

Pasadena, Texas



**Kirk Lewis**  
Superintendent

"Our relationship with the International Center, which began as a simple ninth grade initiative, now focuses on systemic instructional improvements and innovations from PreK-12. Pasadena ISD continues to show strong gains in academic achievement, reduced failure rates and improved student attendance...all with the intent of ensuring that more and more of our students are college and work ready graduates prepared and eager to take their place in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The professional development provided by the consultants and the abundance of resources available through the International Center and the Successful Practices Network contribute to the daily improvements we see in classroom teaching, differentiated instruction and the implementation of the Quadrant D lessons. With the International Center's help, we have added depth to our instructional program and built internal capacity to sustain and implement all we have learned."

## Mission Statement

The mission of the Pasadena Independent School District is to guarantee that all students will:

- Acquire knowledge
- Master skills
- Maximize their potential as responsible citizens in the ever-changing world of the 21<sup>st</sup> century

|                         |                                |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>62 schools:</b>      | <b>52,000 students:</b>        |
| 35 elementary schools   | 88% minority                   |
| 8 middle schools        | 75% economically disadvantaged |
| 10 intermediate schools | 7.8% special education         |
| 5 high schools          | 22 to 1 student/teacher ratio  |
| 4 alternative schools   |                                |

## CHALLENGE

With a widely held passion for school improvement and a true commitment to high levels of academic and lifelong success for each child, the Pasadena Independent School District sought to reinvent its high schools to meet the needs of 21<sup>st</sup> century learners. The district has now broadened the challenge to a PreK-12 reformation.

## SOLUTION

In partnership with the International Center for Leadership in Education, Pasadena began a multi-year project beginning with a thorough needs assessment, strategic planning, and clarification of its issues, expectations, and desired scope of work. A comprehensive and integrated implementation plan then guided the process of school reform.

Between 2003 and 2009, students in the Pasadena Independent School District experienced a 6% improvement in performance on the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) English Language Arts and an 7% increase on the Mathematics portion of TAKS.

# PROCESS

In partnership with the International Center, the Pasadena Independent School District developed a total district focus on providing a rigorous and relevant curriculum for all students.

Pasadena's Administrative Team and the district's Expectation Graduation Team used assessment data plus attendance and dropout rates to drive systemic change in the high schools. Data revealed a critical need for intervention at the 9<sup>th</sup> grade level. This intervention eventually led to a comprehensive overhaul of PreK-12 education based on the guidance of the International Center and its highly effective coaching and management of change process.

## 2004-05: A Year of Analysis

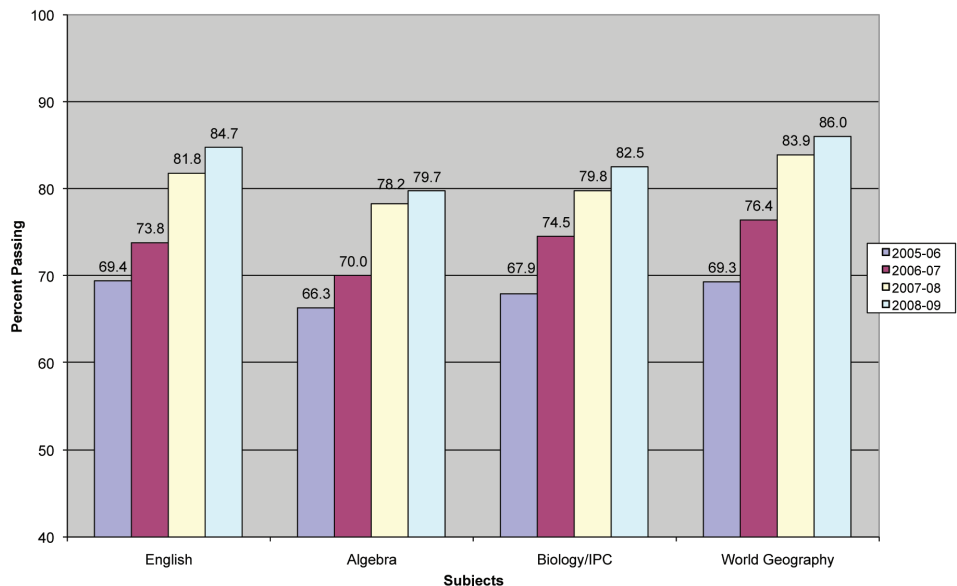
- The district spent one year studying the "why" of the need for change.
- Input was gathered from focus groups to establish a district-wide Expectation Graduation Team composed of representatives from all stakeholder groups.
- The Expectation Graduation Team analyzed survey results, focus group feedback, research on dropout initiatives, and the International Center's characteristics of successful high schools.
- High schools created their own Expectation Graduation Task Forces, which included the feeder middle school principals and had International Center consultant support.

## 2005-06: A Year of Development

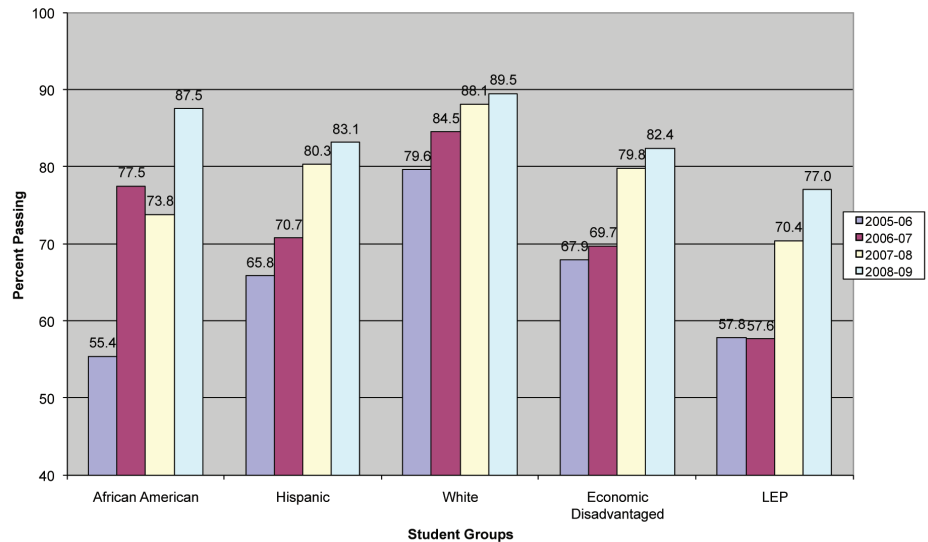
- Dr. Willard R. Daggett's keynote presentations to all district teachers and administrators established the need for change and set the stage for the creation of a shared vision about the competencies students will need to be successful after graduation.
- District leadership team developed a multi-year improvement plan with recommended processes for sustained improvement.
- Staff development was provided on the Rigor/Relevance Framework,<sup>®</sup> academic teaming for data-driven instruction, and differentiated literacy strategies.
- Teachers designed high rigor/high relevance Quadrant D lessons.
- All high schools became members of the Successful Practices Network.

Freshmen pass rates significantly increased.

### Freshmen Pass Rates by Core Subject



## ELA Pass Rates by Student Population



By setting high expectations, English pass rates increased across populations.

Pasadena credits the International Center for helping the district reach the next level of performance.

### 2006-07: A Year of Empowerment

- PreK-12 administrators participated in staff development on instructional leadership. An International Center consultant met with campus teams on a monthly basis to design, monitor, and evaluate progress.
- Dr. Daggett addressed all 9<sup>th</sup> grade students on preparing for their future.
- Academic teaming and advisory periods were initiated in grade 9.
- An early start date was implemented for all freshmen at the larger high schools. Spring visitation opportunities prior to enrollment were held for both students and parents.
- Based on a review of achievement data, each campus developed three research-based instructional practices, examples include cooperative grouping, note-taking skills, and questioning skills.
- A system to monitor the Expectation Graduation plans on a monthly basis was implemented.

### 2007-08: A Year of Expansion

- Laser-like focus was given to research-based practices and literacy improvement strategies based on the previous year's review of data.
- Administrators received walk-through classroom training.
- Academic teaming was expanded to grade 10.
- Data teams were established on each campus. Teams now regularly review and report on periodic student assessments, attendance, discipline, and stretch learning.
- Raymond J. McNulty addressed all district teachers and administrators on the impact of relationships.
- Teams of master teachers developed Quadrant D lessons.
- The International Center provided approximately 70 days of staff development.
- Planning began for the implementation of Career Academies in grades 11 and 12 for 2008-09.

More than 100 district administrators and teachers have attended the Model Schools Conference each year to draw inspiration from model schools.

Pasadena has made significant gains in state rankings. In 2008-09 18 schools were rated Exemplary and 18 were rated Recognized.

## 2008-09: A Year of Refinement

- Continued focus on research-based strategies with an emphasis on literacy — vocabulary development, critical reading/writing, writing to learn, and graphic organizers.
- Intense campus training by consultants in instructional strategy development, instructional delivery, gradual release model, walk-through data collection, and campus leadership.
- Careful monitoring of 9<sup>th</sup> grade students at the end of each grading period was implemented, with intensive individualized interventions and mandatory parent conferences to discuss engagement, behavior, and school attendance, plus individual contracts and improvement plans for all struggling students.
- Initial team trainings on the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) model in all five high school campuses as a means for engaging English-language learners in the regular classroom.
- Began the programming phase for implementation of Career Academies.

## 2009-10: A Year of Opportunity

The district began the year with a strategic planning process to set the course for continuous improvement. A core group of district, campus, and community leaders assembled in early fall. Teachers from across the district will join the team to develop strategies to address the action steps. The strategic plan will serve as a roadmap for the district and will be implemented over the next five years.

Other activities include:

- Instructional leadership training for all administrators and instructional specialists on differentiated instruction in all classrooms.
- Continued growth of the gradual release model.
- Developing Quadrant D moments.
- “Smart” classrooms will be defined and resources allocated.
- Embedding relevant technology into classroom instruction.
- Inclusion of the nationally recognized 16 Career Pathways for career and college planning.
- District benchmark tests rewritten for instructional specialists to do diagnostic assessments.
- Collaboration with local community colleges and universities to create a PreK-16 pathway.
- Continued expansion of the SIOP model on all high school campuses.

Contact us to discuss how we can assist you:



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