

# EISD Middle School Study 2002

## A presentation to the Program Committee of the Board of Trustees

4-7-04  
Board  
Study

### Purpose of study

It has been at least ten years since EISD performed a comprehensive middle school study, and there has been a substantial contribution to the body of literature regarding the middle school model in the past decade. The purpose of this study is to examine the current research, review the EISD middle school program in light of findings from the research, and make recommendations based on the results of the analysis.

### Participants

The base committee consists of representatives from both schools. There are a total of 18 committee members. The principals of both schools and the director of secondary curriculum and instruction will provide leadership for this study. Assistance will be sought from district directors in specific content areas – Ann Jinkins, Special Education; Paula Murray, Technology; Cynthia Schiebel, Counseling; Gloria Thomas, Gifted and Talented; and Sheila Douthit for general guidance.

### Methodology

What an EISD 8<sup>th</sup> grader should know in May, and what do we need to do to make this happen is the overarching question for the present study. Initially, the participants will analyze selected chapters from *Turning Points 2000: Educating Adolescents in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* in small groups. Each group will report findings from their section and respond to the following research questions.

- Summarize the chapter including the major recommendations for middle schools.
- Based on your reading, what strengths do you see in the Eanes middle schools?
- Based on your reading, what areas could be strengthened?
- What are the implications for further study?

The study committee will then refine the parameters of the research, which will lead to the discovery of data for further analysis and eventually a specific set of recommendations.

### Time line

The committee of the whole (all representatives) will meet in October, November, and December. Subcommittees, if they are formed, will meet at times agreeable to the group. A report with recommendations presented to the EISD Board of Trustees at their monthly meeting in December.

### Concerns

An overriding concern is the intersection of this study and the proposed budget calendar. We find that the time line of the study and the potential results may be in conflict with the proposed budget time line as it has been presented. Also, we do not want to commit the resources for this study if the results will be overridden by what seems to be a growing budget crisis.

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The Eanes ISD Board of Trustees received a proposal from the administration outlining a revised middle school program for the 2004/05 school year. The proposal was the culmination of a study regarding the middle school program, which started during the fall semester of the 2002/03 school year. The study included a broad investigation into best practices for middle school instruction and involved faculty and staff from both middle schools. The areas of focus in a preliminary report included such practices as academic teaming, the structure of the school day, courses offered as a part of the middle school program and the like. A follow-up investigation began this fall, which included visits to middle schools in Texas with similar characteristics such as community and student demographics, as well as student performance.

The update provide to the EISD Board of Trustees on December 17, 2003 proposes to restructure the school day for all students by moving from an eight to a seven period school day. The proposal heard by the board will add at least 10 minutes of daily instruction to each class period without lengthening the school day. This will be accomplished in 6<sup>th</sup> grade by restructuring the elective periods and in 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade by refining the language arts daily two period class to a single period of English.

A second change is the inclusion of a required semester of physical education for students at grades 7 and 8. Student enrolled in athletic periods will fulfill this new requirement. Recent research suggests students have a need for increased physical activity. The current middle school program encourages students to participate in physical activities through participation in team sports supported by the athletic program, and a few students elect to enroll in a PE class. The proposed plan should result in an increase of physical activity for all students.

Table one illustrates the proposed changes.

Table one: Proposed Middle School Schedule 2004-05

<u>6<sup>th</sup> Grade</u>	<u>7<sup>th</sup> Grade/8<sup>th</sup> Grade</u>
English	English
Reading	Math
Math	Science
Science	Social Studies
Social Studies	Elective
Fine Arts Elective (Band/Orchestra/Choir)	Elective
P.E./Exploratory Wheel A/B	Elective*
(Art/Drama/Computer) HCMS	*Required Reading
P.E./Computer A/B WRMS	<i>(students who lack proficiency)</i>
	*Semester of P.E. required each year
	<i>(if not taking Athletics)</i>

The proposal also includes a revised method for delivery of Gifted and Talented services, which is still under study at the current time.

Contacts for additional information:

Rick Bentley – Interim Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction

Dr. Cory Duty – Principal, Hill Country Middle School

Mrs. Terri Rodgers – Principal, West Ridge Middle School

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## Proposed Middle School Schedule 2004-2005

Based on a 7 period day—52-55 minute periods  
1 FTE=125 -135 students\*

\*Based on the assumption that fifth grade teachers serve 25-75 based on scheduling/high school teachers serve 130-150.

### 6<sup>th</sup> Grade

English  
Reading  
Math  
Science  
Social Studies  
Fine Arts Elective (Band/Orchestra/Choir)  
P.E./Exploratory Wheel A/B  
(Art/Drama/Computer) HCMS  
P.E./Computer A/B WRMS

### 7<sup>th</sup> Grade/8<sup>th</sup> Grade

English  
Math  
Science  
Social Studies  
Elective  
Elective  
Elective\*  
\*Required Reading  
(students who lack proficiency)  
\*Semester of P.E. required each year  
(if not taking Athletics)

***This represents a change from two periods to one period of language arts  
resulting in FTE reductions 2- 4 at each campus.***

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Gifted/Talented Services:

**6th Grade**

The Gifted and Talented (GT) Program for identified students in sixth grade is a pullout program that serves the needs of students with exceptional intellectual ability and high creativity. Students will be pulled from their reading classes once a week to participate in the GT Program.

**7th and 8th Grade (HCMS)**

Special classes offer identified students instruction in the disciplines of language arts, science, social studies, and/or math. These classes offer appropriately differentiated learning experiences and an advanced, enriched curriculum. For those students who wish to pursue further development of their creative talent, an elective course that utilizes differentiated curriculum will be available.

**7th and 8th Grade (WRMS)**

Students will be served by a GT specialist who will compact a core subject (language arts or social studies), allowing the equivalent of one day a week or more for direct GT services. Additionally, identified students will receive differentiated instruction in the disciplines of language arts, science, social studies, and/or math. For those students who wish to pursue further development of their creative talent, an elective course that utilizes differentiated curriculum will be available.

Electives-Full Year:

Foreign Language:

Latin (LE/AEP)                      Spanish (AEP)

Music/Fine Arts:

Concert II Band (LE/AEP)    Concert I Band (AEP)    Symphonic Band (AEP)  
*(instrumentation at 6<sup>th</sup> grade limits teacher ability to meet the 125-135 criteria)*

Advanced Orchestra (AEP)    Honors Orchestra (AEP)  
*(instrumentation at 6<sup>th</sup> grade can limit teacher ability to meet the 125-135 criteria)*

Concert Choir (AEP)            Treble Chorale (AEP)            Tenor/Bass Chorale (AEP)

Journalism:

Yearbook (AEP)

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**One Semester Electives:**

Fine Arts:

Art 2D (AEP)  
Art 3D (AEP)  
Theatre Arts (EP)  
Play Production (Semester or Full Year) (AEP)

Athletics:

(Fall/spring) (AEP) Boys Girls

High School Credit Courses:

Communication Applications (Speech) (AEP) (*High School Credit 8<sup>th</sup> only*)  
Health (AEP) (*High School Credit 8<sup>th</sup> only*)

Computer Courses:

Computer II (WRMS) (EP)  
Internet/Multimedia (HCMS) (EP)  
Web Design (EP)  
Photo Journalism (Newspaper-HCMS)(AEP)

Career Exploration Courses:

Construction Technology (HCMS) (LE/EP)  
Tech Systems (Industrial Technology) (EP/LE at WRMS)  
Teen Skills/Cougar Helpers (HCMS) (EP)

Electives designed to improve academic performance:

Reading Improvement (HCMS)  
Power Reading (WRMS)  
Novel Ideas (HCMS)  
Wilson  
TAKS Math  
(*All of the preceding courses are required by NCLB*)

New Courses:

G/T Elective (AEP) (One semester or full year) – new course

**Low enrollment=LE**

**Academic/Extracurricular Prep=AEP**

(Links to high school course offerings/extra curricular activities)

**Exploratory Prep=EP**

A part of the middle school program proposal for the 2004/05 school year includes a new course, Power Learning. The primary goal of the course will be to provide intensive and somewhat individualized instruction in reading and possibly math for those students that do not meet a predetermined level of proficiency on the TAKS tests. The stakes for students has increased with the implementation of more rigorous assessment standards, and we know that the same strategies we have used in the past may not have the same effect on student performance. This knowledge coupled with a change in the middle school program (7 period day, equal time schedule) requires the development and implementation of a revised program. Some knowledge of the test and the passing or Met Standard and Commended levels is necessary to understand how student performance on the TAKS is computed by the Texas Education Agency.

The Met Standard level on reading and math on the TAKS test is designed to be increased incrementally over a three-year period. Table 1 shows the phase-in for reading in grade 6. Students in 2002/04 had to achieve a scaled score of 1989, which equates to 50% of the answers correct to meet the Met Standard level. The phase-in process continues, in the current year students will have to achieve a scaled score of 2044, which equates to 57% and in 2004 students will have to achieve at the 2100 score to reach the Met Standard level. The Commended level remains constant during this time and students must achieve at the 2400 scaled score level or approximately 90% to reach this plane.

Table 1: Phase in data

<b>2 SEM - 03 passing</b>	<b>Reading 6</b>
Scaled Score	1989
Raw Score	21/42
Percent	50.00%
<b>2 SEM - 04 Passing</b>	
Scaled Score	2044
Raw Score	24/42
Percent	57.14%
<b>Panel Rec. - 05 Passing</b>	
Scaled Score	2100
Raw Score	27/42
Percent	64.29%
<b>Commended</b>	
Scaled Score	2400
Raw Score	38/42
Percent	90.48%

We would like to use a similar process to qualify students for the Power Learning class and work toward a higher standard over a two or three year period eventually using the Commended standard as the cut-off level. A brief analysis indicates that approximately 15% of our students would not meet an 80% standard and 30% would not meet a 90% standard and 60% not meet the Commended level using available data. Thus, we proposed using the 80% as the qualifying standard for 04/05 and 90% in for 05/06 and then the Commended level in 06/07. Certainly this is assuming that students will achieve at a higher level and student performance will increase over these three years.

Students will take Power Learning in lieu of a third elective during the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade years. We envision that some students may reach specific goals and standards during a semester and transition into a third elective during the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of a school year. However, this practice will be watched carefully to see if it is valid.

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The Power Learning class will be developed using current staff at each middle school and available research on best instructional practice. The curriculum will have an initial development phase in summer 2004 with ongoing assessment and development during the 2004/05 school year.

## A few thoughts on sorting and selecting

This AM I took a bit of time to do a brief examination of the possibility of using the TAKS Reading test for the measurement tool, but setting a higher standard as a way to determine placement into the new "Option" class. Here is what I discovered.

### Known info

1. The TAKS passing standard will increase this year and next and then stay the same for a bit.
2. The commended rate is fixed and will not move until the testing program is restructured (should be about 7 years until restructuring if we factor in the past history).

What would happen if we set a standard that was higher than passing, but lower than commended for the first year and then moved toward commended in year two or three?

Some things to chew on –

Table one shows the passing standard for 03/04 and the number of problems that a student has to answer correctly to meet the standard. Table two shows the same information with a passing standard at 80% and table three shows a standard at 90%. Table four shows what happens at the commended level.

Table 1: State passing standard

Test	Reading 6	Reading 7	Reading 8
State	57.1%	62.5%	64.6%
	24/42	30/48	31/48

Table 2: standard at 80%

Test	Reading 6	Reading 7	Reading 8
EISD 1- 80%	80.00%	80.00%	80.00%
	34/42	38/48	38/48

Table 3: standard at 90%

Test	Reading 6	Reading 7	Reading 8
EISD 2 – 90%	90.00%	90.00%	90.00%
	38/42	43/48	43/48

Table 4: commended standard

Test	Reading 6	Reading 7	Reading 8
Commended	90.0%	93.8%	93.8%
	38/42	45/48	45/48

It is clear that with each "cut line" the number of problems that has to be answered correctly is increased, which will have an effect on students in terms of placement.

Now, a question is how does this affect our students. Using the AEIS data and the TEA raw score conversion table to determine the correlation between the 80% and 90% cut line and the scaled score we are somewhat able to predict how many students would be placed in the Reading class.

Table five shows this picture.

Table 5:

		# of students in Reading class using TAKS passing standard	# of students in Reading class using 80%	# of students in Reading class using 90%	# of students in Reading class using Commended
Grade 6 Reading	All Students				
03/04 prediction	97		<2258	<2400	<2400
Number meeting	508	16	169	226	226
% of class		3.0%	32.2%	43.1%	43.1%
Grade 7 Reading	All Students				
03/04 prediction	98		<2175	<2310	<2400
Number meeting	516	11	84	158	311
% of class		2.0%	15.9%	29.9%	59.0%
Grade 8 Reading	All Students				
03/04 prediction	98		<2175	<2310	<2400
Number meeting	632	13	139	230	292
% of class		2.0%	21.0%	35.6%	45.2%

Pros

1. Students would take one test for the state assessment and we would use the data from the state to place.
2. No additional cost for a test and scoring

Cons

1. Results may come in too late to be useful in making the determination
2. Another test would provide a second source of data for analysis and potentially increase the validity and reliability of the decision to require a student to be in the class.

March 12, 2004

MEMO

TO: Dr. Nola Wellman, Superintendent

**DRAFT**

FROM: Rick Bentley, Interim Asst. Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction

RE: Latin at EISD Middle Schools

**Introduction**

One of the outcomes from the EISD Program Committee meeting held on February 24, 2004 was to assess the level of interest in Latin as course of study among the students that will start 7<sup>th</sup> grade in the fall of 2004. The present memo is designed to report on the results of the decision to seek more information.

The principals were directed to return to campus and gather these data in a manner that would be efficient and effective. A communication that went out on March 8, 2004 asked the principals to respond to four questions. They are:

- 1) The number of 6th graders that expressed interest in Latin as a class for 04/05?
- 2) The number of 7th graders that expressed interest in Latin for 04/05?
- 3) The process you used to answer question 1 (choice sheets, word of mouth, announcements, etc.)?
- 4) Your opinion regarding Latin as a program of study for 04/05 at your campus.

Their responses follow.

<b>Questions</b>	<b>Hill Country</b>	<b>West Ridge</b>
1) The number of 6th graders that expressed interest in Latin as a class for 04/05?	Seven students expressed a desire to take Latin, and one was interested in Latin as an alternative elective	Thirty-six students expressed a desire to take Latin. The principal reports that 24 of these students switched from Spanish to Latin when given the opportunity.
2) The number of 7th graders that expressed interest in Latin for 04/05? (These are students that have already had a year of Latin instruction).	Nineteen students have requested Latin as a course in 04/05	Forty-three students expressed an interest in Latin in 04/05.
3) The process you used to answer question 1 (choice sheets, word of mouth, announcements, etc.)?	Choice sheets, announcements in advisory and on e-mail, sent home in report card, and daily announcements after that to try to get forms turned in	Students were given flyers. We made announcements and placed information on the website. We hand-counted the requests.
4) Your opinion regarding Latin as a program of study for 04/05 at your campus.	The principal reports she sees the need for Latin for current 7 <sup>th</sup> grade students, but the data does not support a class at 7 <sup>th</sup> grade for 2004/05. What this will do is eliminate Latin at a course after the 2004/05 academic year.	The principal is conflicted about the future of Latin as a course of study. The struggle is wrapped in the cloak of reducing and the effect of accommodating the needs of a few over the needs of many.

Analysis

An analysis of the data is presented in table two.

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Table 2

Student Requests						
	7th Grade	8th Grade	Total			
HCMS	7	19	26			
WRMS	36	43	79			
Projected Sections using 27:1 student: teacher ratio						
	7th Grade	8th Grade	Projected FTEs (1 FTE = 5 sections)			
HCMS	0.26	0.70	.19			
WRMS	1.33	1.59	.59			
			.78			
Projected Sections using 28:1 student: teacher ratio						
	7th Grade	8th Grade	Projected FTEs (1 FTE = 5 sections)			
HCMS	0.25	0.68	.19			
WRMS	1.29	1.54	.56			
			.75			

These data suggest one teacher could provide Latin instruction at both campuses during the 04/05 academic year.

Conclusion

Latin as a course of study appears to be under the microscope at the present time due to economic reasons. Certainly the data in terms of student interest would suggest that we should seriously consider the option of continuing to offer Latin at West Ridge and phase out the course at Hill Country. The decision may be best in terms of the economic dimension. However, such a decision could have long term negative effects as we will be eliminating another program and reducing the opportunity for students, which is an important facet of the culture of Eanes ISD.