



Austin Independent School District

Department of Program Evaluation

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A SUMMARY OF AISD'S TITLE I SUMMER SCHOOL ACTIVITIES, 2006–2007

During the 2006–2007 school year, Austin Independent School District (AISD) offered Title I summer school as an extension of the Title I regular supplementary instructional program. The summer program provided services to students who did not attend other district summer school programs because (a) these students were transitioning from one school level to another school level; (b) elementary students had performed poorly on but had not failed End-of-the-Year benchmark assessments or the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) test; and (c) some middle and high school students needed services to recover course credits or pass exit level TAKS. All grade levels provided core academic courses, special academic courses, and transition programs.

On February 19, 2007, AISD's State and Federal Accountability Department sent Title I principals (n = 70) an e-mail requesting information regarding the use of Title I funds in extended learning activities during the 2006-2007 school year. Ninety-seven percent (n = 67) of the Title I principals returned the survey. Of the 67 Title I principals returning surveys,

- 63% (n = 42) reported using Title I funds during the regular school year for Title I extended day activities, and
- 22% (n = 15) reported plans to host Title I extended year/summer activities.

The schools that planned a summer program included 10 elementary schools, 3 middle schools, and 2 high schools. Nine Title I summer programs were 4 weeks in duration during the month of June, another started in June and ended the first week of July, two more held classes or camps July through August, and one held a 5-day camp during the first week of August.

Because Title I requires documentation on students served through academic interventions, the Department of Program Evaluation (DPE) sent an evaluation packet to each school that had reported plans to hold summer school in June. The packet included:

- A memo addressed to the principal and a checklist of the packet contents
- A principal survey with instructions for completion
- Attendance records and instructions for the teachers on how to use the attendance records
- Instructions for verification and return of the attendance records to DPE for the attendance clerk

At the end of summer school, DPE sent an end-of-summer-school packet to the schools, requesting a summary of attendance and promotion/retention data from school staff for the students served in summer school. This packet also included a survey for teachers to complete and return.

STUDENT ATTENDANCE AND PROMOTION/RETENTION

A review of the summer school information provided by principals and teachers showed that 1,321 students were pre-registered for summer school. Of the 1,321 pre-registration records, 1,263 represented students who attended summer school. The remaining records (n = 58) represented students who were no shows (n = 43) or who withdrew (n = 15) from classes shortly after the summer session started. According to the valid records, 99% (n = 1,247) of the students were promoted to the next grade level, and 1% (n = 16) were retained. Of the total number of students (n = 1,247) promoted, 58% (n = 730) met both the academic and attendance criteria, 26% (n = 324) met the academic criteria only, 4% (n = 52) met the attendance criteria only, and 11% (n = 141) did not meet the attendance or the academic criteria. See Table 1 for additional data regarding how summer school students were promoted.

Table 1: 2007 Title I Summer School Students by Promotion Criteria

Promotion criteria	# Elementary	# Middle	# High	Total # by criteria
1 = attended 90% of program days and met the academic criteria	280	300	150	730
2 = did not attend 90% of program days but did meet the academic criteria	76	159	89	324
3 = attended 90% of the program days but did not meet the academic criteria	48	0	4	52
4 = neither attended 90% of the program days nor met the academic criteria	63	16	62	141
TOTALS	467	475	305	1,247

Source: AISD Title I Summer End of Summer School Records, 2006-2007

Table 2 provides a summary of information regarding students' Title I summer school attendance, promotion, and retention, by grade levels.

Table 2: 2007 Title I Summer School Students by Grade Level Range Who Were Promoted or Retained

Grade level range	# Attending	% Promoted	% Retained
Elementary	477	98%	2%
Middle	477	99.6%	0.4%
High	309	99%	1%
TOTAL	1,263	98.8%	1.1%

Source: AISD Title I Summer End of Summer School Records, 2006-2007

PRINCIPAL SURVEY RESULTS

The AISD Title I Summer School Principal Survey was designed to gather data from principals that would help the district plan and implement better accelerated learning programs.

The survey contained items that addressed

- program description,
- instructional staff development training,
- adequacy of principals' staff development training on program management,
- quality of curricula and teaching materials,
- parent involvement,
- program expectations, and
- suggestions for effective use of program data.

Thirteen principals hosted summer school classes, and all 13 principals (i.e., 8 elementary, 3 middle, and 2 high) returned principal surveys. When asked to describe their summer school programs in terms of grade levels served, eligibility criteria, assessment options, curriculum, and goals, the principals reported providing summer school services to their students who

- were struggling learners needing supplemental instruction in core subject areas not offered in district summer school;
- had low scores on the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA);
- needed to pass the TAKS test;
- worked on specific academic areas (e.g., science, algebra, English, social studies) associated with coursework at the next grade level;
- were transitioning from one school level to another (e.g., elementary to middle, middle to high); and/or
- were at secondary school levels and needed to recover credits or pass TAKS.

Elementary principals reported using a variety of curriculum resources (e.g., Open Court to build decoding and fluency skills, balanced literacy, and Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills [TEKS] concepts among others). Secondary principals indicated their secondary summer programs were designed to serve students who had not passed exit level TAKS or who needed to recover course credits. All principals reported providing at least one staff training session.

Most elementary principals shared the goals of 1) proactively supporting struggling learners' transition from one grade to another and 2) increasing reading fluency among these students. All secondary principals held camps for students who were transitioning from one school level to another, and provided opportunities for course credit recovery and passing TAKS.

Table 3 shows the majority of principals agreed with the survey items regarding:

- Adequacy of time allocated for planning staff development training on operations specific to the Title I summer school programs
- Active involvement of instructional staff in developing the campus summer program (e.g., developing assessment and instructional strategies, selecting curriculum materials, and designing parent involvement activities)
- Appropriateness of the rigor/pace of the program for student learning
- Staff's adaptation and use of innovative instructional strategies

- Meeting expectations for student success
- Meeting expectations for parent participation

Table 3: 2007 Principals' Responses About Title I Summer Program
 Operations and Expectations

Place a check in the appropriate response box to indicate whether you strongly disagree, disagree, are undecided, agree, or strongly agree with the statement.	# Respondents	% Agree
The time allocated to plan staff development training on operations specific to your Title I summer school program (e.g., transportation, payroll evaluation needs) was adequate.	13	100%
I actively involved my instructional staff in developing assessment and instructional strategies, selecting curriculum materials, and designing parent involvement activities.	13	100%
The rigor/pace of the program was appropriate for student learning.	13	100%
My expectations for staff's adaptation and use of innovative instructions were met.	13	100%
My expectations for student success were met.	13	92%
My expectations for parent participation were met.	13	69%

Source: AISD Title I Summer School Principal Survey, 2007

Note: Responses of strongly agree and agree were combined. Responses of strongly disagree and disagree were combined.

Seventy-seven percent of principals (i.e., 8 elementary, 1 middle, and 1 high schools) reported involving 1,560 parents and 1,451 students in Title I summer school-related activities. These included home visits, phone calls, conference day, after-school chats, a musical program, a science interactive notebook presentation, a veteran tutoring program presentation, progress reports, information/orientation day, and a promotion ceremony.

When asked to provide suggestions about how summer school outcome data can be used effectively in planning for the regular school year, all principals (n = 13) suggested providing teachers with summer school outcome data (e.g., posttest scores, best practice instructional strategies, and grouping arrangements) for use in implementing intervention strategies at the beginning of the next school year, and for use in recognizing the potential for discovering learning disabilities or eligibility for enrichment programs. This information would be instrumental in focusing on prevention rather than remediation for struggling learners, and in providing a course of action to serve gifted or talented students.

The majority (n = 11) of principals reported their teachers were pleased with students' academic outcomes after the introduction of new/best practice strategies (such as but not limited to grouping students according to need rather than academic grade levels, using state-adopted texts and guided questions during instruction, and pairing of master and novice teachers).

Elementary principals liked the idea of being able to hire special staff (e.g., bilingual teachers, mentors) in addition to their regular staff because these staff offered bilingual services

and performed such duties as modeling teaching strategies, mentoring, and tutoring students individually.

TEACHER SURVEY RESULTS

One hundred twenty-two teachers returned surveys at the end of Title I summer school. Table 4 shows that the majority of teachers positively responded to survey items regarding the adequacy of their summer school staff development training and the curriculum used, the idea of using summer school results for regular session planning, and their expectations for student success.

Table 4: 2007 Teachers' Responses About the Title I Summer School Program on Their Campuses

Place a check in the appropriate response box to indicate whether you strongly disagree, disagree, are undecided, agree, or strongly agree with the statement	# Respondents (n = 122)	% Agree
I received adequate support from summer school staff.	117	96%
The rigor/pace of the curriculum's delivery was comfortable.	113	93%
The curriculum included innovative strategies and best practices suitable for the grade level.	112	92%
The curriculum was adequate to meet the program goal.	111	91%
Staff development on the intervention curriculum on my campus used was adequate.	108	89%
Expectations for student success were met.	108	89%
I will use summer school results to plan regular school year instructional activities.	99	81%
I participated in developing the campus summer program, which included developing assessment and instructional strategies, selecting curriculum materials, and designing parent involvement activities.	87	71%
I received adequate information about the grants (Title I and others) that funded the intervention program on my summer school campus.	84	69%

Source: AISD Title I Summer School Teacher Survey, 2007

Note: Responses of strongly agree and agree were combined.

When teachers were asked if they were aware of parent involvement activities at their campuses during the summer program, the percentage responding they were not aware (33%, n = 40) and percentage responding they were undecided about whether they were aware or not (32%, n = 39) were almost equal. On the other hand, 28% (n = 34) indicated they were aware of parent involvement activities during the summer school program.

Another survey item asked teachers whether parent involvement at their campuses was good for students participating in the summer intervention classes. Forty-eight percent (n = 58) of the teachers were undecided about the quality of parent involvement on their campuses, 35% (n =

43) of teachers agreed the quality was good, 15% (n = 18) disagreed, and 2% did not respond to the question.

Teachers were asked to provide suggestions for improvement in summer staff development training, curriculum, parent involvement, and expectations for student success. Thirty-five teachers offered suggestions for staff development training, including the following:

- Increased training period for first-time teachers
- Shorter training period for experienced teachers, especially in subject areas they teach during the regular school year
- More preparation time for planning lessons and for scheduling (e.g., classes; transcript reviews and placements; and alternate program slots, such as Distance Education and Learning Technology Application)

Another 37 offered suggestions for improvement in curriculum:

- Pre-training on curriculum during the regular school year
- More coverage of specifics topics (e.g., progress reporting, TAKS training, pre- and posttest instruments, matching materials and curriculum, and curriculum goals)
- Access to curricula more suitable to individual instruction
- Inclusion of more technology classes during the summer

Of the 19 teachers who commented on expectations for student success, 10 were extremely pleased with their program's success, while 2 others were positive but guarded in their comments regarding expectations. Seven gave reasons their students were not as successful as they could have been (e.g., grading a student's work that was done in one hour is punitive; teachers lack awareness about grade level differences; if parents were involved in their child's education, student success would increase; pre- and posttests should be compared, then reinforced).

Fifty-two teachers from 11 summer school campuses (7 elementary, 3 middle, and 1 high) commented on parent involvement. Of that number, 31 teachers from 6 campuses (2 elementary, 3 middle, and 1 high school) offered suggestions for improving parent involvement at their schools through activities such as the following: notify parents early of expectations for involvement, use elementary feeder schools as public relations agents, showcase students' work at the end of summer school, host more parent involvement events, use parent volunteers in and outside of classrooms, and hold parents accountable for their child's attendance. Eleven indicated they had experienced adequate, excellent, and/or non-problematic parent involvement on their campuses. Seven gave somewhat neutral responses (e.g., the children did as they were told; the teachers did not need to contact parents; on parent day, they showed parents what to do; and an administrator had to speak to some parents because there was a language barrier). Others said they saw no evidence of parent involvement on their campuses during the summer, and yet others said the practice of parent involvement was unsuccessful on their campus.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The attendance, promotion, parent involvement, and staff development training data indicate AISD's Title I summer school program was successful and in compliance with the Texas Education Agency policies in the following ways:

1. The majority (99%, n = 1,247) of the 1,263 students for whom summer school data were available were promoted to the next grade level.
2. Most (85%, n = 1,054) of the promoted students were promoted because they attended 90% of program days and/or met AISD's academic criteria for promotion (i.e., passage of TAKS, accrual of credits, attaining on or above current grade level status) or met the academic criteria for promotion only.
3. Summer school principals and staff involved 1,560 parents and 1,451 students in Title I summer activities during a 4-week period.
4. Seventy-one percent (n = 87) of the teachers who returned surveys reported participating in the designing of parent involvement activities for their campuses.

A review of summer school reports from 2005, 2006, and 2007 shows that AISD's Title I summer school programs served 2,664 students and promoted 98% (n = 2,601) of those served during this period. Of the 2,601 students promoted, 62% (n = 1,617) were promoted because they attended 90% of the program days and met AISD's academic criteria for promotion (see Table 5).

Table 5: Title I Students Served and Promoted From Summer 2005 to Summer 2007

Summer	# Campuses	# Served	# Promoted	# Promoted, by criteria
2005	19	607	598	404
2006	18	794	756	483
2007	13	1,263	1,247	730
Total	50	2,664	2,601	1,617

Source: Washington, Doolittle, & Williams (2005, 2006); AISD Program Evaluation Records 2006-2007

These accomplishments support AISD's mission statement that all students will progress academically and intellectually and will graduate prepared for personal success and inspired to contribute to society. In addition, the parent involvement results show support for AISD's policy on parents and community relations. However, because teachers are primary initiators of parent contact in the district, the following suggestions are offered to principals to help improve how all teachers support parent involvement in summer school activities:

- Include teachers in all planning phases of the summer school program (e.g., academics, parent involvement, accountability, documentation)
- Notify teachers of parent involvement activities, dates, and times
- Require teacher attendance at parent involvement functions, if applicable
- Introduce teachers during the parent involvement activities
- Include teachers in active roles (e.g., presentations, demonstrations, Q & A) for parent involvement activities, whenever possible

Both staff development and state-approved curricula are required components of all supplementary instructional programs. Teachers' offered these suggestions for how to improve both of these components:

- Staff development should be tailored to teachers' experience levels (e.g., shorter period of training for experienced teachers and longer periods for novice teachers)
- More preparation time should be provided for planning lessons and scheduling (e.g., classes, transcript reviews, alternate program slots)
- Pre-training on summer school curricula should be offered during the regular school year

The use of outcome data for after-school, summer school, and other out-of-school time programs is important for identifying and developing best practice strategies for future programs. All Title I summer school principals (n = 13) responded in a similar fashion when asked to provide suggestions about how summer school outcome data could be used effectively in planning for the school year. Considering that the information would be instrumental in focusing on prevention rather than on remediation, they suggested the following:

- Provide all regular school year teachers with summer school outcome data (e.g., posttest scores, best practice instructional strategies, grouping arrangements)
- Review summer school students' data for potential learning disabilities
- Review summer school students' data for potential eligibility for enrichment programs during the regular school year

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