Texas Public Policy Foundation

LEGISLATIVE POLICY CONFERENCE
September 6, 2002
Austin, Texas

EDUCATION PANEL
TESTING and ACCOUNTABILITY

Chris Patterson, Director of Education Research

Key Questions

1. **What goals are established for public schools by state law?**
   A. Required Curriculum
   B. Student Performance

2. **How do state assessments & the school accountability system measure <u>&</u> advance state goals for public schools?**
   A. National Performance
   B. Post-secondary Readiness
   C. Instructional Equity
   D. High School Graduation

3. **How will assessments & accountability challenge the 78th Legislature?**
   A. Raising the Stakes – End of Social Promotion
   B. Transition to the Recommended High School Curriculum
   C. Increasing Achievement & Eliminating the Achievement Gap
   D. Defining Dropouts & Increasing School Completion
   E. Connecting Public Schools to Higher Education
   F. Increasing the Supply of Qualified Teachers

4. **What can the 78th Legislature do to improve assessments, accountability & student achievement?**
   A. Modifying and Supplementing TAKS

B. Adopting the federal Dropout Definition
C. Enriching the State Curriculum
D. New Criteria for Rating High Schools
E. New Certificate for Alternative Teachers

PRESENTATION OUTLINE

1. The goals set for student learning and student achievement by the Texas Education Code establish 4 targets – (1) Students should demonstrate a high level of performance that is reaches or exceeds their peers throughout the nation; (2) Students should earn a high school diploma; (3) Classroom instruction should prepare all students for post-secondary education or training; and (4) Classroom instruction should eliminate achievement differences between student groups.

2. State assessments and the school accountability system indicate that students and schools have made significant progress towards these goals. Other, independent measures of student achievement fail to confirm, and in many cases, refute achievement gains.

3. State assessments show that student achievement has steadily risen for all student groups in all grades – and that the achievement gap between student groups has rapidly declined. (graphics 3-a, 3-b)

4. Reports of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) indicate that Texas students are scoring about national average and achievement has generally (but not always) risen for all student groups in elementary and middle schools. NAEP does not confirm that Texas is closing the achievement gap but instead indicates no improvement or gradual widening. (graphics 4-a, 4-b, 4-c, 4-d)

5. Texas' assessments inflate student achievement gains and mask the stagnant or growing achievement gap between student groups. Too few questions and the small range of performance difficulty measured by state assessments make tests insensitive to (unable to discriminate) the specific levels of achievement on the individual and group level that are required to expose achievement differences.

6. National tests administered in Houston and Dallas School Districts show that Texas' students score about national average in elementary school but scores drop significantly below grade level in middle and high school. Comparisons between the Stanford 9 and Iowa Test of Basic Skills and TAAS indicate that state assessments set standards for grade level achievement at 1 to 3 years below what national tests recognize as grade level. State assessments fail to show that student achievement and instructional goals are below levels considered grade-level throughout the nation. (graphics 6-a, 6-b)

7. Tests of college readiness show that graduates of Texas public schools are not academically prepared for post-secondary programs. SAT, ACT and TASP scores have steadily fallen since 1995 while the percentage of students taking these tests has declined. Texas posts the 5th lowest SAT and 13th lowest ACT scores in the nation. All tests also show an egregious widening of the achievement gap between student groups in high schools. Texas assessments do not measure or set instructional goals for college readiness.

8. The achievement gap in Texas public schools is evident in (1) TEA biennial studies of grade inflation; (2) ACT analyses of test scores of different student groups taking the same high school coursework; and (3) THECB analyses of TASP passing rates of different student groups taking the Recommended High School Program. State measures indicate that Texas public schools do not provide Hispanic and African-American students the same level of instruction as given their Anglo peers. Research indicates that minority students are more likely to be taught by teachers assigned outside their area of certification, provided less challenging academic curriculum, and held to lower academic standards. (graphics 8-a, 8-b, 8-c, 8-d, 8-e, 8-f)

9. The percentage of students who drop out of school and/or attain a high school diploma in Texas is not known. Several independent sources, including the U.S. Department of Education, offer dramatically different numbers for high school completion than is produced by the Texas Education Agency.

10. The different numbers results from the use of very different definitions for "dropout" and "graduation" as well as very different methods for calculating these rates.

    - TEA reports rising rates of high school graduation (74.5% in 1996 rising to 80.7% today) and falling dropout rates (3.8% in 1991 falling to 1.3% today). Using the federal definition, the TEA reports a 5% dropout rate for Spring 2000.
    - The Manhattan Institute reports Texas has a 68% graduation rate (significantly below national average of 74%) and a dropout rate of 32%.
    - The USDOE's National Center for Education Statistics indicates that high school completion in Texas is has decreased since 1990 (from 80% to 79.4% - compared to the national average of 85.7%).
    - Just for the Kids reports a 77% graduation rate with 20% dropouts.
    - The Intercultural Development Research Association reports a 40% dropout rate, down from 42% in 1996.

    (graphic 10-a)

11. The calculation and reporting of school completion and dropout rates in Texas prevents an accurate assessment and effective resolution of the problem. The state's inappropriate method of calculating dropouts renders Texas public schools ineligible for federal dropout prevention funding.

12. Students in Texas public schools demonstrate below grade-level performance, insufficient college readiness, low high school graduation rates and a broad achievement gap between student groups remain despite decades of education reform and aggressive legislative action. However, these deficiencies are not identified by the state's student assessments or school accountability system. State assessments and the accountability system do not establish goals for students to overcome these challenges.

13. The performance of Texas public schools has fueled a crisis in higher education that is undermining the social and economic future of both our youth and state – Too few students go to college, too few youth are prepared to meet workforce demands, and too few youth are prepared for financial independence.
    (graphics 13-a, 13-b, 13-c)

14. As the 78th Texas Legislature faces these challenges, legislators will also be asked for policy to facilitate implementation of the latest wave of education reforms passed by the last two sessions –

- *Social Promotion Ends* **in spring 2003 when 3rd grade students must pass state assessments to be promoted.**
- *Recommended High School Program* **becomes the default curriculum for all students. All students will be expected to take college-preparatory academics – a program of study that only 40% of students currently take.**
- *Shortage of Qualified Teachers* **is predicted to increase, from the current 30% of teachers teaching outside their field, at the same time that the state attaches high stakes to assessments and requires students to achieve at higher levels demanded by the Recommended High School Program.**
- *New State Assessments (TAKS)* **will replace TAAS.**

15. The challenges confronting public schools today must be addressed by improving state assessments and school accountability. The 78th Texas Legislature can improve student achievement and improve schools by –

✓ **Enriching & standardizing state curriculum standards**

✓ **Modifying new state assessments to fully measure state curriculum standards, grade-level learning & progress towards post-secondary programs with sufficient discrimination to identify achievement differences**

✓ **Introducing administration of the Iowa Test of Basic Skills as a supplement to TAKS in grades 3 and 5, and administer the ACT college readiness exam in grades 8, 10 and 12.**

✓ **Holding schools accountable for reducing achievement gap on all tests (TAKS, the Iowa Test of Basic Skills, and ACT)**

✓ **Mandating use of the federal dropout definition in the school accountability ratings**

✓ **Adding college readiness criteria to accountability ratings of high schools**

✓ **Requiring school districts to pay the cost of remedial education for college freshmen if students attended all 4 years of high school in the district**

✓ **Forming a commission on student & school accountability to monitor legislative implementation and compliance**

✓ **Linking academic qualifications to teacher certification & assignments – establish alternative certification based solely on post-secondary academic qualifications**

✓ **Establishing vouchers for academically-disadvantaged students to obtain after-school and summer tutoring**

✓ **Establishing intra-district public school choice for all students**

✓ **Creating a public/private school voucher program for all students who fail state assessments**

(graphics 15-a, 15-b, 15-c, 15-d)

GOALS of PUBLIC EDUCATION -- TEXAS EDUCATION CODE

✓ **"The State's students will demonstrate exemplary performance in comparison on national and international standards."** *Objectives of Public Education, Section 4.001 (b)*
✓ **"The essential Knowledge and skills shall also prepare and enable *all* students to continue to learn in postsecondary education, training or employment settings."** *Essential Knowledge and Skills: Curriculum, Purpose, Section 28.001*

INTERPRETING STATE GOALS

- **Texas' students should score at or above their peers on national and international tests;**
- **Graduates of Texas public schools should be prepared to transition into skilled vocational training or college;**
- **Schools should provide requisite instruction for all students to meet the state's performance goals; and**
- **Schools should provide requisite instruction for all student groups to achieve at comparable levels of performance.**

TRANSLATING STATE LAW INTO EDUCATIONAL POLICY

- **Curriculum standards should establish the state's goals for student learning:**
  - **Set expectations for student performance that are comparable to or exceeds performance of their peers throughout the nation (meeting or surpassing grade-level expectations on national & international tests);**
  - **Develop the academic foundation necessary for students to succeed in post –secondary programs; and**
  - **Establish uniform and equitable instructional expectations for all classrooms, all student groups and every student in the regular education program.**
- **Public schools should provide a foundation of instruction that meets state goals by:**
  - **Offering all students the knowledge and skills required to meet national & international standards;**
  - **Preparing all students for post-secondary programs;**
  - **Overcoming educational handicaps associated with poverty, linguistic differences, race and ethnicity; and**
  - **Enables students to complete high school & attain a diploma.**
- **State Assessments should measure student performance against state goals:**
  - **Measure how well Texas students perform in comparison to national & international peers;**
  - **Identify how students are progressing towards & achieve academic readiness for post-secondary programs; and**

- **Reveal achievement gaps between student groups that result from curricular and instructional inequities.**
- **State Accountability System should hold schools accountable for state goals:**
  - **Collecting & reporting accurate, reflective, comparable data; and**
  - **Student achievement at national/international standards of performance, school completion, college readiness & academic equity.**

Graphic 3-a
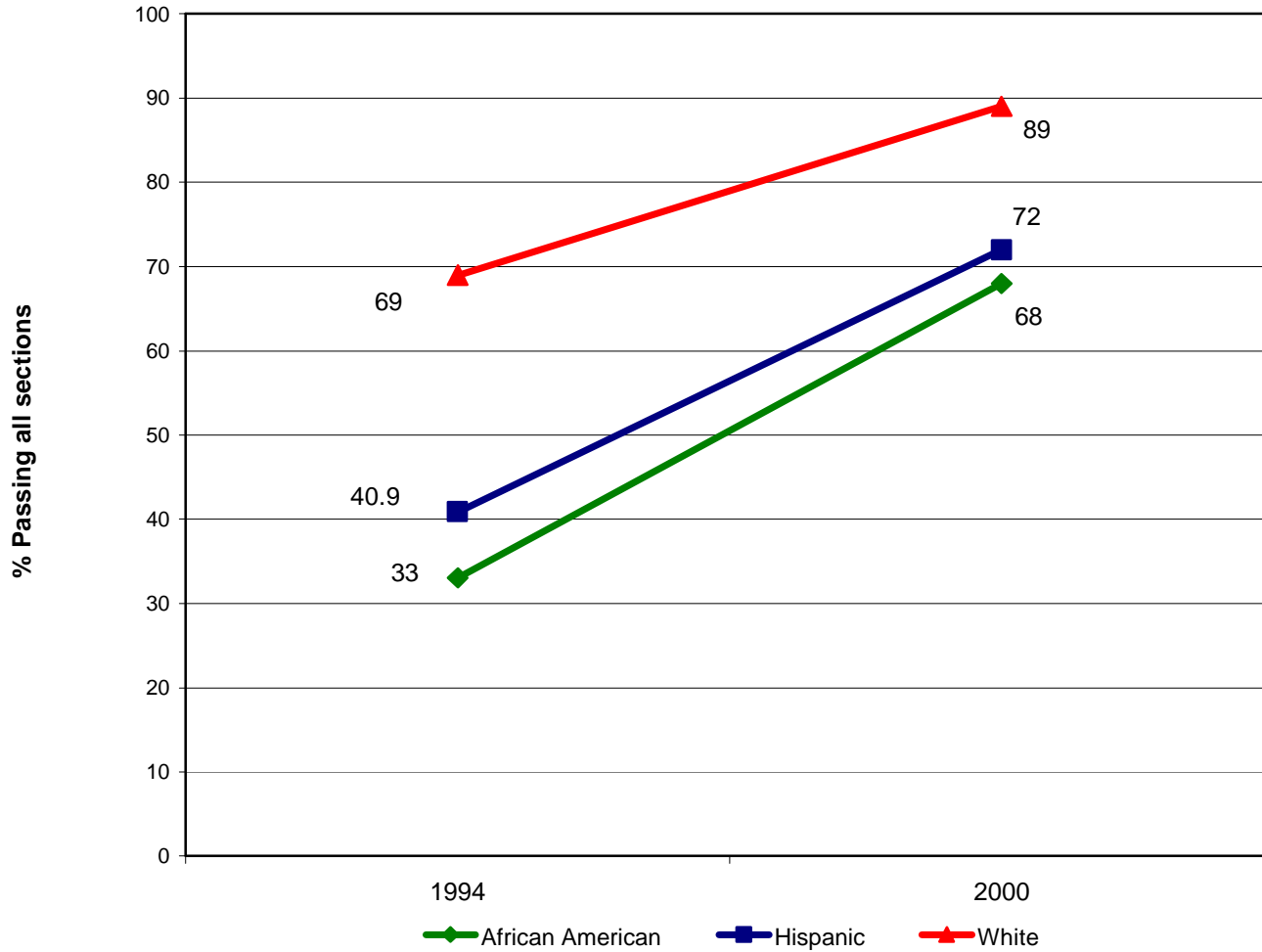
TAAS Percent Meeting Minimum Expectations, All Students, 1994-2001

All Tests Taken ▦ 1994 ▥ 1995 ▢ 1996 ▨ 1997 ▧ 1998 ▥ 1999 ▦ 2000 ▢ 2001
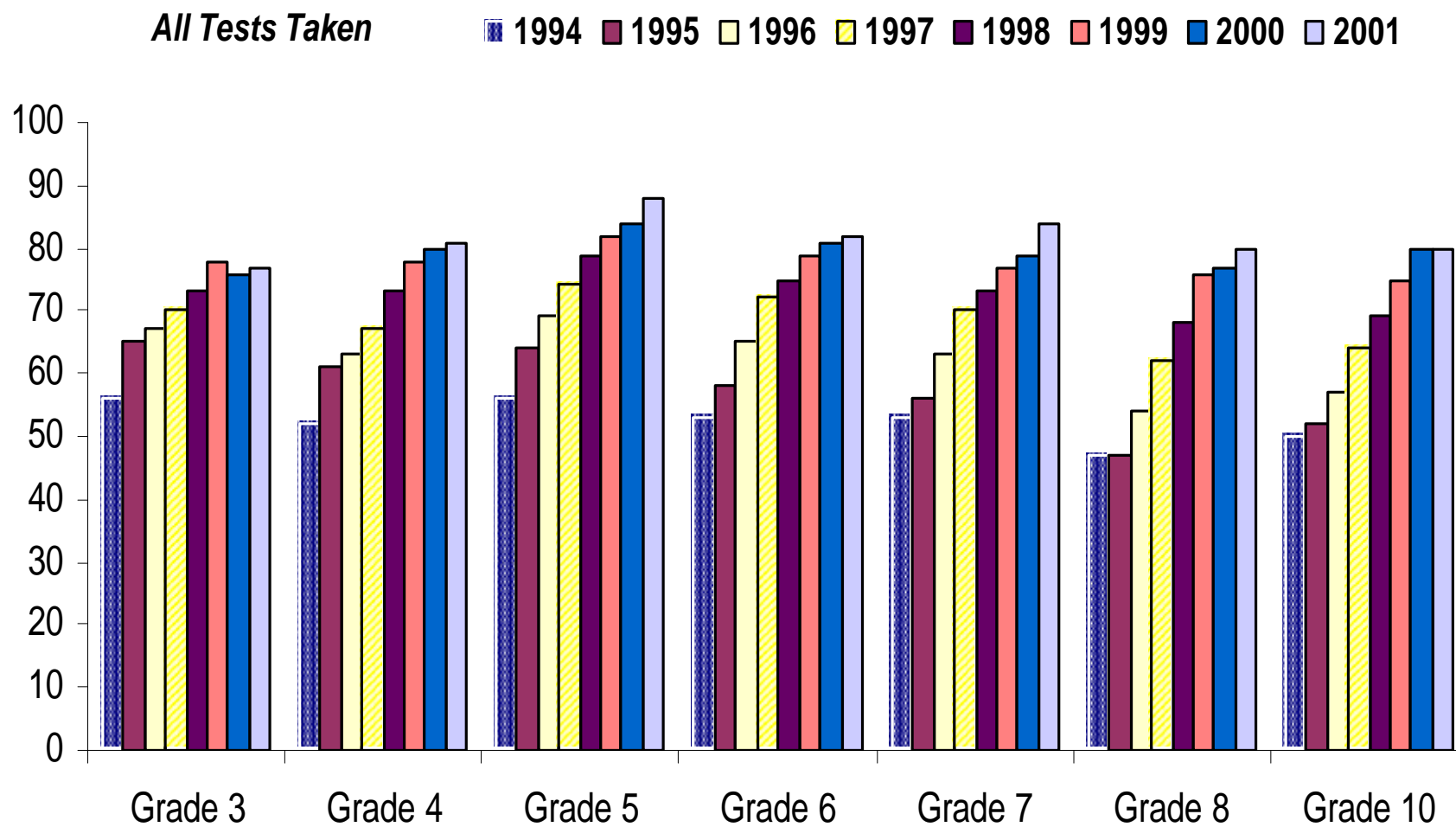
Does not include results of the science and social studies tests.
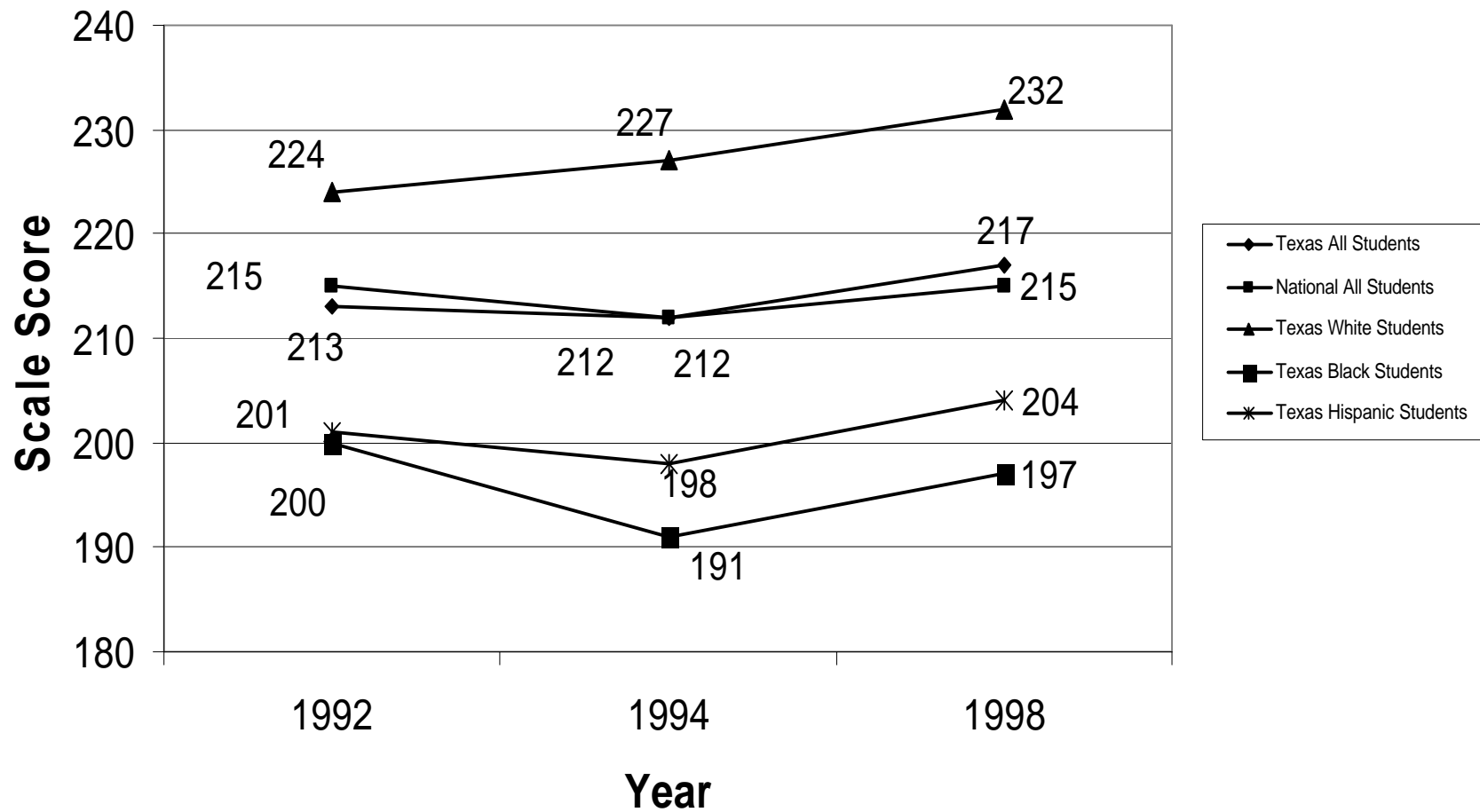
Graphic 3-b

Closing the TAAS Gap

Source: *Real Results, Remaining Challenges: The Story of Texas Education Reform*, The Education Trust, Washington, DC, 2001, pg. 11
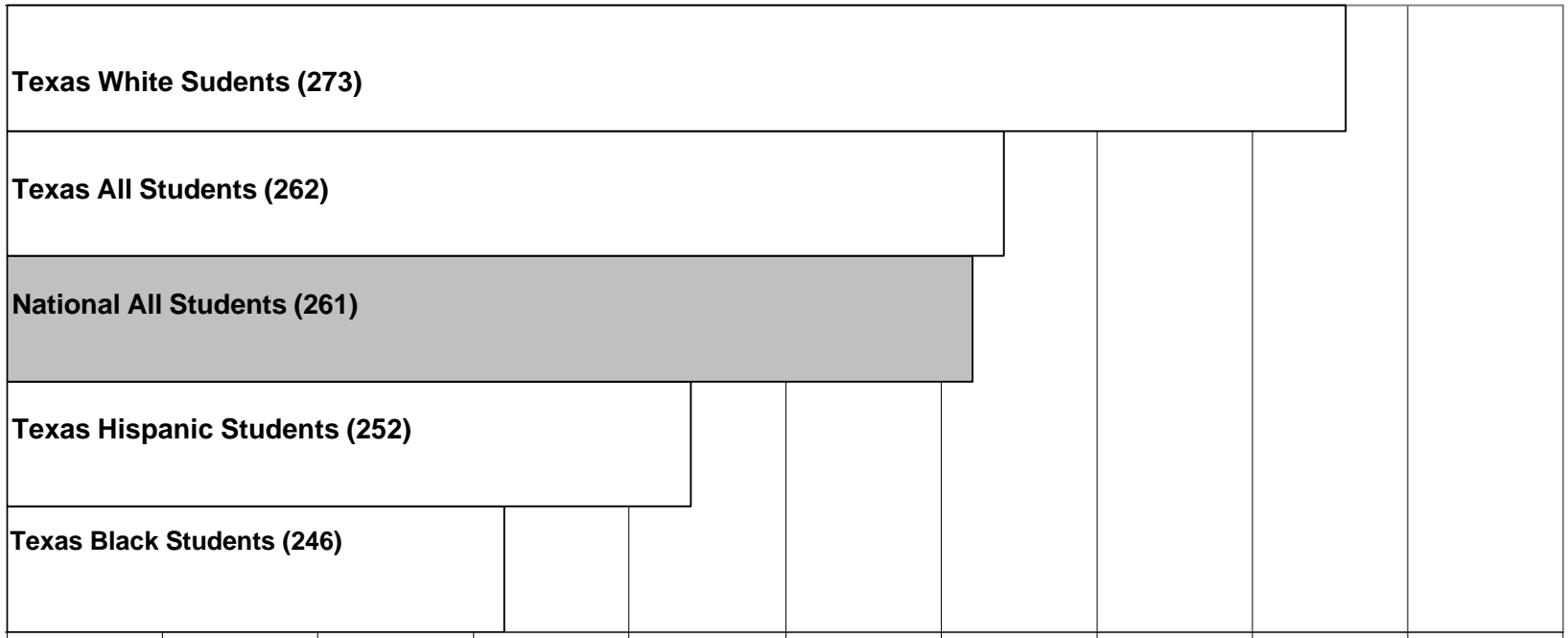
Graphic 4-a

National Assessment of Educational Progress
Average Reading Scores Grade 4
Texas and Nation

Scale Score (y-axis): 180, 190, 200, 210, 220, 230, 240

Year (x-axis): 1992, 1994, 1998

Legend:
- Texas All Students
- National All Students
- Texas White Students
- Texas Black Students
- Texas Hispanic Students

Data labels:
- 224, 227, 232 (Texas White Students)
- 215, 212, 215 (National All Students)
- 213, 212, 217 (Texas All Students)
- 201, 198, 204 (Texas Hispanic Students)
- 200, 191, 197 (Texas Black Students)

Graphic 4-b

National Assessment of Educational Progress 1998
Average Reading Scores Grade 8
Texas and National

Texas White Sudents (273)

Texas All Students (262)

National All Students (261)

Texas Hispanic Students (252)

Texas Black Students (246)

230	235	240	245	250	255	260	265	270	275	280

Scale Score

Graphic 4-c

**National Assessment of Educational Progress Average Math Scores Grade 8
Texas and National**

Year	1990	1992	1996	2000
Texas White Students	273	279	285	288
National All Students	262	267	271	275
Texas All Students	258	265	270	274
Texas Hispanic Students	245	249	256	266
Texas Black Students	236	244	249	252

Legend:
- Texas All Students
- National All Students
- Texas White Students
- Texas Black Students
- Texas Hispanic Students
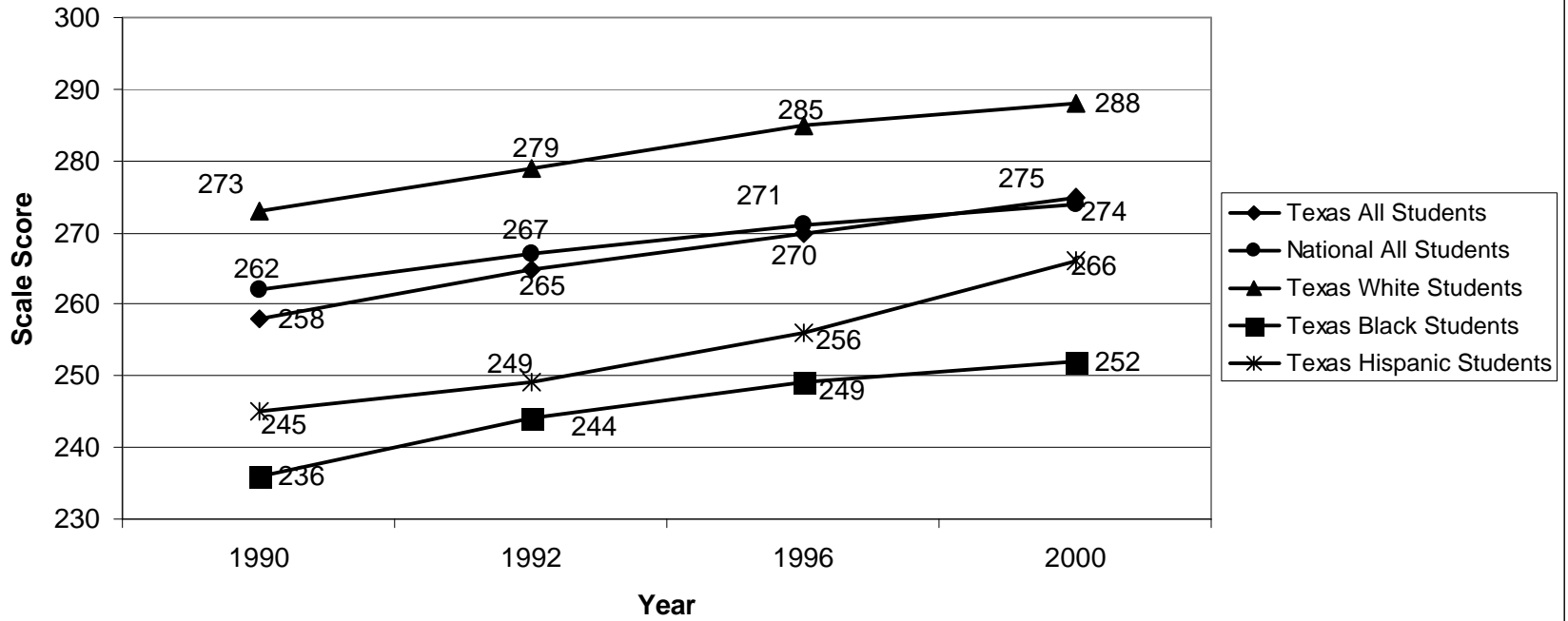
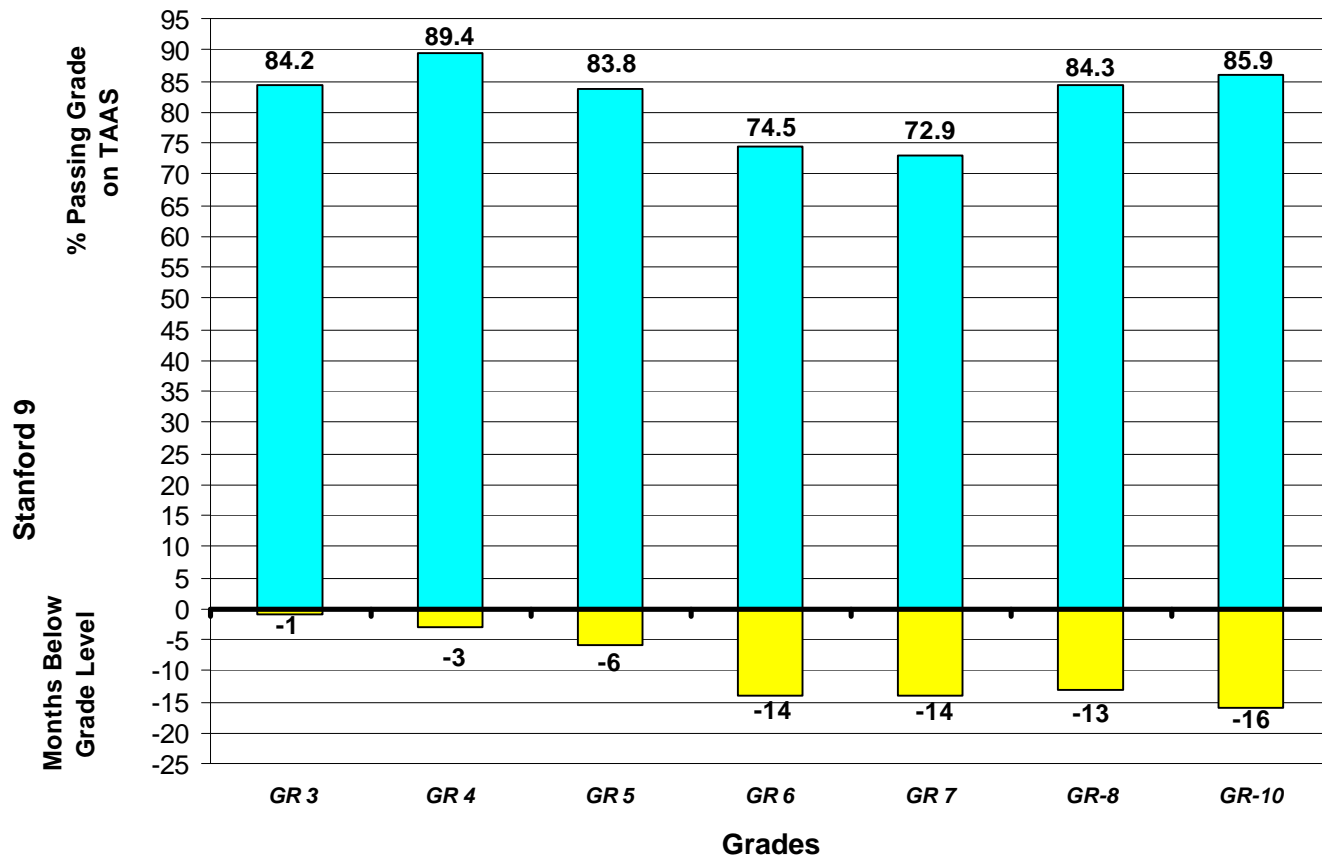# Graphic 4-d

National Assessment of Educational Progress
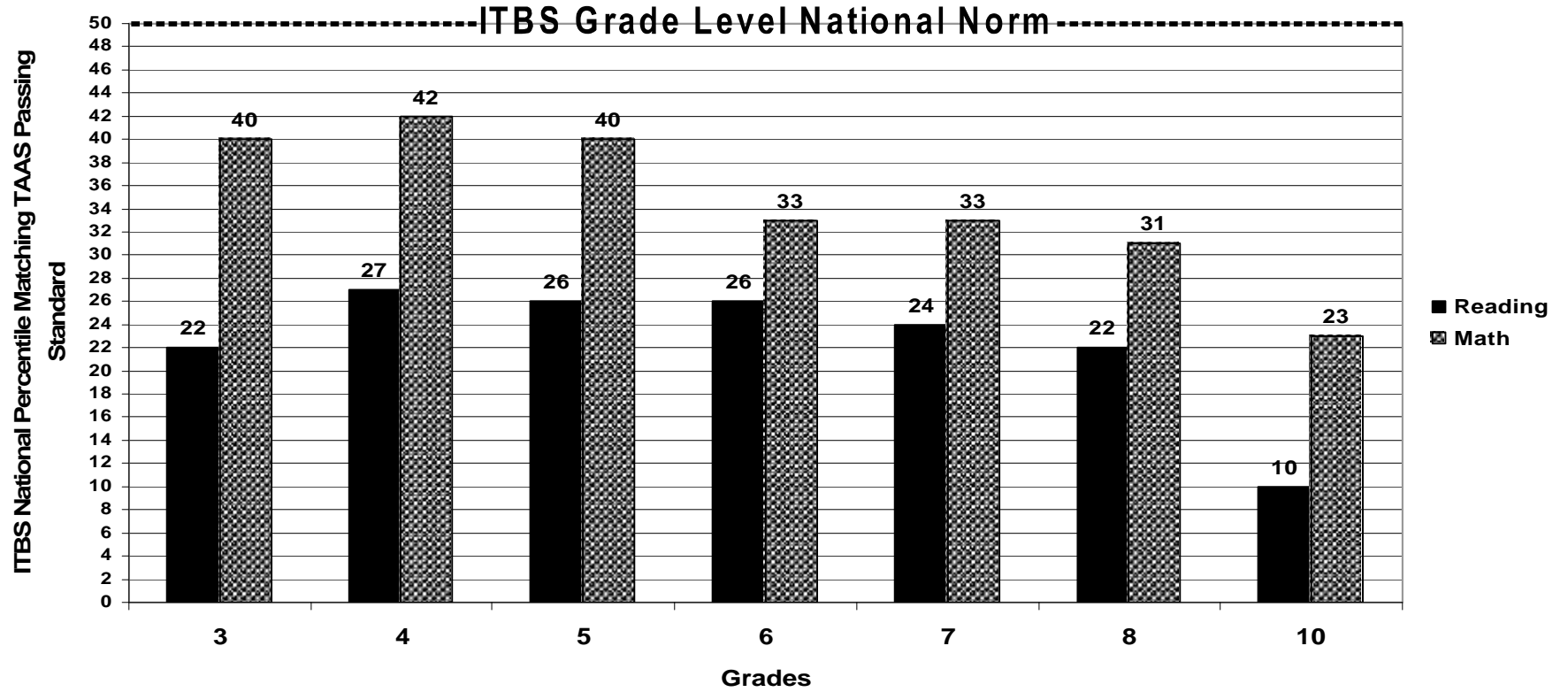**Average Science Scores Grade 8**
Texas and Nation
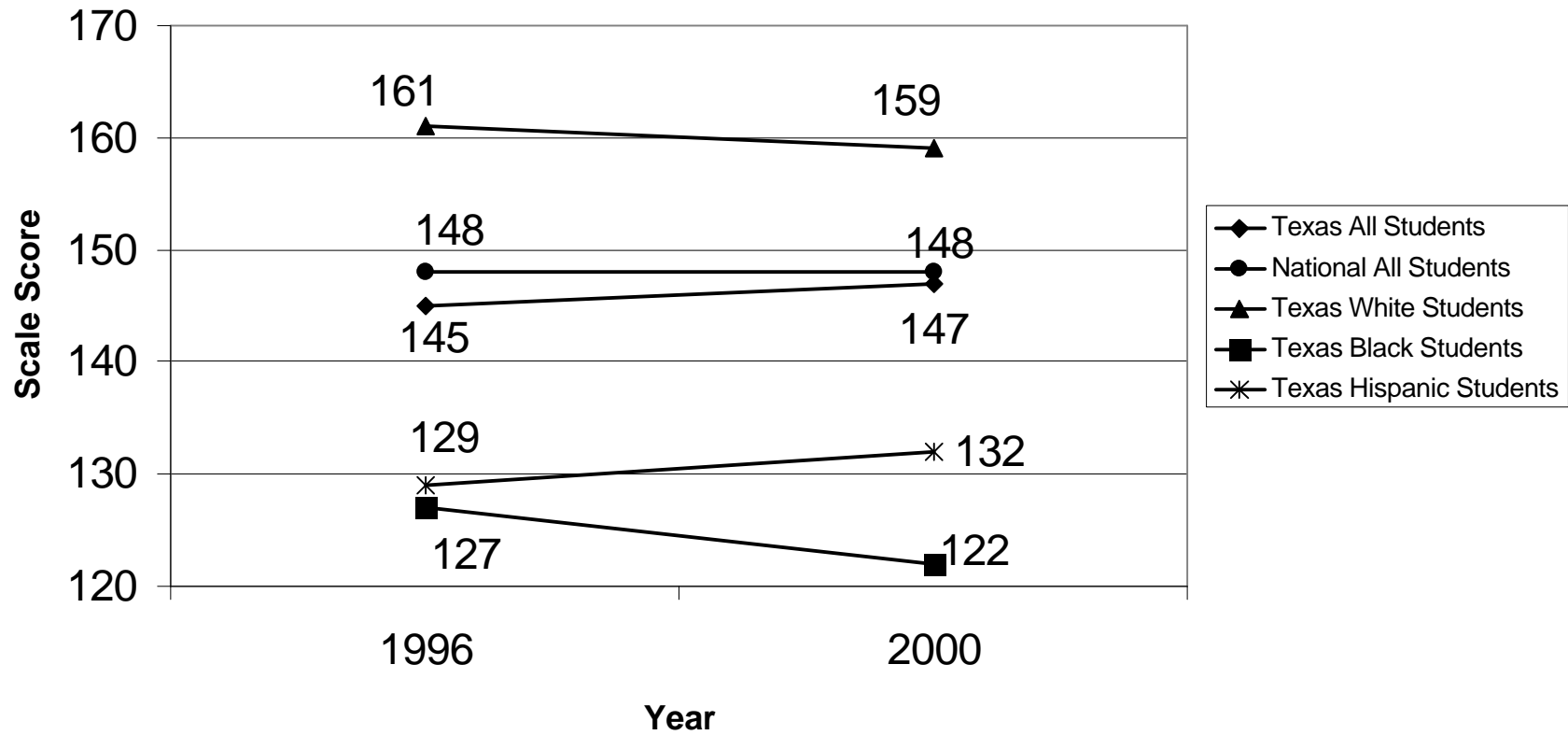
Graphic 6-a

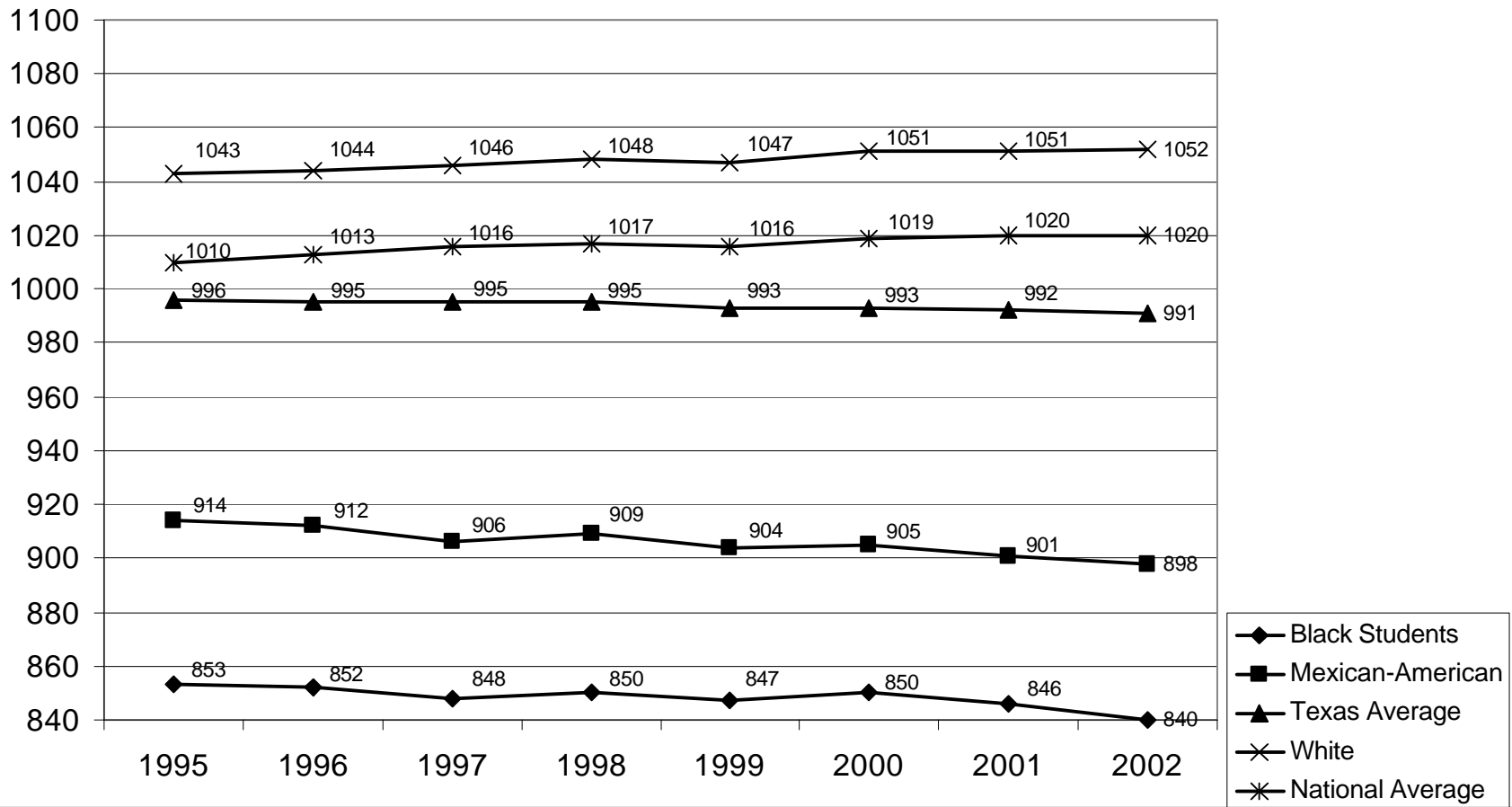## Comparison of Houston ISD Reading Performance 2000

Graphic 6-b

Dallas ISD 1998 TAAS Analysis
Relationship Between TAAS Standard & ITBS Grade Norms

Graphic 8-a

Texas Mean SAT Scores Verbal and Math Combined

Texas Mean SAT Scores Verbal and Math Combined — line graph showing scores from 1995 to 2002.

Year	Black Students	Mexican-American	Texas Average	White	National Average
1995	853	914	996	1043	1010
1996	852	912	995	1044	1013
1997	848	906	995	1046	1016
1998	850	909	995	1048	1017
1999	847	904	993	1047	1016
2000	850	905	993	1051	1019
2001	846	901	992	1051	1020
2002	840	898	991	1052	1020

Legend:
- ◆ Black Students
- ■ Mexican-American
- ▲ Texas Average
- ✕ White
- ✳ National Average

Graphic 8-b

ACT High School Profile
State Composite for Texas

Year	Composite Score Students Taking Core	# Students Tested
1997-98	21.2	44019
1998-99	21.2	45613
1999-00	21	49518
2000-01	20.8	51587
2001-02	20.6	50073

Graphic 8-c

INITIAL TASP PASS RATES 1993-2000
(ALL THREE PARTS)
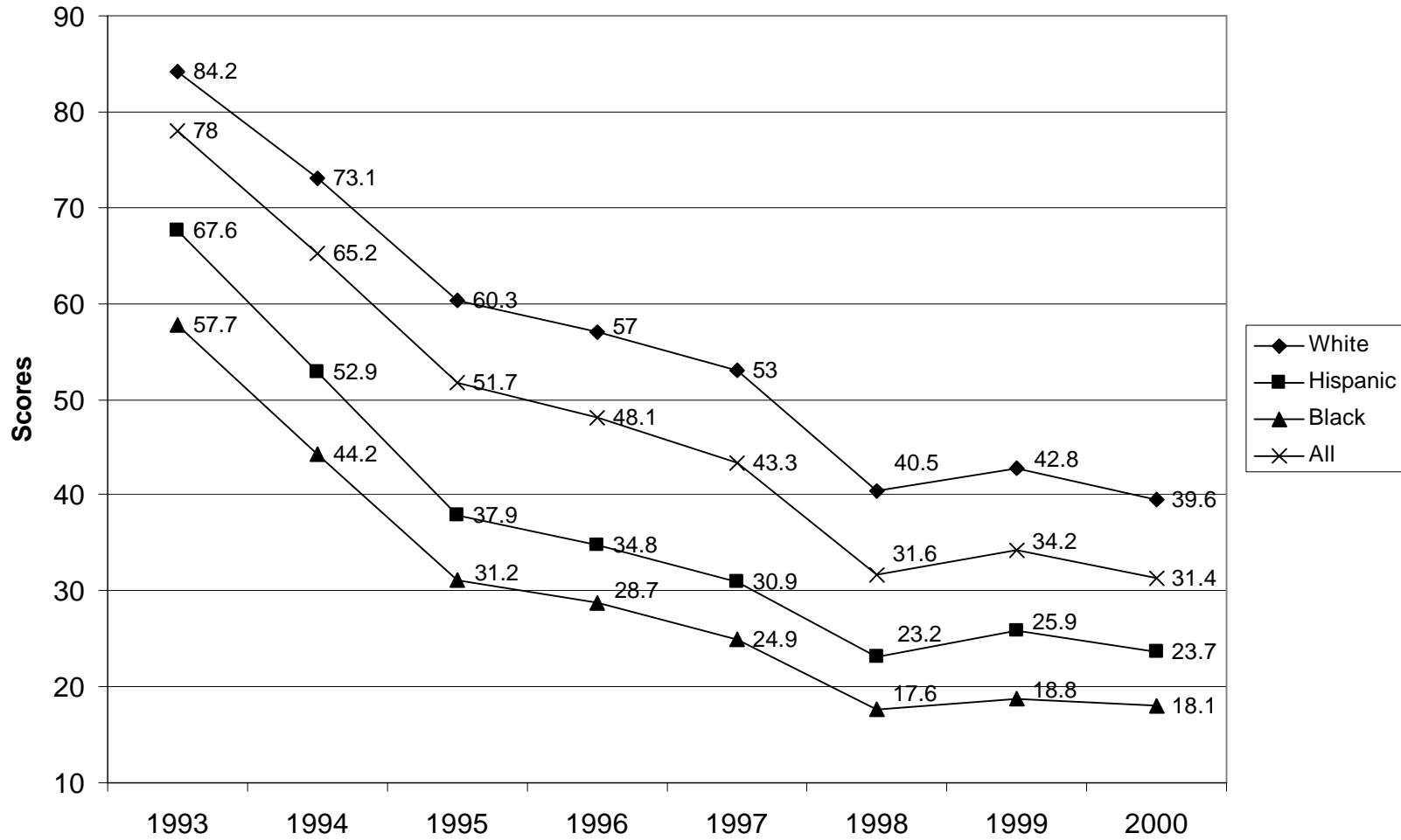
Graphic 8-d

Statewide Performance Measures
Texas Public Schools
1994-2001

School Year	Passing All TAAS Grades 3-10 (%)	Grade 8 Math Passing (%)	Algebra 1 Students Taking/Passing (%)		TASP Passing (%)	Percent Taking SAT/ACT	Mean SAT Score State/Nation		Mean ACT Score State/Nation		Percent Taking AP Tests	Percent Passing the AP Tests
1994-1995	60.7	57.3	n/a	n/a	51.7	64.8	891	1010	20.0	20.8	6.8	56.2
1995-1996	67.1	69	17.8	28.0	48.1	64.7	993**	1013	20.1	20.9	7.6	60.6
1996-1997	73.2	76.3	18.3	35.0	43.3	63.6	992	1016	20.1	21.0	8.6	59.2
1997-1998	73.1	83.8	17.4	39.0	31.8	61.7	992	1017	20.3	21.0	9.7	57.4
1998-1999	78.1	86.3	18.0	43.4	34.2*	61.8	989	1016	20.2	21.0	11	55.7
1999-2000	79.9	90.2	17.6	43.9	n/a	62.2	990	1019	20.3	21.0	12.7	53.9
2000-2001	82.1	92.4	17.2	49.2	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	14.3	50.1
Data Source	1	1	1 and 2		3	1	1 and 4		1 and 5		1	1

Data Sources:

1- AEIS Annual Reports from 1995 to 2001
2- Houston Chronicle, 8/20/98, K. Walt, "Algebra Scores Blamed on Unqualified Teachers"
3- Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, Annual TASP Reports 1994-1999
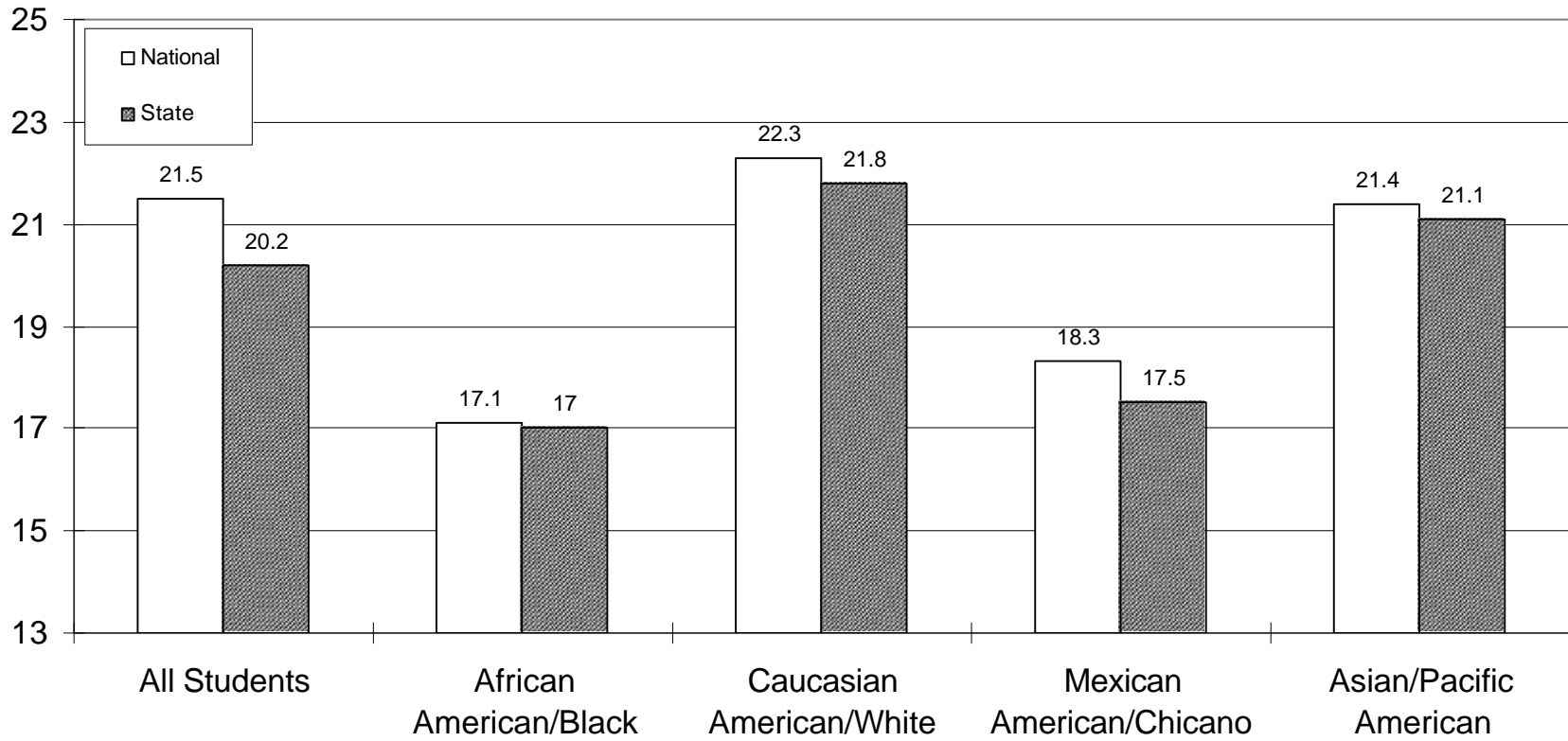4- The College Board, State Report 2000
5- ACT, 2000 Report

* New alternative tests introduced
** SAT scores are recentered in 1995
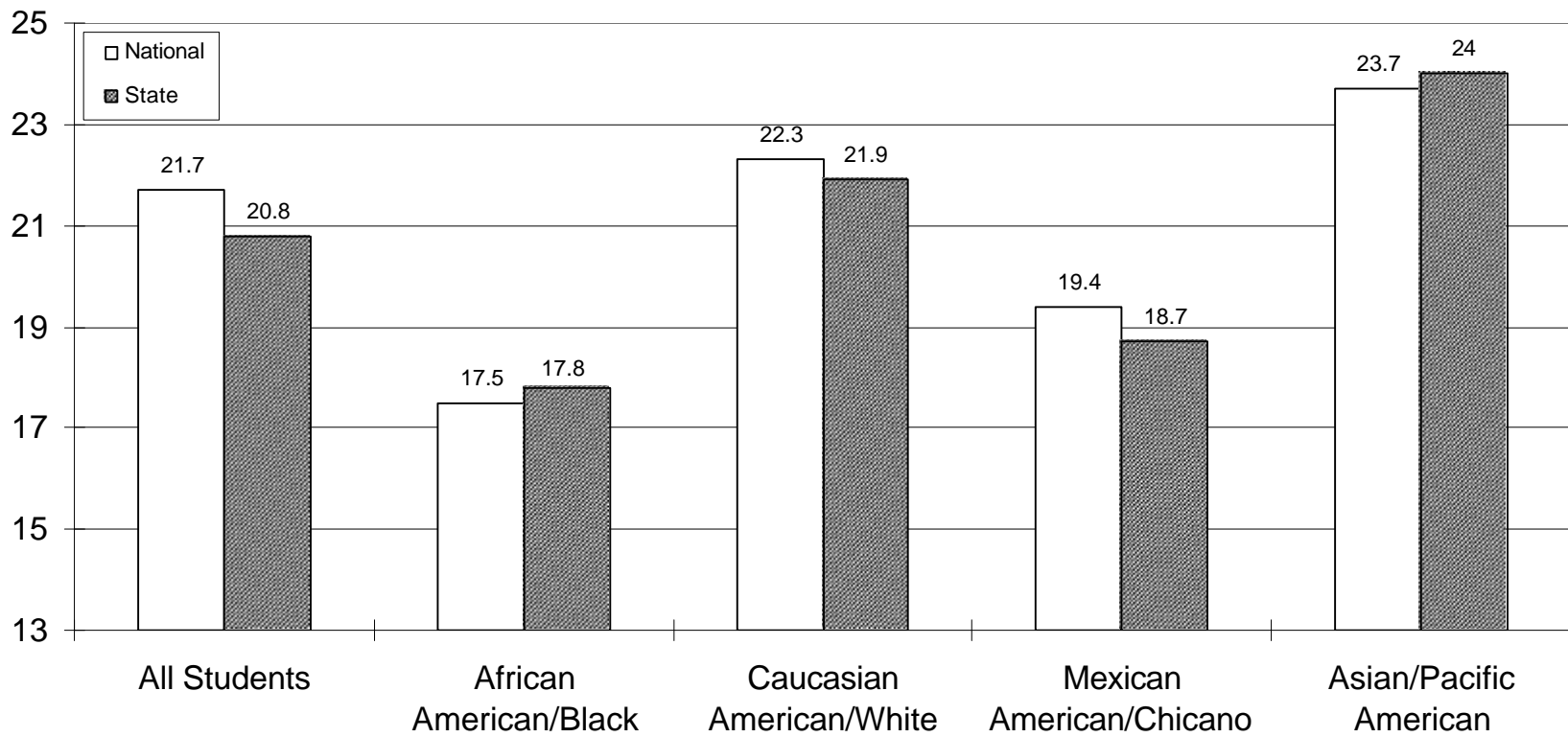"n/a" means not available from TEA / THECB

Graphic 8-e

ACT Performance on <u>English</u> for Those Taking <u>Core or More</u> Graduating Class of 2001
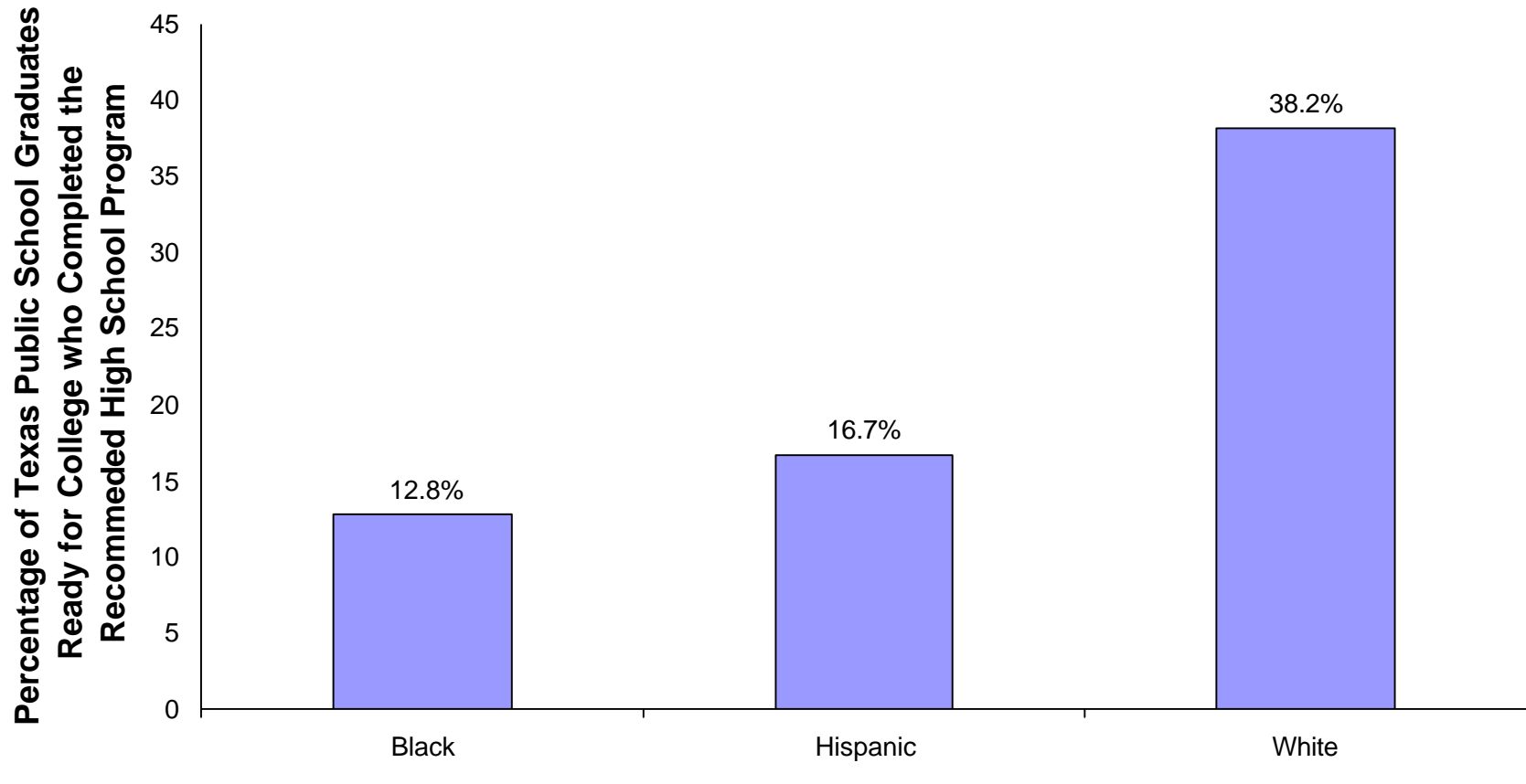
Legend:
- □ National
- ▨ State

Category	National	State
All Students	21.5	20.2
African American/Black	17.1	17
Caucasian American/White	22.3	21.8
Mexican American/Chicano	18.3	17.5
Asian/Pacific American	21.4	21.1

Graphic 8-f

ACT Performance on Mathematics for Those Taking Core or More
Graduating Class of 2001

Legend:
- □ National
- ▨ State

Category	National	State
All Students	21.7	20.8
African American/Black	17.5	17.8
Caucasian American/White	22.3	21.9
Mexican American/Chicano	19.4	18.7
Asian/Pacific American	23.7	24

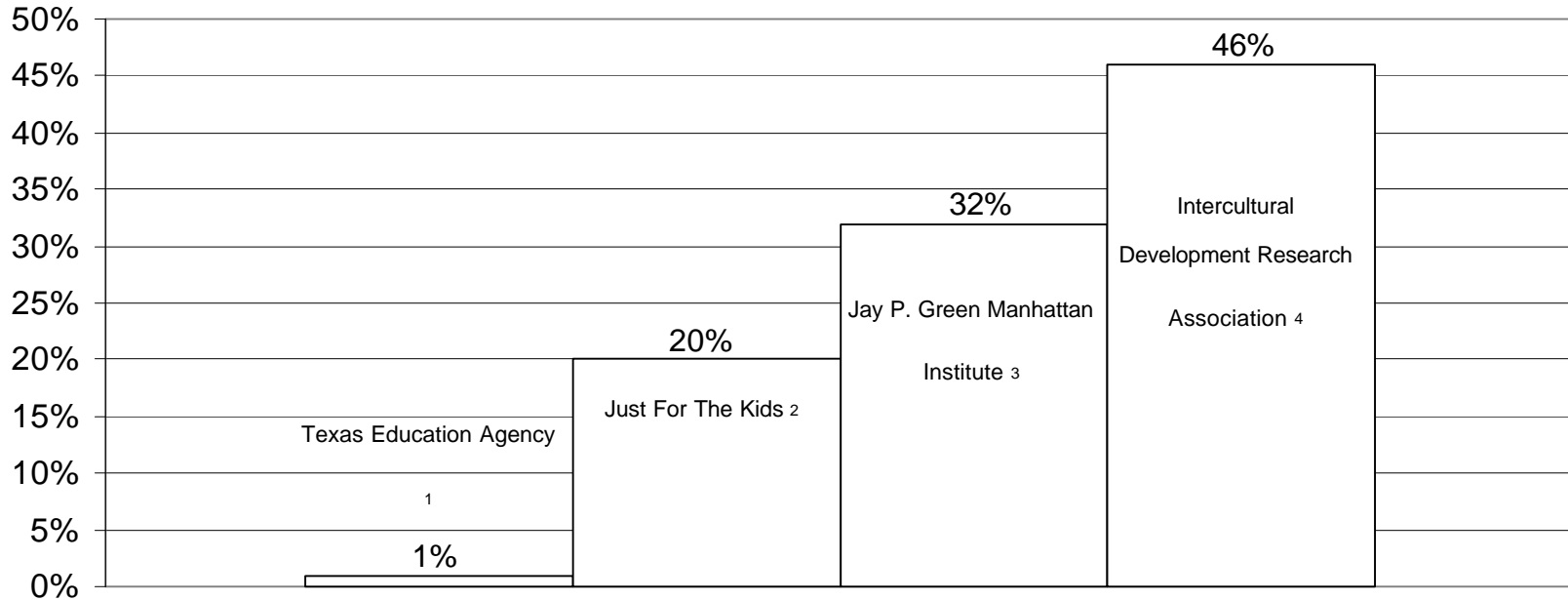# Graphic 8-g

Academic Inequities in Texas Public Schools Same High School Curriculum - Different Academic Proficiency

Y-axis: Percentage of Texas Public School Graduates Ready for College who Completed the Recommeded High School Program

- Black: 12.8%
- Hispanic: 16.7%
- White: 38.2%

Graphic 10-a

High School Dropout Rate Texas Public Schools

1. 2001 Graduating Class
2. 1999 Graduating Class
3. 1998 Graduating Class
4. 2000 Graduating Class

REAL WAGES & EDUCATION
1979 Through 1997

Education:	Wage Change:
High School Dropout	- 26 %
High School Diploma	- 12 %
Some College	- 9 %
College Degree	+ 13 %

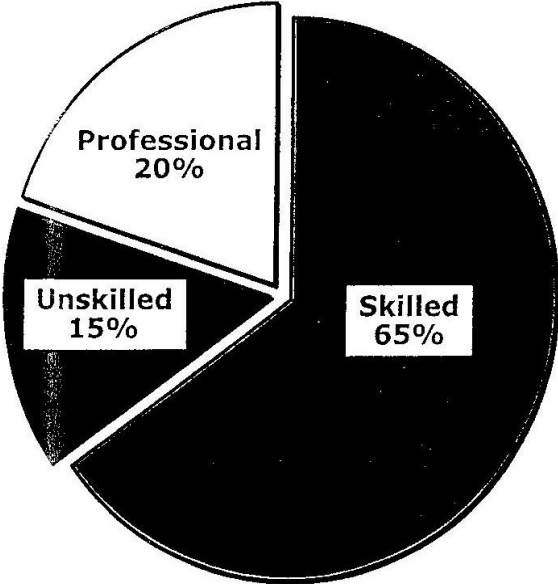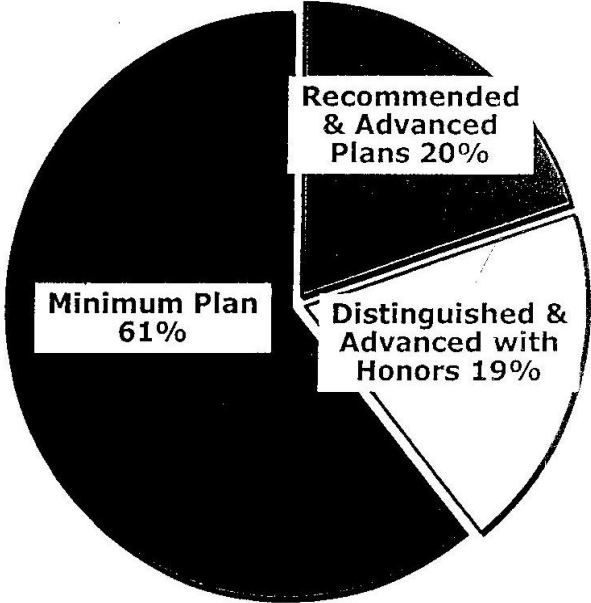Ruy Teixeira and Joel Rogers, *Why the Working Class Still Matters, 2000*

Graphic 13-b

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT IN TEXAS

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES
21ST CENTURY

Professional 20%

Unskilled 15%

Skilled 65%

STUDENTS IN GRADUATION PLANS
1996 TEXAS HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES

Recommended & Advanced Plans 20%

Minimum Plan 61%

Distinguished & Advanced with Honors 19%

Graphic 13-c

LOOMING CRISIS in HIGHER EDUCATION

➢ Only 4 other states bridge fewer students from high school to college

➢ Texas has the fifth lowest SAT scores in the nation

➢ College readiness is decreasing
  ❖ AT scores and number of test-takers have declined since 1995
  ❖ TASP test scores have declined since 1993

➢ Less than 1/3 students can pass college remedial courses

➢ Only 43 % college freshmen graduate in Texas compared with 66 % throughout the nation

➢ Texas has the 3rd lowest college graduation rate in the nation

➢ College completion rates are falling as Hispanic and African-American students become ethnic majorities

Graphic 15-a

SENATE BILL 4 – 1999

❖ Phases practice of social promotion out of public schools

❖ First Phase: 2003 – 3rd grade students must pass state reading assessments to qualify for promotion

❖ Second Phase: 2005 – 5th grade students must pass state reading & math assessments to qualify for promotion

❖ Third Phase: 2008 – 8th grade students must pass state reading & math assessments to qualify for promotion

❖ Exception – Students may be promoted without passing state assessments if (a) the parent requests promotion, (b) the teacher and principal agree to the request, and (c) the student is likely to meet requirements of the succeeding grade

❖ Schools must provide students with multiple opportunities to pass assessments before denying promotion

❖ Schools must provide academic remediation to failing students – Funds from the *Student Success Initiative* underwrite the cost of supplemental instruction

Graphic 15-b

Percentage of Students Enrolled in Texas' Three High School Academic Programs

Distinguished Program
1.20%

39%

Recommended Program

Minimum Program

60%
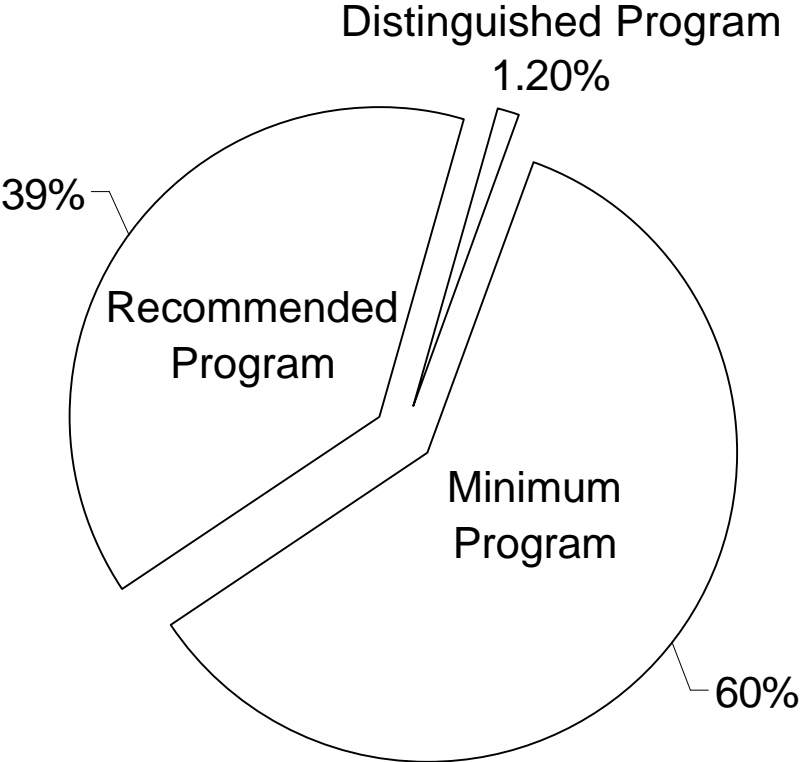
Graphic 15-c

> TEXAS PUBLIC SCHOOLS
> THREE HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION PROGRAMS

- Minimum High School Program - 22 credits, including
  - 3 credits in English (English I, II, III & IV)
  - 3 credits in Math (including Algebra I)
  - 2 credits in Science (one from Biology, Chemistry or Physics)
  - 3.5 credits in Social studies (selected from Economics and choice of World History, World Geography, U.S. History and U.S. Government)

- Recommended High School Program - 24 credits, including
  - 4 credits in English (English I, II, III & IV)
  - 3 credits in Math (Algebra I & II & Geometry)
  - 3 credits in Science (selected from Integrated Physics & Chemistry, Biology, Chemistry & Physics)
  - 4.5 credits in Social Studies (World History, World Geography, U.S. History, U. S. Government & Economics)
  - 2 credits in Foreign Language

- Distinguished Achievement Program – Same 24 credits and courses as the Recommended Program, but additionally includes
  - 3 credits in Foreign Language
  - Advanced measures such as passing Advanced Placement Tests, original research, and credits earned from college coursework.

Graphic 15-d

Texas Teacher Shortage
2001-2002 School Year

Bar chart titled "Texas Teacher Shortage 2001-2002 School Year". Y-axis labeled "Teachers Hired for 2001-2002" ranging from 0% to 45%. X-axis labeled "2001-2002".

- Elementary Bilingual/ESL: 40%
- Secondary Technology: 38%
- Secondary Bilingual/ESL: 35%
- Secondary Foreign Language: 35%
- Secondary Science: 29%
- New Teachers 2001: 25%
- Secondary Special Education: 21%