

**Testimony of Michael Hinojosa, Ed.D.**  
**Superintendent , Dallas Independent School District**  
**Before Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pension Committee**  
**April 29, 2010**

Good Morning Senator Harkin, Ranking Member Enzi, and Members of the Committee,

I am Michael Hinojosa, Superintendent of Schools for the Dallas Independent School District, Dallas, Texas. I have been superintendent in Dallas for five years and a superintendent in Texas for 15 years.

I appreciate this opportunity to discuss the critical area of Teaching and Learning for English Language Learners.

The Dallas ISD educates about 157,000 students of which 5,000 are homeless, 55,000 are English Language Learners, 87 percent are economically disadvantaged, 67 percent are Latino, 27 percent are African American, and 4 percent are white.

We are very proud in Dallas of improvements we have made in Teaching and Learning for our students. I would like to highlight a few of the improvements we have made to enhance the education of our English Language Learners. I also will mention some of the accolades we have received as a result of our work such as being cited by the Brookings Institution in 2008 which indicated that the Dallas ISD was the most improved urban school district in Texas and next to New Orleans, the second most improved urban district in America in closing the achievement gaps among student groups.

We are also proud to be one of four districts in a study by the Council of the Great City Schools for improving learning for ELL students along with St. Paul, New York City, and San Francisco.

The district has seen significant systemwide reform through an effort titled Dallas Achieves!, which included a specific curriculum in all subjects - what every student should know and be able to do in every subject. Dallas also implemented a districtwide dual language program for all elementary schools—both one-way and two-way dual language. The goal for all students in the program is to be academically literate in two languages.

We have also ensured that we have qualified teachers in every classroom by reducing vacancies from 1,000 to less than 25 classrooms (over a five-year period) with bilingual teachers qualified to serve student needs...traveled to Mexico, Puerto Rico, Spain, and South America; developed a grow our own program; and traveled the entire state to have enough qualified teachers for student needs

And to ensure quality teachers, we have more than 15 years of history with a value added (growth) model of measuring the effectiveness of teachers in student achievement gains

- Attached slides indicate that LEP students are outperforming state LEP students and in some instances other student groups and certain grade levels in certain subjects due to the strength of the dual language program

In reauthorization of ESEA, I would like the committee to consider the following key issues:

A growth model will level the playing field for all students...the premise of growth models is to take the students where they are and measure the growth of individuals. The bill should consider the fact that more than 50 percent of new arrivals enter secondary schools, many unschooled or under-schooled. There are special hardships for communities that have refugee centers.

Please also be reminded that academic language acquisition takes multiple years to accomplish. Students who are literate in one language can acquire literacy more readily in a second language. Schools should be given credit for students who have gained proficiency and literacy under their instructional program. Thus Limited English Proficient students should be part of a larger student group that includes English Language Learners.

We would like to see the bill retain current provisions regarding the allowable use of state assessments in the student's native language and would like to insert the requirement of consistency with the language of instruction.

Regarding assessments, the English Language Proficiency Assessment should be used, but not for accountability. Also required should be annual assessments in all domains to monitor progress after initial enrollment and at critical transition points. Codify current regulatory provision that recent immigrant students with limited English proficiency not be required to participate in ELA and math state assessment in their first year in the U.S.

District's should be given incentives to keep students in school who have not graduated in four years. Many immigrant students are over-age and under-credited and will count against the cohort graduation calculations. It should not be a disincentive for districts and schools to continue to educate students who will be counted as dropouts. Credit should be given for drop-ins.

Many districts rely on various formula title funds to support efforts for English Language Learners. If some of these funds become competitive, then there will be districts that by definition will be losing these funds to support these student groups.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.

# Dallas Independent School District





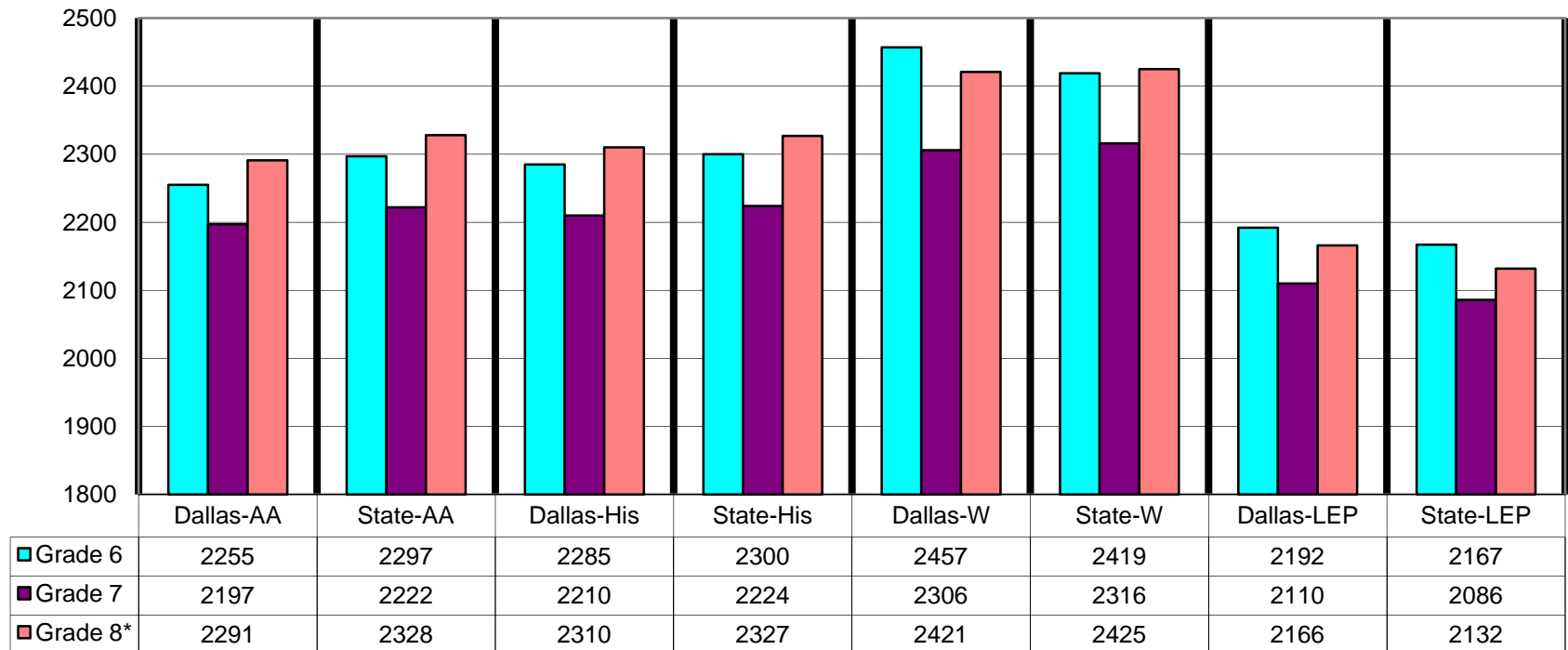
# State vs Dallas ISD Average Scale Scores

## State and Dallas ISD Reading TAKS Average Scale Score by Student Group, Grade 3-5



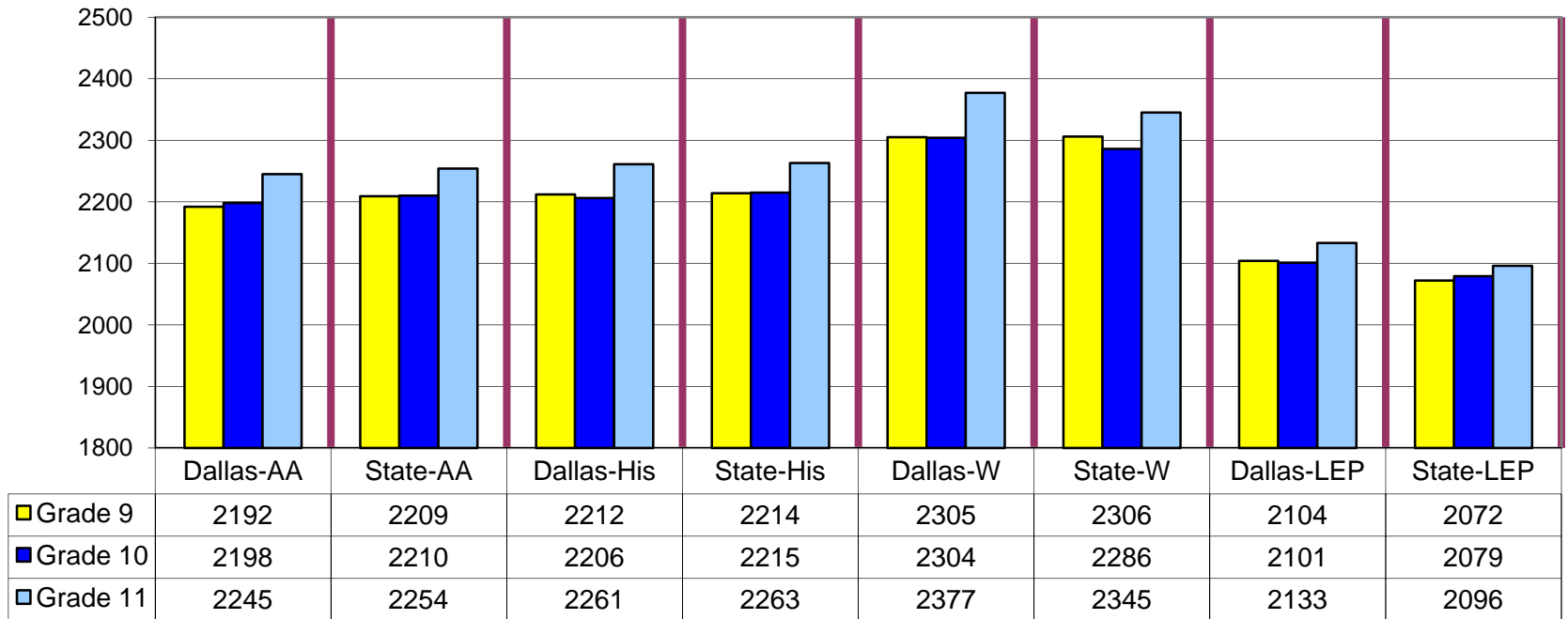
\*Scale score averages are from first administration.

## State and Dallas ISD Reading TAKS Average Scale Score by Student Group, Grade 6-8

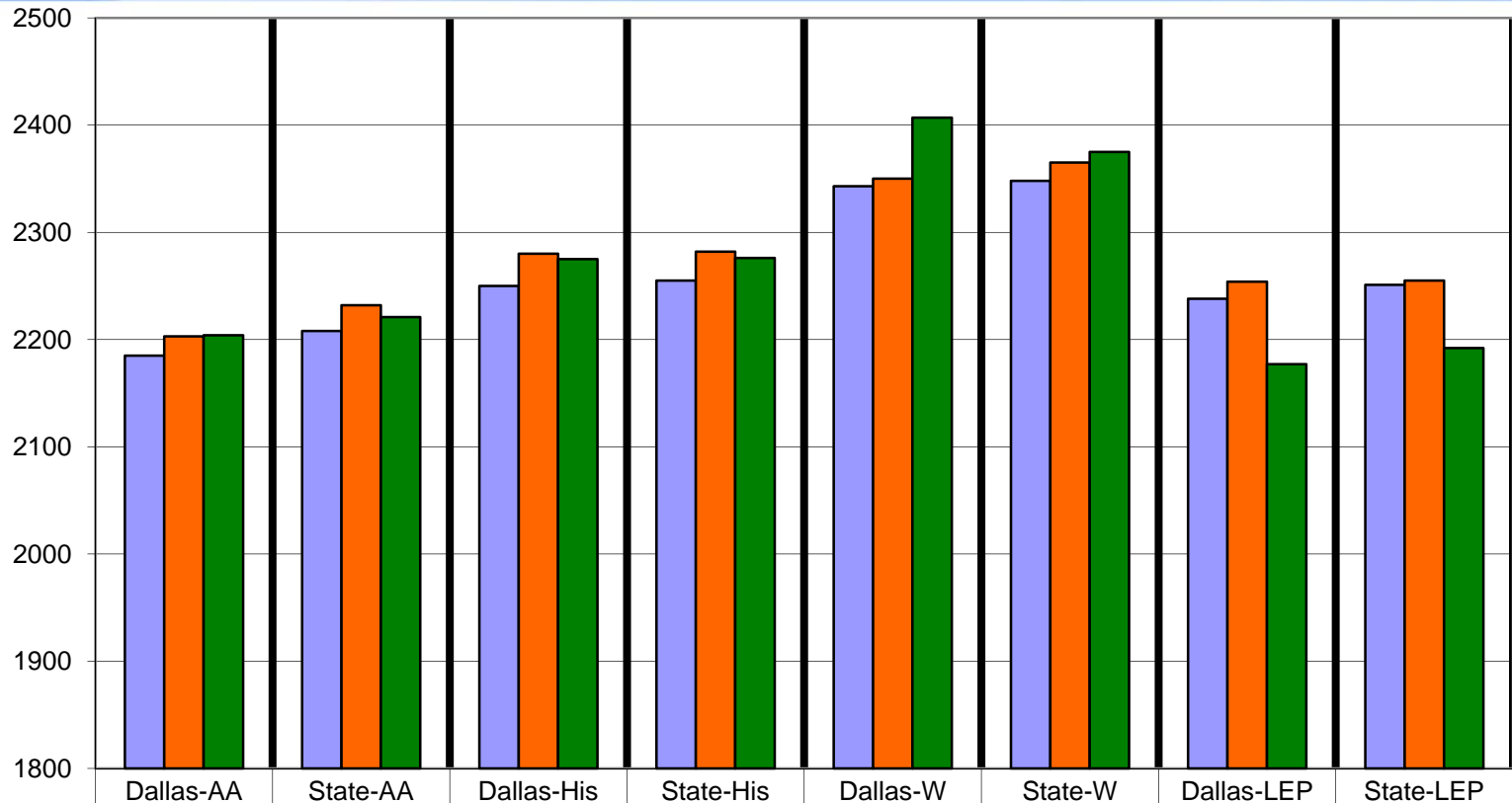


\*Scale score averages are from first administration.

## State and Dallas ISD TAKS Reading Average Scale Score by Student Group, Grades 9-11



## State and Dallas ISD Mathematics TAKS Average Scale Score by Student Group, Grade 3-5

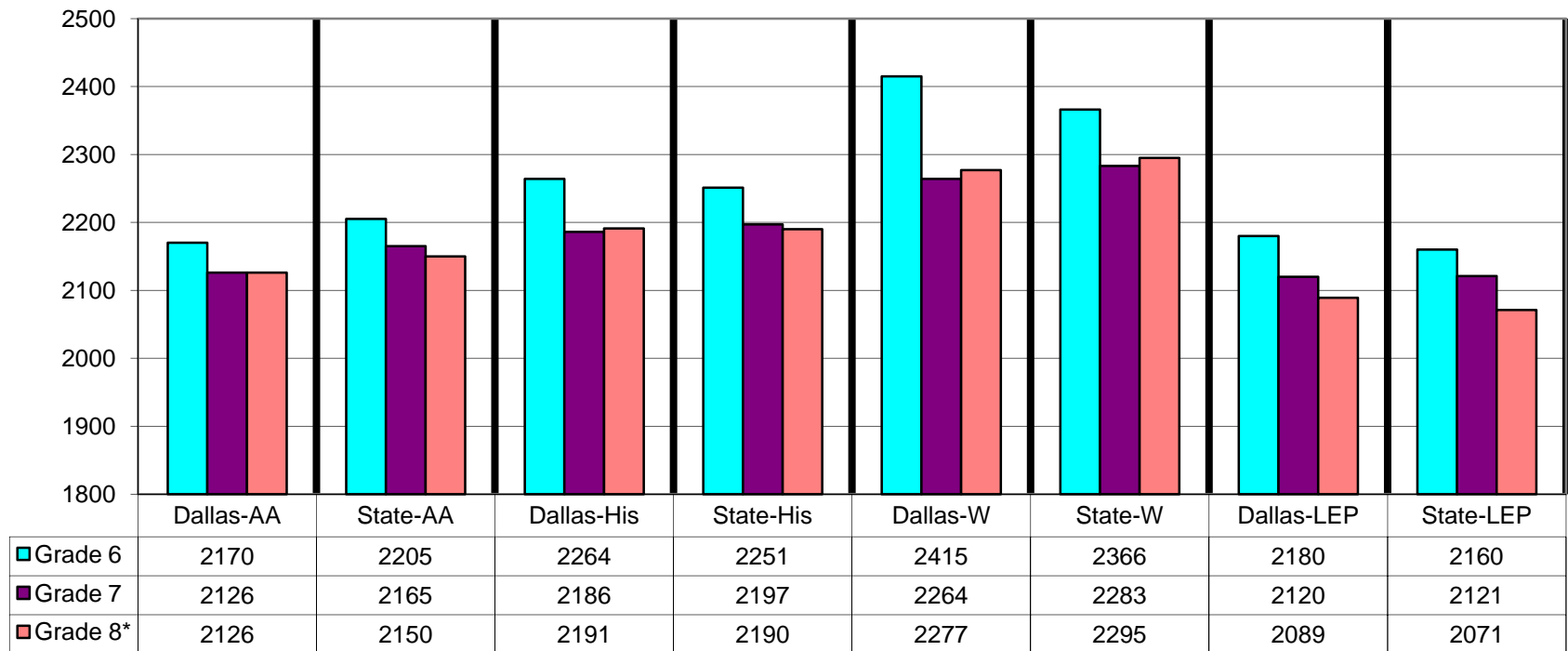


Grade 3	2185	2208	2250	2255	2343	2348	2238	2251
Grade 4	2203	2232	2280	2282	2350	2365	2254	2255
Grade 5*	2204	2221	2275	2276	2407	2375	2177	2192

\*Scale score averages are from first administration.

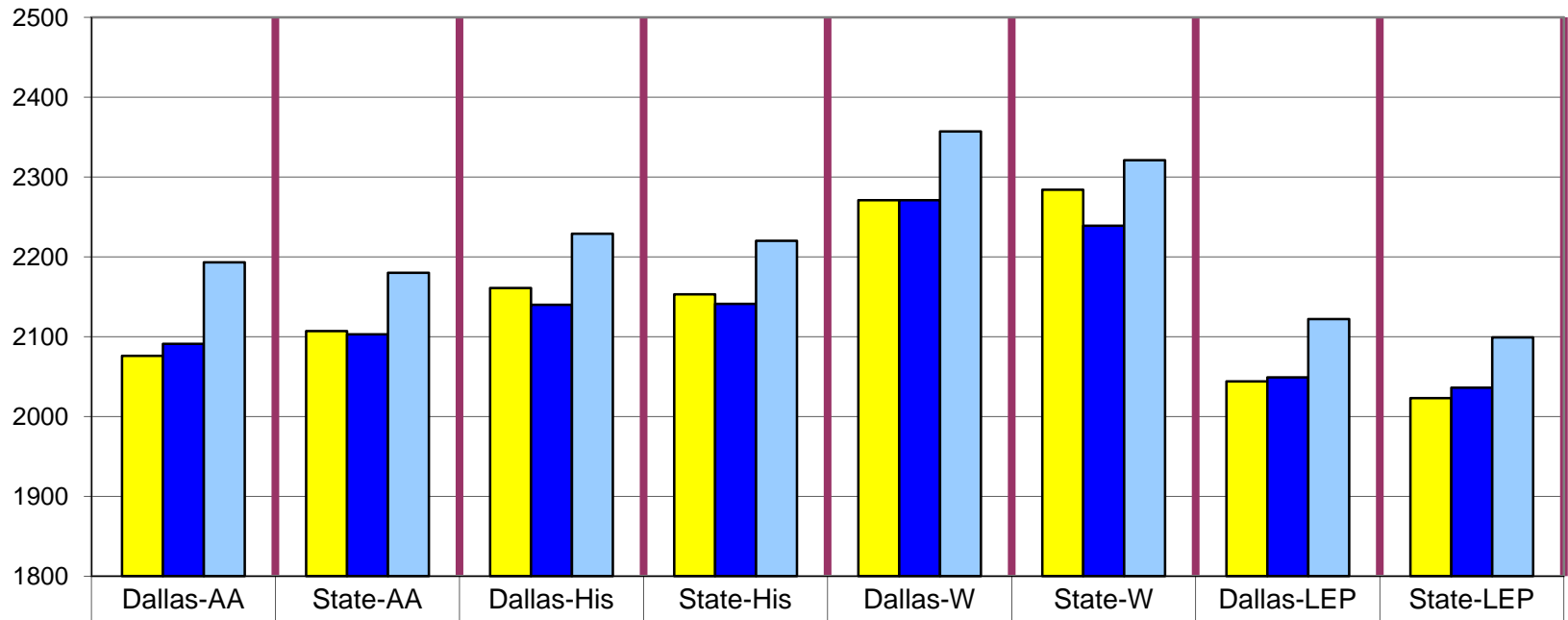


## State and Dallas ISD Mathematics TAKS Average Scale Score by Student Group, Grade 6-8



\*Scale score averages are from first administration.

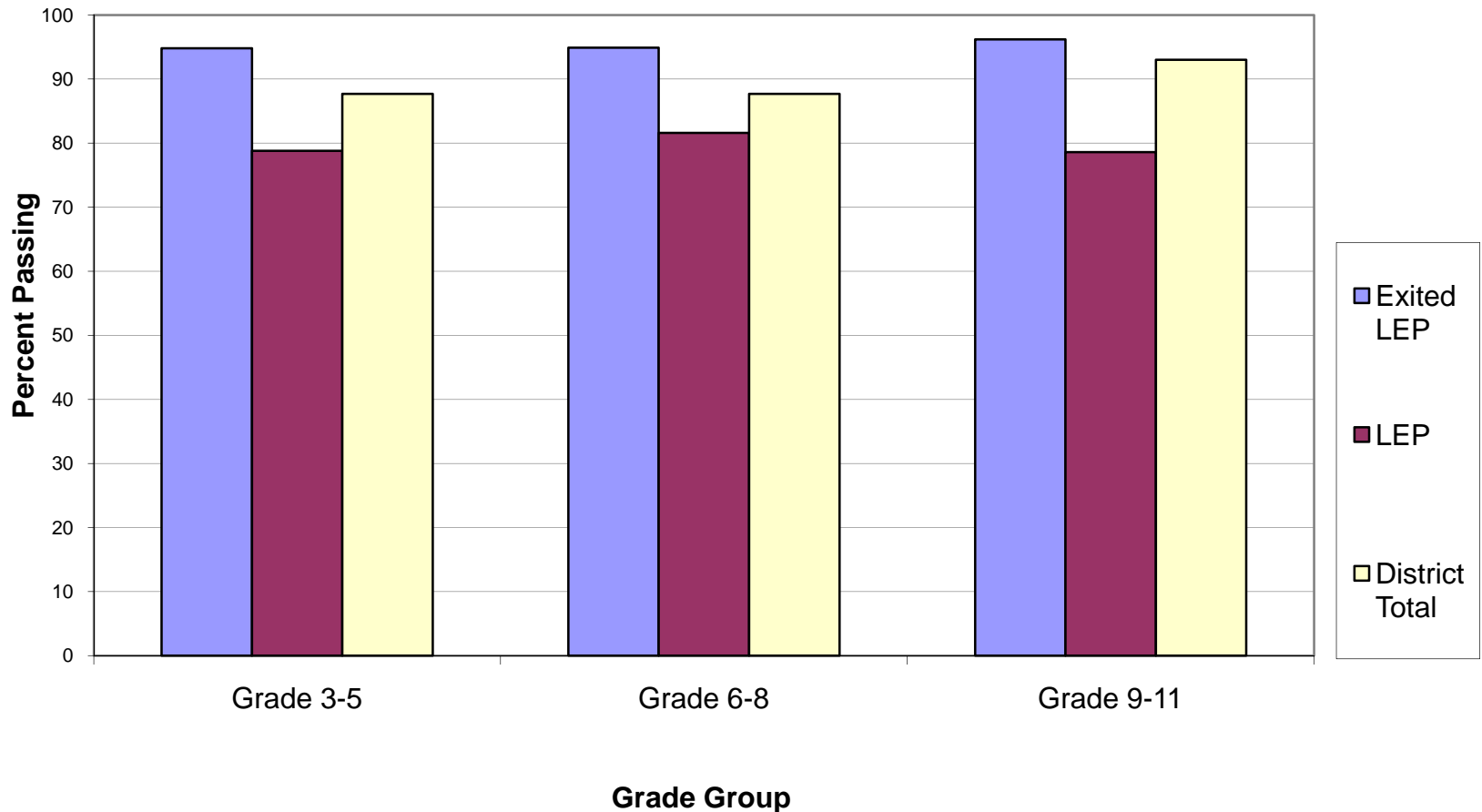
## State and Dallas ISD TAKS Mathematics Average Scale Score by Student Group, Grades 9-11



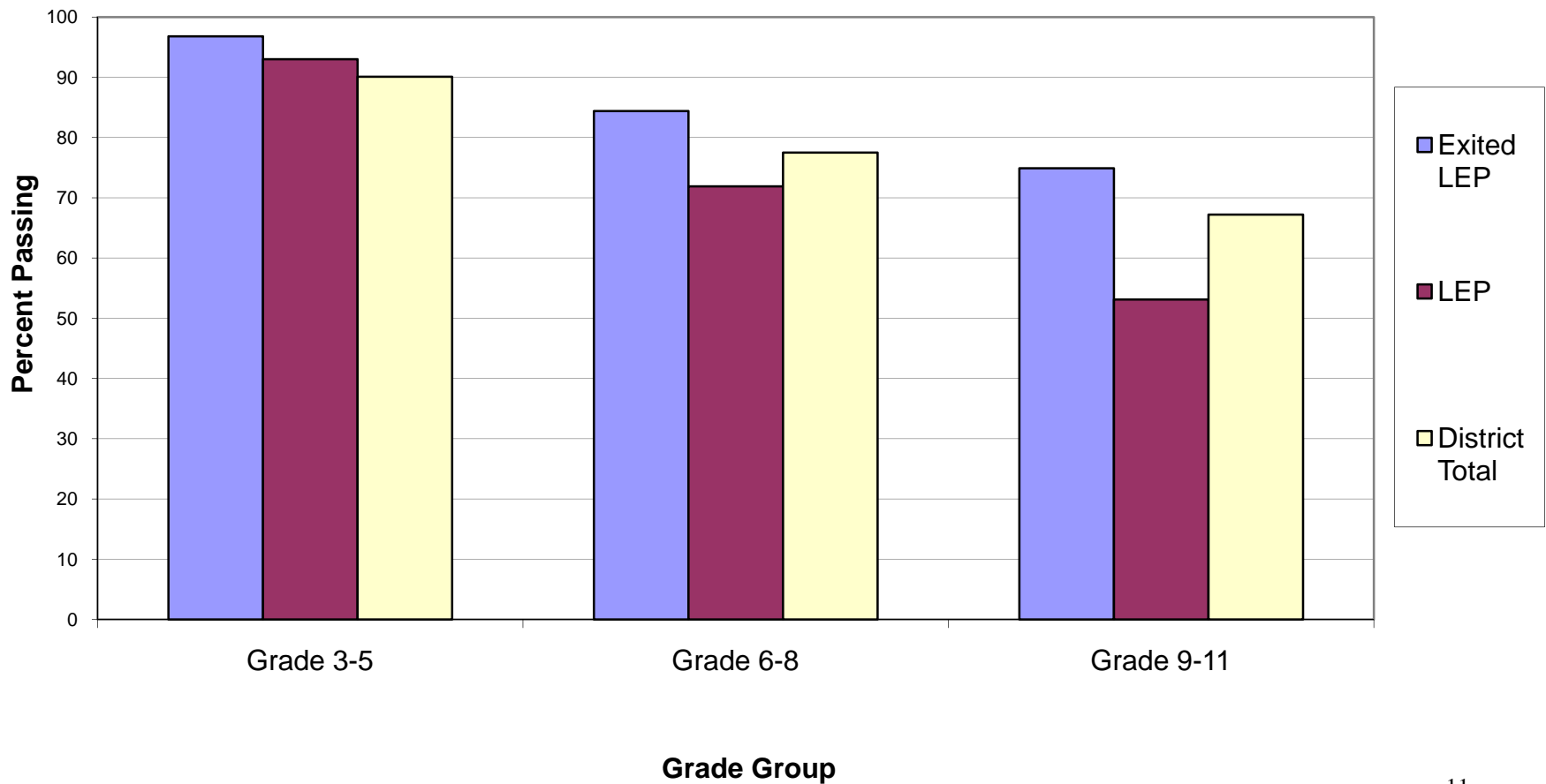
Grade 9	2076	2107	2161	2153	2271	2284	2044	2023
Grade 10	2091	2103	2140	2141	2271	2239	2049	2036
Grade 11	2193	2180	2229	2220	2357	2321	2122	2099

# 2009 TAKS Percent Passing by LEP Status, District Total, and Grade Grouping

## Percent of Grades 3-5, 6-8 and 9-11 Students Passing English TAKS Reading by LEP Status and Grade Group, Spring 2009



## Percent of Grades 3-5, 6-8 and 9-11 Students Passing English TAKS Mathematics by LEP Status and Grade Group, Spring 2009



**Dallas  
Independent  
School  
District**

