



#### **News release**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**September 22, 2011**

## **Bay Area Houston school superintendents discuss the changing face of public education**

**BAY AREA HOUSTON, TEXAS** – On Sept. 22, 2011, the Education & Workforce Development Committee of the Bay Area Houston Economic Partnership hosted a panel discussion, which featured five area school superintendents, to discuss “The changing face of public education” in the Bay Area Houston region. Superintendents participating on the panel were Lloyd W. Graham, La Porte ISD; Trish Hanks, Friendswood ISD; Dr. Kirk Lewis, Pasadena ISD; Vicki Mims, Dickinson ISD; and Dr. Greg Smith, Clear Creek ISD.

Robert Ellis opened the meeting with welcoming comments and an introduction of elected officials and new members Pinnacle Asset Integrity Services and Griffis Law Firm. Ellis is group president, Wyle, Integrated Science and Engineering Group and also serves as chairman of BAHEP’s board of directors. Harv Hartman, chairman of BAHEP’s Education & Workforce Development Committee, was the event moderator.

### **Funding challenges and demographic changes discussed**

Hartman noted that the two main topics of the discussion would center around funding challenges and the demographic changes that are affecting each of the independent school districts. He presented six charts that served to preface the discussion which followed. The charts outlined statewide enrollment in Texas public schools since 1987, the reductions in state funding for the above school districts made by the 82<sup>nd</sup> Texas Legislature, enrollment by ethnicity in Texas public schools since 1999, the change in the Hispanic population as a percent of total students since 2000 in the above school districts, the change in white student demographics as a percent of total students since 2000 in the above school districts, and the enrollment of

economically disadvantaged students in Texas public schools since 1999. (Scroll to the end of this article to view each chart.)

Hartman reported that there are now five million students in Texas public schools with 80,000 – 90,000 students being added each year. The school environment is changing rapidly, and the school districts have less state funding to assist in dealing with the changes. Each of the school superintendents spoke of the ways in which the funding challenges are being met.

#### **Dr. Greg Smith, Clear Creek ISD**

Dr. Greg Smith reported that his district has eliminated 171 positions in administration, support personnel, and teachers over the past two years while gaining over 1,400 students. Fortunately, he added, this has been accomplished through attrition; however, he also stated, “You can see the train wreck occurring, and something drastic needs to be done if we are going to continue to hold public education up as the backbone of democracy.” Smith said that his school district is doing everything that it can do in order not to raise taxes.

#### **Vicki Mims, Dickinson ISD**

Vicki Mims explained that Dickinson ISD has to cut \$4 million from its budget. Although 18 percent of the budget is discretionary, it isn’t in actuality. Building insurance, utilities, and bus fuel are paid for through the discretionary funds. She reported on the many ways the district has made budget cuts and also noted that class sizes had to be increased, as well.

#### **Dr. Kirk Lewis, Pasadena ISD**

Dr. Kirk Lewis explained that Pasadena ISD is considered a property poor school district by the State of Texas. He said that most people don’t realize that only a small portion of the companies located along the Houston Ship Channel, and the revenue they produce, fall within the district’s boundaries. The district has been in a budget cutting mode for the past five years. Three years ago, 120 positions were cut with half of those being teachers. They just cut 152 more teacher units and 150 more administrative / staff positions. Spending was reduced, and low enrollment programs were eliminated, as well.

#### **Trish Hanks, Friendswood ISD**

Trish Hanks was filled with emotion when she said, “As a mother, as a grandmother, I don’t understand how we can settle for less in education for our children. This is my tenth year as a superintendent, and I see us in this state going in the wrong direction for education for our students.” She reported that Friendswood has laid off seven percent of its staff over the past two years. It is anticipated that another three percent will be laid off, as well. The funds that the district has in reserve will be totally depleted by 2015 unless there is a full tax rate increase or without significant cuts to students.

#### **Lloyd Graham, La Porte ISD**

La Porte’s Lloyd Graham began his presentation speaking of leadership. Saying that leadership is a call to service, he thanked those in attendance for their service to the community. He then reported that for the first time since 1949, Texas has not fully funded schools to the level of the prior year. La Porte ISD is facing a cut in funding of \$8.8 million over two years and has lost 175 employees. The employees lost have included positions ranging from administrators to cafeteria

monitors. He said, “Life has changed in public schools, and in La Porte ISD, we’re solvent and we’re liquid. Our motto is live until ’13 and survive until ’15.”

### **Dickinson ISD demographics**

The superintendents then addressed the major shift in demographics which is occurring across Texas. Mims stated that Dickinson ISD’s demographics mirror those of Texas with a declining white population, rising Hispanic population, a Limited English Proficiency population at approximately 11 percent, and an economically disadvantaged population at 62 percent.

### **Pasadena ISD demographics**

Pasadena’s demographic shift happened a long time ago, around 1991, according to Lewis. Pasadena ISD is 81 percent Hispanic, 8 percent African American, and 8 percent Anglo. He said, “Demographics don’t bother me anymore, and they don’t bother our teachers. We teach kids, and that’s what it’s all about.” He noted that the critical number on the demographic reports is the economically disadvantaged. PISD’s economically disadvantaged students stand at 83 percent. To challenge these students to dream beyond what they think they know about what life can be for them is what the real challenge is in the demographic matrix, Lewis stated.

### **Freindswood ISD demographics**

Hanks reported that the trend in Friendswood ISD mirrors the state, but its numbers are so much smaller. The district has seen a 250 percent increase in its Hispanic population in the last eight years. The economically disadvantaged students have quadrupled. Due to the fact that Friendswood ISD is such a small district, it doesn’t receive any federal funding to help with these students. Hanks said that they depend a lot on volunteers to work with these children, which is possible due to the size of this population.

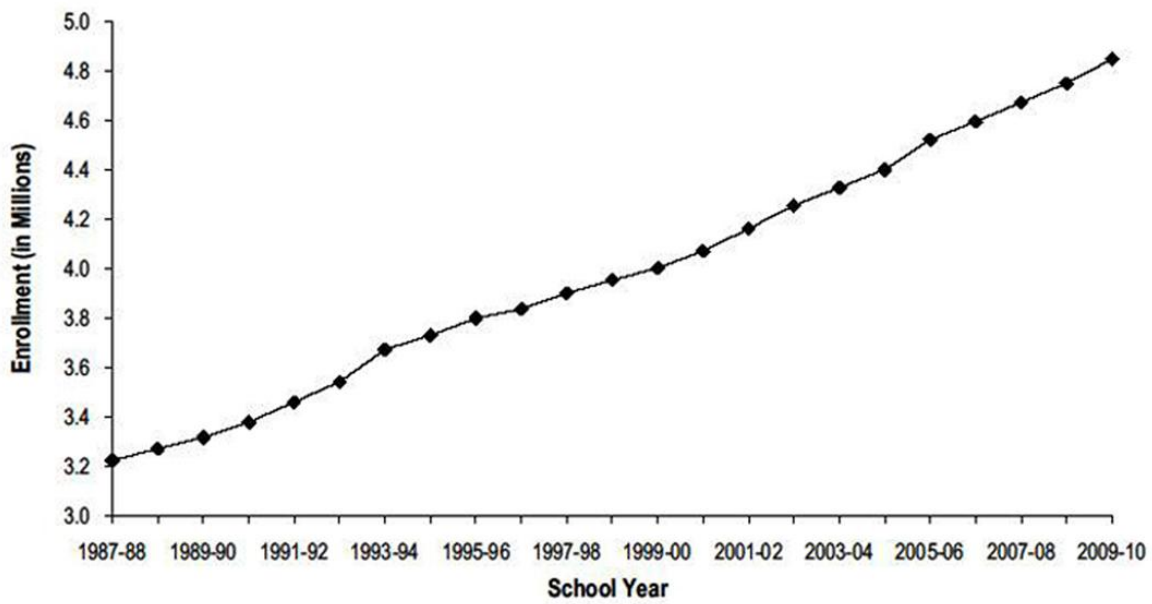
### **La Porte ISD demographics**

Poverty numbers have doubled in La Porte ISD over the last 10 years as they have in the state. The Limited English Proficiency numbers have doubled. Schools are facing more complex educational needs with a reduction in assets. The economic fragility of the home and the way it manifests itself in life experiences is the major contributing factor to the reason children find it difficult to learn according to Graham.

### **It’s not Kansas anymore**

CCISD’s Smith made closing comments. He noted that one subject that had not been touched on was the number of homeless students. Last year in Clear Creek ISD alone there were 800 homeless students who are being passed around from family to family, family to friend, family to car, family to nowhere. Addressing the needs of these students takes considerable resources. Smith also informed the audience that there are 60 different languages that are spoken by the students within CCISD. He restated some of the many challenges that are facing every one of the school districts. “I know it’s not Kansas anymore,” he declared. “Do you know it’s not Kansas anymore?” he asked.

### Statewide Enrollment, Texas Public Schools, 1987-88 Through 2009-10



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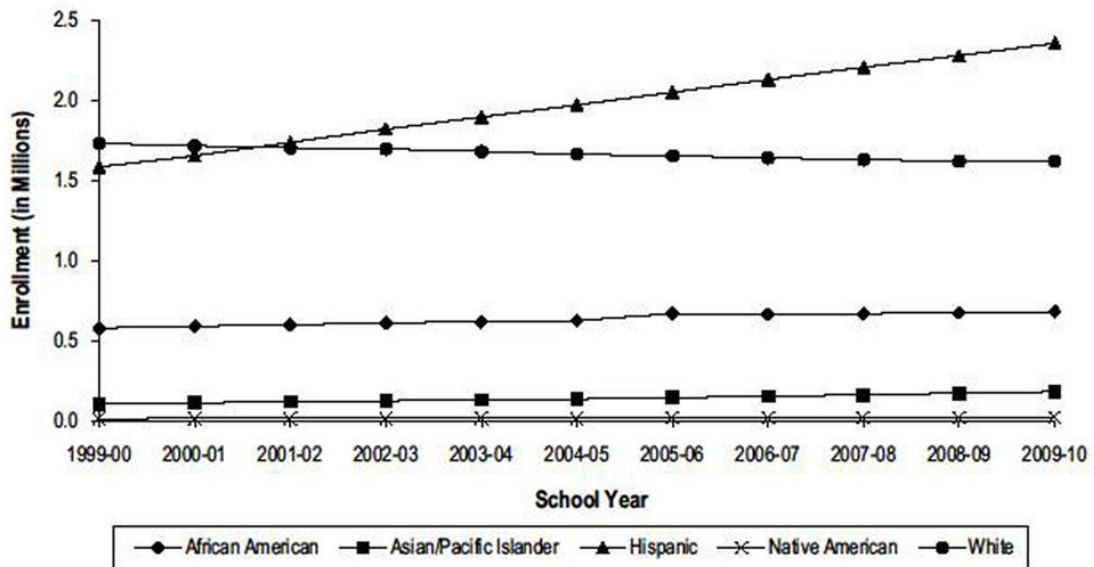
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Year	Number
1989-90	3,316,785
1999-00	4,002,227
2009-10	4,847,844

## Reductions in state funding made by the 82<sup>nd</sup> Texas Legislature

<u>District</u>	<u>11/12</u>	<u>12/13</u>	<u>2 YR LOSS</u>
Clear Creek	-\$14.5M	-\$7.5M	-\$36.5 M
Dickinson	-\$3.9M	-\$1.1M	-\$8.9 M
Friendswood	-\$2.9M	-\$1.2M	-\$7.0 M
La Porte	-\$2.9M	-\$5.9M	-\$8.8 M
Pasadena	<u>-\$17.5M</u>	<u>-\$5.8M</u>	<u>-\$40.8 M</u>
Total	-\$41.7 M	-\$21.5M	-\$102.0M

**Enrollment by Ethnicity, Texas Public Schools, 1999-00 Through 2009-10**

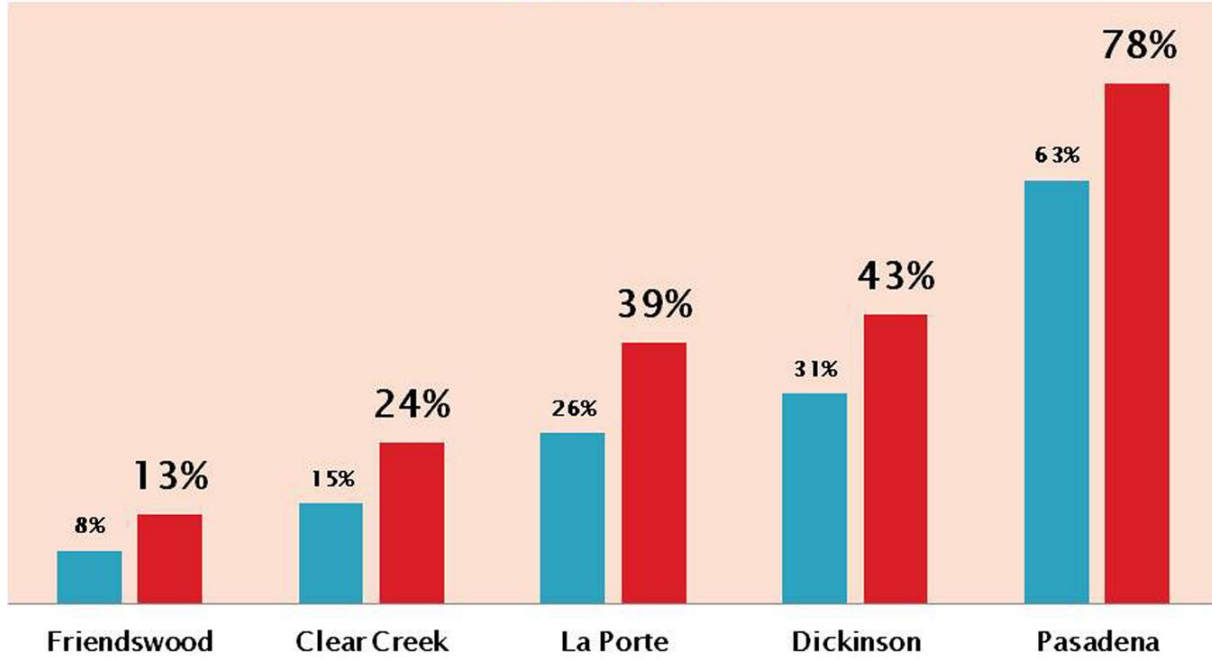


**Enrollment by Ethnicity, Texas Public Schools, 1990-00 Through 2009-10**

Year	Hispanic		White	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
1999 -00	1,582,538	39.5	1,727,733	43.2
2009-10	2,354,042	48.6	1,615,459	33.3
10 Year Change	771,504	48.8	-112,274	-6.5

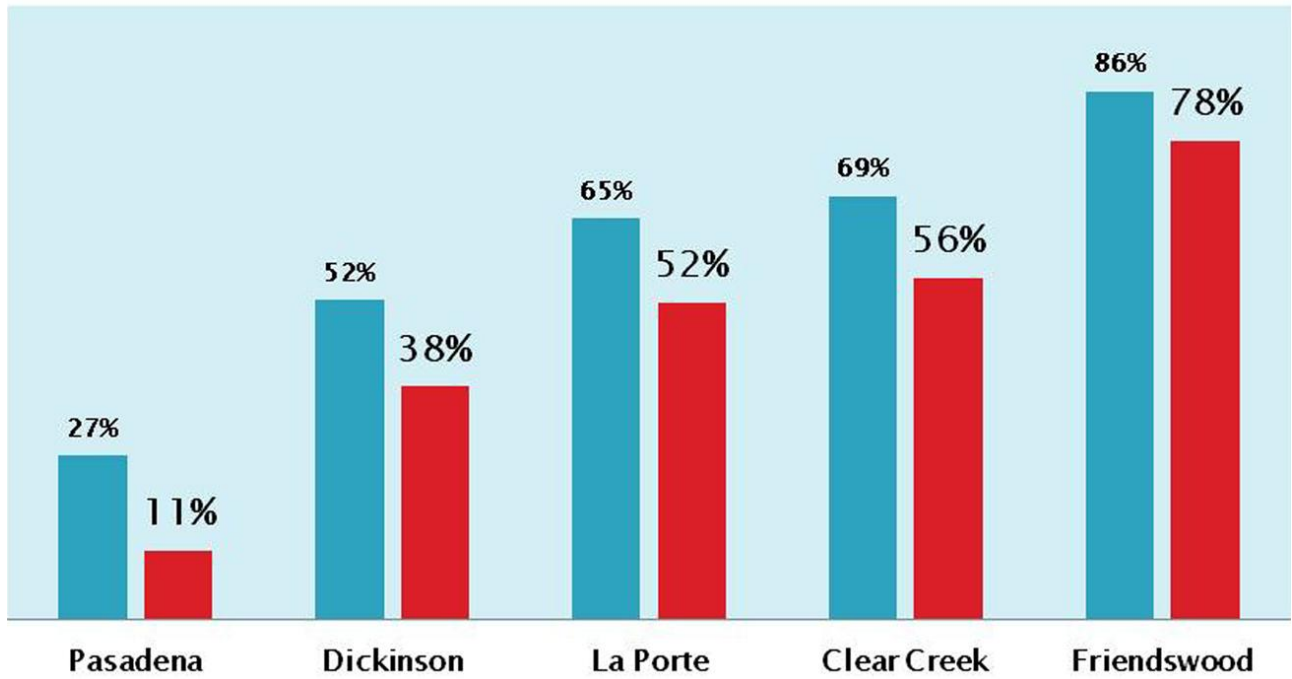
## Change in Hispanic Population (As a Percent of Total Students)

■ 2000 ■ 2010

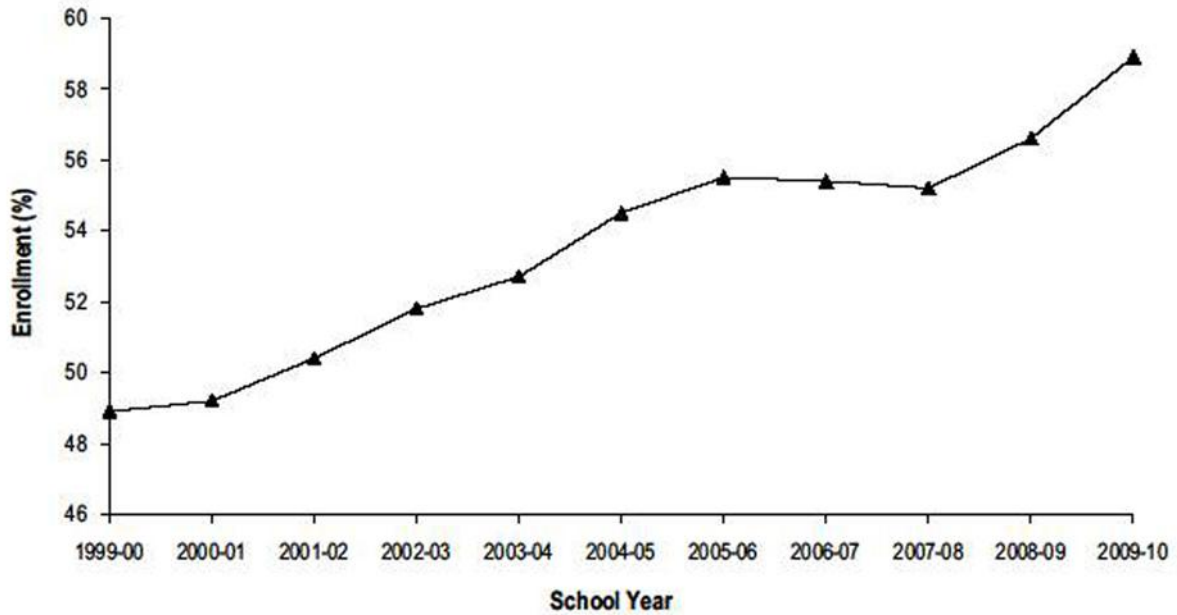


## Change in White Student Demographics (As a Percent of Total Students)

■ 2000 ■ 2010



**Enrollment of Economically Disadvantaged Students, Texas Public Schools, 1999-00 Through 2009-10**



**Enrollment of Economically Disadvantaged Students, Texas Public Schools, 1999-00 Through 2009-10**

Year	Number	Percent
1999-00	1,956,000	48.9
2009-10	2,853,177	58.9
10-year change	897,177	45.9

**The Bay Area Houston Economic Partnership** is a member-driven organization that provides the leadership to stimulate regional economic development and employment in southeast Texas. Its members include more than 260 investor companies, business professionals, local governments, and educational institutions encompassing 13 cities, Galveston and Harris counties, and the Port of Houston Authority. Visit [www.bayareahouston.com](http://www.bayareahouston.com).

**Space Alliance Technology Outreach Program** is administered by the Bay Area Houston Economic Partnership. It is a State of Texas funded initiative designed to transfer the knowledge and technology of the U.S. Space Program to small businesses to solve technical challenges they are unable to solve themselves. Visit [www.spacetechnologies.com/bahep](http://www.spacetechnologies.com/bahep).