

April 20, 2010

The Honorable Florence Shapiro  
Texas Senate  
Chair, State Committee on Education  
P.O. Box 12068  
Austin, TX 78711-2068

Dear Senator Shapiro:

On behalf of the College Board, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony to the Senate Committee on Education, Middle Grades Hearings on April 20<sup>th</sup>.

Attached is written documentation that provides a brief review of the state's education policy and initiatives regarding middle grades. We have included a few recommendations that may contribute to a comprehensive state strategy for preparing students at the middle grades for high school retention and success. Also included is an examination of the research findings and best practices that we have seen both nationally and in the state of Texas to ensure students are college and career ready.

College Board stands eager and ready to explore ways our research and practices can be one point of light to better inform the education policy and practices in the state of Texas.

Sincerely,

Pamela L. Nelson  
Vice President, the College Board  
General Manager, SpringBoard

## **Taking Rigorous Courses**

Many students who expect to go to college are not taking the necessary courses in high school.

Enrollment in more demanding courses does not result in more failures. In fact, the evidence suggests that challenging content results in lower failure rates. It appears that many students can handle more challenging intellectual assignments than schools are willing to give them.

Taking algebra or pre-algebra in the middle grades leads to enrollment in higher-level mathematics courses in high school and does not increase failure rates.

Middle grades schools that successfully prepare students for college-preparatory courses in ninth grade provide extra help and link students with an adult mentor.

([http://publications.sreb.org/2002/02V08\\_Middle\\_Grades\\_To\\_HS.pdf](http://publications.sreb.org/2002/02V08_Middle_Grades_To_HS.pdf))

## **Review of the state’s education policy and initiative regarding middle grades**

Included in this document are recommendations based on a review of the state’s education policy and initiatives regarding middle grades, with accompanying research findings related to each initiative, school-based strategy or best practice observed in national as well as Texas school districts.

### **1. Recommendation: Start with rigorous standards.**

**Texas Initiative: Texas College Readiness Standards.**

#### **Research Findings**

The College Board Research and Development team has analyzed the relationship of the PSAT/NMSQT and SAT to the Texas College Readiness Standards, and found strong alignment.

Overall, there is a strong degree of alignment between the ten key content areas of the Texas College Readiness Standards (CRS) in mathematics and the PSAT/NMSQT and SAT tests in terms of both content and rigor. The PSAT/NMSQT and the SAT demonstrate either strong or partial alignment in 26 out of 31 Texas organizing components in mathematics.

In Writing and Reading, the PSAT/NMSQT and SAT critical reading and writing sections are also strongly aligned to the Texas CRS in 3 out of 5 organizing components. The College Board is in the process of undertaking the alignment of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills with the ReadStep, PSAT/NMSQT, and SAT assessments.

#### **A rigorous curriculum starting in middle grades.**

The rigor of the curriculum is the most significant predictor of academic success and post secondary education success.

*(Source: Adelman, Clifford. (2006). “The Toolbox Revisited – Paths to Degree Completion from High School Through College.” Washington, DC: US Department of Education. )*

As the College Board’s Official Pre- AP Program, SpringBoard has been alignment to Texas College Readiness Standards, TEKS and ELPS by two independent studies including a national company, Academic Benchmarks and a Texas company, Strategic Education Solutions.

Like the aforementioned assessments, SpringBoard was written based on the rigorous College Board Standards for College Success (CBSCS). Recent revisions of the SpringBoard English/Language Arts and mathematics Pre-AP programs included Texas teachers as writers to ensure alignment with the Texas College Readiness Standards as well as the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills and the English Language Proficiency Skills.

2. **Recommendation: Measure, Monitor and Direct Student Progress toward College Readiness.**

**Texas Initiative: The College Readiness Pathway is an integrated series of three assessments recently approved by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) as part of a statewide initiative to increase college and career readiness.**

Aligned to federal and Texas state standards, the tests provide a critical framework that enables educators to measure, monitor and direct student progress from middle school through high school... to college and career readiness.

Texas school districts participating in “College Readiness Assessments” that choose College Board assessment for their eighth and tenth-graders will receive reports on the performance of test takers relative to college readiness benchmarks, enabling administrators and the TEA to monitor and track college readiness metrics over time.

Research Findings:

A College Board research study collected first year grade-point averages (GPAs), course grades and other information from more than 100,000 students who graduated high school as part of the class of 2006. These students attended a diverse set of more than 100 public and private higher education institutions that varied in selectivity. Texas A&M, Texas Sate, Texas Tech, U.T. Austin, U.T. San Antonio, and the University of North Texas were among the institutions that participated in the study.

Academic information from the student’ high school records, such as grades, test scores, and the rigor of the courses they took, was compared to their college grades to determine the minimum thresholds, or benchmarks, required for success in college.

For each academic factor, high school GPA (HSGPA), SAT scores, and Academic Intensity, a benchmark was established that reflects the minimum score a student would need to achieve to have at least a 65% chance of earning a B- or better (2.67 or above) first-year college GPA. On the combined SAT scale (critical reading + mathematics + writing), for example, this minimum score is 1550.

The SAT benchmark was extended to the PSAT/NMSQT scale and separate benchmarks were established for the tenth and eleventh grades. These benchmarks are 145 and 152, respectively, on the combined 60-to-240 PSAT/NMSQT scale.

After the ReadStep assessment is administered this fall, the tenth grade PSAT/NMSQT benchmarks will be extended to eighth-grade ReadStep takers.

(Slides inserted on next two pages will provide further details on the College Readiness Index.)

### **3. Recommendation: Students who take AP classes are better prepared for college-level work.**

#### **Texas Initiative: TEA's Annual Report on AP & IB Examination Results 2007-08; April 2009**

Texas education policy and initiatives have allowed school districts to make great strides over the last fifteen years in the number of AP courses offered to students, the number of AP participants, and the number of AP examinations taken by a greater diversity of student populations..

- In the 2007-08 school year, 103,555 Texas public school students in 11th and 12th grade took 215,013 Advanced Placement (AP) examinations. From 1994-95 to 2007-08, the percentage of 11th and 12th graders taking AP examinations rose from 6.8 percent to 20.7 percent.
- The percentage of 11th- and 12th-grade AP examinees scoring in the 3-5 range on at least one examination was 49.6 percent in 2007-08. The percentage of examinations with scores in the 3-5 range was 45.0 percent.
- Among 11th- and 12th-grade AP examinees tested in 2007-08, 93.4 percent completed advanced academic courses during the year.
- In 2007-08, a total of 689 (64.0%) of the 1,076 Texas public school districts and charter schools with enrollment in Grade 11 and/or Grade 12 had students who took at least one AP examination.
- In 1992-93, there were only 158 Texas public schools (9.6%) with any of Grades 9 through 12 that offered AP courses to students. In 2007-08, 1,124 schools (50.2%) offered at least one AP course.

#### **Participation and Performance**

While Texas initiatives have increased the participation and performance of students by ethnicity, the 2007-08 results indicate a less AP participation by African American and Hispanic students than the total population and a decrease in scores of 3-5 for all student segments except for the Hispanic and Native American populations.

- Although 11th- and 12th-grade AP participation rates for Hispanics and African Americans in Texas public schools climbed steadily between 1994-95 and 2007-08, only 16.6 percent of Hispanics and 12.0 percent of African Americans took AP examinations in 2007-08. By comparison, 24.7 percent of Whites and 47.7 percent of Asian/Pacific Islanders took AP examinations that year.
- In 2007-08, Hispanic students made up 39.8 percent of public school enrollees in Grades 11 and 12 and 32.0 percent of AP examinees. African American students represented 13.7 percent of enrollees and 8.0 percent of AP examinees. In contrast, White students made up 42.5 percent of enrollees and 50.8 percent of AP examinees, and Asian/Pacific Islander students represented 4.0 percent of enrollees and 9.3 percent of AP examinees.

- In 2007-08 the percentages of Texas public school AP examinees in 11th and 12th grade scoring in the 3-5 range on at least one AP examination decreased over the previous year for African Americans, Asian/Pacific Islanders, and Whites and increased for Hispanics and Native Americans.

### **Texas Middle School Program for Advanced Placement Spanish was created**

*Historically, some groups, such as African Americans and Hispanics, have not been well-represented in college preparatory classes offered in Texas public schools. To increase participation in advanced classes by Spanish-speaking students, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) created the Texas Middle School Program for Advanced Placement (AP) Spanish in 2000 with a grant from the U.S. Department of Education. The purpose of the program is to provide Spanish-speaking middle school students the opportunity to participate in AP Spanish language courses as well as to remove financial constraints of participation. The long-term goal is to encourage students to participate in advanced courses in high school after having completed advanced-level coursework in middle school. The program was piloted in 17 middle schools in seven districts. The original pilot schools reported that 90 percent of participating students earned scores on the AP Spanish examination high enough to earn college credit. In addition, the effects of the program generalized to other areas of the students' lives: teachers reported increased student self-confidence; fewer disciplinary problems; overall grade improvement; and increased participation in the AP and IB programs when students entered high school.*

*Based on the program's initial success, TEA applied for, and received, additional funding in 2001-02 from the U.S. Department of Education's AP Incentive Program. The funds allowed the program to be implemented in an additional 13 public middle schools. By 2006-07, the program had been implemented in another 59 schools. Over the period, students taking the AP Spanish Language Examination continued to perform at levels high enough to earn college credit. Between 2000-01 and 2005-06, an average of 88 percent of students in the program scored at least 3 on the examination.*

(Source. TEA (2006b).

### **Research Findings:**

College Board applauds Texas for this policy and practice that has proven effective to encourage more students to participate in advanced courses in high school after having completed advanced –level coursework in middle school. The additional resulting benefits of increasing student self-confidence, fewer disciplinary problems, overall grade improvement and increased participation in AP and IB programs in high school indicate that early success in rigorous courses at middle school can make a huge impact on the lives of students.

Further explorations of rigorous programs at middle school programs should be reviewed to determine ways to enhance and expand this program.

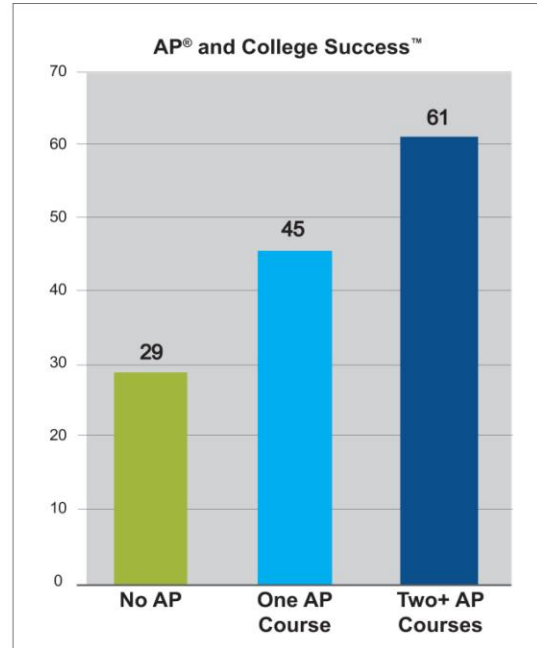
Research Findings (continued)

**Students taking AP classes are more likely to graduate from college in four years or less.**

**Students scoring 3 or higher on their AP exams are far more likely to graduate.**

*Source: Camara, Wayne. College Persistence, Graduation, and Remediation*

*Source: Dougherty, Mellor, Shuling. The Relationship between Advanced Placement and College Graduation*



**Impact of AP on 5-year college graduation rates**

Comparisons made among students with the same abilities and backgrounds (test scores, family income, and school poverty index)

*Source: Chrys Dougherty, Lynn Mellor, and Shuling Jian, The Relationship Between Advanced Placement and College Graduation (National Center for Educational Accountability, 2005).*

Student Group	AP Exam Grade of 3, 4, 5
<i>African-American</i>	<b>28% higher</b>
<i>Hispanic</i>	<b>28% higher</b>
<i>White</i>	<b>33% higher</b>
<i>Low-Income</i>	<b>26% higher</b>
<i>Not Low-Income</i>	<b>34% higher</b>

**4. Recommendation: Students who take a rigorous Pre-AP course in middle grades are better prepared for AP and college-level courses.**

**From the Best Practices Clearinghouse: Hidalgo ISD**

Several Texas school districts have implemented College Board's Pre-AP program over the last 3-5+ years including **19 districts in Region One**, Fort Worth ISD, San Antonio ISD, Midland ISD, and New Braunfels ISD.

National Research Findings:

Included are research findings from districts that have been implementing the program for over 5 years. Due to the fact that this program is fairly new, the largest quantity of data for the longest amount of time was available from the state of Florida.

Phase 1: Five Year Trend Analysis. Can SpringBoard Improve AP Enrollment and Performance?  
Haifa Matos-Elefonte, College Board, and Jun Li, Fordham University

In July of 2009, the Research Services team of the College Board's Research and Development (R&D) department embarked upon phase 1 of a longitudinal evaluation investigating the impact of SpringBoard, College Board's Official Pre-AP Program in English Language Arts and math program for grades 6-12.

Specifically, researchers have been interested in examining Advanced Placement (AP)\* and SAT\* participation and performance trends of the graduating cohorts of students that have attended high schools that have purchased the SpringBoard curricula, typically starting in middle school.

The purpose of phase 1 of the longitudinal study is to describe the relationships between SAT and AP participation and performance among high schools and districts that have purchased SpringBoard in the state of Florida.

Summary of findings over a four year period:

- Schools that purchased SpringBoard for 3 to 5 years had substantially more students taking AP and also had more students scoring higher than students in high schools that implemented SpringBoard for 1 to 2 years or the state overall.
- Schools that purchased SpringBoard had a 109% increase in the number of African American students and a 52% gain in the number of Hispanic students taking AP as compared to a 37% gain in non SpringBoard schools
- Schools that purchased SpringBoard had a 34% gain in the number of African American students and a 30% gain in the number of Hispanic students scoring a 3 in at least one AP exam.



**Best Practices: Region One:** First year of implementation: 2004-05

Region One and in particular La Villa ISD have the longest span of years implementing the program to date. Over time we expect to collect more districts that have since implemented the program in the last few years.

**SpringBoard English Language Arts Initiative Model:**

SpringBoard ELA is currently being used in 19 of 21 GEAR UP partnership districts.

Currently serving over 12,960 students in **middle** and high schools

6,981 GEAR UP cohort 11<sup>th</sup> graders (89% of total cohort students)

Sustainability: Each year, the cohort grade level is added and previous GEAR UP grades are invited to continue training

**Impact of SpringBoard ELA Implementation:**

Increase in PSAT test takers 2008 (10<sup>th</sup> grade cohort) and 2009 (11<sup>th</sup> grade cohort)

Increase in SAT test takers 2010-2011

Gradual increase in median SAT reading and writing scores

More students taking AP English Language and AP English Literature classes and exams

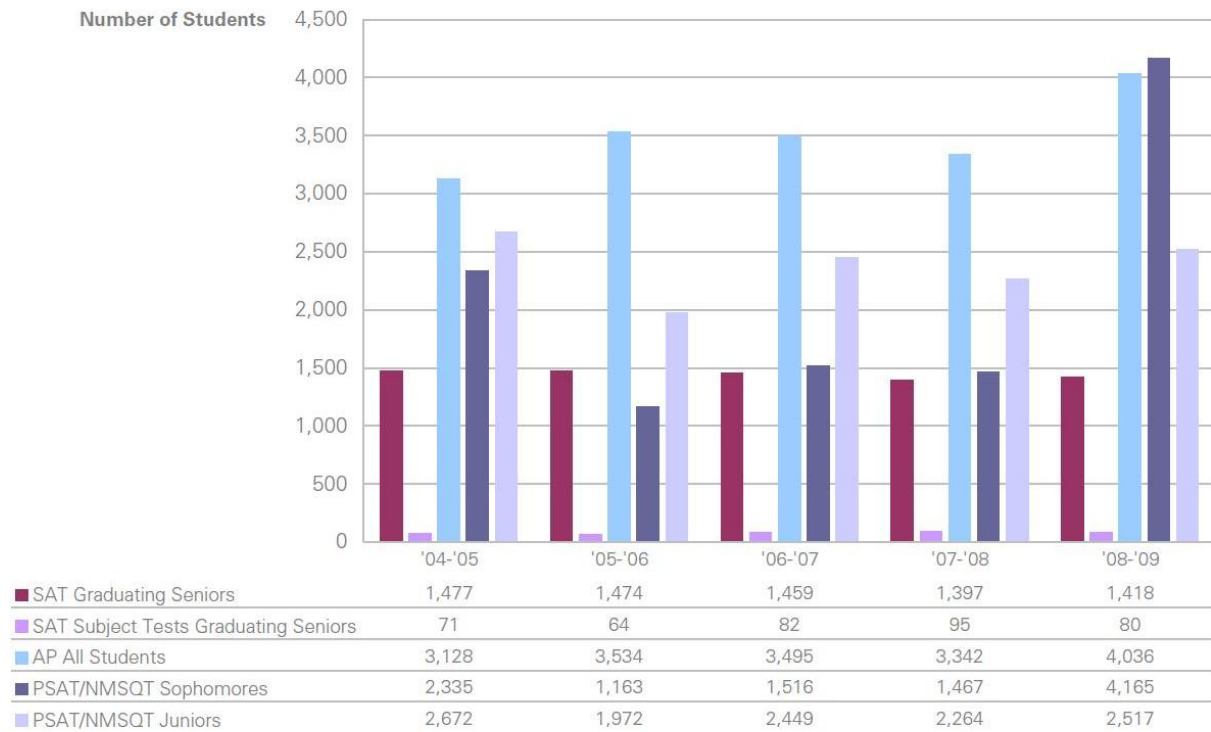
Students who do not enter AP course take Senior SpringBoard

**District Integrated Summary 2008-2009**

**Texas Region 1 ESC**



**OVERVIEW: Number of Students Taking SAT, SAT Subject Tests, AP and PSAT/NMSQT**

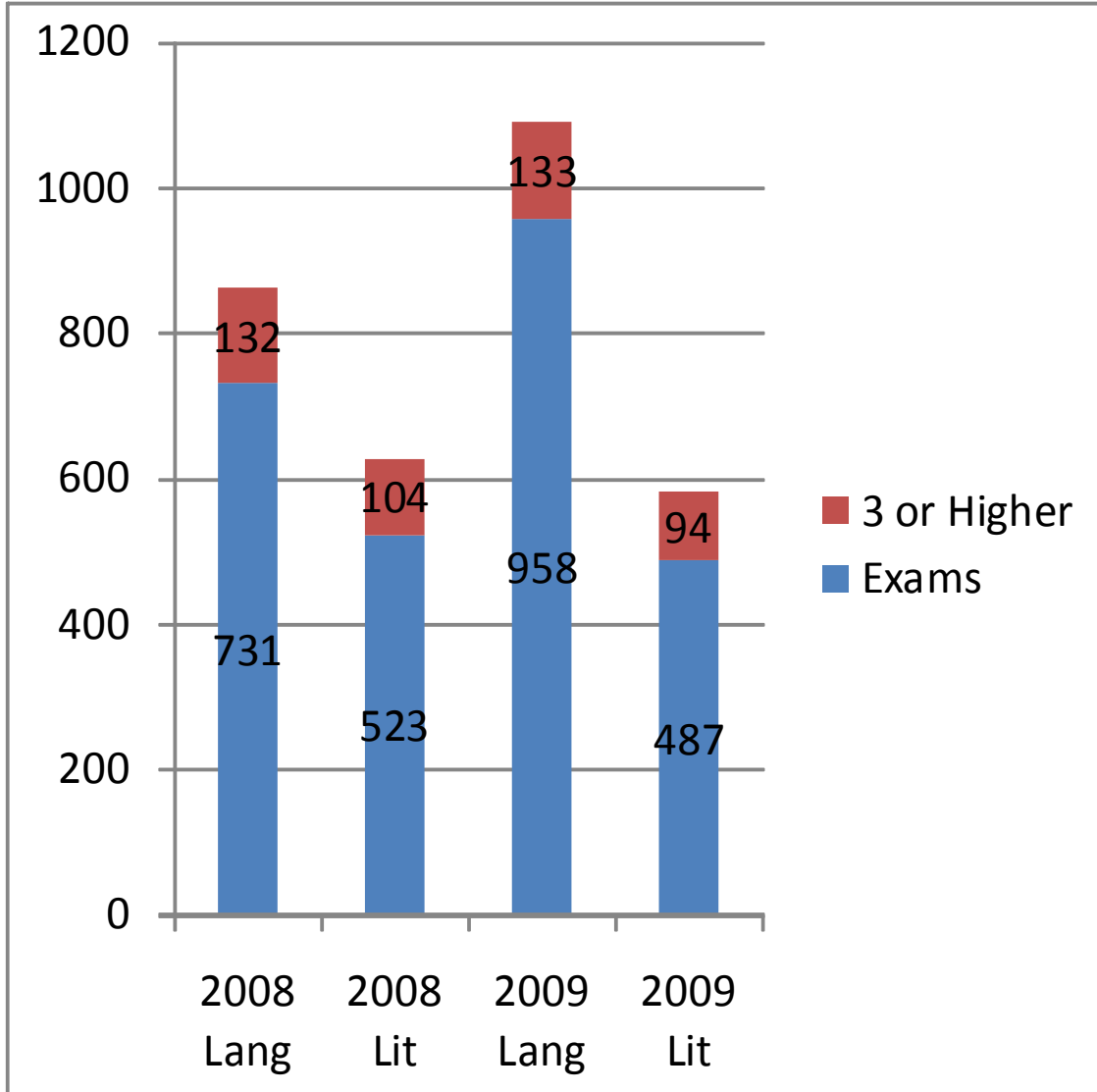


Potential for Increase in AP English Language/Literature Exams:

6,682 GEAR UP junior cohort students took PSAT in October 2009.

Over 1,000 cohort students will take AP English Language exam in May 2010.

686 have potential to score 3 or higher on AP English Literature in May 2010 or 2011



**Best Practices: La Villa ISD District Profile:**

Located in La Villa, Texas, a small rural community in Hidalgo County population 1,500  
Student enrollment in 2008-09 was 589 (elementary, middle and high school).  
97.6% of students graduate under the Recommended High School Graduation Plan or  
the Distinguished Academic Plan in Texas  
99.3% of students are Latino  
87.6% are Economically Disadvantaged  
65.5% are At Risk  
36.8% are English Language Learners  
24.7% are Migrant  
School District rated as Academically Acceptable in 2008-09

The district:

Uses SpringBoard ELA as sole campus/district curriculum with ALL students  
Uses Level 1 through Senior Level Springboard ELA  
Has administrative advocacy and support

Quotes from Abraham Cantu, La Villa High School English Teacher, regarding SpringBoard professional development:

“The SpringBoard training I received will impact the students through the ongoing process of **self reflection**. This helps the students understand in what areas they are weak in and strong. It also helps the teachers instruct the classes according to their weakness.”

“In the training, I learned the **strategies** that not only will help the struggling students, but students in general. Because of these strategies, I will be able to teach in an effective way that will enhance the students’ knowledge with the curriculum.”

**(Please see the separate power point from Region One that contains data from LaVilla ISD)**

### **The Importance of the Middle Grades Years**

Most future dropouts may be identified as early as sixth grade and many can be identified even earlier. More than half of sixth graders with the following three criteria eventually left school:

1. attend school less than 80 percent of the time;
2. receive a low final grade from their teachers in behavior;
3. and fail either math or English (Balfanz & Herzog, 2005)

Eighth-graders who miss five weeks of school or fail math or English have at least a 75 percent chance of dropping out of high school. (Neild & Balfanz, 2006)

### **English Language Learners**

As more English language learners (ELLs) enter schools across the country, it has become increasingly important for states to provide the appropriate guidance and support to local educational agencies (LEAs) so that ELLs are able to graduate and succeed after high school.

The following practices appear to be more important contributors to success with ELLs than using a specific instructional model:

- Implementing a well-defined, rigorously structured plan of instruction for ELLs
- Ensuring that teachers are skilled in addressing the needs of ELLs
- Systematically using data to assess teaching and learning
- Regularly adjusting instructional planning based on student performance.

([http://www.betterhighschools.org/pubs/documents/Educating\\_ELLsat the HSLevel\\_042209](http://www.betterhighschools.org/pubs/documents/Educating_ELLsat_the_HSLevel_042209))

Texas Region One has also found that English Language Learners are most successful when teachers have high expectations. Furthermore they have learned that the need to adapt curriculum cannot be an excuse for denying ELLs access to challenging academic content. (*Garcia, 1997; Stoops-Verplaetse, 1998; Valdez, 2001*)

### **Transitioning to 9<sup>th</sup> grade**

Transitioning from middle grades to 9<sup>th</sup> grade is a critical phase in students lives. However, research has shown that students who enter 9<sup>th</sup> grade prepared for rigorous, college prep coursework and who understand the expectations for challenging high school courses have smoother transitions to high school and are less likely to dropout.

([http://www.betterhighschools.org/pubs/documents/NHSC\\_TowardEnsuring\\_051607.pdf](http://www.betterhighschools.org/pubs/documents/NHSC_TowardEnsuring_051607.pdf))

## 5. Recommendation:

### Texas Initiative: Professional Standards for Middle Grade Teachers:

College Board applauds Texas for their development and implementation of the Professional Standards for teachers in grades 4-8. We find that these standards are well aligned with the latest research in teaching methodologies and instructional practices required of teachers implementing a rigorous curriculum to prepare ALL students for college and careers.

#### Research Findings:

#### Findings from Pedagogical Research on *Engaging Strategies for ALL Students*:

Dr. Jane Delgado, former research scientist at the College Board.

Office of Research and Analytics

#### **Active learners are better learners.**

When students synthesize and organize new information and relate it to prior understandings, they build cognitive linkages that improve comprehension and recall.

#### **Strategies can be learned and transfer to new tasks.**

When students are exposed to positive learning experiences where strategies are applied effectively, they retain more understanding than students who have not had similar exposure. Once the strategic expertise is acquired, students will be able to apply the skills to new tasks.

**Relevance of instruction.** A richer network of relevant associations supports increased retention and retrieval of new knowledge and skills.

**Strategies allow students to take ownership of their learning** – The role of the teacher and the instructional plan is critical in supporting the transition of responsibility of the instructional application and utilization of strategies to student control.

# College Readiness Pathway Tools

## College Readiness Index

### Benchmarks include:

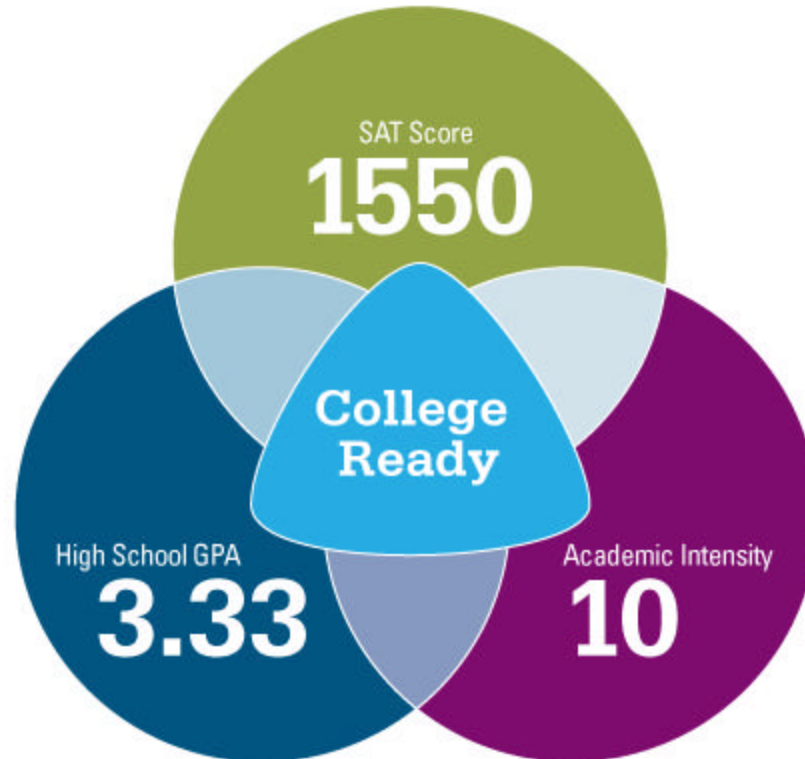
- High school GPA
- Composite assessment scores
- Academic intensity

### College Readiness

- Provides a single index summarizing students' college readiness as they leave high school.

### Reports

- Can be available at the school, district and state level.
- Can be disaggregated by key demographic variables.

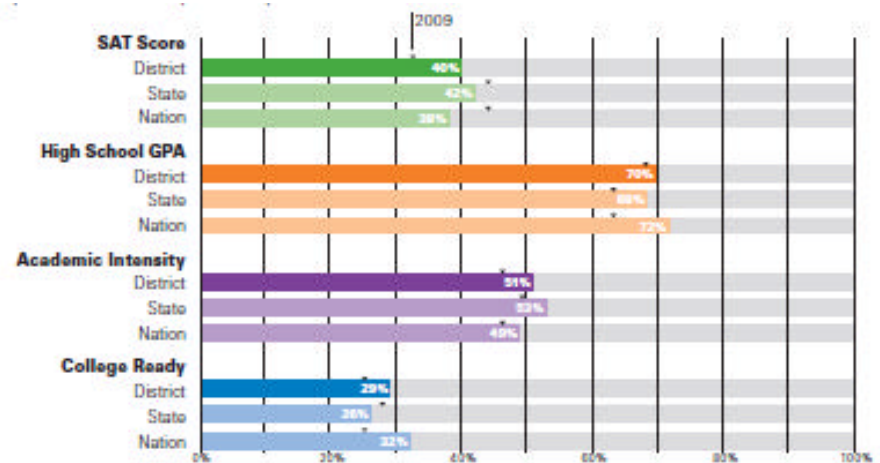


# College Readiness Index

The College Readiness Index report will show group performance.

## Comparisons

- District compared to state
- Performance by gender
- Performance by race/ ethnicity





# Creating a Culture of College Readiness with Latino Students: SpringBoard ELA Integration at Region One ESC GEAR UP Partnership Districts



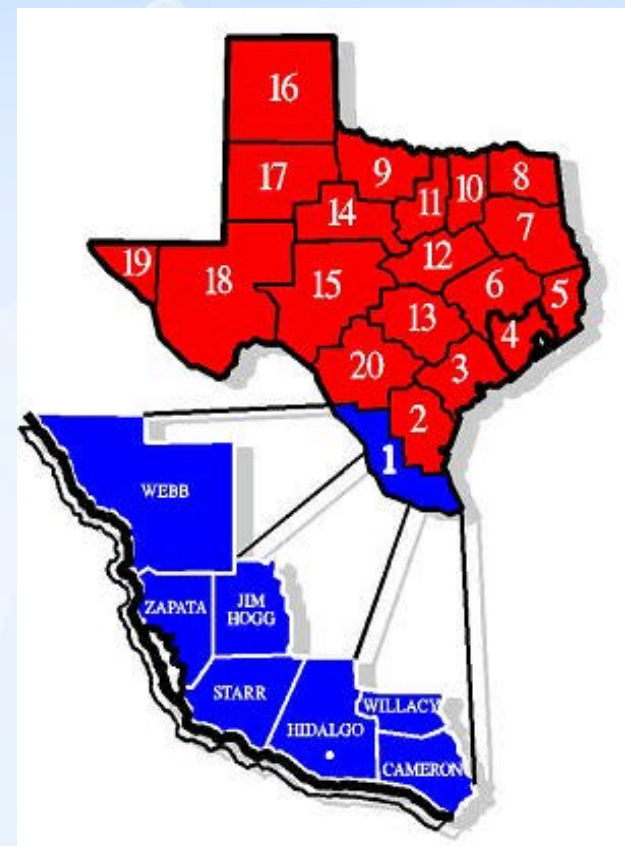
NASSP  
Phoenix, AZ  
March 12-14, 2010



# Region One Education Service Center



- The **Region One** Education Service Center is part of a state-wide system of 20 regional education service centers created by the 59th Texas Legislature to assist school districts across the state
- Located in South Texas on the United States/Mexico border, Region One ESC serves **37 school districts** and 24 charter school campuses in the seven county areas of
  - Cameron County,
  - Hidalgo County,
  - Jim Hogg County,
  - Starr County,
  - Webb County,
  - Willacy County,
  - Zapata County.



# GEAR UP: A National Initiative



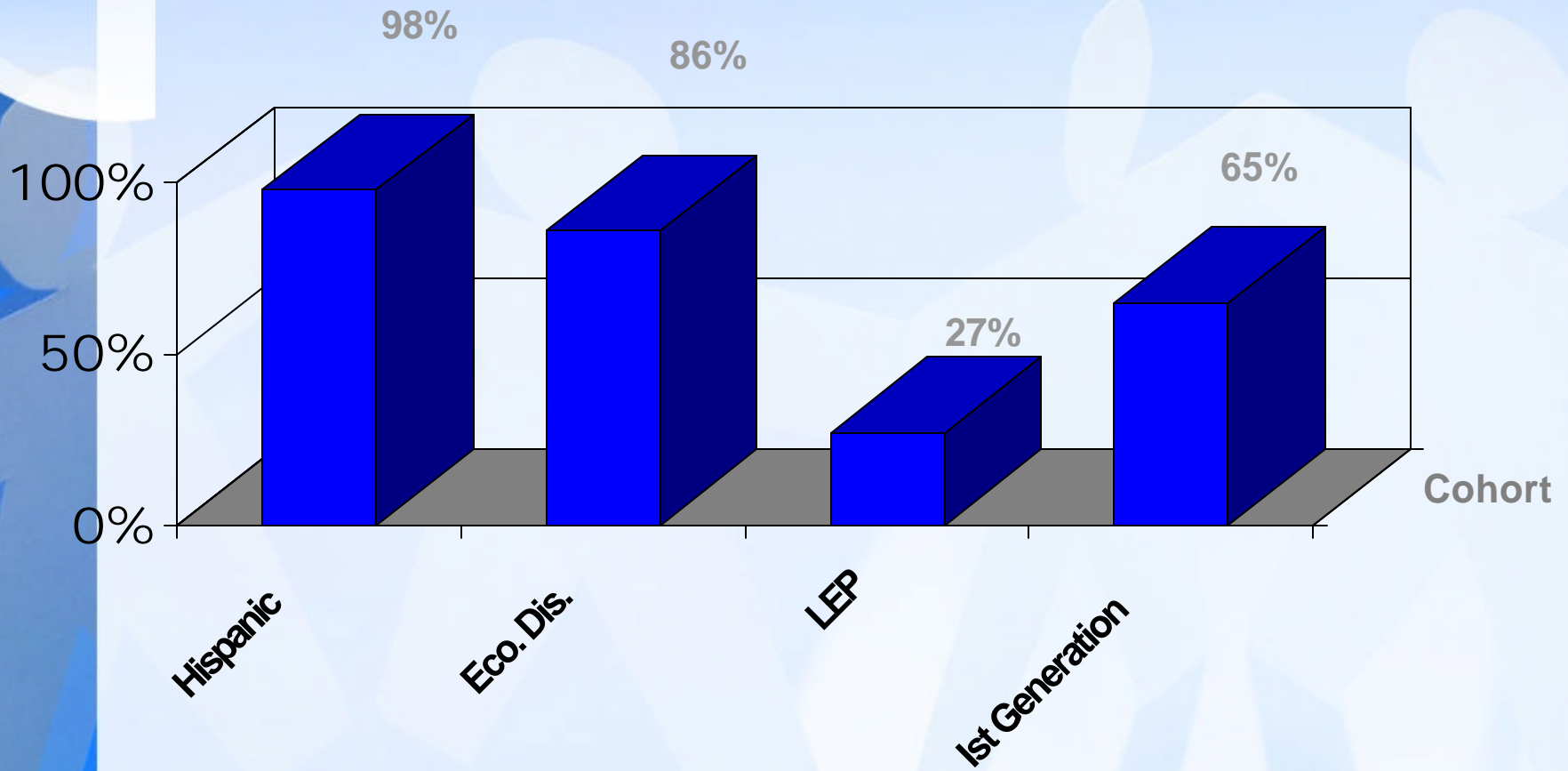
- A national initiative aimed at encouraging more young people to have high expectations, stay in school, study hard and take the right courses to go to college.
- **G**aining  
**E**arly  
**A**wareness and  
**R**eadiness for  
**U**ndergraduate  
**P**rograms

# Region One GEAR UP: Bridges to the Future Partnership



- Currently serving 22 high schools in 21 school districts
- Single Cohort design beginning in 7th Grade in 2006
- Total of 8,468 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grade students served in the Region One GEAR UP cohort.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> largest GEAR UP program in the country
- Currently in second round of federal funding, 10<sup>th</sup> year

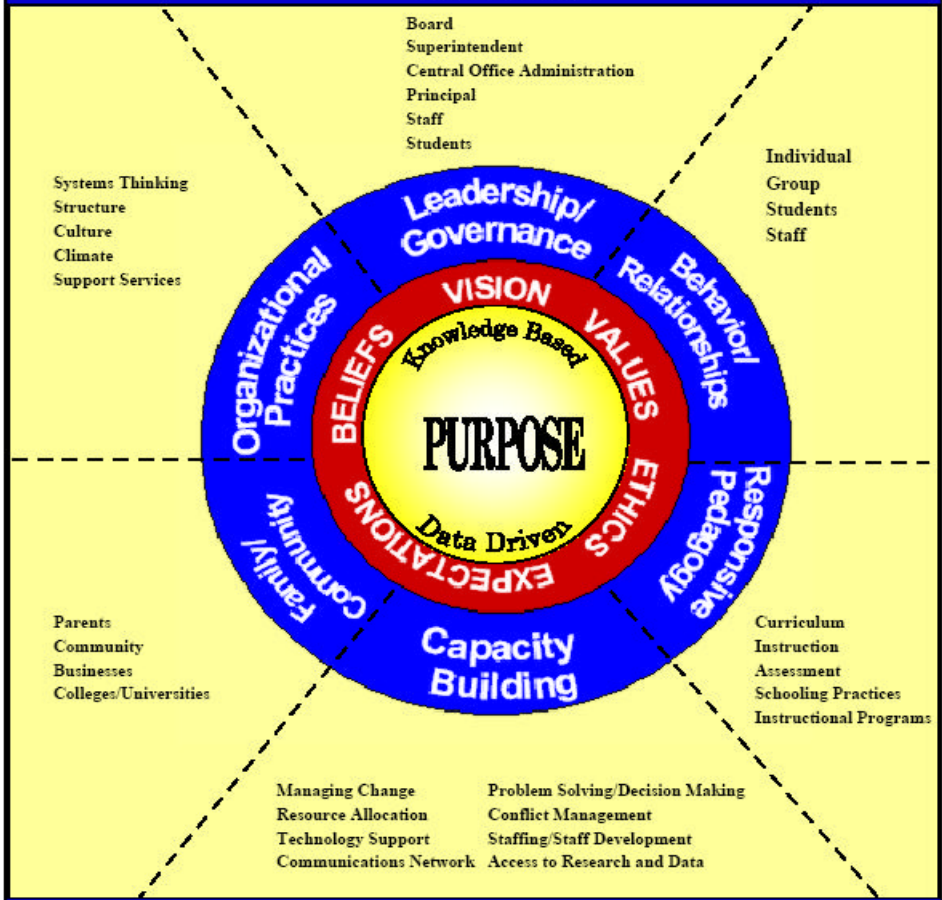
# Region One GEAR UP Cohort Demographics







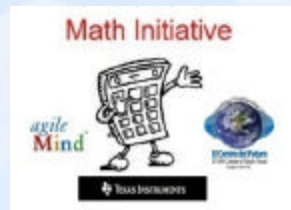
# School Excellence Model



**Community of Learners**  
*Culturally Responsive*      *Quality Driven*

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# Region One GEAR UP Initiatives



Systemic Leadership Initiative



# What Research Tells Us



- English Language Learners are most successful when teachers have **high expectations**.
- The need to adapt curriculum cannot be an excuse for denying ELLs access to **challenging academic content**.

*Garcia, 1997; Stoops-Verplaetse, 1998; Valdez, 2001*

# What Research Tells Us



- **Reading and writing** processes develop in tandem. At the secondary level, instruction in reading strategies increases students' ability to understand text (Carr, 2002).



# What Research Tells Us



- According to recent studies it takes one to three years for ELLs to develop conversational proficiency in English, and they need five to seven years to develop academic English.

*Middle School Journal, Nov. 2005*

# What Research Tells Us



Use two way instructional conversations with students that encourage goal oriented activity and the use of **higher order thinking** skills.

*Creating Responsive Learning Environments For English Language Learners, Zamora & Gonzalez, 2006*

# GEAR UP ELA Initiative



- Met with Campus and District Leadership teams to examine School Excellence Model targeting responsive pedagogy for ELL
- Analyzed student performance data to identify critical areas for academic improvement
- Identified priority list of students with highest academic need
- Shared research that supports rigorous academic support for ELL

# Region One GEAR UP & College Board



- Partnership formed during first Region One ESC GEAR UP grant (Right Choices for Youth) from 2000-2006
- Curriculum was then known as Pacesetter and was still in draft format
- *Thinking Win-Win:* Region One GEAR UP was looking for a feature-rich ELA curriculum that would prepare cohort students, specifically English Language Learners for the rigors of college level courses – College Board was looking to pilot a new product with a large population of students/districts

# Region One GEAR UP & College Board



- During first GEAR UP grant (2000-2006), Region One played a significant role in developing the curriculum and piloting among its partnership schools
- Region One GEAR UP was looking for a rigorous language arts curriculum that could provide a Pre-AP/AP class experience for ALL students and targeted toward underserved English Language Learners
- Several ELA teachers from the Region One ESC service area have become national trainers





# Success Story: La Villa ISD



# La Villa ISD: Sustainable SpringBoard Success



## Non-SpringBoard Years

- 2004 TAKS 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Writing – 80% Met Standard\*
- 2005 TAKS 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Writing – 91% Met Standard\*

## SpringBoard Integration

- 1<sup>st</sup> Year Implementation of SpringBoard ELA Level II
- 2006 TAKS 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Writing – **97%** Met Standard (GEAR UP Cohort)
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Year Implementation of SpringBoard ELA Level II
- 2007 TAKS 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Writing – **97%** Met Standard
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Year Implementation of Springboard ELA Level II
- 2008 TAKS 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Writing – **99%** Met Standard

# La Villa ISD: Sustainable SpringBoard Success



- Uses SpringBoard ELA as sole campus/district curriculum
- District uses Level I through Senior Level Springboard ELA
- Small district/grade size means no room for error in instruction of all student populations
- Administrative advocacy and support



# La Villa ISD: Sustainable SpringBoard Success



“The SpringBoard training I received will impact the students through the ongoing process of **self reflection**. This helps the students understand in what areas they are weak in and strong. It also helps the teachers instruct the classes according to their weakness.”

“This training absolutely helped in the understanding of the **content** I will teach. The trainers were clear and answered every question we had for them. “

“In the training, I learned the **strategies** that not only will help the struggling students, but students in general. Because of these strategies, I will be able to teach in an effective way that will enhance the students’ knowledge with the curriculum.”

*-Abraham Cantu,  
La Villa English Teacher*

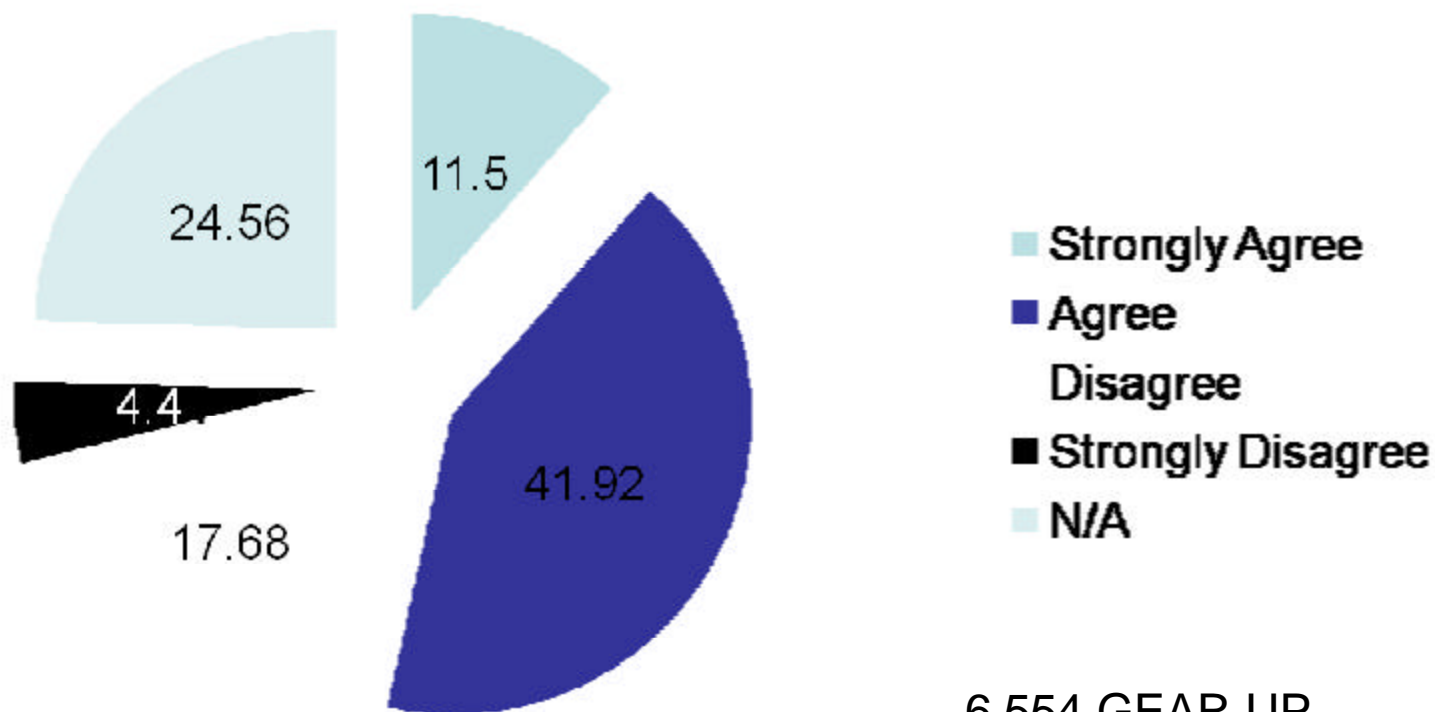


# Survey and Performance Data

# GEAR UP Student Survey Responses 2008-09



**SpringBoard lessons have helped me share my ideas and thoughts in the classroom.**

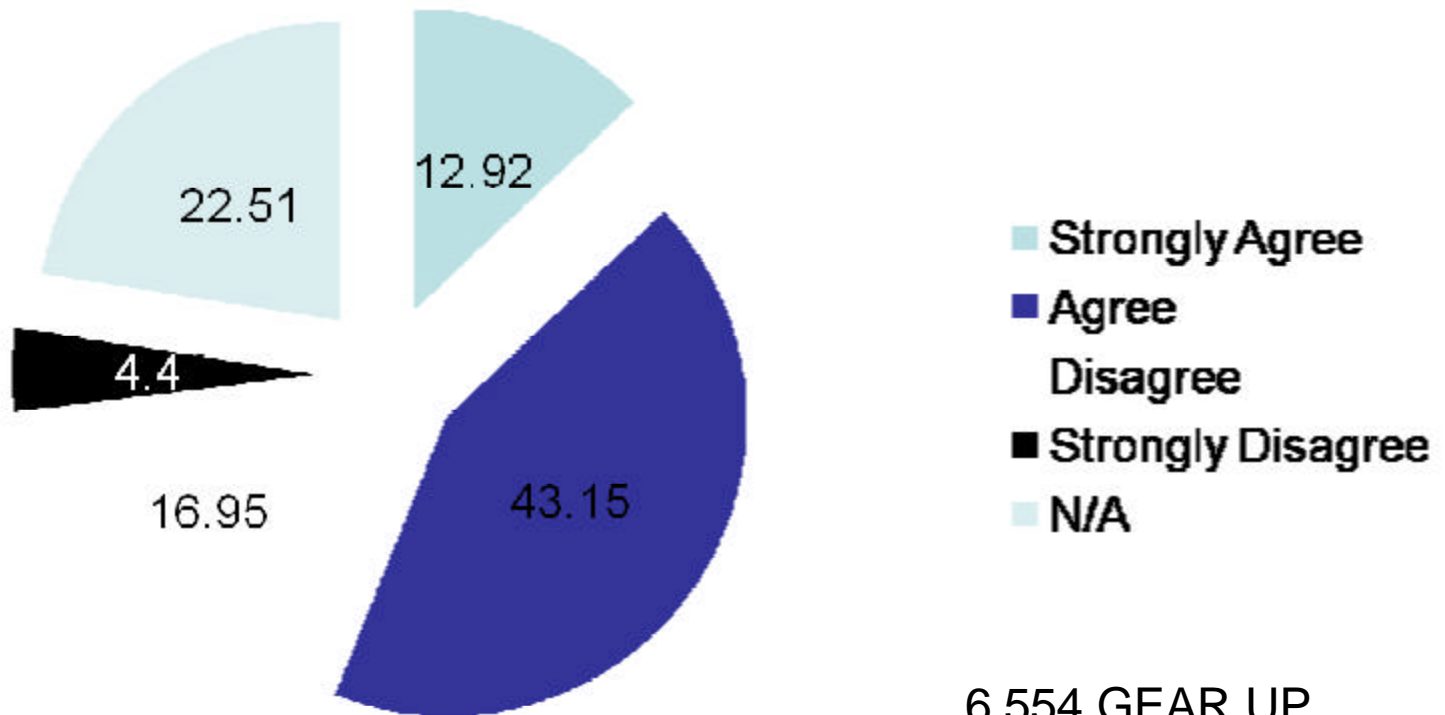


6,554 GEAR UP  
cohort students  
surveyed

# GEAR UP Student Survey Responses 2008-09



**SpringBoard lessons are often used in class by my English teacher.**

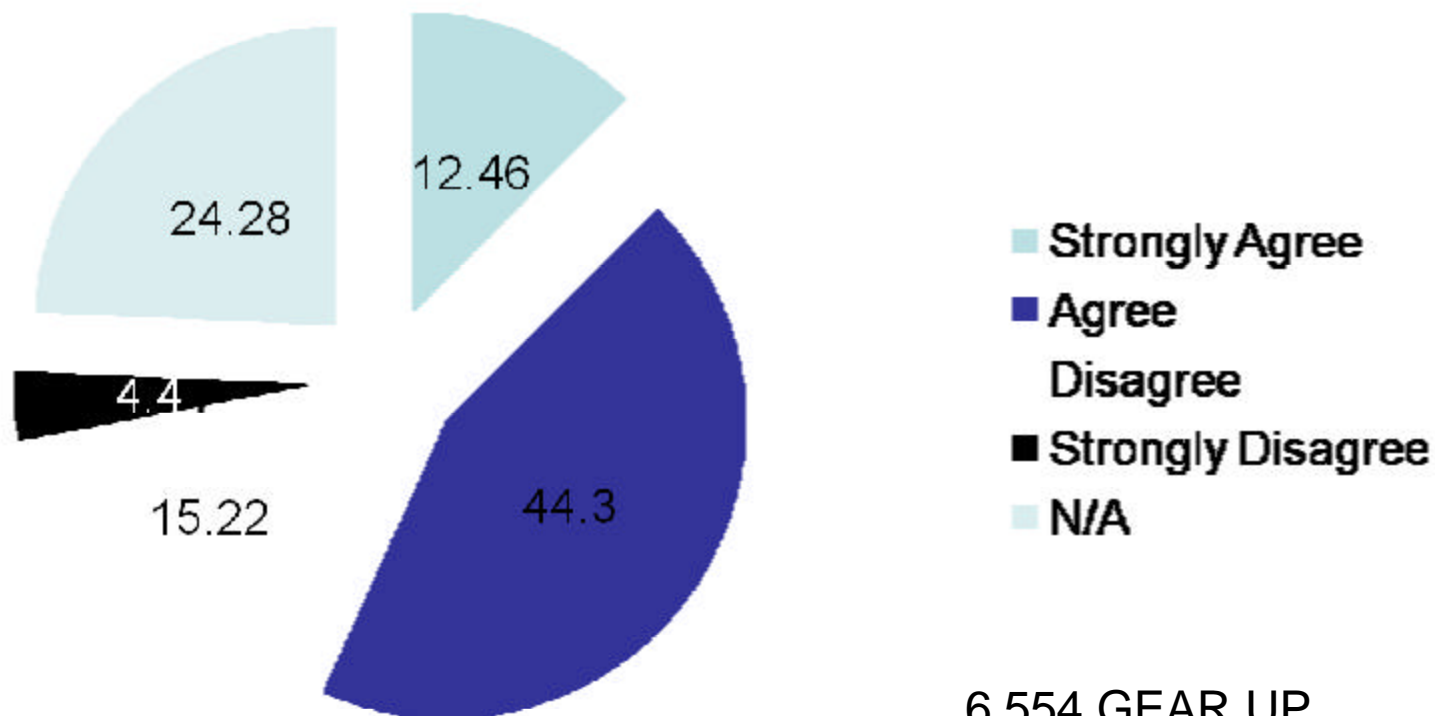


6,554 GEAR UP  
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# GEAR UP Student Survey Responses 2008-09

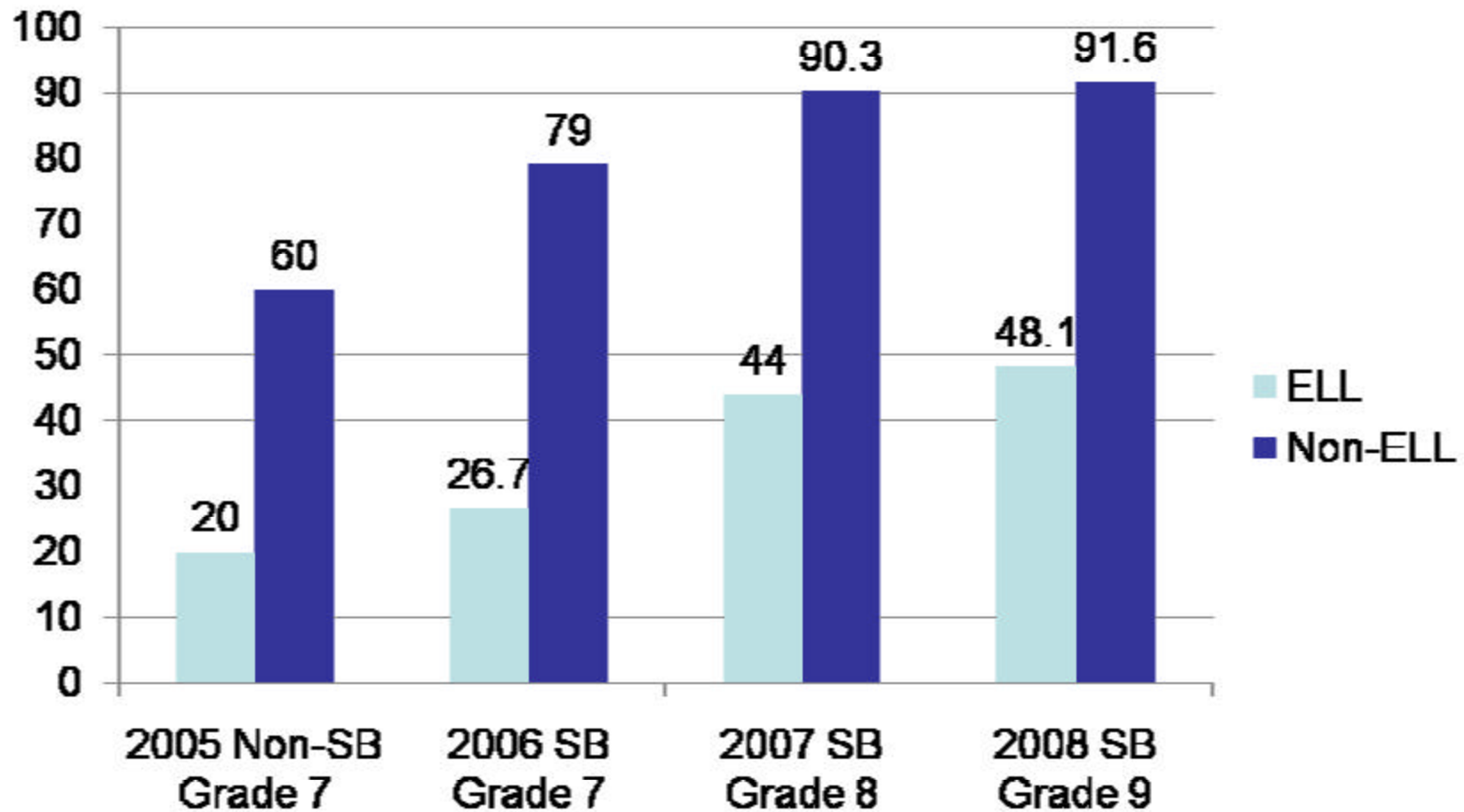


**SpringBoard lessons have helped us get a better understanding of the subject.**



6,554 GEAR UP  
cohort students  
surveyed

# ELL and Non-ELL Cohort Proficiency Gains on Reading TAKS



*\*Amounts indicate percent of cohort students who met minimum passing standards on the TAKS Reading assessment*



# SpringBoard® Success Story

## Texas Region One

College Readiness for ELL and First-Generation College Students

### The Story

Region One GEAR UP is funded through a federal grant and provides support to 21 Texas school districts ranging from Laredo to Port Isabel. The South Texas districts serve a large Hispanic population and many English Language Learners (ELL), as well as, a high percentage of economically disadvantaged students. In addition, a majority of students are first generation college-bound. In 2005, district leaders were searching for a program that would appeal to their student population, increase the richness of their language arts curriculum and prepare students for college.

In 2006, 14 of 21 Region One districts piloted SpringBoard English Language Arts (ELA). Educators found that the wealth of strategies and the focus on current literature appealed to multicultural populations and their district needs. Teachers particularly liked the embedded design of the strategies that made implementation easier and more effective. The following year, the number of SpringBoard districts increased from 14 to 17 of 21 districts.



Edir South Texas

#### District Demographics

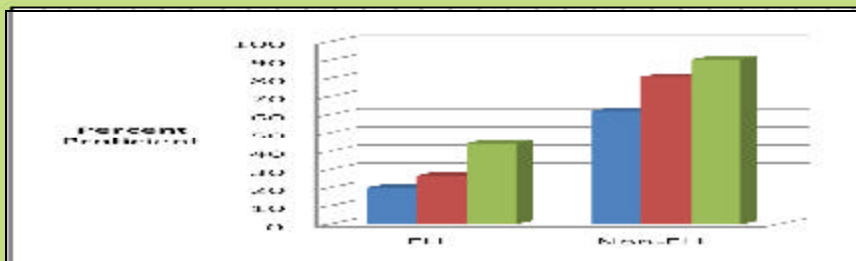
Students:	8,407
Economically Disadvantaged	87 %
English Language Learners	27 %
Hispanic	97 %

The SpringBoard initiative was funded through the Ford Partnership for Advanced Studies (PAS) and the Region One GEAR UP Grant. Under the leadership of David Hernandez, senior education specialist for Region One, each district developed a SpringBoard implementation plan based on district needs. Region One required that at a minimum, the district designate one cohort grade level for the program, with the goal being to promote sustainability over time.

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### The Results:

#### ELL and Non-ELL Cohort Proficiency Gains on the Reading/ELA Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills for Baseline Grade 7 Non-SpringBoard and SpringBoard Grades 7 and 8: 2005-2007



Key ■ 2005 Non-SpringBoard Grade 7 ■ 2006 SpringBoard Grade 7 ■ 2007 SpringBoard Grade 8

As part of the GEAR UP Grant, Region One staff monitored cohort progress on the Reading/ELA Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) for both ELL and non-ELL students. At the end of the first year of implementation, gains among both the ELL and non-ELL cohort groups were impressive. When compared with

the previous year's non-SpringBoard cohort, SpringBoard students posted substantially higher scores. In 2005, 20 percent of non-SpringBoard seventh graders reached proficiency compared with 26.7 percent of SpringBoard cohort seventh graders in 2006. In 2007, grade 8 cohort students continued to show impressive gains. Among ELL students, 44.4 percent reached minimum standards and among non-ELL students, 90.3 percent reached minimum proficiency.

#### Additional Results:

- ▶ 19 out of 21 GEAR UP campuses posted an increase on the Reading/ELA state assessment for BOTH ELL and non-ELL students.
- ▶ 13 of 14 SpringBoard Region One GEAR UP districts posted an increase on the Reading/ELA state assessment for ELL and non-ELL students.

# SpringBoard® Success Story

## Professional Development — A Key Ingredient to Successful Implementation

Ongoing professional development is a hallmark of the Region One implementation plan. Through support of the Region One office, 174 ELA teachers from the SpringBoard districts, curriculum administrators and GEAR UP staff participated in the SpringBoard Initial Institute. Following the Initial Institute, Region One coordinated several additional professional development opportunities that included midyear follow-ups designed to refocus and reenergize teachers, a video conference with a nationally certified SpringBoard trainer and webinars so that teachers could share best practices and access the tutorials for using SpringBoard Online. In addition, one hundred thirty five (135) teachers benefited from individual support for enhancing strategies for differentiated instruction. The Region One office also trained administrators on effective monitoring practices. The goal was to build a sense of community and support among Region One educators.

## What Teachers and Administrators Are Reporting:

- ▶ Serves as a model for my own lesson development
- ▶ Addresses different learner needs
- ▶ Accommodates all students, not just high performing
- ▶ Flexible and easy to use in planning instruction Offers a wealth of information and support for students
- ▶ Centralized theme brings learning together
- ▶ Provides tools and resources that build students' critical thinking skills in reading and writing
- ▶ Love the embedded strategies — not a separate program



*Springboard provides a richness of curriculum that is needed if our students are to be successful in their postsecondary endeavors.*

*— David Hernandez,  
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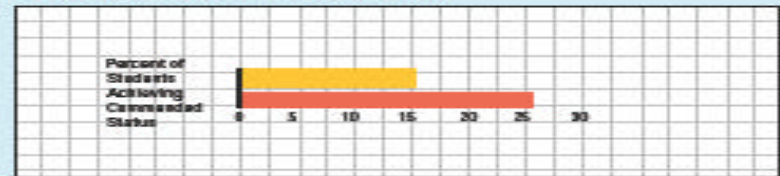
## Notable Results at Veterans' Memorial 9th Grade Academy.

Veteran's Memorial Ninth Grade Academy, located in San Benito, Texas, strives to prepare its students to become leaders in the 21st century. The school serves a high percentage of ELL students and first-generation college students, and is committed to preparing all students for college and the world beyond the classroom. The school's mission is to provide a supportive learning environment that successfully transitions students from a smaller middle school setting to a larger high school setting. The academy's small learning environment and high teacher expectations prepare students both socially and academically for the rigors of high school.

During the 2007-08 school year, the first GEAR UP cohort entered Veteran's Memorial Ninth Grade Academy. To maintain the students' academic momentum and to support transition to high school, Veteran's Memorial implemented SpringBoard. The results were impressive. Scores on the Reading/ELA Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) were substantially higher for the academy's SpringBoard GEAR UP cohort than for the previous year's non-SpringBoard class.

- ▶ Overall, 84 percent of the academy's GEAR UP students reached proficiency in 2008, compared with 79 percent of GEAR UP students in 2007.
- ▶ 37 percent of the academy's SpringBoard GEAR UP ELL students reached proficiency in 2008, compared with 29 percent of non-GEAR UP students in 2007.
- ▶ The percentage of SpringBoard GEAR UP students who reached commended status in 2008, doubled (13 percent to 26 percent) in comparison with non-GEAR UP students in 2007.

### Percentage of Students Achieving Commended Status Doubles for SpringBoard Cohort: 2007 versus 2008



Key: Non SpringBoard in 2007 (Yellow), SpringBoard cohort in 2008 (Red)



# Planning for 2010-2011



- Ford Foundation Grant totaling \$150,000
- SpringBoard ELA Summer Institute will be held July-August 2010
- 20 of 21 districts will implement
- English IV/12<sup>th</sup> Grade cohort students will be targeted (SB Senior Level)
- Sustainability of other grade levels implementing SpringBoard in partnership districts
- Continued support through online SB Community, webinars and campus visits

# Region One ESC

## GEAR UP: Bridges to the Future



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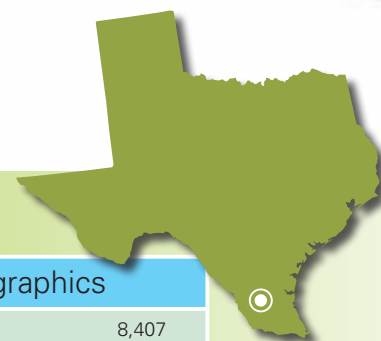
# Texas Region One

## College Readiness for ELL and First-Generation College Students

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#### South Texas

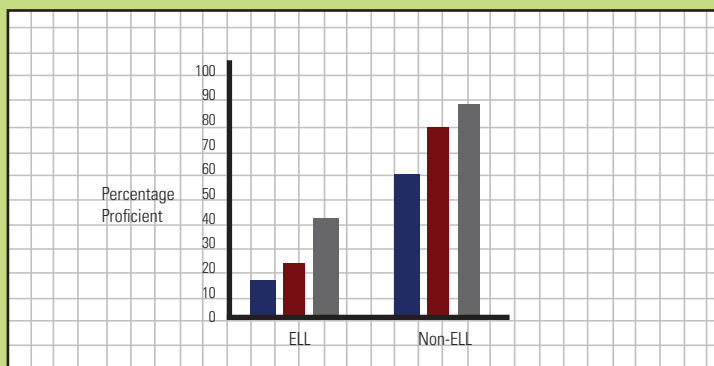
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### The Results

#### ELL and Non-ELL Cohort Proficiency Gains on the Reading/ELA Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills for Baseline Grade 7 Non-SpringBoard and SpringBoard Grades 7 and 8: 2005-2007



Key: 2005 Non-SpringBoard Grade 7 (Blue), 2006 SpringBoard Grade 7 (Red), 2007 SpringBoard Grade 8 (Grey)

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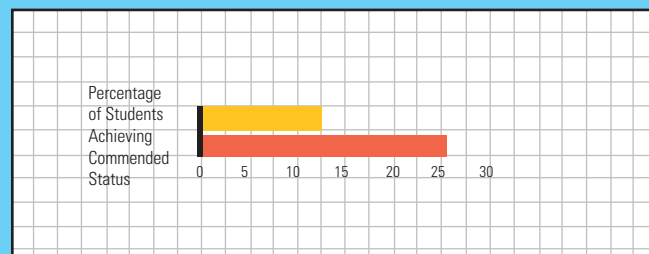
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Key      ■ Non-SpringBoard in 2007      ■ SpringBoard cohort in 2008