

New Tools for Policymakers

The Texas Smart Schools Approach to Identifying Effective and Efficient Schools

A presentation to the National Summit on Education Reform

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Texas Smart Schools

- This online resource empowers school districts to benchmark themselves against their peers and enables parents (and taxpayers) to assess the quality of education their children are receiving compared to its cost
- The goal is to improve education by
 - identifying Smart Schools that are both effective and efficient then
 - highlighting their successful practices





Searching for Success

TXSmartSchools uses academic, financial, and demographic data to identify school districts and campuses that produce high academic achievement while also maintaining cost-effective operations.

We hope that school districts and education policymakers will use this information to identify Texas schools worth emulating—those facing similar challenges and spending similar dollars but that are able to achieve great things.



Compare Schools Easily

The heart of the TXSmartSchools website is the *Apples2Apples* data exploration tool that enables you to interact with Texas public school and district data.

Just pick any Texas school or district — or several schools and districts — and *Apples2Apples* will retrieve the data and suggest fiscal peers for comparison.



TXSmartSchools News

Welcome to TXSmartSchools.org, a resource for Texans interested in school effectiveness and efficiency.

5/18/2017

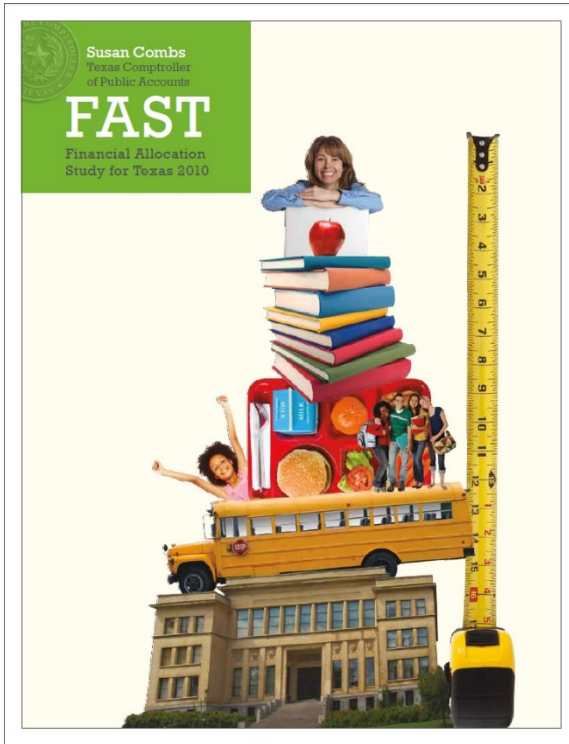
The 2017 Smart Scores are here! See the Five-Star districts and campuses on the [Latest Results](#) page and explore the data using the [Apples2Apples](#) comparison tool.

5/11/2017

The 2017 data release is almost ready. For a sneak peek you can read our first *Smart Steps* article based on that data, "What's Not to Love about Shared Service Arrangements?"



Origins and History



- In 2009 the Texas legislature directed the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts to “identify school districts and campuses that use resource allocation practices that contribute to high academic achievement and cost-effective operations”
- Former comptroller, Susan Combs, and her team developed the Financial Allocation Study for Texas (FAST) to meet that challenge
- The Texas Smart Schools Initiative was initially funded by Susan Combs to build on and improve the work started by FAST



The Core Philosophy: Apples-to-Apples Comparisons

- Differences in educational context have to be taken into consideration to make fair comparisons among schools and districts
- Two dimensions of comparison
 - Academic progress
 - Real expenditures



Measuring Academic Progress

- Value added measure of student gains on the Texas accountability instruments
 - STAAR exams
 - End of Course (EOC) exams
- Adjusted for differences in prior performance and key student characteristics
 - Grade level, sex, race/ethnicity
 - Free or reduced-price lunch status, LEP status, special education status, and gifted and talented status



Measuring Real Expenditures

- Each school or district has a unique set of fiscal peers that are its nearest-neighbor matches on key dimensions of educational cost
 - Size
 - Labor cost
 - Student need
- Spending at the school and district level measured relative to those fiscal peers



The Real Spending Index

- Based on operating expenditures per pupil in core educational functions
 - Instruction and related
 - Instructional leadership
 - School leadership
 - Student support services
 - Extracurricular activities
 - Central administration
 - Maintenance, security, and data processing



2017 San Antonio ISD

Legend

- Fiscal Peers
- ◆ SAN ANTONIO ISD

SAN ANTONIO ISD

53,035 students
view all campuses
BEXAR COUNTY, REGION 20
TEA Rating: Met Standard



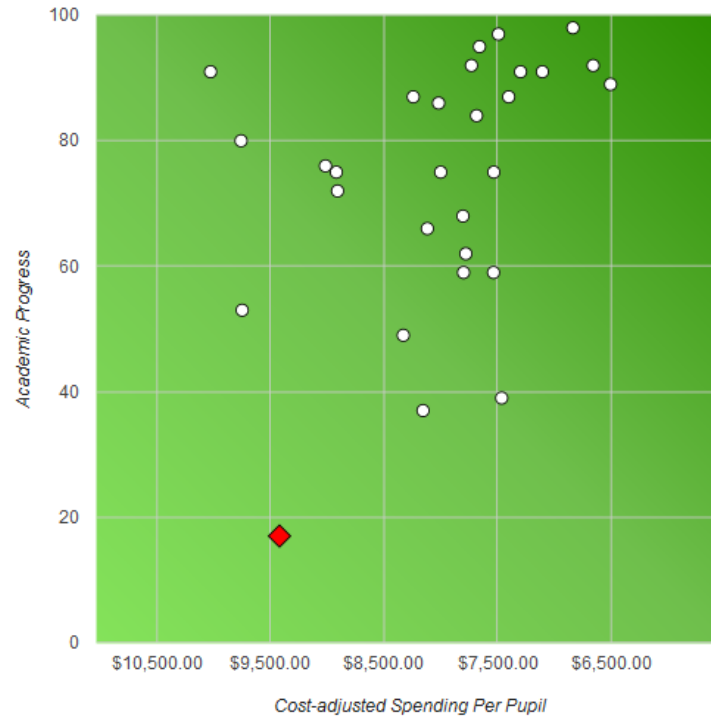
Smart Score

2017

Very Low Academic Progress
at or above 17% of all districts
Very High Spending compared to
fiscal peers
\$9,421.00 cost-adjusted spending
per pupil

This report shows SAN ANTONIO ISD compared to its **Smart Fiscal Peers**. You may choose your own group of districts to compare by selecting several districts.

Cost-adjusted Spending Per Pupil vs. Academic Progress



The Campus Spending Index

- Based on operating expenditures per pupil in a **subset** of core educational functions
 - Instruction and related
 - Instructional leadership
 - School leadership
 - Student support services
 - ~~– Extracurricular activities~~
 - ~~– Central administration~~
 - ~~– Maintenance, security and data processing~~



Choose Campuses to View in Apples2Apples

Year

To see detailed data and visualizations for your campus, first, select the school district or begin typing its name in the **Districts** box. Then, click the **Filter Campuses** > button.

Select the campus or begin typing its name in the **Campuses** box. **Choose only one campus to see how it compares to its closest peers.**

To create a custom data table, select more than one campus. You can select multiple campuses one at a time in the **Campuses** box. You can also select all campuses matching one or more selection criteria. See **Help** for more details.

When you're ready to see the results, click the **Show Me** > button.

1. Choose a District to filter the Campuses selection list (optional)

Districts
 [Filter Campuses >](#)

2. Choose a Campus and/or Other Selection Criteria

Campuses
 [Show Me >](#)

And show all school districts matching the following criteria.

Show Only Charter Campuses

Counties

Smart Score

School Type

Legend

- Fiscal Peers
- ARCADIA PARK EL

ARCADIA PARK EL

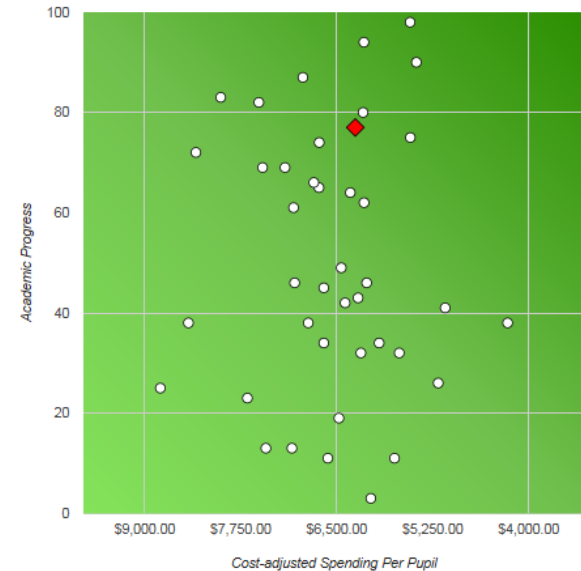
695 students
 DALLAS ISD
 TEA Rating: Met Standard

★★★★★
 Smart Score
2017

High Academic Progress
 at or above 77% of all districts
 Low Spending compared to fiscal peers
 \$6,255.33 cost-adjusted spending per pupil

This report shows ARCADIA PARK EL compared to its **Smart fiscal peers**. You may **choose your own group of campuses** to compare against ARCADIA PARK EL.

Cost-adjusted Spending Per Pupil vs. Academic Progress



Want to learn more about how Smart Scores are assigned? Details can be found on our methodology page.

see as table



Conclusions

- The TSS Academic Progress measure augments the extensive Texas accountability system with value-added measures of student academic progress
- The TSS Real Spending Index allows comparisons among districts and schools facing the same sorts of challenges
- TSS shows schools that it is possible to accomplish more than they already do without any increase in resources

