



School Accountability Report Card 2002-2003

Helix High School: A California Charter School

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Mission Statement and Principles

Helix High School is a college preparatory charter school dedicated to support each student in the attainment of his or her highest academic potential. The educational focus is designed to foster an individual's self-development and personal responsibility that will prepare the student for success in college, career, and adult life. Helix recognizes that a student's education is a shared responsibility between school and family.

Fundamental Principles

1. All students are connected to school and learning through greater personalization and interaction between peers and adults.
2. All students are active learners; all teachers are facilitators of learning.
3. All students demonstrate powerful learning through the production of significant work; all teachers design powerful curriculum.
4. All students, through interdisciplinary work, transfer knowledge to real world situations.
5. All students achieve and remain in school because they comprehend the connection between school work and the world of work.

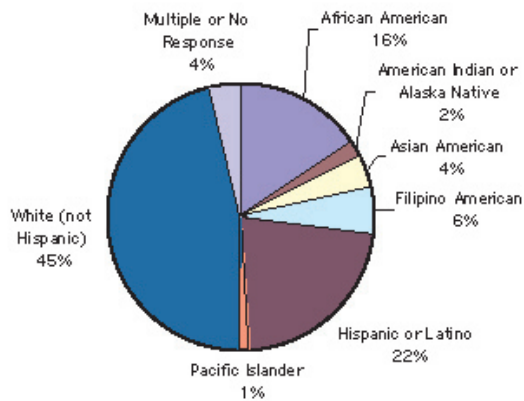
About Helix High School

Description

Helix High School was built in 1952. It is located in La Mesa, California, a suburb of San Diego. Helix received its charter in 1998, making it one of the first comprehensive charter high schools in California. It is part of the Grossmont Union High School District. Helix's zoned district serves parts of La Mesa, Lemon Grove and Spring Valley; however, as a charter school, all high school students in the state of California are eligible to attend.

Enrollment and Demographics

The chart on the next page illustrates the percentage of students at Helix in each racial/ethnic category. These totals were obtained by dividing the total number of students in each category by Helix's enrollment according the California Basic Educational Data System (CBEDS), which was 2,432 for the 2002-2003 school year.



Faculty and Staff

Helix employs 112 teachers. Of these teachers, 107 hold full California State Teaching Credentials and are teaching within their subject area. There are four teachers hired with Emergency Credentials and seven teachers with waivers (a teacher may hold one or more types of credential. As a result, the totals may not match). As a charter school, Helix finds it important that people with the best knowledge of the subject matter teach certain courses; therefore, waivers have been granted to individuals with special knowledge and experience who do not currently have teaching credentials. All seven of the teachers with waivers are currently enrolled in a credential program.

In the event that a teacher is absent, a qualified substitute is provided by the District. It appears that there have not been any problems with the District securing qualified substitutes.

The majority of the teachers (78.9%) have more than 30 units of education beyond a bachelors degree. There are 47 teachers (41.9%) who have earned their Masters Degrees. The average number of years of teaching experience is 11.3. Helix's Pupil to Teacher ratio was 21.7 to 1.

For the 2002-2003 school year, Helix employed three-and-a-half full-time equivalent counselors and three Guidance Information Specialists (GIS). The ratio of pupils per academic counselor was 374 to 1. Beginning in 2003-2004, the administrative staff will be divided into grade level teams. Each grade will be served by a vice-principal, an administrative assistant, a counselor and a GIS. Each team will serve their students for their entire four-year career at Helix.

Helix also employed one librarian, a psychologist, a full-time nurse, a full-time Speech/Language/Hearing Specialist, interpreters for hearing-impaired students, and a full-time Career Technical Advisor in 2002-2003. As a Digital High School, the school has an expansive Technical Support Department. These employees are available to students and staff and have the expertise to handle hardware, software and network issues. Though the grant for Digital High School has ended, the Technical Support Department has proven to be very valuable and will remain as part of the staff.

School Facilities

Helix was built in 1952 and currently has a capacity of 1,852. There are currently 100 classrooms. Helix is 52 years old and is in desperate need of remodeling in order to be brought up

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to current standards. The antiquated electrical system cannot adequately support the electronic equipment in widespread use, such as multiple printers, projectors, theater lighting, etc. Floors, ceilings and walls are in disrepair and contain hazardous materials such as asbestos and lead paint. Only a major refurbishing funded by the success of a bond measure will solve the problems.

Over the past several years, there have been various efforts to improve the appearance of the school. The Helix Foundation sponsored several improvement projects focusing on painting classrooms, polishing floors, cleaning windows and other cosmetic improvements. Helix provides an adequate learning facility; however, major upgrading to the basic infrastructure is necessary in order for Helix to maintain an ideal learning environment.

Plans for Improvement

Helix's Facilities team has made great efforts to note improvements needed on campus. Many students also see the needs on campus and may choose to complete a campus improvement project as part of their Senior Project. It has also been decided by the Grossmont Union High School District Board that a bond measure will be placed on the March 2004 ballot. Should the bond be approved, the project list for coming years will be considerably more extensive. The following projects were slated for completion by our Facilities staff within the 2002-2003 or 2003-2004 school years:

- Create lower parking lot in front of school
- Relocate/replace portables
- Replace stadium field with synthetic grass
- Remodel Vice Principals' offices, GIS Offices and Attendance Office to accommodate grade level team model
- Paint room 320 (senior project)
- Paint and carpet staff lounge (room 235) (senior project)
- Recarpet rooms 230, 170 and 190
- Replace JV Baseball Field (community project)
- Paint Girls' PE building (senior project)
- Convert unused Autoshop into weightroom

Opportunities for Parental Involvement

Helix Charter High School offers many opportunities for parents to become involved with their children's educational experience:

PTSA

The PTSA serves as a link between the parent community and Helix. The executive board is comprised of parent volunteers, staff members and students. The PTSA sponsors many student programs. All parents are eligible to join PTSA and participate in their activities.

Effective Parent Partnerships Coordinator

Helix has a faculty member responsible for community outreach. David Watkins (ext.

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environment

398) facilitates the Helix Community Outreach Program (HCOP), which involves monthly town-hall meetings and home visits. At the town-hall meetings, teachers, administrators and other community resource people meet with parents at various locations throughout the community to discuss, inform, communicate, relate, etc. HCOP also provides teacher visitation to the homes of students for whom parents and teachers feel the visit would be helpful. Funding is provided by a grant issued by the state in relation to California State Assembly Bill 33.

Helix Charter Board

The Helix Charter Board is the governing board for the school and is responsible for making policy decisions for the Helix campus. The Board has two parent representatives; one appointed by PTSA and one elected by all parents. There is also a community representative appointed by the Board, which may or may not be a parent. For more information, please contact Sharon Church in the principal's office (ext. 112).

The Helix High School Foundation (HHSF)

The HHSF facilitates fundraising, which promotes the growth and improvement of the programs, facilities and activities at Helix. Funds raised by the HHSF are used to supplement funding from the state. The HHSF was created in 1994 as a non-profit public benefit corporation. It has provided funding for various projects through a grant program. It also facilitates a Scrip program that allows students to accrue funds to be spent on items purchased from Helix, such as gym clothes, yearbooks, dance bids, etc. All parents are eligible to join the HHSF and participate in its activities.

Focus Groups/Committees

There are many Focus Groups and Committees at Helix that rely on the input of parents and other community members to effectively meet their objectives. These include, but are not limited to, Graduation Requirements Group, Principal's Evaluation Committee, Career Paths Committee (which have parents/community members).

Senior Boards Judging Panels

As part of the Senior Project, a graduation requirement at Helix, all Seniors must participate in Senior Boards. The Boards require that the students make a presentation relating to their Senior Project. The students present to a panel of judges who have expertise related to the subject of the Senior Project. The panel of judges is composed of faculty members, parents and other community members. Parents are encouraged to participate as judges in Boards that match their areas of expertise. For more information, contact Elena Christian (ext. 359).

Summer conferencing/scheduling

Helix students register for classes over the summer. Students and their parents meet with their counselors. This allows the parents to take an active role in determining their children's educational path through Helix. For more information, contact the Vice Principals' office to be directed to the proper grade level team contact.

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Performing Arts Booster Clubs

The Instrumental and Vocal Music programs are supported by parent booster clubs. These booster clubs allow parents the opportunity to work with the directors of the programs and provide support by assisting with the activities in which the groups participate. For more information, contact Russ Sperling (Instrumental Music, ext. 351) or John Lindhorst (Vocal Music, ext. 356).

English Learners Advisory Committee

Parents of students in the English Language Learners program serve on this Committee and provide input into the program. The Committee has regularly scheduled meetings as needed. For more information, contact Martha Foncerrada (ext. 127).

Spring Fling

Each spring, incoming freshmen and their families are invited on campus to register, meet with departments, and explore extra-curricular clubs and sports. For more information, contact the current twelfth-grade level team in the Vice Principals' office.

Parent Training/Workshops

As needed, training and workshops are provided for parents. Examples include computer training, study skills, how to talk to your child, etc. For more information, contact Martha Foncerrada (ext. 127).

Grade Level Parent Information Meetings

Each grade level team conducts meetings as needed to disseminate information regarding colleges, entrance requirements, financial aid, etc. For more information, contact the Vice Principals' office to be directed to the proper grade level team contact.

School Safety

School Safety Plan

Helix has a comprehensive safety plan that has been presented to faculty/staff and students. A safety training is conducted annually to ensure that everyone on campus is aware of the procedures to follow in case of a emergency (including, but not limited to, earthquake, fire, or an incident requiring that the campus be secured for any length of time).

Resource Officer

Helix employs a School Resource Officer who is a sworn officer with the La Mesa Police Department. This officer is available to handle all incidents that may involve criminal activity or present any danger to the students and employees of the school. The School Resource Officer Program has been in effect since July 2000. The program was instituted as a result of the COPS in Schools Grant Program and is intended to improve student attendance and communication with parents and community, while decreasing violence, as well as drug and gang activity on campus. The presence of a School Resource Officer has resulted in an increase in student arrest activities and truancy sweeps and improved attendance. While the grant funding has ended, Helix still partners with the La Mesa Police Department to provide a School Resource Officer.



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Safety Focus Group

Helix's Safety Focus Group is responsible for reviewing issues involving safety on campus, including the Safety Plan. The Safety Focus Group's most recent activity was the review of Lesson's Commission's report and the results of a student survey regarding safety issues.

Identification Badges

All students, faculty and staff are required to wear photo ID badges that are visible at all times. This assists in the identification of individuals who may not belong on campus.

Closed Campus

Helix is a closed campus, meaning all students are required to be on campus during their school hours, including lunch time and passing periods. All visitors are required to check in at the front office for access to the campus.

Promoting a Positive Learning Environment

On a student survey, student responses to questions related to the treatment of students by office staff, teachers and administrators indicate a positive trend since 1997. The school's goal of creating a climate of mutual respect continues to show signs of improvement. Helix's programs and practices foster a climate that promotes a positive learning environment.

Student Handbook

Each student is provided with a Student Handbook that outlines Helix's Behavior Expectations, which includes sections of the California Education Code. The Behavior Code is enforced by teachers and administrators and is part of maintaining order on campus, contributing to a positive learning environment.

Lock Out

Students who are late to class are sent to a study hall for that period. This eliminates distractions to class caused by late students entering during regular class activities. The absence is recorded as an unexcused absence and is designed to be a negative consequence for being late, which can discourage students from purposely being late in order to be sent to Lock Out. Students, consequently, make an increased effort to be on time.

Advisory

During their freshman year, students are assigned to a teacher to serve as their advisor for their high school career. The Advisory groups meet each Wednesday during the school year. The Advisor's role is to assist the students in directing their high school careers to attain their goals. The Advisor may also coordinate activities tailored to the students' goals. Students remain with the same Advisor throughout their four years at Helix and each Advisor's group of Advisees are from the same grade level.

Tutorial

Each Wednesday, teachers are available for an hour before classes begin to provide individual attention to students needing assistance in any aspect of their coursework. Students can also use the tutorial period to make up exams or missed days in Physical

Education classes. Each of the departments provide tutorial periods on designated days after school. The library remains open until 4:00 p.m. for students' use and the Computer Lab is available after school.

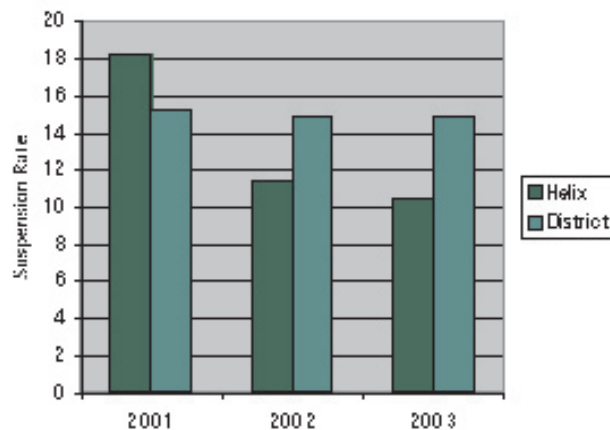
Extended Learning (ExL)

This course allows 9th and some 10th grade students to study and complete homework, research projects, and reading necessary for other classes under the supervision of an adult aide. Students have the opportunity to practice a variety of learning skills that will be useful in all class settings. Students are expected to maintain a calendar or assignment sheet of all class work. All 9th students are assigned to ExL and are only released early when they demonstrate that they can maintain a GPA of 3.0 or above.

Suspensions

Suspensions have declined over the last two years, after a sharp increase in the number and rate of suspensions in 2000-2001. During the 2000-2001 school year, Helix Administration implemented a system to ensure that students assigned to a Saturday School, Helix's primary method of detention, meet their obligation to attend that detention. If a student does not attend the assigned Saturday School, he or she is given one opportunity to make up the assignment. If the student fails to fulfill his or her obligation, the student will be suspended from school. The implementation of this system, as well as the presence of our School Resource Officer, resulted in the increase in the suspension rate. On the whole, students now realize that not attending Saturday School results in suspension and the majority comply, resulting in a lower suspension rate.

The graph below shows the three-year trend comparison for the suspension rate for Helix and the District:



Expulsions

It is in a student's best interest to remain in school whenever possible. For this reason, expulsion is used as a last resort in extreme cases. While the number of expulsions at Helix remained basically the same from 2001-2002 to 2002-2003, the rate remains extremely low, which is indicative of the safe nature of the campus.

The table on the next page shows the three-year trend comparison for the number of expulsions and the expulsion rate for Helix and the district:

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	Number of Expulsions			Expulsion Rate		
	00-01	01-02	02-03	00-01	01-02	02-03
Helix	0	14	15	0	0.6	0.6
District	174	264	219	.74	1.1	.92

Academic Data

Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR)

Through the California Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program, students in grades 2-11 are tested annually in various subject areas. Currently, the STAR program includes California Standards Tests (CST) in English-language arts and mathematics in grades 2-11, science and history/social science in grades 9-11, and a norm-referenced test, which tests reading, language, and mathematics in grades 2-11, spelling in grades 2-8, and science in grades 9-11.

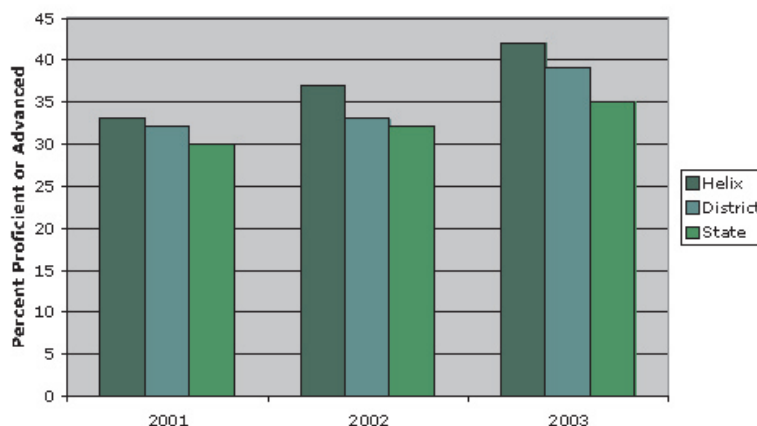
California Standards Tests (CST)

The California Standards Tests (CST) show how well students are doing in relation to the state content standards. Student scores are reported as performance levels. The five performance levels are Advanced (exceeds state standards), Proficient (meets state standards), Basic (approaching state standards), Below Basic (below state standards), and Far Below Basic (well below state standards). Students scoring at the Proficient or Advanced level meet state standards in that content area. Detailed information regarding results for each grade and proficiency level can be found at the California Department of Education Web site at <http://star.cde.ca.gov> or by speaking with the school principal.

English Language Arts

Helix students have outperformed other students in the District and State in percentage of students achieving at the Proficient or Advanced Level (meeting or exceeding the state standards) for the past three years. Percentages have increased each year, as well. The graph below illustrates the percentages of students achieving at the Proficient or Advanced level:

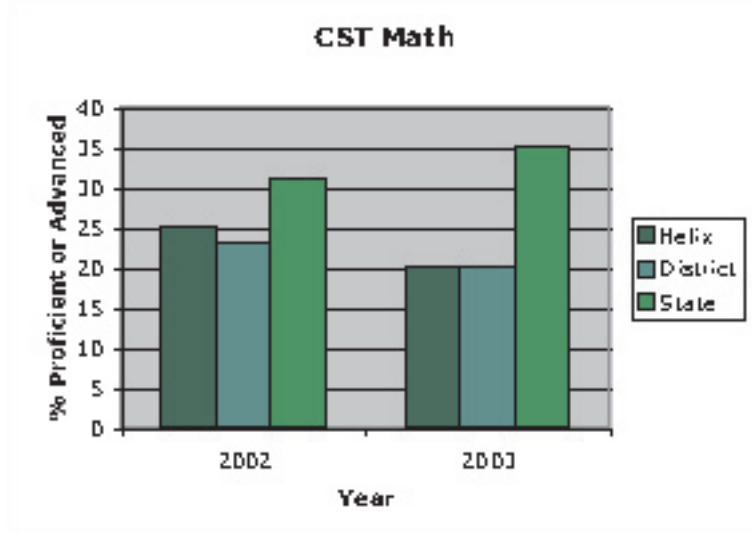
CST English Language Arts



Helix students outperformed other students in the District and State in all grade levels

Mathematics

Helix and the District have both been outperformed in math by students in the rest of the state for the last two years. Helix's scores may be affected by the practice of placing all first year students in Algebra or higher in order to keep them on track for meeting the graduation requirement of Geometry plus one course beyond. Virtually 100% of Helix students are tested in math, compared to a much smaller percentage at other schools. The higher percentage of students tested will usually result in a lower overall achievement rate, due to students who may be less prepared for the testing. It is the goal to have all Helix students test at a proficient rate. At this time, there are only two years of data available for mathematics testing. The graph below illustrates the percentages of students achieving at the Proficient or Advanced level:



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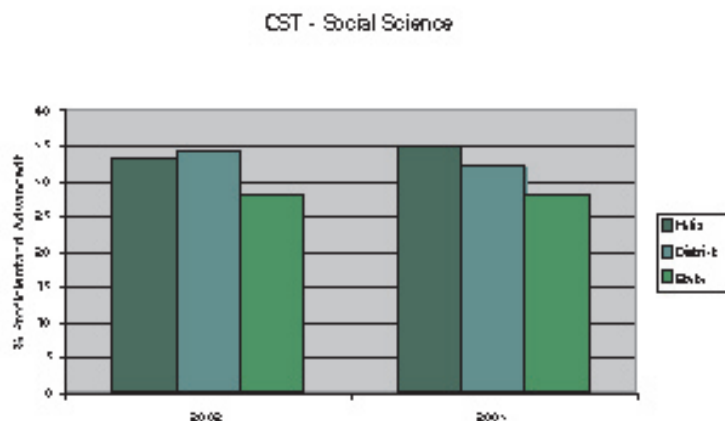
Science

Helix students far outperformed other students in the District and State in 2001-2002, but that percentage dropped dramatically in 2002-2003. The graph below illustrates the percentages of students achieving at the Proficient or Advanced level:



Social Science

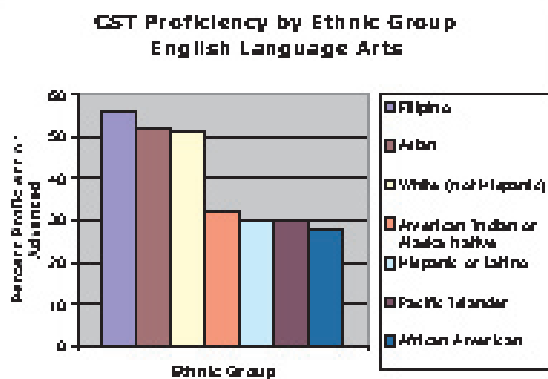
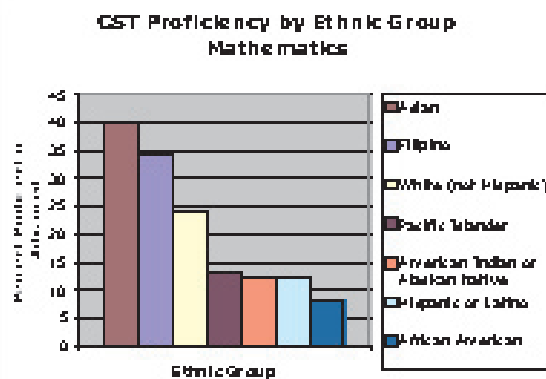
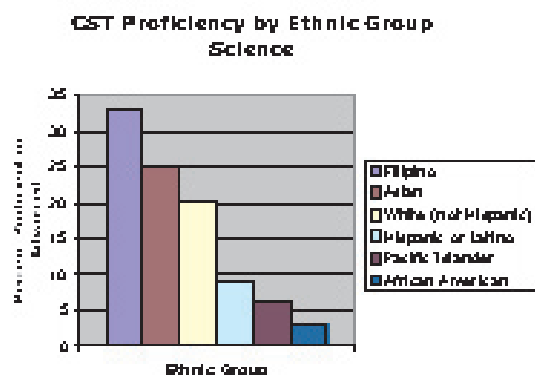
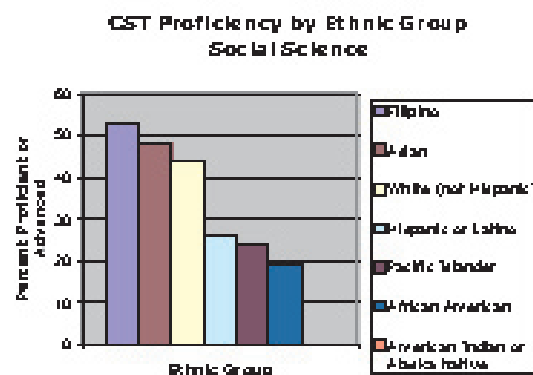
Helix students have outperformed other students in State in percentage of students achieving at the Proficient or Advanced Level for the past two years and outperformed students in the District in 2002-2003. The graph on the next page illustrates the percentages of students achieving at the Proficient or Advanced level:



CST - Racial/Ethnic Groups

Data reported are the percent of students achieving at the proficient or advanced level (meeting or exceeding the state standard). For mathematics, science, and history/social science, data regarding the percent not tested, by grade level and subgroup, are available at <http://star.cde.ca.gov/>. The graphs below illustrate the percent of students achieving at the proficient or advanced level for each measured ethnic group:

Helix students have outperformed other students in State for the past two years and outperformed students in the District in 2002-2003

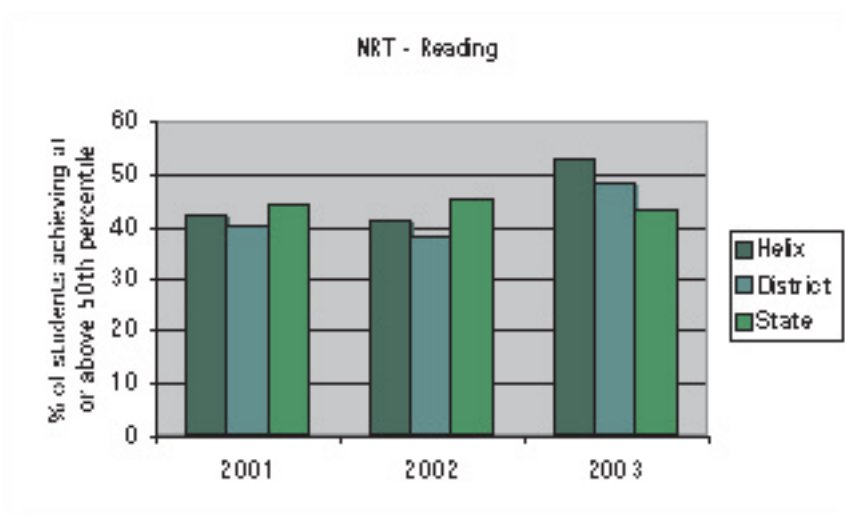


Norm-Referenced Test (NRT)

Reading and mathematics results from the Norm-Referenced Test (NRT), adopted by the State Board of Education (this was the Stanford 9 test up until 2003, but was changed to the California Achievement Test, Sixth Edition for 2003), are reported for each grade level as the percent of tested students scoring at or above the 50th percentile (the national average). School results are compared to results at the district and state levels. Detailed information regarding results for each grade level can be found at the California Department of Education Web site at <http://star.cde.ca.gov/> or by speaking with the school principal.

Reading

For the past three years, Helix students have outperformed other students in the District in percentage of students scoring at or above the 50th percentile. In 2002-2003, the percentage of Helix students scoring at or above the 50th percentile increased from 41 to 53. The District's percentage also increased, while the State's percentage remained about the same. Due to the change in testing, it is difficult to determine to what this increase can be attributed. The graph below illustrates the percentages of students scoring at or above the 50th percentile for the last three years (please note that 2001 and 2002 scores used Stanford 9 testing. 2003's scores use NRT).

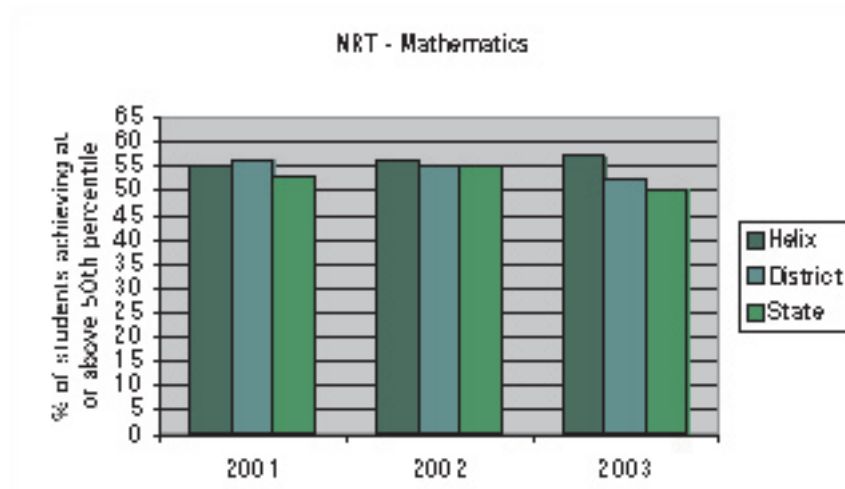


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Mathematics

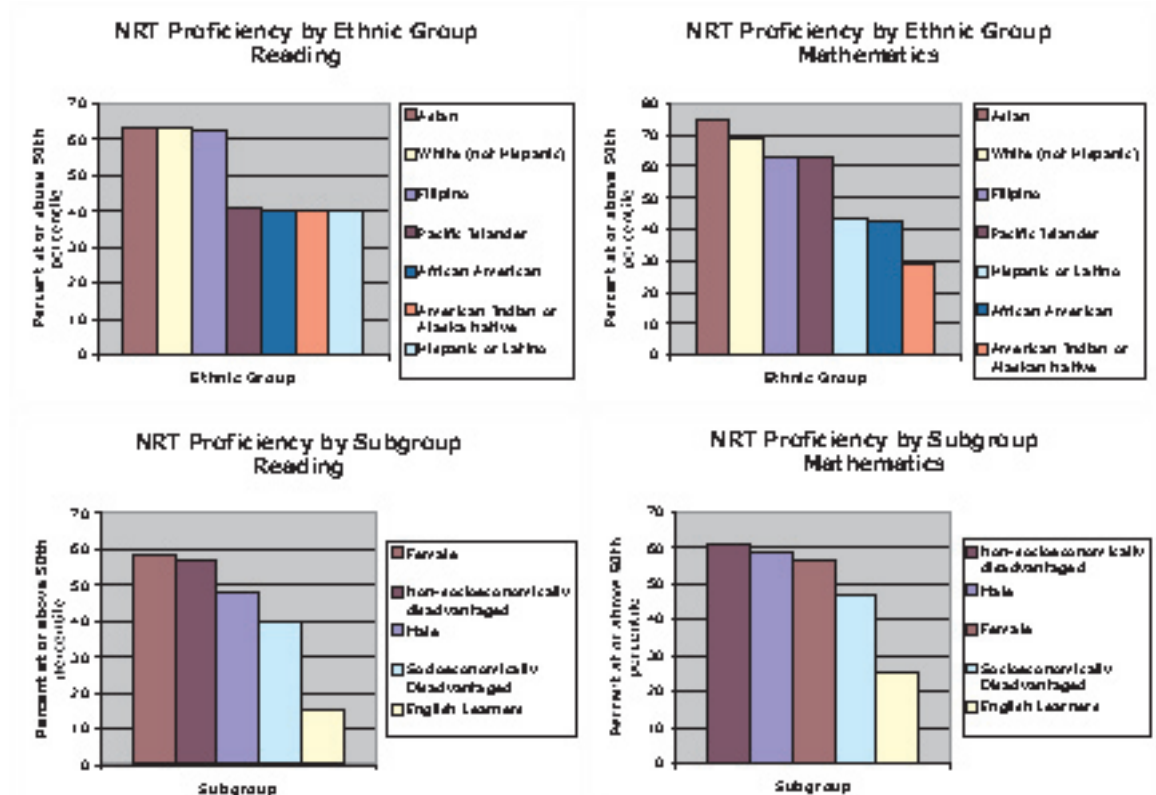
Helix, the District and the State saw similar results in 2000-2001 and 2001-2002. Using the NRT, Helix students' performance improved slightly, while the District and State performance dropped slightly. The graph on the next page illustrates the percentages of students achieving at or above the 50th percentile:

Data for
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Subgroups

Data for standardized testing is provided for several subgroups. These subgroups include gender, race/ethnicity, English learners and socioeconomically disadvantaged. The graphs below show performance for the subgroups:

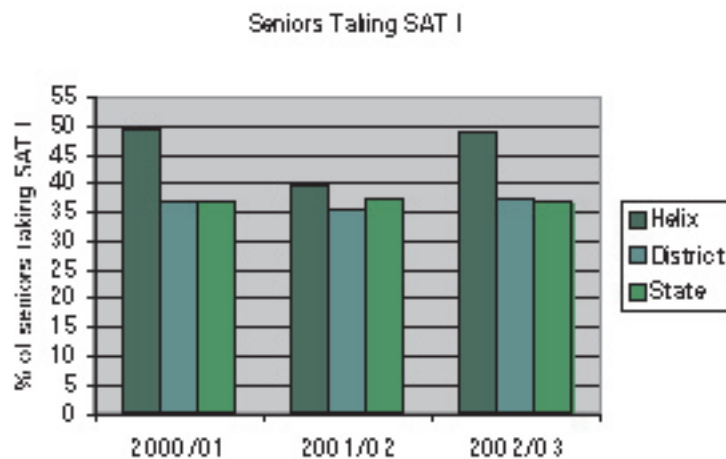


SAT I

The SAT I Reasoning Test, formally known as the Scholastic Assessment Test, is one of the tests available from The College Board that students voluntarily take for college entrance. The SAT I is designed to assess many of the skills that are important to a student's suc-

cess in college. Students may take the test more than once, but only the highest score is reported at the year of graduation.

Percentages of students in the state and the District have remained approximately the same for the past three years. Helix's percentage has been consistently higher than the District and State average during the same period of time. While the percentage of Helix students taking the test dipped dramatically in 2001-2002, it rose just as dramatically in 2002-2003. The graph on the next page illustrates the comparison between Helix, the District and the state regarding percentage of students in Grade 12 taking the SAT:

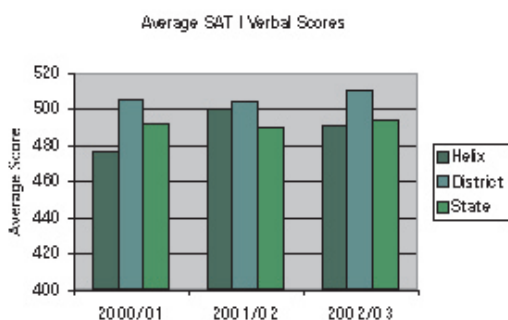
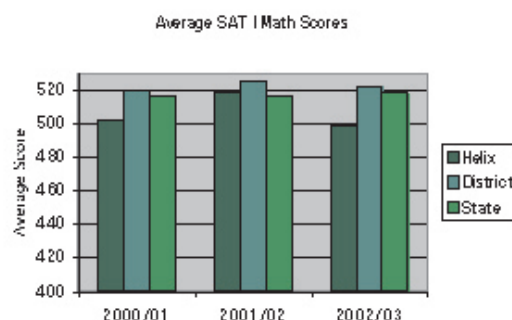


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More Helix students did attempt the test, presumably because the climate at Helix encourages students to take the test and pursue higher education.

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The average scores on both the verbal and math sections have remained virtually the same for the District and state for the past three years. Helix students' average score on both sections declined from 2002 to 2003 (from 500 to 491 on the Verbal portion and from 518 to 499 on the Math portion). More Helix students did attempt the test, presumably because the climate at Helix encourages students to take the test and pursue higher education. It is to be expected that if a higher percentage of students are attempting the test, the average score will be lower. Helix's goal is to have more students taking the test and to achieve higher scores. The graph below shows the average scores for the verbal and math portions of the SAT I for Helix, the District and the state.



California Fitness Test

The California Fitness Test is administered to all ninth graders. Helix ninth graders finished higher than the district and lower than the state percentages in students who scored in the “healthy fitness zone” on all six fitness standards on the California Fitness Test; 16.6% of Helix freshman achieved this standard. At the district level, 4.4% met the standard, while 24.8% of the state’s ninth graders scored in the “healthy fitness zone” on all six standards. Helix implemented a new fitness program for ninth graders in the fall of 2003-2004.

Academic Performance Index (API)

The Academic Performance Index (API) is a score on a scale of 200 to 1000 that annually measures the academic performance and progress of individual schools in California. On an interim basis, the state has set 800 as the API score that schools should strive to meet.

Growth Targets

The annual growth target for a school is 5% of the distance between its base API and 800. Actual growth is the number of API points a school gained between its base and growth years. Schools that reach their annual targets are eligible for monetary awards. Schools that do not meet their targets have a statewide API rank of one to five are eligible to participate in the Immediate Intervention/Underperforming Schools Program (II/USP), which provides resources to schools to improve their academic achievement.

Subgroup APIs and Targets

In addition to a whole-school API, schools also receive API scores for each numerically significant racial/ethnic and socioeconomically disadvantaged subgroup in the school. Growth targets are also set for each of the subgroups. Each subgroup must also meet its target for the school to be identified as having met its target.

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Percentage tested

In order to be eligible for awards, high schools must have at least 90% of their students in grades 9-11 tested.

Statewide Rank

Schools receiving an API score are ranked in ten categories of equal size (deciles) from one (lowest) to ten (highest), according to type of school (elementary, middle or high school).

Similar Schools Rank

This is a comparison of each school with 100 other schools with similar demographic characteristics. Each set of 100 schools is ranked by API score from one (lowest) to ten (highest) to indicate how well the school performed compared to schools most like it.

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API criteria are subject to change as new legislation is enacted into law. More detailed and current information about the API and public school accountability in California can be found at the California Department of Education website at <http://api.cde.ca.gov/> or by speaking with the school principal.

API Base Data				API Growth Data			
	2001	2002	2003		From 2000 to 2001	From 2001 to 2002	From 2002 to 2003
% Tested	95	97	97	% Tested	97	97	97
Base API Score	678	669	688	API Growth Score	673	668	695
Growth Target	6	7	6	Actual Growth	-5	-1	7
Statewide Rank	7	7	7				
Similar Schools Rank	10	7	8				

Helix saw marked improvement in the 2002-2003 STAR testing results. The highest API score to date was achieved and the students exceeded the growth targets both overall and in all but one of the subgroups. These successes can be attributed to continued teacher emphasis on content standards and a greater overall staff and student awareness of successful testing practices.

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It is important to note that the criteria used to calculate the API score has changed from year to year. For this reason, it is difficult to pinpoint areas needing improvement and reasons for a change in score. The changing criteria also makes the base and growth score comparisons irrelevant. Statewide Rank and Similar Schools Rank are valid comparisons, since all schools are subject to the same issues regarding changing criteria from year to year. Helix has remained relatively consistent in these rankings.

School Completion

California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE)

Beginning with the graduating class of 2006, students in California public schools will have to pass the California High School Exit Exam to receive a high school diploma. The School Accountability Report Card for that year will report the percentage of students completing grade 12 who successfully complete the California High School Exit Exam.

Dropout Rate

Helix's goal is to show progress toward reducing dropout rates. In 2002-2003, the dropout rate for Helix, the District and the state all rose slightly, with Helix's rate raising the least of the three. Helix's dropout rate continues to be very low. The table below outlines the dropout rates for Helix, the district and the state.

	Helix			District			State		
	2000	2001	2002	2000	2001	2002	2000	2001	2002
Enrollment	2327	2341	2429	23,451	23,989	24,434	1703492	1745295	1830664
Number of Drop-Dropout	53	14	22	434	354	506	47,282	47,899	59045
Rate	2.3	0.6	0.9	1.9	1.5	2.1	2.8	2.8	3.2

Graduation rate

Another of Helix’s goals is to increase the graduation rate. For the past three years, Helix and the District have improved their graduation rates while the State’s rate remained virtually the same.

Many of the early grade (9th and 10th) support intervention strategies at Helix are targeted at improving this number. The challenge in this area will continue, as Helix’s requirements become more rigorous and academically demanding, but through the academic support system and grade level clusters, the rate of completion should improve even more.

The table on the next page shows the graduation rates for Helix, the district and the state:

	Helix			District			State		
	2000	2001	2002	2000	2001	2002	2000	2001	2002
Dropouts (Class)	45	32	27	607	490	471	48,302	48,908	52,587
Number of Graduates	336	368	415	4198	4387	4457	316,124	325,919	341,078
Graduation Rate	88.2	92	93.9	87.4	90	90.4	86.7	87	86.6

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The instructional leadership of Helix is a shared process

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Class Size

Average Teaching Load and Teaching Load Distribution

Data reported are the average class size and the number of classrooms for each range of students, by subject area, as reported by CBEDS.

Subject	2001				2002				2003			
	Average	1-22	23-32	33+	Average	1-22	23-32	33+	Average	1-22	23-32	33+
English	22.54	64	37	7	Data Not Available				25.15	24	58	3
Mathematics	26.82	19	59	10					28.53	14	46	20
Science	25.11	11	33	0					28.1	6	39	5
Social Science	26.46	21	46	4					26.59	23	59	9

Curriculum and Instruction

School Instruction and Leadership

Helix’s instructional program is influenced by state standards. The scope and sequence of courses are aligned with the standards. Helix takes every opportunity to improve curriculum and note areas in need of improvement. Several of the staff focus groups have the responsibility to review and make recommendations regarding current curriculum. Academic departments with the leadership of the chairperson and grade-level assistant principals support teams of teachers in the development of curriculum. Teachers of the same course work as a course level team to analyze, modify and implement new curriculum and instructional strategies.

The instructional leadership of Helix is a shared process. Teachers, along with administrators participate collegially in school development. The principal has 30 years of educational experience, with 14 years as the Helix principal. The Department Chair Council and the Restructuring Committee, along with the Helix Charter Board, provide staff and parent op-

opportunities to play key roles in school leadership. The Administrative team is organized under a grade-level concept. Four support teams consisting of an assistant principal, counselor, academic assistant and secretary lead each class, starting with them as 9th graders and continuing with them through graduation.

Helix's instructional program includes methods to monitor progress of underperforming students and student groups. Students whose grade point average falls below a 2.0 are placed on academic probation. These students are required to attend tutorials and are evaluated at the end of each grading period. Another method to monitor progress is the summer registration process. When students meet with their counselors to register for classes for the next school year, the counselor, the student and the parent(s) can evaluate the student's progress and determine what, if any, interventions are necessary.

Underperforming student groups can be identified through various data provided by the County Department of Education and the California Department of Education, as well as through Helix's in-house systems. Grade, attendance and credit completion reports are monitored by administrative staff to determine what student groups need special programs or other assistance in order to achieve academic success.

Helix makes available supports and interventions to accommodate special needs students. The Extended Learning Program (ExL) and tutorials before and after school are an integral part of Helix's instructional program and are in place for special needs students. Helix also has a Special Education program that serves students with learning disabilities, multiple physical and learning disabilities and hearing impairment.

Helix makes every effort to ensure equal access to the core curriculum for all students, including English Learners and the placement of individuals with exceptional needs in the least restrictive environment. English Learners (EL) and special needs students are evaluated and, in most cases, are placed in College Preparatory level classes, with appropriate modifications and accommodations as needed.

Teacher Evaluations

On a bi-annual basis, teachers who have completed two or more years at Helix are observed in their classrooms and evaluated by members of the administrative staff. Teachers in their first or second years are observed in their classrooms and evaluated annually by administrative staff and department chairpeople. Teachers are evaluated on four domains: Planning and Preparation, The Classroom Environment, Instruction, and Professional Responsibility. The evaluators note strengths and weaknesses and provide suggestions. If needed, an individual improvement plan is developed and is noted for follow up on the next evaluation.

Professional Development

Helix offers to its faculty many opportunities for professional development. Each Wednesday morning, the faculty attends a meeting. Once a month, this meeting includes a staff development presentation, addressing a topic chosen by a committee of faculty members. The other Wednesday meetings are used to allow department members to meet or for the many Focus Groups on campus to discuss improving curriculum and instruction in core areas. Helix also offers a mentor program whose purpose is to teach how to teach reading and writing across all subject areas.



**Helix makes
available sup-
ports and in-
terventions to
accommodate
special needs
students**



For new teachers, Helix offers the Helix Induction Program (HIP). HIP surpasses most Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment (BTSA) -designed programs in California, providing an opportunity for support to all new teachers at Helix, whether they be in their first or second year of teaching, or experienced teachers who are new to Helix. HIP teams experienced educators with teachers new to Helix, providing consistent and frequent professional support and assessment. This support includes classroom observations, informal and formal conferences, and ongoing opportunity for dialogue and reflection in addition to monthly professional development trainings, conferencing, and idea exchanges. The assessment component of HIP is entirely separated from the evaluation process, allowing new teachers the opportunity for growth as a professional, using rubrics based on the six standards established by CFASST and BTSA.

Textbooks and other Instructional Materials

Included in Helix's 2002-2003 budget was approximately \$370,000 for textbooks, instructional materials, program improvement, library books, and basic supplies. On an annual rotating basis, the money for textbooks is distributed to different departments for them to spend on materials used to deliver curriculum. The departments receiving the money in a given year form a committee to review requests and needs of the school. Teachers refer to state guidelines and consider student needs when selecting a textbook for their classes.

Instructional Minutes and Minimum Days

The California Education Code establishes a required number of minutes per year for each grade. For grades 9-12, that number of minutes is 64,800. For the 2002-2003 school year, Helix offered 64,919 minutes of instruction.

Helix does everything possible to avoid minimum days. It is important that students receive the maximum amount of instruction possible. A minimum day will be scheduled during testing, or may be resorted to in cases of extreme temperature, or for other unforeseen incidents that would make instruction impossible. For the 2002-2003 school year, Helix had 8 minimum days to accommodate testing.

Post-Secondary Preparation

Advanced Placement Courses Offered

The Advanced Placement (AP) program gives students an opportunity to take college-level courses and exams while still in high school. Helix offers AP courses in Fine and Performing Arts, Computer Science, English, Foreign Language, Mathematics, Science and Social Science. English and Social Science have the most students enrolled in AP courses.

Both Helix's AP pass percentage and the AP qualifying rate dropped slightly in 2002-2003. The focus of attention at Helix continues to be on improving this qualifying rate as more students are encouraged and supported in taking the AP courses and exams.

HIP teams experienced educators with teachers new to Helix, providing consistent and frequent professional support and assessment

Year	Helix Pass Percentage	GUHSD Pass Percentage	Helix AP Qualifying Rate # Passed ÷ # 11 th & 12 th	GUHSD Qualifying Rate
2003	63.4	51.8	27.9	22.8
2002	68.2	55.6	34.4	25.2
2001	66.2	54.5	27.6	18.6
2000	66.8	56.4	20	17.9
1999	75.4	63.0	18.7	16.9

Pupils Enrolled in Courses Required for University of California (UC) and California State University (CSU) Admission

The percentage of pupils enrolled in courses required for UC and/or CSU admission is calculated by dividing the total number of pupils in courses required for UC and/or CSU admission (duplicated count) by the total number of pupils in all courses (also a duplicated count) for the most recent year. Helix had 4,644 pupils enrolled in all courses. Sixty-seven percent (67%), or 3,130 were enrolled in courses required for UC and/or CSU admission.

Completion of Course Requirements for University of California (UC) and California State University (CSU) Admission

The “a-g” UC/CSU college entrance requirements include:

- 4 years college preparatory English
- 3 years college preparatory Math
- 2 years college preparatory Science
- 2 years college preparatory Foreign Language
- 2 years college preparatory Social Studies
- 2 years college preparatory Electives

Although the percentage of Helix graduates completing college entrance requirements dropped slightly in 2002/2003, the percentage remains high. The change in requirements from “a-f” to “a-g” may contribute slightly to the decrease. Other information also conflicts with this data. Helix has increased the number of students completing three years of college preparatory math and foreign language. As a charter school focused on college preparation, this statistic is very important as we implement a process to analyze what is causing a decline in the data when other data shows that graduates are taking and completing the courses that are crucial to fulfilling this requirement.

	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003
Helix	48.2	48.6	42.4
District	35.5	29.9	32.7
State	35.6	N/A	N/A

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Helix has increased the number of students completing three years of college preparatory math and foreign language
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**Career path
completion
will lead
directly to
qualification
for the UC
and CSU
system OR
entry into
the work-
force**

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College Admission Test Preparation Course Program

The Helix SAT Prep Course is one of the oldest continuously offered SAT preparation opportunities in San Diego County. The course is co-sponsored by Advancement via Individual Determination (AVID) and the PTSA, and has been offered to students at Helix and throughout the community, in both the Fall and Spring, for the past dozen years. Four evening sessions, twice a year, provide students with strategies and practice in all aspects of both the mathematics and verbal sections of the SAT-1, plus guidance and information about other testing venues and college admissions requirements. The low cost of the course makes the Helix SAT Prep course affordable by any student who desires to maximize her or his test-scoring potential, and any remaining funds after paying for the textbook and other materials benefits the AVID scholarship fund.

During the school day, Helix offers seven sections of AVID. Part of the daily curriculum is the SAT, the English Placement Test (EPT), the Entry Level Math exam (ELM) and other college exams. Helix has monthly parent meetings to help families understand such things as applying for college; completing Federal Aid For Students Applications (FAFSA) and Cal-Grant forms; applying for scholarships; college acceptance requirements, such as the EPT and ELM, the Subject "A" test, writing college application essays, etc. Helix also publishes a monthly newsletter to AVID families that outline these subjects.

Helix also offers a program called Collaborative Academic Preparation Initiatives (CAPI). This program involves teachers in the English and Math departments working with instructors from San Diego State University (SDSU) in aligning standards and preparing students for the ELM and EPT. The goal of this program is to reduce the number of students enrolled in remedial courses at the university level.

School-to-Career

Helix has graduation options which include a Career Path Completion option. Students choosing this option will complete a career path as a means to graduation. All career path curriculums at Helix High School will incorporate academic core requirements and career specific electives. Career path completion will lead directly to qualification for the UC and CSU system OR entry into the workforce.

Career Paths each have:

- ❖ a career theme, such as health, business or automotives, which is usually determined by local employment opportunities and evidence of growing demand for such expertise in the marketplace.
- ❖ traditional academic classes (such as mathematics, English, science, and social studies) combined with career theme-related classes, innovative instructional methods and, often, project-based learning.
- ❖ rigorous and relevant curriculum, which combines academic and technical content. Both are essential, and the two are integrated, showing the relationship between academic skills and real-world jobs.
- ❖ local employers from the career field, who help plan and guide the program, serve as mentors and provide work experience for the students.
- ❖ an advisory group, which includes local employers.

Helix employs a School-to-Career Coordinator who facilitates the operation of the graduation options.

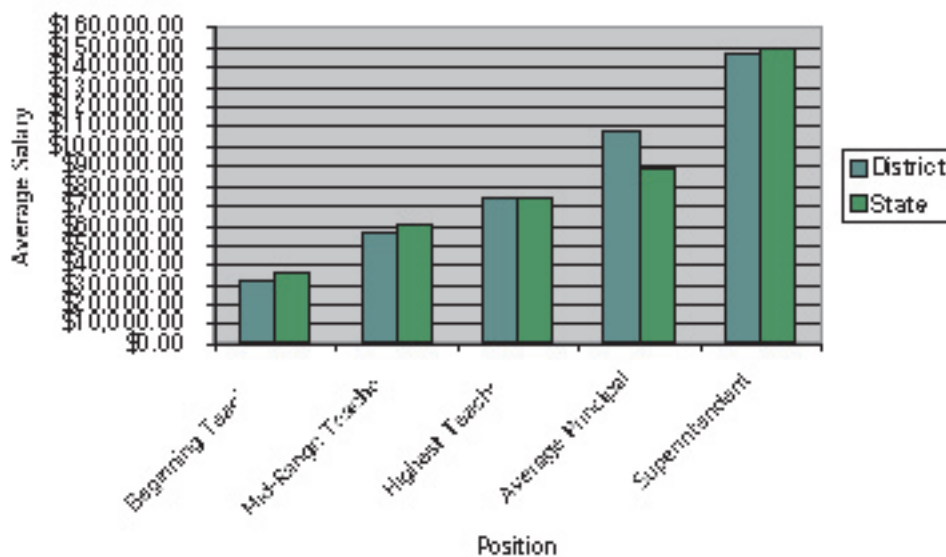
Helix also maintains a fully-staffed Career Center, which provides information on careers, military enlistment, college scholarships, etc. Another full-time employee provides information to students during their sophomore year that assists them in finding careers of interest to them so that they may gear their educational path toward that area, if they so choose. A website, eguidance.com, is available to Helix students and is an integral part of career aptitude, research and exploration.

Fiscal and Expenditure Data

Helix became fiscally autonomous for the first time in 2000-2001; however, for this report, fiscal information is reported for the District, as Helix's salaries are the same as others in the District. Salaries and benefits for teachers accounted for 39.86 percent of the total budget for fiscal year 2001-2002. This is slightly higher than 2000-2001 and the State percentage (38.56). Administrative salaries accounted for 5.31 percent in the District, which is virtually the same as the State average (5.48).

During 2000-2001, the district spent \$6,277 per student (ADA). This figure rose to \$6,608 in 2001-2002. This includes all funds spent for general and special education, State and federally funded projects. It does not include expenditures for capital outlay and facilities. The District's expenditures per student fell below the state average for similar districts of \$6,969 per student and the State average for all districts of \$6,719 per student. With the recent budget cuts, it should be expected that next year, this number will fall below the 2000-2001 figures.

The graph below shows the comparison between the district and the state for teacher and administrative salaries:



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Helix also maintains a fully-staffed Career Center, which provides information on careers, military enlistment, college scholarships, etc.
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