

Research Brief

HISD COMPLETION/STUDENT STATUS AND DROPOUT RATES: CLASS OF 2006

The Texas Education Agency produces an annual publication, the Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) Report, which presents the condition of education in public school districts throughout Texas. Using a variety of indicators, the AEIS provides much of the demographic and performance data for individual campuses and districts in the state of Texas. While these indicators provide a detailed account of Texas public schools, they often involve formulas that require detailed explanation to be fully understood. The purpose of this research brief is to familiarize the reader with the following AEIS indicators: Completion/Student Status Rate and Dropout Rate (Annual) and to provide an explanation of the formulas employed to calculate each.

Completion/Student Status Rate

The AEIS report includes a Completion/Student Status Rate, which shows the status of a cohort of high school students identified at 9th grade and tracked longitudinally for four years. The rate includes four outcomes: percent graduated, percent received GED, percent continued high school, and percent dropped out. The four outcome percentages sum to 100% and are intended to show the status of students at the end of the year in which they were expected to graduate from high school. The indicators are calculated as follows for the Class of 2006, who began as 9th graders in 2002–2003.

1. Percent Graduated (Grad.): The percentage that received a high school diploma by the end of the 2005–2006 school year.
2. Percent Received GED (GED): The percentage that received a General Educational Development certificate before August 31, 2006.
3. Percent Continued High School (Cont.): The percentage still enrolled as students for the 2006–2007 school year.
4. Percent Dropped Out (Drop): The percentage that dropped out and did not return to school by the fall of the 2006–2007 school year.

To determine completion rates, the number of students in each category is divided by the number of students in the class. All four calculations use the number of first time 9th graders in 2002–2003, plus transfers in, minus transfers out as the denominator.

Table 1 shows HISD data for the Classes of 2004, 2005, and 2006. **Table 2** shows the state data for comparison purposes. The HISD Class of 2006 rates for graduation dropped for all groups and dropout rates increased for all groups compared to the previous year, due in part to the state's adoption of the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) definition of dropout. The statewide graduation and dropout rates generally followed HISD trends, however graduation rates were higher and dropout rates were lower at the statewide level compared to HISD.

| | Class of 2004 | | | | Class of 2005 | | | | Class of 2006 | | | |
|----------------|---------------|-----|-------|------|---------------|-----|-------|------|---------------|-----|-------|------|
| | Grad. | GED | Cont. | Drop | Grad. | GED | Cont. | Drop | Grad. | GED | Cont. | Drop |
| All Students | 75.8 | 3.1 | 10.9 | 10.3 | 73.8 | 2.3 | 11.4 | 12.5 | 67.1 | 1.2 | 13.7 | 17.9 |
| African Am. | 79.2 | 2.5 | 9.6 | 8.7 | 75.8 | 1.8 | 10.4 | 11.9 | 69.6 | 1.3 | 11.3 | 17.8 |
| Asian/Pac. Is. | 90.5 | 0.9 | 3.5 | 5.1 | 90.4 | 1.0 | 4.4 | 4.2 | 87.9 | 0.0 | 5.5 | 6.6 |
| Hispanic | 69.4 | 3.1 | 14.1 | 13.5 | 68.3 | 2.0 | 14.5 | 15.3 | 59.9 | 0.8 | 18.0 | 21.3 |
| White | 86.1 | 4.7 | 5.0 | 4.2 | 86.4 | 5.2 | 3.2 | 5.2 | 84.4 | 3.0 | 4.8 | 7.8 |
| Eco. Disadv. | 72.3 | 2.2 | 14.0 | 11.5 | 70.3 | 2.0 | 13.6 | 14.2 | 65.8 | 1.0 | 12.8 | 20.4 |

Table 2: Texas Three-Year Completion Status by Student Demographics

| | <u>Class of 2004</u> | | | | <u>Class of 2005</u> | | | | <u>Class of 2006</u> | | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------|------------|--------------|-------------|----------------------|------------|--------------|-------------|----------------------|------------|--------------|-------------|
| | <u>Grad.</u> | <u>GED</u> | <u>Cont.</u> | <u>Drop</u> | <u>Grad.</u> | <u>GED</u> | <u>Cont.</u> | <u>Drop</u> | <u>Grad.</u> | <u>GED</u> | <u>Cont.</u> | <u>Drop</u> |
| All Students | 84.6 | 4.2 | 7.3 | 3.9 | 84.0 | 3.8 | 7.9 | 4.3 | 80.4 | 2.3 | 8.6 | 8.8 |
| African Am. | 82.8 | 3.1 | 9.2 | 4.9 | 81.7 | 2.6 | 10.2 | 5.5 | 74.5 | 1.7 | 10.5 | 13.3 |
| Asian/Pac. Is. | 92.7 | 1.6 | 4.0 | 1.7 | 92.7 | 1.2 | 4.3 | 1.8 | 92.0 | 0.7 | 4.2 | 3.2 |
| Hispanic | 78.4 | 3.8 | 11.6 | 6.3 | 77.4 | 3.4 | 12.3 | 6.9 | 71.7 | 2.0 | 13.2 | 13.1 |
| White | 89.4 | 5.1 | 3.7 | 1.9 | 89.5 | 4.7 | 3.9 | 2.0 | 89.0 | 2.8 | 4.2 | 3.9 |
| Eco. Disadv. | 78.6 | 4.2 | 11.3 | 5.9 | 77.4 | 3.9 | 12.0 | 6.7 | 72.0 | 2.4 | 11.9 | 13.7 |

Annual Dropout Rate

Beginning with the 2002–2003 reporting period, TEA began reporting two annual dropout rates: 1) the number of students who dropped out of the district across grades 7–12 divided by the cumulative number of students enrolled in grades 7–12 for the school year (reported since 1987–1988), and 2) a calculation based on the above formula using students in grades 7–8. Both rates convey dropping out as a single event during a given year of analysis. **Table 3** shows the Annual Dropout Rates in HISD and Texas over three school years. Overall, 2005–2006 dropout rates at the district level were higher than the previous years, again due in part to the new NCES definition. African Americans had the highest dropout rates both at the state and local level and across grades 7–8 and grades 7–12.

Table 3: Annual Dropout Rate as Calculated by TEA for HISD and the State by Student Demographics, 2003–2004 to 2005–2006

| | <u>2003–2004</u> | | | | <u>2004–2005</u> | | | | <u>2005–2006</u> | | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------|--------------|--------------------|--------------|-------------------|--------------|--------------------|--------------|-------------------|--------------|--------------------|--------------|
| | <u>Grades 7–8</u> | | <u>Grades 7–12</u> | | <u>Grades 7–8</u> | | <u>Grades 7–12</u> | | <u>Grades 7–8</u> | | <u>Grades 7–12</u> | |
| | <u>HISD</u> | <u>State</u> | <u>HISD</u> | <u>State</u> | <u>HISD</u> | <u>State</u> | <u>HISD</u> | <u>State</u> | <u>HISD</u> | <u>State</u> | <u>HISD</u> | <u>State</u> |
| All Students | 0.6 | 0.2 | 2.2 | 0.9 | 0.7 | 0.2 | 2.4 | 0.9 | 1.6 | 0.4 | 4.7 | 2.6 |
| African Am. | 0.5 | 0.2 | 1.8 | 1.0 | 0.6 | 0.2 | 2.3 | 1.2 | 1.9 | 0.8 | 5.2 | 3.8 |
| Asian/Pac. Is. | 0.2 | 0.1 | 0.9 | 0.4 | 0.2 | 0.1 | 0.7 | 0.4 | 1.0 | 0.2 | 2.3 | 1.0 |
| Hispanic | 0.7 | 0.3 | 2.8 | 1.3 | 0.8 | 0.3 | 2.9 | 1.4 | 1.5 | 0.6 | 5.0 | 3.5 |
| White | 0.2 | 0.1 | 0.9 | 0.4 | 0.4 | 0.1 | 1.1 | 0.5 | 1.0 | 0.2 | 2.5 | 1.3 |
| Eco. Disadv. | 0.6 | 0.2 | 2.1 | 0.9 | 0.7 | 0.2 | 2.3 | 1.0 | 1.3 | 0.5 | 4.1 | 2.7 |

Longitudinal Dropout Rate vs. Annual Dropout Rate

Both the four-year longitudinal dropout rate (Tables 1 and 2) and the annual dropout rate (Table 3) provide useful information to districts and schools, but comparisons between the two dropout rates do not yield meaningful results. While the longitudinal dropout rate measures a single group of 9th graders spanning a four-year period, the annual dropout rate measures dropping out of school as a single event during a given year. If a student drops out of school at one point during the four years, the event would be counted in the annual dropout rate. If the student returns to school before the end of the four years, the student would still be counted in the annual dropout rate but would not be counted in the longitudinal dropout rate.

Conclusion

It is important to note that a single indicator, such as completion rate, graduation rate, or annual dropout rate, impacts outcomes on the state and federal accountability systems. The TEA standard accountability system uses the grades 7–8 annual dropout rate indicator, along with student performance. In grades 9–12, the *Completion I Rate*, which combines the cohort of students who graduated and continued high school is used with student performance in the standard system. The TEA alternative accountability system includes the grades 7–12 annual dropout measure and *Completion II Rate*, combining the cohort of students who graduated, received a GED, and continued high school with student performance. However, due to the adoption of the more stringent NCES dropout definition, the annual dropout rates and completion rates will not be used in the 2007 Accountability system to lower a campus' rating. At the federal level, the completion status graduation rate is used as part of the determination of adequate yearly progress, in addition to student performance and test participation for high schools.

Due to new dropout definitions, HISD and the state have reported dramatically higher dropout rates this year than previous years. In 2005–2006, Texas began identifying dropouts based on the definition used by the NCES. The new criteria included earlier cut-off dates for students in grades 7–12 to return to school or to earn a GED and more stringent definitions of who is counted as a dropout.