

STATE COMPENSATORY EDUCATION, 2006–2007



Austin Independent School District
Department of Program Evaluation

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

State Compensatory Education (SCE) is a supplemental program designed to eliminate disparities in (a) student performance on assessment instruments administered under subchapter B, chapter 39 of the Texas Education Code and (b) the rates of high school completion between students who are at risk of dropping out of school, as defined by Texas Education Code §29.081 (2005), and all other students. SCE funds must be used for programs or services that are supplemental to the regular education program. Toward this end, appropriate compensatory, intensive, or accelerated instruction programs are designed and implemented to increase the achievement of at-risk students. For the 2006–2007 school year, Austin Independent School District (AISD) budgeted a total of \$37,990,928 to support a variety of programs and services and 521.34 full-time equivalent (FTE) staff positions. This budget amounted to an approximate cost of \$869 per student identified as at risk.

According to Texas Education Code §29.081 (2005), districts must evaluate the effectiveness of SCE programs by measuring student performance and by comparing rates of high school completion to show the reduction of any disparity in performances between students who are at risk of dropping out of school and all other district students. Analyses of AISD Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) performance showed decreased disparities from 2006 to 2007 between students who were at risk and those who were not, as measured by passing rates in reading and language arts, mathematics, and social studies. However, increased disparities between at-risk and not-at-risk students were evidenced by TAKS passing rates in science. In addition, the most current data from the Texas Education Agency (TEA, 2007) showed an increased disparity between the 2005 and 2006 cohorts' at-risk and all students groups in terms of the dropout rate and the continuation of high school rate. This data also showed a substantial disparity between the graduation rates for these groups; however, because the calculation method changed between 2004–2005 and 2005–2006 years, the change in disparity was not available.

This report includes program descriptions, findings regarding the students served, and general recommendations for SCE-funded services.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The low-level decreased disparities between at-risk and not-at-risk students with respect to the 2005–2006 and 2006–2007 TAKS passing rates, coupled with increased disparity from 2005 to 2006 between at-risk and all students with respect to dropout rates,

indicates some progress has been made but room for improvement remains. In order to better understand what is working and where improvements are needed, the following recommendations are made:

- A more proactive approach to SCE needs to be taken. District and campus staff should work together to determine areas of need and to ensure the best possible match between identified needs and the services and resources available to address those needs. Programs funded with SCE money must focus on meeting the mandated criteria for reducing the disparity between at-risk and not-at-risk students. Therefore, the SCE program must be focused to address the areas of greatest disparity and should target at-risk students.
- Monitoring at the individual program level needs to occur to ensure that each program is helping to close the achievement gap between at-risk and not-at-risk students. All individual SCE programs and services should be monitored for effectiveness in terms of student achievement and school completion outcomes. Additionally, programs should be evaluated to determine the progress of participating at-risk students in meeting the legislative goal of performing at grade level by the end of the next regular term.
- In order to accomplish the individual program evaluation recommended above, the persistent student-level data limitations that prevent identification of students who are beneficiaries of SCE services first must be overcome. To that end, a system needs to be put in place to track the participation of at-risk students in SCE programs.

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PART 1: INTRODUCTION

STATE COMPENSATORY EDUCATION

State Compensatory Education (SCE) is a supplemental program designed to eliminate disparities in (a) student performance on assessment instruments administered under subchapter B, chapter 39 of the Texas Education Code and (b) the rates of high school completion between students who are at risk of dropping out of school, as defined by Texas Education Code §29.081 (2005), and all other students. SCE funds are designated for implementing appropriate compensatory, intensive, or accelerated instruction programs that enable at-risk students to improve their academic achievement and to graduate. Districts therefore must identify the needs of at-risk students and examine student performance data resulting from the administration of state assessment instruments. Using these needs, district and campus staff design appropriate strategies to help at-risk students and must include these strategies in the district and/or campus improvement plans.

The district is required to spend a certain amount of the local budget on SCE, determined in accordance with guidelines from the state's Foundation School Program (Texas Education Code §42.152). The amount is based on the average of the highest 6 months' enrollment of students who qualified for the federal free or reduced-price school lunch program during the preceding school year.¹ Districts are required to allocate additional funds for each student who is educationally disadvantaged and for students without disabilities who reside in residential placement facilities in a district in which the students' parents or guardians do not reside. Districts also must allocate additional funds for each student who is in a remedial or support program because the student is pregnant or a parent.

During the 2006–2007 school year, the district budgeted \$37,990,928 for SCE, which supported a variety of programs and 521.34 full-time equivalent (FTE) staff positions. In comparison, \$32,378,710 was expended and 480.46 FTE positions were funded in the 2005–2006 school year. The district's expenditures for SCE programs in 2006–2007 amounted to an approximate cost of \$869 per student identified as at risk, up from \$771 per student in 2005–2006. Table 1 lists the programs and services the district implemented that were partially or fully supported through SCE funds in 2006–2007.

¹ According to the 2006–2007 Summary of Finance, this amount was equal to \$29,524,765, based on the following formula: (# of educationally disadvantaged students [49,992.3]*FTE allotment [2943]*0.20)+(# pregnant students [23,849]*FTE allotment [2943]*2.41).

Table 1: AISD State Compensatory Education Budget, 2006–2007

	Program/service	Budget	Percentage of budget	FTEs
<u>Dropout prevention</u>	DELTA (dropout recovery)	1,866,490	4.91%	30.40
	Dropout Prevention	1,120,371	2.95%	13.67
	Truancy Master	97,411	0.26%	0.00
	Child Care Program	33,350	0.09%	1.00
<u>Curriculum and academic support</u>	Literacy Teachers	4,731,596	12.45%	78.13
	Summer School	2,599,810	6.84%	0.00
	Middle School Reading Initiative	1,695,547	4.46%	24.00
	Read 180	506,736	1.33%	4.00
	AVID	697,964	1.84%	10.00
	Bilingual Allocation for Immigrants	251,654	0.66%	2.00
	Elementary & Secondary Tutorials	166,936	0.44%	0.00
	TAKS Prep	176,716	0.47%	0.00
<u>Social services</u>	Guidance & Counseling	3,867,520	10.18%	63.14
	Seton Nurse Contract	2,498,799	6.58%	0.00
	School to Community Liaisons	865,112	2.28%	9.10
	Communities in Schools	540,000	1.42%	0.00
	Family Resource Center	84,443	0.22%	2.00
	PAL Program	15,571	0.04%	0.00
<u>Campus allocations</u>	Account for Learning	2,882,721	7.59%	63.00
	Curriculum Specialists	2,857,181	7.52%	38.74
	Blueprint Schools	156,008	0.41%	0.00
	Homebound	143,579	0.38%	1.50
	Secondary Transition Programs	278,248	0.73%	1.00
	9 th Grade Initiatives	66,891	0.18%	0.00
<u>Alternative education & residential facilities</u>	Garza Alternative High School	2,122,542	5.59%	36.50
	International High School	1,169,662	3.08%	23.50
	Phoenix Academy	146,031	0.38%	3.00
	Shoal Creek Hospital	98,699	0.26%	2.00
<u>Disciplinary alternative education</u>	Alternative Learning Center	2,182,737	5.75%	42.00
	Alternative Center for Elementary Students	435,022	1.15%	6.90
	Travis County Detention Center	248,617	0.65%	6.00
	Leadership Academy	210,272	0.55%	7.00
<u>Other discipline</u>	Student Discipline	484,280	1.27%	9.00
	After School Detention	249,445	0.66%	0
<u>Other</u>	Lucy Read Pre-K Center	1,176,739	3.10%	29.00
	Student Support Services	651,322	1.71%	4.10
	Positive Behavior Support	66,242	0.17%	0.00
	Other	548,664	1.44%	10.66
TOTAL		37,990,928	100.00%	521.34

Source: AISD Department of State and Federal Accountability

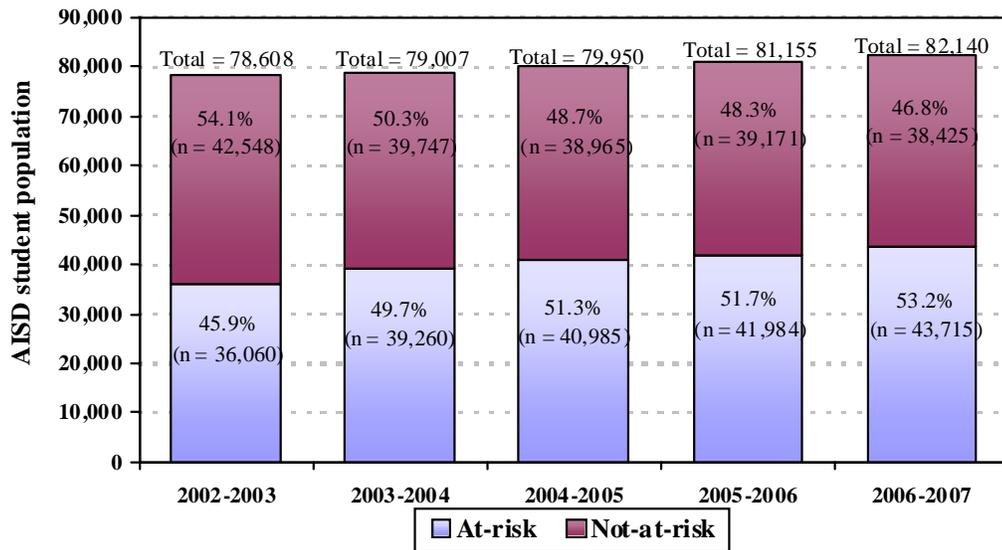
SCE funds must be used for programs or services that are supplemental to the regular education program. They must be allocated so that the indirect costs (i.e., expenses that cannot be traced to a specific costing unit, such as a department or program) do not exceed 15% and Disciplinary Alternative Education expenditures do not exceed 18%. SCE funds may be used to support programs eligible under Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, and as provided by Public Law 107-110, at campuses where at least 40% of the students are educationally disadvantaged. For school-wide programs funded by SCE, a comprehensive description must be provided in each relevant Campus Improvement Plan.

SCE legislation requires schools to develop programs that will meet the needs of at-risk students by closing the achievement gap between at-risk and not-at-risk students. Although no mechanism exists for tracking students served by many SCE-funded programs (Schmitt, 2003), the gathering and reporting of information about students served by the School to Community Liaison (SCL) and Diversified Education through Leadership, Technology, and Academics (DELTA) programs allow for the reporting of findings and development of specific recommendations for both these programs. However, in the case of programs and services funded through SCE for which individual student participation is not tracked, evaluation of success is limited to examination of the at-risk population as a whole.

AISD AT-RISK POPULATION, 2006–2007

In 2006–2007, 53.2% of AISD students ($n = 43,715$) were identified as at risk on the Public Education Information Management System's fall submission to the Texas Education Agency (TEA). This marked the fourth consecutive year that the percentage of at-risk students in the district increased (Figure 1). Students can be identified as at risk due to any one or more of the indicators listed in Table 2. As in the previous school year, in 2005–2006, the most frequent reasons for which students were identified as at risk included limited English proficient (LEP) status, performance on state assessments, and failing two or more courses in the preceding school year. More than one third of the students identified as at risk met 2 or more of the 14 possible criteria (Table 3).

Figure 1: AISD Student Population by At-Risk Status, 2002–2003 through 2006–2007



Source: PEIMS 110 data and AISD student records, AISD Office of Accountability

As shown in Table 4, the numbers of Native American, Asian, and African American students who met criteria for being identified as at risk were proportionally similar to the numbers of their not-at-risk counterparts. Given their representation in the total AISD student population, however, Hispanic students were disproportionately categorized as at risk, while White students were underrepresented within the at-risk group. Although Hispanic students accounted for 57.09% of the district population, they were overrepresented in the at-risk category (73.46%). Conversely, White students represented 26.82% of the district population, but only 11.24% were identified as at risk.

Table 2: Students Reported at Risk of Dropping out of School by At-Risk Indicator, 2006–2007

At-risk indicator	Number of students	Percentage of at-risk students	Percentage of all AISD Students
Limited English Proficient (LEP)	20,798	47.6%	25.0%
Assessment related (Texas Assessment of Knowledge & Skills, Texas Assessment of Academic Skills, or End of Course Exam)	20,503	46.9%	25.0%
Failed two or more courses in the preceding school year (grades 7–12)	6,818	15.6%	8.0%
Retained in one or more grades	5,577	12.8%	7.0%
Currently failing two or more courses (grades 7–12)	4,488	10.3%	5.0%
Did not perform satisfactorily on a readiness assessment (pre-K; K; or grades 1, 2, 3)	3,132	7.0%	4.0%
Placement in an alternative education program	853	2.0%	1.0%
Resides in a residential treatment facility	719	2.0%	1.0%
Pregnant or is a parent	182	<1.0%	<1.0%
Homeless in accordance with federal law	80	<1.0%	<1.0%
Expelled under Ch. 37 in preceding or current year	52	<1.0%	<1.0%
Previously reported to have dropped out of school	47	<1.0%	<1.0%
Parole, probation, or conditional release	43	<1.0%	<1.0%
In custody or care of DPRS/referred to DPRS in the current school year	43	<1.0%	<1.0%
Total students at risk for 1 or more reasons*	43,715	100.0%	53.0%

Source: PEIMS 110 data as of November 1, 2007 and AISD student records, AISD Office of Accountability

* A student may meet multiple criteria for at-risk status; therefore, the total number of at-risk students does not equal the sum of students meeting each indicator.

Table 3: Number of Criteria by Which Students Qualified for At-Risk Status, 2006–2007

Number of at-risk criteria met	Number of students	Percentage of at-risk students
1	27748	63.5%
2	9545	21.8%
3	3728	8.5%
4	1722	3.9%
5	722	1.7%
6-8	247	0.6%
Total	43,715*	100.0%

Source: PEIMS 110 data as of November 1, 2006 and AISD student records, AISD Office of Accountability

* Three students had at-risk status in PEIMS, but no criteria were specified.

Table 4: At-Risk, Not-At-Risk, and All AISD Students, by Ethnic Group, 2006–2007

Ethnicity	At-risk		Not-at-risk		All students		Disparity*
	n	%	n	%	n	%	
Native American	72	0.16%	119	0.31%	191	0.23%	-0.07%
Asian	1,125	2.57%	1,455	3.79%	2,580	3.14%	-0.57%
African American	5,491	12.56%	4,957	12.90%	10,448	12.72%	-0.16%
Hispanic**	32,113	73.46%	14,777	38.46%	46,890	57.09%	16.37%
White	4,914	11.24%	17,117	44.55%	22,031	26.82%	-15.58%
Total	43,715	53.22%	38,425	46.78%	82,140	100.00	NA

Source: PEIMS 110 and PEIMS 101 data, as of November 7, 2006, AISD Office of Accountability.

* The disparity column represents the difference between ethnicity as a percentage of the at-risk population and percentage of the total AISD student population. Positive values indicate overrepresentation of at-risk students within the ethnic group.

** Hispanic overrepresentation within the at-risk category is due in part to a lack of proficiency in the English language. Among Hispanic students identified as at risk, 40% were categorized as at risk solely because of limited English proficiency.

PART 2: STATE COMPENSATORY EDUCATION PROGRAM COMPONENTS

A total of \$37,990,928 was expended for SCE in 2006-2007 to support a wide variety of programs and 521.34 full-time equivalent (FTE) positions. These programs included alternative education and disciplinary programs, as well as district- and campus-based programs for at-risk students. This section provides descriptive information and financial expenditure data for the SCE programs.

DROPOUT PREVENTION

In 2006–2007, the Annual Performance Objectives in the District Improvement Plan (DIP) included a goal of reducing the annual dropout rate among all students and all student groups to 0.2% or less. Approximately \$3.12 million in SCE funds was budgeted for dropout prevention efforts in 2006–2007. SCE resources for dropout intervention were used to fund a dropout prevention coordinator and dropout prevention specialists. Additional services and programs funded included DELTA; IMPACT team support; Truancy Master, a dedicated on-campus truancy court at Fulmore Middle School, Mendez Middle School, and Travis High School; and the child care program.

CURRICULUM AND ACADEMIC SUPPORT

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL LITERACY TEACHERS AND MIDDLE SCHOOL READING INITIATIVE

In 2006–2007, \$4,731,596 of SCE funds was budgeted for literacy teachers. Allocations to campuses were based on students' TAKS performance. The middle school reading initiative received \$1,695,547 in SCE funds. The goal of these efforts was to implement the AISD literacy support model for helping at-risk students develop effective reading and writing strategies.

SUMMER SCHOOL

A total of \$2,599,810 in SCE funds was budgeted in 2006–2007 to support summer programs. Summer school programs largely targeted pre-kindergarten and kindergarten students who were eligible for bilingual/English as a second language (ESL) instructional services. These students received 4 weeks of summer school instruction in English and native language improvement, literacy, and math skills.

READ 180

In 2006–2007, \$506,736 was budgeted for the Read 180 initiative. Read 180 is an intensive, nationally recognized reading intervention program designed to boost reading proficiency and language skills for struggling middle-school-level students. Within AISD, the

Read 180 program also serves the English language learner population to accelerate language acquisition and to improve reading ability.

ADVANCEMENT VIA INDIVIDUAL DETERMINATION

A substantial budget increase from SCE funds was provided to the Advancement via Individual Determination (AVID) program, a nationwide college preparatory initiative. In 2006–2007, more than twice the previous year’s expenditures was budgeted, for a total of \$697,964. Targeting middle school and high school students, the program seeks primarily to address persistent disparities in postsecondary enrollment between students from economically disadvantaged households and those from higher socioeconomic settings. To this end, the AVID program recruits and enrolls students based on criteria that include both socioeconomic indicators correlated with low college enrollment, and academic performance measures demonstrating potential for postsecondary success. Students selected into AVID are exposed to a rigorous curriculum in preparation for the transition to postsecondary education, including Advanced Placement (AP) courses, while also being equipped with the tools to improve study habits and critical thinking skills.

BILINGUAL SERVICES FOR IMMIGRANTS

A total of \$251,654 from SCE funds was expended in 2006–2007 to assist new immigrant students who have limited English proficiency or who are English language learners. Funds were used for professional development opportunities and to pay teachers who supported new immigrant students at both the elementary and secondary levels. In addition, SCE funds supported the development of specific curricula for these students and the purchase of books and testing materials.

ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY TUTORIALS

In 2006–2007, \$166,936 was budgeted for elementary- and secondary-level tutorials. Tutorial funds were distributed to all middle schools and high schools. Money was spent on a variety of strategies, including one-on-one tutoring, study groups, TAAS/TAKS workshops, study skills, and parent activities. In addition, students at a selected group of elementary schools were supported through the University of Texas part-time tutoring program.

SOCIAL SERVICES

GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING

A total of \$3,867,520 was allocated from SCE funds in 2006–2007 for 61 elementary school counselors and district leadership for the Office of Guidance and Counseling. Counselors

at the elementary level were charged with providing the following: classroom guidance in the form of lessons that teach students basic skills (e.g., responsible behavior, conflict resolution, and goal setting); responsive services for students' personal concerns or crises; and system support so staff are aware of the goals of the district's guidance and counseling program and its services. Funding for the elementary school counselors' work falls under the SCE guidelines for allowable administrative costs, which are not to exceed 15% of the SCE budget.

SETON NURSE CONTRACT

AISD has contracted with the Seton Healthcare network since 1996 to provide school nurse services at its campuses. The \$2,498,799 allocated for the service from SCE funds in 2006–2007 reflected only a portion of the full contracted amount. The SCE-funded portion was an estimated cost for serving at-risk students, such as those who were pregnant and needed referral services.

SCHOOL TO COMMUNITY LIAISONS

In 2006–2007, the SCL program was allocated \$865,112 of SCE funds. This amount reflected a slight increase from the 2005–2006 expenditures of \$793,949 from the SCE budget. Of the 13 full-time and 5 part-time SCLs, SCE funds supported 9.10 FTEs. Title I, Title V-Part A and Special Education funds supported the remaining FTEs.

COMMUNITIES IN SCHOOLS

In 2006–2007, as in 2004–2005 and 2005–2006, Communities in School (CIS) received \$540,000 in SCE funds. In addition, CIS was able to garner additional resources from its own grants, contracts, and donations and thus was able to enhance the services provided to AISD students. Each year, the district works with CIS to develop an agreement regarding the school-based social services and related educational activities that will be provided to AISD students. The CIS program manager and AISD campus staff also work to develop program plans that describe the needs of students and the services to be provided by CIS. With approval by the campus principal, this program plan becomes part of the Campus Improvement Plan and is updated throughout the year. At the end of each school year, CIS provides campus- and district-level reports about services provided. Specifically, these reports indicate the number of students receiving services at each campus and contain information about the academic, behavioral, and attendance improvements made by the students served. Graduation and dropout rates also are monitored by CIS.

Many of the organization's activities are aimed at students who meet at-risk criteria. The Home Instructional Program for Pre-School Youngsters (HIPPY) program, for example, is targeted at parents of pre-kindergarten students at Allison, Langford, and Wooldridge elementary schools. A parent educator meets with parents once a week to guide them in preparing their children for school. The other programs offered by CIS enhance social services at schools to enable at-risk students to benefit more from instruction. Selected schools have high levels of risk in the following categories: percentage of students not meeting the passing standard for TAAS or TAKS, attendance rates, percentage of students on the free or reduced-price lunch program, or student discipline rates. CIS provides each campus with a social worker who serves as a case manager. CIS also may provide additional staff (e.g., AmeriCorps workers, caseworkers, interns, or volunteers) who help with tutoring or mentoring or who serve as class aides.

OTHER SOCIAL SERVICE PROGRAMS

The Family Resource Center (FRC) was allocated \$84,443 of SCE funds in 2006–2007 to encourage the involvement of parents and family members in their children's academic settings. The Peer Assistance Leadership (PAL) program was allocated \$15,571 of SCE funds to support student peer mentoring, which allows middle and high school students to be mentors to younger students.

CAMPUS ALLOCATIONS

ACCOUNT FOR LEARNING

Account for Learning (AFL), initially implemented in 1999–2000, is a program funded by local SCE monies to increase equity in the resources provided to campuses with high percentages of economically disadvantaged students. The primary goal of AFL is to increase student achievement in reading and mathematics. For each identified campus, AFL provides resources for parent support specialists and for tutorials to provide instructional support for students. In 2006–2007, AFL received a SCE allocation of \$2,882,721, up significantly from \$2,130,436 in 2005–2006. AFL's supplemental funding is provided to elementary, middle, and high schools campus where at least 70%, 65%, and 50% (respectively) of students meet the criteria for the federal free or reduced-price lunch program.

CURRICULUM SPECIALISTS

SCE funds in the amount of \$2,857,181 were allocated in 2006–2007 for the salaries of 38.74 full-time curriculum specialists. Principals had the option of trading a teaching position for that of a curriculum specialist at their campuses. Similar to instructional coaches, curriculum

specialists serve students who are struggling in specific content areas, both directly by providing classroom instruction and indirectly by serving as a resource for other teachers on campus.

SECONDARY TRANSITION PROGRAMS

Following a significant dip in funding during 2005–2006, secondary transition programs were allocated \$278,248 of SCE funds, returning closer to the level of funding received in 2004–2005. Secondary transition funds were provided to each secondary campus on a per pupil basis for use in easing the transition from elementary to middle school or from middle to high school, times during which at-risk students may be particularly vulnerable to dropping out of school.

OTHER CAMPUS ALLOCATIONS

The Blueprint Schools received \$156,008 in 2006–2007. The Homebound program was allocated \$143,579 in SCE funds, including 1.5 FTEs, for academic support for AISD students with special needs. Lastly, the Ninth Grade Initiatives program received \$98,699 in campus funds for supplemental academic support activities aimed at 9th grade students. This amount was more than five times the amount expended (\$18,231) during 2005–2006.

ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION

GONZALO GARZA INDEPENDENCE HIGH SCHOOL

In 2006–2007, Gonzalo Garza Independence High School (Garza) was funded through SCE in the amount of \$2,122,542, including 36.5 FTEs. Garza is the district's sole non-disciplinary alternative high school and has been in operation since Spring 1997. Garza's nontraditional approach to learning is characterized by an integrated, interdisciplinary curriculum that is problem- and project-based and is enhanced by access to technology. Students at Garza complete all their coursework independently and at their own pace. The school has an attendance waiver from the state that allows flexibility in scheduling. Students can attend school in 4-hour blocks in the morning, afternoon, or evening and are given the opportunity to choose from among three levels of rigor in the curriculum. Within these levels, students can choose between, for example, taking a final exam and creating a portfolio of their work.

INTERNATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL

The International High School, located on the Johnston High campus, received \$1,169,662 and 23.5 FTEs in SCE monies for its inaugural year of operation during the 2006–2007 school year. The International High School is designed to ease the transition of the English language learner student population. To qualify, students must have arrived in this country

within the past 3 years, and their English reading skills must be at or below the 4th grade level. By immersing them in intensive ESL courses, the program aims to reintegrate them into their home high schools by the 11th grade.

RESIDENTIAL FACILITIES: PHOENIX ACADEMY AND SHOAL CREEK HOSPITAL

In 2005–2006, funds to provide academic support for students in an alternative education setting comprised \$146,031, including 3.0 FTEs, expended by the Phoenix Academy, and \$98,699, including 2.0 FTEs, expended by the Shoal Creek Hospital. The Phoenix Academy is a residential high school that provides comprehensive drug and alcohol abuse treatment to adolescents while helping them catch up academically. Shoal Creek Hospital provides inpatient crisis stabilization for youth ranging in age from 3 years through 17 years. Children and adolescents who are in need of hospitalization exhibit emotional and behavioral problems that place them at risk of hurting themselves or someone else if they remain at home or are placed in a less restrictive treatment setting. The programs are designed to help patients together with their families identify and learn to manage the issues that have compromised their ability to function safely at home and in their communities.

DISCIPLINARY ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION AND PROGRAMS FOR ADJUDICATED STUDENTS

ALTERNATIVE LEARNING CENTER

In 2006–2007, the Alternative Learning Center (ALC) was budgeted \$2,182,737 of SCE funds. The purpose of the ALC is to provide a disciplinary alternative educational placement (DAEP) for middle and high school students assigned as a consequence of inappropriate behavior, as defined by the district's Student Code of Conduct, campus rules, or the Texas Education Code §37.006. After a due process hearing, students are sent to complete a regular program, a special program, or a program that lasts for a specific extended period of time.

The ALC focuses on teaching students appropriate behaviors and on providing opportunities to practice these behaviors in a group setting while engaging in cooperative activities. Strengthening academic skills to bring students to grade-level proficiency is another major goal of the program. Student success is defined as the reintegration of students into their home schools with the behaviors, knowledge, and skills necessary to achieve their academic goals.

ALTERNATIVE CENTER FOR ELEMENTARY STUDENTS

The Alternative Center for Elementary Students (ACES) was allocated \$435,022 from SCE funds in 2006–2007. ACES is a DAEP school for elementary students who have been suspended from their home campuses. Placements can be short term (less than 4 days) or longer. According to the district’s Student Code of Conduct handbook, the duration of students’ placements are determined on a case-by-case basis. Instruction in core content areas and counseling are provided to students at ACES.

TRAVIS COUNTY JUVENILE DETENTION CENTER AND THE LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

Travis County Juvenile Detention Center, funded through SCE in 2006–2007 for the amount of \$248,617, is a county facility that serves students ages 10 through 17. The average detention time for students at the facility is 5 days. Students are instructed in core subjects, following the AISD curriculum. No credits are offered, but grades are given and are provided to students’ home schools.

Funded through SCE in the amount of \$210,272 in 2006–2007, the Leadership Academy is a long-term incarceration facility operated by the county. Students must be remanded by a judge to the facility, and are typically present for an entire school year and earn credits in core subjects only.

OTHER DISCIPLINARY PROGRAMS

A total of \$484,280 was expended from SCE funds in 2006–2007 for a discipline coordinator and for dropout specialists at various campuses. An additional \$249,445 was expended for after-school detention costs to pay teachers and support staff who worked extra hours to supervise students who stayed after school or attended Saturday detention.

PART 3: EVALUATION OF THE STATE COMPENSATORY EDUCATION PROGRAM

METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

According to the Texas Education Code §29.08 (2005), legislative requirements mandate the analysis of student performance on assessment instruments, to appraise the efficacy of the SCE programs. In compliance with this requirement, this report assesses the performance of students categorized as at risk relative to their not-at-risk peers, using comparative descriptive statistics. The central purpose of the SCE program is the alleviation of performance disparities between students at risk of dropping out and all other students. As such, this report presents the change in disparity between at-risk and not-at-risk students on the TAKS and student dropout rates.

This report examines the progress made by at-risk students, relative to their peers, regardless of participation in any of the supported SCE program components. For the most part, the ability to link outcomes to program components was constrained by data limitations (Schmitt, 2003). A comprehensive system for identifying and tracking students receiving services funded by SCE monies is currently unavailable, hampering efforts to accurately evaluate the effectiveness of specific SCE program interventions among students receiving SCE services or to track utilization of available services by students at risk of dropping out.

EXAMINATION OF DISPARITY BETWEEN AT-RISK AND ALL AISD STUDENTS TEXAS ASSESSMENT OF KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS PERFORMANCE

According to the Texas Education Code §29.081 (2005), districts must evaluate the effectiveness of SCE programs by examining student performance on assessment instruments and on rates of high school completion, to show the reduction of any disparity in performances between students at risk of dropping out of school and all other district students. Results from the 2006 and 2007 TAKS were examined and compared across these two student groups. Table 5 shows the percentage of at-risk and not-at-risk students who met the standard for passing each content area of the TAKS in 2006 (2005–2006 school year) and 2007 (2006–2007 school year).

Table 5: Changes in Disparity Between At-Risk and Not-At-Risk Students,
Based on Percentage Passing TAKS by Content Areas, 2005–2006 to 2006–2007

TAKS test	2005–2006				2006–2007				Δ^*
	At-risk		Not-at-risk		At-risk		Not-at-risk		
Content area and grade levels tested	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	
Reading, English language arts (3-9, 10–11)	69.72	13,954	95.56	20,750	71.49	15,448	96.25	21,481	-1
Mathematics (3–11)	47.92	9,555	90.88	19,734	50.35	10,791	91.00	20,375	-2
Science (5, 10, 11)	46.37	3,062	90.07	5,670	44.91	2,852	90.74	6,135	2
Science (8)	42.88	987	92.64	1,888	38.66	978	92.12	1,859	4**
Social studies (8, 10, 11)	71.50	4,760	97.04	5,239	74.29	5,010	98.06	5,608	-2

Source: AISD TAKS student records; 2005–2006 and 2006–2007 PEIMS data as of February 26, 2008, Department of Program Evaluation

Note: The science portion of the TAKS test was not administered to 8th grade students prior to 2005–2006, and passing standards for 8th grade science were not the same as for other grade levels in 2005–2006 and 2006–2007. Therefore, 2005–2006 results for 8th science are reported separately to allow comparable comparison groups across school years for grade levels with common passing standards.

* The symbol Δ refers to the change in percentage point difference (disparity) between at-risk and not-at-risk student passing rates from 2005–2006 to 2006–2007, rounded to the nearest whole percentage point. This value is shown for each content area of the TAKS. Negative values represent a decrease in disparity, which is the desired outcome of SCE-funded programs.

** The standard for science at 8th grade was 2 SEM below panel recommended passing standard in 2005–2006 and 1 SEM below panel recommended passing standard in 2006–2007. Changes in the disparity between at-risk and not-at-risk students should be interpreted with caution.

Although passing rates for at-risk students increased in both reading and English language arts and in mathematics, the passing rate for at-risk students remained considerably lower than that for not-at-risk students, a trend that continued from the previous 2 years. However, some progress was made because the disparity decreased slightly (1 and 2 percentage points, respectively) in both of these content areas. Likewise, although passing rates for both at-risk and not-at-risk students increased in the social studies content area, the disparity also decreased between the groups. In contrast, although students in the not-at-risk group performed at a stable level on the science TAKS test (5th, 10th, and 11th grades), the at-risk students' performance declined, resulting in increased disparity for this content area. Similar results are shown for the 8th grade science test, but caution should be used in interpreting this finding because the passing standard was not the same on this test in both years.

SCHOOL COMPLETION

Another legislative requirement under SCE mandates that an evaluator measure the district's progress in reducing any disparity in the rates of high school completion between students at risk of dropping out of school and all other district students. Data from the TEA's publication *Secondary School Completion and Dropouts in Texas Public Schools: Supplemental District Data* (2006, 2007) for the school years 2004–2005 and for 2005–2006 were used to make this assessment of progress. Data from 2006–2007 will not be available until summer 2008. At-risk students' graduation, dropout, and school continuation rates in the grade 9 longitudinal cohorts of the classes of 2005 and 2006 are shown in Table 6 and are compared with the group "all students" in each cohort.²

Table 6: Longitudinal Student Status Rates for At-Risk and All Students in AISD for the Classes of 2005 and 2006

Class of:		Percentages of students			
		Graduated	Dropped out	Continued high school	Received GED
2005	At-risk	74.6	7.0	14.3	4.1
	All students	80.7	5.6	10.3	3.4
	Disparity	-6.1	1.4	4.0	0.7
2006	At-risk	64.9	15.2	17.7	2.2
	All students	77.3	10.2	10.9	1.6
	Disparity	-12.4	5.0	6.8	0.6
Δ Change in disparity		N/A*	3.6	2.8	-0.1

Source: Texas Education Agency: *Secondary School Completion and Dropouts in Texas Public Schools, 2004–2005 and 2005–2006*

Note: The symbol Δ refers to the change in percentage point difference (disparity) between at-risk and not-at-risk student passing rates from 2004–2005 to 2005–2006. Negative values represent a decrease in disparity.

* The methodology for calculating graduation rate changed in the 2005–2006 school year, and therefore 2005–2006 rates are not directly comparable to those shown in prior years.

From 2004–2005 to 2005–2006, the disparity increased between the percentages of at-risk students and all students who dropped out or who continued high school for a 5th year. In the continuation category, the disparity mostly resulted from an increased percentage of at-risk students continuing for a 5th year, while in the dropout category, the disparity increased despite substantial increases in the percentage of students dropping out in both groups. A relatively large

² Due to student mobility, only the TEA is able to provide accurate longitudinal dropout data. However, the TEA does not provide disaggregated data for the not-at-risk longitudinal cohort. Therefore, "all students" is the best available comparison group.

disparity (12.4 percentage points) was apparent between at-risk and all students who graduated, although it was unclear how this compared with the previous year due to the change in the way this field was calculated by TEA. The percentages of both at-risk students and all students who completed a GED declined, but resulted in a slight (0.1%) decline in disparity.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The low-level decreased disparities between at-risk and not-at-risk students with respect to the 2005–2006 and 2006–2007 TAKS passing rates, coupled with increased disparity from 2005 to 2006 between at-risk and all students with respect to dropout rates, indicates some progress has been made but room for improvement remains. In order to better understand what is working and where improvements are needed, the following recommendations are made:

- A more proactive approach to SCE (i.e., as an integrated program, as opposed to a funding source) needs to be taken. The district and campus staff should work together to determine areas of need and to ensure the best possible match between the identified needs and the services and resources available to address those needs. The programs funded with designated SCE money should be focused on meeting the mandated criteria for reducing the disparity between at-risk and not-at-risk students through the provision of supplemental compensatory, intensive, or accelerated programs. Therefore, the SCE program must focus on the areas in greatest need of attention (i.e., areas of greatest disparity) and should target at-risk students.
- Monitoring at the individual program level needs to occur to ensure that each program is helping to close the achievement gap between at-risk and not-at-risk students. All individual SCE programs and services should be monitored for effectiveness in terms of student achievement and school completion outcomes. Additionally, programs should be evaluated to determine the progress of participating at-risk students in meeting the legislative goal of performing at grade level by the end of the next regular term.
- In order to accomplish the individual program evaluations recommended above, the persistent student-level data limitations that prevent identification of students who are beneficiaries of SCE services first must be overcome. To that end, a system needs to be put in place to track the participation of at-risk students in SCE programs. This system could take the form of any (or a combination) of the following: program and district staff could maintain lists of student participants in specific SCE programs or services, including student ID numbers; the district's student record system, SASI, could be modified to include additional fields to capture SCE program participation and service provision; or a web-based data system could be developed to track student participation in SCE programs and services.

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AUSTIN INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

Pascal D. Forgione, Jr., Ph.D.

OFFICE OF ACCOUNTABILITY

Maria Whitsett, Ph.D.

DEPARTMENT OF PROGRAM EVALUATION

Holly Williams, Ph.D.

AUTHORS

Cinda Christian, Ph.D.

Lisa Schmitt, PhD



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