



# **Amarillo Independent School District**

## **A REVIEW OF THE STUDENT BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT SYSTEM**

**Conducted by MGT of America, Inc.  
for the Legislative Budget Board**

**January 2011**



## LEGISLATIVE BUDGET BOARD

Robert E. Johnson Bldg.  
1501 N. Congress Ave. - 5th Floor  
Austin, TX 78701

512/463-1200  
Fax: 512/475-2902  
<http://www.lbb.state.tx.us>

January 20, 2011

Superintendent Rod Schroder  
Amarillo Independent School District

Dear Superintendent Schroder:

The attached report reviews the management and performance of the Amarillo Independent School District's (Amarillo ISD) student behavior management system.

The report's recommendations will help Amarillo ISD improve its overall performance as it manages student behavioral related issues. The report also highlights model practices and programs being implemented in Amarillo ISD to manage student behavior.

The Legislative Budget Board engaged MGT of America, Inc. to conduct and produce this review, with LBB staff working in a contract oversight role.

The report is available on the LBB website at <http://www.lbb.state.tx.us>.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John O'Brien", written over a horizontal line.

John O'Brien  
Director  
Legislative Budget Board

cc:

Anette Carlisle  
Jim Austin  
James Allen  
John Ben Blanchard  
Mary Faulkner  
Linda Pitner  
Jack Thompson



# AMARILLO INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

## A REVIEW OF THE STUDENT BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Amarillo Independent School District (ISD) is located in the Texas Panhandle, and its boundaries encompass parts of Potter and Randall Counties. The district is surrounded by four other school districts: Bushland ISD, River Road ISD, Highland Park ISD, and Canyon ISD.

Amarillo ISD's 30,647 students attend 54 campuses that include:

- four high schools;
- nine middle schools;
- one sixth-grade campus;
- thirty-six elementary schools;
- two magnet academies;
- one disciplinary alternative school; and
- one early childhood academy.

In school year 2008–09, 28 of the district's schools were rated as Exemplary by the Texas Education Agency (TEA), and the district's overall rating was Academically Acceptable.

**Exhibit 1** shows that Amarillo ISD's student population is primarily White (43.0 percent) or Hispanic (41.8 percent).

African Americans represent 11.3 percent of the student population, followed by Asian/Pacific Islanders at 3.6 percent, and Native Americans at 0.3 percent. Amarillo ISD's student ethnicity somewhat mirrors that of all students statewide, with a slightly lower African American population (14.2 percent of the 11.3 percent in Amarillo ISD compared to the state population is African American) and a higher White population (34 percent of the state population is White).

Of the total number of Amarillo ISD students, 61.4 percent were classified as economically disadvantaged, 11.8 percent were considered Limited English Proficient (LEP), and 49 percent were considered at-risk. In school year 2007–08, 685 of Amarillo ISD's students received disciplinary placements (2.1 percent).

Compared to statewide totals, Amarillo ISD has more students that are economically disadvantaged (Amarillo ISD's 61.4 percent compared to the statewide percentage of 56.7). Amarillo ISD has 11.8 percent LEP students, fewer than the statewide percentage of almost 17. The percentage of students identified as at-risk and the number of disciplinary placements in Amarillo ISD are similar to statewide numbers. For example, in school year 2007–08, the percentage of at-

**EXHIBIT 1**  
**AMARILLO ISD**  
**STUDENT INFORMATION COMPARED TO STATEWIDE TOTALS**  
**SCHOOL YEAR 2008–09**

	AISD		STATE	
	COUNT	%	COUNT	%
<b>Total students</b>	30,647	n/a	4,728,204	n/a
<b>African American</b>	3,475	11.3%	669,371	14.2%
<b>Hispanic</b>	12,806	41.8%	2,264,367	47.9%
<b>White</b>	13,181	43.0%	1,608,515	34.0%
<b>Native American</b>	93	0.3%	16,649	0.4%
<b>Asian/Pacific Islander</b>	1,092	3.6%	169,302	3.6%
<b>Economically disadvantaged</b>	18,820	61.4%	2,681,474	56.7%
<b>Limited English Proficient</b>	3,624	11.8%	799,801	16.9%
<b>Disciplinary Placements (2007–08)</b>	685	2.1%	103,727	2.2%
<b>At-risk</b>	15,015	49.0%	2,285,954	48.3%

Note: The enrollment numbers cited in this exhibit may differ from those cited in subsequent exhibits due to the differing collection and reporting process of the Texas Education Agency.

SOURCES: Texas Education Agency, Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS).

risk students in Amarillo ISD was 49 percent compared to the state at 48.3 percent. The percentage of disciplinary placements in Amarillo ISD and statewide were both slightly about 2 percent.

The current Asian population in Amarillo ISD is in line with the rest of the state (3.6 percent of the total population for both the district and the state), the increases in the district have been dramatic. In school year 2007–08, Amarillo ISD’s Asian population was 2.9 percent. In school year 2008–09, the Asian population increased to 3.6 percent which represents a 25.5 percent increase.

In school year 2008–09, Amarillo ISD employed a total of 3,991 staff: 2,171 teachers, 377 professional support staff, 127 campus administrators, 21 central administrators, 388 educational aides, and 907 auxiliary staff.

For fiscal year 2008–09, Amarillo ISD had general fund expenditures of \$202 million, which is an increase of almost 0.7 percent from prior year expenditures. Expenditures from all fund sources amounted to \$250 million, an increase of 8.3 percent over the prior year.

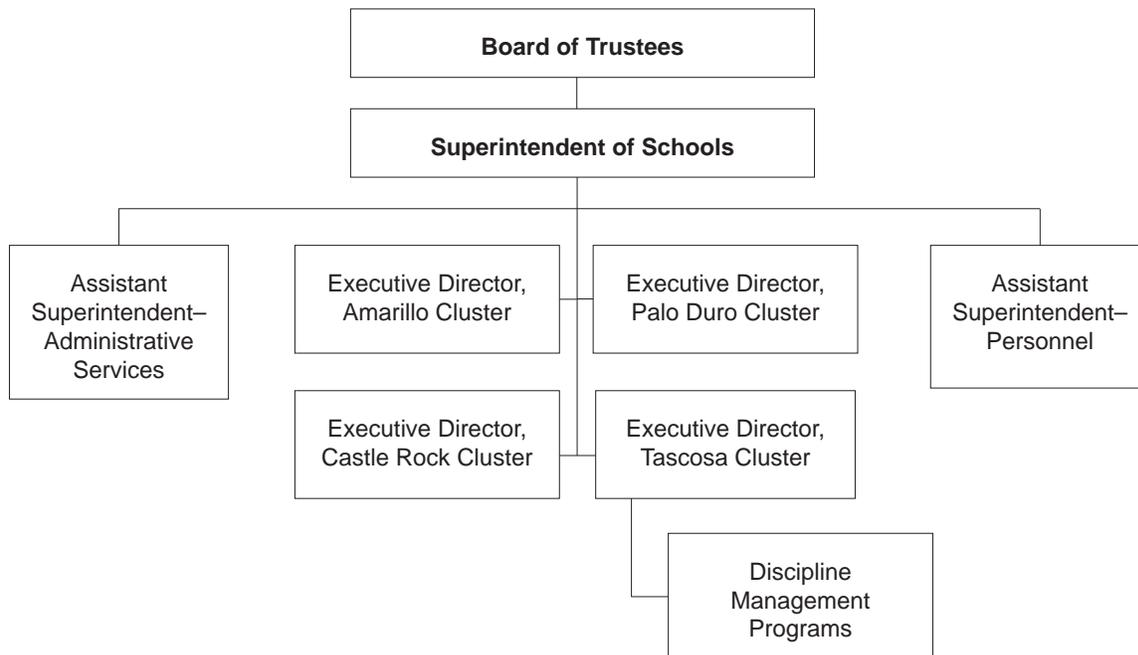
The majority of Amarillo ISD’s funding (51.1 percent) is from state sources, followed by 36.1 percent from local and

intermediate sources. Federal sources of funds for Amarillo ISD account for 12.8 percent of total funding.

**Exhibit 2** shows the district’s organization. The seven-member Amarillo ISD Board of Trustees has oversight of the district, and the superintendent of schools manages and serves as chief executive officer of the district. The superintendent’s cabinet includes the assistant superintendent of Administrative Services, the assistant superintendent of Personnel, and four executive directors. The district is divided geographically by feeder school clusters, with the four executive directors managing each of the individual clusters and their principals. Interviews with administrators reveal that this organizational structure limits the span of control between the superintendent and teachers to two organizational levels, the cabinet members and the principals.

Responsibility for discipline management falls to the executive director of the Tascosa Cluster, who reports directly to the superintendent. Interviews with administrators reveal that these responsibilities include the supervision of the four disciplinary alternative education programs (DAEP) and the district hearing officer. Individual principals and their designees are responsible for the in-school suspension (ISS) classrooms located at the middle and high school campuses.

**EXHIBIT 2  
AMARILLO ISD ORGANIZATION**



SOURCE: Amarillo ISD.

Disciplinary alternative education for Texas students can be implemented at the district or county level depending on the location of the school district. Because Amarillo ISD is located in Randall County, the district's students may be placed in the pre or post adjudication programs operated by the county. This report is organized based on these two divisions. The report provides a summary and description of accomplishments, findings, and recommendations for Amarillo ISD based on document reviews, interviews, focus groups, and site observations during the visit to the district, and an overview of the Randall County operated alternative education services.

District practices are compared to the National Alternative Education Association (NAEA) Exemplary Practices and Quality Indicators of Alternative Education. NAEA states that alternative education programs not observing best practices may, in effect, operate as “dumping grounds” for students with behavior problems or who are perceived as difficult to educate. Students are typically transferred into such schools involuntarily (perhaps as a “last chance”) before expulsion. The implementation of a design must reflect a genuine effort to keep students in school and to educate them in ways that are consistent with statewide academic standards.

## ACCOMPLISHMENT

- **Amarillo ISD has implemented a system-wide Positive Behavior System (PBS) to reduce behavior problems leading to office referrals and a high rate of referral to special education.** Amarillo ISD is in its third year of implementation of school-wide PBS, now referred to nationally as Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS). Staff within all schools have been trained on the system and are currently in the implementation stage. PBIS is described by the Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions (2003) as a systems approach for establishing a continuum of proactive, positive discipline procedures for all students, all staff members, and all settings which incorporates positive behavior interventions and supports. While Amarillo ISD is just completing its third year of its progressive implementation, there has been a significant decrease in campus level referrals to ISS since the program began. Administrators and teachers perceive the success of the program is driven by the superintendent's support and expectation that all staff embrace the system.

## FINDINGS

- **Amarillo ISD does not have written procedures for ISS classrooms.**
- **Amarillo ISD lacks a consistent training program for ISS staff.**
- **Amarillo ISD lacks a consistent transition process from alternative programs back to regular classrooms.**
- **Amarillo ISD lacks a formal evaluation of the components of the district discipline management system.**

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Recommendation 1: Create and adopt districtwide operation procedures for the ISS classrooms.** ISS is a regularly used placement in the district, but there are no written standard operating procedures (SOPs), which results in inconsistent implementation throughout the district.
- **Recommendation 2: Create a districtwide training program for ISS staff.** During interviews and focus groups it was revealed that the district does not provide targeted training for ISS assistants and, in some cases, staff are unaware of the major responsibilities listed on their job descriptions.
- **Recommendation 3: Develop districtwide written procedures for transitioning students from alternative settings back to the regular classroom.** Interviews and focus groups with administrators, counselors, and teachers reveal the lack of a consistent, clear transition process for students who are returning to their home campus from an alternative setting.
- **Recommendation 4: Develop a comprehensive districtwide evaluation design for all alternative placement options.** A review of district documents and interviews with district administrators revealed that there is no comprehensive districtwide evaluation design for the student behavior management components.

## DISTRICT STUDENT BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT INITIATIVES

Amarillo ISD has created a districtwide behavior model that combines Positive Behavior Support (PBS), Response to Intervention (RTI), and Professional Learning Communities (PLC) for student behavior management. PBS is in its third year of districtwide training and implementation. Staff at all schools have been trained and are currently implementing the model. The design has included generational, gender, and socio-economic/cultural awareness training. PBS provides the basis for Tier I of the RTI model to ensure district and campus-wide behavior consistency. In addition, the district has implemented PLCs as a communication mechanism for implementation of PBS and RTI to support appropriate behavior and learning on the campuses. There are PLCs at both central office and campus levels. Teams of administrators and teachers have been trained through the Richard Dufour seminars to use the four leading questions related to behavior and instruction:

- What do we expect students to learn?
- How will we teach?
- How will we know when they have learned it?
- If the student is still unsuccessful, is it because the student “can’t do” or “won’t do” it?

Administrators and teachers meet regularly in their PLCs to discuss these questions in relationship to individual instructional and behavioral techniques for groups and specific students. Conversations are documented and data driven. During these discussions, a decision may be made to refer a student to the campus Student Support Team (SST) for consideration of RTI Tier II placement/interventions.

Comments during interviews and focus groups reveal the perception that the success of the model’s implementation has been the superintendent’s support and expectation that all staff embrace PBS, RTI, and PLCs and have specific conversations about specific students. Staff believes that the model has decreased office referrals by requiring teachers to have reflective conversations about student behavior and classroom interventions which prevent students from being sent to the office and ultimately receiving negative disciplinary consequences.

The review team visited the Amarillo ISD central office and selected schools and held focus groups with central office administrators, principals, assistant principals, counselors, and teachers to gather their perspectives on student behavior

issues. The review team learned that individual campuses have some discretion in designing approaches to improve both instruction and student behavior. These efforts are designed to meet the needs of students and staff at the individual campus level. Some efforts include professional development activities for all campus educators, campus procedures to better define student actions necessitating intervention, and coaching and mentoring for teachers needing help in classroom management.

In addition to the districtwide behavior management model, Amarillo ISD follows the safety provisions required and/or allowed in Chapter 37 of the Texas Education Code (TEC). Those provisions include out-of-school suspension (OSS), ISS, and off-campus short- and long-term district DAEP. Amarillo ISD’s Discipline Management Plan identifies the following as standards for all student conduct:

- Demonstrate courtesy, even when others do not.
- Behave in a responsible manner, always exercising self-discipline.
- Attend all classes, regularly and on time. Prepare for each class; take appropriate materials and assignments to class.
- Meet district and campus standards of grooming and dress.
- Obey all campus and classroom rules.
- Respect the rights and privileges of students, teachers, and other district staff and volunteers.
- Cooperate with and assist the school staff in maintaining safety, order, and discipline.

It is the general intent of the school district that discipline will be designed to correct misconduct and to encourage all students to adhere to their responsibilities as citizens of the school community. Disciplinary action is intended to draw on the professional judgment of teachers and administrators and on a range of district-published discipline management techniques. It is expected that a disciplinary action be correlated to the seriousness of the offense, the student’s age and grade level, the frequency of misbehavior, the student’s attitude, the effect of the misconduct on the school environment, and statutory requirements. As a result of these factors, discipline for a particular offense (unless otherwise specified by law) may involve a variety of consequences in Amarillo ISD.

The discipline of students with disabilities is always subject to applicable state and federal law, as well as the district Student Code of Conduct. Amarillo ISD uses the following steps to determine discipline placement for students with disabilities:

- A manifestation determination review (MDR) is conducted by an Admission Review Dismissal (ARD) committee; the committee meets to determine if the behavior is related to a disability.
- The ARD committee reviews the behavior intervention plan (BIP) if one is in place, and develops one if one is not in place.
- The district hearing officer reviews the ARD committee decision and the MDR and makes a recommendation for alternative placement or expulsion.
- The ARD committee meets a second time to review the hearing officer's recommendations. The committee makes the final decision on the appropriateness of the placement.
- The student is ensured participation in the general curriculum and progression toward meeting the goals in the Individual Education Plan (IEP).
- The ARD committee reviews the modifications and accommodations to ensure implementation in the placement. The committee discusses and identifies related services which need to be provided during placement.
- A diagnostician ensures the BIP, modifications, and IEPs are taken to the placement.
- A behavior counselor provides services as needed during the placement.

Amarillo ISD's LOCAL Policy FO (Student Discipline) specifically identifies and defines five levels of student misconduct for which students are assigned disciplinary consequences. The level of misconduct determines a student's disciplinary placement. The five levels are:

- Level I: acts of misconduct include repeated infractions of classroom management procedures or rules, or other misconduct that disrupts the educational process to the extent that the classroom teacher needs administrative support to correct the problem.

- Level II: when a student's behavior does not change as a result of action taken at Level I, and the student is being seen for a second time in the principal's office for repeated Level I infractions.
- Level III: acts of misconduct include those student infractions that are somewhat more serious than those in Levels I and II in their effect on the orderly process of the school program.
- Level IV: offenses include those acts of misconduct that seriously affect other students, and perhaps violate the law.
- Level V: if a student commits any of the Level V offenses listed in the Student Code of Conduct while on school property or within 300 feet of school property, or while attending a school sponsored or school-related activity on or off school property, he or she shall be removed to a DAEP. A student shall be expelled from school for a period of time determined by the board or designee if the student, on school property or while attending a school-sponsored or school-related activity on or off school property uses, exhibits, or poses any of the items or commits any of the acts listed in the Student Code of Conduct under mandatory expulsion. If a student under the age of 10 engages in expellable conduct, the student must be placed in a DAEP.

**Exhibit 3** shows the student incidents for Amarillo ISD students in school year 2008–09. This table is compiled from data gathered through the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS). The table is divided between actions leading to ISS, OSS, and DAEP assignments for students and reports the number of students and the number of actions for each.

The most commonly committed offenses are for Amarillo ISD's student code of conduct violations. These violations can include anything from disregard of authority and mistreatment of others to misuse of computers and dress code violations. In school year 2008–09, the district assigned the following number of students to various placements for student code of conduct violations: 3,556 students to ISS; 1,482 students to OSS; and 432 students to DAEP. Fighting/mutual combat was the second-most prevalent reason students were disciplined. A total of 1,350 students were assigned either to ISS, OSS, or DAEP for engaging in 1,477 separate incidents of fighting. A total of 262 students were assigned to either OSS or DAEP for possession of controlled

**EXHIBIT 3  
AMARILLO ISD  
COUNTS OF STUDENTS AND ACTIONS BY DISCIPLINE ACTION GROUPS AND REASONS  
SCHOOL YEAR 2008–09**

DISCIPLINE REASON	ISS		OSS		DAEP	
	STUDENTS	ACTIONS	STUDENTS	ACTIONS	STUDENTS	ACTIONS
02-Conduct Punishable as a Felony	*	*	7	7	12	12
04-Controlled Substances/Drugs	*	*	126	134	136	150
05-Alcohol Violation	*	*	30	31	33	34
09-Title 5 Felony-Off Campus	*	*	6	6	10	10
12-Illegal Knife	*	*	*	*	5	7
14-Prohibited Weapon	0	0	6	6	6	7
20-Serious/Persistent Misconduct	11	12	159	338	9	9
21-Violated Local Code Of Conduct	3,556	7,911	1,482	2,522	432	535
26-Terroristic Threat	*	*	5	5	5	5
28-Assault-Nondistrict Employee	0	0	18	18	19	19
33-Tobacco	38	38	22	22	*	*
35-False Alarm/False Report	*	*	5	5	5	5
41-Fighting /Mutual Combat	600	653	636	701	114	123
50-Non-Illegal Knife	10	10	5	5	0	0

\*Numbers less than five have not been cited due to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) 34CFR Part 99.1 and Texas Education Agency procedure OP 10-03.

NOTE: A single student can have multiple records if removed from the classroom more than once and a single incident can result in multiple actions.

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, PEIMS.

substances/drugs. The district also had 179 students assigned to ISS, OSS, or DAEP for serious/persistent misconduct.

**Exhibits 4 and 5** show Amarillo ISD’s discipline actions that resulted in ISS, OSS, and DAEP assignments for school years 2007–08 and 2008–09, respectively. The percentages represent the percent of the total student population assigned to ISS, OSS, and DAEP.

The data is grouped by student ethnicity and gender, as well as student designation as special education, economically disadvantaged, and at-risk. Special education students are those identified as having a disability or special need as defined by federal law and are, therefore, eligible to receive special education services. Economically disadvantaged students are those identified as eligible for free or reduced-price lunches or for other public assistance. An at-risk student is identified as being at-risk of dropping out of school based on state-defined criteria. Some of the at-risk criteria include students who:

- did not advance from one grade to the next for one or more years;
- have not performed satisfactorily on assessment tests;

- are pregnant or are parents;
- have been placed in an alternative education setting during the preceding or current year;
- have been expelled from school;
- are on parole, probation, deferred prosecution, or other conditional release;
- have previously dropped out of school;
- have Limited English Proficient; and/or
- are homeless.

**Exhibits 4 and 5** also show the number of students assigned to ISS and to OSS, as well as the number of actions leading to such assignments, has decreased from school year 2007–08 to 2008–09 in spite of an overall enrollment increase of 1.6 percent for the same time period. The number of students assigned to DAEP and the number of students expelled from school has increased from school year 2007–08 to 2008–09. In school year 2007–08, 685 students, responsible for committing 857 violations, were given a

**EXHIBIT 4  
AMARILLO ISD  
COUNTS OF STUDENTS AND DISCIPLINE ACTIONS BY STUDENT GROUPS  
SCHOOL YEAR 2007–08**

STUDENT GROUP	ALL STUDENTS	AFRICAN AMERICAN	ASIAN	HISPANIC	NATIVE AMERICAN	WHITE	FEMALE	MALE	SPECIAL ED	ECO DIS	AT-RISK
<b>Total Students</b>	32,453	3,760	974	13,293	101	14,325	15,857	16,596	4,337	19,571	16,700
<b>ISS Actions</b>	9,230	2,095	97	4,294	15	2,729	2,743	6,487	2,427	7,277	7,347
<b>ISS Students</b>	4,152	913	48	1,905	13	1,273	1,351	2,801	930	3,121	3,121
<b>ISS Percent</b>	12.8%	24.3%	4.9%	14.3%	12.9%	8.9%	8.5%	16.9%	21.4%	15.9%	18.7%
<b>OSS Actions</b>	4,272	1,160	36	1,993	7	1,076	1,074	3,198	1,441	3,495	3,531
<b>OSS Students</b>	2,177	541	26	1,006	6	598	669	1,508	582	1,691	1,714
<b>OSS Percent</b>	6.7%	14.4%	2.7%	7.6%	5.9%	4.2%	4.2%	9.1%	13.4%	8.6%	10.3%
<b>DAEP Actions</b>	857	175	9	419	0	254	212	645	259	635	732
<b>DAEP Students</b>	685	133	8	333	0	211	176	509	195	497	577
<b>DAEP Percent</b>	2.1%	3.5%	0.8%	2.5%	0.0%	1.5%	1.1%	3.1%	4.5%	2.5%	3.5%
<b>Expulsion Actions</b>	16	*	0	11	0	*	*	*	0	9	11
<b>Expulsion Students</b>	16	*	0	11	0	*	*	*	0	9	11
<b>Expulsion Percent</b>	0.0%	*	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%	*	*	*	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%

\*Numbers less than five have not been cited due to the FERPA 34CFR Part 99.1 and Texas Education Agency procedure OP 10-03.  
NOTE: A single student can have multiple records if removed from the classroom more than once and a single incident can result in multiple actions.  
SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, PEIMS.

DAEP assignment. This represents an increase of 6.9 percent of students and a 9.9 percent increase in the number of DAEP actions. The number of students expelled from an Amarillo ISD campus increased from 16 in school year 2007–08 to 22 in school year 2008–09, representing a 37.5 percent increase.

**Exhibit 5** also shows that some groups of students are over-represented in ISS and OSS assignments. For instance, although African American students represent only 11.3 percent of Amarillo ISD’s student population, 22 percent of African American students were assigned to ISS and 13 percent of African American students were ordered to OSS in school year 2008–09. For the African American student category, this trend reverses itself when looking at the number

of students assigned to the DAEP (only 4.2 percent of African American students were assigned to DAEP in school year 2008–09).

While Asian and Native American students in school year 2008–09 made up only 3.6 and 0.3 percent of the student population, respectively, 5.7 percent of students in ISS are of Asian descent and 10.3 percent are of Native American descent. District staff told the review team that the number of refugee families moving to the Amarillo area has increased in the past few years. These families are migrating in and around Amarillo to work in the local meat packing industry. The primary ethnicity of these families is Asian. Staff further explained that many of the refugee children have never been in a formal classroom, and cultural differences can lead to

**EXHIBIT 5  
AMARILLO ISD  
COUNTS OF STUDENTS AND DISCIPLINE ACTIONS BY STUDENT GROUPS  
SCHOOL YEAR 2008–09**

STUDENT GROUP	ALL STUDENTS	AFRICAN AMERICAN	ASIAN	HISPANIC	NATIVE AMERICAN	WHITE	FEMALE	MALE	SPECIAL ED	ECO DIS	AT RISK
<b>Number of Students</b>	32,891	3,775	1,193	13,772	107	14,044	16,070	16,821	4,005	19,575	15,485
<b>ISS Actions</b>	8,643	2,088	151	3,853	19	2,532	2,381	6,262	1,942	6,735	6,159
<b>ISS Students</b>	3,871	833	68	1,752	11	1,207	1,224	2,647	775	2,868	2,611
<b>ISS Percent</b>	11.8%	22.0%	5.7%	12.7%	10.3%	8.6%	7.6%	15.7%	19.4%	14.7%	16.9%
<b>OSS Actions</b>	3,819	969	37	1,726	5	1,082	948	2,871	1,078	3,029	2,830
<b>OSS Students</b>	2,076	489	*	951	*	603	616	1,460	492	1,594	1,440
<b>OSS Percent</b>	6.3%	13.0%	*	6.9%	*	4.3%	3.8%	8.7%	12.3%	8.1%	9.3%
<b>DAEP Actions</b>	942	213	*	440	*	270	243	699	232	706	727
<b>DAEP Students</b>	732	160	*	339	*	217	203	529	172	538	563
<b>DAEP Percent</b>	2.2%	4.2%	*	2.5%	*	1.5%	1.3%	3.1%	4.3%	2.7%	3.6%
<b>Expulsion Actions</b>	22	*	*	8	*	9	*	*	*	10	16
<b>Expulsion Students</b>	22	*	*	8	*	9	*	*	*	10	16
<b>Expulsion Percent</b>	0.1%	*	*	0.1%	*	0.1%	*	*	*	0.1%	0.1%

\*Numbers less than five have not been cited due to the FERPA 34CFR Part 99.1 and Texas Education Agency procedure OP 10-03.  
NOTE: A single student can have multiple records if removed from the classroom more than once and a single incident can result in multiple actions.  
SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, PEIMS.

misunderstandings and confusion. As a result, these children may incur disciplinary actions and exhibit poor performance on standardized tests.

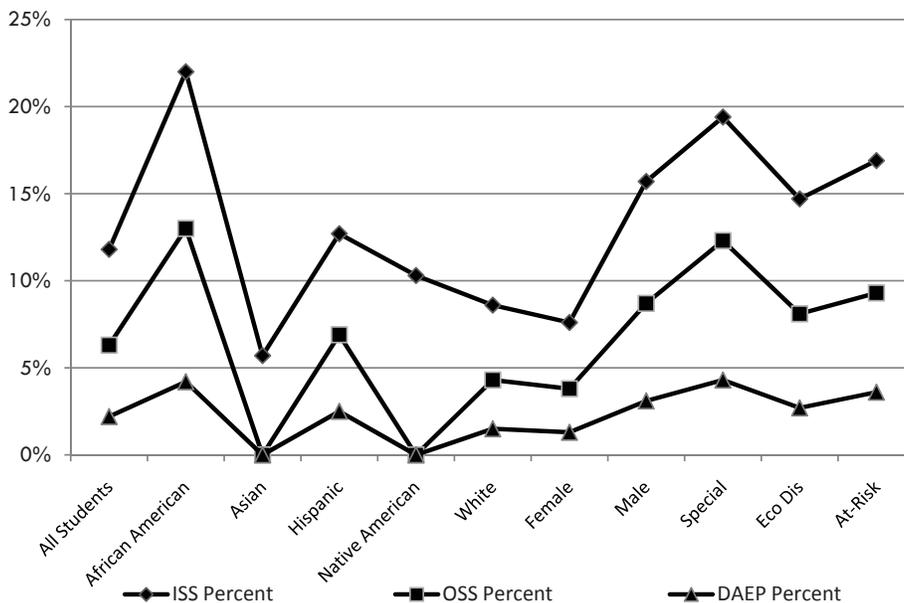
Special education students make up 12.2 percent of total student population, yet 19.4 percent were given ISS assignments in school year 2008–09.

**Exhibit 6** shows a graphical presentation of ISS, OSS, and DAEP assignments in the district for school year 2008–09. This exhibit shows a significant increase in ISS and OSS assignments for African American, Hispanic, and special education students. However, assignments to the DAEP do not show a similar increase.

**OUT-OF-SCHOOL SUSPENSION**

District administrators stated that OSS has historically been used as a disciplinary option in Amarillo ISD. The district Student Code of Conduct states that students may be suspended for any behavior listed as a general conduct violation, DAEP offense, or expellable offense. When a student is referred to the campus discipline administrator for a charge of misconduct, the administrator holds an informal conference. During the conference the administrator and the student discuss the incident. The student is allowed to

**EXHIBIT 6  
AMARILLO ISD  
PERCENT OF STUDENTS AND DISCIPLINE GROUPS  
SCHOOL YEAR 2008–09**



SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, PEIMS.

explain his/her version of the incident taking into consideration:

- self-defense;
- intent or lack of intent at the time the student engaged in the conduct;
- the student’s disciplinary history; and
- a disability that substantially impairs the capacity to appreciate wrongfulness of conduct (TEC 37.001).

The administrator determines level of responsibility for the offense and assigns the student up to, but not more than, three school days of suspension. The administrator also determines and explains to the student any restrictions on participation in school-sponsored or school-related extracurricular and co-curricular activities. Administrators, teachers, and counselors generally agree with the need for OSS. However, they are concerned about the loss of instruction which results from being out of school, particularly for repeat offenders.

**Exhibit 7** shows a comparison of Amarillo ISD’s OSS data for school years 2007–08 and 2008–09. This table shows the number of students referred to OSS and the number of OSS

actions. The exhibit shows decreases in both the number of students as well as the number of OSS actions for every student group except for the Asian and White groups, which had increases of 2.8 percent and 0.6 percent in the number of OSS actions, respectively.

The most significant decreases in the number of students ordered to OSS occurred for the special education and at-risk categories. The number of special education students ordered to OSS decreased by 15.5 percent, while the at-risk student category decreased by 16 percent. The number of African American students assigned to OSS also decreased by 9.6 percent. The decrease in OSS placement could be attributed to the district’s efforts to promote a districtwide behavior model.

In school years 2007–08 and 2008–09 several student groups experienced decreases in the number of actions resulting in an OSS assignment. The two decreases were the Native American and special education student groups with 28.6 percent and 25.2 percent, respectively.

**Exhibit 8** presents discipline data for OSS actions and students on a statewide basis for school years 2007–08 and 2008–09. Amarillo ISD’s percentages of student groups

**EXHIBIT 7  
AMARILLO ISD  
OUT-OF-SCHOOL SUSPENSION COUNTS OF STUDENTS AND DISCIPLINE ACTIONS BY STUDENT GROUPS  
SCHOOL YEARS 2007–08 AND 2008–09**

STUDENT GROUP	2007–08				2008–09				% CHANGE FROM PRIOR YEAR	
	TOTAL STUDENTS	OSS ACTIONS	OSS STUDENTS	OSS % STUDENTS	TOTAL STUDENTS	OSS ACTIONS	OSS STUDENTS	OSS % STUDENTS	OSS % ACTIONS	OSS % STUDENTS
All Students	32,453	4,272	2,177	6.7%	32,891	3,819	2,076	6.3%	-10.6%	-4.6%
African American	3,760	1,160	541	14.4%	3,775	969	489	13.0%	-16.5%	-9.6%
Asian	974	36	26	2.7%	1,193	37	*	*	2.8%	*
Hispanic	13,293	1,993	1,006	7.6%	13,772	1,726	951	6.9%	-13.4%	-5.5%
Native American	101	7	6	5.9%	107	5	*	*	-28.6%	*
White	14,325	1076	598	4.2%	14,044	1,082	603	4.3%	0.6%	0.8%
Female	15,857	1,074	669	4.2%	16,070	948	616	3.8%	-11.7%	-7.9%
Male	16,596	3,198	1,508	9.1%	16,821	2,871	1,460	8.7%	-10.2%	-3.2%
Special Education	4,337	1,441	582	13.4%	4,005	1,078	492	12.3%	-25.2%	-15.5%
Eco Dis	19,571	3,495	1,691	8.6%	19,575	3,029	1,594	8.1%	-13.3%	-5.7%
At Risk	16,700	3,531	1,714	10.3%	15,485	2,830	1,440	9.3%	-19.9%	-16.0%

\*Numbers less than five have not been cited due to the FERPA 34CFR Part 99.1 and Texas Education Agency procedure OP 10-03.  
 Note: A single student can have multiple records if removed from the classroom more than once and a single incident can result in multiple actions.  
 Source: Texas Education Agency, PEIMS.

ordered to OSS are similar to the statewide percentages. In addition, similar to the reduction in OSS actions and assignment between the two years in the district, statewide percentages for almost all student categories—except for a 1.4 percent increase in OSS actions for Native American students—declined over this same time period.

**Exhibits 9 and 10** show Amarillo ISD’s OSS assignments for all student groups Compared to Statewide Totals assignments for school years 2007–08 and 2008–09, respectively. Amarillo ISD’s OSS assignments for all students, African American, female, male, and economically disadvantaged groups were about the same rate as statewide assignments in school years 2007–08 and 2008–09.

**IN-SCHOOL SUSPENSION**

ISS is recognized by reference in TEC Section 37.002(c) as a disciplinary placement, but it is regulated by local policy rather than state law. Amarillo ISD’s student discipline policies refer to ISS as a discipline consequence used in the district. The review team learned through interviews, focus groups, and campus observations that Amarillo ISD regularly uses ISS as a placement. However, there is no apparent

campus or district written guidelines or suggested structures for the ISS classroom.

The Student Code of Conduct does not describe the procedure for placing a student in ISS nor the length of stay. All decisions related to ISS appear to be at the discretion of the campus level discipline administrator. There is no formal training for the ISS staff, and there is no consistency or alignment of instructional activities between the regular classroom and the ISS classroom. The ISS teacher contacts the classroom teacher to get students’ assignments, provides the assignments to the students, and returns the work to the classroom teacher to grade and record. However, the review team learned through interviews and focus groups that the regular classroom teachers are not consistently sending the student assignments.

Interviews and focus groups with representative stakeholder groups of administrators, counselors, and teachers across the district revealed that ISS provides a valuable placement option for students not meeting behavioral expectations. It is believed that the strengths of the program include an immediate placement option for students who are misbehaving, a “cooling off” place for students who are angry

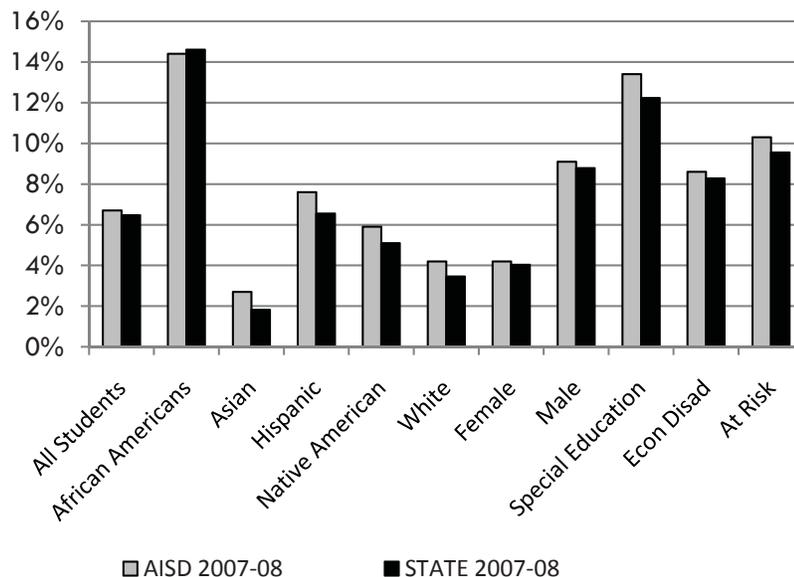
**EXHIBIT 8  
STATEWIDE TOTALS  
OUT-OF-SCHOOL SUSPENSION COUNTS OF STUDENTS AND DISCIPLINE ACTIONS BY STUDENT GROUPS  
SCHOOL YEARS 2007-08 AND 2008-09**

STUDENT GROUP	2007-08				2008-09				% CHANGE FROM PRIOR YEAR	
	TOTAL STUDENTS	OSS ACTIONS	OSS STUDENTS	OSS % STUDENTS	TOTAL STUDENTS	OSS ACTIONS	OSS STUDENTS	OSS % STUDENTS	OSS % ACTIONS	OSS % STUDENTS
All Students	4,819,172	644,853	311,718	6.5%	4,892,748	589,856	289,809	5.9%	-8.5%	-7.0%
African American	692,663	226,160	101,220	14.6%	696,923	208,308	94,398	13.5%	-7.9%	-6.7%
Asian	166,207	5,122	3,032	1.8%	176,818	4,436	2,778	1.6%	-13.4%	-8.4%
Hispanic	2,275,774	308,293	148,976	6.5%	2,346,168	282,799	139,457	5.9%	-8.3%	-6.4%
Native American	17,365	1,601	885	5.1%	17,761	1,624	845	4.8%	1.4%	-4.5%
White	1,667,163	103,677	57,605	3.5%	1,655,078	92,689	52,331	3.2%	-10.6%	-9.2%
Female	2,343,951	173,366	94,488	4.0%	2,378,854	155,311	86,586	3.6%	-10.4%	-8.4%
Male	2,475,221	471,487	217,230	8.8%	2,513,894	434,545	203,223	8.1%	-7.8%	-6.4%
Special Education	528,768	154,719	64,668	12.2%	509,018	133,835	57,346	11.3%	-13.5%	-11.3%
Eco Dis	2,567,154	455,866	212,511	8.3%	2,676,788	431,735	205,179	7.7%	-5.3%	-3.5%
At Risk	2,247,224	472,369	214,626	9.6%	2,282,091	437,766	201,788	8.8%	-7.3%	-6.0%

NOTE: A single student can have multiple records if removed from the classroom more than once and a single incident can result in multiple actions.

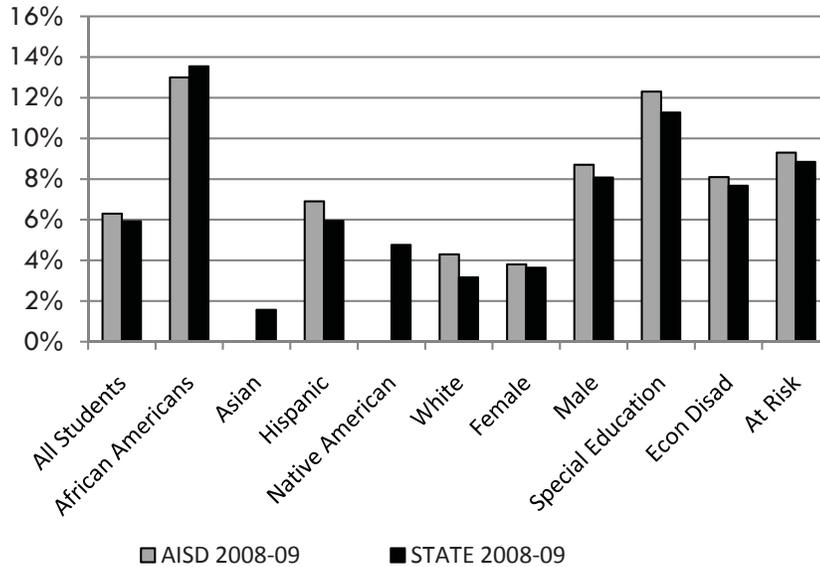
SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, PEIMS.

**EXHIBIT 9  
AMARILLO ISD  
OUT-OF-SCHOOL SUSPENSION, PERCENTAGE OF STUDENT GROUPS COMPARED TO STATEWIDE TOTALS  
SCHOOL YEAR 2007-08**



SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, PEIMS.

**EXHIBIT 10  
AMARILLO ISD  
OUT-OF-SCHOOL SUSPENSION, PERCENTAGE OF STUDENT GROUPS COMPARED TO STATEWIDE TOTALS  
SCHOOL YEAR 2008–09**



SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, PEIMS.

and/or frustrated, and the ISS option keeps students in school, allowing them to keep up with their assignments. Stakeholders identified several ISS challenges including regular classroom teachers not sending student assignments to the ISS classroom, students missing direct teacher instruction, and students not completing the assignments. Another challenge identified is that the regular classroom teachers often don't know their student has been assigned to ISS or when they will be returning from ISS. Since the time of the onsite visit the district has developed written guidelines and training for the ISS program.

**CAMPUS VISITS**

During the onsite visit, the review team visited the ISS classrooms at two campuses, Palo Duro High School (PDHS) and Caprock High School (CHS).

**PALO DURO HIGH**

In school year 2008–09, PDHS's enrollment was 1,814 students. The student population is primarily Hispanic (52.8 percent), followed by African American (22.8 percent) and White (15.2 percent). Asian students make up 9.1 percent of PDHS's student population, while Native American students represent 0.2 percent. The campus is rated by TEA as Academically Acceptable.

In an interview with the review team, the campus principal stated that he believes the single most important initiative related to student discipline at PDHS has been the implementation of the PBS program. He stressed that, as a result of this implementation, teachers provide consistent classroom expectations and identify individual behavioral interventions to keep students in the classroom and out of the principal's office. While the campus does have ISS, the principal and his staff make every attempt to address behavior problems through other interventions before referring students to either ISS or the DAEP.

While on campus the review team visited the ISS classroom, which is somewhat isolated on the second floor of the main building, but easily accessible to teachers. The classroom was organized and students were engaged in their assignments. The ISS coordinator, a non-certified paraprofessional, has been in that position at PDHS for 15 years and describes herself as a "strict disciplinarian." She is responsible for submitting attendance each morning, getting student assignments from teachers, and returning the assignments to the teachers. Teachers assign work from the regular Amarillo ISD Standards 2.0 Curriculum and/or remedial assignments, if appropriate. The ISS coordinator explained that students may be placed in ISS from one to ten days but that average placement is five days. Each student assigned to ISS at PDHS

signs a contract acknowledging the classroom rules and expectations.

### **CAPROCK HIGH SCHOOL**

In school year 2008–09 CHS's enrollment was 1,822 students. The student population is predominantly Hispanic (67.8 percent), followed by White (25.8 percent). African American students account for 5 percent of the student population, followed by Asian students at 1.1 percent and Native American students at 0.3 percent. The campus is rated Academically Acceptable with a Gold Performance Acknowledgement for Comparable Improvement in Mathematics.

The campus principal was appointed in the summer of 2008 and restructured the campus into individual grade level communities called "Houses," i.e., Freshman House, Sophomore House, Junior House, and Senior House. Each "House," or community, has a principal and a counselor and follows the Amarillo ISD Standards 2.0 Curriculum. Interviews with the principal revealed that, in addition to the reorganization of the campus, there were multiple staffing and programmatic changes. Faculty participated in a two-day workshop focusing on brain-based, cooperative learning and multiple intelligences structures in the classroom.

The review team visited the ISS classroom while on campus. The classroom is located in the main building, near the principal's office and is staffed by a non-certified paraprofessional, the ISS coordinator. The coordinator has been in the ISS classroom for two years. She stated that she has observed another ISS coordinator for one day but has not received any specific training to work in ISS. Interviews with campus administrators, counselors, and the ISS coordinator revealed an ISS program similar to PDHS in its operation. At CHS, students can be assigned to ISS for just one period or up to ten days. The ISS coordinator contacts the regular classroom teacher for assignments and returns the completed work to the teacher's mailbox at the end of the day. As at PDHS, assignments are taken from the Amarillo ISD Standards 2.0 Curriculum system and/or are created by the classroom teacher. In addition, the coordinator has created some generic assignments to use when the classroom teacher does not send an assignment. There is a tutor assigned to the ISS classroom from 10:00 AM until 3:30 PM to assist students, primarily freshmen, with their assignments.

Interviews and focus groups with administrators, counselors, and teachers across Amarillo ISD revealed the following strengths for district ISS programs: minimum time out of the

classroom, use of Amarillo ISD Standards 2.0, structured environment, and students are required to work all day. In addition, they identified the following concerns: missed labs and active learning opportunities, assignments are not as rigorous due to lack of direct teaching, lack of certified teacher, getting work to and from the ISS classroom presents logistical problems, teachers don't always know their students are in ISS or when they will return to the classroom, ISS implementation is not consistent across the district, some students would rather be in ISS than the regular classroom and act out in order to be assigned to ISS.

**Exhibits 11** and **12** show the number of ISS incidents and the number of students assigned to ISS for school years 2007–08 and 2008–09 for Amarillo ISD and the state, respectively. The ISS data for Amarillo ISD (**Exhibit 11**) shows decreases in the number of students and the number of ISS actions from school year 2007–08 to 2008–09 for most student categories, with one exception. The number of Asian students assigned to ISS increased by 41.7 percent, from 48 students in school year 2007–08 to 68 students in school year 2008–09. The Asian student group ISS actions increased by 55.7 percent. The African American and Hispanic students both decreased by about 8 percent.

**Exhibit 12** shows the statewide ISS data has a similar pattern to Amarillo ISD. Amarillo ISD placed 11.8 percent of its students in ISS during school year 2008–09, while the statewide percentage was 12.9. The percentage of each Amarillo ISD student subgroup assigned to ISS is similar to statewide percentages.

While Amarillo ISD experienced increases in the number of Asian students assigned to ISS, on a statewide basis the numbers decreased for all student categories from school year 2007–08 to 2008–09.

**Exhibits 13** and **14** show that Amarillo ISD had similar percentages of student groups assigned to ISS in school years 2007–08 and 2008–09 as the state in almost all categories. African American students in the district appear to be assigned at higher rates than African American students statewide for both years.

### **DISCIPLINARY ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM**

Amarillo ISD operates four DAEPs:

- Elementary alternative placement center—a short- (5, 10, or 15 days) and long-term alternative education program that serves all 37 elementary schools.

**EXHIBIT 11  
AMARILLO ISD  
IN-SCHOOL SUSPENSION COUNTS OF STUDENTS AND DISCIPLINE ACTIONS BY STUDENT GROUPS  
SCHOOL YEARS 2007-08 AND 2008-09**

STUDENT GROUP	2007-08				2008-09				% CHANGE FROM PRIOR YEAR	
	TOTAL STUDENTS	ISS ACTIONS	ISS STUDENTS	ISS %	TOTAL STUDENTS	ISS ACTIONS	ISS STUDENTS	ISS %	ISS ACTIONS	ISS STUDENTS
All Students	32,453	9,230	4,152	12.8%	32,891	8,643	3,871	11.8%	-6.4%	-6.8%
African American	3,760	2,095	913	24.3%	3,775	2,088	833	22.1%	-0.3%	-8.8%
Asian	974	97	48	4.9%	1,193	151	68	5.7%	55.7%	41.7%
Hispanic	13,293	4,294	1,905	14.3%	13,772	3,853	1,752	12.7%	-10.3%	-8.0%
Native American	101	15	13	12.9%	107	19	11	10.3%	26.7%	-15.4%
White	14,325	2,729	1,273	8.9%	14,044	2,532	1,207	8.6%	-7.2%	-5.2%
Female	15,857	2,743	1,351	8.5%	16,070	2,381	1,224	7.6%	-13.2%	-9.4%
Male	16,596	6,487	2,801	16.9%	16,821	6,262	2,647	15.7%	-3.5%	-5.5%
Special Education	4,337	2,427	930	21.4%	4,005	1,942	775	19.4%	-20.0%	-16.7%
Eco Dis	19,571	7,277	3,121	15.9%	19,575	6,735	2,868	14.7%	-7.4%	-8.1%
At-Risk	16,700	7,347	3,121	18.7%	15,485	6,159	2,611	16.9%	-16.2%	-16.3%

NOTE: A single student can have multiple records if removed from the classroom more than once and a single incident can result in multiple actions.

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, PEIMS.

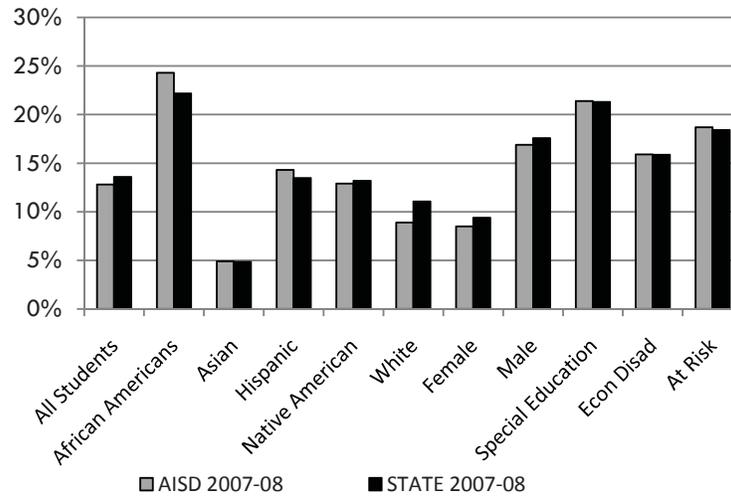
**EXHIBIT 12  
STATEWIDE TOTALS  
IN-SCHOOL SUSPENSION COUNTS OF STUDENTS AND DISCIPLINE ACTIONS BY STUDENT GROUPS  
SCHOOL YEARS 2007-08 AND 2008-09**

STUDENT GROUP	2007-08				2008-09				% CHANGE FROM PRIOR YEAR	
	TOTAL STUDENTS	ISS ACTIONS	ISS STUDENTS	ISS %	TOTAL STUDENTS	ISS ACTIONS	ISS STUDENTS	ISS %	ISS ACTIONS	ISS STUDENTS
All Students	4,819,172	1,740,233	654,667	13.6%	4,892,748	1,654,084	631,625	12.9%	-4.9%	-3.5%
African American	692,663	441,758	153,637	22.2%	696,923	421,477	147,844	21.2%	-4.6%	-3.8%
Asian	166,207	16,462	8,064	4.9%	176,818	16,254	7,963	4.5%	-1.3%	-1.3%
Hispanic	2,275,774	832,057	306,442	13.5%	2,346,168	803,097	299,178	12.8%	-3.5%	-2.4%
Native American	17,365	5,644	2,291	13.2%	17,761	5,447	2,230	12.6%	-3.5%	-2.7%
White	1,667,163	444,312	183,233	11.1%	1,655,078	408,529	173,510	10.5%	-8.1%	-5.3%
Female	2,343,951	528,723	219,807	9.4%	2,378,854	494,277	209,245	8.8%	-6.5%	-4.8%
Male	2,475,221	1,211,510	434,860	17.6%	2,513,894	1,160,527	422,040	16.8%	-4.2%	-2.9%
Special Education	528,768	377,302	112,621	21.3%	509,018	300,433	102,283	20.1%	-20.4%	-9.2%
Eco Dis	2,567,154	1,138,657	407,093	15.9%	2,676,788	1,119,803	405,505	15.2%	-1.7%	-0.4%
At-Risk	2,247,224	1,199,420	413,783	18.4%	2,282,091	1,146,370	399,786	17.5%	-4.4%	-3.4%

NOTE: A single student can have multiple records if removed from the classroom more than once and a single incident can result in multiple actions.

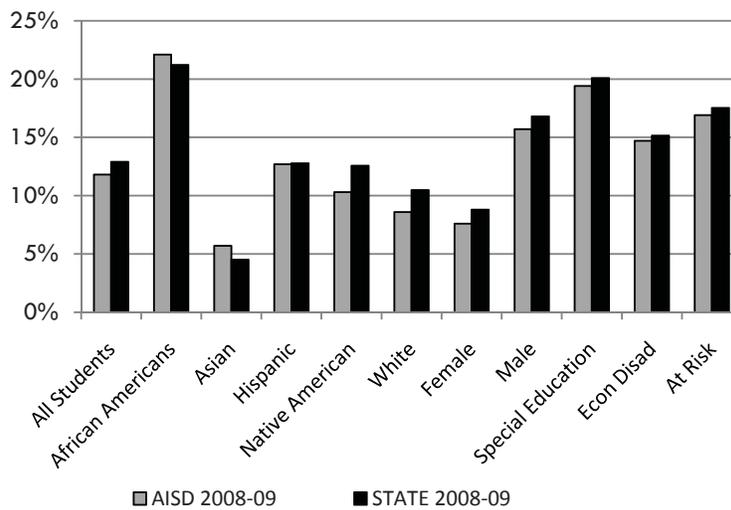
SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, PEIMS.

**EXHIBIT 13  
AMARILLO ISD  
IN-SCHOOL SUSPENSION, PERCENTAGE OF STUDENT GROUPS COMPARED TO STATEWIDE TOTALS  
SCHOOL YEAR 2007-08**



SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, PEIMS.

**EXHIBIT 14  
AMARILLO ISD  
IN-SCHOOL SUSPENSION, PERCENTAGE OF STUDENT GROUPS COMPARED TO STATEWIDE TOTALS  
SCHOOL YEAR 2008-09**



SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, PEIMS.

- Short Term Alternative Education Program (STAEP)—a short-term (no less than 11 days and no more than 30 days) alternative education program for secondary students.
- Recovery Extension Alternative for Disruptive Youth (READY)—a long-term (more than 30 days) alternative education program for secondary students.
- Special Education Expulsion Instruction Program—for secondary special education students who have been expelled from school.

The three secondary alternative placement programs are located on the North Heights Alternative campus, while the elementary alternative placement center is located on the Avondale Elementary School campus.

In addition to the three secondary discipline alternative programs, the North Heights campus also houses:

- Priority Achieve Success in School Center (PASS), which is designed to facilitate school attendance and success for students with unique circumstances. Students must be at-risk and have established residence in one of the four high schools in Amarillo ISD. Classes are available in the four core subject areas and limited electives. The school day is flexible with late afternoon classes. The program is individualized and self paced with an open entry/open exit schedule. Students must apply for entry into the program.
- Child Development Center was implemented for the convenience and learning experiences of school-age parents enrolled in the selected programs. The center provides childcare for the child so that the school-age parent may attend classes.
- Diplomas and Certificates (DAC) is a joint project between Amarillo ISD and Amarillo College. Amarillo ISD participants earn high school credit or work on Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) preparedness while enrolled in Amarillo College. Upon successful completion of the program, students receive a certificate in an area such as automotive collision technology, automotive technology, aviation maintenance technology, fire protection technology, and welding technology.

The mission for North Heights Alternative School is to recover and prepare “at-risk students to become self-directed learners. Students will develop an understanding of the rules

of society, meet and accept challenges, and find life fulfillment.” The stated goals are to:

- Improve academic achievement of all students.
- Meet the academic needs of the students in special programs.
- Ensure students will demonstrate behaviors that support academic success.
- Increase the number of students who are prepared for success in high school.
- Create and maintain a safe environment for all stakeholders.
- Improve communication with all building stakeholders.
- Continually pursue opportunities to focus resources into learner-centered settings.

Amarillo ISD has a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with neighboring River Road ISD (RRISD) for the placement of RRISD students in Amarillo ISD’s DAEP. RRISD pays Amarillo ISD \$24,000 annually to hold four slots, and an additional \$32.10 per student per day for students actually attending North Heights. For RRISD students attending Amarillo ISD’s DAEP in excess of four students, Amarillo ISD receives \$83 per student per day.

**Elementary Alternative Education Program:** The elementary DAEP is located in a separate wing of Avondale Elementary School and is supervised by the Avondale principal and a certified teacher. The program is physically segregated from the regular campus, maintaining a separate entry and exit. A home campus administrator or district hearing officer assigns students between the ages of six and ten to the elementary alternative program for either serious/persistent misbehavior or for an expellable offense defined in Chapter 37 of the TEC. **Exhibit 15** shows the total number of staff members who have served at the elementary DAEP during school year 2008–09.

The home campus is responsible for providing and grading student assignments at the elementary DAEP. The home campus is also responsible for providing the elementary DAEP with each student’s:

- discipline history;
- copy of the parent letter of notification;
- health card;

**EXHIBIT 15  
AMARILLO ISD  
ELEMENTARY DAEP STAFF  
SCHOOL YEAR 2008–09**

POSITION	NUMBER
Teachers	1.0
Counselors	0.2
Administrators	0.2
Paraprofessionals	1.0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2.4</b>

SOURCE: Amarillo ISD Director of federal programs and grants.

- registration card;
- IEP and BIP; and
- any other relevant instructional or behavioral information.

The DAEP is responsible for:

- ensuring students receive their assignments;
- assisting students with their assignments;
- counseling services provided by a certified play therapist;
- returning each student’s completed work to the home school for grading and recording;
- reporting absences to the home school;
- providing lunch;
- facilitating counseling services from the home campus or the district;
- ensuring that IEPs and BIPs are implemented; and
- notifying home campuses of each student’s expected return.

The review team learned through interviews and focus groups with administrators that the elementary DAEP is necessary as it isolates a student from his/her home campus. The DAEP also provides a break for both the student and the teacher by relieving classroom tension. The program serves as a “wake-up call” to parents that their child’s behavior is unacceptable for the classroom. Concerns include the loss of direct instruction by the regular classroom teacher and the inevitable loss of learning opportunities.

**Exhibit 16** shows the number of students assigned to the elementary DAEP for discretionary and mandatory offenses

**EXHIBIT 16  
ELEMENTARY DAEP PLACEMENTS  
SCHOOL YEARS 2007–08 AND 2008–09**

ELEMENTARY DAEP	2007–08	2008–09
<b>Discretionary</b>	68	62
<b>Mandatory</b>	5	8
<b>Number of Students</b>	73	70

SOURCE: Amarillo ISD Director of federal programs and grants.

from school year 2007–08 to 2008–09. The discretionary placements decreased while the mandatory placements increased.

**Secondary Short-Term Alternative Education Program:**

STAEP is a short-term alternative placement for students who have violated the Amarillo ISD student code of conduct. It is located at North Heights in portable buildings away from the main campus. Typically, students are assigned for no less than 11 days and no more than 30 days. They are not allowed to return to their home campus until they complete their assigned days or an administrator changes the placement. Days may be added to the assignment if students do not successfully complete the requirements of the program. While at STAEP, students remain enrolled in their home campus and the North Heights attendance clerk notifies the home campus of any absences. Students and their parents/guardians are responsible for student transportation. Breakfast is available from 7:45 a.m. to 8:00 a.m. and students receive a sack lunch prepared by the district’s Child Nutrition Services department and eat in their classroom.

When a student commits an offense that merits placement at STAEP, the home campus administrator in charge of discipline suspends the student for three days pending the assignment. During these three days the parents are required to contact the alternative program administrator and schedule an orientation for the day the student begins his/her placement. It is the home campus administrator’s responsibility to contact the student’s classroom teachers to notify them of the suspension and to gather the information from both core and elective teachers to ensure the student is placed appropriately in the alternative school instructional program.

Teachers of a student placed in STAEP receive a core standards form that indicates the student’s name and the number of days assigned to the STAEP. Teachers are expected to complete this form by indicating where the student is currently working in the Amarillo ISD standardized curriculum (available on the intranet and Internet), the

specific standards the student is to follow while placed at STAEP, and the exact assignments (using the standards) the student should complete while assigned to the alternative program. The teachers at STAEP begin instructing the student in his/her core courses using the core standards form. At the end of the placement period, the STAEP teacher places a final cumulative grade, with comments, on the core standards form and that grade is e-mailed to the campus administrator to provide to the regular classroom teacher. The regular classroom teacher uses this cumulative grade to replace the individual grades the student would have earned daily had the student been present in the regular classroom.

STAEP students' work in elective subjects is handled differently than the core subjects. Elective teachers prepare assignment packets, students complete the work in the packets, and at the end of the STAEP placement, elective packets are returned to the elective teachers for grading. **Exhibit 17** shows the staffing for the STAEP program.

**EXHIBIT 17  
AMARILLO ISD  
SHORT-TERM ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM STAFF  
SCHOOL YEAR 2008-09**

POSITION	NUMBER
Teachers	7.0
Counselors	0.5
Administrators	0.5
Paraprofessionals	1.0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>9.0</b>

SOURCE: Amarillo ISD Director of federal programs and grants.

**Recovery Extension Alternative for Disruptive Youth:** The READY program is located in the main building of the North Heights Alternative School in Amarillo ISD. It is an alternative placement for students who have been removed from their home school campus by a district hearing officer for a serious violation of the student code of conduct. The program serves as the long-term alternative placement for the Amarillo ISD. The length of assignment varies based on the individual's discipline record and the date the incident occurred. Generally, the assignment is more than 30 days. Students may not return to their home campus before the completion of their assignment and may have the assignment lengthened if they do not successfully complete the READY Program.

Students begin their assignment to the READY program with an orientation. The rules and curriculum requirements

for the program are explained to each student and his/her parent. Each student and parent signs a student behavior contract. The student meets with a counselor to discuss his/her instructional schedule. Amarillo ISD uses an electronic warehouse, Amarillo ISD Standards 2.0, for curriculum and resource documents. This allows teachers to align student assignments with the work previously done in the regular classroom and provides students the opportunity to stay current in their instruction. In addition to the district scope and sequence, students have access to individualized computer instructional programs including Odyssey-Ware, Bridges, and SMARTeam, a computer program dealing with conflict resolution and anger management.

In addition to structured instructional activities, READY students have multiple opportunities for counseling services. They attend a daily counseling class, may self-refer or be referred by a staff member for an individual counseling session, and have access to a district mental health professional (MHP). When a student has been referred to a MHP, a mental health assessment is conducted (with parental approval) and staff assists the family in accessing resources for the student.

The READY Program handbook states that the structure "of the READY program is designed to provide a safe and orderly environment for students to attend school and give each student opportunities to demonstrate their willingness to follow the rules necessary in a public school setting." The use of the "levels" system in READY is designed to reward students who demonstrate an understanding of the importance of cooperation and appropriate behavior. In this system, students advance levels based on the number of days attended and the successful progression through a series of character/social skills modules. Students begin on Level One and move through Levels Two through Four based upon demonstration of oral or written knowledge of the character/social skills introduced in the modules. Students must continue to demonstrate knowledge of all social skills to maintain their earned levels. Each level provides rewards and freedoms as follows:

- Level One: is for all students entering the program. On this level, students' freedom is severely limited, students are monitored very closely and expected to cooperate with the testing, screening, and counseling necessary for appropriate instructional placement. Students remain on Level One until they have completed the first character/social skills module and have completed five successful days in the program.

- Level Two: is awarded when a student demonstrates knowledge of the module for Level One. This level allows a student to attend scheduled activities, provided students are current with all of their coursework.
- Level Three: is awarded when a student demonstrates knowledge of the module for Levels Two and Three and completes 10 successful school days. Students receive full cafeteria and restroom privileges.
- Level Four: is awarded when a student demonstrates knowledge of the module for Levels Two, Three, and Four, the successful completion of 15 days on Level Three and completion of a student-selected and staff-approved service project. At this level students may wear clothes of their choice provided the clothes meet Amarillo ISD’s dress code and minimal READY Program dress requirements.

**Exhibit 18** shows the staffing for the READY Program in school year 2008–09.

**EXHIBIT 18  
AMARILLO ISD  
RECOVERY EXTENSION ALTERNATIVE FOR DISRUPTIVE  
YOUTH STAFF  
SCHOOL YEAR 2008–09**

POSITION	NUMBER
Teachers	6.0
Counselors	0.5
Administrators	0.5
Paraprofessionals	4.0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>11.0</b>

SOURCE: Amarillo ISD Director of federal programs and grants.

The review team learned through interviews and focus groups with administrative, teaching, and counseling staff the perceived strengths and challenges for the secondary alternative education programs. The strengths included:

- use of certified teachers for core courses;
- focus on district curriculum standards, scope and sequence;
- use of the districtwide standards form;
- focus on discipline and changing student’s behavior;
- access to a counselor; and

- careful placement of staff to align with the mission of the program.

The challenges include:

- Regular classroom teachers don’t know the length of the placement or when the student is returning.
- There is a lack of communication between the regular classroom teacher and the DAEP teacher (need to have some common planning time).
- Appears to be a difference in the level of rigor of instructional expectations.
- Students who are in conflict with each other are placed in the same setting.
- Some students would rather be at the DAEP and will commit offenses to be assigned to DAEP.
- It is unclear what works and what does not work at the alternative school.

**Exhibits 19 and 20** show Amarillo ISD’s DAEP incidents and expulsions, respectively.

**EXHIBIT 19  
AMARILLO ISD  
DAEP INCIDENTS  
SCHOOL YEARS 2007–08 AND 2008–09**

DAEP CATEGORY	2007–08	2008–09
<b>Short-Term Incidents</b>	693	808
<b>Long-Term Incidents</b>	174	152
<b>Total DAEP Incidents</b>	867	960
<b>Total Students</b>	691	750

NOTE: The total student incident numbers in this Exhibit may differ from other numbers because these numbers were received from the alternative campus which will count carry over students from the previous school year which are not counted in PEIMS.

SOURCE: Amarillo ISD.

**EXHIBIT 20  
AMARILLO ISD  
EXPULSION INCIDENTS  
SCHOOL YEARS 2007–08 AND 2008–09**

EXPULSION	2007–08	2008–09
<b>Total Expulsion Incidents</b>	30	38
<b>Total Students</b>	30	37

NOTE: The total student incident numbers in this Exhibit may differ from other numbers because these numbers were received from the alternative campus which will count carry over students from the previous school year which are not counted in PEIMS.

SOURCE: Amarillo ISD.

**The Special Education Expulsion Instruction Program:**

The Special Education Expulsion Instruction Program is located in a portable building on the grounds of North Heights Alternative School, and is staffed with a full-time certified special education teacher and a police officer (Exhibit 21). The classroom is provided for special education students who have committed an expellable offense. After recommendation by the district hearing officer, the ARD Committee places a student in the Special Education Expulsion Instruction Program for the duration of his/her expulsion. The certified staff member ensures that the student receives instruction based on the IEP and receives related services, as required. Certified special education teachers from both the short- and long-term DAEP are available for services, as necessary. Special education expulsions are shown in Exhibit 22.

**EXHIBIT 21  
AMARILLO ISD  
SPECIAL EDUCATION EXPULSION PROGRAM STAFF  
SCHOOL YEAR 2008-09**

POSITION	NUMBER
Teacher	1
Police Officer	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2</b>

SOURCE: Amarillo ISD Director of federal programs and grants.

**EXHIBIT 22  
AMARILLO ISD  
SPECIAL EDUCATION EXPULSIONS  
SCHOOL YEARS 2007-08 AND 2008-09**

EXPULSION	2007-08	2008-09
<b>Total Expulsion Incidents</b>	*	5
<b>Total Students</b>	*	5

\*Numbers less than five have not been cited due to the FERPA 34CFR Part 99.1 and Texas Education Agency procedure OP 10-03.  
SOURCE: Amarillo ISD Director of federal programs and grants.

Exhibits 23 and 24 show the discipline data for Amarillo ISD and the state, respectively. While DAEP student placements and actions have declined in almost every category (except for Native American students) at the state level, Amarillo ISD experienced increases in several student categories. For example, African American students in the district were assigned to the DAEP 20.3 percent more in school year 2008-09 than in the prior year. The African American DAEP actions also increased by 21.7 percent during this time period.

The number of female Amarillo ISD students assigned to DAEP also increased. In school year 2007-08, 176 females were assigned to DAEP, while in school year 2008-09, 203 females were assigned (an increase of 15.3 percent). The female group DAEP actions increased by 14.6 percent during this time period. The number of Amarillo ISD special education students assigned to DAEP decreased by 11.8 percent from school year 2007-08 to 2008-09.

Exhibits 25 and 26 show Amarillo ISD student assignments to DAEP compared to the state for school year 2007-08 and 2008-09, respectively. In school year 2007-08, the district had DAEP assignments for all students at about the same rate as districts statewide. However, in school year 2008-09, assignments for all students statewide dropped while the percentage in Amarillo ISD increased. The percentage of African American students in the district also increased in school year 2008-09 relative to statewide percentages.

DAEP programs in Amarillo ISD are funded through a variety of sources. Direct costs, which include teacher and instructional assistant salaries and benefits, as well as classroom supplies, are paid for through state compensatory funds. Indirect costs for the program are funded through Title IV and Safe Schools and Healthy Student funds, which also are used to pay for transitional counselors and an alcohol abuse counselor. The district's general fund pays for the DAEP's campus support staff, assistant principals, campus counselors, and transportation costs.

**COUNTY OPERATED PROGRAMS**

Although Amarillo ISD is not located in a county that is required to operate a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education program, the district has students that are served in the Randall County Youth Center of the High Plains (Youth Center) located at 9300 S. Georgia in Amarillo, Texas. The Youth Center serves as a pre- and post-adjudication facility. The majority of youth detained at the Youth Center are from Randall or Potter County. Supervision of the detained youth is provided by juvenile detention officers certified by the Texas Juvenile Probation Commission. The Youth Center is a campus of Canyon ISD and detained youth are required to attend all day classes taught by Canyon ISD certified teachers. The teachers provide instruction in all core courses and students receive counseling services from professional counselors provided by the county. Upon leaving the Youth Center, grades and progress information are forwarded to the student's home school. Staff reported that the educational

**EXHIBIT 23  
AMARILLO ISD  
DISCIPLINARY ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM COUNTS OF STUDENTS AND DISCIPLINE ACTIONS BY STUDENT GROUPS  
SCHOOL YEARS 2007-08 AND 2008-09**

STUDENT GROUP	2007-08				2008-09				% CHANGE FROM PRIOR YEAR	
	TOTAL STUDENTS	DAEP ACTIONS	DAEP STUDENTS	DAEP %	TOTAL STUDENTS	DAEP ACTIONS	DAEP STUDENTS	DAEP %	DAEP ACTIONS	DAEP STUDENTS
All Students	32,453	857	685	2.1%	32,891	942	732	2.2%	9.9%	6.9%
African American	3,760	175	133	3.5%	3,775	213	160	4.2%	21.7%	20.3%
Asian	974	9	8	0.8%	1,193	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Hispanic	13,293	419	333	2.5%	13,772	440	339	2.5%	5.0%	1.8%
Native American	101	0	0	0.0%	107	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
White	14,325	254	211	1.5%	14,044	270	217	1.5%	6.3%	2.8%
Female	15,857	212	176	1.1%	16,070	243	203	1.3%	14.6%	15.3%
Male	16,596	645	509	3.1%	16,821	699	529	3.1%	8.4%	3.9%
Special Education	4,337	259	195	4.5%	4,005	232	172	4.3%	-10.4%	-11.8%
Eco Dis	19,571	635	497	2.5%	19,575	706	538	2.7%	11.2%	8.2%
At-Risk	16,700	732	577	3.5%	15,485	727	563	3.6%	-0.7%	-2.4%

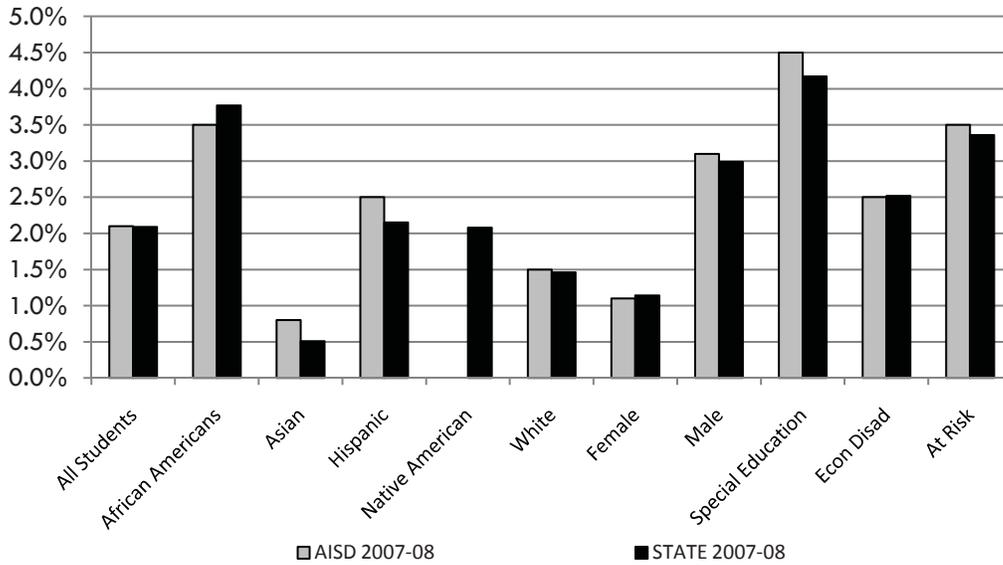
\*Numbers less than five have not been cited due to the FERPA 34CFR Part 99.1 and Texas Education Agency procedure OP 10-03.  
NOTE: A single student can have multiple records if removed from the classroom more than once and a single incident can result in multiple actions.  
SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, PEIMS.

**EXHIBIT 24  
STATEWIDE TOTALS  
DISCIPLINARY ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM COUNTS OF STUDENTS AND DISCIPLINE ACTIONS BY STUDENT GROUPS  
SCHOOL YEARS 2007-08 AND 2008-09**

STUDENT GROUP	2007-08				2008-09				% CHANGE FROM PRIOR YEAR	
	TOTAL STUDENTS	DAEP ACTIONS	DAEP STUDENTS	DAEP %	TOTAL STUDENTS	DAEP ACTIONS	DAEP STUDENTS	DAEP %	DAEP ACTIONS	DAEP STUDENTS
All Students	4,819,172	128,175	100,666	2.1%	4,892,748	119,109	92,719	1.9%	-7.1%	-7.9%
African American	692,663	33,531	26,121	3.8%	696,923	31,040	23,864	3.4%	-7.4%	-8.6%
Asian	166,207	1,011	843	0.5%	176,818	876	740	0.4%	-13.4%	-12.2%
Hispanic	2,275,774	63,122	49,039	2.2%	2,346,168	59,827	46,852	1.9%	-5.2%	-4.5%
Native American	17,365	438	361	2.1%	17,761	440	345	1.9%	0.5%	-4.4%
White	1,667,163	30,073	24,302	1.5%	1,655,078	26,926	21,918	1.3%	-10.5%	-9.8%
Female	2,343,951	32,525	26,624	1.1%	2,378,854	29,429	23,973	1.0%	-9.5%	-10.0%
Male	2,475,221	95,650	74,042	3.0%	2,513,894	89,680	68,746	2.7%	-6.2%	-7.2%
Special Education	528,768	28,972	22,074	4.2%	509,018	25,180	19,111	3.8%	-13.1%	-13.4%
Eco Dis	2,567,154	83,682	64,678	2.5%	2,676,788	80,443	61,485	2.3%	-3.9%	-4.9%
At-Risk	2,247,224	98,058	75,398	3.4%	2,282,091	92,083	70,099	3.1%	-6.1%	-7.0%

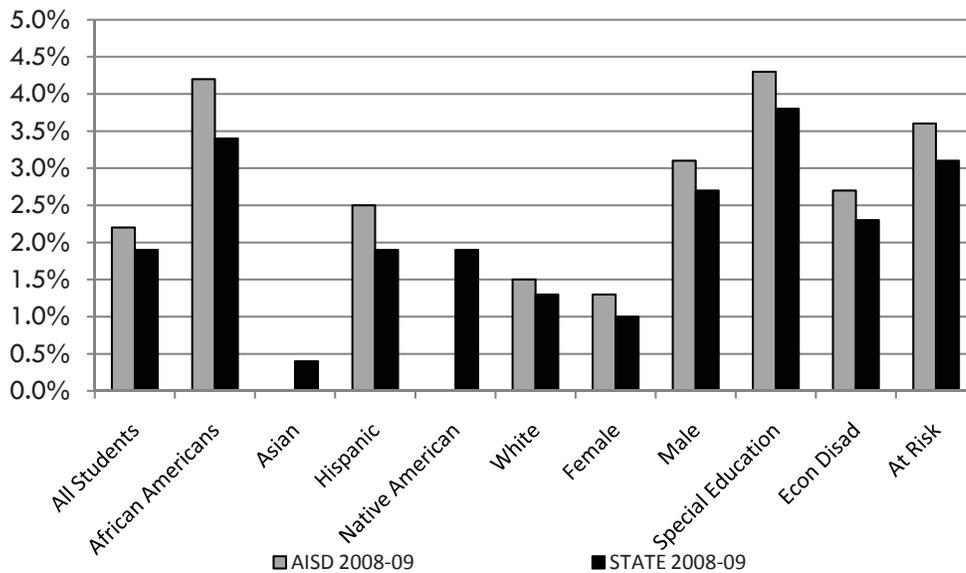
NOTE: A single student can have multiple records if removed from the classroom more than once and a single incident can result in multiple actions.  
SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, PEIMS.

**EXHIBIT 25**  
**AMARILLO ISD**  
**DISCIPLINARY ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM, PERCENTAGE OF STUDENT GROUPS COMPARED TO STATEWIDE TOTALS**  
**SCHOOL YEAR 2007-08**



SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, PEIMS.

**EXHIBIT 26**  
**AMARILLO ISD**  
**DISCIPLINARY ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM, PERCENTAGE OF STUDENT GROUPS COMPARED TO STATEWIDE TOTALS**  
**SCHOOL YEAR 2008-09**



SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, PEIMS.

program served a total of 297 students during school year 2008–09 with an average membership of 50 students.

Amarillo ISD’s MOU with the Youth Center states that the district will provide funding for “one person holding a certificate issued by the State Board for Educator Certification [, and] this person will assist in the educational program for school year 2009–10.” Amarillo ISD does not have control over the hiring of the position, but provides up to \$42,000 in funding.

During the site visit at the Youth Center, the review team observed the students engaged in structured classroom activities. The classrooms were equipped with computers, textbooks, and instructional materials. In addition to the certified classroom teacher, each classroom is assigned a county monitor to maintain discipline. Monitors were observed removing students who were not engaged from class, counseling them, assigning them a short time-out, and returning the student to the classroom when reasonable. Interviews with the principal and classroom teachers revealed a sense of dedication to the students at the Youth Center and sense of partnership with the county employees.

**Exhibit 27** shows the educational staffing at the Youth Center of High Plains.

**EXHIBIT 27  
RANDALL COUNTY  
YOUTH CENTER OF THE HIGH PLAINS EDUCATIONAL STAFF  
SCHOOL YEAR 2008–09**

POSITION	NUMBER
Teachers	4.0
Counselors	1.0
Administrators	0.5
County Classroom Monitors	5.0
Registrar	1.0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>11.5</b>

SOURCE: Canyon ISD.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Recommendation 1: Create and adopt districtwide operation procedures for the ISS classrooms.** ISS is a regularly used placement in district but there are no written standard operating procedures (SOPs), which results in inconsistent implementation throughout the district.

The National Alternative Education Association (NAEA) has identified the use of SOPs as a best practice quality indicator for effective alternative education programs. NAEA

recommends that program leadership “operate under a current policies and procedures manual that is consistent with the mission and purpose of the program, approved by the local board of education, and articulated to all stakeholders in the form of standard operating procedures (SOPs).” Elements of the manual should address, at a minimum, the following:

- Clearly defined roles and responsibilities for all teaching and non-teaching staff that are written and fully explained to program staff.
- Referral . . . procedures that are outlined and promote timely, user-friendly access to program services for students.
- Procedures to collect, share, and store individual student records developed for participants that ensure student confidentiality.

Currently, Amarillo ISD uses PLCs to design and review implementation strategies for behavioral and instructional issues related to students and programs. The district should consider using a PLC approach to evaluating the current ISS designs that exist across the district, identify research based best practices and current best practices in the district ISS classrooms, and create a common set of district SOPs that are reviewed, modified, and adopted by district and campus leadership. These SOPs should be incorporated into the district and campus Student Code of Conduct: Discipline Management Plans. The SOPs should be introduced to all campus staff during the beginning of the year as an intensive professional development session for ISS staff. NAEP recommends that the rules and behavioral expectations be “clearly written, understood and accepted by staff, students, and parents/guardians . . . to ensure that students are actively taught, rewarded, recognized and monitored.” These expectations “guide and manage student behavior, evaluate progress, and direct the learner’s experience in the alternative education program.”

There is no specific financial investment for the creation of the SOPs; however, a commitment of staff time and resources would be required to organize and provide resources for the work of the PLC.

**Recommendation 2: Create a districtwide training program for ISS staff.** During interviews and focus groups it was revealed that the district does not provide targeted training for ISS assistants and, in some cases, staff are unaware of the major responsibilities listed on their job descriptions.

ISS job descriptions reflect the following major responsibilities and duties:

- Supervises students needing a time-out of varying lengths in a structured environment.
- Provides individual supervision/assistance in assuring that school work sent to the ISS is completed.
- Reinforces appropriate school behaviors which will help the student be successful.
- Communicates frequently with principal and/or assistant principal regarding problems and progress of students who are assigned to ISS. Particular attention will be paid to repeat offenders.
- Conducts follow-up with individual students who are returned to class.
- Maintains a written log of students assigned to ISS, which will include, but not be limited to, reason for assignment to ISS and length of time assigned.

D'Angelo and Zemanick offer four core components for professional development for discipline management programs:

- Professional development specific to the alternative setting is crucial.
- Budgeting to provide the specialized staff with development opportunities.
- A staff survey detailing needs and wants for professional development.
- Visiting other educational facilities that offer similar placements.

To ensure that ISS assistants are able to fulfill major job responsibilities, Amarillo ISD should design and provide training that reflects the core components above. Training should include a review of the job responsibilities and techniques for accomplishing them successfully. NAEA recommends the following as a quality indicator for alternative education programs:

- Staff members create written professional development plans that facilitate personal and professional growth, identify the professional development needs of the individual, establish short and long term goals, and align professional development training to address the individual's overall plan.

As a part of the training, ISS assistants should be given an opportunity to identify their strengths and weaknesses as they relate to the major job responsibilities, and these skills should become the basis for future professional development sessions.

The design and presentation of professional development should be assigned to appropriate in-house staff, so there would be no specific investment for these tasks. Each ISS assistant would need a substitute teacher for two days during the school year in order to attend the professional development. Substitute teachers for 15 assistants for two days at \$65.00 per day would cost Amarillo ISD \$1,950.

**Recommendation 3: Develop districtwide written procedures for transitioning students from alternative settings back to the regular classroom.** Interviews and focus groups with administrators, counselors, and teachers reveal the lack of a consistent, clear transition process for students who are returning to their home campus from an alternative setting. Currently, the Amarillo ISD DAEP administrator contacts the administrator in charge of discipline at the sending campus to notify the campus that the student is returning. In addition, the student typically meets with the home campus counselor upon arriving back to the campus to review his/her schedule. The student is then sent to class. Focus groups with teachers reveal that the classroom teacher seldom knows that the student is returning to the regular classroom and has not had an opportunity to review the student's alternative school assignments nor prepare for the student for the current class day. Since the time of onsite work the district has implemented some procedures to address the challenges with transitioning students.

The DAEPs have written procedures for newly-entering students and their parents regarding orientation and review of DAEP rules. These procedures are explicit regarding student behavior expectations, discipline consequences and procedures for instructional placement but do not address the student's return to the home campus in any detail. In general they inform only that the assistant principal will receive a phone call or e-mail of the student's return and that the student's work/grades will be returned to the teacher as appropriate. There are no specific written procedures for transitioning students back to the sending campus.

- Chapter 103, Subchapter CC of the Commissioner's Rules Concerning Safe Schools states that

Procedures for each DAEP shall be developed and implemented for newly-entering students and their parents or guardians on the expectations of the DAEP, including written contracts between students, parents or guardians, and the DAEP that formalize expectations and establish the students' individual plans for success. The transition procedures established for a student who is exiting a DAEP and returning to the student's locally assigned campus shall be implemented and updated annually as needed. The transition procedures shall include:

- An established timeline for the student's transition from the DAEP to the student's locally assigned campus; and
- Written and oral communication from the DAEP staff to the locally assigned campus during the student's assignment to the DAEP, including the student's educational performance and tasks completed.

In addition to the Commissioner's Rules, NAEA is specific about the need for transitional planning and support for students returning to an educational setting in its statement that "clear criteria and procedures for transitioning students from the traditional education setting to the alternative setting and from the alternative program to the student's next education . . . setting are essential elements of effective alternative settings." NAEA quality indicators for transitional planning and support include:

- A formal transition process for students from pre-entry through post-exit which includes the following elements: an orientation which consists of rapport building, assessment of the student, IEP review, information and record sharing regarding the student, short- and long-term goal setting, development of an individualized student learner plan, and other mechanisms designed to orient the student to the alternative education setting.
- Student needs (i.e., academic, behavioral, life skill, service coordination, transitional and vocational needs) are addressed before, during, and after the student's transition.

There should be no specific financial impact for the development of a written transition plan beyond the commitment of staff time.

**Recommendation 4: Develop a comprehensive districtwide evaluation design for all alternative placement options.** A review of district documents and interviews with district administrators revealed that there is no comprehensive districtwide evaluation design for the behavior management components in Amarillo ISD. The school year 2009–10 Plan for District Improvement is thorough and provides specific direction for implementation. The plan provides some direction for discipline management by including the following goals/strategies:

- The district will provide a safe, student-friendly environment.
- Continue to implement Positive Behavior Support Programs
- The district will implement programs that support student success in order to meet the goals. These programs will be developed and implemented by the appropriate staff in those areas. Annually, each program will be evaluated with the results reported to the District's Executive Team in June of each year. At that meeting, department/program managers will also present their next year's action plan. Before August, the A-Team will finalize the Action Plans for the next school year.
- Student Services, Discipline Management

While the continued implementation of the PBS Programs and the development of a discipline management plan are both valuable components of the behavior management system, they do not, in and of themselves, provide a comprehensive evaluation of all of the components of the discipline management program in Amarillo ISD (OSS, ISS, elementary, short- and long- term DAEPs, and the special education expulsion classroom). Research consistently identifies programmatic evaluation as critical to the success of any program. Quinn and Rutherford (1998) identify assessment and evaluation as critical to alternative education programs and Fitzsimons, Hughes et al. (2006) identified "ongoing program evaluation and data based decision making" as key characteristics of successful alternative education programs. NAEA reports that "an exemplary alternative education program systematically conducts program evaluations for continuous improvement." Amarillo ISD should develop an evaluation design that reviews all components of the discipline management system and assesses the following six components judged to be essential to quality alternative programs:

- Procedures for conducting functional assessment of academic and nonacademic behavior.
- Flexible curriculum that places emphasis on functional academic, social, and daily living skills.
- Effective and efficient instructional strategies.
- Transition programs and procedures that link the alternative program to mainstream educational settings and the larger community.
- Comprehensive systems for providing students both internal alternative educational services and external community-based services.
- Appropriate staff and adequate resources to serve students with disabilities (*Preventing School Failure, Vol. 53, No. 4, p7*).

The plan should be added to the comprehensive district planning document and become part of the districtwide annual programmatic evaluation. When developing the plan, the district should give consideration to the strengths and challenges that stakeholder groups identified in this report.

The cost of an outside facilitator to initially develop the process and generate the reports would be approximately \$25,000. In the future, the district could conduct the research and the annual cost would be approximately \$7,000 for an external evaluator to generate the reports.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

RECOMMENDATION	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	TOTAL 5-YEAR (COSTS) OR SAVINGS	ONE TIME (COSTS) OR SAVINGS
1. Create and adopt districtwide operation procedures for the ISS classrooms.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
2. Create a districtwide training program for ISS staff.	(\$1,950)	(\$1,950)	(\$1,950)	(\$1,950)	(\$1,950)	(\$9,750)	\$0
3. Develop districtwide written procedures for transitioning students from alternative settings back to the regular classroom.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
4. Develop a comprehensive districtwide evaluation design for all alternative placement options.	\$0	(\$7,000)	(\$7,000)	(\$7,000)	(\$7,000)	(\$28,000)	(\$25,000)
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>(\$1,950)</b>	<b>(\$8,950)</b>	<b>(\$8,950)</b>	<b>(\$8,950)</b>	<b>(\$8,950)</b>	<b>(\$37,750)</b>	<b>(\$25,000)</b>

