

Optional Extended Year Program Summary Report: 2003-2004

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The Optional Extended Year Program (OEYP) was initiated in 1995 as a result of Senate Bill 1 to provide extended learning opportunities for students in kindergarten through grade 8 who are at risk of academic failure. The primary focus of an OEY program is to immediately reduce and ultimately eliminate the need for student retention by providing additional instructional time for students to master the State's academic performance standards (Texas Education Code Sections 42.152 & 29.082). OEY programs are designed to accommodate four school-day options: 1) extended day; 2) extended week; 3) intersession for year-round schools; and 4) summer school. A school district may provide instructional services during any of these programs for a period of time not to exceed 30 days. Since 1993, the Austin Independent School District (AISD) has used the OEY program in each of these options to reduce the number of AISD students at risk of being retained. AISD used OEY programs funds during the spring (grades 3-5) and summer (grades 6-8) of 2004 at 64 schools and served 3,565 students who would have been retained without the benefit of supplemental instructional.

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) sets the guidelines for promotion, and provides OEY program policy on class size (no more than 16 students to a class and no fewer than 8), attendance, staff development and parental involvement. This report provides a summary of operational and participant outcome (attendance, promotion, parent involvement, and staff development) data, as well as recommendations to assist district program planners, principals, grants staff, teachers, and school support services staff in the planning and delivery of services to students at risk of not being promoted to the next grade.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A number of people worked with the AISD Department of Program Evaluation (DPE) in developing and carrying out the 2003-2004 OEYP evaluation. Many thanks go to our department's secretaries, AISD Accountability/PEIMS staff, AISD School Support Services staff, OEYP principals, teachers, their mentors, attendance clerks, grants staff, and other staff.

EVALUATION OBJECTIVES

1. To document and report AISD's OEY program activities and expenditures, per state law.
2. To summarize the participation of parents in AISD's OEYP activities.

3. To gather information from OEYP staff (teachers, their mentors, and principals) on the program's implementation, curriculum, and expectations for program participants.
4. To provide AISD decision-makers with recommendations to enhance the operation of the district's OEY program and its ability to foster academic success.

AISD'S OEYP PROGRAM CONFIGURATION AND COSTS

AISD implemented an early intervention program in spring 2004 at 59 (80%) of 74 AISD elementary campuses. This program provided accelerated literacy and mathematics instruction to students in 3rd through 5th grades who were not meeting district academic performance standards by the end of the first semester. The OEYP instructional day was defined as four hours of accelerated instruction that took place beyond the regular instructional day. This segment of AISD's OEY program included students with eligibility scores of 60% or less on the Middle of the Year (MOY) benchmark test for reading and math, who participated in sessions with a maximum class size of 8 in a specific program type (extended day, week, or the combination of the two). In addition, the program included parental involvement, staff development for teachers, and student performance evaluations (attendance, pre- and posttest information, classroom performance, and promotion and retention information for all participating students).

Summer school was the other segment of AISD's OEY program that offered academic course grade recovery in mathematics, language arts, and social studies at 5 middle school sites. These course offerings were for students who were at risk of being retained in grades 6-8 because they had failed to pass at least two of these core subjects during the regular school year.

AISD received its OEY program formula-based allocation of \$421,710 in January 2004. Payroll costs for school staff and other program support staff made up the largest share of the project budget at \$309,634 (73%). Instructional and office supplies, textbooks, and testing materials cost \$112,076 (27%). Also, when principals at elementary accelerated instruction campuses were asked if staff other than those funded with OEYP funds worked with their students, 23 (66%) of the responding principals named one or more persons, or other program staff who worked with them, such as mentor teachers, regular classroom teachers, counselors, special education staff, reading and mathematics specialists, high school students, and others.

The Texas Education Agency's (TEA) Optional Extended Year Program Final Expenditure report, submitted in September 2004 by AISD Finance staff, showed that all allocated funds were expended. In addition, as part of the TEA OEY Program compliance report, submitted in September 2004 by AISD Program Evaluation staff, expenditures for the

2003-2004 OEY program showed a cost of \$808,974 (of which \$387,264 were local funds) that included operational costs, such as refreshments, transportation, awards and incentives, janitorial supplies, and contracted services (e.g., child care for parental involvement activities or nursing services).

PROGRAM STRATEGIES

AISD curriculum staff developed a curriculum for structured classes that incorporated an interdisciplinary program. The curriculum also delivered the materials at a more rigorous, accelerated pace to provide additional instructional time for students to master the State's academic performance standards. The collective strategies used most often by schools participating in the spring and summer OEY programs are state designated curriculum or project focuses, and were reported to TEA as part of the compliance report. Following are the curriculum or project focuses for which the collective strategies were reported most often:

- Reading or Language Arts,
- Mathematics and/or Science,
- Interdisciplinary Program,
- Integration of Technology,
- Problem Solving,
- ESL (English as a Second Language),
- Mentoring,
- Parent Partnerships,
- Accelerated Reading Instruction (ARI),
- Accelerated Math Instruction (AMI), and
- Readiness for Next Grade (used to determine readiness for promotion).

In the elementary program, campuses used SRA Corrective Reading (English) or Trofeos (Spanish) curriculum for third grade low decoders. (See AISD Publication 03.09, AISD K-4 Accelerated Instruction in Reading and Mathematics Evaluation, 2003-2004, for more information on grades K-3.) For upper elementary grades 4 and 5, elementary campuses used Corrective Reading (Levels B1 and B2) curriculum intervention for students with low decoding skills, and the Orchestrated Reading Success (ORS) curriculum intervention for those students with low comprehension skills. Teachers provided assistance to struggling readers via direct instruction, demonstrations, discussions, independent practices that included guided reading, using expository text, TAKS passages from ORS materials, and other approaches. Students were

assessed regularly with the AISD's Graphic Organizer rubric to determine areas in which they needed additional academic support.

The middle school curricula, developed by district staff in alignment with TEKS, covered course materials needed for grade or credit recovery at a rigorous pace in Language Arts, Mathematics or Social Studies. Middle school students could take a maximum of two courses from those offered.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

During September, TEA requires each district that receives OEYP funds to submit OEYP information as part of the district's electronic Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) report, as well as a separate OEY Program Evaluation Report. The OEYP PEIMS data contain basic demographic information about the students who participated in OEY program activities, such as students' names, PEIMS ID numbers, campus enrollment numbers, grade levels, OEY program type, attendance, and promotion or retention information.

To substantiate the PEIMS count of program participants and gather the data for the final evaluation report, teachers provided information about their students on a roster provided by staff from the Department of Program Evaluation. Data requested were: student name, ID number, current grade, daily attendance, academic classes attended, pre- and posttest data for program participants, and student promotion or retention recommendations. Program Evaluation staff also gathered data for the report from the district's student database, as well as feed back from principals, teachers, and mentors at the OEYP spring and summer sites.

In school year 2003-2004, TEA assigned school districts' program funding and number of students to be served based upon prior year information. Therefore, to ensure consistent records, AISD's PEIMS and evaluation staff kept one attendance file on spring and summer daily attendance. In May 2004, class rosters were reconciled with the district's student databases for OEYP participation prior to the electronic transmission of the PEIMS report and the program evaluation report to TEA. This process ensured reporting accuracy by eliminating the risk of AISD staff accumulating different participant totals for the district.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Prior to the implementation of the grant, staff development was conducted with coordinators regarding grant requirement. An OEYP principal survey was sent to principals at 59 elementary schools, and 5 middle school "cluster site" principals. Of the 39 (or 55%) surveys returned, 35 were from elementary principals who held an accelerated instruction program on

their campus during spring 2004. The other four surveys were from middle school summer school principals. Elementary OEYP accelerated instruction principals reported providing one or more staff development sessions on topics such as Orchestrated Reading success strategies, SRA Corrective Reading, TAKS Success comprehension, using the Graphic Organizer's rubric for scoring, intervention math strategies, and procedures and policy.

The content of OEYP summer middle school staff development included training in the use of relevant curriculum materials (e.g., math, reading, social studies, and special education modifications) for secondary teachers, and TEKS and/or curriculum alignment for all teachers. AISD curriculum specialists provided training in assessment/testing techniques and portfolio expectations. Staff development also was provided on behavioral management, attendance, program schedules, pay, staff assignments, student registration, staff planning and preparation, and evaluation/data requirements.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

All (39) responding OEYP principals reported providing parent involvement activities during 2003-2004. The most common methods used by elementary and secondary schools to notify parents about the program and their child/children's eligibility for participation included: letters/flyer to parents, phone calls to parents, parent/teacher conference, counselors' notices to parents, marquee messages, PTA/PTO meetings, and broadcast messages over AISD's TV access channels.

Survey records completed by principals showed a duplicated count of 4,005 elementary and secondary parents participating in OEY program activities during 2003-2004. AISD schools hosting OEY programs held a variety of activities to engage parents in their child's learning. The parents were notified through invitations, newsletters, and phone calls about the activities. The following list includes the most common parent involvement activities reported by OEYP principals and the *attendance totals* for the categories in parentheses:

- Elementary Family Math or Literacy Night (1,581);
- Middle School Registration and Orientation (782); and
- Elementary Principal Coffees (255).

PROGRAM INFORMATION, CURRICULA, AND PROCEDURES

When elementary principals were asked if the curriculum at their school adequately addressed the needs of their students (e.g., academically sound, short-term adaptability, rigor, creative academic qualities, and others), 34 (or 97%) agreed that the program at their respective

schools adequately addressed the needs of their students. Thirty-three (or 94%) agreed that expectations for student success were met, and 20 (or 57%) felt their expectations for parent participation were met. Four of the 5 summer school middle school principals returned the survey. All four of the summer principals agreed with the statements about:

- Adequacy of information about the OEYP grant,
- Rigor/pace of the curriculum's delivery,
- Non-disruptive inclusion of 8th graders on site,
- Expectations for student success, and
- Quality of parent involvement in the summer school.

PROGRAM COMPLETION, STUDENT PROMOTION AND RETENTION

Teachers in the OEY middle and high school summer programs made recommendations for student promotion or retention based on their students' pre- and posttest scores (where available), academic work, and attendance. However, student promotion or retention is not necessarily predicated upon these types of data because state law (Senate Bill 1) allows students who attend OEY program activities to be promoted to the next grade in one of four situations: 1) meeting program attendance requirements and district academic requirements; 2) meeting academic requirements only; 3) meeting attendance requirements only; or 4) meeting neither attendance nor academic requirement (*subjective student placement*). The final decision to promote or retain a student is made by the home school principal or the parent of the student.

At the end of the program, OEY program summary rosters with student data (including pre- and posttest scores, attendance information, and recommendations for promotion or retention) were provided to the home school principals who verified student promotion or retention.

Table 1 shows that 3,565 students attended at least one day of an OEY program in 2003-2004. Of that number, 3,461 (97%) were promoted. Table 2 shows that 102 (2.9%) were retained by principal decision and 2 (0.06%) were retained by parent request.

Table 1: Number and Percent of AISD Students Served by Grade Level and Promoted in OEY Programs 2003-2004

| OEY Programs | Grade Level | | | | | | Totals | |
|---|-------------|-------|-----|-----|-----|-----|--------------|----------------|
| | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | Total Served | Total Promoted |
| Accelerated Reading Instruction-Spring 2004 | 835 | 1,022 | 571 | | 0 | 0 | 2,428 | 2,365 (97.4%) |
| Summer School-2004 | | | | 296 | 412 | 429 | 1,137 | 1,096 (96.3%) |
| Totals | 835 | 1,022 | 571 | 296 | 412 | 429 | 3,565 | 3,461 (97.0%) |

Source: AISD's Program Evaluation Records, September 2004.

Table 2: Number and Percent of AISD Students Served and Retained in OEY Programs 2003-2004

| OEY Programs | Total Participants | Number & Percent of Students Retained By Principal Decision | Number & Percent of Students Retained By Parent Request |
|---|--------------------|---|---|
| Accelerated Reading Instruction-Spring 2004 | 2,428 | 62 (2.5%) | 1 (0.04%) |
| Summer School-2004 | 1,137 | 40 (3.5%) | 1 (0.09%) |
| Totals | 3,565 | 102 (2.9%) | 2 (0.06%) |

Source: AISD's Program Evaluation Records, September 2004.

MIDDLE SCHOOL COURSE PERFORMANCE

Table 3 shows data (unduplicated counts) reported to TEA on the numbers of students in grades 6-8 taking courses in the summer that they had failed during the regular school year. Overall, for students taking a minimum of two courses failed during the regular school year, summer course passing rates were high, with 96% (1,096) of middle school students passing summer courses. Please note, Table 3 promotion totals and percentages contain some placements.

Table 3: Students in Grades 6-8 Taking Failed Regular-Term Courses During OEYP Summer 2004

| Grade | Number & Percent Passed | Number & Percent Failed |
|--------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| 6 | 285 (96%) | 11 (4%) |
| 7 | 398 (97%) | 14 (3%) |
| 8 | 413 (96%) | 16 (4%) |
| Total | 1,096 (96%) | 41 (4%) |

Source: AISD's Program Evaluation Records, September 2004.

ACCELERATED INSTRUCTION STAFF SURVEY RESULTS

Elementary staff (teachers and mentor teachers) who participated in the spring OEYP accelerated instruction program were asked to complete and return the Reading and Mathematics Intervention Teacher Survey developed through the coordinated efforts of the Department of Program Evaluation staff. Eighty-one teachers and seventy-two mentor teachers returned surveys, and all were viable for analyses (n=153). Survey results showed most staff agreed that:

- Professional staff development provided useful information about the curriculum in use (80%),
- The program curriculum was effective (92%),
- The monitoring assessments used in their program gave accurate information about student progress (86%),
- Campus staff felt that the mentor teacher worked cooperatively with them (94%), and
- The mentor teachers felt that campus staff provided support for them and the teachers working in their accelerated program (93%).

However, 10% of the mentor teachers (n=72) were undecided about whether the curriculum used in the spring program was effective in accelerating student progress. In addition, 17% of the mentor teachers disagreed with the statement that the program provided accurate student progress information.

Review of the teachers and mentor teachers' survey results also showed that some teachers, who taught either accelerated reading or mathematics instructional classes, were not as satisfied with the district's provision of adequate information for reading and mathematics in the following areas: curriculum and instruction (18%), assessment options (27%), data collection and reporting (27%), and grant requirements (27%).

These teachers also showed higher percentages of uncertainty about district staff provision of adequate information on grant requirements (19%), payroll procedures (40%), and clear expectations for teacher participation (18%). Since school year 2003-2004 was the first year that many elementary teachers taught OEYP-funded accelerated classes, it is most likely that they were not familiar with OEY program rules and policies.

Summer middle school teachers and mentor teachers were asked to complete surveys at the end of summer school. Seventy-three middle school teachers returned surveys viable for analyses. Survey results in Table 4 show that summer middle school teachers were positive about most topics. However, there were two areas in which many indicated that they were

undecided. For example, 42% were not sure about being involved in planning for the OEYP program. In addition, 41% were unsure about whether parent involvement at their schools was good. This result seems to be in conflict with the survey data from principals showing large numbers of parents participating in OEYP summer activities and may be an issue of quantity versus quality of involvement, or lack of awareness of activities taking place.

Table 4: Percent of Teachers Responding in Each Response Category on the AISD Summer 2004 Middle School OEYP Teacher Survey (n=73)

| Survey Item | % Agree | % Disagree | % Undecided |
|---|---------|------------|-------------|
| Staff development on the accelerated learning curriculum for summer academic was adequate. | 79 | 10 | 11 |
| The program goals were clearly defined. | 77 | 7 | 13 |
| The curriculum was adequate to meet the program goals. | 76 | 12 | 12 |
| The rigor/pace of the curriculum's delivery was comfortable. | 78 | 18 | 4 |
| I would like more involvement in planning for this program. | 32 | 25 | 42 |
| I received adequate assistance from the curriculum support staff (mentor teacher). | 94 | 3 | 3 |
| In general, I received adequate support from the school staff where I taught. | 93 | 3 | 4 |
| I received adequate information about the grant (Optional Extended Year Program) that funded the summer program at my school. | 66 | 11 | 23 |
| My expectations for student success were met. | 74 | 15 | 11 |
| Parent involvement at my school for students participating in the summer classes was good. | 29 | 30 | 41 |

Source: AISD OEYP Summer Middle School Teacher Survey, 2003-2004.

Twenty-nine middle school mentor teachers completed the survey at the end of the summer school session (see Table 5). Review of their responses showed that the majority of mentor teachers agreed that staff development provided was adequate for operations specific to OEYP. In addition, most agreed that they received adequate information on pre- and posttest assessments, and support from school staff. They also were positive about the appropriateness of the rigor/pace of the program, expectations for student success, and the first-time inclusion of 8th graders in the program. In previous years, eighth graders attended summer school sessions at the high school that they would be attending as 9th graders.

Mentor teachers were required to attend training on grant requirements and the availability of assistance for parental involvement activities. However, in the survey, mentor

teachers were less positive about receiving adequate information about the grant (OEYP) that funded their summer accelerated learning program (48%), and parent involvement in their schools (24%). When asked what type of OEYP staff development they would like to see continued, the majority of mentor teachers mentioned keeping the curriculum and the two day-staff development session. The majority of the mentor teachers suggested having the 8th graders back in a separate program, and revising the policy on allowing resource students (receiving special education services) into regular summer classes.

Table 5: Percent of Mentor Teacher Responding in Each Response Category on the AISD Summer 2004 Middle School OEYP Mentor Teacher Survey (n=29)

| Survey Item | % Agree | % Disagree | % Undecided |
|---|---------|------------|-------------|
| I received adequate information on pre-and posttest assessments. | 83 | 10 | 7 |
| In general, I received adequate support from the school staff where I worked. | 79 | 18 | 3 |
| The inclusion of 8 th grade in the summer program did not disrupt delivery of service. | 73 | 10 | 17 |
| Staff development on operations “specific” to the Optional Extended Year Program (e.g., class rosters, electronic attendance, attendance summaries, potential retainee list, and payroll) was adequate. | 69 | 14 | 17 |
| The rigor/pace of the program was appropriate for student learning. | 69 | 24 | 7 |
| My expectations for student success were met. | 52 | 27 | 21 |
| I received adequate information about the grant (Optional Extended Year Program) that funded the accelerated learning program at my summer school. | 48 | 24 | 28 |
| My expectations for parent participation were met. | 24 | 24 | 52 |

Source: AISD OEYP Summer Middle School Mentor Teacher Survey, 2003-2004.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Review of the data shows very positive student outcomes for AISD’s 2003-2004 OEY program, such as a 97% promotion rate for the 3rd through 5th grade students who participated in the spring Accelerated Reading and Mathematics Instruction program. Also, 96% of the summer school participants in grades 6-8 were promoted to the next grade, and parent involvement (4,005) was high in terms of volume, across both elementary and middle school programs.

Because the majority of 3rd through 5th grade students who participated in the spring accelerated reading and mathematics instruction program were promoted at the end of the school year, fewer elementary summer resources were needed. Thus, early intervention seems to work well. Most elementary schools sent their students, who needed additional services, to the district's elementary summer school programs or to other summer schools nearby that used state or local funds to provide summer remedial services. Strict promotion standards will remain in effect under the state's Student Success Initiative, which includes the OEY Program. Because of the success of the early intervention program, when TEA released OEYP funds in August to AISD, AISD began its OEY program in Fall 2004. This program expanded the grade levels served to grades 3-12 and course offerings recommended by program, grant, and evaluation staffs. Regardless of the positive outcome of the early intervention program, there are some concerns about the program's design, planning, and operational uniformity within AISD that need immediate attention. Thus, the first recommendation addressing program design is to offer the OEYP early intervention to students in need of accelerated services with district-directed emphasis on meeting the TEA designated number of students to be served. This prioritization would ensure that the district addresses the needs of all eligible students and does not return OEYP funds to TEA. Although, staff development was offered to each middle school campus principal, a third recommendation is to have more staff development provided to principals and designated staff in the following areas:

- Emphasizing the OEYP program guidelines regarding attendance, class size, and number of program days, to lessen confusion about reporting data;
- Stressing the efficient and effective use of campus support staff, such as parent support specialists or persons designated to contact parents about student attendance, behavior, and/or setting up conferences on these topics, or other program related matters; and,
- Since survey results showed that middle school teachers and mentor teachers felt that parent involvement was less than satisfactory in their schools, staff development should be offered on parent involvement through the AISD Family Resource Center. The Center has trained staff capable of providing and/or modeling the needed staff development on ways to involve parents in activities that are tailored to the classroom, grade level or the school's total OEY program.

The fourth recommendation is to involve teachers in specific planning for the OEY program at their schools including the parent involvement component. Implementing these

recommendations would raise levels of awareness for teachers and mentor teachers about grant requirements, including the parent involvement activities occurring at their schools', since the activities would stem from their suggestions.

Because OEYP program guidelines stipulate that accelerated instruction activities take place before or after the regular school day, participating staff must conduct OEYP activities such as instructional planning, mentoring/modeling, and pick up and delivery of data to other district staff after regular work hours. Currently, these tasks are performed without compensation. Thus the fifth and last recommendation is for the District to consider the provision of compensation for all activities conducted by campus staff (teachers, contact persons, mentor teachers, and attendance clerks) in relation to OEYP accelerated instruction.

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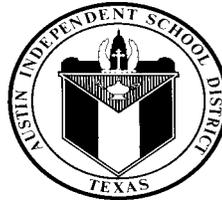
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