

STATE COMPENSATORY EDUCATION, 2008-2009



Austin Independent School District
Department of Program Evaluation

November 2009

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

State Compensatory Education (SCE) is a supplemental program designed to eliminate disparities in (a) student performance on assessment instruments administered under chapter 39 of the Texas Education Code (1995, amended 2007), and (b) the rates of high school completion between students who are at risk of dropping out of school, as defined by Texas Education Code §29.081 (1995, amended 2007), and all other students. SCE funds must be used for programs or services that are supplemental to the regular education program. Toward this end, appropriate compensatory, intensive, and accelerated instruction programs should be designed and implemented to increase the achievement of at-risk students. For the 2008–2009 school year, Austin Independent School District (AISD) allocated a total of \$40,587,117 from SCE to partially or fully support a variety of programs and services and 540.11 full-time equivalent (FTE) staff positions.

According to Texas Education Code §29.081 (2005), districts must evaluate the effectiveness of SCE programs by measuring student performance and by comparing rates of high school completion to show the reduction of any disparity in performances between students who are at risk of dropping out of school and all other district students. Analyses of AISD Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) performance showed decreased disparities from 2008 to 2009 between students who were at risk and those who were not, as measured by passing rates in reading and language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. However, the most current data from the Texas Education Agency (TEA, 2009) showed an increased disparity between the 2007 and 2008 cohorts' at-risk and all students groups in terms of the dropout and graduation rates. This report includes findings regarding the students served and general recommendations for SCE-funded services.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Decreased disparities between at-risk and not-at-risk students with respect to the 2007–2008 and 2008–2009 TAKS passing rates are promising. However, the increased disparity from 2007 to 2008 between at-risk and all students with respect to graduation and dropout rates indicates that room for improvement remains. In order to better serve at-risk students, it is necessary to understand which programs are effective, and where improvements are needed.

General Program Recommendations

- A more proactive approach to SCE (i.e., using funds strategically in an integrated program, rather than as a funding source) needs to be taken. AISD needs to undergo a cultural shift in the way SCE funds are viewed, planned for, and utilized. District and campus staff should work together to determine areas of greatest need and to ensure the best possible match between the identified needs and the services and resources available to address those needs. Currently, not all SCE-funded programs appear to be focused on the legislated required goals.
- Monitoring at the individual program level needs to occur to ensure that each program is helping to close the achievement gap between at-risk and not-at-risk students. All individual SCE programs and services should be monitored for effectiveness in terms of student achievement and school completion outcomes.
- In order to accomplish the recommended individual program evaluations, the persistent student-level data limitations that prevent identification of students who are beneficiaries of SCE services first must be overcome. To address this issue, AISD leadership must ensure that a process is put in place, and that there is adequate support, training, and staffing, to track student participation in the new student information system once it comes on line in 2010-2011.

Target Area Recommendations

- Students in science and mathematics: The greatest disparity in TAKS passing rates between at-risk and not-at-risk students continues to be in the areas of science and mathematics (41.27 and 32.91 percentage points, respectively).
- Students with limited English proficiency (LEP): Half of all at-risk students were identified as being at risk due to LEP status.
- Students at risk due to assessment-related failure: More than a quarter of all AISD students were identified as being at risk due to assessment related reasons (e.g., failing to pass TAKS, TAAS, or end-of-course exams). This accounts for nearly half (47.8%) of the AISD at-risk population. Assessment of content-area proficiency by grade level should be considered to facilitate targeting of SCE-funded services.

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PART 1: INTRODUCTION

STATE COMPENSATORY EDUCATION

State Compensatory Education (SCE) is a supplemental program designed to eliminate disparities in (a) student performance on assessment instruments administered under chapter 39 of the Texas Education Code (1995, amended 2007), and (b) the rates of high school completion between students who are at risk of dropping out of school, as defined by Texas Education Code §29.081 (1995, amended 2007), and all other students. SCE funds are designated for implementing appropriate compensatory, intensive, or accelerated instruction programs that enable at-risk students to improve their academic achievement and to graduate. Districts therefore must identify the needs of at-risk students and examine student performance data resulting from the administration of state assessment instruments. Using these needs, district and campus staff are expected to design appropriate strategies to help at-risk students and must include these strategies in the district and/or campus improvement plans.

The district is required to spend a certain amount of the local budget on SCE, determined in accordance with guidelines from the state's Foundation School Program (Texas Education Code §42.152, 1995, amended 2007). The amount is based on the average of the highest 6 months' enrollment of students who qualified for the federal free or reduced-price school lunch program during the preceding school year.¹ Districts are required to allocate additional funds for each student who is educationally disadvantaged and for students without disabilities who reside in residential placement facilities in a district in which the students' parents or guardians do not reside. Districts also must allocate additional funds for each student who is in a remedial or support program because the student is pregnant or a parent.

Districts must use SCE funds for programs or services that are supplemental to the regular education program. They must be allocated so the indirect costs (i.e., expenses that cannot be traced to a specific costing unit, such as a department or program) do not exceed 15% and Disciplinary Alternative Education expenditures do not exceed 18%. SCE funds may be used to support programs eligible under Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, and as provided by Public Law 107-110, at campuses where at least 40% of the students

¹ According to the 2008–2009 *Summary of Finance* (Texas Education Agency, 2008), this amount was equal to \$35,813,834, based on the following formula: (# of educationally disadvantaged students [51,650.20] x FTE allotment [\$3,446] x 0.20) + (# pregnant students [26.07] x FTE allotment [\$3,446] x 2.41).

are educationally disadvantaged. For school-wide programs funded by SCE, a comprehensive description must be provided in each relevant campus improvement plan.

During the 2008–2009 school year, the district allocated \$40,587,117 for SCE, which supported a variety of programs and 540.11 full-time equivalent (FTE) staff positions (Table 1). In comparison, \$42,939,374 was expended and 537.36 FTE positions were funded in the 2007–2008 school year. Table 1 lists the programs and services the district implemented that were partially or fully supported through SCE funds in 2008–2009.

Although the Texas Education Agency (TEA) requires evaluation of the effectiveness of SCE programs, no mechanism exists for tracking students served by most of the AISD SCE-funded programs (Christian & Schmitt, 2008; Christian, 2009). Systematic gathering and reporting of information about students served is uniquely conducted by the School to Community Liaison (SCL) and Diversified Education through Leadership, Technology, and Academics (DELTA) programs, which allows for the reporting of findings and development of specific recommendations for both of these programs. However, in the case of the majority of programs and services funded through SCE for which individual student participation is not tracked, evaluation of success is limited to examination of the at-risk population as a whole. This tracking issue may be addressed, in part, by AISD's new student information system that will be implemented in the 2010-2011 school year.

Table 1. AISD State Compensatory Education Budget, 2008–2009

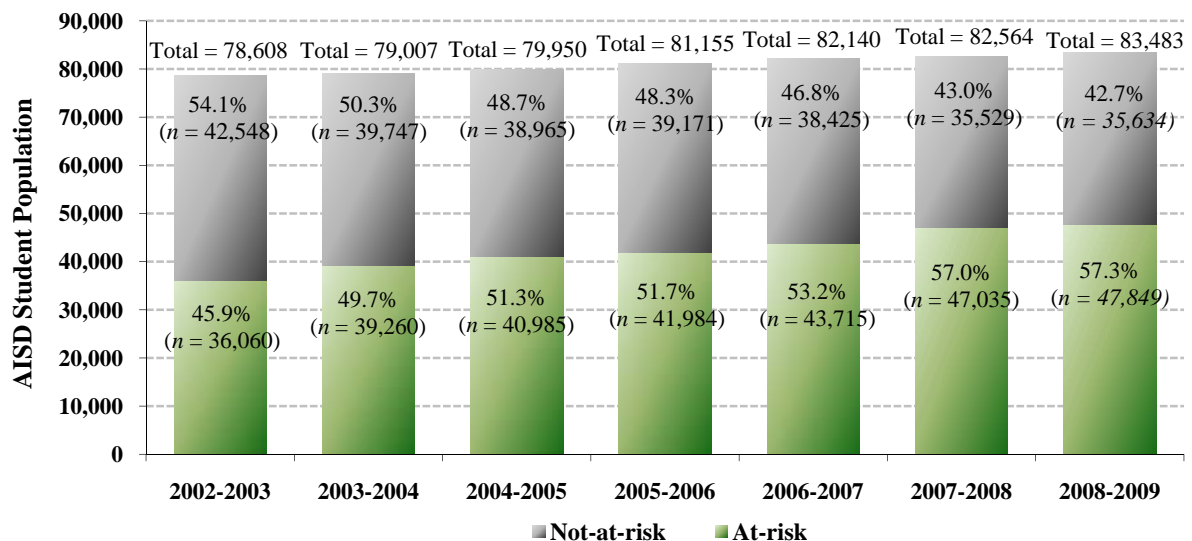
	Program/Service	Budget	Percentage of Budget	FTEs
Dropout Prevention	DELTA (dropout recovery)	\$ 2,208,842	5.44%	31.40
	Dropout Prevention	\$ 1,329,875	3.28%	15.50
	Truancy Master	\$ 97,411	0.24%	-
	Child Care Program	\$ 24,500	0.06%	-
Curriculum and Academic Support	Reading Literacy Teachers	\$ 4,849,640	11.95%	7.00
	Summer School	\$ 3,307,926	8.15%	-
	Middle School Reading Initiative	\$ 1,720,000	4.24%	1.27
	Struggling Learners	\$ 1,133,500	2.79%	-
	AVID	\$ 935,264	2.30%	2.00
	Read 180	\$ 500,000	1.23%	3.29
	Bilingual Allocation for Immigrants	\$ 214,149	0.53%	3.00
	Elementary & Secondary Tutorials	\$ 198,489	0.49%	-
	TAKS Prep	\$ 176,716	0.44%	-
Social Services	Guidance & Counseling	\$ 3,884,143	9.57%	4.25
	Seton Nurse Contract	\$ 2,788,111	6.87%	-
	School to Community Liaisons	\$ 982,652	2.42%	9.60
	Communities in Schools	\$ 690,000	1.70%	-
	Family Resource Center	\$ 81,549	0.20%	1.20
	PAL Program	\$ 15,588	0.04%	-
Campus Allocations	Account for Learning	\$ 3,323,612	8.19%	69.00
	Curriculum Specialists	\$ 1,216,743	3.00%	24.75
	Secondary Transition Programs	\$ 275,000	0.68%	-
	Support for “Needs Improvement” & “Academically Unacceptable”	\$ 198,450	0.49%	2.00
	Homebound	\$ 134,364	0.33%	1.00
	9 th Grade Initiatives	\$ 78,936	0.19%	-
	Blueprint Schools	\$ 57,343	0.14%	-
Alternative Education & Residential Facilities	Garza Alternative High School	\$ 2,217,063	5.46%	36.50
	International High School	\$ 1,206,328	2.97%	23.00
	Shoal Creek Hospital	\$ 108,305	0.27%	2.00
	Phoenix Academy	\$ 104,951	0.26%	3.00
Disciplinary Alternative Education	Alternative Learning Center	\$ 2,178,540	5.37%	3.00
	Alternative Center for Elementary Students	\$ 416,118	1.03%	6.90
	Leadership Academy	\$ 344,507	0.85%	7.00
	Travis County Detention Center	\$ 203,250	0.50%	7.00
Other Discipline	Student Discipline	\$ 490,860	1.21%	9.00
Other	Lucy Read Pre-K Center	\$ 1,248,716	3.08%	41.00
	Student Support Services	\$ 857,045	2.11%	3.55
	Response to Intervention	\$ 528,631	1.30%	12.90
	Quality of Life	\$ 260,000	0.64%	-
TOTAL		\$40,587,117	100%	540.11

Source: AISD Department of State and Federal Accountability

AISD AT-RISK POPULATION, 2008–2009

In 2008–2009, 57.3% of AISD students ($n = 47,849$) were identified as at risk on the Public Education Information Management System's (PEIMS) fall submission to the Texas Education Agency (TEA). This marked the sixth consecutive year that the percentage of at-risk students in the district increased (Figure 1). Students can be identified as at risk due to any one or more of the indicators listed in Table 2. As in the previous 2 school years, the most frequent reasons for which students were identified as at risk were limited English proficient (LEP) status and performance on state assessments. This year, however, having not performed satisfactorily on a readiness assessment moved up to the third most frequent reason for being identified as at risk, and having been retained in one or more grades dropped from third position to fourth. Nearly one-third of the students identified as at risk met 2 or more of the 14 possible criteria (Table 3).

Figure 1. AISD Student Population, by At-Risk Status, 2002–2003 Through 2008–2009



Source. Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) 110 records and AISD student records, AISD Office of Accountability

Table 2: Students Reported at Risk of Dropping out of School by At-Risk Indicator, 2008–2009

At-risk indicator	Number of students	Percentage of at-risk students	Percentage of all AISD students
LEP status	24,251	50.7%	29.0%
Assessment related (TAKS, TAAS, end-of-course exam)	22,849	47.8%	27.4%
Did not perform satisfactorily on a readiness assessment (pre-K; K; or grades 1, 2, 3)	6,666	13.9%	8.0%
Retained in one or more grades	6,565	13.7%	7.9%
Failed two or more courses in the preceding school year (grades 7–12)	5,845	12.2%	7.0%
Currently failing two or more courses (grades 7–12)	4,317	9.0%	5.2%
Placement in an alternative education program	643	1.3%	0.8%
Resides in a residential treatment facility	535	1.1%	0.6%
Pregnant or is a parent	382	0.8%	0.5%
In custody or care of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services(DFPS)/referred to DFPS in the current school year	32	0.1%	0.0%
Previously reported to have dropped out of school	119	0.2%	0.1%
Expelled under Ch. 37 in preceding or current year	48	0.1%	0.1%
Parole, probation, or conditional release	58	0.1%	0.1%
Homeless in accordance with federal law	75	0.2%	0.1%
Total students at risk for 1 or more reasons*	47,849*	100%	57.3%

Source. PEIMS 110 and AISD student records, AISD Office of Accountability

* A student may meet multiple criteria for at-risk status; therefore, the total number of at-risk students does not equal the sum of students meeting each indicator.

Table 3. Criteria by Which Students Qualified for At-Risk Status, 2008–2009

Number of at-risk criteria met	Number of students	Percentage of at-risk students
1	32,422	67.8%
2	9,743	20.4%
3	3,368	7.0%
4	1,456	3.0%
5	647	1.4%
6-8	213	0.4%
Total	47,849	100%

Source. 2008-2009 PEIMS 110 and AISD student records, AISD Office of Accountability

As shown in Table 4, the numbers of Native American, Asian, and African American students who met criteria for being identified as at risk were proportionally similar to the numbers of their not-at-risk counterparts. However, Hispanic students were disproportionately over categorized as at risk, and White students were underrepresented within the at-risk group. Hispanic students accounted for 58.9% of the district population, but 74.5% were identified as at risk; White students represented 25.7% of the district population, but only 10.7% were identified as at risk.

Hispanic overrepresentation within the at-risk category was due in part to a lack of proficiency in the English language. Among Hispanic students identified as at risk, 63.5% ($n = 22,647$) had LEP status, and 45.7% ($n = 16,295$) were categorized as at risk *solely* because of LEP status. Clearly, one area where SCE funds should be focused is on building English proficiency.

Table 4. At-Risk, Not-At-Risk, and All AISD Students by Ethnic Group, 2008–2009

Ethnicity	At-risk		Not-at-risk		All students		Disparity*
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	
Native American	80	0.2%	123	0.4%	203	0.2%	0%
Asian	1,336	2.8%	1,527	4.3%	2,863	3.4%	-0.6%
African American	5,690	11.9%	4,125	11.6%	9,815	11.8%	0.1%
Hispanic	35,662	74.5%	13,562	38.1%	49,184	58.9%	15.6%
White	5,121	10.7%	16,297	45.7%	21,418	25.7%	-15.0%
Total	47,849	57.3%	35,634	43.7%	82,564	100%	NA

Source. 2008-2009 PEIMS 110 and PEIMS 101 records, AISD Office of Accountability.

* The disparity column represents the difference between ethnicity as a percentage of the at-risk population and percentage of the total AISD student population. Positive values indicate overrepresentation of at-risk students within the ethnic group.

PART 2: EVALUATION OF THE STATE COMPENSATORY EDUCATION PROGRAM

METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

According to the Texas Education Code §29.08 (2005), legislative requirements mandate the analysis of student performance on assessment instruments, to appraise the efficacy of the SCE programs. In compliance with this requirement, this report assesses the performance of students categorized as at-risk relative to their not-at-risk peers, using comparative descriptive statistics. The central purpose of the SCE program is the alleviation of performance disparities between students at risk of dropping out and all other students. As such, this report presents the change in disparity between at-risk and not-at-risk students on the TAKS and student dropout rates.

This report examines the progress made by at-risk students, relative to their peers, regardless of participation in any of the supported SCE program components. For the most part, the ability to link outcomes to program components was constrained by data limitations (Christian & Schmitt, 2008). A comprehensive system for identifying and tracking students receiving services funded by SCE monies is currently unavailable, hampering efforts to accurately evaluate the effectiveness of specific SCE program interventions among students receiving SCE services or to track use of available services by students at risk of dropping out. This tracking issue is being partially addressed through the installation of a new student information system that will be in place at AISD in 2010-2011.

EXAMINATION OF DISPARITY BETWEEN AT-RISK AND ALL AISD STUDENTS

TAKS Performance

Results from the 2008 and 2009 TAKS were examined and compared between students at risk of dropping out of school and all other district students. Table 5 shows the percentage of at-risk and not-at-risk students who met the standard for passing each content area of the TAKS in 2008 (2007–2008 school year) and 2009 (2008–2009 school year).

From 2007–2008 to 2008–2009, the passing rates of at-risk students increased across all subjects. The largest increase in passing rate for at-risk students was in science (5.55 percentage points), and the smallest increase was in reading/English language arts (2.23 percentage points). In contrast, although the passing rates of not-at-risk students also increased across all subjects, this increase was by a smaller magnitude (range = .35 percentage points in social studies to 3.78 percentage points in science). Therefore, although the passing rates for at-risk students remained considerably lower than passing rates for not-at-risk students, progress was made in reducing the

disparity between at-risk and not-at-risk students in all content areas. However, it should be noted that there are still large disparities between the passing rates of at-risk and not at-risk students, particularly in the areas of mathematics and science, where the differences were 32.91 and 41.27 percentage points, respectively, in 2008–2009.

Table 5. Changes in Disparity Between At-Risk and Not-At-Risk Students, Based on Percentage Passing TAKS, by Content Areas, 2007–2008 to 2008–2009

TAKS test content area and grade levels tested	2007–2008				2008–2009				Change in disparity*
	At-risk		Not-at-risk		At-risk		Not-at-risk		
	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	
Reading, English language arts (3–11)	75.54	18,328	96.57	21,005	77.77	19,306	97.64	21,937	-1.16
Mathematics (3–11)	57.79	14,003	93.45	20,296	61.69	15,342	94.60	21,212	-2.75
Science (5, 8, 10, 11)	48.92	5,017	91.96	7,874	54.47	5,819	95.74	8,149	-1.77
Social studies (8, 10, 11)	78.35	5,404	98.91	5,512	82.79	6,253	99.26	5,518	-4.09

Source. AISD TAKS student records; 2007–2008 and 2008–2009 PEIMS data, Department of Program Evaluation

Note. The *n* in each column represents the number of students who met the test standard

* *Change in disparity* refers to the change in percentage point difference (disparity) between at-risk and not-at-risk student passing rates from 2007–2008 to 2008–2009. This value is shown for each content area of the TAKS. Negative values represent a decrease in disparity, which is the desired outcome of SCE-funded programs.

School Completion

Another legislative requirement under SCE mandates that an evaluator measure the district's progress in reducing any disparity in the rates of high school completion between students at risk of dropping out of school and all other district students. Data from TEA's publication *Secondary School Completion and Dropouts in Texas Public Schools: Supplemental District Data* (2008, 2009) for the school years 2006–2007 and for 2007–2008 were used to make this assessment of progress. Data from 2008–2009 will not be available until summer 2010. At-risk students' graduation, dropout, and school continuation rates in the 9th-grade longitudinal cohorts of the classes of 2007 and 2008 are shown in Table 6 and are compared with the group "all students" in each cohort. Due to student mobility, only the TEA is able to provide accurate longitudinal dropout data. However, TEA does not provide disaggregated data for the not-at-risk longitudinal cohort. Therefore, "all students" was the best available comparison group.

Table 6. Longitudinal Student Status Rates for At-Risk and All Students in AISD for the Classes of 2007 and 2008

Class of:		Percentages of students			
		Graduated	Dropped out	Continued high school	Received GED
2007	At-risk	61.2	17.7	19.2	1.9
	All students	75.3	11.5	11.8	1.4
	Disparity	-14.1	6.2	7.4	0.5
2008	At-risk	59.3	19.0	19.6	2.0
	All students	74.3	12.4	11.9	1.4
	Disparity	-15.0	6.6	7.7	0.6
Change in disparity*		0.9	0.4	0.3	0.1

Source. TEA (2008, 2009)

* *Change in disparity* refers to the change in percentage point difference (disparity) between at-risk and not-at-risk student rates from 2006–2007 to 2007–2008. Negative values would represent the desired decrease in disparity; however, only positive values are observed, representing an increase in disparity.

In contrast with the goal of the SCE program, from 2006–2007 to 2007–2008, the disparity increased between the percentages of at-risk students and all students who graduated and between the respective percentages who dropped out. Fewer at-risk students than not at-risk students graduated from, and more dropped out of, AISD schools in 2008 than in 2007. As a result, mirroring the trend from the previous year (Christian, 2009), the disparity between the two groups continued to grow. The greatest disparity between at-risk students and all students was in the percentage who graduated (15.0 percentage points). Both student groups experienced a decrease in the percentage of students who graduated (1.9 percentage points for at-risk students, and 1.0 percentage point for all students), and both groups experienced an increase in the percentage of students who dropped out (1.3 percentage points and .09 percentage points, respectively). However, the magnitude of the changes was smaller for the all students group than for the at-risk group, resulting in increased disparity on both elements. There was also an increase in disparity for the percentages of those who continued in high school for a fifth year and those who received a GED.

PART 3: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Decreased disparities between at-risk and not-at-risk students with respect to the 2007–2008 and 2008–2009 TAKS passing rates are promising. However, the increased disparity from 2007 to 2008 between at-risk and all students with respect to graduation and dropout rates indicates that room for improvement remains. In order to maintain improvements in TAKS, and to improve in the area of school completion, it is necessary to better understand which programs are effective and where improvements in support services for at-risk students are needed. In order to achieve this goal, the following recommendations are made.

GENERAL PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS

- *A more proactive approach to SCE (i.e., using funds strategically in an integrated program, rather than as a funding source) needs to be taken. AISD needs to undergo a cultural shift in the way SCE funds are viewed, planned for, and utilized. District and campus staff should work together to determine areas of need and to ensure the best possible match between the identified needs and the services and resources available to address those needs. The programs funded with designated SCE money must meet the mandated criteria for reducing the disparity between at-risk and not-at-risk students through the provision of supplemental compensatory, intensive, or accelerated programs. Therefore, the SCE program must focus on the areas in greatest need of attention (i.e., areas of greatest disparity) and should target at-risk students. Currently, all SCE funded programs do not appear to be focused on the required goals.*
- *Monitoring at the individual program level needs to occur to ensure that each program is helping to close the achievement gap between at-risk and not-at-risk students. All individual SCE programs and services should be monitored for effectiveness in terms of student achievement and school completion outcomes. Additionally, programs should be evaluated to determine the progress of participating at-risk students in meeting the legislative goal of performing at grade level by the end of the next regular term.*
- *In order to accomplish the recommended individual program evaluations, the persistent student-level data limitations that prevent identification of students who are beneficiaries of SCE services first must be overcome. To address this issue, AISD leadership must ensure that a process is put in place and that there is adequate support, training, and staffing to track student participation in the new student information system once it comes on line in 2010-2011.*

TARGET AREA RECOMMENDATIONS

- *Students in science and mathematics.* The greatest disparity in TAKS passing rates between at-risk and not-at-risk students continues to be in the areas of science and mathematics (41.27 and 32.91 percentage points, respectively). Currently, it appears that curriculum programs funded through SCE are continue to be primarily in the reading content area. Stakeholders should carefully examine what programs and services are available to at-risk students struggling in science and mathematics and target resources accordingly.
- *Students with LEP status:* Half of all at-risk students were identified as being at risk due to LEP status. Again, careful examination of programs and services should be undertaken so that SCE resources can be appropriately directed.
- *Students at risk due to assessment-related failure:* More than a quarter of all AISD students were identified as being at risk due to assessment related reasons (e.g., failing to pass TAKS, TAAS, or end-of-course exams). This accounts for nearly half (47.8%) of the AISD at-risk population. At-risk students experience the lowest passing rates for TAKS in the subjects of mathematics and science, but further investigation is needed regarding end-of-course exam passing rates and differences by grade levels. Assessment of content-area proficiency by grade level should be considered to facilitate targeting of SCE-funded services.

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