

# AUSTIN InSiDe

ANNUAL  
REPORT  
2002-2003

NEWSLETTER OF THE AUSTIN INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

SPECIAL EDITION  FALL 2003



PHOTOS BY DAVID OMER

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“All students will progress academically and intellectually and will graduate prepared for personal success and inspired to contribute to society.”  
*(Board of Trustees 'Results-1')*

## ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

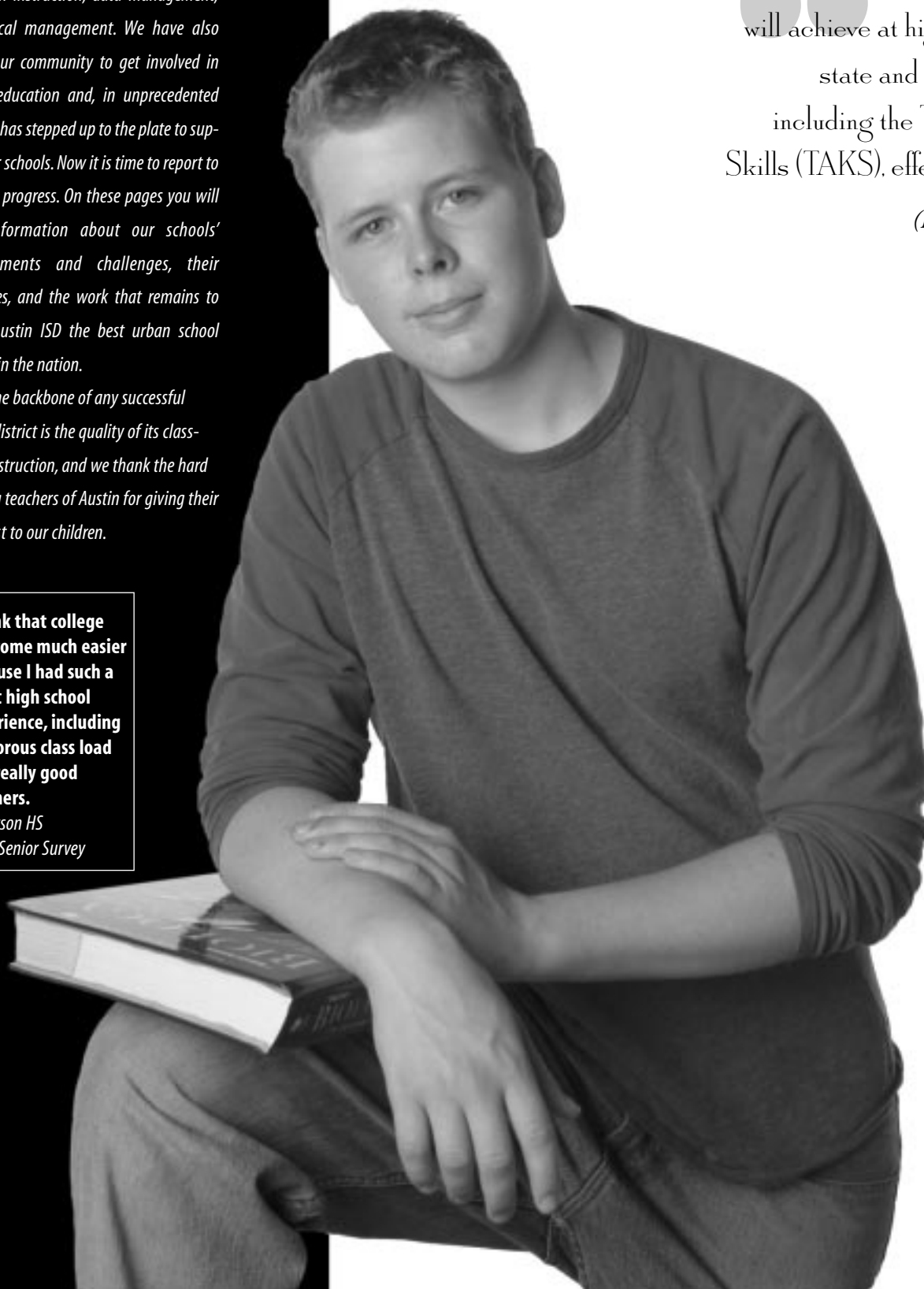
### Welcome, Reader!

The students, faculty, and staff of the Austin School District are proud to present to you the Annual Report for the 2002-2003 school year. This Annual Report is a first for the District. Over the past several years, AISD has made significant improvements in instruction, data management, and fiscal management. We have also asked our community to get involved in public education and, in unprecedented ways, it has stepped up to the plate to support our schools. Now it is time to report to you our progress. On these pages you will find information about our schools' achievements and challenges, their successes, and the work that remains to make Austin ISD the best urban school district in the nation.

The backbone of any successful school district is the quality of its classroom instruction, and we thank the hard working teachers of Austin for giving their very best to our children.

**I think that college will come much easier because I had such a great high school experience, including a rigorous class load and really good teachers.**

*Anderson HS  
2003 Senior Survey*



Austin ISD is committed to an instructional program that teaches the state standards and that has high expectations for student learning. The Board of Trustees has set a high bar for AISD students to achieve. The Board goal states,

“All students will think critically and analytically and will achieve at high academic levels that meet or exceed state and national performance standards, including the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS), effectively eliminating any achievement gap.”

*(Board of Trustees 'Results-2')*

Austin ISD has made steady progress over the past four years in its core commitment to raising achievement for all student groups and closing the achievement gap. Last year, AISD initiated a comprehensive curriculum alignment in all classrooms to ensure a common instructional focus in language arts, mathematics, science and social studies. This curriculum alignment is tied directly to the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) state standards and to the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) tests.

It was a year of transition to a new era of accountability as Texas began to phase out the TAAS test and to phase in the new, more rigorous TAKS test. Schools were ready with curriculum changes and new strategies. Confidence was bolstered by exciting August 2002 news from the Texas Education Agency: AISD had 48 campuses earning the *Exemplary* or *Recognized* ratings, thus tripling the number of distinguished schools in the past four years. This year also rang in Texas' Student Success Initiative, requiring third graders to pass reading for promotion to grade four.

Under the new Federal accountability system, the Texas Education Agency has determined that — for 2002-03 — all 74 Austin elementary schools met the various criteria for Adequate Yearly Progress, as did 10 of the District's middle/junior high schools. Ninety-eight, or 96 percent, of the District's 102 campuses met the Adequate Yearly Progress criteria on student achievement. The predominant reason that 18 Austin secondary schools did not meet Adequate Yearly Progress is that student participation did not reach 95 percent on a particular TAKS 'test day,' as required by federal law. Four Austin secondary schools (three high schools, one middle school) failed to meet Adequate Yearly Progress because of student achievement.

**In 2002-03, Austin students met and exceeded the District's high standards for every student. For example:\***

- AISD is a leader among Texas urban school districts on the new TAKS tests; 95 percent of all students passed the 2003 TAKS Grade 3 Reading test, cumulatively.
- For the first time, at least 90 percent of students in each student group passed the third-grade Reading test, by summer 2003.
- AISD students achieved an average composite score of 1045 on the 2003 SAT college entrance test, exceeding the state and national averages — 52 points higher than the state and 19 points higher than the nation.
- Five Austin high schools earned outstanding recognition in Newsweek Magazine's list of the top 650 U.S. high schools, more than any other Texas district.
- AISD's dropout rate has been reduced by more than two-thirds over the past four years to 1.1 percent.
- Austin has more National Board Certified teachers — a prestigious recognition for educators — than any other Texas district.
- Austin had 135 students named National Merit Scholars in 2003, with many of them earning scholarship awards from institutions of higher education and other grantors.
- Ninety-six AISD seventh-graders were honored by the Duke University Talent Identification Program for their exceptional achievement on the SAT and/or ACT tests.
- Thirty-five Austin schools received 47 acknowledgements under the new Gold Performance Acknowledgement (GPA) system of the Texas Education Agency, in 2002-03.

## English Language Arts

Mastery of reading and writing is the foundation of all learning, so AISD educators are committed to students' mastery of these skills. Their efforts in 2002-03 paid off. In the first year of TAKS, based on all data:

- Among comparable urban districts, a greater percentage of AISD students met the Reading assessment passing standard in grades 3-8 and the English/Language Arts assessment in grade 10.
- AISD students in fourth and seventh grade had higher passing rates on the writing assessment than their peers in other urban districts.

In addition, our full set of TAKS results showed that:

- AISD third-graders achieved a 95 percent passing rate and the final results indicated no significant gaps in achievement among student groups.
- AISD fourth grade students exceeded the state passing rate in Writing; 87 percent of students tested in English passed compared to 86 percent at the state level, and 88 percent of students tested in Spanish passed compared to 87 percent at the state level.

## Mathematics

Math mastery in the early grades prepares students for higher-level math in middle school and high school.

\*Unless stated otherwise, TAKS results are based on the full complement of data (not the accountability subset.)

Austin students are mastering the math curriculum. Results from the first TAKS mathematic tests in 2003 showed that in AISD:

- Eighty-eight percent of third-graders met the minimum standard in math, compared to 85 percent in Fort Worth and 81 percent in Dallas.
- High school students achieved a higher passing rate on the 2003 math TAKS than had been predicted by the 2002 Algebra End of Course (EOC) scores. Although the Algebra EOC scores had predicted a 49 percent passing rate among AISD students, results showed that 59 percent of ninth-graders passed the test; 69 percent of tenth-graders passed; and 66 percent of eleventh-graders passed the test.

## Social Studies

Students' knowledge of our complex world and its peoples will enable them to become responsible global citizens. Results of the TAKS measurement of Social Studies mastery indicated that:

- AISD's eighth-graders achieved a 90 percent passing rate, higher than the passing rates in Dallas, El Paso, and Fort Worth.
- Tenth- and eleventh-grade AISD students passed at a higher rate than students in comparable urban districts.

## Science

This new century will see astounding advances in all fields of science. Preparing students to take their places as pioneers of progress is an AISD priority. AISD students met the challenge of the new TAKS Science tests, and took advantage of opportunities to showcase their science skills. Students matched the state passing rate in grade 11, and passed at rates slightly above those in other Texas urban districts.

## Technology

AISD strives to ensure that all students are proficient in using technology. Initiatives are underway to ensure that students will participate in rigorous technology courses and programs, and meet or exceed

benchmark assessment performance standards. In addition, the district is enhancing efforts to certify more teachers in technology instruction. Success of these initiatives is evidenced by results from the 2003 High School Exit Survey:

- Eighty-nine percent of respondents indicate that their high school had helped them to develop Computer/Technology skills.

## Advanced Academic Programs

**Advanced Placement** — All AISD high schools offer Advanced Placement courses, a program that enrolls high school students in college-level coursework. High schools across the district also realized gains in student participation in the AP Program. In recent years the District has initiated several programs aimed at increasing participation in Honors and Advanced Placement courses by Hispanic and African American students.

- The number of students taking Advanced Placement examinations increased 17.4 percent, from 2,020 in May of 2002 to 2,371 in May of 2003.
- The number of Advanced Placement examinations taken by students increased from 4,138 in 2002 to 4,795 in 2003, an increase of 15.9 percent.
- The number of examinations scoring a 3 or above, which usually earns credit at colleges and universities, increased 17.3 percent, from 2,192 in 2002 to 2,572 in 2003.

**International Baccalaureate Programs** — The IB Program is a comprehensive two-year curriculum offered at Anderson High School. In 2002-03, the IB Program celebrated a significant gain in program participation.

- IB student graduates (diploma and certificate candidates) increased from 47 in 2002 to 72 in 2003, a 53 percent increase.
- Diploma students nearly doubled from 2002 to 2003 (from 15 to 29).

To help students undertake the IB Program, an IB Middle Years Programme has been instituted at Murchison Middle School and is being developed at Martin Middle School.

**Percentage of All Students in Urban Districts Who Met the Standard for All TAKS Tests Taken, Spring 2003**

District	Grade Level									
	3rd Reading, March*	3rd Math, March	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th
Austin ISD	89%	88%	74%	62%	69%	61%	61%	55%	48%	48%
Corpus Christi ISD	90%	87%	74%	63%	67%	58%	57%	51%	45%	44%
Dallas ISD	76%	81%	57%	48%	67%	48%	53%	41%	36%	40%
El Paso ISD	90%	91%	75%	62%	60%	56%	58%	49%	44%	43%
Fort Worth ISD	84%	85%	68%	61%	65%	58%	55%	50%	44%	41%
Houston ISD	84%	84%	67%	54%	60%	53%	58%	46%	36%	39%
San Antonio ISD	83%	81%	59%	52%	55%	46%	51%	47%	33%	38%
Ysleta ISD	85%	88%	76%	62%	76%	68%	70%	52%	40%	37%

Source: Texas Education Agency, 7/25/2003; data shown are **not** the accountability subset.

\*Two additional 3rd grade reading tests resulted in a 95% overall pass rate for AISD.

# ENHANCING PREPAREDNESS FOR COLLEGE AND CAREER

I feel prepared and ready to conquer what a university can teach me.  
LBJ HS  
2003 Senior Survey

I received an awesome education and wouldn't trade it for the world.  
Reagan HS  
2003 Senior Survey



“All students will demonstrate and understand the skills, knowledge, work habits, attitude, leadership and teamwork required by employers for success in the global 21st century workplace.”  
(Board of Trustees 'Results-3')

AISD is committed to preparing all students well for college and careers. Building and implementing a comprehensive educational plan for all students — based on high standards, a curriculum aligned with those standards, and principles to guide every classroom — will help to achieve that goal. Programs such as AVID and GEAR UP are designed to increase participation of all students in post-secondary education.

Success in pursuing post-secondary college and career options was predicted from responses to the 2003 High School Exit Survey.

- Ninety-one percent of responding seniors reported they planned to continue their education within a year of graduation from high school.
- Eighty-two percent said their high school provided needed information, skills and training to meet their career goals.
- The lack of financial resources was the most common reason cited for not pursuing a university, community college, or technical school education immediately following high school. This underscores the importance of continuing to aggressively pursue scholarship opportunities.

## Recommended High School Plan

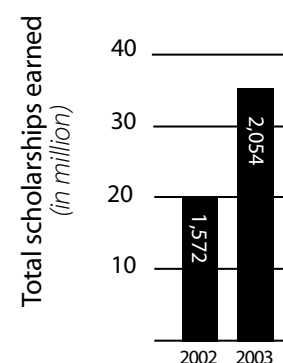
Many of the District's initiatives focus on the goal of increasing the number of students who graduate on the State of Texas' *Recommended High School Plan*. The District requires all students, beginning with ninth-graders in 2002-03, to follow this more rigorous college preparatory plan as the standard graduation

plan. AISD instituted this requirement two years earlier than the state mandate. This plan equips students with the basic requirements for entry into most institutions of higher education and is required for eligibility for the valuable Texas Grant Program. In Spring 2003, 2,535 Austin seniors graduated on the *Recommended High School Plan*.

## College Scholarships

AISD's Department of Guidance and Counseling aggressively helps students identify and successfully apply for scholarships that best suit their college and career goals. Austin ISD graduates appear to be better prepared for higher education now than ever before.

- The Class of 2003 earned a record \$35.2 million in college scholarships. Nine hundred twenty seven students garnered the valuable financial recognitions in 2003, up from 795 in 2002.
- The number of scholarships earned increased from 1,572 in 2002 to 2,054 in 2003, an increase of more than 30 percent.



## College and Career Preparatory Program

A new and comprehensive College and Career Preparatory Program — managed in collaboration by AISD and Austin Community College — will give Austin high school students more opportunities to explore and experience a wide range of career options that relate to their interests and aptitudes. This College and Career partnership will support Austin students' success by providing them an opportunity to explore an abundance of highly technical and profitable careers, while earning college credit and gaining valuable skills.

Each of AISD's 11 traditional high schools offers a unique selection of career pathways from which students can choose to explore a single course, or embark on a more comprehensive study of a particular career through a cohesive sequence of courses. The course offerings include the areas of:

- High Tech
- Applied Technology
- Human Services
- Business and Marketing
- Health Care Professions
- Communications/Media Arts Technology
- Military Protective Services
- Agricultural and Environmental Sciences

The most comprehensive career preparatory programs are available through innovative "Career Institutes" located at individual high schools but open to all District students. Currently, the career institutes include programs dedicated to Hospitality and Culinary Arts at Travis High School and Health Science Professions at Lanier High School.

One of the major goals of the partnership with ACC is to increase college and career opportunities for students from all district geographic areas and demographic groups.

- The number of students in Austin ISD earning college credit through dual enrollment has doubled, from 100 students in 2001-02 to 204 students in 2002-03.
- AISD students have dramatically increased their college-credit earning through dual enrollment. Approximately 150 such courses were passed in 2001-02, and 273 were passed in 2002-03.
- AISD's 4-year high school completion rates (inclusive of graduates, GED recipients, and continuing students) rose from 87.8% for the Class of 1998 to 91.1% for the Class of 2002.

## College Readiness Initiative

In the fall of 2002, AISD implemented a college readiness initiative, funded by the Michael and Susan Dell Foundation. The initiative is designed to increase college enrollment among previously underserved student populations. This initiative included: the expansion of AVID into Crockett and LBJ high schools and staff development for all district AVID teachers; the creation of Project SMART, providing extra teachers at Dobie and Pearce Middle Schools to work with under-achieving students individually and in small groups to prepare them for the

Recommended High School curriculum; and the inception of Project ADVANCE, which places a facilitator on each AISD high school campus to work with students who may not have been considering college so that these students begin to think of themselves as college material, understand the wide spectrum of post-secondary options open to them, and learn how to apply for college admission and financial aid.

This initiative contributed to:

- A 531 percent increase in parent attendance at district financial-aid application workshops;

- A 52 percent increase in the number of seniors applying to at least one college, university or technical school;
- A 20 percent increase in the number of seniors taking the SAT; and
- A 55 percent increase in the amount of scholarships awarded AISD seniors.

Project SMART students showed marked increases in academic achievement. All 45 seniors in AISD's first graduating AVID class are enrolled in colleges and universities.

**The help to get financial aid to go to college has been great.**  
*Travis HS  
2003 Senior Survey*



Citizenship is a component of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) and of AISD's social studies curriculum for grades K-12.

Students are required to successfully complete government, history and geography courses. Many of AISD's high school students learn about citizenship through participation in the *State Bar of Texas* program, *Project Vote*, and hold mock elections at campuses. Through government classes students also participate in *Get Out the Vote*, to register parents and eligible students to vote.

The Peer Assistance and Leadership (PAL) Program now exists in all AISD high schools, 14 middle schools and has expanded to 28 elementary schools. PAL students helped peers from feeder schools address issues that

# CITIZENSHIP



“All students will be productive members of the community and know the values of democracy.”

*(Board of Trustees 'Results-5')*

Music and art classes have helped enrich my experience immensely.  
*McCallum HS  
2003 Senior Survey*



## ARTS *Arts*

All Austin elementary schools offer instruction in art and music to all students. At the secondary level, a comprehensive array of art and music courses is offered as elective choices.

The 2002-2003 school year was exciting and rewarding for fine arts. Many programs were successful at the district, region, and state levels. Not only did the fine arts students perform at an exemplary level in multiple competitions, they also were academically successful as evidenced by the SAT scores of band and orchestra students, which exceeded the state average by more than 100 points. Following are highlights of AISD's accomplishments in fine arts enrichment programs.

### Band

- Bowie High School Band placed in the finals of 5A State Marching Contest of Texas.
- Bowie High School Orchestra placed in the finals for TMEA State Honor Orchestra of Texas.

- McCallum High School Band placed in the finals of TMEA State Honor Band of Texas.
- Bailey Middle School Band was chosen by audition to represent the Southern States at the CBDNA Convention.

### Visual Arts

- Twenty-one students earned the highest rating at the State Visual Arts Scholastic competition in Houston.
- AISD hosted the first Junior Visual Arts Scholastic Event with much success.
- Numerous art students received scholarships to continue their art education in college.
- Ten of AISD's art teachers were trained in Advanced Placement Art.

### Theatre Arts, Music, Dance

- Crockett High School One Act Play made the finals at State One Act Play Contest.
- Bowie High School Dance completed a successful year of a new AISD program, Ballet Folklorico.
- Middle School and High School Choirs completed their most successful year in UIL competitions.

“All students will participate in and appreciate the arts.”

*(Board of Trustees 'Results-4')*



challenge school success, and they also performed community service projects (i.e., Food Drives, Town Lake Clean-ups, Water Testing, etc.).

- During 2002-03, 694 students participated in the PAL Program, more than double the number of PAL participants for 2001-02.

To assist students in understanding and respecting the broad range of cultures, languages and belief structures in our community, these topics are addressed in high school history and sociology courses, as well as, through the World Cultures course that all sixth-graders are required to take.

- During 2002-03, 93.7 percent of AISD's sixth-graders successfully completed the World Cultures course.

The results of the 2003 High School Exit Survey indicate that seniors believe students are demonstrating an understanding and respect for a broad range of cultures at school, and that they are contributing positively to their communities. Some of the specific results include:

- Thirty-five percent of respondents indicated that they are involved in church-related activities.
- Seventy percent of the respondents agreed that students at their school get along with each other.

## ESSENTIAL LIFE SKILLS

Parts of the District's Guidance and Counseling curriculum are taught in classrooms annually with age-appropriate goals specified at every grade level from Pre-K to Grade 12. The counselor at each elementary school and the counseling team at each secondary school select the appropriate lesson plans to address the needs of students. Counselors also help students to identify personal goals and select a graduation plan.

During the 2002-03 school year:

- High school counselors concentrated on *Goal Setting* and *Career Planning* with additional lessons in *Responsible Behavior* and *Motivation to Achieve*.
- Middle school counselors emphasized *Goal Setting* and *Career Planning*, but also provided lessons in *Motivation to Achieve* and *Decision-Making and Problem Solving*.
- Elementary counselors focused mainly on lessons in *Responsible Behavior* and *Conflict Resolution*, but also provided many lessons in *Self Knowledge and Acceptance* and *Interpersonal Relationships and Communication Skills*.

The emphasis at middle and high schools on *Goal Setting* and *Career Planning* in 2002-03 was a success.

- More than 82 percent of all students in grades 5-12 completed Individual Academic Career Plans (IACPs) in 2002-03.
- According to the 2003 High School Exit Survey, 85 percent of senior respondents indicated that their high school helped them in planning their school schedules, and 81 percent said their high school helped them to understand and develop their personal abilities and talents.

In addition to the Guidance and Counseling curriculum, a variety of Character Education programs (i.e., Second Step, Foundations, Character Counts, Preparing Responsible Individuals Dedicated to Excellence (PRIDE), Capturing Kids' Hearts, etc.) are utilized at all grade levels in the District. Also, the middle school *Skills for Living* course teaches personal development, acceptance of responsibility, self-image and decision-making, and other practices that promote positive development.

- In 2002-03, 95.5 percent of middle school students successfully completed the *Skills for Living* course.

**The teachers and the staff have done an exceptional job of teaching me and giving me a wonderful education that I will use throughout college and throughout the rest of my life.**

*Austin HS  
2003 Senior Survey*

**I really have appreciated the teachers who go out of their way to help a student.**

*Garza HS  
2003 Senior Survey*

“All students will demonstrate the aptitude, attitude and skills to lead responsible, fulfilling, and respectful lives.”  
*(Board of Trustees 'Results-6')*



# HEALTH &

**T**he AISD Initiative for Healthy Kids, a joint project begun earlier this year with AISD and the District's School Health Advisory Council (SHAC), addresses student health issues by emphasizing physical activity and exercise during the school day, as well as nutrition education for children and parents about promoting a healthy lifestyle.

As part of this initiative, AISD expanded Texas Agriculture Commissioner Susan Combs' policy to ensure that carbonated beverages and foods of minimal nutritional value are not provided on any AISD campus, or on off-campus field trips during the school day. In addition, AISD cafeterias now offer more healthful food and beverage selections for students.

Other highlights showing progress in the areas of overall health include:

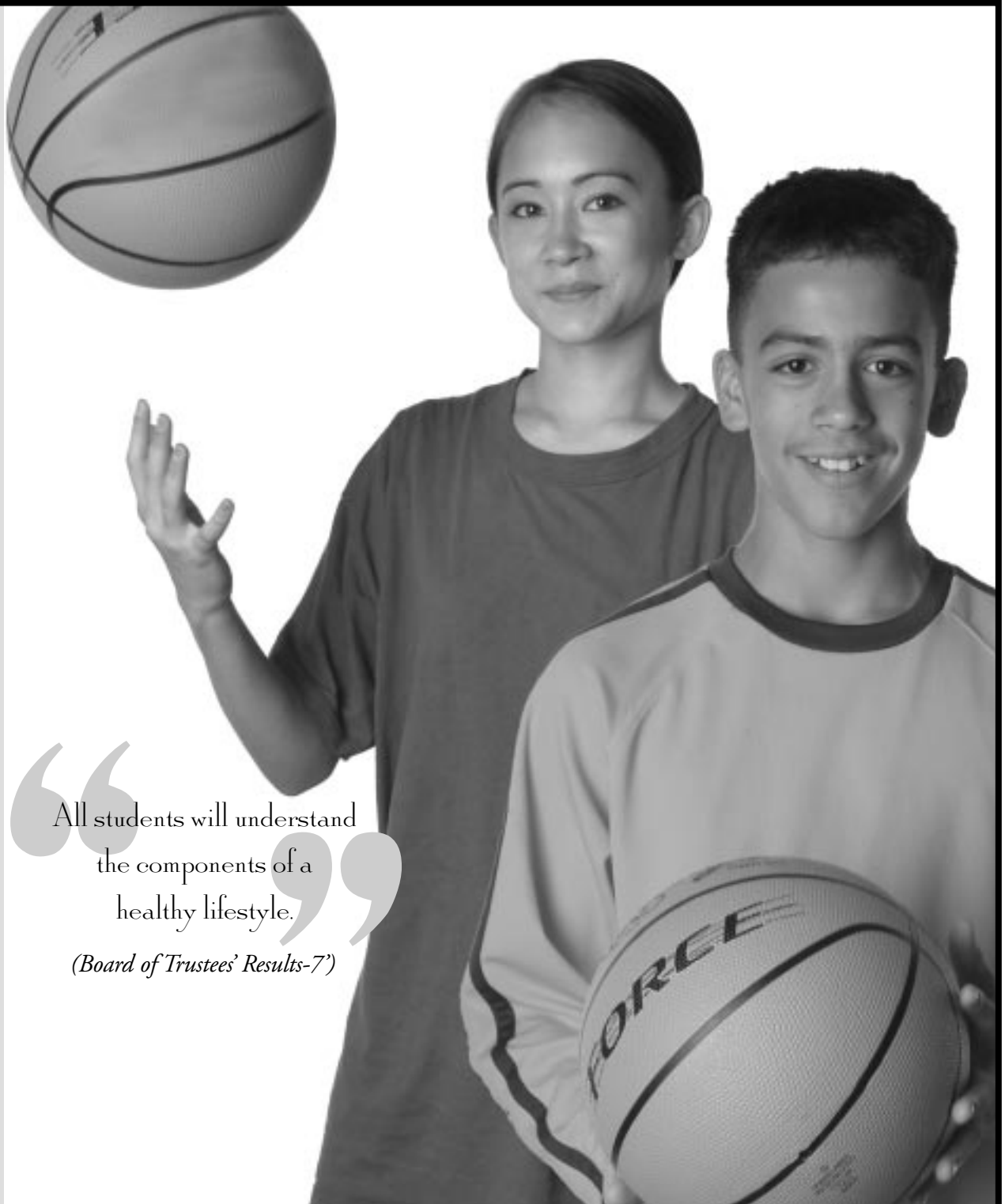
- Elementary classroom teachers are supporting students' fitness through daily Working Out For Wellness (W.O.W.) physical activity periods;
- More than 10,000 AISD students participated in the *Marathon Kids* fitness program;
- More than 1,500 AISD middle school students participated in *Volleyball Play Day*; and
- Twenty-six AISD schools are participating in the *Team Nutrition Program*.

# SAFETY

A Community Safety Task Force was created to lead the effort to ensure that Austin campuses are safe, conducive to learning and free from disruption. The charge to this Task Force is to review district policies and data related to school safety and provide campuses with guidance in developing comprehensive safety plans.

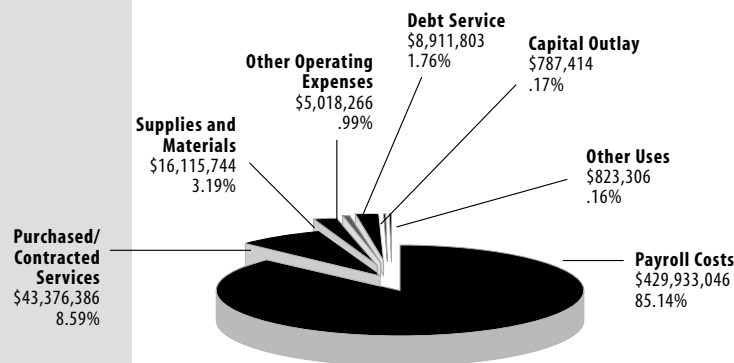
These plans will include campus safety needs assessments and actions to be taken to prevent unsafe events from occurring, and intervention and recovery actions to be taken to deal with unsafe and crises situations.

**I would want the administrators to know that I appreciate all the hard work they do to make sure our campus is a safe place.**  
*Akins HS*  
*2003 Senior Survey*



“All students will understand the components of a healthy lifestyle.”  
*(Board of Trustees' Results-7')*

# B U D G E T



**AISD Budget  
2003-2004**

**Total: \$662,977,363**  
**-158,011,398**  
**\$504,965,965**

## A Tough Economy Brings Tough Choices: District Tightens its Belt

**A**ustin ISD's positive trajectory of academic success is seriously threatened by a number of financial challenges. Under the current method of public school finance in Texas, AISD is deemed to be "property wealthy" and is required to distribute local funds to "property poor" districts, so as to "equalize" funding. In 2002-2003, this financial obligation, or "recapture," was \$144 million. In 2003-2004, this financial obligation—born solely by Austin taxpayers—is expected to increase by \$14 million, to \$158 million.

As a result, the size of AISD's operating budget will have declined by an estimated \$109 million from 1999-2000 to the projected expenditures for 2003-2004.

Prior to 2003-2004, these state "recapture" funds were secured through an increase in local property values—the only source of local revenue for Texas school



districts—and very aggressive cost reductions in Central Administration (approximately \$54 million over the past three years.)

Unfortunately, neither of these strategies will work in 2003-2004. Property values are stagnant, and additional funding cuts will reach beyond central services and will impact Austin campuses and classrooms.

These financial challenges are further compounded by the fact that AISD, like more and more Texas school districts, has reached the state-mandated cap of \$1.50 per \$100 of assessed property value for maintenance and operations.

Even with the 0.0196-cent increase approved by Trustees for 2003-2004 to retire the District's bond debt, AISD still has the lowest overall tax rate of any school district in Central Texas.

Recently, AISD received a rating of "Superior Achievement" under Texas' new Schools First financial integrity rating system. The Superior Achievement rating is the state's highest, demonstrating the quality of Austin ISD's financial management and reporting system.

Austin ISD must still borrow approximately \$30.1 million from available Fund Balance. These decisions were affirmed as steps in the right direction to address Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) issues in AISD secondary schools. The District budget for 2003-2004 includes six significant new investments that are in keeping with the Board's Results Policies:

- Class-Size Reductions in Grades 10 & 11—\$2.86 million
- Reading Intervention for Struggling Middle School Students—\$1.5 million
- Supplemental Funds for the Account for Learning—\$1.68 million
- Bilingual Education & New Immigrant Initiative—\$909,000
- Additional Cost of Employee Health Insurance—\$1.75 million
- Salary Increase for Employees—\$4.4 million

At the same time, savings achieved through aggressive reductions in district-wide expenditures in the 2002-2003 budget will allow AISD to reallocate existing dollars to reduce class sizes in the tenth and eleventh grades, where fewer than 50 percent of Austin students passed the first-ever TAKS tests. Beginning in 2004, eleventh grade students will be required to pass the TAKS before they can graduate.

To achieve a balanced budget for 2003-2004 has required that AISD eliminate 423 full-time positions in central services, campus administration and the classrooms, or approximately five percent of the District's workforce.

As a percentage, the largest reductions will be in Central Administration, where a net of 72 full-time positions, or 18 percent, have been eliminated for a savings of more than \$3.2 million.

There will be a nine percent reduction in Campus Administration and non-teaching professionals, and a seven percent districtwide reduction in Classified personnel for 2003-2004.

AISD's teacher workforce will be reduced by approximately two percent in 2003-2004, most notably among art, music and physical education instructors at the elementary grades.

# BOND



## AISD's Health & Safety Bond Program

AISD 2002 Health & Safety Bond Program efforts to ensure the health and safety of its students have reached the halfway mark to completion.

## First and Second-Year Projects

First-year projects focused on the mold remediation and roofing projects with a budget of approximately \$20 million. Six of the seven first-year projects are complete or substantially complete.

As AISD entered the second year of the Health & Safety Bond Program, the focus, once again, was on roofing and mold remediation, with the addition of indoor air quality, site drainage, sealing of exteriors walls and windows and accessibility projects with a budget of approximately \$10 million. This renovation work at 41 of the 43 schools is complete or substantially complete.\*

## Challenges

The District has made a commitment to complete most of the project work during the summer months to protect the instructional year from interruption. However, this commitment, unforeseen conditions that occurred in mold remediation projects, and the discovery of asbestos-containing materials during renovation projects caused extended schedules and budget challenges on a few of the first- and second-year projects. The foresight of the 2002 Health & Safety Bond Advisory Committee and of the Austin ISD Board of Trustees to budget additional project and program contingencies for these possibilities permitted the bond program to remain within budget. District staff has worked closely with the few campuses that had schedule challenges to ensure minimal impact on the operation of school until project completion.

## Planning Ahead

The Construction Management Department has set the planning for the 37 third-year project packages in motion this summer by issuing a request for qualifications (RFQ) to local architects and engineers to develop the design for these projects. These early efforts will allow the projects to be bid in early 2004, which will facilitate project completion next summer. The completion of these projects by summer's end supports our goal of minimizing interruption to instruction.

\* In an effort to achieve maximum budget and schedule efficiency, projects were grouped by the nature of the work to be performed. Because of this, many campuses are scheduled multiple times for work throughout the four-year bond program resulting in a total number of projects greater than the number of schools.

## AISD Profile 2002-2003

### Our Students

PreK & Elementary	42,094
Middle Schools/Jr. High	15,870
High Schools	20,526
Total*	78,490

### Students by Ethnicity

African Am.	11,272	14.4%
Asian	2,105	2.7%
Hispanic	40,578	51.7%
Native American	212	0.3%
White	24,323	31.0%
Total*	78,490	

\* These figures reflect enrollment taken for submission to the Texas Education Agency for the PEIMS Snapshot of October 2002 for the 2002-03 school year.

### Our Staff

Campus Professional Staff	
Teachers	5,375
Administrators	274
Non-teaching Professionals	673
Central Office Professional Staff	
Administrators	113
Non-teaching Professionals	158
Campus & Central Support Staff	
Classified	1,943
Maintenance	2,223
Total Staff*	10,759

\* as of 9/12/02

### Our Facilities

Austin ISD has facilities, land, and other assets representing a taxpayer investment of almost \$1 billion. With funding from the 1996 School Bond Program, AISD has, since 1998, opened 11 new schools — one high school, two middle schools, and eight elementaries — and two athletic and student activity complexes. AISD is engaged in a comprehensive campus repair and renovation project with \$49 million in funding from the 2002 Health & Safety Bond Program.

Campuses	
Elementary	74
Middle/Jr. High	17
High School	12
Special Campuses	4

### Our Budget 2002-2003

Total Budget	\$705,937,956	
Operations	\$634,186,988	89.8%
Food Service	\$27,037,624	3.8%
Debt Service	\$44,713,344	6.4%
Taxable Value	\$41,826,379,899	
Assess. Value/Student	\$533,840	
Bonded Debt	\$719,598,085	
% Debt to Assess. Value	1.7%	
Tax Rate	\$1.5964/\$100 valuation	
Expenditure Per Pupil	\$6,819	
Recapture Payment	\$144,596,165	

### Additional Academic Facts

2003 Graduates	3,931
Scholarships	\$35.2 Million
Average SAT Score	1,045
Students Taking SAT	2,267
National Merit Finalists	135
Texas Scholars (RHSP)	2,535
Students Taking AP Exams	2,371
AP Exams Taken	4,795



## ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

**O**n behalf of the Austin Independent School District, I am pleased to present to the AISD Board of Trustees and the entire Austin community this Annual Report for 2002–2003.

I believe this Annual Report is a fair and accurate accounting of AISD's trajectory of greater student achievement, and a straightforward, truthful accounting of the academic and financial obstacles that we must still overcome if Austin ISD is to become the nation's premier urban school district.

There have been numerous reports to the Austin community in the past, documenting student achievement and outlining new initiatives to ensure that all children are achieving at their maximum potential. But never before has there been an Annual Report that reviews District progress in the context of the Board's expectations for high student achievement.

In directing the Superintendent to prepare and publish an Annual Report, the Board said the document should convey clear and concise information in three areas:

- Student performance data indicating student progress towards accomplishing the Board's Results policies.
- Information about School District strategies, programs and operations intended to accomplish the Board's Results policies; and
- Revenues, expenditures and balances of major budget funds of the District.

In the Academic Achievement section, you'll see how Austin students performed on the first-ever Texas Assessment of Knowledge & Skills tests in the Spring of 2003. Those results show the scores of Austin students generally fared quite favorably with those in other urban Texas districts. You'll also see that one of our strategies for improving TAKS scores at the 10th and 11th grades is lower class sizes. And how do we afford more high school teachers? By making tough choices and reducing expenditures in other areas.

I hope you will read and study this Annual Report and determine for yourself the job AISD is doing towards educating all Austin students. I also hope you will take the time to complete the survey on the back page so that we can make the Annual Report on future years more meaningful and effective.

Best regards,

Pascal D. Forgione, Jr., Ph.D.  
Superintendent

## EXCELENCIA ACADÉMICA

**A** nombre del Distrito Escolar Independiente, de Austin, me complace presentar a la Mesa Directiva y a toda la comunidad de Austin el Informe Anual de 2002-03.

Estoy convencido que este Informe Anual es un informe justo y exacto de la trayectoria del gran aprovechamiento académico de Austin ISD y un informe veraz de los obstáculos académicos y financieros que aún debemos superar si es que Austin ISD ha de convertirse en el distrito escolar urbano y sobresaliente del país.

Anteriormente la comunidad de Austin ha recibido muchos informes que documentan el aprovechamiento estudiantil y delinean las nuevas iniciativas para asegurar que todos los estudiantes alcanzan su potencial máximo. Sin embargo, nunca antes se había presentado un Informe Anual que revisara el progreso del Distrito dentro del contexto de las expectativas de alto aprovechamiento estudiantil de la Mesa Directiva.

Como guía para que el Superintendente preparara y publicara un Informe Anual, la Mesa Directiva especificó que el documento debería comunicar información clara y concisa en tres áreas:

- Datos del desempeño estudiantil indicando el progreso de los estudiantes en alcanzar las Normas de los Resultados de la Mesa Directiva
- Información sobre las estrategias, programas y operaciones del Distrito escolar para lograr las Normas de los Resultados de la Mesa Directiva
- Los ingresos, gastos y balances de los fondos principales del Distrito

En la sección de Aprovechamiento Académico podrán observar los resultados de los estudiantes de Austin en la Evaluación de Conocimientos y Destrezas de Texas que se presentaron por primera vez en la primavera de 2003. Estos resultados muestran que las calificaciones de estudiantes de Austin fueron generalmente mejores en comparación con las de otros distritos urbanos de Texas. Asimismo, podrán observar que una de nuestras estrategias para mejorar las calificaciones de TAKS en 10º y 11º grados es reducir el tamaño de la clase. ¿Cómo podremos proporcionar más maestros de escuelas secundarias? Tomando decisiones más estrictas y reduciendo los gastos en otras áreas.

Espero que lean y estudien este Informe Anual para que determinen por sí mismos la labor que Austin ISD esta realizando para educar a todos los estudiantes. También espero que llenen la encuesta en la hoja de atrás para que nuestro Informe Anual sea más significativo y efectivo en años futuros.

Atentamente,

Pascal D. Forgione, Jr., Ph.D..  
Superintendente

## CHALLENGES WE FACE

**W**hile Austin students are experiencing many successes, the District continues to face significant challenges. The challenge of eliminating achievement gaps among all student groups, while raising standards for all is a continuing and primary focus for the district. In 2003-04, and in keeping with Board Results Policies, District leadership is focusing on data-driven, continual, and systematic improvements to meet or surpass this challenge. To do this, the District will:

- Ensure that all students and each student group on all campuses meet or exceed state and national accountability performance standards, thereby closing the gap among student groups.
- Implement High School initiatives to improve achievement and reduce gaps in college / career access among student groups.
- Ensure access to a rigorous curriculum at all levels of AISD, through:
  - uniformly implementing the District curriculum
  - administering benchmark assessments to guide and inform instructional decision making throughout the school year
  - implementing strategic interventions for struggling learners
  - maximizing student participation in the Recommended and Distinguished High School Plans for graduation, and
  - reinforcing implementation of the Principles of Learning, especially in Bilingual/ESL classrooms.
- Redesign Career and Technology Education programs, in collaboration with Austin Community College, to better prepare students for a wide array of successful post-secondary opportunities.
- Improve student attendance rates and increase high school graduation rates through systematic monitoring, interventions, and reporting.
- Support implementation of campus safety plans to create learning environments that are safe, inviting, and supportive of high student performance.
- Improve customer service and implement the recommendations of the Cultural Connections Task Force so that parents and students will know without question that they are, indeed, our most valuable resources.