



## Board Monitoring System: Indicator G

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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#### 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 increase the number of students taking advanced placement courses, exams and the number and percentage of students scoring three or higher (Goal 1, Section G).

#### Findings

#### ***Number of Students Taking Advanced Placement (AP) Courses, Exams and the Number and Percentage of Students Scoring 3 or Higher***

- Although 8,115 high-school students enrolled in AP courses for 2009, only 6,069 or 75 percent of the students took AP subject tests. This is an increase from 2008, when only 70 percent of the high-school students who enrolled in AP courses took AP subject tests (Figure 1). The district did not meet its target of 100 percent.
- The number of AP exams taken by high-school students increased by 14 percent, from 10,148 in 2008 to 11,594 in 2009 (Figure 2). The district exceeded the target for a 10 percent annual increase in the number of AP exams taken annually by four percentage points.
- Over the past six years, the number of Advanced Placement (AP) exams taken by HISD high-school students has increased from 6,051 in 2004 to 11,594 in 2009 (Figure 2).
- While the number of exams scored at a 3 or higher has increased from 4,445 in 2008 to 4,915 in 2009 at the high-school level, the percentage has decreased to 42 percent in 2009 from 44 percent in 2008 (Figure 2). Based on this decline in the percentage of AP exams that scored at 3 or higher, the district did not meet its target for an increase by two percentage points annually.
- At the middle-school level, 117 students were enrolled in AP courses in 2009, and 174 middle-school students from six campuses took AP exams in the areas of Chinese Language and Culture, Japanese Language and Culture, and Spanish Language (Figure 3). From 2004 to 2009, the number of middle schools offering AP courses and AP exams has increased from one campus to six campuses. While the number of exams scored at 3 or higher has increased from 75 in 2008 to 127 in 2009, the percentage scoring 3 or higher decreased from 77 percent in 2008 to 73 percent in 2009.

#### Administrative Response

Over the past five years, the district has achieved much success in increasing the number of students who take AP courses and exams. While continuing to focus on increasing student enrollment in these courses, we must also address the quality of instruction in AP courses to ensure increased levels of student success.

During the 2009–2010 school year, staff members on all district levels will explore sources available to fund districtwide AP exams and teacher/student incentives, similar to the existing

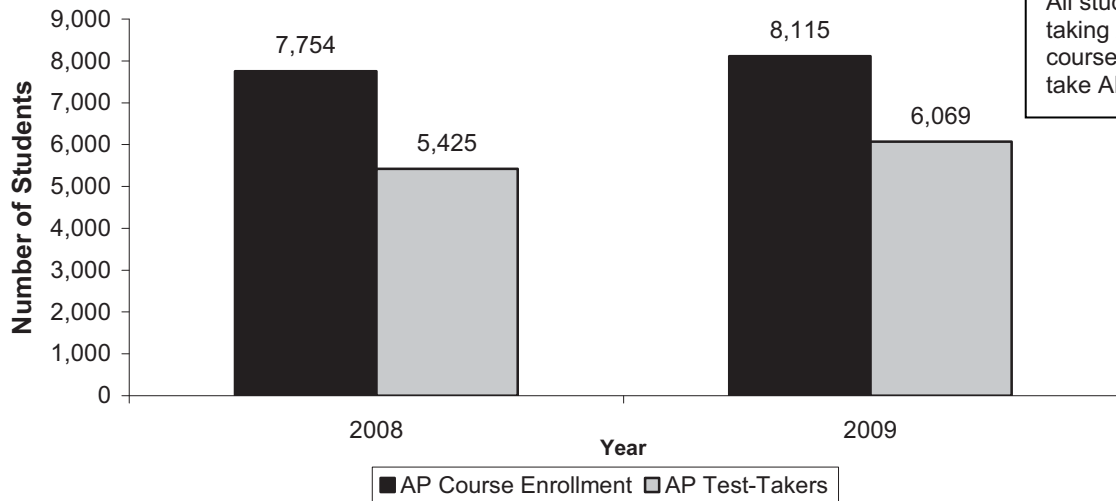
incentive program through the Michael & Susan Dell Foundation. In the absence of districtwide funding, high-school principals and AP coordinators will be alerted to possible funding through the high-school allotment, the gifted/talented allotment, business partners, and other sources.

The Advanced Academics and Curriculum, Instruction and Assessments (CIA) Departments will work collaboratively with principals, AP coordinators, and regional content specialists to monitor AP teacher usage of their authorized AP syllabi. Training will be provided in the areas of instructional planning and content course alignment for grades 6 through 12. Additionally, teachers will be encouraged to attend relevant conferences and workshops, such as the College Board Summer Institute at Rice University, Laying the Foundation (LTF) Pre-AP training, AP teacher networking groups, and AP prep sessions.

Staff from CIA will continue to include appropriate skill development and content compressions in the Horizontal Alignment Planning Guides (HAPG) to ensure preparedness for AP courses. Regional leadership will monitor implementation of the Standard Practice Memorandum related to defaulting qualified sixthgrade students into Pre-AP courses. They will work with principals to support their Pre-AP/AP programs and to set goals for program monitoring and growth, including teacher training, student participation, and LTF Pre-AP end-of-course participation.

The success of students in AP courses and exams is enhanced by strong Pre-AP courses in grades 6–10. Currently, all Pre-AP math, science, and English students take the Laying the Foundation Pre-AP end-of-course exams, which mirror AP exams. This will continue for the 2009–2010 school year.

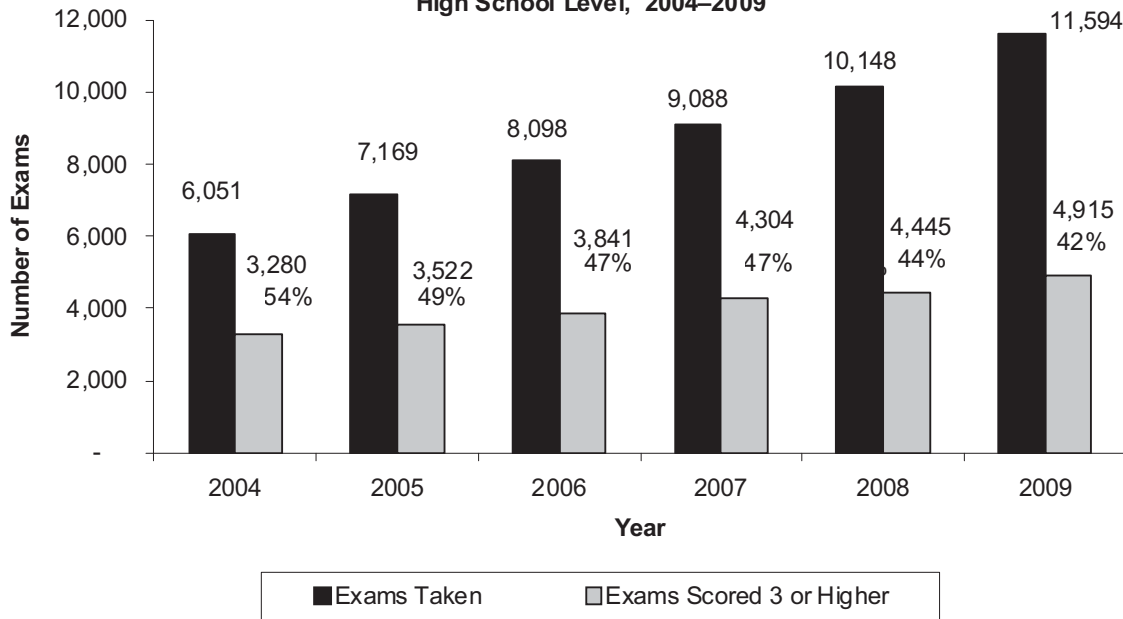
**Figure 1: The Number of High School Students Taking AP Courses and AP Exams**



Target:  
All students taking AP courses will take AP exams.

Source: The College Board Reports, 2008 electronic data file and 2009 printed report. Chancery 2007–2009. Data reflect the most current information available.

**Figure 2: The Number of AP Exams Taken and Scoring at a 3 or Higher at the High School Level, 2004–2009**



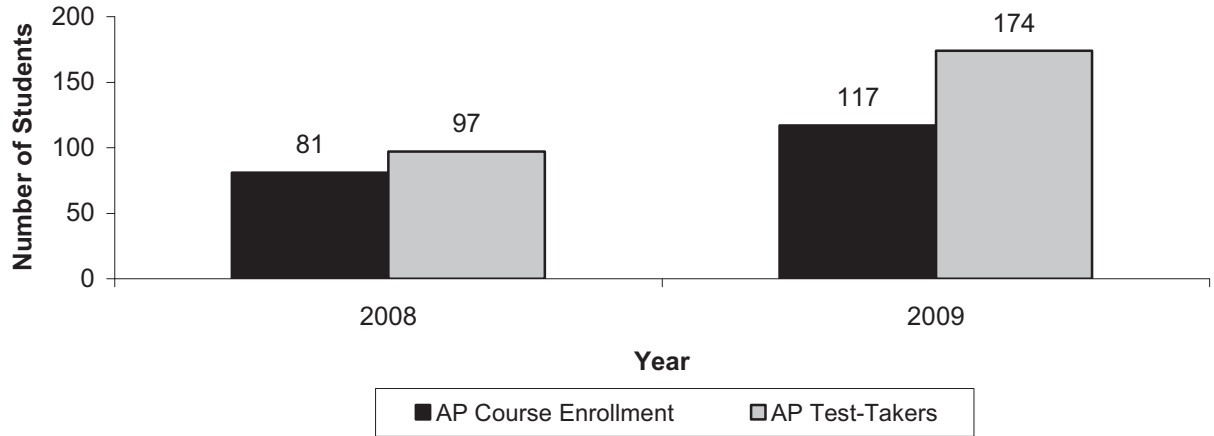
Target:  
The number of AP exams taken will increase by 10% annually.

Target:  
The percent of AP exams scored at 3 or higher will increase by 2 percentage points annually.

Note: Pending university or college requirements, students scoring 3 or higher qualify to get college credit, advanced placement, or both.

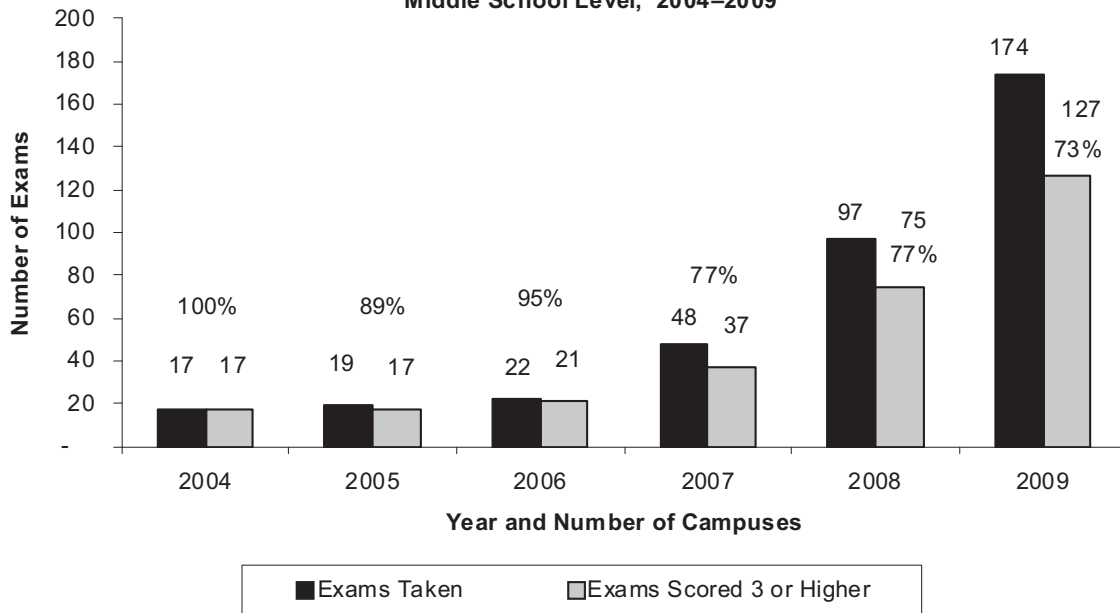
Source: The College Board Reports, 2004–2009. Data reflect the most current information available.

**Figure 3. The Number of Middle School Students Taking AP Courses and AP Exams**



Source: The College Board Reports, 2008 electronic file and 2009 printed report. Chancery 2007–2009. Data reflect the most current information available.

**Figure 4: The Number of AP Exams Taken and Scoring at a 3 or Higher at the Middle School Level, 2004–2009**



Note: Pending university or college requirements, students scoring 3 or higher qualify to get college credit, advanced placement, or both.

Source: The College Board Reports, 2004–2009. Data reflect the most current information available.