAT/NMSQT. From 2003-04 to 2007-08 the number of students taking AP exams and passing AP exams increased by 42.5 percent and 28.1 percent, respectively.

**Recommendations**

- In order to increase AP exam passing rate, students should be prepared with rigorous and aligned education, and students’ progress on content knowledge should be checked and monitored on a regular basis to identify potential problem areas and to ensure passing scores and course credits.
- Students in the AVID and DG programs need to be more encouraged and guided to enroll in the AP Program. In addition, it is recommended that each
program seeks to maintain recruitment efforts, and equally important, to retain existing members in the program.

- As an effort to meet the district’s performance targets for the ACT/SAT, a more systematic approach is needed to help students ready themselves for the tests. One possible way would be utilizing online resources effectively in addition to taking the preparatory classes at a traditional school setting. Online courses are beneficial in that those courses are flexible with time and access, and provide immediate feedback.

- Students who can academically meet the enrollment requirements of the dual credit program should be encouraged to take a course, so that more of the district’s students could benefit from the DC courses. In addition, efforts should be made to make data on students enrolled in the DC program at partnering DCCCD campuses readily available for the program evaluation.

For more information, see EA09-182-2, available at www.dallasisd.org/inside_disd/depts/evalacct/