



## **Pilot Project - Evaluation Report 2003-2004**

**Large Urban Southwest  
Independent School District**

RESEARCH CONDUCTED BY: EDUSTART, LLC

REPORT SUMMARY AND GRAPHICS : AL GAVITO, MA  
CENTRAL RESEARCH ASSOCIATES

**Large Urban Southwest Independent School District (LUSISD):** Large urban ISD has a population of over two hundred thousand students. Its schools are dedicated to giving every student the best possible education through an intensive core curriculum and specialized, challenging instructional and career programs. LUSISD is working hard to become the best' K–12 school system of choice, by constantly improving instruction and management to be as effective, productive, and economical as possible.

**LUSISD Social Studies Department:** In 2002, the state agency accountability system held schools and districts responsible for student performance on the TAAS grade 8 Social Studies. In 2004, the graduation testing requirement for 11th graders included Social Studies. Currently, both the grade 8 and the exit-level Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) test focus on United States history. The mission of the Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment Department to provide curriculum-based support through systemic collaboration so that all students have equitable access to college and career options.

## Ignite! Learning Pilot Project Findings

Researcher: EDUSTART, LLC

**Program Description:** During the 2003–2004 school year, Large Urban Southwest Independent School District partnered with Ignite! Learning to improve academic performance for American History students in 8th, 10th and 11th grade. Ignite! Learning provides an online courseware focused on improving student achievement on the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS). Students participated in the program during their American History class.

**Student surveys:** response rate of 18.8% or 744 of the 3,950 pool. Results reveal that the majority of students rated Ignite! Learning as “helping a lot or making a huge difference in learning history” (53.8% for middle and 66.7% for high school), activities helped them learn history (55.3% middle school; 59% high school), and helping them pass the TAKS (55.1% middle school and 59% high school). Qualitative data from the students indicated a very positive view of the courseware’s effectiveness in making its subject matter easy to understand and interesting.

**Teacher surveys:** response rate of 46.8% or 37 of the 79 teachers (12 were high school and 24 were middle school teachers). Results reveal that overall both middle and high school teacher respondents rated Ignite! activities as effective or highly effective in improving student understanding (36% middle school; 58.3% middle school). Ratings for the courseware effectiveness in helping the students pass the TAKS were (48% for middle school; 50% for high school). Ratings were the highest for the effectiveness of the Ignite! training sessions (72% of the middle school and 75% of high school teacher respondents) rated the sessions as effective or highly effective.

**Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS):** High school pre-post test results 2003 to 2004 revealed an increase in the percent passing the TAKS at each of the 4 schools in the pilot study. Middle school pre-post test results 2003-04 revealed that the percent passing did not increase due to the high passing rates in the pre-tests and change in passing standard. TAKS mean scale score for both middle and high school students increased from 2003 to 2004.

### District Pilot Project Profile

- 9 middle schools & 4 high schools
- 4,988 students
- 8th, 10th and 11th grade students

### Ignite! Learning Instructional Principals

- Covering the knowledge skills required by state academic standards
- Ensuring that students learn required materials within an integrated context
- Helping students understand the relevance of the material to their daily lives
- Provision of multiple assessment instruments of the material to demonstrate the acquisition of knowledge
- Including enrichment activities
- Pairing print and media to address all learning styles

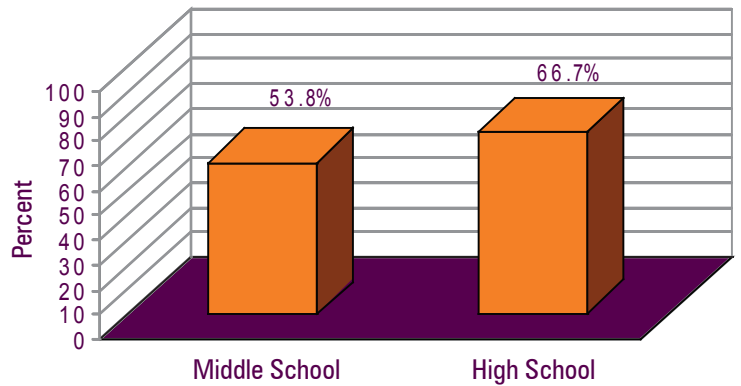
### Research Instruments

- Student Survey – Likert Scale
- Teacher Survey– Likert Scale
- Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills – Percent Passing and Scale Score

### Research Time Frame

- 2002-2003 to 2003-2004

### Percent of Students Rating\* Ignite! Courseware Helped Them Understand History

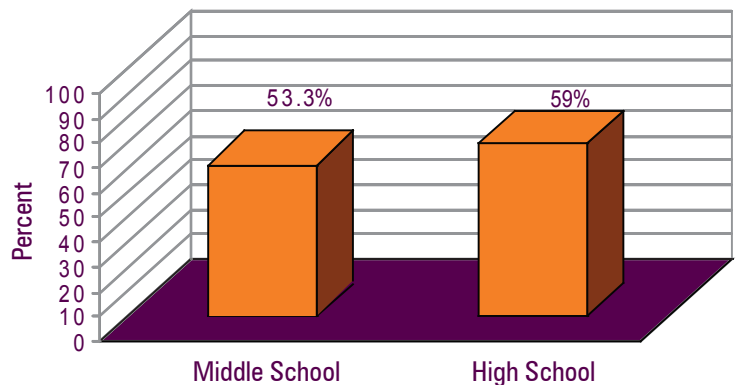


\*Likert rating scale of 3 or 4 = helping a lot or making a huge difference.

#### Student Perceptions of Ignite! Effectiveness

The majority of middle and high school students rated Ignite! courseware as helping them understand history

### Percent of Students Rating\* Ignite! Activities Helped Them Understand History

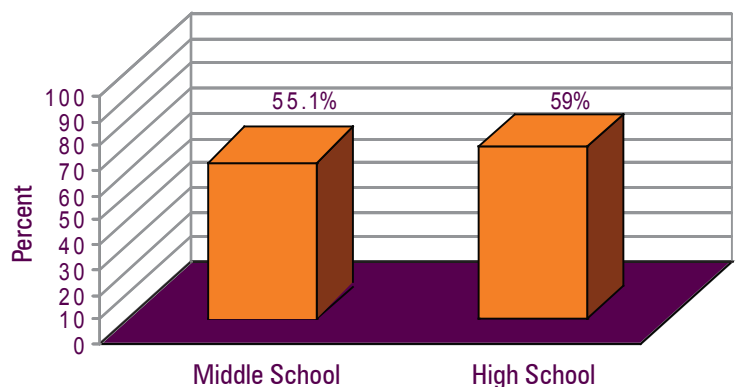


\*Likert rating scale of 3 or 4 = helping a lot or making a huge difference.

#### Student Perceptions of Ignite! Effectiveness

More than fifty percent of high school students rated Ignite! activities as helping them understand history.

### Percent of Students Rating\* Ignite! Courseware Helped Them Pass TAKS



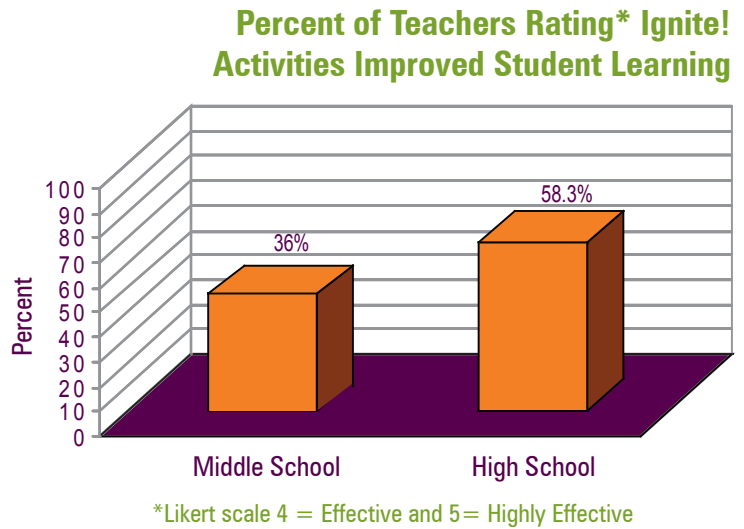
\*Likert rating scale of 3 or 4 = helping a lot or making a huge difference.

#### Student Perceptions of Ignite! Effectiveness

The majority of middle and high school students rated Ignite! courseware as helping them pass the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills.

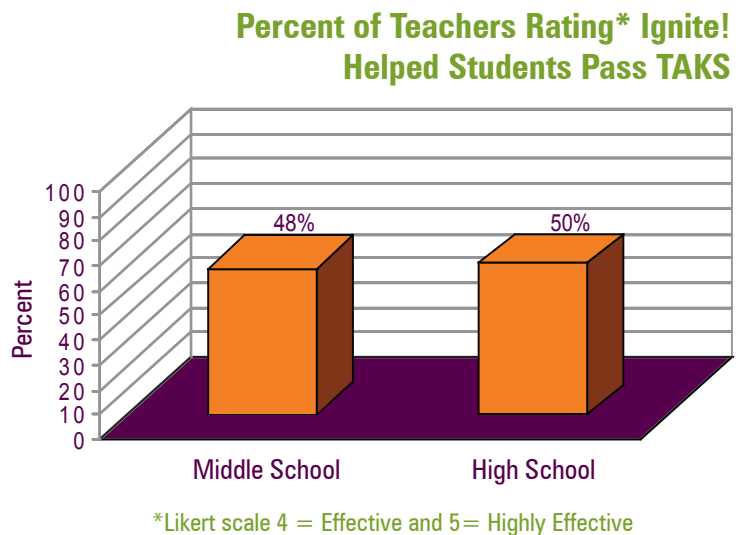
### Teacher Perceptions of Ignite! Effectiveness

Student learning was rated effective or highly effective by 36% of middle school teachers and 58.3% of high school teachers.



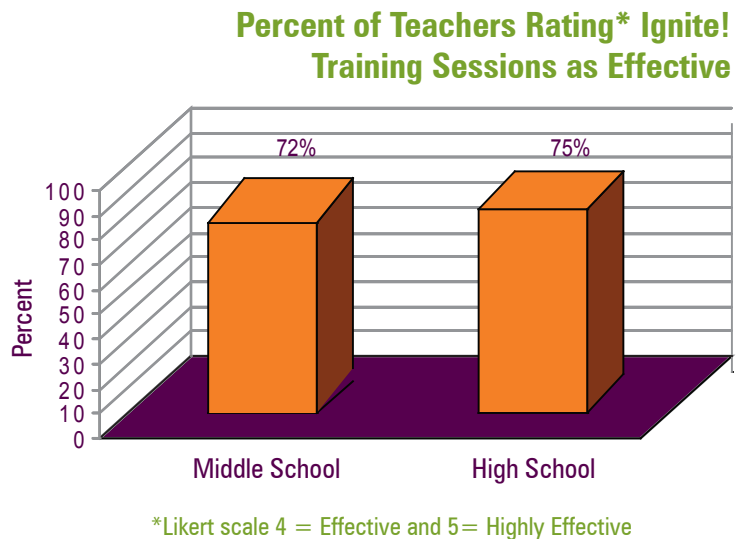
### Teacher Perceptions of Ignite! Effectiveness

Ignite! courseware helped student pass the TAKS was rated effective or highly effective by 48% of middle school teachers and 50% of high school teachers.



### Teacher Perceptions of Ignite! Training Session Effectiveness

About three quarters of the teachers rated Ignite! training sessions as effective.



**TAKS 8th grade American History passing standard between 2002-03 & 2003-04 by campus compared to district average.**

Six middle school campuses in 2003 had passing standards higher than the district average of 89 percent. In 2004, eight of the nine campuses had higher passing standards than the district average of 83 percent.

Passing standard may have decreased because passing standards were high (90 – 100 percent passing standard) in 2003.

TAKS 8th Grade American History Passing Standard* for Middle School Students by Campus			
	2003	2004	
Campus	Passing Standard	Passing Standard	Difference
Rice School	100	98	-2
Edison	94	93	-1
Hartman	93	91	-2
Henry	93	87	-6
Clifton	91	93	2
McReynolds	91	80	-11
Jackson	87	85	-2
Woodson	86	84	-2
Long	79	71	-8
District Avg.	89	83	-6

\*Two SEM is TEA Passing Standard for 2003; One SEM Passing Standard for 2004

**TAKS 10th and 11th grade Social Studies passing standard between 2002-03 & 2003-04 by campus compared to district average.**

One high school campuses in 2003 had a passing standard higher than the district average of 79 percent. In 2004, three of the four campuses had higher passing standards than the district average of 80 percent.

Passing standard may have increased because scores in 2003 were in the 70 percent passing range and had room for improvement.

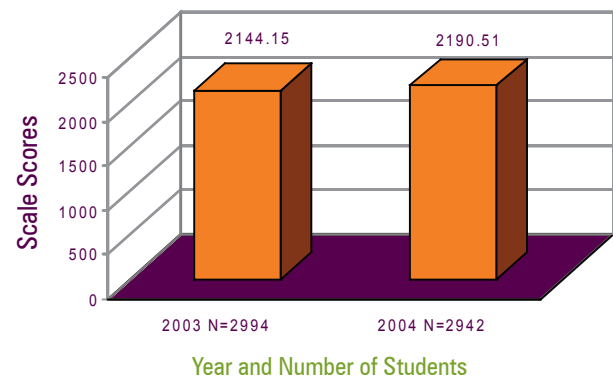
TAKS 10th and 11th Grade Social Studies Passing Standard* for High School Students by Campus			
	2003	2004	
Campus	Passing Standard	Passing Standard	Difference
Austin	83	89	6
Worthing	74	88	14
Houston	70	81	11
Energized for Excell.	48	55	7
District Avg.	79	80	1

\*Two SEM is TEA Passing Standard for 2003; One SEM Passing Standard for 2004

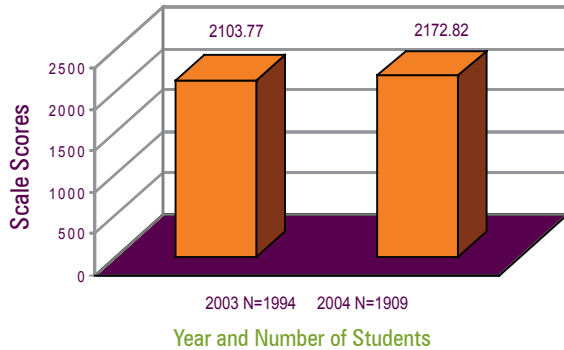
**TAKS Mean Scale Scores Middle Schools**

The mean scale score for middle school students in both years "met standard." In addition, middle school students in 2004 achieved a higher mean scale score in 2004 than in 2003. The mean difference between 2003 (2144.15) and 2004 (2190.51) was 46.36. The standard deviation for 2003 was 126.19 and 141.39 for 2004. The difference was statistically significant at the p. <.05 level.

**Independent T-Test Using Social Studies TAKS Results for Ignite Middle School**



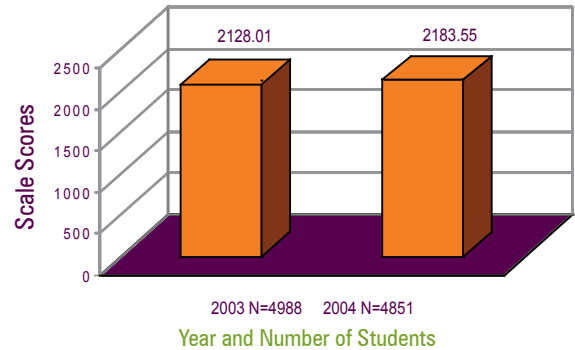
**Independent T-Test Using Social Studies TAKS Results for Ignite High Schools**



**TAKS Mean Scale Scores High Schools**

Scale scores in both years indicated Ignite! high school students “met standard.” Further, the findings reflected an increase in the mean scale scores of students from 2003 (2103.77) to 2004 (2172.82). The difference between the mean scale scores from year to year was 69.05. Standard deviation for 2003 was 128.41 and for 2004 it was 128.73. The difference was statistically significant at the  $p < .05$  level.

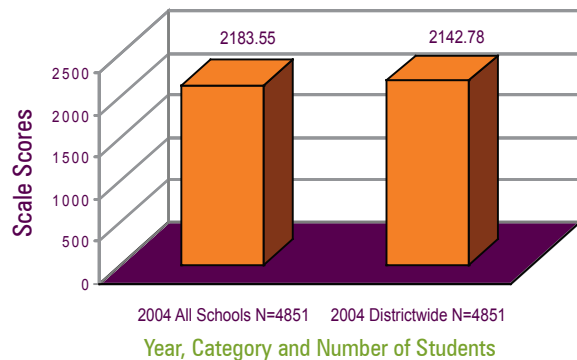
**Independent T-Test Using Social Studies TAKS Results for Ignite All Schools**



**TAKS Mean Scale Scores All Ignite! Schools**

Overall, Ignite! students met standard in 2003 and 2004. Students attained a higher mean scale score in 2004 than in 2003 (2183.55 vs. 2128.01, respectively). Standard deviation of 128.60 for 2003 and 136.80 for 2004. The difference between the mean scale scores was 55.53. These results were statistically significant at the  $p < .05$  level.

**Independent T-Test Using Social Studies TAKS Results for Ignite! Schools Versus Districtwide**



**TAKS Mean Scale Scores All Ignite! Schools Compared to Students District wide in 2004**

Students in Ignite! schools attained a higher mean scale score than students district wide. The mean scale score for Ignite! schools was 2183.55 whereas, the mean scale score for districtwide was 2142.78. Standard deviation for 2003 was 136.80 and 191.72 for 2004. The difference between the scores for the groups was 40.77; thus yielding a statistically significant difference at the  $p < .05$  level.

**Summary**

It is clear that both students and instructors liked Ignite! courseware. One enthusiastic teacher stated, “This is the only exciting and effective software available for teaching US History. It stresses the important TEKS and makes abstract concepts come alive for students.” Teachers also found it to be effective in improving student understanding of history, engaging students in the learning process, and helping students pass the TAKS test. While a causal relationship was not established, there is some correlational evidence that students in the Ignite! pilot schools did score slightly better than their counterparts in other district schools.