

# HISD



## A Great School System, Getting Better!

The **Houston Independent School District's** academic successes outlined below were driven by the **ASPIRE** (Accelerating Student Progress. Increasing Results & Expectations) model. This overarching initiative connects all of HISD's educational-improvement efforts and encompasses innovative technology solutions, professional development, and communications. ASPIRE's system of **value-added analysis** helped HISD increase student achievement and reward those who help students make strong academic progress. One of the largest **performance-pay plans** in the nation, this year the ASPIRE Award Program recognized more than 10,000 teachers and other school personnel with more than \$23 million in bonuses. The district also broadened **performance management** making everyone in the central office more accountable for the quality of support provided to ensure successful teaching and learning in every classroom.

HISD helped students do better in all subjects by improving their reading skills through the new **Literacy Leads the Way initiative**, which sets expectations for reading, writing, and speaking at all grade levels and expands the **Lexile system** of matching students with books geared to their reading ability. The district's increased outreach to parents and the community also boosted student achievement. HISD conducted **175 community forums** to inform parents and community members about ASPIRE, and the **Parent Prep Academy** offered courses that helped parents to assist in their children's learning and expanded their own education.

### HISD Has All-Time High Number of Top-Rated Schools

Even with the state raising accountability standards, the number of HISD schools earning an **Exemplary rating increased from 15 to 38**, and the number of **Recognized schools rose from 69 to 119**—for a record total of 157, an 87-percent gain! The number of Academically Unacceptable schools remained at 15.

- With 57 percent of the district's schools earning the state's highest accountability ratings, Exemplary and Recognized schools are now the norm in HISD. This is also the highest rate among large urban districts in the state.

### Students Score Record Highs on TAKS

The Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills is the state's yardstick for student achievement, and it is very important because students must pass it to be promoted to the next grade level or to graduate from high school. HISD students scored record highs on the TAKS this year.

- 84 percent of schools improved in passing rates in social studies, 79 percent in science. 70 percent of HISD schools improved in math, 61 percent of schools improved in reading, and 60 percent improved in writing.

- The percent of students reaching the "Commended" (highest level) of performance on the English TAKS increased for all grades and subjects except for grades 4, 6, and 11 reading/ELA. Same is true on the Spanish TAKS with the exception of grades 5 and 6 reading and math.

### Outstanding Performance on National Achievement Tests

The Stanford 10 and its Spanish-language equivalent, the Aprenda 3, show how students compare with their peers throughout the nation. HISD students performed well on these important exams.

- All of the district's 2008 Stanford 10 national percentile ranks (NPRs) by grade and subject were in the "average" range (40–60 NPR) or above.
- On the Aprenda 3, HISD first through fifth-graders outperformed nearly 75 percent of their peers nationally in every subject.

### More Students Taking Key College-Preparedness Exams

A standardized test that provides valuable practice for the SAT Reasoning Test, which many colleges consider in their admission process, the PSAT (Preliminary SAT) measures the critical-reading, math-problem-solving, and writing skills students need to be successful in college.

- A total of 16,852 HISD students took the 2007 PSAT, representing 80 percent of enrolled sophomores and juniors. This was an increase over the 77.6 percent participating in 2006.
- Nine HISD high schools had across-the-board gains in reading, math, and writing on the SAT, four schools showed gains in two of the three categories, and five schools posted gains in one of the three test subjects.

### More Students Taking Dual-Credit, Advanced Placement Courses

Dual-credit and Advanced Placement courses give students the opportunity to earn high-school and college credits at the same time. Record numbers of HISD students took these classes, giving them a head start as college freshmen and saving their parents thousands of dollars in college tuition.

- The number of students enrolled in dual-credit courses rose 47 percent from 2007 to 2008, with a passing rate for all students at 95.1 percent.
- Nearly 7,900 students were enrolled in AP classes in 2007–2008 representing an increase of 34.8 percent since 2003.
- From 2003 to 2007, the number of students taking AP exams increased 77.8 percent.

