

DISD RATINGS

Dallas ISD issued a list of schools Thursday that it believes will be in the top two tiers of state rankings based on 2008 TAKS scores. If the Texas Education Agency confirms the analysis, the 2008 rankings will become symbols of progress for the Dallas school system.

EXEMPLARY

Science and Engineering Magnet
Business Magnet
Irma Rangel Young Women's Academy
Health Professions Magnet
Government and Law Magnet
Talented and Gifted Magnet
William B. Travis Academy
Dallas Environmental Science Academy
George Bannerman Dealey (Middle School)
James B. Bonham
George Bannerman Dealey (Elementary)
Julia C. Frazier
Victor Hexter
Stonewall Jackson
Sidney Lanier
William Lipscomb
B.H. Macon
Ben Milam
George Peabody
Harry Stone Montessori
William B. Tavis Vanguard (Elementary)
J.P. Starks

Education & Social Services Magnet
Everette Lee DeGolyer
Alex Sanger
Walnut Hill

RECOGNIZED

Booker T. Washington High School
for the Performing and Visual Arts
W.E. Greiner
Harry Stone Montessori
Longfellow Academy
Early College
Middle College
John Quincy Adams
Arcadia Park
James Bowie
John Neely Bryan
F.P. Caillet
Casa View
City Park
Martin Luther King Jr.
Leila P. Cowart
B.F. Darrell
Julius Dorsey
Paul L. Dunbar
Jill Stone

James W. Fannin
Tom W. Field
Stephen C. Foster
N.W. Harllee
James Stephen Hogg
Lida Hooe
Sam Houston
Edwin J. Kiest
Kleberg
Arthur Kramer
Lakewood
Jimmie Tyler Brashear
Lisbon
William Brown Miller
Mount Auburn
Elisha M. Pease
John F. Peeler
John J. Pershing
Preston Hollow
J.W. Ray
Charles Rice
Oran M. Roberts
Rosemont
H.S. Thompson
Phillis Wheatley
Winnetka
Harry C. Withers
Henry B. Gonzalez
Erasmus Seguin

Ronald McNair
Eladio Martinez
John F. Kennedy
Thomas Tolbert
Anne Frank
Highland Meadows
Felix Botello
William L. Cabell
Ignacio Zaragoza
John Ireland
Albert Sidney Johnston
Richard Lagow
Maple Lawn
Martha Turner Reilly
Reinhardt
Ascher Silberstein
Nathan Adams
Arturo Salazar
Whitney M. Young
Arlington Park
Mary McLeod Bethune
Louise Wolff Kahn
Celestino M. Soto
Gabe P. Allen
Robert E. Lee
Clinton P. Russell
Edna Rowe
Esperanza Medrano

Dallas ISD expects better state rankings for schools

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By TAWNELL D. HOBBS / The Dallas Morning News

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The Dallas school district says that the number of exemplary or recognized schools will probably double – to about 100 – and that fewer schools are expected to be ranked unacceptable this year.

DISD made the announcement in a late afternoon news release Thursday, saying that the accomplishment is "truly a milestone." But the release stressed that the district's analysis, based on recent TAKS test scores, is preliminary.

"The preliminary figures indicate that the number of exemplary schools in Dallas has quadrupled since 2005," Superintendent Michael Hinojosa said in the news release. "At the same time, we have doubled the number of recognized schools."

But Dr. Hinojosa said there's still work to be done.

The district expects to have 20 schools that are academically unacceptable – the lowest state ranking. The number was 26 schools last year.

However, the decrease doesn't take into consideration completion – the number of students who graduate in four years – and dropout rates. District officials say the number of academically unacceptable schools may increase because of those factors.

The state has adopted a new dropout definition that is stricter. For instance, students who fail TAKS exit exams count as dropouts now – they didn't before. The same goes for students sent to alternative programs.

DISD expects the number of exemplary schools to increase from 14 to as many as 26, with the number of recognized schools going from 36 to 76.

The TAKS, or Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills, is the high-stakes standardized test by which Texas measures academic progress in its public schools.

DISD students scored higher in every subject on the TAKS test except for writing, district officials said. The percentage of students passing the reading exam went up in every grade – with eighth-graders making the biggest gain, officials said.

School board President Jack Lowe applauded the results.

"This shows that what Michael [Hinojosa] and his gang are doing is paying off," Mr. Lowe said. "I think we can expect to see similar gains in future years."

Mr. Lowe tempered his comments, however, by saying that merely passing the TAKS isn't a huge academic accomplishment.

"It indicates that we're making progress, but to pass the TAKS doesn't indicate that a student is college- or workforce-ready," he said.

Staff writers Holly Hacker and Kent Fischer contributed to this report.