

# Independence High School

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## **Mission Statement**

The mission of Independence High School is to provide a student-centered learning environment with access to all. It is a partnership of students, parents, staff and community members where everyone continues to be challenged; where the lessons of the past and the demands of the present create an atmosphere of tolerance, acceptance, and change leading to sphere of tolerance, acceptance, and change leading to an enriched future for every individual and the community.

## **School Goals**

- Ensure the Success of all Students
- Reduce the Dropout Rate
- Increase Student Achievement
- Enable Students to Become More Humane, Self-Confident Contributing Members of Society
- Increase the Graduation Rate
- Increase Student Enrollment in Post Secondary Schools
- Increase the Number of Highly Trained Teachers
- Create Small Learning Community

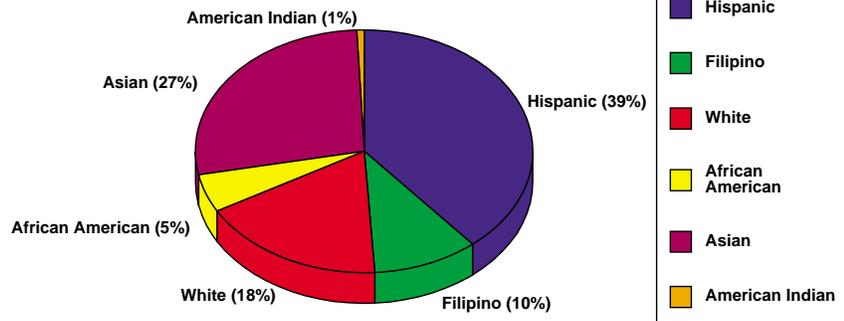
## **School Profile**

Independence High School is located in the East foothills of San Jose. It is the largest of ten comprehensive high schools in the East Side Union High School District. During the 1998-1999 school year, its student population reached 4,356, the largest enrollment in its history. The teaching staff includes 220 teaching faculty and 120 support personnel. The administration includes a principal, an associate principal and five villa principals. The student population is divided into five villas, each having its own principal, counselors and office staff. Two of these villas, Democracy and Eagle Halls, are dedicated to ninth graders. The other three villas, American, Bicentennial, and Constitution Halls, are designated for sophomores, juniors and seniors.

Independence High School is committed to academic excellence for every student. As the population of their students and the needs of the work force in Silicon Valley changed, the staff realized that the process of teaching and learning had to be reevaluated and changed to prepare students to become life long learners in the 21st century. Students are no longer tracked into classes by ability level. All freshmen are placed into college prep Integrated Science, Algebra 1 and English classes. To aid 9th grade students, "families" have been created for the first time. Teachers in the subjects of Math, Science and English teach a common

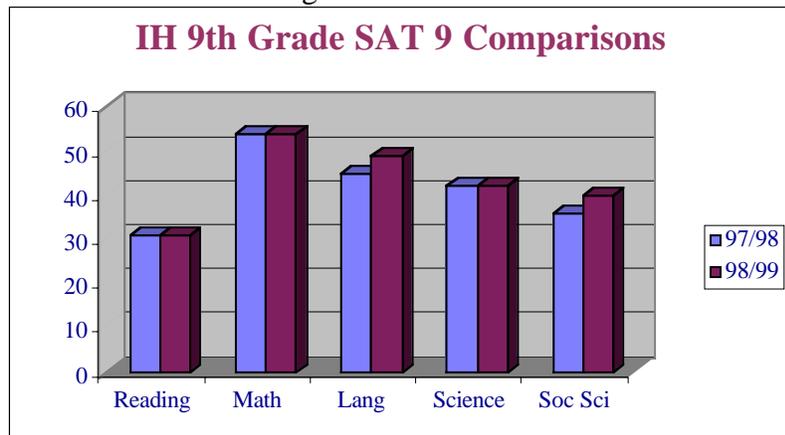
group of 150 to 200 freshmen. This allows the teachers to collaborate and plan lessons across subject areas and to better support and monitor the students. Teachers get to know the parents during scheduled meetings. All this keeps the learning communities close and small, allowing for better student-teacher interaction.

### Ethnic Breakdown of Student Body

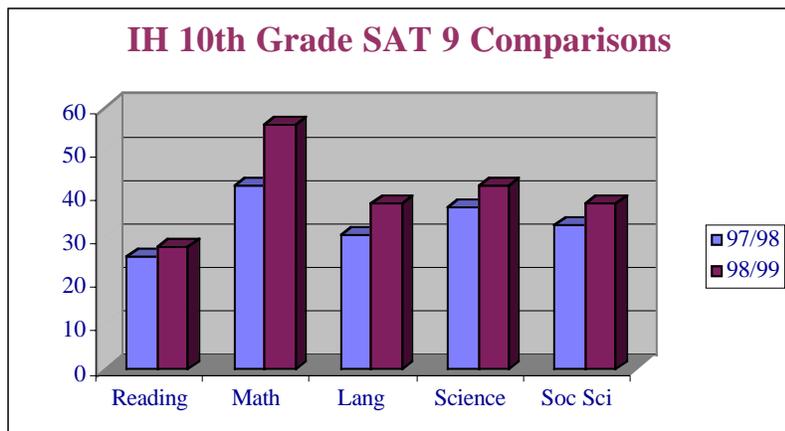


## SAT9

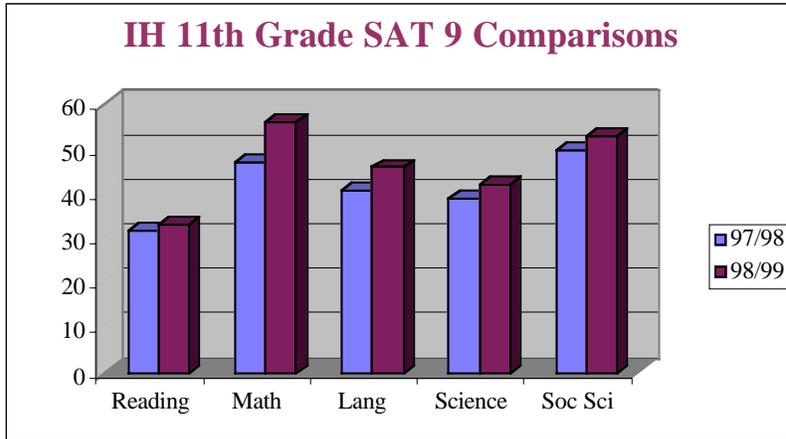
The State of California now requires schools to test all students. The Stanford Achievement Test version 9 (SAT-9) is used statewide. For grades 9-11, students are tested in reading, language, mathematics, science and history/social science. The SAT9 test is designed to compare student performance against a national sample of students in the same grade.



Independence 9th graders scored at the same level or better in all subject areas than the previous year's 9th graders.



Independence 10th graders scored better in all subject areas than the previous year's 10th grade class. The largest gain was realized in math.



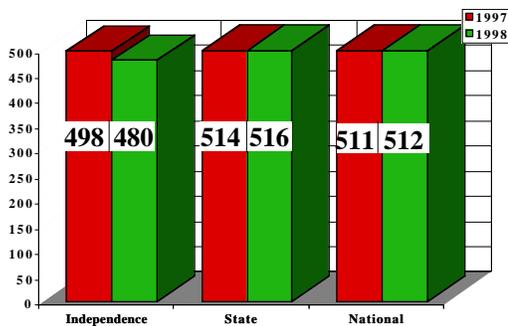
Independence 11th graders scored better in all subject areas than the previous year's 11th grade class. The largest gain was realized in math.

The Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) is a voluntary 2 1/2 hour test that measures verbal and mathematical reasoning abilities related to successful performance in college. Colleges use the information to recruit and select students. The College Board reports the number of students from each school who took the test. All sophomore students take the PLAN to assess skills, interests and begin to explore possible future careers.

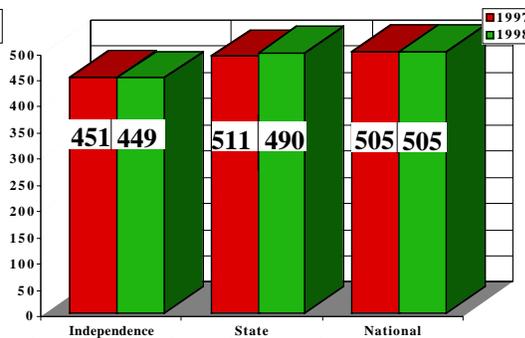
## Student Achievement

### Scholastic Aptitude Test

#### Math Scale Scores



#### Verbal Scale Scores



The College Board reports the average scale scores of students who gave permission to release those scores to their schools. The graph above compares the mean mathematics and verbal scores for Independence attained in 1997 and 1998 with those attained by students across the state and across the nation.

Student attendance at school is directly related to achievement and graduation. Parents should develop a process of monitoring the daily attendance of their students in all classes. The attendance office and villa office staffs notify the parents of chronically absent students by phone. Student absences are also noted for each class on the report cards. Letters are sent home when students have excessive absences or when phone contacts are unsuccessful. Home/School Liaison staff make home calls where necessary and assist parents in working with their students in developing regular attendance habits. On an average day at IHS well over 91% of the students attend school. Another 4% of the students have excused absences. If you have questions or concerns about the attendance of your student, you should immediately call the villa office for his or her attendance status. The total number of students suspended for the 1998-99 school year was 570, and the number of students expelled was 8.

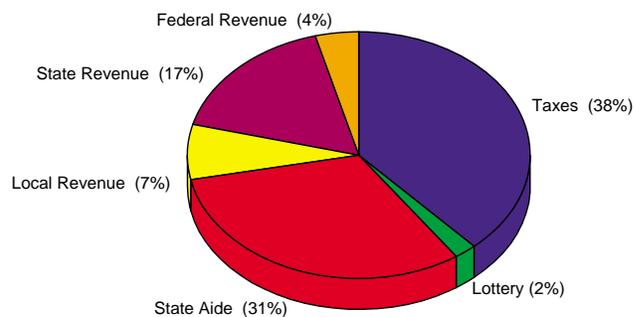
## School Attendance/ Dropout Rates/ Expulsions

## Expenditures and Services Offered

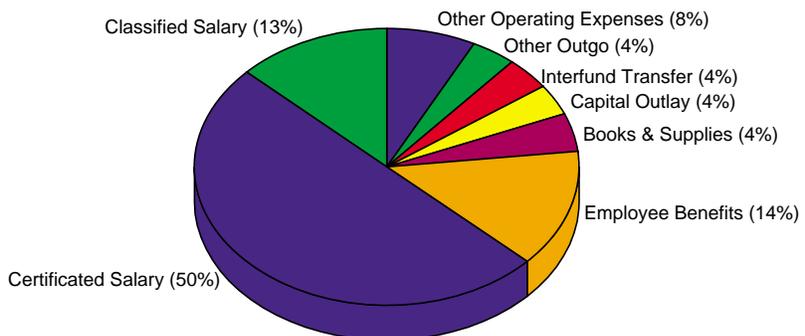
The number of students in grades 10, 11, & 12 who left Independence without requesting a transcript during the 1998-99 school year was 246, which was a decrease over the previous year. This presents a dropout rate of about 5.6%. The school staff continues its efforts to reduce the student dropout rate at IHS and to have all students graduate on time. Strategies such as special orientation programs, study skill classes, student tutorial centers, satellite study centers, period sweeps of the campus for students out of class and alternative ways of earning credits for graduation have resulted in increased numbers of students graduating. The school has programs to help students remain in school, to help students set goals for high school and post high school education, and assist students with personal problems which interfere with their success in school.

In 1998-99, the East Side Union High School District received \$146 million. When costs for direct instruction, transportation, salaries, fringe benefits, food services and facilities maintenance are considered, the district expended \$6,646 per student. The graphs below illustrate district income and expenditures.

—General Fund Income—



—District Expenditures—



A variety of integrated instructional programs have been developed within the East Side Union High School District. Through these programs, students can obtain technical training to prepare them to enter the work force or further their education. Included are Integrated Career Programs (ICP's); Tech Prep; Work Experience; Central County Occupational Center, which includes Regional Occupational Satellite Programs; New Ways Workers; Partnership Academies and Job Placement Center.

Independence high school is a leader in developing new programs and adding services which will improve student performance. The school also receives additional state and federal funds and private grants to meet the needs and learning styles of our diverse student population.

The following programs and services are offered on the IHS campus:

- Limited English Proficient Program
- Delayed Language/Aphasic Program
- Evergreen Valley College Program
- Compensatory Education Program
- Adaptive Physical Education Program
- ROP-Early Childhood Development Program
- ROP-Merchandising Program
- Publication Technology Program
- Clinical Counseling/Peer Support
- School Based Health Clinic
- College Visitation & Enrollment Program
- Independent Study Program (ISP)
- Gifted & Talented Ed Program
- Freshman Orientation Program
- Performing Arts Academy
- Work Experience Program
- Conflict Resolution Program
- Speech Therapy
- Migrant Education Program
- Resource Specialist Program
- Special Day Class Program
- Space Science and Technology Magnet
- Student Study Center
- School Improvement Program
- Teaching Academy Magnet
- Pegasus Alternative School
- Academy of Finance
- AVID (Achievement Via Individual Determination)

Many things affect employee salary. Considerations that affect the salary of educators are: the size of the district and whether it serves only high school students, elementary students, or both. Below, we look at statewide averages, ranges and ESUHSD figures.

	STATE-WIDE AVERAGE	STATE-WIDE RANGE	ESUHSD AVERAGE
Beginning Teacher's Salary	\$30,652	\$27,309-\$37,130	\$30,351
Midrange Teacher's Salary	\$50,676	\$41,540-\$59,852	\$52,607
Highest Teacher's Salary	\$60,962	\$53,428-\$69,300	\$64,827
School-Site Principal's Salary	\$86,783	\$68,065-\$109,091	\$84,673
District Superintendent's Salary	\$117,436	\$90,436-\$138,395	\$121,033

Class size in the East Side Union High School District varies by subject from an average of twenty or less in reading classes, ELD, and 9th grade Opportunity classes to forty-two or less in physical education. The specific class size by subject area is established by a contractual agreement between the East Side Teachers' Association and the school district.

It is each school's responsibility to monitor class size at that site and to maintain class averages at or below the agreed upon numbers. Where class size exceeds the subject average, a monetary penalty is assessed against the school district.

The typical teaching load for a full-time teacher is five classes plus a preparation period, with one to three subject level preparations. Teachers with less than a full-time contract have a proportionately lower teaching load.

Instructional Aides for ELD are provided through State and Federal Supplementary Funds to assist in Math, Sheltered Science, Sheltered World History, Sheltered Keyboarding and various ELD courses.

Instructional Aides are provided through Special Education funds for all Special Education classes.

The average department class size is as follows:

Department/Class Size	Department/Class Size
Art ..... 29	Other ..... 30
Business Education ..... 29	Safety Education ..... 35
Typing/Keyboard ..... 40	Science ..... 32
English ..... 30	Social Science ..... 32
Foreign Language ..... 29	<i>Additionally, the following classes average:</i>
Homemaking ..... 29	ELD
Industrial Education ..... 29	Language Arts 1 & 2 ..... 20
Mathematics ..... 32	Survival Skills ..... 20
Performing Arts (Band, Choir, except for Drama) ..... 30	Language Arts 3 ..... 30
Physical Education ..... 42	Bilingual/Sheltered ..... 25
Reading Improvement & Development ..... 20	

## Compensation/ Salary

## Class Size and Teaching Loads

All ninth grade English classes were loaded at a ratio of 20 to 1 under the auspice of the state's class size reduction program. Additionally 9th grade math or science was reduced to 20 to 1 or 25 to 1.

## Teacher Assignments

California law requires that teachers be assigned to classes only within their area of credential authorization. Where it is necessary to make assignments outside of current credential authorizations, appropriate special credentials are obtained. For the school year of 1998-99, there were approximately 4 teachers requiring special credentials throughout the district.

## Substitute Teachers

Finding and hiring qualified substitute teachers is a problem at all East Side high schools. The need for substitutes varies with the day of the week and the time of year. Coupled with teacher absences for illness and personal necessity, there are special professional growth activities that require teachers to be absent from their classes. These special activities may include teacher training workshops or subject area conferences. When the need for substitutes exceeds the supply, the regular classroom teachers are called upon to fill in for their colleagues during their preparation period. Regardless of the reasons for calling in substitute teachers, the instructional program suffers when the regular teacher is absent. Every effort is made to minimize teacher absences.

## Teacher Evaluation and Teaching Loads

The principal, villa principals and associate principal identify areas where inservice training is needed to increase student achievement. The principal evaluates the performance of each villa principal, the associate principal, and the assistant to the principal. The principal is evaluated by the Superintendent based on written performance reports and personal interviews. A portion of this evaluation is based on goals developed jointly by the school and district administration and is tied to student success, instructional services, and administrative leadership.

## Textbooks/ Instructional Materials

Classroom sets of individual textbooks are available to students for courses using them. On the average, a new textbook costs between \$35.00 and \$40.00. Students who take five required courses may have as many as 5 texts with a total value of \$175.00 or more. New textbooks were adopted by the Board of Trustees last year for courses in ELL, Health and Safety Education, Foreign Language, Home Economics, and Social Science. These textbooks are being phased into schools over two years to replace outdated textbooks.

## Technology

Technology continues to increase as an instructional tool at Independence. Independence is a Digital High School. The entire campus is networked. Every classroom has at least one teacher work station with internet access. All 9th grade core classes have at least 3 student work stations. Each student has assigned space on the school's server to store their work over their four years at IHS. Students make use of more than 450 computers in classes such as computer fundamentals, computer programming, science, English, graphics, journalism, advanced business skills, academy programs and special education. At IHS the instructional staff also uses interactive video, laser discs and multimedia technology teaching stations. A newly completed Staff/Parent Technology Training Center will offer classes to staff and parents. Teachers will learn new ways to integrate technology into the curriculum. *Textbook losses continue to be a serious district problem that students, parents and teachers must address every year.*

## Counseling/ Student Services

At Independence, each villa has 2-3 part-time counselors. All 12th graders have a counselor who is responsible for the following services: transcript evaluation, schedule changes, college counseling, testing, letters of recommendation, parent conferences, personal counseling, and college & financial aid applications. Students in grades 9-11 see an available counselor for schedule changes, testing information, personal counseling, and college planning. In addition to the guidance counseling program, the following counseling support services are available: the Career Center, Clinical Counseling, and Healthy Start. Four student advisors and one home-school liaison assist students in the areas of attendance and discipline.

**S**afety is a priority at Independence. The school's safety team includes parents, students and staff. San Jose Police officers are present on campus to assist in emergencies and to handle situations more appropriate to law enforcement. The parent safety team monitors part of the campus to assure that students are in class. Emergency drills are conducted regularly for fire, earthquake and intrusions. The school's janitorial and gardening staff keep the 102 acre facility clean and well maintained. Measure A funds have remodeled 16 science classrooms and campus restrooms. New exterior, lighting, fire and intrusion alarm and telephone systems have increased the safety for staff and students.

**I**ndependence has a behavior code that was developed by staff and parents in accordance with district policy and educational codes. The plan is mailed to parents at the beginning of each school year and distributed to the students. The school offers a family support program which assists parents in establishing acceptable social standards for their children and methods of monitoring and enforcing these standards so that their children will experience greater success in school and throughout life. Parents interested in this program should call IHS and ask for the supplementary programs' office. Good citizenship, respect for one another and adherence to school rules are fundamental to the achievement of excellence. A safe and orderly campus is assured when parents, teachers, administrators, and students join together. Unacceptable behavior carries consequences. The school makes every effort to retain students in the educational system, yet correcting misbehavior and truancy, through programs such as Saturday school and alternative educational programs. Behavior which endangers students or staff is not tolerated and is handled through the district suspension and expulsion procedures.

**T**he IHS staff believes professional development is a lifelong process in which all staff members are involved. The result of this training has made IHS a model school for change which has improved student performance. The high level of professional development service was carried forward into the 1998-99 school year. The staff development program utilizes professionals from other educational institutions and from industry as well as our own staff in presenting information or giving demonstrations. Staff development programs focused on:

- **Curriculum**—Departments concentrated on aligning curriculum to state content standards, providing students with equal access to a rigorous course of study, developing new student assessment processes including rubrics and project-based learning.
- **Restructuring**—Designation as a Bay Area School Reform Collaborative (BASRC) Leadership School has allowed Independence to continue in the development and planning of small learning communities focusing on integrated curriculum and career pathways. Staff development and community forums continue to focus on the development of standards and assessment related to student achievement. Cycles of Inquiry have created a data driven course of action focusing on improved student achievement.
- **Diversity Training**—At IHS, with its diverse ethnic student population, it is vital to create common experiences that are shared by all students and staff. The staff is provided with training on common experiences which allows the school community to come together to share, learn, celebrate, and reflect upon their uniqueness. The training focuses on school wide activities, facilitating communication, evaluating success of activities, planning for increased effectiveness of activities, and offering support for the many activities and groups involved with diversity activities. Inservice for classified staff included specialized training particular to the needs of the instructional aide, clerical, food and nutrition, custodial and gardening staffs. IHS staff participated in a program presented through the ESUHSD for classified staff.

The Independence staff is constantly seeking ways to improve current course offerings and develop new courses to meet the needs of students in the twenty-first century.

**I**n the spring of 1996, The California School Boards Association selected Independence High School as a **Bay Area Reform Leadership School**. This is one of the most prestigious awards that a school can receive. This award is based on the school vision and leadership, programs and curriculum, teaching and learning processes, assessment and accountability, student support services, teacher training and workshops, and parent and community participation.

## Safety, Cleanliness of School Facilities

## Classroom Discipline

## Staff and Curriculum Development

## Quality of Instruction and Leadership

Independence offers one of the widest range of courses in Santa Clara County. In addition to a variety of academic classes, IHS offers a great co-curricular program including clubs, athletics, music, dance, drama, student government and other activities. Independence has some of the finest educational facilities found in the United States. The IHS staff is committed to providing the very best instruction to all students. Parents are encouraged to call the villa offices at any time if they have questions.

- Based on the state criteria for classification as a senior student, Independence had a graduation rate of 87%. All entrance requirements for the University of California were completed by 18% of the graduates.
- 25% of IHS 1998 graduates enrolled or planned to attend a 4 year college or university and 50% enrolled in community colleges.
- IHS students took 426 Advanced Placement Examinations in 13 subject areas. Tests were given in the areas of Art History, Computer Science A & B, English Language, English Literature, Comp. Government, U. S. Government, History, Calculus AB & BC, Physics B and Spanish Language.
- With the assistance of the IHS counseling staff, 100% of the senior students completed applications for college and university financial aide.

## Involvement

Independence is committed to involving as many segments of the community as possible in planning, operating, monitoring and evaluating its educational programs. This includes:

- **SCHOOL SITE COUNCIL:** A group of 32 teachers, counselors, parents, students and administrators who are responsible for planning and sustaining the school's School Improvement Program.
- **SCHOOL ADVISORY COMMITTEE & BILINGUAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE:** These two committees include parents, staff, and community members who advise the school on how best to serve non-English speakers and students scoring below grade level in math and reading.
- **GATE COMMITTEE:** A group of parents, teachers, and other school staff who plan programs to meet the needs of the school's 380 (10%) gifted and talented students.
- **STAFF SENATE:** A group of professional educators composed of 15 teachers, 5 classified staff, and 2 administrators meet twice per month to discuss current issues and resolve problems. They also focus on long range planning to increase the effectiveness of the school programs and seek ways to make IHS a more pleasant place to work and learn.
- **AD HOC COMMITTEES:** Advisory and information parent and staff committees meet regularly for UCO students, magnet and academy program students, ELD students, African American students and Hispanic students.
- **IHS BAND BOOSTERS:** This group provides support and direction to the band. Other parent and community groups support spirit leaders, athletic teams, clubs, and classes. Independence High School is recognized for its excellence in education throughout the State of California.

## Work Force Preparation

Independence is home to three California Partnership Academy Programs: East Side Academy, Academy of Finance and the Teaching Academy. These Academies prepare students for careers by providing job related experiences in the community, internships and mentoring by working professionals.

## Instructional Minutes

Independence High School exceeded the state requirement for instructional minutes.

Superintendent Joe Coto  
East Side Union High School District  
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