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RESULTS OF THE AISD H

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR THE CLASS OF 2008

Postsecondary Intentions

More than 90% of seniors reported plans to continue their education within a year of graduation; this was a significant increase over prior years. The percentage of seniors who said they intended to work part time also increased significantly.

The percentage of seniors who said they have no plans after graduation from high school has been steadily declining; only 2.4% of seniors in the Class of 2008 said they had no plans for the year following graduation, which represents a significant decrease from prior classes.

High School Experiences, Campus Climate, and Civic Engagement

Nearly 60% of graduating seniors reported participating in sports during high school; this was the highest participation rate for any type of extracurricular activity. On average, seniors spent more time per week participating in sports than in any other activity.

Approximately two-thirds of graduating seniors worked during the summer and/or during their senior year. Among those who were employed during the summer or the school year, the majority worked 16 or more hours per week.

Instruction and Technology

Graduating seniors rated the quality of instruction they received in mathematics, science, foreign language, and performing/fine arts less favorably than did seniors in the Class of 2007. The seniors in the Class of 2008 rated the quality of instruction received in social studies and computer/technology significantly higher than did seniors in the Class of 2007.

Compared with previous graduating classes, significantly more seniors in the Class of 2008 reported using a computer once a week or more at school. Also, seniors in the Class of 2008 were more likely than seniors in previous years to report using a computer to communicate with teachers and to participate in online communities (e.g., Facebook).

Postsecondary Preparation and Advising

Compared with previous graduating classes, more seniors in the Class of 2008 reported feeling well prepared to plan their high school course selections. Also, a higher percentage of seniors in the Class of 2008, compared with previous classes, reported they were well prepared to achieve their college and career goals.

Significantly more seniors in the Class of 2008 took active steps toward preparing to further their education than did seniors in prior years. Notably greater percentages of seniors in the Class of 2008 than in other classes reported the following:

- Visiting college campuses
- Attending college fairs
- Completing and submitting financial aid forms
- Completing and submitting scholarship applications
- Taking college entrance exams
- Taking test preparation classes
- Completing Austin Community College (ACC) courses
- Ordering and submitting transcripts

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Department of Program Evaluation
Austin Independent School District

INDIVIDUAL ITEM RESPONSES FOR ALL AISD HIGH SCHOOLS

OPEN-ENDED COMMENTS

The first item on the survey was open-ended so seniors had the opportunity to give feedback to district administrators before receiving any prompts or exposure to the broad themes within the survey. The responses below are to the question, "What is the ONE thing that you especially want the administration of AISD to know?"

Seventy percent (n = 2,232) of seniors provided comments⁴; 44% were negative, 14% were positive, and the rest were neutral or difficult to categorize as strictly negative or positive. Similar to open-ended comments from prior years, many seniors in 2008 complained about the dress code and lunch options (e.g., limited food choices, lack of healthy foods, and the desire to eat off-campus). Because of the district-wide implementation of high school redesign in the Fall of 2007, seniors in the Class of 2008 were the first group to provide widespread comments about new classes and programs (e.g., Advisory period and Community Seminar). Seniors frequently remarked on the physical environment of their school, available courses, and scheduling. Commonly identified themes expressed by the Class of 2008 are described in the following list.

Advisory Period and Community Seminar. Seniors' reports on Advisory period and Community Seminar were overwhelmingly negative. Seniors felt these classes distracted them from focusing on their coursework. One senior said, "*that this whole ADVISORY idea is not working;*" "*Advisory is completely pointless. It is a waste of class time and ruins that days schedule. For most seniors and juniors it is simply a thirty minute period to sneak off campus and go get coffee or food at Whataburger.*" Another said, "*Advisory was almost completely useless and a wasste of our school time as seniors.*" Yet another said, "*Community Seminar needs to be changed. It isn't helpful unless all seniors have access to computers/rooms. Some classes meet in hallways.*"

Building and physical environment. Many seniors criticized the condition of the bathrooms and other facilities, such as the hallways and gym. One senior said, "*I would want them to know that the restrooms are horrible. They are broke down and need to be fixed.*" Another said, "*Our bathrooms are not clean.*" Another said, "*that the bathrooms are disgusting and torn to pieces...it's embarrassing how much grafiti is in there and broken doors.*" Yet another said, "*THE RATS!!*"

then is currently mandated (more hours...in depth studies).” Yet another said, “The AISD curriculum should stop changing so frequently.”

POSTSECONDARY INTENTIONS AND FAMILY SUPPORT

**Table 2. Within a Year After Graduating from High School, What Do You Plan to Do?
 (Item 7)**

Plan	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008
Continue my education*	84.0%	89.0% ^á	92.2% ^á
Travel	13.1%	18.3% ^á	19.4%
Be a full-time parent	1.8%	2.2%	2.2%
Go into the military	3.4%	2.6%	2.8%
Work full time	12.3%	13.2%	13.8%
Work part time	30.5%	35.5% ^á	41.1% ^á
No plans	8.0%	5.6% ^â	2.4% ^â

Note. Respondents could select more than one option, so percentages do not total 100%.

* Item was recoded to match longitudinal data. In 2008, this involved two items: “Attend a school or college for a business, technical, trade, or vocational certificate” and “Attend a college or university for a degree.” The percentage represents seniors who chose either or both options.

**Table 3. If You Are Not Planning to Pursue Further Education at This Time,
 What Are Your Primary Reasons? (Item 8)**

Reason	
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HIGH SCHOOL EXPERIENCES, CAMPUS CLIMATE, AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Table 9. How Many Different High Schools Have You Attended? (Item 3)

# of schools	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008
1	73.9%	76.1% ^á	77.5%
2	17.5%	16.8%	16.8%
3 or more	8.6%	7.2% ^â	5.6% ^â

Table 11. Please Indicate the Number of Years of High School That You Have Been Employed (Either During the Year or During the Summer). (Item 21)

Years	2007-2008
0	24.1%
1	28.2%
2	26.1%
3	13.7%
4	7.5%

Note. This item was new in 2008.

Figure 2. Now Indicate the Number of Hours per Week That You Have Worked During Your Senior Year and Last Summer. (Item 22)

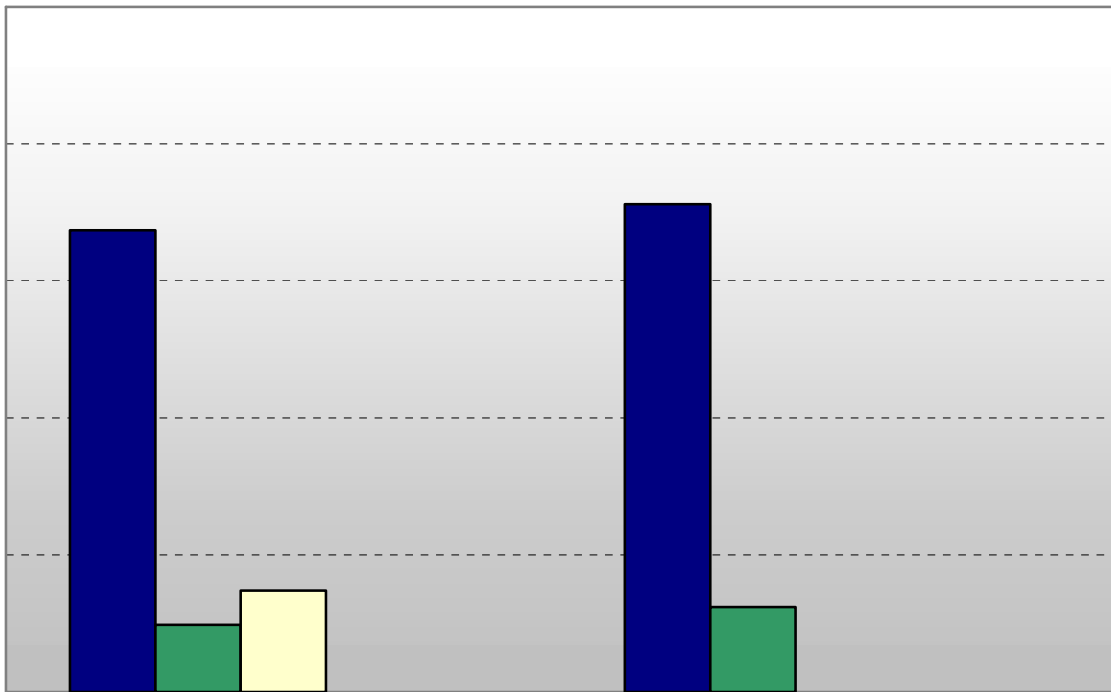


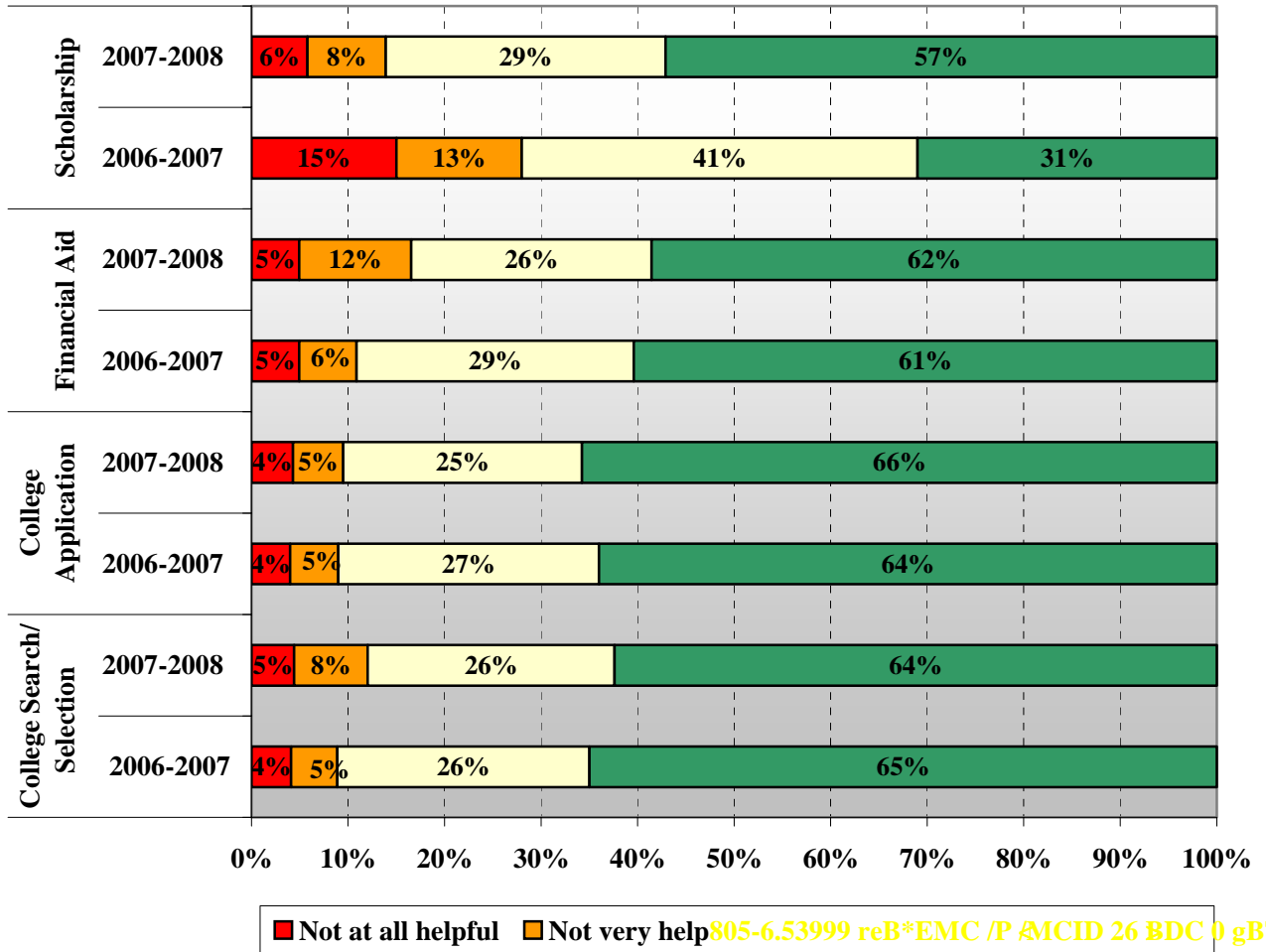
Table 12. Please Mark the Item That Best Indicates How You Feel: (Item 25a-k)

	2007-2008	
	All grades 9-11	All seniors
School climate		
I feel safe at my school	3.1	3.4
My classmates show respect to each other	2.9	2.9
The consequences for breaking school rules are the same for everyone	2.9	2.7
Adults at this school listen to senior ideas and opinions	2.8	2.8
There is at least one adult at my school who I can go to if I have a problem	3.2	3.3
My teachers are fair to everyone	2.8	2.9
Academic climate		
My homework helps me learn things I need to know.	2.9	2.9
I know how I am doing in school	3.2	3.4
My teachers expected me to do my best work.	3.5	3.6
My classes were rigorous and challenging	*	3.1
My high school coursework has been relevant to my life	*	2.7

**Table 20. How Did You Prepare for Continuing Education? (Check All That Apply)
(Items 32 & 35)**

Preparation	2006-
	2007

Figure 8. How Helpful Was Your Project ADVANCE Facilitator/College Advisor With the Following Processes? (Item 38)



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Figure 10. How Helpful Was Your School Counselor in the Following Types of Meetings?

**Table 23. For Which of the Following Issues Did You Meet With a School Counselor?
(Item 42)**

Issue	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008
Scheduling	81.5%	76.7% ^â	77.5%
Course selection & placement	60.1%	56.2% ^â	58.4%
Graduation plans	52.3%	53.0%	53.2%
4 year plan	21.5%	21.2%	26.4% ^á
Graduation credit verification	41.0%		

Table 24. How Important Is Each of the Following in Choosing a College? (Item 36)

Reason	Somewhat or Very important	
	2006-2007	2007-2008
College expenses	77.8%	91.7% á
Availability of financial aid	76.1%	90.1% á
Availability of specific courses or curriculum	81.6%	95.1% á
Reputation of the college in athletic programs	48.5%	61.4% á
Social life at the college	71.5%	86.4% á
Ability to live at home and attend college	49.9%	

Table 25. How Easy Has It Been for You and Your Parents to Understand the Process of Financial Aid? (Item 44)

Degree of ease	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008
Very easy	16.2%	18.1%	17.0%
Easy	29.2%	27.8%	21.2%
Somewhat easy, somewhat difficult	40.4%	40.1%	36.2%
Difficult	9.4%	8.7%	7.9%
Very difficult	4.8%	4.1%	3.9%
Did not apply for financial aid	*	*	13.9%

Note. This item was changed from that in previous years' surveys, which asked, "How easy has it been to understand the process of financial aid (whether or not you applied)?"

Table 26. How Do You Plan to Pay for Your Education After High School? (Item 45)

Means of payment	2007-08
Financial aid	57.1%
Scholarships	48.9%
Personal savings	36.0%
Family savings	45.8%
Family members will take loans	13.5%
I will take loans	28.0%
Grants	26.7%
Working during the school year	42.3%
Working during summer	45.4%
Work-study programs on campus	19.0%
Don't know/unsure	14.8%

Note. Respondents could select more than one option, so percentages do not total 100%. This item was new in 2008.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Figure 13. What Is the One Thing That Was Most Important to Keeping You Going Through School All the Way to Graduation? (Item 46)