



Austin Independent School District

Department of Program Evaluation

Publication Number 07.27
March 2008

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A SUMMARY OF PRIVATE SCHOOLS' TITLE I ACTIVITIES UNDER AISD'S OVERSIGHT, 2004–2006

Title I is a compensatory education program supported by funds from the U.S. Department of Education (USDE) through the Elementary and Secondary Act (ESEA) of 1965 and reauthorized by the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001 (Public Law 107-110). The stated purpose of Title I is to provide opportunities for all children to acquire the knowledge and skills described in state academic content standards. State and local education agencies that have high concentrations of low-income children living within their attendance zones receive Title I funds for regular public schools and participating private schools. The USDE monitors various components of a school district's Title I program every four to five years to assess their ability to provide these services, the efficiency of their operations in doing so, and to ensure district and school compliance with state and federal law. The USDE reviewed Title I, Part A programs in Texas in May 2000 as part of a federal integrated review initiative. No findings of non-compliance were identified as a result of that review. However, due to the increased emphasis NCLB places on states' responsibilities to work with districts and schools to improve instruction and boost student achievement, the USDE's Student Achievement and School Accountability Programs (SASA) began to review State Education Agencies' (SEA) administration of titled programs operating under NCLB. During the week of January 10–14, 2005, a team from the USDE reviewed the Texas Education Agency's (TEA) administration of Title I funds as they pertain to private schools in Texas. The review included site visits to the Austin, Brownsville, Dallas, and San Antonio school districts, and telephone conferences with the Amarillo and El Paso districts.

In a January 2005 report cover letter (J. C. Jackson, USDE, personal communication, January 2005) addressed to the Honorable Shirley Neeley, Texas Commissioner of Education, the USDE reported the results of the January monitoring visits and reviews. The results of these reviews required the TEA to ensure that several Texas school districts made changes in the Title I fiscal and administrative oversight required by Section 1120(d)(1) of the ESEA. Specifically, these actions required the local education agency (LEA) to maintain control of the Title I funds and to administer the use of these funds (e.g., purchasing materials, curricula, equipment, property, hiring and paying staff). Although the Austin Independent School District (AISD) was

not cited in the January 2005 report for this problem, AISD Title I program staff decided to produce an interim report on the status of AISD's work with private schools in its attendance areas. Thus, the purposes of this summary are to establish a benchmark for the district's board of trustees, administrators, grant staff, and private school administrators regarding AISD's assumption of fiduciary oversight of Title I private schools in the district's attendance area and to provide a reference resource for the next state or federal audit of the district.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A number of people worked with the AISD Department of Program Evaluation (DPE) to develop and conduct this evaluation of AISD's fiscal and administrative oversight of Title I funds as they pertain to private schools in Texas. Many thanks go to private school staff for completing and returning staff surveys over the years. DPE also wishes to thank the State and Federal Accountability director and the Title I grants coordinator for sharing materials and data.

IMPLEMENTATION AND DATA COLLECTION

This summary includes data reported by private school administrators to AISD, AISD workshop attendance notes, communication with the AISD Title I grant coordinator, and correspondence from the AISD State and Federal Accountability Department director for the 3-year period of 2004–2006.

When asked about the positive findings and remarks made by the USDE monitoring team during their January 2005 visit to AISD, the grant coordinator responded that she had created a template based on the fiscal and administrative requirements cited in Section 1120(d)(1) of NCLB and had used it one year (2003–2004) prior to the USDE review and visit.

The grant coordinator held the first AISD pre-planning Title I workshop for private schools in spring 2004. This workshop included interviews with private school administrators who had opted to participate in AISD's Title I 2004–2005 program. They used a template during their interviews to design their programs. The template contained nonnegotiable (e.g., purchases, staffing, qualification of staff, staff salaries) and negotiable items (e.g., delivery of services, time and site), based on Section 1120(d)(1) of NCLB. The program plan was copied when the administrator and the grant coordinator agreed upon its contents, and each retained a file copy.

According to the grant coordinator, several factors influenced the decision to develop this template:

- growth in the number and variety (e.g., Catholic, Presbyterian, Baptist, Muslim) of private schools participating in the Title I grant;
- increased diversity in individual onsite program management styles (i.e., sometimes the manager is the head of the sponsoring institute, and at other times a principal, administrator, and/or a head teacher serves as head);
- the district's need for a standard operating procedure (SOP) in monitoring Title I services to private schools; and
- awareness of the USDE's communication with state and local education agencies about the pending requirement for school districts to maintain fiscal control of their Title I program for eligible private school children.

Annually, AISD's Department of Program Evaluation (DPE) staff gathers demographic data through a Private School Principal Survey about students in the AISD attendance area who attend private schools that provide supplementary instructional programs with Title I funds. These data are included in the school district's Title I, Part A annual compliance report submitted to the TEA.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS

Survey results for the 2004–2005 school year showed that Title I funds were used to support services at 5 private schools (Austin Peace Academy, Cathedral School of St. Mary, Ebenezer Child Development Center, El Buen Pastor Early Childhood Development Center, and San Juan Diego Catholic High School) in the AISD attendance areas. These schools collectively served 279 students. In 2005–2006, Title I funds were used to support services at 6 private schools (Abundant Life Learning Center, Austin Peace Academy, Cathedral School of St. Mary, Ebenezer Child Development Center, Greater Calvary Academy, and San Juan Diego Catholic High School) that served 191 students. In 2006–2007, Title I funds were used to support services at 5 private schools (Abundant Life Learning Center, Cathedral School of St. Mary, Ebenezer Child Development Center, Greater Calvary Academy, and San Juan Diego Catholic High School) that served 172 students. Altogether, these schools served 642 students between 2004–2005 and 2006–2007. Brief summaries of their instructional programs and AISD-approved campus plans are included in the program descriptions. A directory list of these schools appear at the end of this report.

AUSTIN PEACE ACADEMY

In the 2004–2005 school year, the instructional program involved working closely with at-risk students in grades 1 through 3 who were struggling in reading. Title I funds were used to hire consultants to go to the school on a monthly basis to assess the reading levels of the identified students and to provide teachers with intervention strategies. Title I funds also were used to provide after-school and summer reading programs. The Academy's goal was to bring at-risk students to a proficient level in reading comprehension, as measured by the Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI). In 2005–2006, the Academy contracted with a consultant to tutor the Title I students in reading comprehension and writing skills, with the goal of raising all Title I students' reading performance to grade level. The Academy did not participate in the 2006–2007 Title I program.

CATHEDRAL SCHOOL OF ST. MARY

The Cathedral School of St. Mary used the Diocese of Austin's educational objectives, which are aligned with the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), for their instructional program. Title I funds were used to hire an instructional specialist to provide educational services for students in grades K through 7 who were performing 1 year below grade level in reading or math. Title I funds were also used to provide staff development training for teachers in grades K through 3 as part of the federal Reading First Initiative. The teachers used a broad range of teaching methods, styles, manipulatives, and books to enhance students' learning, involvement, and enthusiasm for participating in lessons. Students participating in the 2005–2006 Title I tutoring program received small-group or individualized instruction in their areas of academic need. Each student was given an individual program with specific learning objectives to be addressed weekly. In the 2006–2007 school year, the Cathedral School of St. Mary continued to offer small-group or individualized instructional programs with weekly learning objectives.

EBENEZER CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER

Ebenezer's instructional program used a curriculum that was created by the Center for Improving the Readiness of Children for Learning and Education (CIRCLE) and was based on improving academic skills in children through research and implementation. Texas First Lady Laura Bush located the program at the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston in the fall of 1999 and introduced it as part of then-Governor George W. Bush's early childhood education initiative. The program brings evidenced-based learning approaches to the classroom, with the main goal of helping families and teachers to assist young children in preparing for reading and learning before they enter kindergarten. Beginning in the 2004–2005 school year, tutors were paid with Title I funds to go to the school twice per week for 1-hour sessions to help children with speech problems. Title I funds were used to purchase additional materials for teachers to support read-aloud activities and to purchase updated CIRCLE materials and other supplementary resources, as these materials become available each year. Ebenezer's instructional program has remained the same since 2004-2005.

EL BUEN PASTOR EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT CENTER

El Buen's early childhood instructional program used Title I funds for printing daily lesson plans and other resource materials (e.g., guidelines suggested by Texas Minimum Standards for Childcare, Texas Worksource Solutions Rising Star, and the National Association for the Education of Young Children) during the 2004-2005 school year. El Buen opted out of Title I program participation in school year 2005–2006.

SAN JUAN DIEGO HIGH SCHOOL

During the 2004–2005 school year, Title I funds were used to establish a computer laboratory at San Juan Diego High School. Teachers used the laboratory for Internet research, research writing, creation of PowerPoint presentations, review of instructional materials, and testing of high school students. In 2005–2006, Title I funds were used to hire two teachers to work with at-risk high school students. The school offered a summer school program in 2006–2007, and Title I funds were used to hire two teachers to provide the instruction.

ABUNDANT LIFE LEARNING CENTER

Abundant Life Learning Center participated in the Title I program in 2005–2006 and used Title I funds to hire tutors to provide tutoring in reading for their 4-year-old students. Teachers used different phonics programs as the foundation for learning to read. The Center's goal was for each student to be reading by age four. In the 2006–2007 school year, the Center used Title I funds to purchase a phonics-based reading program to teach reading. Regular instruction was provided in writing, math, and science. The Center's program goal included all students and was aimed at increasing each student's reading level by at least one grade level. Title I funds were used to hire a consultant to provide additional tutoring in reading during June 2007.

GREATER CALVARY ACADEMY

Greater Calvary Academy participated in the Title I program in the 2005–2006 school year. The Academy used a variety of resources, including Science Research Associates' (SRA) Reading Open Court, Reading Mastery phonics, and Saxon mathematics. TEKS was used as a guide for the Academy's social studies instruction. The Academy's overall goal was to raise student reading performance at least one grade level above the national level. Greater Calvary used Title I funds to hire tutors during the year in reading and mathematics. Title I funds were used in 2006–2007 to provide writing workshops for teachers, parent conferences that included workshops, and summer school classes that were held in June 2007.

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

A review of the private school records and survey results submitted for the 3-year period showed that Title I private schools collectively served 642 students. Of the various ethnic groups, Blacks (45%) and Hispanics (44%) had the largest numbers in attendance during this period. Fifty-nine percent of all students enrolled in Title I private schools were pre-kindergarten students. Tables 1 and 2 show the ethnicity, gender, and grade levels of these students for the 3-year period.

Table 1: Private School Students Served with Title I Funds, by Ethnicity, 2004–2005 Through 2006–2007

Ethnicity	# in 2004–2005	# in 2005–2006	# in 2006–2007	Total #
American Indian or Alaskan Native	0	0	0	0
Asian or Pacific Islander	21	7	3	31
Black not Hispanic	80	103	106	289
Hispanic	151	76	56	283
White not Hispanic	27	5	7	39
Total served by Ethnicity	279	191	172	642

Source: AISD DPE Title I Program Surveys: Private Schools, 2004–2005 Through 2006–2007

Table 2: Private School Students Served with Title I Funds,
 by Gender and Grade Level, 2004–2005 Through 2006–2007

Demographics	# in 2004– 2005	# in 2005– 2006	# in 2006– 2007	Total #
Male	147	94	78	319
Female	132	97	94	323
Total, by gender	279	191	172	642
Pre-K	173	101	105	379
K	15	7	6	28
1	19	6	8	33
2	18	5	5	28
3	13	8	2	23
4	12	4	7	23
5	8	0	3	11
6	1	0	0	1
7	4	2	2	8
8	0	2	1	3
9	6	18	13	37
10	7	20	9	36
11	3	14	5	22
12	0	4	6	10
Ungraded	0	0	0	0
Total, by grade level	279	191	172	642

Source: AISD DPE Title I Program Surveys: Private Schools, 2004–2005 Through 2006–2007

As seen in Table 3, course enrollment data for the 3-year period showed 93% (n = 594) of these students were enrolled in reading or language arts, 43% (n = 277) in mathematics, 30% (n = 191) in social studies, and 29% (n = 184) in science.

Table 3: Numbers of Private School Students Enrolled in Core Courses and Served with Title I Funds, 2004–2005 Through 2006–2007

School year	# in Reading/ Language arts	# in Mathematics	# in Science	# in Social science
2004–2005	267	138	89	96
2005–2006	191	93	72	72
2006–2007	136	46	23	23
Total #	594	277	184	191

Source: AISD DPE Title I Program Surveys: Private School, 2004–2005 Through 2006–2007

STAFF DEVELOPMENT AND DIAGNOSTIC TESTING

Private school administrators unanimously reported providing their program staff with staff development sessions on Title I funding and operations. Staff development topics mentioned most often by school administrators were Thinking Maps, intervention strategies, and updates on Title I funding and operation guidelines.

Administrators reported using some of the following student assessments: SRI, Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT), Stanford Achievement Test (SAT), Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA), CIRCLE assessment materials, quarterly subject area testing, Preliminary SAT, Advantage Star Testing of high school reading and math skills, Developmental Online Math (DOMA), Developmental Online Reading Assessment (DORA), and the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS).

OTHER SURVEY RESULTS

Table 4 shows that when administrators were asked about the adequacy of resources and staff development that they had received from AISD about Title I grant program management, the majority of private school administrators responded that both the curricula used at their schools and the training were adequate to meet program goals. Most administrators also agreed that instructional resources (e.g., staff, staff development for campus staff, materials, and equipment) provided through Title I adequately met their program needs.

Private school administrators also were asked about expectations for student success and the quality of parent involvement at their schools. Table 4 shows the majority of principals agreed that expectations for student academic success were met and parent involvement at their schools, for students participating in the Title I program, was good.

Table 4: Count of Principals Agreeing With Survey Questions Regarding Program Adequacies and Expectations, 2004–2005 Through 2006–2007

Place a check mark to indicate whether you strongly disagree, disagree, are undecided, agree or strongly agree with the statement	2004–2005 (n = 5)	2005–2006 (n = 6)	2006–2007 (n = 5)
Staff development training on Title I grant program management by AISD for this school year was adequate.	5	6	3
The curricula used at my school were adequate to meet my program goals.	5	6	4
Instructional resources (staff, staff development, materials, and others) provided through Title I by AISD were adequate.	4	6	4
My expectation for students' academic success was met.	5	6	4
Parent involvement at my school for students participating in the Title I program at my school was good.	5	5	3

Source: AISD DPE Title I Program Surveys: Private School, 2004–2005 Through 2006–2007
 Note: Responses of agree and strongly agree were combined for this table.

On the questions regarding parent involvement activities and attendance from August to May of each school year, private school administrators collectively reported involving 5,947 parents over the 3-year period. Table 5 shows examples of some activities (e.g., back to school, open house, monthly parent meetings) with the highest attendance, as reported by the participating schools.

Table 5: Parents Attending Title I Private Schools Activities, 2004–2005 Through 2006–2007

School	Activity	# of Parents attending:		
		2004–2005	2005–2006	2006–2007
Abundant Life Learning Center	Parent meetings		32	38
Austin Peace Academy	Open house	210	240	
Cathedral School of St Mary	Parent teacher meetings and class project breakfasts	72	350	320
Ebenezer Child Development Center	Parent meetings	300	200	200
El Buen Pastor Early Childhood Development Center	May graduation	44		
Greater Calvary Academy	Monthly meetings		17	45
San Juan Diego High School	July corporate work study	75	35	45
TOTAL		701	874	648

Source: AISD DPE Private School Principal Surveys, 2004–2005 Through 2006–2007

Other parent activities (e.g., monthly Parent Teacher Conference/Parent Teacher Officer meetings, Sunday breakfasts, field trips, and literacy nights) drew large numbers of parents. A separate event listing is available from AISD's DPE records.

Private school administrators also reported recruiting 651 community volunteers over the 3-year period. Administrators reported that volunteers worked with students on science and robotic projects, taught dance classes, conducted mock court hearings, graded papers, assisted teachers in the classroom, chaperoned field trips, and worked in the school office or cafeteria.

Finally, administrators were asked in the 2006–2007 survey to indicate how long their school had participated in the Title I program. The majority (60%) of administrators responded that they had been in the Title I program for 3 years or more.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

AISD's success in performing the fiscal and administrative oversight of the district's Title I funds used to provide services to eligible students at area private schools is attributed to advanced planning, teamwork, and best management practices. Survey results for 2004–2005 through 2006–2007 showed AISD met its Title I grant responsibilities by:

- Consulting with appropriate officials from private schools during the design and development phases of the district's program for eligible private schools
- Addressing issues, such as how the district will assess the academic services provided to eligible private school children, and how the district will use the results of that assessment to improve Title I services
- Maintaining control of the Title I funds and administering the Title I funds, materials, equipment, and property
- Providing the Title I services to private schools through a contract between the district and the employee(s), independent of the private schools or any religious organization
- Providing staff development sessions on Title I funding, operations, and AISD's grant program management
- Creating opportunities for parent and community involvement through two-way communication and interaction

Another affirmation of AISD's success in the assumption of fiscal and administrative oversight of Title I funds used for services to private schools in its attendance area was the positive feedback provided by USDE. The USDE monitors were impressed with their visit to AISD and with the work being done with the private schools, in particular (C. Green, TEA, personal communication, January 20, 2005). As a result of this positive feedback from USDE, the state's Region XIII Education Service Center (ESC) staff set up and videotaped a teleconference in which AISD's grant coordinator shared with other Texas ESCs ways to design and customize templates for use with their participating private schools. Region XIII ESC staff currently use this video/CD as a training tool during annual Title I program orientations. This summary report establishes a benchmark for AISD, based on 3 years of data reported to TEA. Thus, an opportunity has been created to use data from this summary for the purpose of comparison with future district data for monitoring of private schools participating in the Title I program.

AUSTIN AREA PRIVATE SCHOOLS PARTICIPATING IN TITLE I PART A

Abundant Life Learning Center
6510 Berkman Drive
Austin, Texas 78723

Austin Peace Academy
5110 Manor Road
Austin, Texas 78723

Cathedral School of St. Mary
910 San Jacinto
Austin, Texas 78701

Ebenezer Child Development Center
1014 E. 10th Street
Austin, Texas 78702

El Buen Pastor Early Childhood Development Center
1208 Willow Street
Austin, Texas 78702

Greater Calvary Academy
6510 Berkman Drive
Austin, Texas 78723

San Juan Diego High School
800 Herndon Lane
Austin, Texas 78704

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Publication Number 07.27

March 2008