



# **Striving for Academic Excellence**

## ***A Profile of Seven Economically Disadvantaged School Districts***

**Conducted by  
McConnell Jones Lanier & Murphy, LLP  
for the  
Legislative Budget Board**

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**INDIVIDUAL SCHOOL  
DISTRICT PROFILE**

**AVINGER**

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# AVINGER ISD

## BACKGROUND

Avinger Independent School District (AISD), whose motto is “Winners with Pride in Academics and Athletics,” is located within the town of Avinger, Texas. Avinger is located in Cass County, Texas and had a population of 464 according to the census of 2000. Avinger’s population is 75.4 percent White, 22.6 percent African American and 1.9 percent Hispanic. There are 133 families living in 203 households in Avinger. Families with children under the age of 18 represent 30.5 percent of the population. Residents with income below the poverty line make up 27.3 percent of the town. The median income for families is \$24,063, for males is \$30,972, and for females is \$16,875.

A majority of the adults, 72 percent, living within the school district have at least a high school diploma. Additionally, 12.9 percent of the adults living in AISD have a Bachelor’s degree. For two years, 2004 and 2005, the district earned *Academically Acceptable* ratings according to the Texas Education Agency standards. Then, in 2006, AISD became a *Recognized* district. That accountability rating, *Recognized*, was earned again for 2007.

The student population during the 2006–07 school year was 139. The demographic data shown in **Exhibit 127** indicated

that this district was comprised of 18 percent African American students, 10.8 percent Hispanic students, 69.8 percent White students, and 1.4 percent other students. Enrollment data depicted in **Exhibit 127** indicated a decline from 154 students in 2005–06 to 139 students in 2006–07. Consequently, it should be noted that with such a small number of students only a few students may make a seemingly important difference in the percentages. When compared with the state, the district had a higher percentage of African American students (18 percent district versus 14.4 percent state). In 2006–07, the percentage of Hispanic students reached a three-year peak at 10.8 percent. This percentage is slightly lower than the region’s 14.2 percent Hispanic student population and well below the state percentage of 46.3 percent. In addition, this district has almost double the state’s percentage of White students (69.8 percent district versus 35.7 percent state). Of the 139 students enrolled, 64.7 percent are identified for the federal government’s Child Nutrition program and qualify for free or reduced-priced meals.

**Exhibit 128** compares the number and percent of students at risk of dropping out of high school for the district, region, and state. The 56 students identified for the district represented 40.3 percent of the student population. The

**EXHIBIT 127**  
**DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF STUDENTS**  
**AISD, REGION 8, AND STATE**  
**2004–05 THROUGH 2006–07**

ENTITY	STUDENT ENROLLMENT	RACIAL/ETHNIC PERCENTAGE				PERCENTAGE ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED
		AFRICAN AMERICAN	HISPANIC	WHITE	OTHER	
<b>2004–05</b>						
<b>Avinger</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>20.8%</b>	<b>6.0%</b>	<b>71.8%</b>	<b>1.3%</b>	<b>73.2%</b>
Region 8	56,523	22.8%	12.6%	63.2%	1.4%	54.3%
State	4,383,871	14.2%	44.7%	37.7%	3.3%	54.6%
<b>2005–06</b>						
<b>Avinger</b>	<b>154</b>	<b>20.1%</b>	<b>2.6%</b>	<b>76.0%</b>	<b>1.3%</b>	<b>76.0%</b>
Region 8	56,781	23.1%	13.2%	62.3%	1.4%	55.8%
State	4,505,572	14.7%	45.3%	36.5%	3.4%	55.6%
<b>2006–07</b>						
<b>Avinger</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>18.0%</b>	<b>10.8%</b>	<b>69.8%</b>	<b>1.4%</b>	<b>64.7%</b>
Region 8	56,625	22.9%	14.2%	61.5%	1.4%	56.4%
State	4,576,933	14.4%	46.3%	35.7%	3.6%	55.5%

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS), 2004–05 through 2006–07.

**EXHIBIT 128**  
**NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF AT-RISK STUDENTS**  
**AISD, REGION 8, AND STATE**  
**2006–07**

ENTITY	TOTAL ENROLLMENT	NUMBER OF AT-RISK STUDENTS	PERCENTAGE OF AT-RISK STUDENTS
<b>Avinger</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>40.3%</b>
Region 8	56,625	24,647	43.5%
State	4,576,933	2,209,538	48.3%

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS, 2006–07.

region percentage of at-risk students for the 2006–07 school year was 43.5 percent, and the state, accounting for this same time period and category, was 48.3 percent. Due to the economic situation in the geographical region, the district encounters many academically deficient transient students which may factor into the percentage of at-risk students.

AISD had a total of 18.8 full-time-equivalent (FTE) teachers, which represented 55.3 percent of its 34.0 FTE total staff in 2006–07. This percentage was slightly higher than the state's teacher percentage of 50.7. Of the district's 18.8 FTE teachers, 2.5 FTEs were African American and represented 13.3 percent of the total staff. The remaining 16.3 FTE teachers are White. At 13.3 percent, AISD has a higher percentage of African American teachers than the state average which is 9.3 percent (**Exhibit 129**).

No students in AISD were served in Bilingual/ESL programs as shown in **Exhibit 130** for 2006–07. The largest percentage of student enrollment, outside of the regular education program, was students served under the special education umbrella. These pupils reflected 22.3 percent of the district's student population. The region reported 14.1 percent special education student enrollment, and the state noted 10.6 percent of the students received special education services. The next largest percentage of student enrollment by program was 20.1 percent for career and technology. This percentage reflected the state's percentage of 20.6 and was lower than the region's 24.7 percent student enrollment. Gifted and talented students represented 12.9 percent of AISD's student population, which was higher than both Region 8's (7.4 percent) and Texas' (7.5 percent).

AISD reported no dropouts in grades 7–8 for any of the years depicted in **Exhibit 131**. In 2004–05, no AISD students in grades 7–8 or grades 7–12 were reported as dropouts. During that same time period, the region recorded no dropouts in grades 7–8; 0.3 percent of the 7–12 grade students were listed. In 2004–05, the state noted 0.2 percent dropouts in grades 7–8 and 0.9 percent dropouts in grades 7–12.

Noted in **Exhibit 132** are the 100 percent graduation rates for the classes of 2004 and 2006 for AISD. For the class of 2004, the region reported 91.8 percent of the students graduated and the state showed 84.6 percent. Although the

**EXHIBIT 129**  
**AISD AND STATE STAFF**  
**2006–07**

CATEGORY	DISTRICT TOTAL	PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL STAFF	STATE TOTAL	STATE PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL STAFF
Teachers	18.8	55.3%	311,466.3	50.7%
Professional Support	1.2	3.5%	50,333.9	8.2%
Campus Administration	1.0	2.9%	17,098.1	2.8%
Central Administration	1.0	2.9%	6,202.1	1.0%
Educational Aides	4.0	11.8%	61,344.6	10.0%
Auxiliary Staff	8.0	23.5%	167,469.2	27.3%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>34.0</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>613,914.2</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
Total minority staff	5.6	16.5%	259,842.5	42.3%
Race/ethnicity of teachers:				
African American	2.5	13.3%	29,062.2	9.3%
Hispanic	0.0	0.0%	64,759.7	20.8%
White	16.3	86.7%	213,201.3	68.5%
Other	0.0	0.0%	4,443.1	1.4%
<b>TOTAL*</b>	<b>18.8</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>311,466.3</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

\*Totals may not equal 100 percent due to rounding.

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS, 2006–07.

**EXHIBIT 130  
PERCENTAGE OF STUDENT ENROLLMENT AND TEACHERS BY PROGRAM  
AISD, REGION 8, AND STATE  
2006–07**

DISTRICT	BILINGUAL/ESL	CAREER AND TECHNOLOGY	GIFTED AND TALENTED	SPECIAL EDUCATION	REGULAR EDUCATION
<b>Avinger</b>					
Students	0.0%	20.1%	12.9%	22.3%	*
Teachers	0.0%	6.2%	0.0%	8.0%	85.9%
<b>Region 8</b>					
Students	6.1%	24.7%	7.4%	14.1%	*
Teachers	2.7%	5.8%	1.2%	9.1%	71.7%
<b>State</b>					
Students	14.8%	20.6%	7.5%	10.6%	*
Teachers	7.6%	3.9%	2.0%	10.0%	70.6%

\* AEIS does not provide number of students in regular education.  
SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS, 2006–07.

**EXHIBIT 131  
ANNUAL AND LONGITUDINAL DROPOUT RATES  
AISD, REGION 8, AND STATE  
2003–04 THROUGH 2005–06**

ENTITY	2003–04	2004–05	2005–06
<b>ANNUAL DROPOUT RATE GRADES 7–8</b>			
Avinger	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Region 8	0.1%	0.0%	0.1%
State	0.2%	0.2%	0.4%
<b>ANNUAL DROPOUT RATE GRADES 7–12</b>			
Avinger	1.1%	0.0%	1.1%
Region 8	0.2%	0.3%	1.2%
State	0.9%	0.9%	2.6%
<b>ANNUAL DROPOUT RATE GRADES 9–12</b>			
Avinger	*	*	1.7%
Region 8	*	*	5.4%
State	*	*	8.8%

\*Information not available on AEIS.  
SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS, 2004–05 through 2006–07.

region reported a 92 percent graduation rate for the class of 2005 and the state reported 84 percent, both entities did not surpass AISD’s rate of 92.3 percent.

Average class sizes in elementary were well below region and state sizes for all grades ranging from kindergarten through 6 as reported for school year 2006–07 and represented in **Exhibit 133**. The grade 4 class size average (17) came closest to the region (18.1) and the state (20.2). Likewise, in secondary schools, average class sizes for all areas were below the state average. When compared with Region 8, AISD exceeded the region class size average in two areas—math

**EXHIBIT 132  
PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS GRADUATING, RECEIVING A GED, CONTINUING HIGH SCHOOL, OR DROPPING OUT  
AISD, REGION 8, AND STATE  
CLASS OF 2004 THROUGH CLASS OF 2006**

GRADUATING CLASS	AISD	REGION 8	STATE
<b>CLASS OF 2006</b>			
Graduated	100.0%	90.0%	80.4%
Received GED	0.0%	2.1%	2.3%
Continued HS	0.0%	2.5%	8.6%
Dropped Out (4-year)	0.0%	5.4%	8.8%
<b>CLASS OF 2005</b>			
Graduated	92.3%	92.0%	84.0%
Received GED	0.0%	3.8%	3.8%
Continued HS	0.0%	2.3%	7.9%
Dropped Out	7.7%	1.9%	4.3%
<b>CLASS OF 2004</b>			
Graduated	100.0%	91.8%	84.6%
Received GED	0.0%	4.7%	4.2%
Continued HS	0.0%	2.1%	7.3%
Dropped Out	0.0%	1.4%	3.9%

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS, 2004–05 through 2006–07.

and social studies. The region average class size for math was 15.7 students, and for AISD it was 16.6 students. In social studies, the region average class size was 18.0 students, and AISD’s average class size was 21.7, or 3.7 students higher than the region average.

AISD reported percentages for dual enrollment courses were less than state and region percentage rates as shown in

**EXHIBIT 133  
AVERAGE CLASS SIZE BY GRADE LEVEL  
AISD, REGION 8, AND STATE  
2006–07**

GRADE	AVINGER	REGION 8	STATE
<b>Elementary</b>			
Kindergarten	8.0	17.8	19.5
Grade 1	9.0	17.6	19.5
Grade 2	12.0	18.2	19.6
Grade 3	12.0	17.5	19.5
Grade 4	17.0	18.1	20.2
Grade 5	9.1	18.1	22.3
Grade 6	7.0	18.3	21.8
<b>Secondary</b>			
English Language Arts	14.7	15.8	20.0
Math	16.6	15.7	20.0
Science	16.0	17.0	21.0
Social Studies	21.7	18.0	22.0

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS, 2006–07.

**Exhibit 134.** Lack of transportation was cited by the district as the primary reason more AISD students do not participate in dual credit courses. However, each year from 2004–06, the percentage of students completing these courses increased

from a low of 5.1 percent in 2004 to a high of 8.7 percent in 2006. Due to the low student population, AISD does not offer any advanced placement classes.

Due to the small number of students, some test scores are not reported to protect student confidentiality. One hundred percent of the class of 2006–07 was reported as taking one or both of the SAT/ACT exams, as shown in **Exhibit 135**.

As depicted in **Exhibit 136**, more AISD students met Texas Success Initiative TAKS standards in math than English Language Arts. For math, AISD’s percentages consistently met or exceeded the region percentages for all years. The 2005–06 percentages proved to be the most successful in math with 78 percent of the students indicating math readiness via their performance.

**COMMENDABLE PROGRAMS AND PRACTICES**

**INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES AND STRATEGIES**

AISD gears its instructional practices and strategies to ensure that its students are academically well rounded. AISD’s primary focus is ensuring all students possess exceptional fundamental skills, emphasizing reading, math, and science. The district implements reading programs to assist students at all levels to improve their reading skills.

**EXHIBIT 134  
AISD, REGION 8, AND STATE PERFORMANCE ON ADVANCED PLACEMENT CLASSES AND EXAMINATIONS  
2004–05 THROUGH 2006–07**

ENTITY	2004	2005	2006
<b>PERCENTAGE COMPLETING ADVANCED COURSES/DUAL ENROLLMENT COURSES</b>			
<b>Avinger</b>	<b>5.1%</b>	<b>5.9%</b>	<b>8.7%</b>
Region 8	16.8%	17.0%	17.6%
State	19.9%	20.5%	21.0%
<b>PERCENTAGE TESTED ADVANCED PLACEMENT COURSES</b>			
<b>Avinger</b>	<b>0.0%</b>	<b>0.0%</b>	<b>0.0%</b>
Region 8	10.7%	10.1%	9.9%
State	17.4%	18.4%	18.9%
<b>PERCENTAGE OF AP EXAMINEES WITH SCORES EXCEEDING CRITERION</b>			
<b>Avinger</b>	<b>0.0%</b>	<b>0.0%</b>	<b>0.0%</b>
Region 8	45.4%	42.7%	42.3%
State	53.9%	51.8%	51.3%
<b>PERCENTAGE OF ALL AP SCORES EXCEEDING CRITERION</b>			
<b>Avinger</b>	<b>0.0%</b>	<b>0.0%</b>	<b>0.0%</b>
Region 8	39.2%	37.5%	36.9%
State	49.3%	47.4%	47.2%

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS, 2004–05 through 2006–07.

**EXHIBIT 135  
PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS TAKING ACT/SAT EXAMS, MEETING CRITERIA  
2004–05 THROUGH 2006–07**

ENTITY	STUDENTS TAKING SAT/ACT EXAMS	STUDENTS MEETING SAT/ACT CRITERIA	MEAN SAT SCORE	MEAN ACT SCORE
<b>2004–05</b>				
<b>Avinger</b>	?	<b>20.0%</b>	-	<b>20.0</b>
Region 8	61.3%	23.3%	1,003	20.0
State	61.9%	27.0%	987	20.1
<b>2005–06</b>				
<b>Avinger</b>	?	<b>0.0%</b>	-	<b>18.3</b>
Region 8	62.9%	24.4%	1,004	20.1
State	65.5%	27.4%	992	20.0
<b>2006–07</b>				
<b>Avinger</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>20.0%</b>	*	<b>18.7</b>
Region 8	61.5%	24.9%	1,013	20.4
State	65.8%	27.1%	991	20.1

? Indicates that the data for this item were statistically improbable, or were reported outside a reasonable range.

\* Indicates results are masked due to small numbers to protect student confidentiality.

- Indicates zero observations reported for this group.

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS, 2004–05 through 2006–07.

**EXHIBIT 136  
HIGHER EDUCATION READINESS–TEXAS SUCCESS INITIATIVE  
AISD, REGION 8, AND STATE  
2004–05 THROUGH 2006–07**

ENTITY	ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS	MATH
<b>2004–05</b>		
<b>Avinger</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>45%</b>
Region 8	43%	45%
State	39%	48%
<b>2005–06</b>		
<b>Avinger</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>78%</b>
Region 8	42%	48%
State	40%	51%
<b>2006–07</b>		
<b>Avinger</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>70%</b>
Region 8	49%	51%
State	53%	54%

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS, 2004–05 through 2006–07.

AISD’s instructional practices are benefited by the district’s small student enrollment that provides small class sizes and access to unique opportunities not as readily available in larger districts. For example, teachers have greater exposure to students on an individual level since students in grades 7 through 12 are taught by the same teachers. Usually, one

teacher is assigned to each subject area for multiple grade levels. This organization allows teachers to gain significant familiarity with the student and their academic needs. Manual class scheduling starting with high school seniors assures students have the necessary access to classes they will need in order to graduate.

AISD demonstrated greater passing percentages than the state in all TAKS tested areas in grades 3, 5, 6, 7, and 9. Reading for every grade level tested except grade 4 surpassed the state’s passing percentage, as indicated in **Exhibit 137**.

**Exhibit 138** depicts the percentage of students’ passing rate on TAKS by subject area for AISD and the state. In math, AISD exceeded the state percentage for the three years shown. In addition, AISD met or exceeded the state passing percentage in social studies for the same years. AISD not only demonstrated gains in Reading/ELA from 2004–05 to 2005–06 but also in writing, science, and all tests taken. In 2006–07, AISD exceeded the state percentage in math, science, social studies, and all tests.

**COLLEGE READINESS PROGRAM**

AISD’s ultimate goal is to ensure that all of its students are academically prepared for college. One of the ways in which the district realizes this goal is through the preparatory work which the district puts its high school students through annually to prepare them for taking college entrance exams, such as the ACT. AISD administers a practice ACT test for

**EXHIBIT 137  
PERCENTAGE OF AISD AND STATE STUDENTS TESTED (IN ENGLISH) MEETING TAKS STANDARD BY SUB-TEST AND GRADE  
2006-07**

GRADE	DISTRICT/ STATE	PERCENTAGE OF AISD AND STATE STUDENTS TESTED MEETING TAKS STANDARD						
		READING	MATH	WRITING	ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS	SCIENCE	SOCIAL STUDIES	ALL TESTS
Grade 3	AISD	91%*	91%					82%
	State	89%	82%					78%
Grade 4	AISD	73%	80%	87%				60%
	State	84%	86%	91%				75%
Grade 5	AISD	86%*	>99%			86%		86%
	State	83%	86%			78%		69%
Grade 6	AISD	>99%	>99%					>99%
	State	92%	80%					8%
Grade 7	AISD	>99%	86%	>99%				86%
	State	85%	77%	93%				71%
Grade 8	AISD	>99%	60%			80%	>99%	60%
	State	9%	73%			71%	87%	61%
Grade 9	AISD	88%	>99%					89%
	State	87%	61%					60%
Grade 10	AISD		>99%		**	60%	>99%	50%
	State		65%		85%	59%	87%	51%
Grade 11	AISD		80%		90%	80%	99%	80%
	State		81%		91%	78%	94%	70%

\*First administration only.

\*\*Indicator results are masked due to small numbers to protect student confidentiality.

NOTE: Blank cells indicate that test not given at that grade level.

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS, 2006-07.

**EXHIBIT 138  
AISD PASSING RATES ON TAKS BY SUBJECT AREA  
2004-05 THROUGH 2006-07\***

TAKS	2004-05		2005-06 *		2006-07**	
	AISD	STATE	AISD	STATE	AISD	STATE
Reading/ELA	77%	83%	95%	87%	86%	89%
Math	72%	71%	77%	75%	88%	77%
Writing	86%	90%	90%	91%	90%	92%
Science	67%	63%	73%	70%	77%	71%
Social Studies	89%	87%	87%	87%	>99%	89%
All Tests	56%	62%	73%	67%	76%	70%

\* Sum of all grades excluding Grade 8 Science; Standard Accountability indicator.

\*\* Sum of all grades excluding Grade 8 Science and TAKS-I; Standard Accountability indicator.

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS, 2004-05 through 2006-07.

all high school students each year. Based on the results of these tests, the counselor refers whichever subject matter areas that each student needs help in to teachers who follow up with needed assistance.

Additionally, the counselor meets with 12th grade students and parents in the fall and provides them with packets of information on how to apply for and finance higher education. The counselor passes out Fast Web bulletins bimonthly to seniors throughout the year. Financial aid workshops are held in December of each year with a special emphasis on how to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Individual appointments are scheduled with a financial aid specialist to help complete FAFSA forms. This and other services are provided through the Texas Association of Developing Colleges – East Texas Educational Opportunity Center, a Federal TRIO program based in Longview.

For the junior high grades, the counselor meets with parents and students during the spring semester of their 8th grade year to prepare four-year high school plans. The families are provided with information regarding college financial aid and high school testing requirements as well as information regarding college admission and scholarships.

In addition to the four-year plan, a “Personal High School Timeline” form is completed each year by all students in grades 9–12. The annually completed form is reviewed and maintained by the counselor’s office to ensure that each student has all the information necessary for letters of recommendation, resumes, scholarship applications, or other needs during their years in high school. The counselor creates a portfolio for each student in 9th grade so that by the time students have reached the 12th grade the district has more accurate knowledge of whether or not its students have applied for college. Additionally, throughout the year students and parents are able to access information regarding scholarships, possible career paths, financial aid, test preparations, and study skills through the Counselor’s Corner on AISD’s website.

Maintaining close contact with district graduates is one of AISD’s strengths. In 2006–07, an informal count showed that Avinger had 17 graduates. During this school year, 11 of these students took a college entrance exam, either the SAT or ACT. Through their continued contact with this former class, the district has learned that 10 of these students have enrolled in college. **Exhibit 139** summarizes the number of AISD’s graduates who took the ACT, their average score, and the number of students who enrolled in a higher education institution through AISD’s informal count.

**EXHIBIT 139  
AVINGER GRADUATES TAKING ACT/SAT EXAMS  
AND POST HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATION  
2004–05 THROUGH 2006–07**

NUMBER OF GRADUATES	GRADUATES WHO TOOK SAT/ACT EXAM	GRADUATES’ MEAN ACT SCORE	NUMBER OF GRADUATES ENROLLED IN COLLEGE
<b>2004–05</b>			
12	9*	20.0	7
<b>2005–06</b>			
10	9*	18.3	6
<b>2006–07</b>			
17	11	18.7	10

\*Indicates that for that school year all reported exams taken by students were ACT.  
SOURCES: Texas Education Agency, AEIS, 2004–05 through 2006–07; Avinger ISD.

AISD’s other college preparation program initiatives include:

- attending a College Fair in Texarkana, TX with seniors;

- attending a Career Fair with 8th grade students at Northeast Texas Community Colleges sponsored by Region VIII Educational Service Center;
- attending a Medical Career/Job Shadow program at Good Shepherd Medical Center in Longview with junior and senior students interested in pursuing a medical career;
- providing information to seniors regarding scholarship opportunities; and
- hosting guest speakers from nearby colleges and technical schools to speak to all high school students.

**DUAL CREDIT PROGRAM**

Students who have completed their sophomore year may, with permission of the principal or designee, apply for the Dual Credit Program through Northeast Texas Community College. The information is contained in the AISD student handbook and is explained by the counselor each year. A representative from Northeast Texas Community College makes a presentation to interested students and their parents. Students are invited based on a combination of their test scores and GPA (grade point average).

Students enrolled in this program must maintain a “B” average in all high school courses and must continue to make progress towards graduation.

As of the 2005–06 school year, graduates have the opportunity to take up to 10 college courses prior to graduation through Northeast Texas Community College.

**TEACHER RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION STRATEGIES**

To recruit and retain highly qualified teachers, a site-based interview committee/panel is utilized and the district only hires teachers that will live in the area for five or more years. Teachers individually determine areas of need for development and are permitted to attend two to six workshops per year as needed. As depicted in **Exhibit 140**, AISD teachers average 15.7 years of experience in the profession. The state average years of teaching experience is 11.3 years. In addition, AISD classes average 7.4 students per teacher. However, for the

**EXHIBIT 140  
AISD AND STATE TEACHERS  
2006–07**

CATEGORY	DISTRICT TOTAL	STATE TOTAL
Average years of experience	15.7	11.3
Average years of experience with the district	10.5	7.5
Turnover rate	16.8%	15.6%
Number of students per teacher	7.4	14.7

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS, 2006–07.

state, the average class size is almost double at 14.7 students per teacher.

As depicted in **Exhibit 141**, Avinger ISD had no beginning teachers, although 7 percent of the region’s teachers and 8.1 percent of the state’s educators were newly hired teachers. On the other end of the spectrum, 36.3 percent of AISD’s teachers had more than 20 years of experience. This percentage was nearly double the state’s percentage of 19.7 percent that represented Texas’ most experienced instructors.

**EXHIBIT 141**  
**PERCENTAGE OF TEACHERS BY YEARS OF EXPERIENCE**  
**AISD, REGION 8, AND STATE**  
**2006–07**

ENTITY	BEGINNING	1–5 YEARS	6–10 YEARS	11–20 YEARS	20+ YEARS
Avinger	0.0%	26.6%	15.9%	21.2%	36.3%
Region 8	7.0%	22.2%	18.2%	28.2%	24.5%
State	8.1%	29.1%	19.6%	23.6%	19.7%

SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS, 2006–07.

All teachers in AISD reported earning a college degree. One teacher obtained a higher degree that was represented as 5.3 percent in the Master’s degree column in **Exhibit 142**. Noted also was the 20 percent of the region’s educators who held a Master’s degree and 21.1 percent for the state.

**KEY FINDINGS AND KEY FACTORS**

Avinger ISD’s education system is built around small classes with teachers and administrators who know the entire student body. Students receive one-on-one attention from Kindergarten through 12th grade. District elementary class sizes are well below the region and state average; secondary class size averages for all subject areas are below the state average, with AISD only exceeding the region’s class size average in math and social studies.

This small class size is exhibited in the elementary grades where there is one teacher per class for Kindergarten through grade 3. In grades 4–6, students rotate between three teachers.

One teacher teaches language arts; one teaches health, spelling, and social studies; and one teaches math and science. Therefore, the same teachers and students are together for three years and the learning styles, strengths, and weaknesses of students can be consistently addressed.

Due in part to the size of the district, which encourages more personal interactions between all district staff, there is a strong camaraderie among teachers. The educators work together through planning periods and share information and techniques, formally and informally, to help students achieve success. The teachers are dedicated and communicate frequently to make the transition from grade to grade smoother for each student. Teacher dedication is further shown through their willingness to work with students one-on-one for Texas University Interscholastic League (UIL) events.

This emphasis on staff camaraderie also extends to the district. There is a high level of respect between administrators, teachers, and staff. Monthly events are held which help strengthen this bond between staff, such as lunches where the teachers take turns planning the menu and providing the food. The camaraderie also stems from the stake that the teachers and other school staff have in the success of the students and in the community. It is aided by the fact that most of Avinger’s administrators, teachers, and staff grew up in the geographical region or have been residents and have worked in the district for a long time.

AISD’s success is exhibited by being the recipient of several statewide and national awards and recognition:

- Avinger High School was listed in the 2008 *U.S. News & World Report’s* “America’s Best High Schools” for overall student performance and honors in the Bronze category.
- Avinger High School was recognized as a 2007 Texas Business and Education Coalition (TBEC) Honor Roll School.

**EXHIBIT 142**  
**DEGREE STATUS OF TEACHERS**  
**AISD, REGION 8, AND STATE**  
**2006–07**

ENTITY	PERCENTAGE OF TEACHERS WITH DEGREE				TOTAL*
	NO DEGREE	BACHELORS	MASTERS	DOCTORATE	
Avinger	0.0%	94.7%	5.3%	0.0%	100.0%
Region 8	0.5%	79.3%	20.1%	0.2%	100.0%
State	0.8%	77.6%	21.1%	0.5%	100.0%

\*Totals may not equal 100 percent due to rounding.  
SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, AEIS, 2006–07.