



Austin Independent School District

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A SUMMARY OF AISD'S OPTIONAL EXTENDED YEAR PROGRAM ACTIVITIES, 2006–2007

The Optional Extended Year Program (OEYP), a state-funded grant, provides extended learning opportunities for students in kindergarten through grade 12 who are at risk of academic failure. The primary focus of OEYP is to reduce and eliminate the need for student grade-level retention by providing additional instructional time for students to master the state's academic performance standards (Texas Education Code Sections 42.152 & 29.082). OEYP activities occur outside of the regular school day. Programs are designed to accommodate four school-day options: (a) extended day, (b) extended week, (c) intersession for year-round schools, and (d) summer school. A school district may provide instructional services during any of these programs for a period of time not to exceed 30 days. Participating students must receive a minimum of 240 minutes of instruction to meet the Texas Education Agency (TEA) reporting requirements. Since 1993, the Austin Independent School District (AISD) has used OEYP to reduce the number of AISD students at risk of academic failure.

TEA sets the guidelines for grade promotion through OEYP and provides OEY program policies regarding class size (i.e., no more than 16 students to a class and no fewer than 8); attendance (i.e., a minimum of 240 minutes); staff development training; and parental involvement.

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EVALUATION OBJECTIVES AND SUPPORT DOCUMENTATION

The evaluation focused on four specific objectives relevant to district reporting needs:

- To document and report AISD's OEYP activities, per state law
- To summarize the participation of parents in AISD's OEYP activities
- To gather information from OEYP principals regarding program implementation, including curriculum and expectations for program participants
- To provide AISD decision makers, principals, program managers, and other school staff with 2006–2007 program data to enhance the operation of AISD's 2007–2008 program

In spring 2007, an electronic survey was sent to the principals (n = 75) who held OEY programs on their campuses during the 2006–2007 school year. Eighty-four percent (n = 63) completed the survey, but not all respondents answered every survey item. The evaluation assembled information from their responses to survey questions about program strategies, staff development training sessions, parent involvement, program information, curricula, and expectations for success.

AISD'S OPTIONAL EXTENDED YEAR PROGRAM CONFIGURATION

During 2006–2007, OEYP supported activities at 75 AISD campuses. In grades K through 5, programs provided accelerated, supplemental services, including literacy and mathematics instruction to students whose eligibility scores were 50% or less of items correct on the Beginning of the Year (BOY) benchmark tests for reading and/or mathematics. In grades 6 through 8, reading and mathematics intervention or remediation instruction was provided to eligible students. Students could participate in extended day sessions (before or after school), extended week sessions (Saturday), or a combination of the two. All OEY programs included parental involvement activities; staff development sessions for teachers; and student performance evaluations (i.e., attendance, pre- and posttest information, classroom performance, and promotion/retention information).

Program Strategies

AISD curriculum staff developed a curriculum for structured classes that incorporated an interdisciplinary program. The curriculum also required staff to deliver the materials at a rigorous, accelerated pace to provide additional instructional time before school, after school, or on Saturdays. Table 1 shows the TEA-defined instructional strategies and the frequency of their use by principals that held OEY programs at their schools.

Table 1: Percentage of Principals' Self-reported Frequency of Use of Instructional Strategies in OEYP, 2006–2007

Areas of program focus	% Used most often	% Not used at all
Accelerated reading instruction (ARI)	85	*
Accelerated math instruction (AMI)	85	*
Reading or language arts programs	78	*
Mathematics and/or science programs	73	*
Integration of technology	70	9
Problem solving	66	*
Follow-up activities	64	8
Parent partnerships	63	20
Interdisciplinary program strategies	56	19
Mentoring	51	16
English as a second language (ESL)	46	13
Readiness for next grade	44	16

Sources: AISD OEYP Principal Survey Results (2006a, 2007a)

* Percentages <5 are not reported.

Staff Development Sessions

Principals (n = 62) reported offering staff development sessions for their teachers prior to implementation of OEYP. Staff development topics mentioned most often by principals were:

- Assessment strategies (n = 61)
- Questioning strategies (n = 61)
- Researched-based practices (n = 60)
- Teaching strategies in content area (n = 57)
- Accelerated instruction (n = 56)
- Learning styles (n = 53)
- Grouping patterns (n = 51)

Other topics mentioned were mentoring, cultural and linguistic diversity, interdisciplinary instruction, team teaching, and integrating technologies.

Parent Involvement

When principals were asked how they informed parents that OEYP was available to their child/children, the majority (92%, n = 57) said they used letters to parents and parent-teacher conferences. Survey results indicated that 15,264 elementary and secondary parents participated in OEYP activities during school year 2006–2007, which represents an increase over the number (n = 14, 459) who participated in 2005–2006 (Washington, 2006). Principals reported the

following as examples of activities that they used most often to involve parents of students participating in their campus OEYP: coffees, conferences, assemblies, meetings, workshops, literacy activities, and literacy nights. Table 2 shows the parent involvement activities reported by principals (n = 41) responding to the survey. A separate event listing is available from AISD DPE records.

Table 2: OEYP Involvement Activities Reported Most Often by Principals, 2006–2007

Activity	# Parents participating
Coffee talks with principal, and parent-teacher conferences	4,511
Assemblies, Parent Teacher Association (PTA), open house, and orientation	4,384
Literacy fairs and nights (mathematics, reading, science)	1,860
Small-group parent involvement activities*	1,660
Parent coffees and workshops	1,325
Family night literacy activities	980
Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS)	544
TOTAL	15,264

Sources: AISD OEYP Principal Survey Results (2006a, 2007a)

* Small-group parent activities were too numerous to list individually.

When principals were asked to rate the frequency with which their campuses provided parents with services and other activities to increase parent involvement on their campuses, most (n = 57) reported using conferences with parents. A majority of the principals also reported using materials and meetings in the home language of parents, parent training about reinforcing reading skills at home, and parent training in study skills strategies and how to assist with their child's homework assignments. Sixty-two percent (n = 36) of principals reported providing parent training about making mathematics manipulative to enhance student learning, 56% (n = 32) reported including parents as partners in developing their OEY programs, and 55% (n = 31) reported surveying parents to help determine program needs. Less than one half of principals reported using child care for parents to allow involvement in activities (49%, n = 28); to serve as teacher assistants in classroom and extension services (47%, n = 27); and to participate in parent training in technology (37%, n = 21). The lack of use of these activities is not a problem because parents were involved in other ways.

PROGRAM INFORMATION, CURRICULA, AND EXPECTATIONS FOR SUCCESS

Of the 63 principals who returned the survey, 91% (n = 52) agreed that PEIMS staff provided school staff with adequate training about data entry and reporting and that school staff were comfortable with entering and reporting PEIMS attendance data from the campus level. Eighty-six percent (n = 49) agreed that the rigor/pace of the curriculum was comfortable, and 82% (n = 46) agreed that their expectations for student success were met. Also, 81% (n = 46) agreed that communication with OEYP program managers was adequate, and 77% (n = 43) of responding principals reported receiving adequate information about the OEYP grant that funded the program at their school. Twenty percent (n = 11) of the responding principals disagreed that involvement at their school by parents of students participating in OEYP classes was good; 18% (n = 10) were undecided about whether parent participation was good, and 5% (n = 3) indicated the question was not applicable to their program. Not applicable (N/A) was an option on that section of the survey. Because this question referred to the involvement of parents in their child's academic affairs, these results may be a cause for concern because schools are required by state and federal law to include parent involvement in supplementary academic activities, and parent involvement is a key element of AISD's efforts to enhance students' academic and social success.

PRINCIPALS' COMMENTS OR RECOMMENDATIONS ABOUT USE OF OEYP FUNDS

When principals were asked to make comments or recommendations about how the district might enhance the use of OEYP funds, 24% (n=15) responded. Of the respondents, 40% recommended providing more information to campuses, promoting idea exchanges; sharing best curricular practices, teaching strategies, and materials; and offering earlier staff development training. Thirty-three percent commented on the benefits of the extra funding (e.g., providing early intervention to struggling learners, hiring and utilizing mentors, using tutors, and purchasing other resource materials). Twenty percent commented about wanting distribution of OEYP funds to occur earlier in the school year so planning for activities could take place earlier.

PROGRAM COMPLETION, STUDENT PROMOTION, AND RETENTION

Principals and teachers in OEYP completed records that showed whether OEYP students on their campuses were to be promoted or retained, based on the students' pre- and posttest scores (where available), academic work, and attendance. An electronic copy of AISD's *PEIMS Edit + Reports Data Review* (resubmission, 2007b) showed that 4,473 students attended at least one day of an OEY program in 2006–2007. Of that number, 4,331 were promoted and 142 were retained. Of the number promoted, 28% (n = 937) were placements. Placements occur when students are promoted to the next grade level based on district policy, without meeting the district academic criteria for promotion. The largest number of placements (n = 322) occurred at the fifth grade level, at which 502 students were enrolled. This level of placement on a single grade level raises concerns because it means some students may have been promoted without meeting the program's criteria for academic success. See Table 3 for promotion/retention data by grade level and program type.

Table 3: Promotion/Retention Data by Grade Level for Students Who Participated in AISD's OEYP, 2006–2007

Grade level	# Enrolled	# Promoted	# Retained
Kindergarten	102	95	7
01	141	126	15
02	160	144	16
03	943	891	52
04	766	755	11
05	917	893	24
06	602	597	5
07	333	329	4
08	509	501	8
TOTAL	4,473	4,331	142

Source: PEIMS Edit + Reports Data Review, 2006–2007 OEYP Extended Collection and Resubmission Results (AISD, 2007b)

SUMMARY

Of the 4,473 students who participated in the 2006–2007 OEYP, 97% (n = 4,331) were promoted. Since 2000–2001, the district has used OEYP funds to serve 28,911 students who would have been retained without the benefit of supplemental instruction. Of that number, more than 99% (n = 28,770) have been promoted. Table 4 shows that AISD had an average promotion rate of 96% among OEYP students served in the past 7 years. Because the majority of students were promoted at the end of each school year, fewer summer school resources have been needed each year for students at risk of being retained. As shown in Table 5, the program actively involved 48,794 parents in a variety of OEYP activities during this 7-year period.

Table 4: AISD Students Served and Promoted in OEYP, 2000–2001 Through 2006–2007

School year	Grade level ranges served	School semester	# Served	% Promoted
2000–2001	K-8	Intersession & summer	3,518	96
2001–2002	3-8	Summer	2,609	95
2002–2003	4-8	Spring & summer	2,312	97
2003–2004	3-8	Spring & summer	3,565	97
2004–2005	K-12	Fall & spring	4,006	94
2005–2006	K-12	Fall & spring	8,428	96
2006–2007	K-8	Spring	4,473	97
TOTAL			28,911	96

Sources: Washington, Doolittle, & Williams (2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006)

Table 5: Parents Involved in OEYP Activities,
 2000–2001 Through 2006–2007

School year	# Parents involved
2000–2001	2,909
2001–2002	2,420
2002–2003	3,917
2003–2004	4,005
2004–2005	5,820
2005–2006	14,459
2006–2007	15,264
TOTAL	48,794

Sources: Washington, Doolittle, & Williams (2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006)

Note: Parents may have attended more than one event; therefore, the total participation count for this period includes duplicates.

Principals' responses to survey questions indicated that they were in compliance with the following TEA OEYP policies:

- providing training for accelerated instructional staff,
- using state-designated curriculum and approved instructional strategies,
- notifying parents about the availability of the program, and
- involving parents in various OEYP activities.

However, a few principals indicated that participation at their school by parents of students in OEYP classes was “not applicable,” which raises concerns because this question referred to the involvement of parents in their child’s academic affairs. Therefore, it is recommended that program administrators and managers ensure that all participating schools include parent involvement in their OEYP because most grants (e.g., local, state, and federal) require such compliance, and parent involvement is a key element of AISD’s efforts to enhance students’ academic and social success.

Finally, based on this report, it is recommended that program managers and school staff anticipate and make plans to address student placements (i.e., students promoted by district policy) when those are concentrated at particular grade levels. At a minimum, these students should be provided with additional academic support, preferably at the beginning of the following school year.

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