



DURÓN'S DIGEST

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Results indicate significant progress, but more work to be done

The report cards are in, and for the most part, the campuses across San Antonio Independent School District can point to solid progress in both the academic and non-academic categories tracked by state accountability ratings. We are certainly encouraged by the results that demonstrate our students are being prepared for college or career success. At the same time, we are reminded of the need to continue moving forward with a real sense of urgency.

Where does SAISD shine? According to this year's TAKS (Texas Assessment of Knowledge & Skills) testing, our schools are showing significant improvements in Science (up 9 percent compared to 2009); Math (up 7 percent, and the highest we have scored since TAKS began in 2003); and Social Studies (up 4 percent—and now rated at the *Exemplary* level district-wide). In addition, SAISD schools remain *Recognized* in Reading and Writing.

All told, SAISD met or exceeded all of the 25 academic measures evaluated by TAKS, and increased the number of *Recognized* and *Exemplary* schools—so clearly, good things are going on inside our classrooms, across the district. At the same time, the 2010 TAKS results highlight one of our biggest challenges as a district: Keeping all students in school until they graduate.

While SAISD has no campuses rated as *Unacceptable* for academics, we do have two campuses that missed on a non-academic indicator. The TEA looks at two non-academic indicators: high school Completion Rate (following a cohort to see how many graduate within four years or continue on for a fifth year) and Annual Dropout Rate for 7th and 8th grades. Unlike the academic scores which are based on the 2009-10 school year, the non-academic indicators lag and are based on previous years' data, so we're not seeing the full impact of the many programs that have been put in place.

Sam Houston High School missed Completion Rate. So despite double-digit gains in all their test scores and meeting the standards for academics, the school has been rated *Academically Unacceptable*. Wheatley Middle School missed by four students on annual dropout rate, and received an *Academically Unacceptable* rating (we are submitting an appeal). And the District missed on completion rate by 9 students, and as a result received the rating of *Academically Unacceptable* (we are submitting an appeal). Final ratings will be known in October.

While we're proud of the progress we're seeing in the classroom, we are also keenly aware of the need to improve attendance. In the past couple of years, we have launched several initiatives to significantly improve the number of students who continue their education on through to graduation.

We are starting to see the impact of such work. SAISD has increased the number of graduates compared to the previous year. On-time 4-year graduation rate and the completion rate have both increased by 2 percentage points compared to the previous year. For the past two years, SAISD has seen a record number of students come back to school to complete their education: 200+ more students than the Class of 2006. And we have significantly decreased the percent of students dropping out of school (5 percentage point decrease over the past 3 years.)

Comprehensive programs are driving real improvements in overall student attendance today, and they will enhance our performance even more in the years to come.

Ultimately, our goal is to have every student cross the stage and graduate. Rigorous and effective academic instruction supports that target, as does giving students a variety of course offerings to keep them engaged and in school, and prepared for success in their future endeavors.

Thanks in large part to your continued support and encouragement, we're well on the way toward achieving our mission. With your help, we expect to make great schools a reality for this great community—sooner rather than later.

Best regards,