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ABSTRACT

As part of a sweeping educational reform package, the Texas legislature passed a No Pass/No Play provision requiring that a student have a 6-weeks average of at least 70 in every course or sit out of all extracurricular activities for the next 6 weeks. A review of the effects of this provision in the Austin Independent School District indicated that, on balance, the provision appears to have a positive effect. More students have remained eligible for extracurriculars than in the years before the provision was enacted, with the highest increases among student athletes. From 1984-85 through 1992-93, students involved in extracurriculars dropped out at a lower rate than students not participating. No effect of the provision has been seen on the dropout rate for students involved in extracurriculars. In the period since the enactment of no pass/no play, the numbers of students enrolled in honors courses has risen. While the provision has not met the optimistic hopes of some legislators, it has not had the negative impacts many feared. Dropouts do not appear to have risen among students who lost eligibility for extracurriculars. Five figures and six attachments (tables) present evaluation findings. (SLD)

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A Look Back at the No Pass/No Play Provision

Executive Summary

Austin Independent School District
Office of Research and Evaluation

Author: *Melissa Sabatino*

Program Description

In 1984, the Texas legislature signed House Bill 72 (HB 72) into law. HB 72 was a massive education reform bill designed to overhaul the educational system statewide. One of the most controversial components of HB 72 was, and continues to remain, the No Pass/No Play provision. The No Pass/No Play provision requires that a student have a six-weeks average of at least 70 in EVERY COURSE or sit out of all extracurricular activities for the next six-weeks grading period. Prior to January 1985, when HB 72 became effective, a student retained eligibility for extracurricular activities for an entire semester by passing at least three courses during the preceding semester.

The impact of the No Pass/No Play provision has most often been discussed in terms of three anticipated outcomes, one positive and two negative. On the positive side, students were expected to fail fewer courses overall in order to maintain their eligibility for extracurricular activities. On the negative side, students were expected to drop out at a higher rate when they lost their eligibility to participate in extracurricular activities, and to enroll in fewer higher level or honors courses in order to maintain their eligibility.

This study addresses three research questions:

1. Did students fail fewer courses under the influence of the No Pass/No Play provision?
2. Did the dropout rate increase under the influence of the No Pass/No Play provision?
3. Did enrollments decline in honors courses under the influence of the No Pass/No Play provision?

Major Findings

On balance, the No Pass/No Play provision appears to have a positive effect on students involved in extracurricular activities. These finding support a 1988 AISD study of the No Pass/No Play provision.

1. Since the passage of No Pass/No Play, more students have remained eligible to participate in extracurricular activities. In 1984-85, the year before No Pass/No Play was implemented, the percentage rate of high school students eligible to participate in extracurricular activities was approximately 41%. In 1992-93, eight years after the implementation of No Pass/No Play, the eligibility rate for high school students was 47%. (Page 3)
2. Student athletes had the largest increase in the eligibility rate from 47% in the fall of 1984-85 to 60% in the fall of 1992-93. (Page 4)
3. From 1984-85 to 1992-93, African American students were the least likely to be eligible to participate in extracurricular activities, while White students were the most eligible to participate. (Page 8)
4. Students involved in extracurricular activities dropped out at a lower rate each year from 1984-85 through 1992-93 than students not involved in extracurricular activities. The dropout rate for students involved in extracurricular activities has fluctuated over the years, but no notable differences were observed across time and among activities. (Page 9)
5. The overall percentage of enrollment in honors courses rose from 24% in 1984-85 to 35% in 1992-93. Of those students participating in extracurricular activities, the percentage of students also enrolled in honors courses has increased since No Pass/No Play was implemented. During the fall of 1992-93, of the 5,473 students enrolled in extracurricular activities, 2,625 (48%) were also enrolled in honors courses, up 12 percentage points from 1984-85. (Page 12)

Conclusion

In conclusion, the No Pass/No Play provision may not have met the optimistic hopes of some legislators; however, the negative impacts that many feared also have not materialized.

On balance, No Pass/No Play appears to have a slightly positive effect on students involved in extracurricular activities. Students appear to be remaining eligible to participate in extracurricular activities and enrolling in honors courses at a higher rate under the No Pass/No Play provision. The dropout rate for those involved in extracurricular activities has fluctuated over the years, but no notable differences were observed across time and among activities.

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A LOOK BACK AT THE NO PASS/NO PLAY PROVISION

CONCLUSIONS

Looking back on the last eight years of No Pass/No Play shows that although the provision may not have met the optimistic hopes of some legislators, the negative impacts that many feared also have not materialized.

On balance, No Pass/No Play appears to have a slightly positive effect on students involved in extracurricular activities. Students appear to be remaining eligible to participate in extracurricular activities and enrolling in honors courses at a higher rate under No Pass/No Play. The dropout rate for those involved in extracurricular activities has fluctuated over the years, but no notable differences were observed.

Clearly, because No Pass/No Play began during a time when many other changes were being implemented, one cannot conclude with assurance that this one provision change is responsible for these outcomes.

INTRODUCTION

Too many students fail. In the desperate search for a solution, No Pass/No Play rules have gained popularity across the nation. However, is being barred from participation in extracurricular activities a sanction that encourages students to pass their courses? No Pass/No Play is also controversial for political reasons. Legislation authorizing it is often inspired more by the pressure for educational reform than by any research supporting the efficacy of stricter sanctions for failing grades. This was the case in Texas; however, we now have an eight-year history with the provision. We can examine whether student behaviors -- earning passing grades, dropping out, or enrolling in honors courses -- have been impacted.

In 1984 the Texas legislature signed House Bill 72 (HB 72) into law. HB 72 was a massive education reform bill designed to overhaul the educational system statewide. One of the most controversial components of HB 72 was the No Pass/No Play provision. The No Pass/No Play provision requires that a student have a six-weeks average of at least 70 in EVERY COURSE or to sit out of all extracurricular activities for the next six-weeks grading period. Prior to January 1985, a student retained eligibility for extracurricular activities for an entire semester by passing at least three courses during the preceding semester.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The impact of the No Pass/No Play provision has been most discussed in terms of three anticipated outcomes, one positive and two negative. On the positive side, students were expected to fail fewer courses overall in order to maintain their eligibility for extracurricular activities. On the negative side, students were expected to drop out at a higher rate when they lost their eligibility, and to enroll in fewer higher level or honors courses.

This study is a follow-up to a study performed in 1988, No Pass -- No Play: Impact on Failures, Dropouts, and Course Enrollments (ORE Publication No. 87.29), which evaluated the impact of the first three years of the No Pass/No Play provision. Both studies address the three research questions mentioned below.

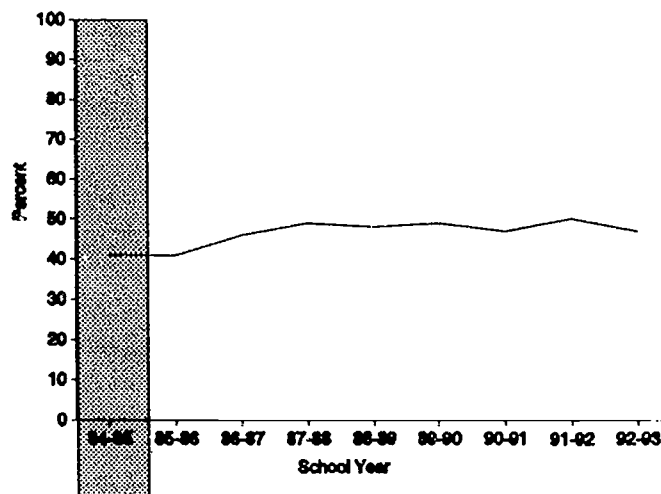
1. Did students fail fewer courses under the influence of the No Pass/No Play provision?
2. Did the dropout rate increase under the influence of the No Pass/No Play provision?
3. Did enrollments decline in honors courses under the influence of the No Pass/No Play provision?

The answers to the three research questions were collected from statistical programs run by ORE staff, unless otherwise noted.

**DID STUDENTS FAIL FEWER COURSES UNDER
THE INFLUENCE OF THE NO PASS/NO PLAY PROVISION?**

Yes. Under the influence of No Pass/No Play more students remained eligible to participate in extracurricular activities. In 1984-85, the year before No Pass/No Play was implemented, the percentage rate of high school students eligible to participate in extracurricular activities was approximately 41%. In 1992-93, eight years after the implementation of No Pass/No Play, the eligibility rate for high school students was 47%. See Figure 1 for the percentage of eligible students from 1982-83 to 1992-93.

**FIGURE 1
PERCENT OF STUDENTS ELIGIBLE TO PARTICIPATE IN
EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES, 1984-1992**



Shading represents the year before the implementation of No Pass/No Play.

Was the impact greater for students enrolled in extracurricular courses? We can compare the grades of students enrolled in courses associated with extracurricular activities to those who are not enrolled. This is not a perfect comparison, because not all extracurricular activities are tied to course enrollments; however, the link is substantial and includes the major activities. Attachment A is a listing of the courses associated with extracurricular activities.

When the eligibility rate is broken out by those students enrolled in extracurricular courses and those enrolled in regular courses, some trends become evident. The trend is for students in extracurricular activities to be eligible at a higher rate than students enrolled only in regular courses.

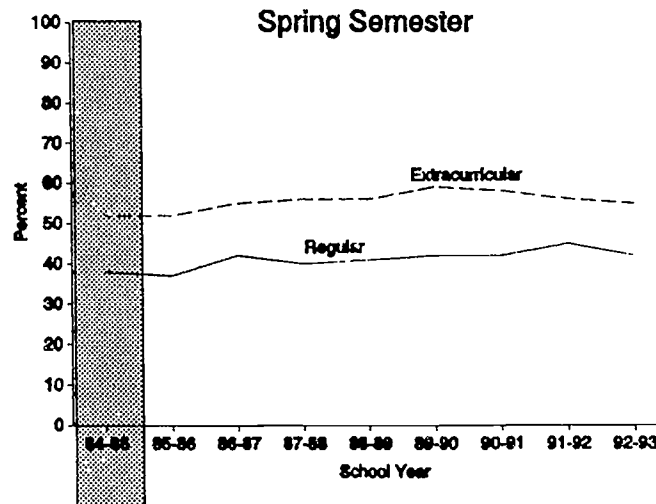
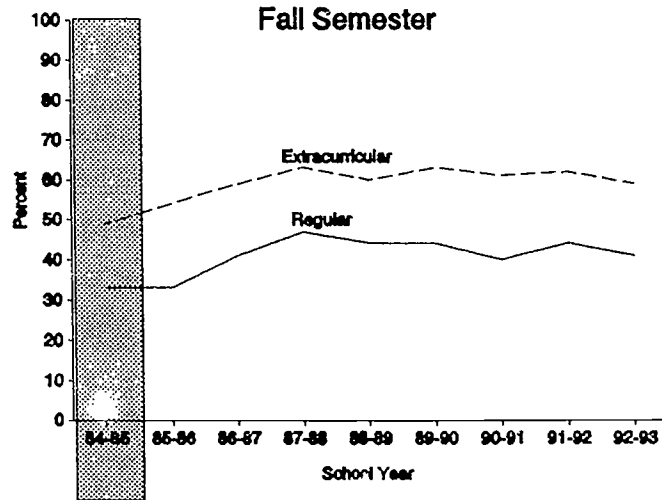
During the fall semester of 1984-85, students enrolled in extracurricular activities were eligible at a rate of 49%, while students enrolled in regular courses were eligible at a rate of 33%. By the fall 1992-93, 59% of students enrolled in extracurricular activities were eligible to participate, while 41% of students enrolled in regular classes were eligible to participate.

During the spring semester, the trend continued for students in extracurricular activities to be eligible at a higher rate than students enrolled only in regular courses. During the spring semester of 1984-85, students enrolled in extracurricular activities were eligible at a rate of 52%, while students enrolled in regular courses were eligible at a rate of 38%. By spring 1992-93, 55% of students enrolled in extracurricular activities were eligible to participate, while 42% of students enrolled in regular classes were eligible to participate. Figure 2 summarizes the recent trends in the percentage of eligibility rates in regular and extracurricular activities for the fall and spring semesters. See Attachment B for a table of percent of eligible students by years.

Was the eligibility rate different among extracurricular activities? Figure 3 displays the percentage of eligible students by types of extracurricular activities during the fall and spring semesters. During the fall semester, student athletes had the largest increase in the eligibility rate, 13 percentage points, from 47% in 1984-85 to 60% in 1992-93. Journalism students had the second largest increase, 11 percentage points, from 52% in 1984-85 to 63% in 1992-93. Band students also increased their eligibility rate during the fall semester. However, theater and choral students decreased the percentage of students eligible to participate from 1984-85 to 1992-93.

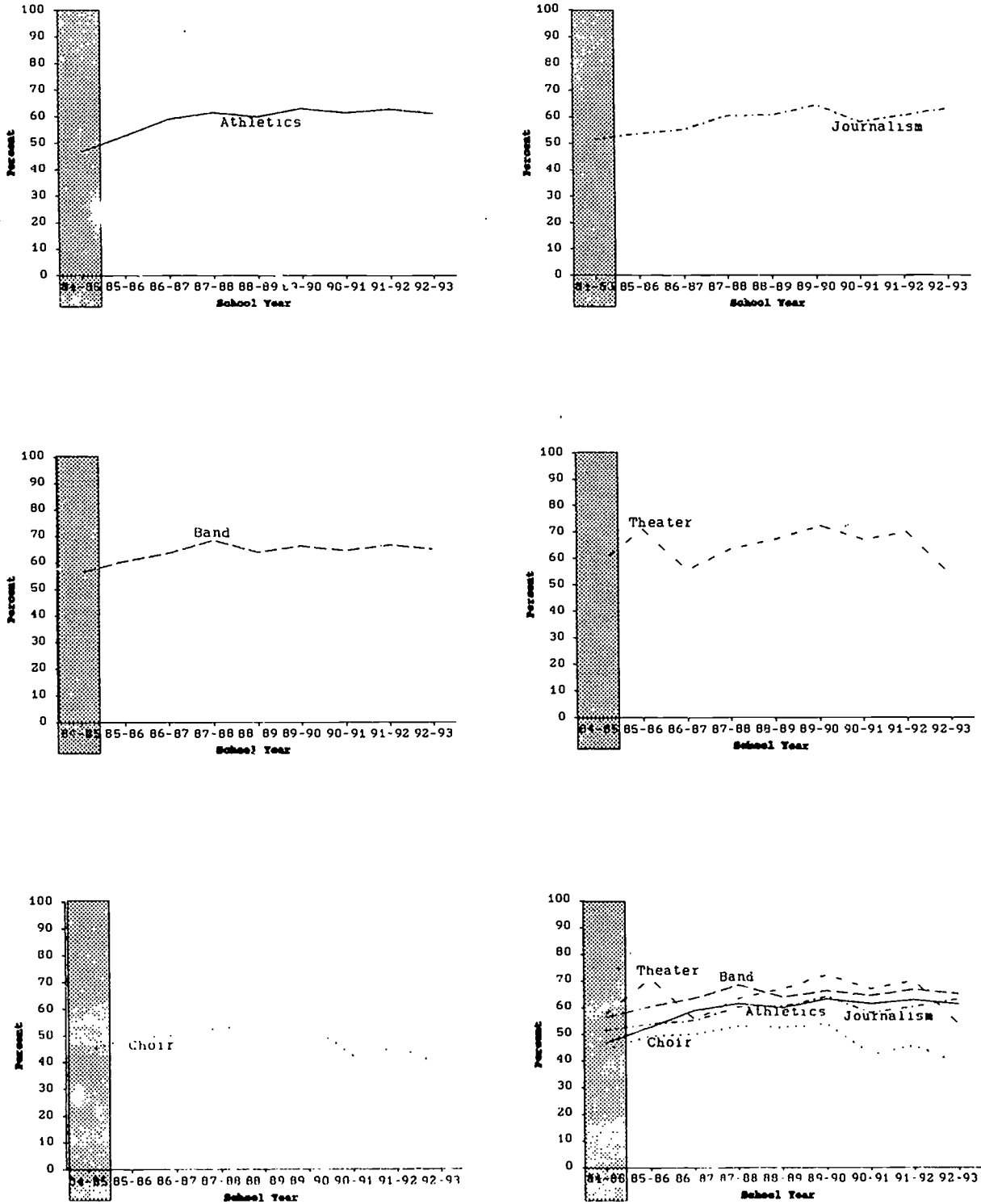
During the spring semester student athletes again had the largest increase in the eligibility rate, from 49% in 1984-85 to 55% in 1992-93, an increase of 6 percentage points. Band and journalism students also increased the eligibility rate during the spring semester. However, theater and choral students decreased the percentage of students eligible to participate from 1984-85 to 1992-93. See Attachment C for a table of percent of eligible students by extracurricular activities during the fall and spring semesters.

FIGURE 2
PERCENT OF STUDENTS ELIGIBLE TO PARTICIPATE IN
EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES



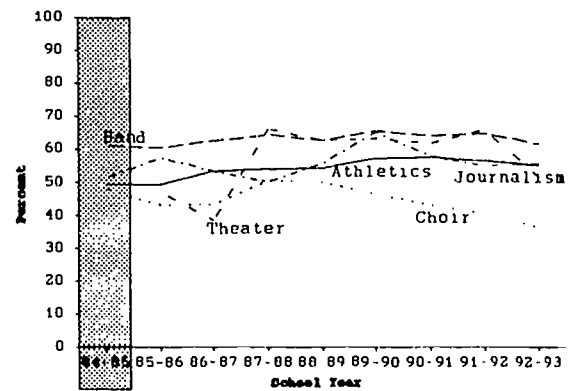
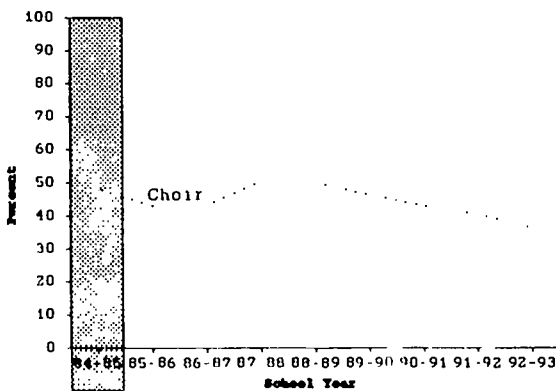
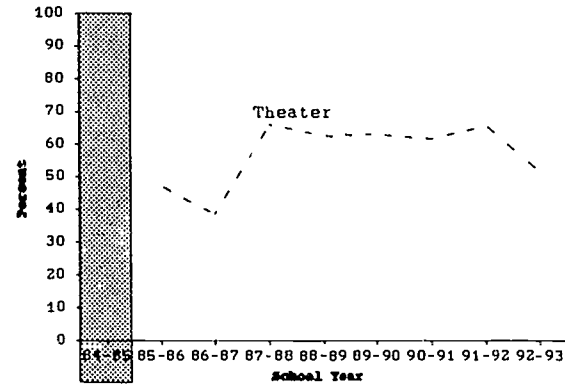
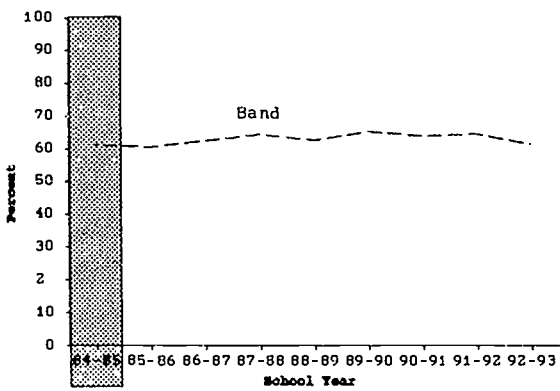
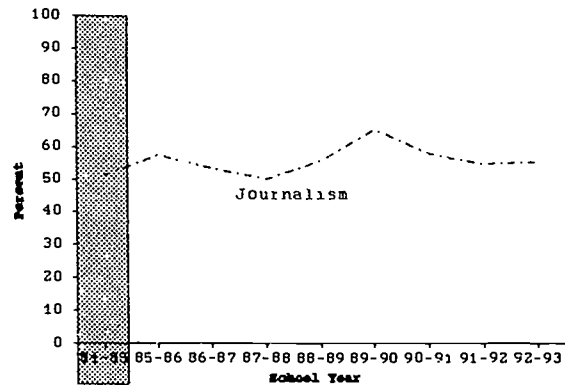
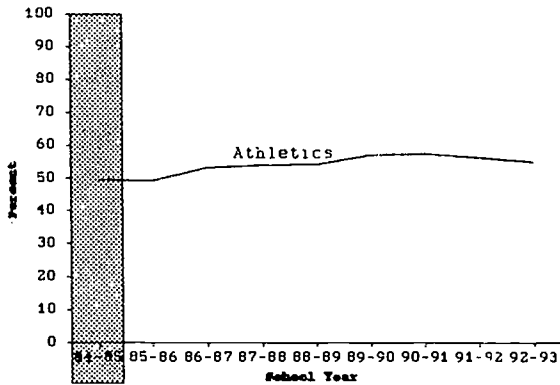
Shading represents the year before the implementation of No Pass/No Play.

FIGURE 3
PERCENT OF ELIGIBLE STUDENTS BY EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES,
FALL SEMESTER



Shading represents the year before the implementation of No Pass/No Play.

FIGURE 3
PERCENT OF ELIGIBLE STUDENTS BY EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES,
SPRING SEMESTER



Shading represents the year before the implementation of No Pass/No Play.

Did the eligibility rate increase among certain ethnic groups for students involved in extracurricular activities? Hispanic students involved in extracurricular activities increased their eligibility rate by 14 percentage points from 36% in 1984-85 to 50% in 1992-93. White students involved in extracurricular activities increased their eligibility rate by 8 percentage points from 59% in 1984-85 to 67% in 1992-93. African American students involved in extracurricular activities increased their eligibility rate by 7 percentage points from 33% in 1984-85 to 40% in 1992-93. From 1984-85 to 1992-93 African American students remained the least eligible to participate in extracurricular activities.

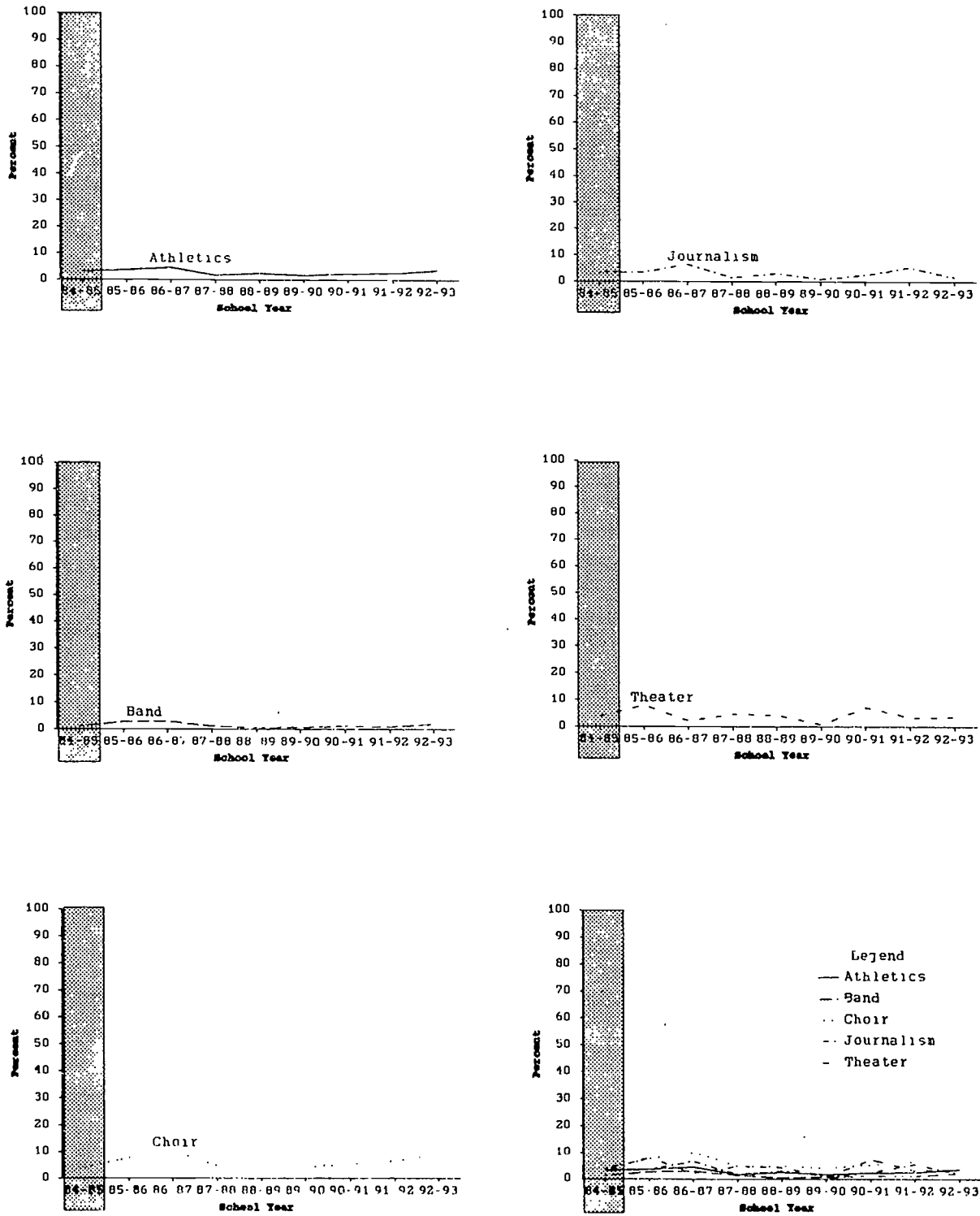
See Attachment D for a breakdown of percentage of eligible students by ethnicity.

**DID THE DROPOUT RATE INCREASE UNDER
THE INFLUENCE OF THE NO PASS/NO PLAY PROVISION?**

The answer to this question is not clear. The dropout rate for all students involved in extracurricular activities was below the dropout rate for all students. The dropout rate for high school students in 1984-85 was 13% compared to 5% for only those high school students involved in extracurricular activities. In 1992-93 the dropout rate for students involved in extracurricular activities continued to remain far below the dropout rate for all students. The dropout rate for high school students in 1992-93 was 10% compared to 3% for high school students involved in extracurricular activities. The 1992-93 school year is the latest year in which districtwide dropout data is available. For dropout statistics for all high school students, see 1992-93 Dropout Report (ORE Publication No. 92.17).

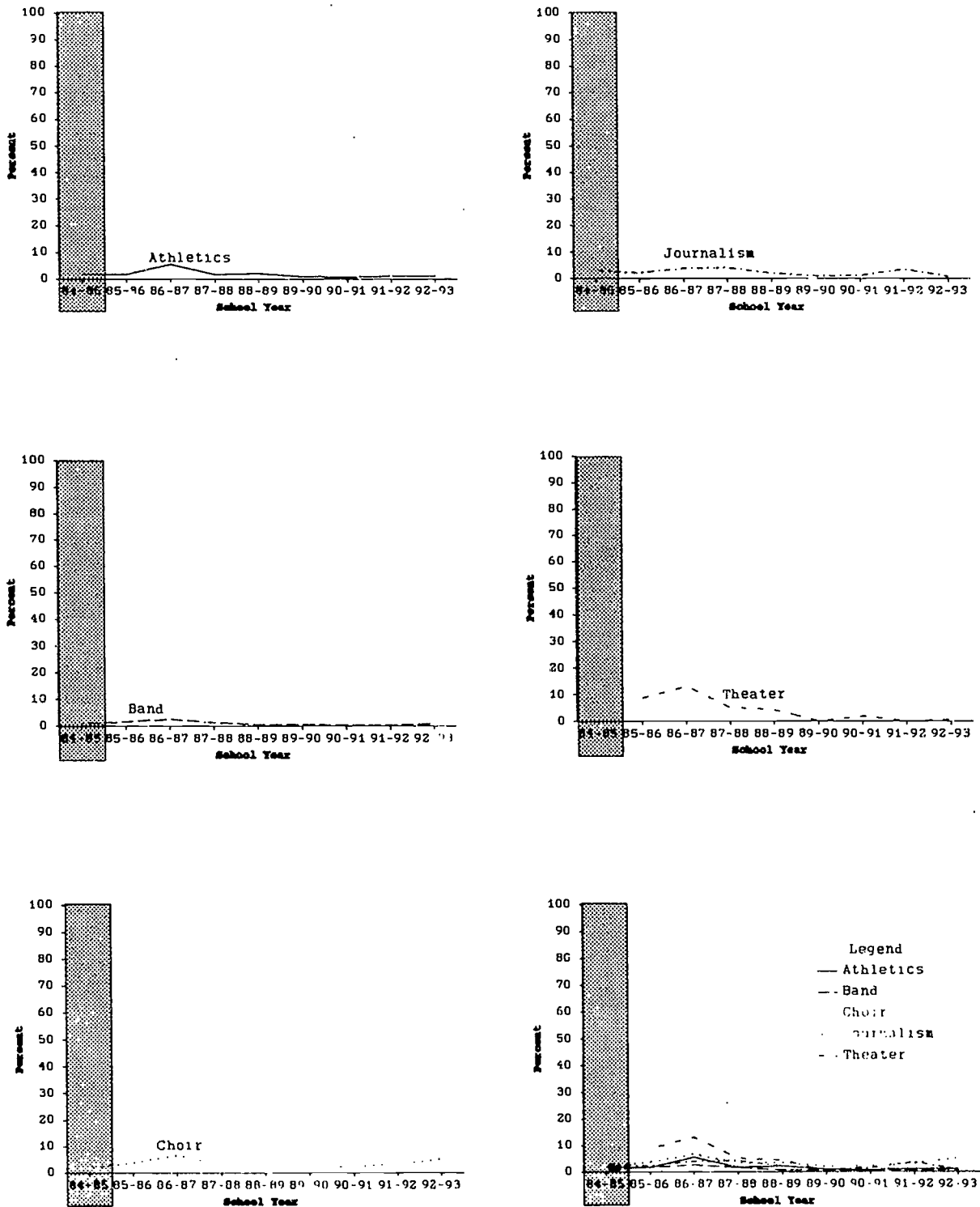
When extracurricular activities are separated, a slightly different picture emerges. From 1984-85 until 1992-93, the dropout rate for most extracurricular activities fluctuated over the years, but no notable differences were observed. The overall trend appears for the dropout rate to remain below the 1984-85 rate. Figure 4 shows the percentage of dropouts by extracurricular activities during the fall and spring semesters, respectively. See Attachment E for a detailed comparison among extracurricular activities.

FIGURE 4
PERCENT OF DROPOUTS UNDER NO PASS/NO PLAY BY EXTRACURRICULAR
ACTIVITIES, FALL SEMESTER



Shading represents the year before the implementation of No Pass/No Pla

FIGURE 4
PERCENT OF DROPOUTS UNDER NO PASS/NO PLAY BY EXTRACURRICULAR
ACTIVITIES, SPRING SEMESTER



Shading represents the year before the implementation of No Pass/No Play.

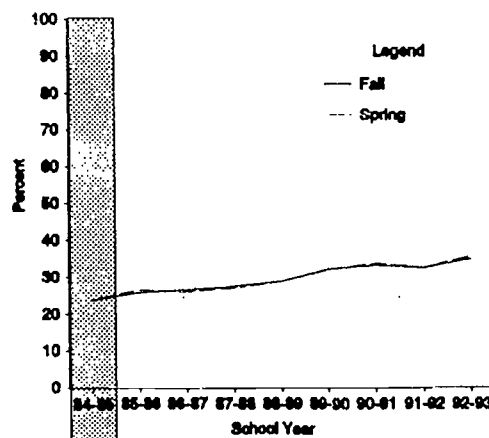
DID ENROLLMENTS DECLINE IN HONORS COURSES UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF THE NO PASS/NO PLAY PROVISION?

No. Figure 5 shows that the overall percentage of enrollment in honors courses rose from 24% in 1984-85 to 35% in 1992-93.

Are the numbers different for those students participating in extracurricular activities? Of those students participating in extracurricular activities, the percentage of students also enrolled in honors courses has increased since No Pass/No Play was implemented. During the fall of 1984-85, of the 5,595 students enrolled in extracurricular activities, 2,201 (36%) were also enrolled in honors courses. During the fall of 1992-93, of the 5,473 students enrolled in extracurricular activities, 2,625 (48%) were also enrolled in honors courses, up 12 percentage points from 1984-85. See Attachment F.

However, the data suggests that fewer honors students are involved in extracurricular activities. In fall 1984-85, of the 3,929 students enrolled in honors courses, 1,726 (51%) were enrolled in extracurricular activities. That percentage has fluctuated during the years of No Pass/No Play implementation, and in 1992-93, only 49% of the 5,390 students enrolled in honors courses were active in extracurricular activities. See Attachment F.

FIGURE 5
PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS ENROLLED IN HONORS COURSES IN AISD,
1984-1992



Shading represents the year before the implementation of No Pass/No Play.

ATTACHMENT A
CLASSES ASSOCIATED WITH EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

ATHLETICS	COURSE NUMBER
Wrestling	6901
Baseball	6911
Girls Basketball	6912
Track & Field	6913
Cross-Country	6914
Volleyball	6915
Golf	6916
Gymnastics	6917
Swimming (Fall Only)	6918
Tennis	6919
Boys Basketball	6920
Cheerleading	6921
Softball	6922
Football	6923
Soccer	6924

BAND

Band I A & B	5310-5311
Band II A & B	5312-5313
Band III A & B	5314-5315
Band IV A & B	5316-5317
Orchestra I A & B	5410-5411
Orchestra II A & B	5412-5413
Orchestra III A & B	5414-5415
Orchestra IV A & B	5416-5417
Jazz Ensemble I A & B	5318-5319
Jazz Ensemble II A & B	5320-5321
Jazz Ensemble III A & B	5322-5323
Jazz Ensemble IV A & B	5324-5325
Instrumental Ensembles I A & B	5512-5513
Instrumental Ensembles II A & B	5514-5515
Instrumental Ensembles III A & B	5516-5517
Instrumental Ensembles IV A & B	5518-5519
Applied Music I A & B	5917
Applied Music II A & B	5918

CHORUS

Girls Chorus A & B	5611-5612
Boys Chorus A & B	5613-5614
Mixed Chorus A & B	5615-5616
Concert Choir A & B	5617-5618
Small Vocal Ensemble I A & B	5711-5712

ATTACHMENT A (Continued)

CHORUS (Continued)	COURSE NUMBER
Small Vocal Ensemble II A & B	5713-5714
Small Vocal Ensemble III A & B	5715-5716
Small Vocal Ensemble IV A & B	5717-5718
Applied Music I A & B	5917
Applied Music II A & B	5918
JOURNALISM	
Journalism I A & B	1811-1812
Advanced Journalism - Yearbook or Literary Magazine Prod. I A & B	1815-1816
Advanced Journalism - Yearbook or Literary Magazine Prod. II A & B	1825H-1826H
Advanced Journalism - Yearbook or Literary Magazine Prod. III A & B	1835H-1836H
Advanced Journalism - Newspaper Prod. I A & B	1817-1818
Advanced Journalism - Newspaper Prod. II A & B	1827H-1828H
Advanced Journalism - Newspaper Prod. III A & B	1837H-1838H
Photojournalism A & B	1813-1814
Broadcast Journalism A & B	1711-1712
Independent Study A & B	1848H-1849H
THEATER	
Theater Arts I A & B	1611-1612
Theater Arts II A & B	1621-1622
Theater Arts III A & B	1631-1632
Theater Arts IV A & B	1641-1642
Technical Theater I A & B	613-1614
Technical Theater II A & B	1623-1624
Theater Production I A & B	1615-1616
Theater Production II A & B	1617-1618
Theater Production III A & B	1619-1620
Theater Production IV A & B	1625-1626

**ATTACHMENT B
PERCENT OF ELIGIBLE STUDENTS BY SEMESTER**

	Total	Percent of eligible students enrolled in extracurricular activities	Percent of eligible students enrolled in regular courses
1984-85			
Fall	40	52	33
Spring	42	49	38
1985-86			
Fall	40	54	33
Spring	42	52	37
1986-87			
Fall	47	59	41
Spring	45	55	42
1987-88			
Fall	53	63	47
Spring	45	56	40
1988-89			
Fall	50	60	44
Spring	46	56	41
1989-90			
Fall	51	63	44
Spring	47	59	42
1990-91			
Fall	47	61	40
Spring	47	58	42
1991-92			
Fall	50	62	45
Spring	51	56	44
1992-93			
Fall	47	59	41
Spring	46	55	42

Shading represents the year before the implementation of No Pass/No Play.

ATTACHMENT C
PERCENT OF ELIGIBLE STUDENTS BY EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

	1984 - 1985	1985 - 1986	1986 - 1987	1987 - 1988	1988 - 1989	1989 - 1990	1990 - 1991	1991 - 1992	1992 - 1993
FALL SEMESTER									
Athletic	46.7%	52.8%	59.1%	61.5%	60.0%	63.2%	61.5%	62.9%	60.4%
Band	56.3%	60.6%	63.7%	68.4%	64.1%	66.4%	64.7%	66.7%	65.2%
Choir	44.4%	49.5%	50.1%	53.1%	52.6%	53.9%	42.3%	45.7%	39.0%
Journalism	51.6%	53.8%	55.2%	60.3%	60.6%	64.3%	58.1%	60.5%	63.3%
Theater	57.7%	71.0%	55.6%	63.5%	67.1%	72.3%	67.1%	69.6%	53.6%
SPRING SEMESTER									
Athletic	49.4%	49.2%	53.3%	54.0%	54.3%	57.1%	57.6%	56.3%	55.0%
Band	61.1%	60.5%	62.5%	64.4%	62.8%	65.4%	64.0%	64.7%	61.5%
Choir	48.1%	43.2%	43.4%	50.7%	50.1%	46.5%	43.2%	40.7%	36.4%
Journalism	51.3%	57.4%	53.4%	50.2%	55.8%	65.1%	57.9%	54.8%	55.4%
Theater	100%	47.1%	38.5%	66.2%	62.8%	63.1%	61.8%	65.7%	51.5%

Shading represents the year before the implementation of No Pass/No Play.

**ATTACHMENT D
PERCENT OF ELIGIBLE STUDENTS BY ETHNICITY**

	African American Students	Hispanic Students	White Students
1984-85			
Fall	32	32	57
Spring	35	39	61
1985-86			
Fall	44	41	61
Spring	42	40	59
1986-87			
Fall	49	51	65
Spring	42	46	63
1987-88			
Fall	51	53	70
Spring	42	46	65
1988-89			
Fall	47	53	68
Spring	39	48	65
1989-90			
Fall	40	54	71
Spring	44	48	68
1990-91			
Fall	49	50	69
Spring	41	47	69
1991-92			
Fall	48	52	73
Spring	38	38	58
1992-93			
Fall	46	52	68
Spring	35	47	66

Shading represents the year before the implementation of No Pass/No Play.

ATTACHMENT E
PERCENTAGE OF DROPOUTS UNDER NO PASS/NO PLAY

	1984 - 1985	1985 - 1986	1986 - 1987	1987 - 1988	1988 - 1989	1989 - 1990	1990 - 1991	1991 - 1992	1992 - 1993
FALL SEMESTER									
Athletic	3.2%	3.5%	4.6%	1.7%	2.5%	1.6%	2.3%	2.5%	3.6%
Band	1.3%	2.7%	3.0%	1.3%	0.6%	0.8%	1.2%	1.1%	2.1%
Choir	4.0%	7.7%	10.0%	4.7%	4.8%	4.1%	5.3%	6.4%	8.9%
Journalism	3.7%	3.6%	6.6%	1.6%	3.1%	1.1%	2.5%	5.5%	1.9%
Theater	3.9%	7.9%	2.2%	4.8%	4.3%	0.9%	7.3%	3.3%	3.6%
SPRING SEMESTER									
Athletic	1.7%	1.7%	5.5%	1.7%	2.0%	1.0%	0.8%	1.1%	1.1%
Band	1.0%	1.7%	2.6%	1.4%	0.7%	0.6%	0.5%	0.5%	0.9%
Choir	1.8%	3.7%	6.7%	3.2%	3.4%	2.0%	2.5%	3.3%	5.2%
Journalism	3.0%	2.2%	4.0%	4.1%	2.1%	1.0%	1.3%	3.6%	0.8%
Theater	0.0%	8.8%	13.2%	5.2%	4.4%	0.0%	2.0%	0.0%	0.6%

Shading represents the year before the implementation of No Pass/No Play.

**ATTACHMENT F
NUMBER AND PERCENT OF STUDENTS IN HONORS CLASSES**

Year	Number	Percent
1984-85		
Fall	3,929	23.8%
Spring	3,792	24.0%
1985-86		
Fall	4,197	25.8%
Spring	4,094	26.6%
1986-87		
Fall	4,276	26.5%
Spring	4,046	26.0%
1987-88		
Fall	3,742	27.3%
Spring	3,728	26.9%
1988-89		
Fall	4,070	28.9%
Spring	4,029	28.9%
1989-90		
Fall	4,460	32.1%
Spring	4,347	31.9%
1990-91		
Fall	4,937	33.1%
Spring	4,751	33.6%
1991-92		
Fall	4,825	32.4%
Spring	4,894	35.0%
1992-93		
Fall	5,390	34.8%
Spring	5,138	35.5%

Shading represents the year before the implementation of No Pass/No Play.

Austin Independent School District

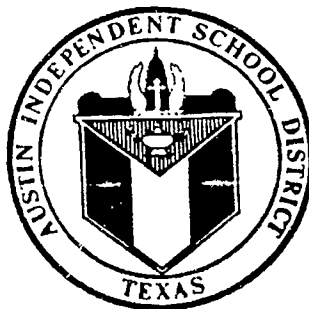
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