Board Monitoring System: Indicator B

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Purpose

The Houston Independent School District (HISD) exists to strengthen the social and economic foundation of Houston by assuring its youth the highest-quality elementary and secondary education available anywhere. In fulfilling this goal, HISD's Board of Education has designed a program to systematically monitor the district's goals and core values. The Board Monitoring System will report on each goal and core value on a routine basis. The goal currently under review is to improve the dropout rate and completion rate among students as measured by the Texas Education Agency (Goal 1, Section B).

Findings

Annual Dropout Rate

- In the 2007–2008 school year, the annual dropout rate (grades 7 and 8) decreased from 1.2 percent in the 2006–2007 school year to 0.5 percent (Figure 1).
- HISD's dropout rate of 0.5 percent exceeded the state's dropout rate of 0.3 percent (Table 1).
- The 2007–2008 African-American, Hispanic, and white student dropout rates decreased from the 2006–2007 school year. The African-American student dropout rate was 0.6 percent, the Hispanic student dropout rate was 0.5 percent, and the white student dropout rate was 0.0 percent, down from 1.4 percent, 1.2 percent, and 0.7 percent, respectively, from the 2006–2007 school year.
- By the end of the 2010–2011 school year, the district goal is to lower the grades 7 and 8 annual dropout rate to 0.1 percent. This year's performance is above that target by only 0.4 percentage points and has decreased the past two years.

Four-Year Longitudinal Completion Status

- The percentage of students in the ninth-grade cohort who dropped out of school by the end of four years decreased from 22.1 percent for the class of 2007 to 18.7 percent for the class of 2008 (Table 2).
- The percentage of students who graduated in the ninth-grade cohort increased more than three percentage points over the last year (from 2007 to 2008). The graduation rate for the class of 2008 was 68.2 percent, which is 3.9 percentage points higher than last year's graduation rate of 64.3 percent (Figure 2).

- By the end of the 2007–2008 school year, the district goal was to increase the graduation rate to 85 percent. The district has fallen short of this target by 16.8 percentage points.
- By the end of the 2010–2011 school year, the district goal is to increase the four-year completion rate for the ninth-grade cohort to 95 percent. This includes students who graduate or are still in school (continued). This year's rate was 80.6 percent, an increase of 3.8 percentage points from the class of 2007 at 76.8 percent (Figure 3).

Administrative Response

With the goal of a recognized completion rate (85 percent), the district has set targeted benchmarks of 83.6 percent for the class of 2009, coupled with a decrease in the cohort dropout rate to 15 percent (from 18.7) for the class of 2009.

An executive council will meet weekly to initiate, prioritize, and coordinate major strategies, monitor the implementation of the plans, and ensure crossfunctional support.

Major Strategies

To increase student completion rates and prevent students from dropping out of school, the district will focus on the following five strategies.

1. **Instructional Practices**
   Improve the curriculum and delivery of instruction based on best-practices research to meet the needs of our diverse student populations. (Instruction needs to be differentiated, engaging, relevant, cooperative, direct, and accelerated.)

2. **Flexible Options for Student Learning**
   Create a system of options for students who have been identified as being at-risk due to poor attendance, being overage, being retained, or failing more than two courses in high school (Systems will include credit-recovery, middle/early colleges, evening/weekend high schools, overage middle schools, career and technical education, and acceleration programs.)

3. **Quality Effective Staffing**
   Institutionalize a rigorous recruitment, selection, and placement process for the highest-quality teachers and administrators. Staffing will include a focus on high-needs areas and assessment of current staffing at schools using TEA accountability, value-added, and other criteria to determine action.

4. **Student Support Services**
   Implement specific programs to address the affective, social, and emotional needs of students identified as at-risk. Programs will include mentoring, attendance interventions and incentives, and health and social services. Graduation coaches and credit-recovery labs will be used at all comprehensive high schools and in selected other high schools.

5. **Federal and State Law and District Policy**
   Examine all policies to determine whether barriers or challenges exist that prevent students from graduating.

Figure 1: HISD's Annual Dropout Rate for All Students in Grades 7–8, Class of 2004–2005 to 2007–2008
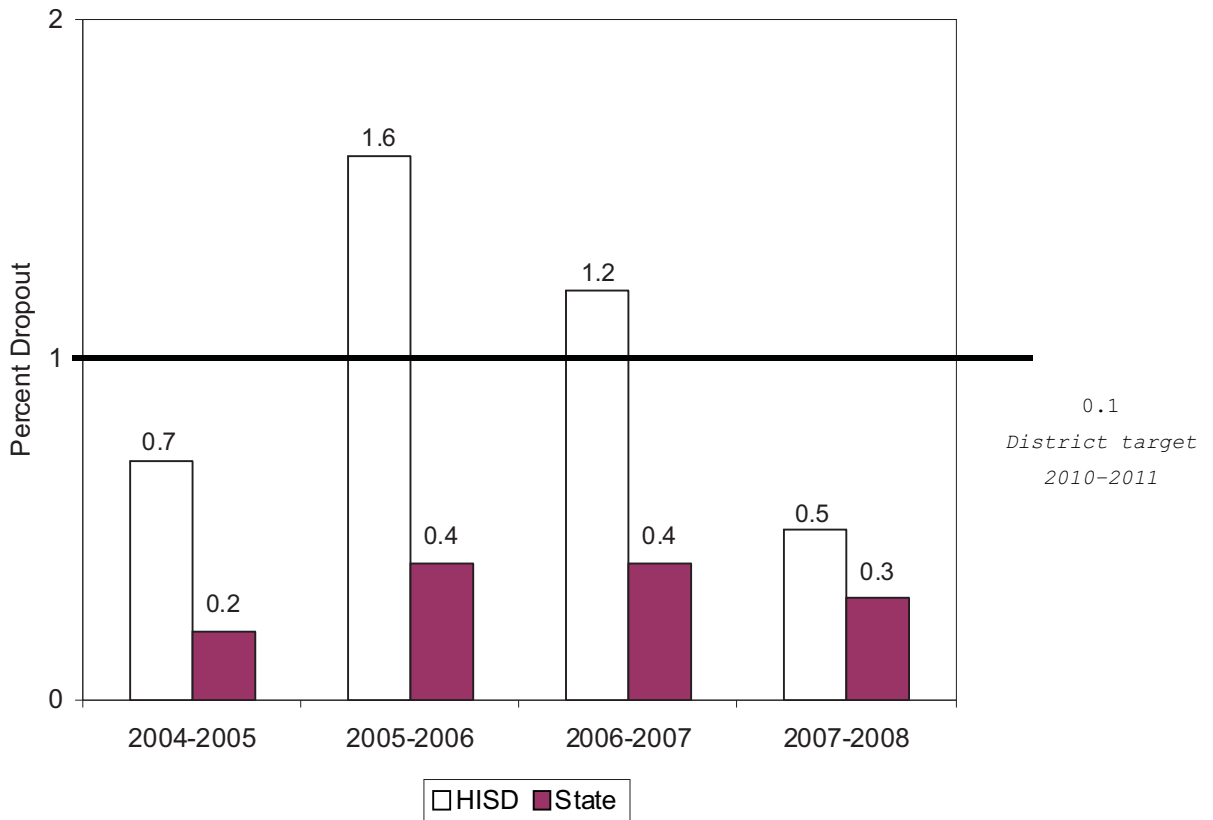
Source: *Secondary School Completion and Dropouts in Texas Public Schools 2007–2008*; Texas Education Agency, District Dropout and Completion Summary Tables 6/18/2009.

Table 1: Annual Dropout Rate for Grades 7 and 8 as Calculated by TEA for HISD and the State by Student Demographics, 2004–2005 to 2007–2008

	2004–2005 HISD	2004–2005 State	2005–2006 HISD	2005–2006 State	2006–2007 HISD	2006–2007 State	2007–2008 HISD	2007–2008 State
All Students	0.7	0.2	1.6	0.4	1.2	0.4	0.5	0.3
African Am.	0.6	0.2	1.9	0.8	1.4	0.7	0.6	0.5
Hispanic	0.8	0.3	1.5	0.6	1.2	0.5	0.5	0.4
White	0.4	0.1	1.0	0.2	0.7	0.2	0.0	0.1
Eco. Disad.	0.7	0.2	1.3	0.5	1.0	0.5	0.4	0.3

Note:

$$\text{Annual Dropout Rate Grades 7 and 8} = \frac{\text{Number of seventh- and eighth-grade students who dropped out at any time during the school year}}{\text{Number of seventh- and eighth-grade students who were in attendance at any time during the school year}} \times 100$$

Table 2: Four-Year Longitudinal Completion Status for HISD by Student Demographics, Class of 2006–2008

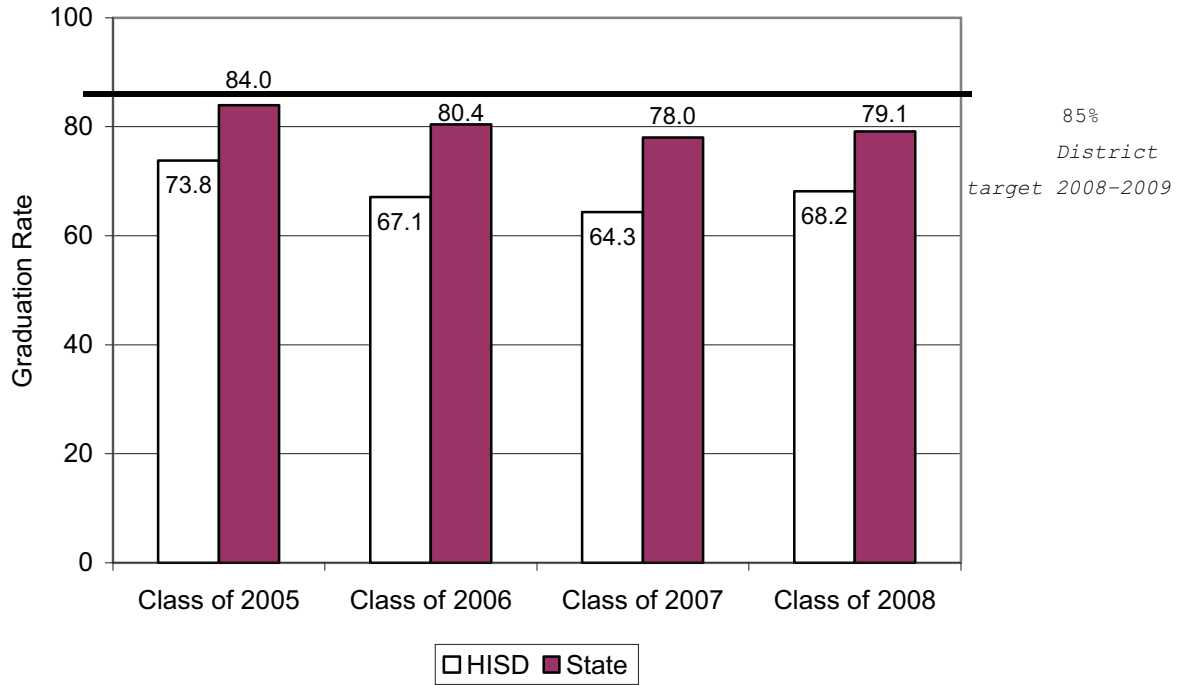|		2006 Grad	2006 GED	2006 Cont	2006 Drop	2007 Grad	2007 GED	2007 Cont	2007 Drop	2008 Grad	2008 GED	2008 Cont	2008 Drop
All Students	**HISD**	67.1	1.2	13.7	17.9	64.3	1.1	12.5	22.1	68.2	0.7	12.4	18.7
	STATE	80.4	2.3	8.6	8.8	78.0	2.0	8.7	11.4	79.1	1.5	8.9	10.5
African Am.	**HISD**	69.6	1.3	11.3	17.8	66.7	1.1	9.6	22.6	68.0	0.5	11.6	20.0
	STATE	74.5	1.7	10.5	13.3	70.7	1.6	10.5	17.2	71.8	1.1	11.0	16.1
Hispanic	**HISD**	59.9	0.8	18.0	21.3	55.6	0.8	16.8	26.8	62.8	0.6	15.3	21.2
	STATE	71.7	2.0	13.2	13.1	68.5	1.8	13.3	16.4	70.8	1.5	13.3	14.4
White	**HISD**	84.4	3.0	4.8	7.8	86.9	2.5	3.8	6.7	84.7	1.7	4.7	8.9
	STATE	89.0	2.8	4.2	3.9	88.2	2.4	4.1	5.3	88.8	1.8	4.2	5.1
Asian	**HISD**	87.9	0.0	5.5	6.6	87.8	0.6	6.4	5.1	88.0	0.5	5.3	6.2
	STATE	92.0	0.7	4.2	3.2	91.5	0.5	4.2	3.8	91.2	0.3	4.8	3.6
Eco. Disadv.	**HISD**	65.8	1.0	12.8	20.4	59.9	1.0	13.2	25.9	65.0	0.6	14.5	19.9
	STATE	72.0	2.4	11.9	13.7	68.8	2.1	11.7	17.3	70.4	1.7	12.2	15.7

Note:
Grad = High-School Graduate
GED = Received General Educational Development Certificate
Cont = Still in school after four years
Drop = Dropout

$$\text{Longitudinal Dropout Rate} = \frac{\text{Number of students from the ninth-grade cohort who dropped out before the end of twelfth grade}}{\text{Number of students in the 2004–2005 cohort}} \times 100$$

Source: *Secondary School Completion and Dropouts in Texas Public Schools 2007–2008*; Texas Education Agency, District Dropout and Completion Summary Tables 6/18/2009.

Figure 2: Four-Year Longitudinal Graduation for All Students in HISD and the State, Class of 2005–2008

Graduation Rate (vertical axis)

- Class of 2005: HISD 73.8, State 84.0
- Class of 2006: HISD 67.1, State 80.4
- Class of 2007: HISD 64.3, State 78.0
- Class of 2008: HISD 68.2, State 79.1

85% District target 2008–2009

Legend: ☐ HISD ■ State

Graduation Rate: Based on the ninth-grade cohort, this shows the percentage who received their high-school diploma on time or earlier by the end of their twelfth grade year.

Source: *Secondary School Completion and Dropouts in Texas Public Schools 2007–2008*; Texas Education Agency, District Dropout and Completion Summary Tables 6/18/2009.

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Figure 3: Longitudinal Completion Rate I for All Students in HISD and the State, Class of 2005–2008
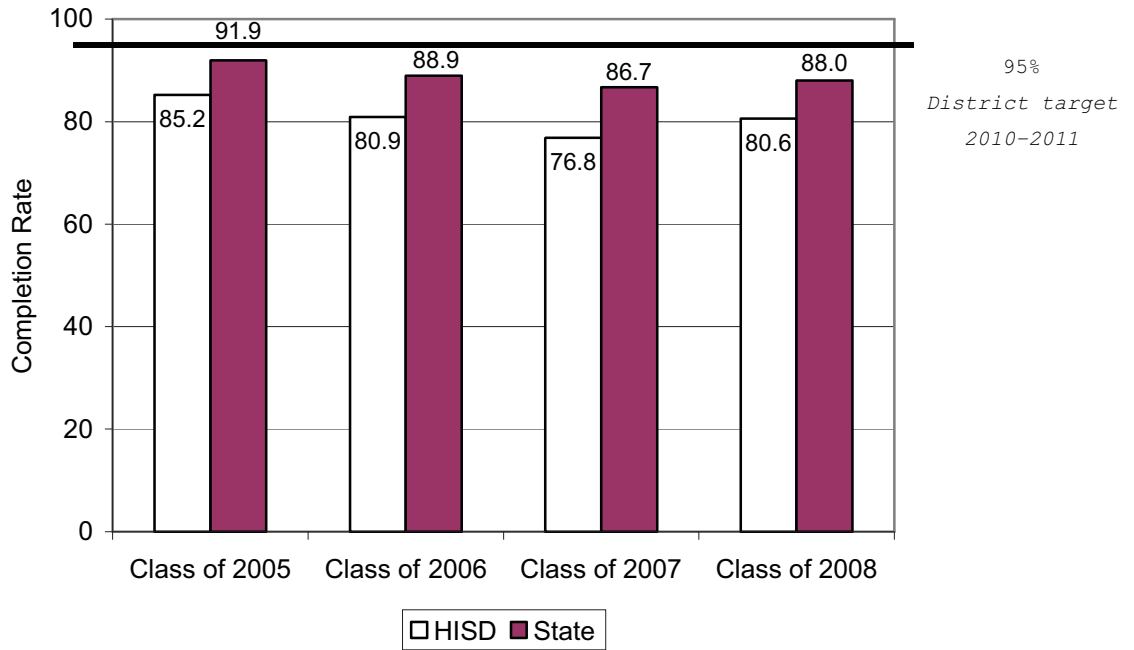
Note: Two completion-rate measures have been defined for Texas public-school accountability beginning in 2004. Completion Rate I includes graduates and continuing enrollment. Completion Rate I is used in determining campus and district accountability ratings. Completion Rate II includes students who received a GED and is used for rating alternative-education campuses.

Completion Rate I formula:

$$\frac{\text{graduates + continuers}}{\text{graduates + continuers + GED recipients + dropouts}}$$

Source: *Secondary School Completion and Dropouts in Texas Public Schools 2007–2008*; *Texas Education Agency, Secondary School Completion and Dropouts in Texas Public Schools 2007-08*.