

**Association for the Advancement of Mexican Americans**  
**George I. Sanchez School**

AAMA operates two separate Charter Schools: George I. Sanchez Charter High School in Houston and George I. Sanchez High School in San Antonio, Texas. The original Sanchez School was founded in 1973 in Houston as a privately accredited school for dropouts and is one of the nation's oldest minority run alternative school programs.

The school's mission, since its inception, is to address the needs of highly at-risk students whom have either dropped out of school or have been identified as potentially dropping out of school. George I Sanchez High School has grown substantially over the last few years as there are now 720 students on both campuses (Houston – 560 & San Antonio – 160). In 1998, the Houston Campus had 57 graduates which have now risen to 128 in 2004. Approximately 79% of the graduates completed the “recommended program” (24 credits), which is much higher than any other area Charter School. Many graduates completed in only three years. In 2004, the Sanchez School had a completion rate of 78.1%, an 18 point increase over 2003.

TAAS scores improved from 1998 to 2002 as follows: Reading - from 71.0% to 94.9%; Math – from 35.5% to 87.5%; Writing – from 66.7% to 81.0%. In 2002, GIS had some of the highest TLI (Texas Learning Improvement) scores in Texas, almost doubling the State average in Math (23.7 vs. 10.5).

The new TAKS test also resulted in significant improvement as scores rose from 2003 to 2004: Reading: + 8 points; Math: + 10 pts.; Science +22 pts.; and Social Studies +26 points. We are highly focused on Math and Science improvements as Hispanic youth across the State of Texas have especially struggled in these areas.

George I. Sanchez Charter High School was selected to implement an Early College Program funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation through the National Council of La Raza. George I. Sanchez was one of twelve cohort members and the only Texas school in the group. Over seventy schools originally applied for the Early College Program grant. Early College Programs are designed specifically for small schools and allow students to leave with not only their high school diploma, but also an Associate's degree or two years of college credit toward a bachelor's degree.

The Sanchez School excels at working with youth that most schools have given up on. Many districts and schools only want “mainstream” students in their schools in light of increasing accountability tests and concerns over drop-out data. Too many youth are thus, pushed out of our public schools due to academic deficiencies, truancy, and just a “bad attitude.” Sanchez believes that every youth deserves a “second chance” and we are willing to spend the extra time and provide a level of commitment and service that is unprecedented in assisting our students. The results show that we can make a major turn-around, even for the most difficult students and that those who were destined to drop-out can graduate and become productive citizens.