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ABSTRACT

Texas's education commissioner initiated a research study to investigate the possibility of replacing the dropout rate with a school-completion rate in the accountability system. The report provides an overview of school success indicators, along with an analysis of Texas data using a school-completion methodology. Following a review of school success/completion indicators, the advantages and disadvantages of the proposed school-completion methodology, along with issues related to incorporating the indicator into the Texas public education accountability system, are discussed. The text explores the issues surrounding the use of a longitudinal performance measure in the Texas integrated accountability system and provides a detailed discussion of high school completion rates. Consideration of a longitudinal performance measure raises several issues regarding the data used in calculating the measure, the methodology of a longitudinal measure, and the process of transitioning the measure into the school accountability system. The report concludes with some assumptions surrounding high school completion rates, such as unreported withdrawals not being treated as dropouts and students with alternate personal identification numbers being removed from analysis. District category descriptions and data on completion rates are provided. (RJM)

Policy Research

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High School Completion Rates: Investigating a Longitudinal Performance Measure for Texas Schools

This report investigates issues surrounding the use of a longitudinal performance measure in the Texas integrated accountability system. A detailed discussion of a high school completion rate is presented, along with an overview of other school performance measures. Consideration of a longitudinal performance measure raises several issues related to the data used in calculating the measure, the methodology of a longitudinal measure, and the process of transitioning the measure into the school accountability system. A discussion of these issues is presented in this report. The report concludes with an analysis of high school completion rates for Texas.

Report Number 8, October 1996

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High School Completion Rates: Investigating a Longitudinal Performance Measure for Texas Schools

Use of a longitudinal school completion rate as an indicator of school district performance has been discussed since the advent of the Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) and the integrated accountability system. In August 1994 (see TEA, 1996a), the integrated accountability system, based on AEIS data and published decision-making rules, was used for the first time to determine campus and district accreditation status. Three types of indicators are used in the accountability system: (1) base indicators, (2) additional indicators, and (3) report-only indicators. Base indicators are those components of AEIS that are used to determine district accreditation. Additional indicators are used to determine acknowledgment ratings for districts and campuses. Report-only indicators are performance measures that are not statutorily required for use in accrediting districts, but are required for reporting in AEIS (TEA, 1996a).

One of the base indicators used in accrediting districts is the Grade 7-12 annual dropout rate. For the August 1994 rating, the annual dropout rates for all students and each student group (African American, Hispanic, White, and economically disadvantaged) were used in rating campuses and districts as *Exemplary* or *Recognized* only. In August 1995, when the annual dropout rate for Grades 7-12 was used to rate all districts and campuses, not just those in the *Exemplary* and *Recognized* categories, there was an interest from the field and public to explore an alternative measure of high school dropout. Critics of the annual dropout rate claim the indicator does not provide a "true" picture of what happens to a cohort of students through high school since the indicator only captures a "snapshot" of the high school career (Calderon, 1996). Educators and research groups have expressed their concerns for many years regarding the accuracy of an annual indicator in capturing what is truly happening through a student's school career (Arrigona, 1991; Cardenas, Robledo, & Supik, 1986; Ligon, Stewart, & Wilkinson, 1990). Criticism of the current dropout rate methodology has also increased in the past three years since the rate became a base indicator used to rate districts and campuses. However, changing from an annual dropout rate to a longitudinal school completion rate as a base indicator in the accountability system would require a change in statute.

In response to the recent criticisms of using the dropout rate as an indicator in the accountability system, the commissioner of education initiated a research study to investigate the possibility of replacing the dropout rate with a school completion rate.

This report provides an overview of school success indicators, along with an analysis of Texas data using a school completion methodology. The advantages and disadvantages of the proposed school completion methodology, along with issues related to incorporating the indicator into the Texas public education accountability system are also discussed.

Review of School Success/ Completion Indicators

There are several procedures used to estimate school success, which measure the proportion of students who either drop out of school or graduate. These procedures can be classified as annual indicators, estimated longitudinal indicators, status indicators, and longitudinal indicators. Each will be reviewed in turn.

An annual indicator measures what happens in a school over a one-year period of time. An example of an annual indicator is the dropout rate used in the accountability system for Texas public schools and school districts (TEA, 1996a). This dropout rate represents the proportion of 7th through 12th graders who are identified as dropouts, using a series of carefully defined criteria, during a given school year.

An example of an estimated longitudinal indicator is the graduation rate computed by the U.S. Department of Education. This measure divides the number of regular diploma recipients in a given school year by the number of students enrolled in the ninth grade four years earlier, as reported in the Common Core of Data (CCD; Clements, 1990). These rates are then adjusted for inter-state migration rates to reflect the movement of students in and out of each state; however, since the methodology does not track individual students, the resulting rates are only estimates.

A status indicator looks at a pool of people in a given age range, at a given point in time, and determines the proportion of persons who are not enrolled in high school and not high school graduates. For example, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) reported that 11.5 percent of 16 to 24 year-olds nationwide were not enrolled in high school and were not high school graduates in 1994 (McMillen & Kaufman, 1996).

The fourth type of estimate of school success looks at longitudinal data and determines, to the greatest extent possible, what has happened to a group of students, or cohort, over a given period of time by tracking individual students in that cohort. An example of a longitudinal measure is the Holding Power Index (Hartzell, McKay, & Frymier, 1992). Since it is the methodology investigated for replacing the dropout rate used in the Texas accountability system, it is discussed in further detail.

Holding Power Index

The Holding Power Index was originally conceived by William Denton of Dallas Independent School District and modified through work by Ruben Carriedo of the San Diego Unified School District, Sharon Johnson-Lewis of the Detroit Public Schools, and Larry Barber, Jack Frymier, and Neville Robertson of Phi Delta Kappa (Hartzell, McKay, & Frymier, 1992). The formula for the Holding Power Index measures a school's ability or power to "hold" students in school through graduation. Any student who graduates, obtains his or her GED certificate, or continues to be enrolled after Grade 12 can contribute to a school's "Holding Power" under this methodology. Although the index is a measure of a school's success at keeping students enrolled in school, it can also provide practical information to schools about the types of students they lose over a four-year period.

Definition

Seven assumptions underlie the formula for the Holding Power Index.

1. There is a relationship between what goes on at a high school and the percentage of students who graduate from that high school.
2. There are also factors beyond the control of the high school that contribute to a student's decision to leave early and schools should not be held accountable for those students.
3. The graduating class cohort is the appropriate unit of analysis in calculating the HPI for a school.
4. High school represents Grades 9-12.
5. Four years, starting with Grade 9 and ending with Grade 12, is the appropriate time frame for measuring dropout and graduation rates with the Holding Power Index.
6. A dropout is any student who cannot be accounted for at the time his or her graduating class reaches the end of 12th grade.
7. The HPI is defined as "the percentage of students in each graduating class cohort, including those who constitute the original membership of the cohort at the start of the ninth grade and those who subsequently transfer in, who graduate or are still enrolled when the cohort finishes grade 12" (Hartzell, McKay, & Frymier, 1992, p. 14).

Methodology

Given the assumptions behind the index, the HPI methodology requires tracking a cohort, or class of students, individually and determining each student's status at the end of Grade 12. The original cohort consists of first-time ninth graders in the starting year and adds any new students to the cohort each successive year. A student who transfers to a different public school is removed from his or her original cohort and added to the cohort in the student's new school. A student who transfers to a private school or a public school in another state is removed from the calculation of the Holding Power Index. At the end of four years, the cohort used in computing the denominator of the index consists of the original ninth grade cohort plus any students who have transferred in, minus any students who have transferred out. The numerator for the index consists of on-time graduates, early graduates, and students still enrolled. Since the methodology behind the Holding Power Index focuses on tracking students over a given time period, the status of a student is determined at the cohort's typical graduation date (four years after Grade 9).

Advantages and Disadvantages of a School Completion Rate

One of the advantages of reporting a longitudinal measure of success is that it is more consistent with the public's understanding of what a dropout or school completer is — someone who enters high school and, during the next four or five years, either com-

pletes the program or drops out. A longitudinal measure can be expected to be more stable over time than an annual measure. Fluctuations in a district's annual dropout rate may not necessarily reflect the success or failure of the district's dropout prevention program. Also, a school completion rate is a more positive indicator than the dropout rate, measuring school success instead of failure.

Another advantage of a longitudinal completion rate is the length of time schools have to encourage students to return and graduate from high school before they are held accountable for that student. Because the status of a student is not determined until the end of four years, schools have up to four years to bring dropouts back to school. Also, the status of a student who drops out of school to enroll in a GED preparation program can be determined before calculating a completion rate. Under the current dropout system, students are considered to be dropouts based on the type of GED preparation programs they enter at the time they withdraw from school. With a longitudinal methodology, whether or not a student receives a GED certificate could be determined before the completion rate is calculated.

Although tracking individual-level withdrawal information on students allows for much more flexibility in a school completion system, it may be burdensome for some schools to maintain such a system. One of the disadvantages of this methodology is the amount of staff and resources required to track students over time. For larger schools, and those with computer resources, this tracking of students may already replicate their current accounting system. Smaller schools, however, may not have the resources available to do this type of tracking. This could prevent some schools from computing their own completion rates and analyzing their own information about the types of students they lose over a four-year period.

In Texas, school districts submit individual staff and student-level information yearly to the Texas Education Agency (TEA) through the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS). With these data, students can be tracked through the Texas public education system until they withdraw from the system. Although the current data collection process makes it relatively easy to calculate a school completion rate at the state level, using the Holding Power methodology, the next section provides a discussion of some of the issues that may influence the decision to use the indicator in Texas. These issues are related to the data used in calculating the index, the methodology of the index, and the process of transitioning the index into the school accountability system.

Incorporating a Completion Rate into the Texas Public School Accountability System

Data Collection Issues

Two issues are raised concerning the current collection of student-level data. One involves the manner in which dropout and graduate information are reported. Currently, each school district independently reports dropout and graduate information to the agency; student withdrawals that do not fall into either of these two categories are not reported. In the 4 years between the time they enter ninth grade and their class graduates, about 30 percent of each cohort withdraws from the Texas public school system without being reported as a dropout or graduate. Such "self-reported" data allow for variability in the interpretation of the definition of a dropout or graduate, which in turn may create variability among districts in who gets reported. As a result, unreported student withdrawals could include unreported dropouts. To fully implement a longitudinal school completion rate and apply it consistently across districts, information needs to be collected on all students withdrawing from the Texas public education system, not just dropouts and graduates. The definition of a completer and a dropout could then be determined at the state level and applied consistently across all districts. This would make the completion rate more equitable across districts and help compensate for the flaws that may be present in self-reported data.

The second issue with the current data collection is related to the PEIMS person identification (PID) system. Each student has a master PID record that includes basic demographic information that does not typically change over time (gender, ethnicity, birthdate, and name). If the basic identification information on a student data record submitted by a district does not match the PID record, that data record is flagged and given an alternate PEIMS identification number. Annual processing of data can occur even when alternate identification numbers are used, but cross-year processing becomes problematic because alternate identification numbers only apply to a specific data collection, within a specific year. A student who cannot be linked from one year to the next may appear to have withdrawn from the public education system and would not be included in the calculation of a school completion rate. If longitudinal data are to be used in the accountability system, accurate reporting of student demographic information will need to receive a greater emphasis in the PEIMS processing to ensure accurate

computation of school completion rates for Texas.

Methodological Issues

When calculating a school completion rate, criteria for deciding who belongs in the numerator need to be clearly defined. In the Holding Power Index, the definition of the numerator includes on-time graduates, early graduates, and students still enrolled. However, when students drop out of high school in Texas, some of these students complete their high school education by obtaining a GED certificate. This effort, to complete an alternative high school education, is reflected in the accountability system by not considering GED certificate recipients as dropouts. Therefore, in computing school completion rates for Texas, GED certificate recipients also might be considered school completers in the Holding Power formula. If GED certificate recipients are included in the numerator, the amount of time a student has to complete the GED certificate once they have withdrawn from school also will need to be decided.

Table 1 shows the effect of different definitions on the state completion rate computed for 1994-95. Including only regular diploma recipients (early and on-time graduates) in the numerator produces a state completion rate of 70.8 percent. The rate increases to 77.6 percent if students who do not graduate but are still enrolled are included. Including non-traditional graduates, such as GED recipients, increases the state rate to 87.9 percent.

Another methodological issue is the treatment of students who transfer from district to district. As part of the methodology for the Holding Power Index, students who transfer in and out of a district throughout the four years also transfer in and out of the cohort within that district. The district to which the final status of that student is attributed is the last district the student attends rather than the first district. For example, a district that loses a student (i.e., due to a family move) after teaching him or her for the first three years of high school would not receive credit for the final graduation status of that student given the current computation of the indicator. Similarly, a dropout also would be attributed to the last district the student attended rather than the first district from which he or she dropped out.

For consistency with the current calculation of the dropout rate, it has been suggested that the school completion indicator should track a seventh grade cohort versus a ninth grade cohort. As with any longitudinal methodology, the length of tracking can compound any problems in the data. Using the example of the alternate personal identification numbers described above, this data problem would be compounded with each year of tracking. Therefore, tracking across four years versus six years (a seventh grade cohort) minimizes this problem. The impact of changes to the PEIMS Data Standards over time also would be minimized with a four-year tracking process. What is lost in tracking a ninth grade cohort are students who never make it to high school. The impact of losing seventh and eighth grade students before high school will not be reflected in a completion rate calculated for a ninth grade cohort.

A related methodological issue is the level of analysis used. Because the completion rate is a cumulative measure, it is only comparable for campuses that include all the grades covered in the rate. Most Texas high schools are Grade 9-12 schools. However, many smaller districts have Grade K-12 or Grade 7-12 schools. Completion rates based on a seventh grade cohort would not be comparable for Grade 9-12 schools and Grade 7-12 schools. Completion rates based on a ninth grade cohort would be comparable because both campus configurations include all the grades included in the calculation.

An argument can also be made for computing the completion rate only at the district level to enhance the equity of the accountability system. Middle

Table 1. 1994-95 Completion Rates Based on Different Definitions of Completers

	Traditional Graduates	Graduates and Continuing Students	Graduates, GED Recipients, and Continuing Students
Number of Students	161,647	177,019	200,647
Completion Rate	70.8%	77.6%	87.9%

Source: TEA PEIMS (1990-91 – 1995-96)

In 1994-95, traditional graduates produced a completion rate of 70.8 percent. When different definitions of completers were applied to the state completion rate, the rate increased as high as 87.9 percent.

and high schools must meet standards on more indicators than elementary schools under the current accountability system, making it more difficult to achieve the highest accountability ratings. Yet the problems students face in secondary schools that result in dropping out, for example, often begin in elementary school. For this reason, it may be more equitable to compute measures such as the completion rate only at the district level. However, using a school completion rate only at the district level as a base indicator in the accountability system would require a change in statute.

Issues in the Transition to the Accountability System

The state accountability system is designed to improve student performance by: (1) being fair and recognizing student diversity; (2) recognizing high levels of performance and providing assistance to schools with inadequate performance; (3) complying with statutory requirements; (4) allowing flexibility at the local level in designing programs to meet the needs of the students; (5) relying on districts to develop and implement their own accountability systems that complement the state system; (6) supporting the public's right to know levels of student performance; and (7) providing a stable and realistic time line for measurement, data collection, planning, staff development, and reporting (TEA, 1996a).

Changing indicators in the accountability system disrupts the stability of the system and requires starting over to build trend data. However, this disruption is minimized by the phase-in process for new accountability indicators. New indicators are phased in over several years. Typically, the new indicators are first benchmarked for 1 year, reported for the next 2 years against a standard, and then used in the system to rate districts and campuses during the 4th year (TEA, 1996a). This process permits early identification of technical difficulties in a measure, allows districts and campuses to become comfortable with new indicators, and allows them to see how they compare to the standards before they are held accountable for them.

A longitudinal indicator is a new concept in the Texas accountability system. Current ratings are based on current and prior year data only, calculated annually. Including a longitudinal indicator in the system would require districts and campuses to be accountable for data submitted 4 or 6 years prior to the year it is used in the rating. Also, districts may object to being rated for students who dropped out 4 to 6 years earlier. Accountability appeals may extend across 6 years of data, based on either changes in the PEIMS Data Standards over the period included in the completion rate or on reporting errors from earlier years. Given the time required to resolve each appeal, it may be necessary to limit the range of appeals. Also, the impact of new dropout prevention and recovery programs would be reflected in a completion rate more gradually than an annual dropout rate because the completion rate for each year is based only on the class of students who began Grade 9 four years earlier, for example, rather than all Grade 9-12 students.

One of the biggest potential issues in transitioning to a school completion indicator is how districts and campuses will respond to the change. Due to the current accountability criteria and standards for small numbers of students, not all districts and campuses are required to meet the standards for the annual dropout rate. Switching to a completion rate could require more districts to achieve a standard they did not have to achieve before. (Only 351 of 1,044 districts had total dropout rates used for ratings in the 1996 accountability system; 704 districts would have had completion rates based on the data presented in this report.) If the completion rate is implemented at the campus level, not only more but different campuses would be rated. (The estimated 926 campuses with completion rates does not include all of the 694 campuses with total dropout rates used in the 1996 accountability ratings.) Although changing to an indicator that applies to more districts would be more equitable, it may not be well received by those districts who have an additional hurdle to achieve, even if sanctions are phased in over a 4-year period. Also, some districts and campuses with acceptable performance on the annual dropout rate indicator may not perform as well on the longitudinal completion rate. Based on districts who would have had a completion rate used in the 1996 accountability ratings, there is only a moderate correlation between district rankings on the two rates.

Another issue in transitioning to a school completion rate is the overlap between data used in the annual dropout rate and data used in the completion rate during the first few years after moving to a longitudinal measure. For example, the 1996-97 completion rate would include students who were in Grade 9 in 1993-94. Districts were held accountable for 1993-94 dropouts in the 1995 ratings and would be accountable for them again in the 1998 ratings if a school completion rate is used.

If student withdrawal information is collected, decisions need to be made about how to handle unreported withdrawals while that change is being phased in. If unreported withdrawals are treated as unreported

dropouts, school completion rates would start out artificially low and would improve as new data are incorporated. If unreported withdrawals are not treated as dropouts, completion rates would start out artificially high and would worsen as new data are incorporated, with the reporting deficiencies possibly offsetting any district gains made during that period of time.

Analysis of High School Completion Rates for Texas

Given the issues involved in switching to a school completion rate, the following assumptions and decision-making rules were applied to a preliminary analysis of Texas public school completion rates.

- Based on the recommendation of the Holding Power Index, and availability of data, a ninth grade cohort (rather than a seventh grade cohort) was followed through graduation.
- Unreported withdrawals were not treated as dropouts, but rather as students withdrawing from the Texas public education system.
- Students with alternate personal identification numbers were removed from the analysis (this consisted of about 20,000 students in the first cohort and 16,000 students in the second cohort).
- The final status of the student was attributed to the last district the student attended.
- Completion rates were calculated at the state and district levels only.

Completion Rate Analysis

Cohorts

Using the Holding Power methodology, two cohorts were studied in examining high school completion rates for Texas. The first cohort consisted of ninth grade students in 1990-91 who were followed through fall enrollment of 1994-95 (Cohort 1). Graduation and dropout statuses were established at the end of 1993-94 and students continuing their education for a 5th year were followed through fall enrollment of the 1994-95 school year. GED certificate recipients also were determined in the fall of 1994-95. The second cohort consisted of ninth grade students in 1991-92, who were followed through fall enrollment of the 1995-96 school year (Cohort 2). Graduation and dropout statuses were established at the end of 1994-95 and students continuing their education for a 5th year or receiving GED certificates were followed through fall enrollment of 1995-96. Table 2 shows the number of students who transferred into the cohort (i.e., from private school or another state public education system) over the 4-year period and the number of students who transferred out of the Texas public education system. Students transferring from district to district within Texas are reflected in the final numbers. As shown in Table 2, about 95,000 students transferred out of the Texas public education system in each cohort.

State-Level Analysis

Table 3 on Page 11 presents the state-level analysis of school completion rates for both cohorts, disaggregated by student ethnicity, gender, and socioeconomic status. For Cohort 1, the school completion rate was 86 percent, with 81 percent graduating, 11 percent receiving GEDs, and 8 percent of the cohort continuing high school for a 5th year. For Cohort 2, the school completion rate was 87.9 percent, with 80 percent graduating, 12 percent receiving GEDs, and 8 percent of the cohort continuing high school for a 5th year.

The state-level analysis by ethnicity shows that White students have the highest school completion rate in both cohorts, followed by other (Asian and Native American) minority students.

Table 2. Number of Students Transferring In and Out of the Texas Public Education System for Two Cohorts

	1993-94 Cohort 1	1994-95 Cohort 2
Original 9th Grade Cohort	272,326	285,028
Incoming 10th Graders	25,174	18,072
Incoming 11th Graders	10,873	12,596
Incoming 12th Graders	8,593	8,126
Total Cohort	316,966	323,822
Students transferring out of the Texas public school system	<94,290>	<95,567>
Final Cohort (minus students transferring out)	222,670	228,255

Source: TEA PEIMS (1990-91 – 1995-96)

About 95,000 students transferred out of the Texas public education system in each cohort.

1994-95 District Category Descriptions

Enrollment Groupings. A nine-category grouping based on the total number of students enrolled by district.

District Type. Classification of school districts based on factors such as size, growth rates, and proximity to urban areas.

Property Wealth. Total taxable property value divided by enrollment, which indicates district ability to raise local funds on a per pupil basis.

Total Tax Effort. A four-category tax effort grouping of districts defined by the total effective tax rate.

Maintenance and Operations Effective Tax Rates. A four-category tax effort grouping of districts showing the maintenance and operation (M&O) effective tax rate.

Highest Property Value Category. A 13-category Comptroller Property Tax Division classification based on property use.

Small/Sparse Adjustment. A four-category grouping of districts based on the small/sparse adjustment amount as a percent of the total adjusted basic allotment amount.

Cost of Education Index Level. A five-category grouping of districts based on the Cost of Education Index (CEI).

Operating Cost per Student. A five-category grouping of districts based on operating cost per student.

Education Service Center Region. The state is divided into 20 geographic regions; districts within each region are served by an Education Service Center.

TAAS: Percent Passing All Tests Taken. A five-category grouping of districts based on the percent passing the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS).

SAT/ACT: Percent Taking. A three-category grouping based on the percent of graduates taking the 1993/94 Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) and/or American College Testing Program's ACT Assessment.

SAT/ACT: Percent Scoring Above Criterion. A five-category grouping based on the percent of students who scored at or above the criterion on the SAT total or ACT composite.

Student Density. A four-category grouping based on density, or the number of students enrolled per square mile.

Enrollment Change from Prior Year. A five-category grouping based on the growth or decline in district student population over a one year period.

Percent African American, Hispanic, and Minority Students. Three six-category sets of groupings according to the ethnic composition of district student populations.

Percent Low Income Students. A six-category grouping according to the district percentage of enrolled students classified as economically disadvantaged on the Public Education Information Management System.

Average Teacher Experience. A four-category grouping of average teacher experience years computed as total professional experience years of all teachers divided by total teacher full-time-equivalent (FTE) count.

Average Teacher Salary. A four-category grouping by average district teacher salary computed as the total salary of teachers divided by the total teacher FTE.

Percent of Teachers with Advanced Degrees. A four-category grouping by district percentage of teachers with advanced degrees.

Percent Minority Teachers. A six-category grouping according to the minority composition of district teaching populations.

COMPLETION RATES FOR COHORT 2 (1994-95) BY DISTRICT CHARACTERISTICS

NBR DIST	CATEGORY	TOTAL RATE	WHITE RATE	AFR.AM. RATE	HISPANIC RATE	OTHER MIN. RATE	MALE RATE	FEMALE RATE	ECON. DISADV. RATE	NON-ECON. DISADV. RATE
ENROLLMENT GROUPINGS										
8	OVER 50,000	78.8	90.8	75.2	74.0	88.1	76.4	81.2	75.4	80.5
23	25,000 TO 49,999	89.2	93.9	86.0	81.7	94.3	88.3	90.2	79.9	92.1
44	10,000 TO 24,999	88.5	93.7	85.4	83.9	95.8	87.3	89.7	82.9	91.5
68	5,000 TO 9,999	89.9	93.2	82.8	84.7	95.2	88.9	90.9	80.9	92.8
78	3,000 TO 4,999	90.5	93.0	86.0	85.6	93.4	90.1	90.9	84.3	92.6
137	1,600 TO 2,999	91.2	93.3	88.7	86.8	95.3	90.5	91.8	85.0	93.8
118	1,000 TO 1,599	92.8	94.7	90.6	87.3	94.9	92.7	92.9	87.0	95.3
204	500 TO 999	93.7	95.3	92.6	88.3	98.1	93.3	94.1	87.5	96.3
365	UNDER 500	95.7	96.8	91.8	92.6	97.0	95.6	95.9	92.8	97.3
DISTRICT TYPE										
9	MAJOR URBAN	79.0	90.3	75.0	76.1	87.4	76.7	81.5	76.2	80.5
65	MAJOR SUBURBAN	91.5	94.3	88.3	84.9	94.8	90.7	92.3	83.6	93.2
25	OTHER CENTRAL CITY	86.3	93.3	81.2	80.9	95.6	85.0	87.7	79.8	90.5
80	OTHER CC SUBURBAN	89.4	92.9	87.0	85.4	95.2	88.3	90.5	84.0	92.3
74	INDEPENDENT TOWN	88.7	92.6	82.1	81.3	90.2	88.0	89.4	79.3	92.0
98	NON-METRO FAST GROWING	94.1	95.7	93.0	88.5	100	93.9	94.3	87.2	96.4
235	NON-METRO STABLE	91.2	93.8	88.7	86.3	93.2	90.9	91.6	85.9	93.7
459	RURAL	94.7	96.0	91.5	90.9	98.4	94.5	95.0	90.5	96.8
WEALTH (MEDIAN=$134,665)										
103	UNDER $72,126	86.3	94.7	91.0	84.0	96.2	85.0	87.7	83.5	90.5
104	$72,126 TO $85,951	90.0	93.2	89.0	87.7	96.4	89.2	90.9	86.8	92.3
104	$85,952 TO $102,077	86.7	93.3	82.8	79.1	89.1	85.5	88.0	80.2	90.7
104	$102,078 TO $117,489	89.6	92.5	85.4	82.4	91.4	89.0	90.2	82.5	92.1
104	$117,490 TO $134,664	88.2	92.1	81.7	84.3	91.7	87.5	88.9	81.9	90.9
104	$134,665 TO $155,715	90.8	93.9	87.8	83.2	95.9	89.7	92.1	82.5	93.0
104	$155,716 TO $188,205	90.1	93.6	84.8	83.5	94.2	89.4	90.9	81.2	92.7
104	$188,206 TO $247,378	85.2	94.1	77.3	72.3	92.6	83.6	87.0	78.6	86.7
104	$247,379 TO $373,950	85.6	93.7	78.6	75.3	91.0	84.6	86.7	75.0	89.6
104	OVER $373,950	93.3	95.4	85.5	87.0	96.4	92.9	93.6	85.8	95.0
6	SPECIAL DISTRICTS	99.0	98.4	100	99.2	100	98.4	99.6	99.4	98.7
WEALTH (ST AVG=$174,346)										
692	UNDER $174,346	88.8	93.2	85.8	83.9	94.4	87.9	89.8	82.8	91.9
347	OVER $174,346	86.3	94.2	78.2	74.9	92.3	85.0	87.7	77.7	88.7
6	SPECIAL DISTRICTS	99.0	98.4	100	99.2	100	98.4	99.6	99.4	98.7
WEALTH BY EQUAL PUPILS PER GROUP										
26	UNDER $47,300	84.2	94.2	86.0	83.7	100	82.8	85.7	82.8	87.9
56	$47,300 TO < $68,672	87.5	94.8	91.6	84.2	98.0	86.4	88.7	84.4	91.2
99	$68,672 TO < $83,493	91.7	94.3	90.7	89.1	92.9	90.9	92.5	87.4	94.6
89	$83,493 TO < $95,951	89.7	92.7	87.9	86.2	95.8	88.9	90.6	86.0	91.5
74	$95,951 TO < $106,940	85.3	92.5	80.5	78.0	91.4	84.0	86.8	78.8	89.5
95	$106,940 TO < $121,463	88.5	92.5	85.1	82.0	93.0	87.8	89.2	81.7	91.5
30	$121,463 TO < $125,566	89.9	92.6	82.7	88.1	92.7	89.4	90.6	85.4	92.1
30	$125,566 TO < $132,274	86.0	90.4	79.2	82.3	89.4	85.3	86.8	78.4	89.0
59	$132,274 TO < $141,973	91.1	94.2	87.7	85.4	95.2	90.1	92.2	85.4	93.0
35	$141,973 TO < $149,113	90.8	94.0	86.5	82.6	93.5	89.9	91.9	81.2	93.4
40	$149,113 TO < $157,140	90.7	93.9	87.9	80.0	98.2	89.4	92.1	79.7	93.0
21	$157,140 TO < $162,468	89.4	94.2	85.9	83.6	93.5	88.5	90.2	81.0	92.4
69	$162,468 TO < $187,067	91.0	93.2	83.4	83.9	94.8	90.5	91.6	81.9	93.0
31	$187,067 TO < $195,484	93.7	95.7	90.4	86.0	96.0	93.2	94.2	87.0	95.0
44	$195,484 TO < $220,679	91.5	94.7	83.9	83.2	95.4	90.9	92.1	82.1	93.6
21	$220,679 TO < $236,911	91.9	94.0	89.5	85.4	94.8	91.6	92.2	85.5	93.1
1	$236,911 TO < $240,021	69.5	86.5	70.4	62.7	84.8	65.5	73.9	67.2	70.0
24	$240,021 TO < $257,033	79.2	89.6	78.1	73.2	85.8	77.2	81.2	74.3	82.8
36	$257,033 TO < $298,698	85.1	93.1	75.8	73.0	90.9	84.0	86.2	71.7	89.4
159	$298,698 AND OVER	93.3	95.4	87.9	86.3	94.8	93.1	93.5	85.2	94.9
6	SPECIAL DISTRICTS	99.0	98.4	100	99.2	100	98.4	99.6	99.4	98.7
TOTAL TAX EFFORT (ST AVG=$1.4106)										
259	UNDER $1.2383	90.8	94.3	87.9	86.1	93.0	90.2	91.4	86.0	93.7
260	$1.2383 TO UNDER $1.3401	89.5	93.5	86.9	83.3	94.9	88.6	90.4	83.1	92.7
260	$1.3401 TO UNDER $1.4426	85.1	93.1	77.4	79.4	90.6	83.6	86.6	79.5	87.5
260	$1.4426 AND OVER	89.8	93.8	86.5	82.5	94.9	89.0	90.7	81.8	92.4
6	SPECIAL DISTRICTS	99.0	98.4	100	99.2	100	98.4	99.6	99.4	98.7
M&O EFF. TAX EFFORT (ST AVG=$1.2374)										
259	UNDER $1.0601	90.2	94.0	88.0	85.9	96.0	89.3	91.2	85.1	93.3
260	$1.0601 TO $1.1853	89.2	93.1	82.9	84.0	93.4	88.4	90.2	82.3	92.0
260	$1.1854 TO $1.3103	84.8	92.9	79.8	76.6	92.7	83.3	86.3	78.4	87.2
260	$1.3104 AND OVER	89.8	94.6	85.0	82.5	93.9	89.1	90.5	81.7	92.8
6	SPECIAL DISTRICTS	99.0	98.4	100	99.2	100	98.4	99.6	99.4	98.7
1,045	STATE TOTAL	87.9	93.6	81.8	81.5	93.4	86.8	89.0	81.5	90.6

COMPLETION RATES FOR COHORT 2 (1994-95) BY DISTRICT CHARACTERISTICS

NBR DIST	CATEGORY	TOTAL RATE	WHITE RATE	AFR.AM. RATE	HISPANIC RATE	OTHER MIN. RATE	MALE RATE	FEMALE RATE	ECON. DISADV. RATE	NON-ECON. DISADV. RATE
HIGHEST PROPERTY VALUE CATEGORY										
367	RESIDENTIAL	89.7	93.8	86.5	83.8	94.7	88.9	90.6	82.6	92.5
332	LAND	93.5	95.4	91.3	87.9	95.6	92.6	94.5	88.3	96.1
151	OIL AND GAS	91.9	95.1	86.3	87.8	90.7	91.8	91.9	86.3	95.1
189	8USINESS	82.4	92.0	77.1	74.8	89.6	80.7	84.1	77.1	84.6
6	SPECIAL DISTRICTS	99.0	98.4	100	99.2	100	98.4	99.6	99.4	98.7
SMALL/SPARSE ADJSTMNT (ST AVG=30.0%)										
317	NO SMALL/SPARSE ADJUSTMENT	87.1	93.2	81.0	80.9	93.3	85.9	88.4	80.3	89.8
182	UNDER 22.3%	92.7	94.4	90.3	88.1	95.2	92.5	92.8	87.4	95.0
182	22.3% TO UNDER 31.2%	93.6	95.2	91.5	88.3	100	93.0	94.3	88.0	96.1
182	31.2% TO UNDER 36.8%	94.8	96.3	91.9	89.2	100	94.3	95.3	90.3	97.0
182	36.8% AND OVER	95.7	97.5	96.3	91.6	92.3	95.8	95.6	92.0	97.9
CEI LEVEL (MEDIAN=1.07)										
160	UNDER 1.05	94.3	94.6	94.1	91.1	94.6	94.0	94.6	89.9	95.9
267	1.05 TO UNDER 1.07	92.3	94.2	86.7	86.0	98.1	92.0	92.7	86.2	94.7
246	1.07 TO UNDER 1.09	91.6	94.0	85.8	85.8	95.4	91.4	91.8	84.4	94.1
150	1.09 TO 1.11	88.5	93.3	81.9	80.5	92.2	87.9	89.2	79.8	91.6
221	1.11 AND OVER	86.6	93.3	80.8	81.2	93.3	85.3	88.1	80.7	89.3
OPERATING COST/PUPIL (ST AVG=$4,504)										
210	UNDER $4,208	91.4	93.3	88.0	83.4	95.7	90.6	92.2	82.5	93.1
208	$4,208 TO $4,539	91.2	94.0	87.9	86.8	95.0	90.5	91.8	84.9	93.3
209	$4,540 TO $4,961	83.0	92.7	77.4	77.1	89.3	81.3	84.7	78.2	85.3
209	$4,962 TO $5,732	85.8	94.9	82.9	81.5	93.3	84.7	86.9	81.4	90.3
209	OVER $5,732	94.2	96.7	91.8	90.3	94.9	93.9	94.5	90.3	96.9
ESC REGION										
38	I EDIN8URG	84.8	95.2	96.4	84.2	95.6	83.0	86.7	83.3	88.0
42	II CORPUS CHRISTI	90.7	95.6	90.9	87.9	93.9	90.3	91.1	84.9	94.0
40	III VICTORIA	89.2	94.8	87.0	80.4	91.7	88.0	90.5	82.2	92.0
55	IV HOUSTON	84.4	93.1	78.5	72.9	93.1	82.7	86.2	75.7	86.3
29	V 8EAUMONT	90.4	93.2	84.0	85.8	95.1	90.0	90.8	83.6	92.6
56	VI HUNTSVILLE	90.6	93.2	83.2	82.3	98.7	90.1	91.2	82.3	93.2
97	VII KILGORE	89.3	92.1	83.0	76.9	90.6	88.8	89.9	81.6	92.0
48	VIII MT PLEASANT	91.9	93.4	87.7	83.1	100	92.2	91.5	85.1	94.6
40	IX WICHITA FALLS	93.5	94.4	91.6	87.5	94.9	92.7	94.2	87.6	95.3
80	X RICHARDSON	88.3	93.7	82.1	77.3	93.6	87.0	89.6	78.0	91.4
77	XI FORT WORTH	91.0	93.0	85.9	83.1	92.3	90.2	91.9	82.2	92.9
78	XII WACO	92.6	95.0	88.0	86.7	96.2	92.0	93.2	85.2	95.3
56	XIII AUSTIN	87.1	93.9	76.4	76.1	91.2	86.5	87.8	74.9	90.9
43	XIV A8ILENE	93.2	95.0	90.9	86.8	100	92.8	93.6	85.2	96.1
43	XV SAN ANGELO	91.0	95.0	86.5	85.8	93.1	90.7	91.2	85.5	93.9
65	XVI AMARILLO	90.7	94.5	76.1	81.4	84.5	90.6	90.9	83.0	93.4
61	XVII LU88OCK	89.8	95.1	84.6	83.4	100	89.0	90.6	82.5	94.0
33	XVIII MIDLAND	85.0	90.7	81.6	78.2	94.1	84.6	85.3	77.5	88.1
13	XIX EL PASO	89.5	94.3	86.6	88.5	96.7	88.2	90.8	88.4	90.5
51	XX SAN ANTONIO	87.0	94.1	83.9	83.1	95.3	86.1	88.0	81.6	90.7
TAAS: PCT PASSING ALL TESTS TAKEN										
208	UNDER 54.0%	82.0	91.2	77.9	80.1	88.5	80.1	84.0	80.7	83.0
210	54.0% TO UNDER 61.2%	86.4	92.0	81.6	80.9	92.7	85.6	87.3	79.3	89.7
209	61.3% TO UNDER 67.3%	91.3	93.7	88.0	85.3	96.7	90.6	92.0	83.8	93.3
209	67.4% TO UNDER 74.4%	91.9	93.7	89.8	84.1	92.6	91.3	92.5	84.2	93.7
208	74.4% AND OVER	94.7	96.0	91.6	87.1	95.5	94.2	95.2	86.8	95.7
SAT/ACT: PCT TAKING										
263	0% TO UNDER 55%	88.0	92.5	88.3	83.4	93.5	87.0	88.9	83.3	90.8
333	55% TO UNDER 70%	85.1	92.3	78.5	79.2	91.0	83.6	86.7	79.3	87.7
373	70% AND OVER	92.0	95.3	87.2	84.5	95.4	91.5	92.7	84.1	94.2
76	NO GRADUATES	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
SAT/ACT: PCT AT OR A8OVE CRITERION										
82	NONE MET CRITERION	92.3	96.4	87.6	87.0	100	92.3	92.3	88.5	95.8
291	UNDER 10%	85.4	92.2	82.2	83.2	89.8	84.2	86.8	82.3	88.5
390	10% TO UNDER 20%	86.3	92.6	78.9	78.7	91.0	85.1	87.6	80.3	88.4
169	20% TO UNDER 35%	91.0	94.4	86.0	82.0	95.7	90.2	91.9	81.0	93.2
37	35% AND OVER	94.1	96.5	89.0	82.7	93.7	93.7	94.5	81.6	95.5
76	NO GRADUATES	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
1,045	STATE TOTAL	87.9	93.6	81.8	81.5	93.4	86.8	89.0	81.5	90.6

COMPLETION RATES FOR COHORT 2 (1994-95) BY DISTRICT CHARACTERISTICS

NBR DIST	CATEGORY	TOTAL RATE	WHITE RATE	AFR.AM. RATE	HISPANIC RATE	OTHER MIN. RATE	MALE RATE	FEMALE RATE	ECON. DISADV. RATE	NON-ECON. DISADV. RATE
DENSITY (ST AVG=13.56 PUPILS/SQ MI)										
512	FEWER THAN 5	92.8	95.4	90.8	87.6	97.0	92.5	93.2	87.9	95.5
300	5 TO FEWER THAN 20	91.0	94.0	86.8	85.5	92.4	90.5	91.4	84.7	93.6
123	20 TO FEWER THAN 100	88.4	92.3	82.5	81.9	94.4	87.4	89.5	80.4	91.4
104	100 AND OVER	86.2	93.5	80.4	80.0	93.2	84.8	87.7	79.7	88.9
6	SPECIAL DISTRICTS	99.0	98.4	100	99.2	100	98.4	99.6	99.4	98.7
PUPIL CHG:93/94-94/95 (ST AVG=1.90%)										
300	DECLINING PUPILS	88.1	92.8	84.5	83.6	94.3	87.2	89.0	82.5	91.1
309	0% TO UNDER 3%	85.6	93.0	79.7	79.1	92.1	84.3	87.1	79.3	88.4
220	3% TO UNDER 6%	92.6	95.0	88.0	86.0	95.9	92.0	93.2	85.9	94.5
138	6% TO UNDER 10%	93.2	94.4	91.9	90.2	93.1	92.6	93.8	88.5	94.7
78	10% AND OVER	93.7	95.0	89.4	89.7	96.0	92.7	94.7	86.9	95.5
PCT AFRICAN AM PUPILS (ST AVG=14.3%)										
627	UNDER 5%	90.0	94.4	89.9	85.8	93.8	89.2	91.0	85.1	93.1
137	5% TO UNDER 10%	91.2	94.1	88.5	83.9	94.4	90.7	91.7	82.1	93.4
141	10% TO UNDER 20%	87.8	93.2	83.2	77.1	94.2	86.8	88.8	77.9	91.2
71	20% TO UNDER 30%	91.2	93.2	88.3	84.3	98.3	90.2	92.2	83.7	93.2
54	30% TO UNDER 50%	78.9	90.5	77.5	69.5	89.5	76.6	81.4	75.0	80.6
15	50% AND OVER	86.0	91.1	83.8	82.1	95.8	84.7	87.3	80.2	89.4
PCT HISPANIC PUPILS (ST AVG=36.1%)										
235	UNDER 5%	93.2	93.9	88.4	91.8	97.2	93.0	93.4	87.1	94.7
180	5% TO UNDER 10%	92.1	93.8	83.4	85.7	93.6	91.5	92.7	81.3	94.0
194	10% TO UNDER 20%	92.7	94.4	89.4	85.6	96.2	92.0	93.5	85.6	94.1
104	20% TO UNDER 30%	89.7	93.1	84.1	81.6	94.1	89.1	90.4	81.1	92.3
151	30% TO UNDER 50%	82.1	92.0	76.6	74.9	89.1	80.4	84.0	75.6	84.7
181	50% AND OVER	86.3	94.9	81.4	84.9	95.5	85.1	87.7	83.8	89.7
PCT MINORITY PUPILS (ST AVG=52.9%)										
78	UNDER 5%	95.3	95.3	100	94.7	96.8	95.0	95.6	89.9	96.1
126	5% TO UNDER 10%	93.7	94.0	90.3	88.7	95.9	93.1	94.4	86.5	94.8
193	10% TO UNDER 20%	93.4	94.1	90.4	86.6	94.2	92.9	93.9	85.8	94.6
152	20% TO UNDER 30%	92.6	93.7	90.4	85.7	95.3	92.3	92.9	85.6	94.0
226	30% TO UNDER 50%	91.3	94.0	87.3	83.4	94.7	90.6	92.0	82.6	93.5
270	50% AND OVER	83.9	92.4	79.0	80.9	92.1	82.3	85.5	80.4	86.2
PCT ECON DISADV (ST AVG=46.31%)										
79	UNDER 20%	94.4	95.7	93.0	86.0	95.1	93.9	95.0	84.8	95.3
127	20% TO UNDER 30%	92.8	94.1	89.1	84.9	96.2	92.3	93.3	84.5	93.9
206	30% TO UNDER 40%	91.5	93.5	88.5	85.5	95.2	90.9	92.1	84.5	93.1
427	40% TO UNDER 60%	84.7	92.2	78.6	76.3	90.1	83.2	86.3	78.3	87.2
153	60% TO UNDER 80%	85.4	93.5	81.5	84.2	91.0	84.2	86.6	82.7	88.2
53	80% AND OVER	83.0	91.7	72.8	82.9	88.2	81.3	84.8	82.7	83.9
AVG. TEACHER EXPER (ST AVG=11.5 YRS)										
261	UNDER 10.0 YEARS	89.7	93.2	85.2	86.7	92.7	88.8	90.6	86.1	91.6
261	10.0 TO UNDER 11.4 YEARS	88.6	93.4	85.2	82.0	95.7	87.7	89.7	81.0	92.0
262	11.4 TO UNDER 12.6 YEARS	87.3	93.8	80.1	79.8	92.8	86.1	88.6	81.2	89.4
261	12.6 YEARS AND OVER	87.1	93.7	81.1	80.6	91.3	86.1	88.1	79.9	90.6
AVG. TEACHER SALARY (ST AVG=$29,419)										
261	UNDER $25,805	93.8	94.8	92.5	89.6	98.1	93.6	94.1	89.8	95.7
261	$25,805 TO UNDER $27,063	90.5	93.7	86.4	81.5	93.6	90.3	90.8	83.8	93.3
262	$27,063 TO UNDER $28,622	90.1	93.2	85.1	84.6	96.2	89.4	90.8	82.8	92.9
261	$28,622 AND OVER	86.7	93.6	80.4	80.9	93.1	85.4	88.1	80.4	89.4
PCT MINORITY TCHRS (ST AVG=23.4%)										
584	UNDER 5%	93.3	94.1	90.7	87.4	93.7	92.8	93.9	86.7	94.6
194	5% TO UNDER 10%	92.3	94.5	88.8	84.3	95.4	91.9	92.8	83.7	94.3
131	10% TO UNDER 20%	88.4	92.7	85.3	80.6	94.4	87.4	89.5	79.9	91.3
34	20% TO UNDER 30%	85.1	91.6	80.5	79.4	93.9	84.2	85.9	76.6	88.6
41	30% TO UNDER 50%	84.7	92.5	79.9	83.9	90.0	83.1	86.4	80.6	87.9
61	50% AND OVER	79.8	89.7	73.2	79.9	86.5	77.5	82.3	81.1	78.5
% TCHRS W ADV DEGREE (ST AVG=27.9%)										
261	UNDER 15.4%	90.3	96.0	90.6	86.4	97.1	89.4	91.3	86.5	93.9
261	15.4% TO UNDER 21.5%	88.5	93.6	86.3	84.5	95.5	87.7	89.4	83.6	91.8
262	21.5% TO UNDER 29.1%	89.9	93.4	85.4	83.3	94.3	89.1	90.7	82.1	92.4
261	29.1% AND OVER	86.1	93.4	79.9	76.3	92.5	84.7	87.5	77.9	88.7
1,045	STATE TOTAL	87.9	93.6	81.8	81.5	93.4	86.8	89.0	81.5	90.6

Table 3. State Level School Completion Rates Disaggregated by Ethnicity, Gender, and Socioeconomic Status

	Cohort 1 (1993-94)			Cohort 2 (1994-95)		
	Final Cohort	Completers	Rate	Final Cohort	Completers	Rate
Ethnicity						
White	110,562	102,317	92.5%	114,020	106,691	93.6%
African American	30,224	23,826	78.8%	30,793	25,187	81.8%
Hispanic	75,616	59,630	78.9%	77,198	62,938	81.5%
Other	6,268	5,647	90.1%	6,244	5,831	93.4%
Gender						
Male	115,184	97,911	85.0%	117,465	102,007	86.8%
Female	107,486	93,509	87.0%	110,790	98,640	89.0%
Socioeconomic Status						
Economically Disadvantaged	61,866	48,837	78.9%	66,816	54,433	81.5%
Non-economically Disadvantaged	160,804	142,583	88.7%	161,439	146,214	90.6%
TOTAL	**222,670**	**191,420**	**86.0%**	**228,255**	**200,647**	**87.9%**

Source: TEA PEIMS (1990-91 – 1995-96

The completion rate for Cohort 1 was 86.0 percent and 87.9 percent for Cohort 2. Completion rates by ethnicity show that White students had the highest completion rate followed by other (Native American and Asian) minority students.

African American and Hispanic students have about the same completion rate in both cohorts. The school completion rate for females is about two percentage points higher than that for males in both cohorts. School completion rates disaggregated by socioeconomic status show that economically disadvantaged students have a lower school completion rate than non-economically disadvantaged students.

District-Level Analysis

One of the objectives of the state is to achieve a 95 percent school completion rate (TEC §11.205(d)). Table 4 on Page 12 presents the distribution of school completion rates across districts, disaggregated by student ethnicity, gender, and socioeconomic status. As shown in Table 4, 970 districts had completion rates for Cohort 1, ranging from 20 percent to 100 percent. Of these 970, 37.3 percent met the state goal of 95 percent. For Cohort 2, Table 4 shows that 968 districts had completion rates ranging from 50 percent to 100 percent. Of this cohort, 45.2 percent of the districts met the state goal of 95 percent.

The completion rates by ethnicity ranged from a low of 0 percent to a high of 100 percent. The greatest variation was found among the African American and Hispanic rates. The completion rates by gender also ranged from a low of 0 percent to a high of 100 percent. The completion rates for economically disadvantaged students ranged from 0 to 100 percent, but overall were lower than those for non-economically disadvantaged students.

From one cohort to the next, the completion rates for the same district varied considerably. One district went from a completion rate of 20 percent for Cohort 1 to a completion rate of 100 percent for Cohort 2. Another district went from a completion rate of 94 percent for Cohort 1 to a completion rate of 50 percent for Cohort 2. About 68 percent of the districts, however, either increased their completion rates or stayed the same. Although longitudinal measures are expected to be more stable over time, the variation seen with the two cohorts could be attributed to the variability of self-reported data. Collecting information on all students withdrawing from the Texas public education

Table 4. District Distribution of School Completion Rates Disaggregated by Ethnicity, Gender, and Socioeconomic Status

	Cohort 1 (1993-94)					Cohort 2 (1994-95)				
	Number of Districts	Lowest Rate	Median Rate	Highest Rate	Percent of Districts Meeting State Goal of 95%	Number of Districts	Lowest Rate	Median Rate	Highest Rate	Percent of Districts Meeting State Goal of 95%
Ethnicity										
White	962	66.7%	95.2%	100.0%	54.3%	958	0.0%	96.3%	100.0%	62.1%
African American	597	0.0%	94.1%	100.0%	48.9%	601	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%	53.6%
Hispanic	829	0.0%	89.7%	100.0%	39.9%	843	0.0%	92.3%	100.0%	45.6%
Other	358	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%	80.4%	361	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%	85.6%
Gender										
Male	969	0.0%	92.6%	100.0%	39.3%	968	50.0%	93.8%	100.0%	45.7%
Female	969	0.0%	93.2%	100.0%	42.6%	968	0.0%	94.4%	100.0%	49.7%
Socioeconomic Status										
Economically Disadvantaged	952	0.0%	87.5%	100.0%	33.4%	966	0.0%	89.7%	100.0%	36.3%
Non-economically Disadvantaged	966	50.0%	95.0%	100.0%	53.6%	966	0.0%	96.3%	100.0%	61.9%
TOTAL	**970**	**20.0%**	**92.6%**	**100.0%**	**37.3%**	**968**	**50.0%**	**93.9%**	**100.0%**	**45.2%**

Source: TEA PEIMS (1990-91 – 1995-96)

District completion rates for Cohort 1 ranged from 20 percent to 100 percent. For Cohort 2, completion rates ranged from 50 percent to 100 percent. Less than half of the districts met the state goal of 95 percent completion rate for each cohort.

system, and applying the definition of a completer and dropout at the state level, may help stabilize the indicator from year to year.

District Characteristics. Completion rates by district characteristics follow the same patterns as other school success indicators. The lowest completion rates are found in urban areas, where the highest dropout and retention rates are found. Minority and economically disadvantaged students also are found in greater numbers in urban areas, and their completion rates are lower than their nonminority and wealthier counterparts. As the percentages of students passing the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) test increases, so do the completion rates. A summary of completion rates for Cohort 2 by district characteristics begins on Page 7.

Comparison to the Annual Dropout Rate

When the school completion rate is compared to the annual dropout rate, conceptually the indicators are the reverse of each other — districts with high dropout rates have low completion rates and vice versa. Mathematically, the indicators are very different. Table 5 presents a simplified example of the calculation of a longitudinal dropout rate versus an annual dropout rate.

In the first example, the campus had a ninth grade enrollment of 100 students in 1992-93. After the first year, 20 students dropped out of school, leaving 80 students remaining in the cohort in 1993-94. During the second, third, and fourth years, 10 students dropped out of school each year, leaving 50 students remaining in the cohort in 1995-96. For the 1992-93 ninth grade cohort, the 1995-96 longitudinal dropout rate is 50 percent (the 50 students who dropped out divided by the 100 students in the original cohort). This tells you that a student entering the ninth grade in 1992-93 had a 50 percent chance of dropping out before completing high school.

In the second example, the annual dropout rate for the 1995-96 school year is 16 percent. This is because the denominator becomes the total number of students in Grades 9-12. In 1995-96, there is a ninth grade class of 100 students, plus a tenth grade class of 80 students, plus an eleventh grade class of 70 students, and a twelfth grade class of 60. If 20 students drop out from Grade 9 and 10 students drop out from each of the higher grades, the annual dropout rate is 50/310, or 16 percent. This tells you that 16 percent

Table 5. An Example of the Calculation of a Longitudinal Dropout Rate versus an Annual Dropout Rate

	Longitudinal Dropout Rate Graduating Class of 1995-96				
	1992-93 Grade 9	1993-94 Grade 10	1994-95 Grade 11	1995-96 Grade 12	Total
Number of Students	100	80	70	60	100
Number of Dropouts	20	10	10	10	50
Longitudinal Dropout Rate = (50/100) * 100 = 50%					

	Annual Dropout Rate 1995-96 School Year				
	1995-96 Grade 9	1995-96 Grade 10	1995-96 Grade 11	1995-96 Grade 12	Total
Number of Students	100	80	70	60	310
Number of Dropouts	20	10	10	10	50
Annual Dropout Rate = (50/310) * 100 = 16%					

Source: TEA PEIMS (1990-91 – 1995-96)

A longitudinal dropout rate tells the likelihood of any one student dropping out before he or she completes high school; whereas, an annual dropout rate tells how many students drop out during a particular school year.

of all Grade 9-12 students dropped out during the 1995-96 school year, but does not tell you the likelihood of any one student dropping out before he or she completes high school.

The patterns seen with a school completion rate reflect complementary patterns for the annual dropout rate. As a group, White students have the highest completion rate and the lowest dropout rate of all ethnic groups. Female students have slightly higher completion rates and slightly lower dropout rates than male students. Economically disadvantaged students also have the lowest completion rates and the highest dropout rates. Further analysis with other groups, such as students identified as being at risk, students receiving special education services, students who are overage for grade, and students with limited English proficiency, is likely to complement the same patterns seen with the state dropout rate (for an analysis of the state dropout rate the reader is referred to TEA, 1996b).

Conclusions and Future Directions

Recent interest in reexamining the dropout rate as an indicator in the Texas accountability system has led to research investigating other school success indicators, including a school completion rate. School success generally has been measured as a proportion of a group either completing or not completing high school. Some measures look at what happens in a school over a one-year period of time, while other measures examine what happens to a group of students, or cohort, over a longer period of time. The Holding Power Index is one measure that examines a cohort over a period of time and communicates the success, rather than the failure, of a school system.

The Holding Power Index measures a school's ability or power to hold students in school through graduation. This methodology tracks a class of students individually and determines each student's status at the end of Grade 12. Some of the advantages of this methodology include its ability to track individual student success over time and the consistency of the index with the general public's understanding of what a dropout or school completer is.

Although switching to a school completion rate provides districts and campuses with an indicator that communicates the success rather than the failure of a school system, calculating the indicator and incorporating it into the accountability system requires careful consideration from those most impacted by it. The implementation issues in regards to the current data collection, the methodology of the index, and the process of transitioning the index into the accountability system need to be considered to make sure districts and campuses are given the most equitable and accurate measure of school success.

An analysis of Texas school completion data using the Holding Power methodology shows results similar to those achieved with indicators such as the annual dropout rate and grade-level retention (TEA, 1996c). White students have higher completion rates than African American or Hispanic students, and female students have higher completion rates than male students. The lowest completion rates generally are found in the urban areas, that have enrolled higher concentrations of minority and economically disadvantaged students.

Although a school completion rate has advantages over an annual dropout rate as a performance indicator, it still maintains some of the same problems associated with the dropout rate. The current PEIMS collection of graduate and dropout information is self-reported annually by school districts. Switching to a collection of student withdrawal data will likely improve the methodology and reduce the bias of self-reported data. This also will ensure that standards are set consistently and objectively at the state level. Discussions currently are being held at the Texas Education Agency about collecting student withdrawal information, for implementation during the 1998-99 school year.

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