

# AUSTIN PARTNERS IN EDUCATION EVALUATION REPORT, 2007-2008



Austin Independent School District  
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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Austin Partners in Education (APIE) is a non-profit organization that serves as a point of contact for donors and volunteers wanting to support schools in the Austin Independent School District (AISD). APIE's mission is to promote effective community and school partnerships that will assist all students to prepare successfully for college and careers. In order to achieve its program goals, APIE facilitated numerous programs during the 2007-2008 school year. Activities ranged from coaching reading groups of 2nd grade students in the classroom to helping 12th grade students prepare for college entrance exams. More than 1,815 students in elementary, middle, and high schools were served by APIE throughout 2007-2008.

The APIE programs were evaluated by staff in AISD's Department of Program Evaluation (DPE) in the 2007-2008 school year. In this process, both qualitative and quantitative data pertaining to clearly defined performance measures were collected and included student demographic, course passing, and testing data; teacher, counselor, volunteer, and student surveys; and classroom observations. The data were analyzed for each program.

As a result of the evaluation, major findings emerged across the programs. First, the APIE programs were selectively placed and implemented in varying ways to meet student needs across the district. Second, APIE participants (teachers, volunteers, and students) generally held positive perceptions of the program and believed it was enjoyable and helpful; many indicated they wanted to participate in the next school year. Third, although the academic outcomes for APIE students varied by program, the overall academic outcomes for APIE students were positive.

Program effectiveness can be increased with relatively minor changes in implementation. The following recommendations were provided for program staff consideration:

1. Continue to expand APIE volunteer recruitment and increase support in participating classrooms.
2. Provide additional or ongoing support for APIE volunteers and teachers.
3. Rearticulate and align program goals, objectives, and success indicators in consideration of program participant characteristics.
4. Focus more on how APIE programs impact indirect influences on student achievement.
5. Expand data collection to better describe program implementation and to better determine program participation results.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Austin Partners in Education (APIE) is a non-profit organization that serves as a point of contact for donors and volunteers wanting to support schools in the Austin Independent School District (AISD). APIE's mission is to promote effective community and school partnerships that will assist all students to prepare successfully for college and careers. APIE staff work with schools to identify high quality educational practices and works to gather business and foundation resources to pilot and expand successful programs.

APIE staff facilitated programs using a study group approach within schools throughout AISD during the 2007-2008 school year. These support programs united teachers and community volunteers to help students succeed. Teams of volunteers were placed in classrooms to support classroom instruction and worked with groups of 3 to 5 students once each week. The instructional support activities generally took the form of tutoring sessions and ranged from coaching reading groups of 2nd grade students in the classroom to helping 12th grade students prepare for college entrance exams.

### **DESCRIPTION OF THE APIE STUDY GROUP PROGRAMS**

APIE's Partners in Reading (PIR) program helped students in the second grade to improve their reading fluency skills to increase reading comprehension. Using a structured format, volunteers and students utilized notebooks with materials to read poetry, practice lists of commonly occurring words, and complete timed reading tasks. During these sessions, APIE volunteers provided opportunities for students to hear how fluent reading sounds, practice reading aloud, and receive feedback about their reading. The primary program objective for APIE's PIR program is to provide academic support for 2nd graders and to assist them to read with fluency and accuracy.

In addition, a Spanish-language version of PIR, *Compañeros en Lectura* (CEL), was offered in second-grade bilingual classes. APIE's CEL program provided a structured approach to helping bilingual children become stronger readers. Volunteers met with their own small group of students in the classroom every week and utilized Spanish-language learning materials. Again, APIE volunteers provided opportunities for students to hear how fluent reading sounds, practice reading aloud, and receive feedback about their reading. The primary program objective for CEL was to provide academic support for bilingual second graders and to assist them to read with fluency and accuracy.

APIE staff also facilitated the Partners in Math (PIM) program, designed to support struggling middle and high school math students. Each week, volunteers helped small groups of students solve math problems. The experience was designed to create relevance for students; to accomplish this, volunteers shared their enjoyment of math and real-world experiences.

APIE's Partners in Literature (PIL) program was designed to promote reading comprehension and critical thinking skills for struggling readers at the high school level. Using curricula and resources provided by the classroom teacher, volunteers facilitated small group discussions with students about assigned stories and articles. This experience was designed to promote reading comprehension and critical thinking skills.

APIE's College Readiness program focused on supporting high school students who were eligible to graduate, but who had not met the stringent college readiness standards of state or college-admissions assessments. In this program, APIE volunteers helped students learn about the college readiness standard by listening to a series of speakers. These volunteers spoke to students about college preparation and the benefits of a college education. APIE volunteers also provided tutoring sessions on Saturdays and during the school day to help students prepare for the entrance exams. Specifically, the volunteers facilitated college entrance exam study groups, each with three to four students who had individualized study plans.

#### **PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS**

Approximately 1,815 students in elementary, middle, and high schools were served by APIE throughout the 2007-2008 school year. Demographic characteristics of the APIE participants are presented in Table 1, along with the overall student characteristics of the district. Of the APIE participants, 76.68% were Hispanic, 16.11% were African-American, 37.54% were categorized as limited English proficient (LEP), and 89.76% were categorized as economically disadvantaged. Compared with the district as a whole, the APIE programs served greater percentages of Hispanic, African-American, special education, LEP, and economically disadvantaged students. The schools served by APIE staff and volunteers had student mobility rates ranging from 9.7% to 43.9% in the 2005-2006 school year (Academic Excellence Indicator System, 2006-2007).



Table 1. Characteristics of Students Participating in APIE Programs, 2007-2008

<b>Total Students</b>	<b>Native American</b>	<b>Asian</b>	<b>African American</b>	<b>Hispanic</b>	<b>White</b>	<b>Special Ed</b>	<b>Limited English Proficient</b>	<b>Economic Disadvantage</b>
<b>District total</b>	0.22%	3.33%	12.09%	57.93%	26.43%	9.9%	27.61%	64.31%
<b>APIE students</b>	0.20%	0.76%	16.11%	76.68%	6.26%	10.24%	37.54%	89.76%

Source. AISD student enrollment records, 2007-2008

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this evaluation conducted by AISD's Department of Program Evaluation (DPE) staff was to provide information about program outcomes to facilitate decisions about program implementation and improvement.

### **EVALUATION QUESTIONS**

For each APIE program, the evaluation focused on three major questions:

- Did program participants (teachers, volunteers, and students) feel supported by the programs?
- What were the academic outcomes for APIE program participants?
- How did the academic outcomes of APIE participants compare with those of similar non-participants?

### **DATA COLLECTION**

The evaluation of each APIE program was structured to examine specific program objectives. Both qualitative and quantitative data pertaining to the clearly defined performance measures were collected to assess the programs' progress. Thus, the data collected may have differed across programs. The various types of data collection activities are described in the following sections.

#### **Student Demographic and Academic Data**

District information systems provided student demographic data; attendance rates; course enrollment; and Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA), Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS), Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT), and ACT (originally, American College Testing) test data.

#### **Participant Surveys**

Teacher, counselor, volunteer, and student surveys were developed and administered to the participants to elicit descriptions of their experiences with and feelings about participation in the APIE programs. In Fall 2008, the APIE program staff developed survey instruments and surveyed the teachers and volunteers participating in APIE programs. The questions included in the surveys varied by program and participant group. All surveys included a combination of questions using a 4-point rating scale (i.e., strongly agree to strongly disagree) and open-ended questions.

In Spring 2008, the AISD evaluation staff consolidated the existing APIE instruments across program and participant groups. Apart from a few program-specific questions, a core set of questions assessing program impact, communication with APIE, participant behavior, and study-group materials was asked on all surveys. The survey questions are provided in Appendices B, C, and D.

The revised surveys were administered at the end of the school year. Teachers, counselors, and volunteers in all of the APIE programs were sent an invitation in May 2008 to complete the electronic survey. Students participating in APIE programs were asked to complete paper versions of the survey. If APIE teachers and/or volunteers completed a survey in both the spring and the fall, only the most recent survey form was used in the analyses.

The response rates for the various participant groups differed (Table 2). The student response rate in the spring semester was 75%, and the volunteer response rate was 47%. Upon closer examination of these rates, it was determined that the volunteer and student survey responses could be considered representative of the respective populations. The largest margin of error was associated with teacher surveys, because the teachers' response rate was low.

Table 2. Response Rates for Teacher, Volunteer, and Student Surveys, 2007-2008

Survey Type	Sent Surveys	Completed Surveys	Completion Rate
Teacher	263	55	21%
Volunteer	887	418	47%
Students	457	344	75%

Source. APIE teacher, student, volunteer surveys 2007-2008

Note. Counselor surveys are included with the teacher surveys. Teacher and volunteer rates include the total numbers of surveys sent and returned in the fall and spring semesters. Students were only surveyed in the spring semester.

### Classroom Observations

Observations were conducted to describe the process of program implementation and to discern the characteristics of successful teacher-volunteer-student interactions. In the spring semester, APIE program and AISD evaluation staff observed APIE volunteers working with students in classrooms. Of 82 classes identified by APIE staff as being supported regularly by program volunteers in the spring semester, 51 or 62% were observed.

The classroom observation checklist consisted of four statements about volunteer-student engagement, which were rated on a 6-point scale with responses ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree (Appendix E). The observation tool contained free response sections

which prompted the observer to describe student-volunteer ratios, classroom logistics, teacher behaviors, and student-volunteer interactions.

### **DATA ANALYSIS**

Evaluation staff utilized a mixed-methods approach to analyze and interpret data. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Qualitative data were examined using contextual analyses.

To more definitively determine whether student outcomes might be associated with participation in APIE programs, many of the data analyses compared the academic outcomes of students participating in APIE programs with the academic outcomes of similar students who did not participate in the programs. Specifically, the students within classes supported by APIE volunteers were compared with similar non-APIE-supported classes within the same school. The classrooms were matched based on the demographic characteristics of the students within the classes and the class type (e.g., “regular” versus an advanced placement or a special education class). If similar classrooms were not available within the same school, classes of students from neighboring schools with similar demographic and academic characteristics were selected. Furthermore, the data analyses comparing APIE students with non-APIE students only included those who were enrolled in the fall and spring semesters. A detailed description of data analyses follows.

### **Student Enrollment**

Descriptive statistics were used to describe APIE participant characteristics and to select appropriate student comparison groups. Data for APIE participants and comparison students are presented in Appendix A.

### **Student Academic Outcomes**

Descriptive statistics were employed to describe outcomes for the students participating in each of the APIE programs and the student comparison groups. Tests of statistical significance were conducted to determine if assessment scores significantly differed between APIE participants and comparison students. Regression analyses were completed to determine whether APIE program participation influenced student outcomes, based on their assessment results.

### **Survey Analysis**

Although the surveys administered at the end of the fall semester were revised in the spring semester, many of the same or very similar questions were asked on both surveys. For

questions presented on both the fall and spring surveys, the teacher and volunteer surveys were combined. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze questions from the surveys. The open-ended items were analyzed using a content analysis approach. Respondent comments were coded in reference to participant behaviors, program processes, and key issues brought forth. Similarly coded data were grouped together, and the major ideas and themes were summarized. The survey question results are provided in Appendices B, C, and D.

**Classroom Observations**

For ratings given on the classroom observation instrument, descriptive statistics were used to summarize the outcomes. To analyze the observation notes recorded by the observers, a content analysis approach was used. Observation notes were coded in reference to articulated evaluation questions and related observation protocol categories. Those topics included study group processes, observed participant behaviors, and classroom setting. Similarly coded data were grouped together, and the major ideas were summarized.

## EVALUATION RESULTS

In this section, the program evaluation results are presented. Because the results for multiple APIE programs are presented in this report, the findings will be organized by program. The overall results are discussed in relation to the major components of the programs.

### **PARTNERS IN MATH**

The PIM program was offered at the middle and high school levels. Although the program was implemented according to standards set by APIE, the variety of educational contexts required the use of different data for describing student outcomes. Thus, the results for PIM are reported separately for the middle and high school levels. PIM also supported classrooms at the Ann Richards School: a competitive admissions academy for girls. APIE program support did not begin until Spring 2008. This school was not included within the comprehensive program evaluation plans.

PIM volunteers supported five classes at Johnston High School. Within these classes, the program served a total of 104 students, among whom 61 were present during the entire year. For evaluation purposes, two comparison classes were selected at Johnston High School.

When APIE students were compared with non-APIE participants, differences were found in respect to academic outcomes. Keeping in mind that a higher percentage of APIE students passed the TAKS math test in their eighth grade year compared with non-participants, greater percentages of APIE participants continued to pass their TAKS math test in Spring 2008, compared with the non-participants (Table 3). The difference between passing rates for APIE students and non-participants increased in 2008. A greater percentage of APIE students scored 2200 or above on the TAKS math test, compared with non-participants.

APIE participants had a higher average scale score on the TAKS math test than did their non-APIE peers; however, this difference was not found to be statistically significant. Sample sizes and differences in the distribution of scores were factors influencing the determination of statistical significance.

Table 3. Partners in Math Participants and Comparison Students Passing TAKS Math Tests, High School Level, 2006-2007 and 2007-2008

High school students	2006-2007		2007-2008		2007-2008
	APIE students (n=50)	Comparison students (n=13)	APIE students (n=61)	Comparison students (n=16)	Difference between groups
<b>% Passing TAKS math test</b>	24%	15%	26%	6%	+20
<b>% Passing TAKS math test at 2200 level</b>	10%	8%	9%	0%	+9
<b>Average scale score on TAKS math test</b>	2027	1964	1983	1931	+50

Source. AISD student enrollment, and TAKS test files prepared by DPE

PIM was offered in 14 classes at Bedichek, Martin, O. Henry, and Webb middle schools. APIE served 357 students, with 258 of these students present during the entire school year. Comparison classes included 68 math classes within the same middle schools (Table 4).

Differences were found with respect to academic outcomes when APIE students were compared with non-APIE participants in the middle schools. Greater percentages of APIE participants passed their TAKS math test and scored 2200 or above on the test, compared with non-APIE participants. APIE participants also had a higher average TAKS math scale score, compared with non-APIE participants.

The difference between the 2007-2008 average scale scores on the TAKS math test for the APIE and comparison students was determined to be statistically significant. This indicated that the difference between the groups was greater than one would expect to see by chance.

Table 4. Partners in Math Participants and Comparison Students Passing TAKS Math Tests, Middle School Level, 2006-2007 and 2007-2008

Middle school students	2006-2007		2007-2008		2007-2008
	APIE students (n=196)	Comparison students (n=820)	APIE students (n=215)	Comparison students (n=956)	Difference between groups
% Passing TAKS math test	55%	53%	65%	58%	+7
% Passing TAKS math test at 2200 level	25%	19%	29%	21%	+8
Average scale score on TAKS math test	2114	2093	2132	2104	+28*

Source. AISD student enrollment, and TAKS test files prepared by DPE

Note. \*The difference between the 2007-2008 average TAKS math scale scores for the APIE and comparison students is statistically significant,  $p=.01$ .

### BROWN ELEMENTARY CASE STUDY

PIM was offered at Brown Elementary School. However, the instructional model utilized at Brown uniquely differed from both the high school and middle school programs provided at other campuses. Instead of the volunteers coaching groups of students in classrooms, all fifth grade students at Brown Elementary met in the school's cafeteria. In the cafeteria, volunteers worked with small groups of students to complete the instructional activities created by the team of fifth grade teachers. The activities created by this team of teachers focused on TAKS math test preparation, and a curriculum was developed for the entire school year. While the volunteers worked with the students, the teachers circulated around the room, assisting with the exercises and monitoring student participation.

On one day of activities observed by APIE and DPE staff, the theme of the program was "Math Olympics," modeled on the forthcoming 2008 Summer Olympics in Beijing. Student and volunteers completed math activities pertaining to the Olympic theme. At the end of the session, the students earned gold, silver, or bronze certificates based on their work with the volunteers. The learning environment was described as friendly, engaging, and academically rigorous.

Because all fifth grade students at Brown participated in APIE's PIM program, a comparison group could not be established. However, 2006-2007 and 2007-2008 school year TAKS information was gathered to compare the participants' academic outcomes (Table 5). Seventy-four percent of the fifth grade students at Brown passed the math TAKS in 2007-2008, whereas 61% passed in 2006-2007. The average 2007-2008 TAKS math scale score for



the fifth graders was 2167, whereas the 2006-2007 the average scale score was 2106. This difference in TAKS math scale scores was found to be statistically significant. In 2007-2008, more students (43%) scored 2200 or above on the math TAKS compared with the students (37%) who scored 2200 or above in 2006-2007.

Table 5. Partners in Math Participants Passing TAKS Math Tests, Brown Elementary, 2006-2007 and 2007-2008

	2006-2007 (n=53)	2007-2008 (n=69)
<b>% Passing TAKS math test</b>	62%	74%
<b>% Passing TAKS math tests at 2200 level</b>	37%	43%
<b>Average scale score on TAKS math test</b>	2106	2167*

Source. AISD student enrollment, and TAKS test files prepared by DPE

Note. \*The difference between the average TAKS math scale scores for the student cohort is statistically significant,  $p < .05$ .

### **PARTNERS IN READING**

PIR was offered in 28 second grade classes at 12 elementary schools (i.e., Allison, Barrington, Becker, Blackshear, Brown, Dawson, Oak Springs, Odom, Pecan Springs, Pillow, St. Elmo, and Sanchez). APIE volunteers served 460 students, with 414 of these students present for the entire year. Thirty-eight second grade classes within the same schools were selected for comparison.

To evaluate APIE's PIR program, the DRA was utilized. This assessment is designed to determine students' independent reading level and is used to measure students' reading growth over time. No state reading assessment has been developed for or administered to second grade students.

DRA test results are reported on a continuum spanning across grade levels. DRA scores indicating that students are reading at grade level range from a score of 4 at the beginning of first grade to a score of 16 at the end of first grade. DRA scores indicating that students are reading at grade level range from a score of 18 at the beginning of second grade to a score of 28 at the end of second grade.

Academic outcomes for the APIE participants and the comparison group students were examined (Table 6). In contrast with the comparison group, fewer APIE students were reading at grade level at the beginning of the year (BOY) in 2007-2008. However, the APIE students made greater gains in reading at grade level between the beginning and end of the school year (BOY and EOY, respectively), than did comparison group students, and a greater percentage of

APIE students were reading at grade level by the end of the 2007-2008 school year. The differences between APIE and non-APIE students with respect to average DRA scale scores at the beginning and the end of the year were not found to be statistically significant.

Table 6. Students Reading at Grade Level and Average Reading Score, 2006-2007 and 2007-2008

Second grade students	2006-2007				2007-2008				2007-2008
	APIE students (BOY n=309) (EOY n=334)	Change	Comparison students (BOY n=343) (EOY n=349)	Change	APIE students (BOY n=384) (EOY n=404)	Change	Comparison students (BOY n=388) (EOY n=375)	Change	Difference between groups
% At grade level on DRA, BOY	42%	+18	51%	+11	32%	+22	34%	+15	-2
% At grade level on DRA, EOY	60%		62%		54%		49%		+5
Average DRA score, BOY	4	+12	5	+11	14	+10	15	+10	-1
Average DRA score, EOY	16		16		24		25		-1

Source. AISD student enrollment and DRA test files prepared by DPE

### COMPAÑEROS EN LECTURA

CEL was offered in 13 second grade classes at 8 elementary schools (i.e., Allison, Becker, Blackshear, Dawson, Oak Springs, Odom, Pillow, and Sanchez). APIE volunteers served 189 students, among whom 181 were present for the entire year. Because APIE worked with the majority of Spanish-speaking students in each school, an adequate comparison group could not be found within the same schools. An attempt was made to find comparison students at neighboring elementary schools; however, major differences in TAKS scores and course grades prohibited their use.

The percentages of students reading at grade level at the beginning and end of the year were described (Table 7). Compared with the 2006-2007 baseline data, a lesser percentage of APIE participants were reading at grade level at both the beginning and end of the 2007-2008 school year. The percentage of APIE participants reading at grade level increased from the beginning to the end of the 2007-2008 school year.

Table 7. Students Reading at Grade Level and Average Reading Score for Compañeros en Lectura, 2006-2007 and 2007-2008

CEL students	2006-2007		2007-2008	
	(BOY n=160) (EOY n=159)	Change	(BOY n=174) (EOY n=168)	Change
% At Grade level on DRA , BOY	54%	+9	32%	+8
% At Grade level on DRA, EOY	63%		40%	
Average DRA score, BOY	6	+11	14	+9
Average DRA score, EOY	17		23	

Source. AISD student enrollment and DRA test files prepared by DPE

### PARTNERS IN LITERATURE

The PIL program also was offered at the middle and high school levels. Although the program was implemented according to standards set by APIE, the differing educational contexts required different types of data to be used to describe student outcomes. Thus, the results for PIL were reported separately for the different school levels.

PIL was offered in three 9th and 10th grade English/Language Arts classes at Reagan High School. APIE volunteers were placed strategically in the highest need classes, which were composed of struggling students working to improve their reading comprehension and critical thinking skills. APIE volunteers served approximately 101 students, among whom 78 were enrolled through the entire school year (Table 8). Because the APIE volunteers were placed strategically according to high need, an appropriate comparison group of students could not be selected from this school or another similar high school.

The academic outcomes of APIE participants were examined. The percentage of APIE students passing the TAKS English/language arts test decreased compared with the percentage passing the previous year. Additionally, the average scale score on the TAKS English/language arts test was lower compared with average scale score for the previous year. However, the differences in average scale scores were not found to be statistically significant.

Table 8. Partners in Literature Participants Passing TAKS English/Language Arts Tests at the High School Level, 2006-2007 and 2007-2008

PIL students	2006-2007	2007-2008
	APIE students (n=51)	APIE students (n=59)
<b>% Passing TAKS English/language arts test</b>	45%	31%
<b>% Passing TAKS English/language arts test at 2200 level</b>	8%	12%
<b>Average scale score on TAKS English/language arts test</b>	2055	2052

Source. AISD student enrollment, and TAKS test files prepared by DPE

PIL also was offered in three classes at Webb Middle School that were implementing the Read 180 program. The READ 180 program is an intensive reading intervention program designed to meet the needs of struggling readers whose reading achievement is below grade level. An appropriate comparison group could not be determined for evaluation purposes, because Read-180 was an elective class that served students with intensive academic needs. Furthermore, students may have entered and exited the class when they were identified and/or as they met their reading level goals.

APIE served 39 students, among whom 28 were present for at least 5 months and among whom 15 were present through the entire year. Academic outcomes for APIE participants at Webb Middle School were described (Table 9). Students participating in the Read 180 program were selected, because they had not passed their TAKS reading test. Therefore, the baseline data illustrates a 0% passing rate. By the end of the 2007-2008 school year, 71% of the students had passed the TAKS reading test.

Although program results were positive, certain aspects of the research should be taken into consideration when interpreting the results. Levels of student participation in Read 180 activities were not examined in combination with APIE tutoring. The degree to which student outcomes may be attributable to a single program was undetermined. Student outcomes may have been influenced by the combination of programs.

Table 9. Partners in Literature Participants Passing TAKS English/Language Arts Tests at the Middle School Level, 2006-2007 and 2007-2008

PIL students	APIE students (n=28)	
	2006-2007	2007-2008
% Passing TAKS English/language arts test	0%	71%
% Passing TAKS English/language arts test at 2200 level	0%	25%
Average scale score on TAKS English/language arts test	1953	2110

Source. AISD student enrollment, and TAKS test files prepared by DPE

### COLLEGE READINESS

APIE 's College Readiness program was offered to students at Anderson, Austin, Bowie, McCallum, and Garza high schools. APIE staff and volunteers partnered with the Project ADVANCE facilitators at these high schools to help students achieve college readiness standards. Project ADVANCE is a college readiness program funded by the Michael and Susan Dell Foundation. The program provided information about becoming college-ready; created individualized study plans for college admissions tests using ACT, ASSET, and SAT test preparation guides; and tutored students preparing to take college admissions tests.

Although all high school students could access the college readiness services provided by APIE, 652 “bubble” students were targeted to receive support services if they passed portions of the TAKS English and math tests necessary for graduation but failed to meet the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board’s (THECB) standard indicating their readiness to enroll in an institution of higher education. APIE college readiness services were provided apart from the classroom, and student participation in the program was voluntary.

Through efforts of the APIE and Project ADVANCE staff, 426 letters were sent to parents. The letters described the college readiness services available to students, and 612 students were counseled one or more times about their college readiness status. During these guided presentations, individualized study plans, printed study materials, and links to online resources were provided for these students to help them prepare for the ASSET, ACT, and SAT tests. Students also were encouraged to study at home and attend tutorial sessions.

A variety of test scores (e.g., from the ACT, ASSET, SAT, and TAKS tests) were examined to determine the college readiness status of the “bubble” students targeted by APIE volunteers and those attending high schools not served by APIE (Table 10). At the end of the school year, 42.1% of the targeted students met the college readiness standard. However, campus staff did not consistently document student participation in APIE college readiness

tutoring. An appropriate student comparison group from other high schools could not be selected based on student demographic and school-wide academic performance differences. Thus, the influence of student participation in tutoring towards meeting college readiness standards provided by APIE volunteers could not be determined.

Table 10. Students Who Met College Readiness Standard, 2007-2008

College Readiness	APIE Target Students (n=652)
# Passing TSI College Readiness Standard	275
% Passing TSI College Readiness Standard	42.1%

Source. AISD student enrollment and test files prepared by the DPE

Note. TSI college readiness standards can be achieved through any mix of passing scores on TAKS, SAT, ACT, or ASSET tests. To meet math standards, a student must have a minimum TAKS score of 2200, or an SAT Composite score of 1070 with a math score of 500, or an ACT composite score of 23 with a math score of 19, or an ASSET math score of 38. To meet reading standards, a student must have a minimum TAKS score of 2200, or an SAT Composite score of 1070 with a reading score of 500, or an ACT composite score of 23 with a reading score of 19, or an ASSET reading score of 41. To meet writing standards, a student must have a minimum TAKS ELA score of 3, or an SAT Composite score of 1070 with a math score of 500, or an ACT composite score of 23 with a math score of 19, or an ASSET writing score of 6 (or 5 with an objective score of 40).

## SURVEY RESULTS

In this section of the report, the results from the teacher, counselor, volunteer, and student surveys are discussed. All of the surveys contained two types of questions. The first type utilized multiple responses in which respondents reacted to statements by marking strongly disagree, disagree, agree, or strongly agree. The surveys also contained open-ended questions that allowed respondents to write their answers in the spaces provided.

### Teacher Multiple-Response Survey Summary

Across the survey items in the fall and spring, teacher responses were very positive (Appendix B). Ninety percent of the teachers who responded to the survey indicated the APIE staff made them feel appreciated, and 95% reported they believed that the APIE programs made an overall positive difference for their students. All of the teacher respondents participating in APIE's PIR or PIL programs believed the study groups helped improve student reading skills. Ninety-five percent of the teacher respondents indicated they would like to participate again in the next school year and would recommend APIE programs to other teachers. The only question that had a mean rating of less than 3 was "My students come to school more often because of this program." This question received an average rating of 2.81.

### Open-Ended Survey Response Summary for APIE Teachers

Teachers who facilitated APIE tutoring programs in classrooms across the district were asked to complete open-ended prompts on their surveys. These responses also were examined to provide evidence that the program was implemented according to program expectations and to identify outcomes for students, teachers, and volunteers.

When asked if they would recommend this program to other teachers and volunteers, teachers overwhelmingly responded yes and provided reasons for recommending the program. They believed that the volunteers provided valuable instructional support in their classrooms and were thankful for the volunteers' contributions. One teacher said, "I like that people, outside of the education world, take the time to spend with my kids. It means a lot, even if it is not said enough!" The teachers also reported that many of their students were motivated to learn when working with their tutors and experienced increased levels of academic achievement as a result.

The teachers discussed the aspects of their APIE programs they *liked best*. The teachers were complimentary about the support provided APIE program staff and the quality of the volunteers provided. They appreciated the positive attitudes and enthusiasm brought into their classrooms by these individuals. They reported that the volunteers had a high level of expertise and provided real world connections to content areas as they worked with students. All of these factors combined, contributed to creating a positive learning environment for student learning. A few teachers' comments follow.

"I like having capable adults to help my students understand new concepts."

"The students love their reading buddies! They are all warm, caring individuals!"

"I liked the positive and warm learning environment that they provided for my students. The students feel very nurtured and cared for."

"The volunteers were excellent. They were well prepared for their work and patient with the students."

"I like the positive attitude that the volunteers have and the impact they are having on the students"

"Many things. The math coaches seem to bring out the best in my students ... The students seem to appreciate the time the math coaches devote to helping them."

Although their responses were overwhelming positive, the teachers also were asked to identify the aspects of their APIE programs they *liked least* and to provide recommendations for improvement. Most often, teachers reported that they needed more support materials and

resources for volunteers to use with students. They also wanted recommendations for activities that would enable them to use the volunteers more effectively in their classrooms. They were concerned about making the most of the volunteers' time and expertise in such a way that would benefit student learning.

Some teachers (about 12%) were concerned about the regular attendance of their volunteers. They described instances in which the volunteers were absent, altering student group membership or preventing groups from working together on those days. The teachers felt this caused disruption to the whole class and felt the learning environment was affected. Furthermore, the teachers described the importance of developing relationships between the tutors and students. They wanted to facilitate this process and believed regular volunteer attendance was critical for the development of relationships. The teachers recommended that the importance of regular attendance be discussed with potential tutors during the orientation and training processes. They encouraged the volunteers to let them know in a timely fashion when they could not attend a tutoring session, so the teachers could plan accordingly and communicate with students to avoid undue disappointment.

Acknowledging the orientation and training APIE staff provide when they recruit and place volunteers in classrooms, some teachers encouraged the continued development of teacher and volunteer training. Some suggested it would be beneficial for the teachers themselves to have more training about procedures for communicating with and effectively utilizing their volunteers. Teachers observed instances in which volunteers struggled to manage student behaviors and teachers requested ongoing training in this area. They also thought volunteers needed more strategies for engaging students in assigned activities, especially when volunteers work with groups of students with varying needs.

Teachers often mentioned the influence volunteers' contributions had on teachers and their students. Teachers talked about the positive connections with members of the community and how these connections provided important moral support needed by teachers. They believed the relationships between the students and volunteers improved student self-esteem and increased levels of student motivation to learn. They provided examples of how the tutoring experience positively influenced student academic outcomes. One teacher stated,

APIE has made a profound impact on my classroom and my opinions of what urban schools need more of. My students need more interactions with adults, conversations about education, and application of mathematics in jobs. If it weren't for the volunteers,



I would likely be the only person in their lives encouraging this. The fact that the volunteers just show up to spend time with my students proves that they care. I know my students appreciate it because they always ask if the volunteers will be coming each Wednesday.

Another teacher said,

Academically students have demonstrated an increase in their fluency rates [words per minute] and an increase in their sight word proficiencies. I see less decoding, and students are beginning to read longer phrases. Socially, students have been exposed to working with adults and their peers in a new learning environment. They have created bonds with the volunteers and developed a level of comfort that allows for positive schooling experiences.

In summary, the teachers were overwhelmingly positive about their participation in the APIE tutoring programs. The support provided by APIE staff and volunteers was perceived by teachers as being of high quality and supportive to both teachers and students. The teachers believed students were experiencing positive outcomes, personally and academically. When teachers identified areas for improvement, their feedback was constructive and given with the intention that the program continue to grow in their own schools and across the district.

### **Volunteer Multiple-Response Survey Summary**

Volunteer responses on the APIE program surveys also were overwhelmingly positive (Appendix C). The average scale response for all of the volunteer survey questions were above 3 indicating that the volunteers agreed or strongly agreed with the questions asked. When asked whether APIE staff made the volunteers feel appreciated, 100% of the volunteers agreed. Ninety-seven percent of the volunteers reported that they felt appreciated by the teachers as well. The question with the lowest average rating (3.18) was “Most of my students' attitudes about school have improved because of their participation in the study groups.” However, the average score indicated most volunteers (78%) agreed with this statement.

### **Open-Ended Survey Response Summary for APIE Volunteers**

As with teachers, the volunteers overwhelmingly responded yes when asked if they would recommend this program to other volunteers, and they provided reasons for their recommendations. First and foremost, the volunteers believed the program met student needs and had positive outcomes for students. Students were able to work with caring adults who served as role models when they worked together to learn in the classroom. The volunteers often spoke about the personal satisfaction they experienced when they worked with their

students throughout the school year. Many volunteers stressed the importance of supporting the children in the community. One volunteer wrote,

We are truly making a difference in the students' lives. It's especially satisfying for someone like me. Most of the students are exactly who I was when I was their age.

They are low-income minority students who don't always have role models. There is no greater reward in life than helping someone else to improve his or her life.

Others described the quality of the APIE programs. The volunteers also reported that the programs were well organized by cheerful and dedicated program staff. One person stated, "The organizational structure and communication is top-notch. APIE staff have a genuinely positive outlook on the program, students, and volunteer work."

In a few instances, volunteers were unsure about recommending the program. These volunteers stressed the importance of needing certain personal characteristics to work with the program. They emphasized the need for volunteers to have strong content knowledge and skills, patience to work with struggling learners, and flexibility to adapt in a dynamic environment.

The volunteers provided a plethora of comments related to the aspects of the APIE programs they *liked best*. Most importantly, the volunteers found their interaction with students to be the highlight of their experiences. They often described the students with whom they were working and the relationships built with those students. Their comments reflected a genuine love for children and concern about their well-being. The volunteers reported that students engaged in positive learning experiences and had improved academic outcomes. Some of their statements illustrate their feelings:

"I enjoy the interaction with my group of kids. They are so appreciative and loving, and I am sure they are improving in their reading skills I am hoping they will continue to love to read."

"I like getting to have a relationship with children. It becomes obvious they want to please you."

"I like working with the students and being able to observe their weekly growth. The development of that 'reading relationship' with them can be quite special."

"I enjoy working with the students and encouraging them. I love seeing their smiles and listening to them interact. They made me cards ...that brought tears to my eyes."

"I like seeing the kids' excitement and improvement. I feel they really look forward to seeing me, and I make sure I'll be there for them. It's nice to see the excitement on their faces when I come in and see how motivated they are to get started on the lessons."

“I liked to see the student’s improvement. I noticed students’ confidence and self-esteem as they built skills.”

Additionally, volunteers reported that the programs, APIE staff, and teachers were of high quality. They thought the programs were closely aligned with student needs. They acknowledged the APIE staff and the classroom teachers for their organization and dedication needed to effectively implement their programs. Many of the volunteers liked the small-group tutoring model used within the programs to work with struggling learners and described the groups as intimate, organized, easy to facilitate, and effective. They thought the consistent, weekly tutoring enabled them to help students improve their reading and math skills. For example, one volunteer stated, “I think the program is well organized and easy to facilitate. The communication is great by Partners in Reading staff.” Another wrote, “I liked the professional, committed, and knowledgeable volunteer coordinator; the talent and commitment of my classroom teacher to her students and her appreciation of the volunteers; and my Partners in Math team leader also was superb.”

Taking into consideration their articulated dedication and support, the volunteers also were asked to identify the aspects of their APIE programs they *liked least* and to provide recommendations for improvement. Most often, the volunteers requested that instructional materials used in tutoring situations be improved. They desired to have reading and mathematics materials that were more interesting to students, in hopes of being able to create excitement about learning and effectively engage students in learning activities. They also requested that they be provided with a greater variety of materials or activities to use with students to better meet individual instructional needs and to use in the event they found extra time to fill during their tutoring sessions. One volunteer recommended, “I’d like to see more interesting reading materials. You might want to have a lot of materials on-line... That way we could download the appropriate passages, puzzles, etc. for our students.” Another said, “I see disinterest in learning and lack of excitement with the material. I see the most engagement when the problems are interesting and applicable to real world issues that the students already think about, for example, cell phone plan comparisons, etc.”

Next, the volunteers provided many comments related to the structure and consistency of their student groups. Many thought that having the groups of four to five students were too difficult to manage and thought that groups consisting of two to three students would be ideal. Some volunteers also expressed the need to be more consistent with the student membership within their groups. They described instances in which they worked with different students

from week to week and believed they would be more effective working with the same group of students over a period of time. Overall, the volunteers were concerned about meeting the various individual instructional needs and spending too much time managing student behaviors.

The volunteers also indicated they would like to increase the amount of communication they have had with their classroom teachers. Some suggested that they attend training along with the teachers to which they are assigned. This joint training would ensure that both the teachers and the volunteers had a common vision for the students and would provide a forum for establishing ongoing communication about tutoring plans and student progress. Many of the volunteers wanted to have copies of curriculum materials, textbooks, and/ or teacher lesson plans before they arrive for tutoring. They believed advance preparation was critical to ensuring that students receive coherent instructional support. For example, one volunteer said, I think this is a great program. It allows the volunteers to make a positive influence in the lives of children in many ways. The APIE staff and my teacher have been excellent. They are supportive and make the volunteers feel very special and appreciated. It would be helpful to have some additional time at the beginning of the year to discuss the children's reading levels with the teacher, so that we could tailor the curriculum more.

Although the volunteers were complimentary about the training provided by APIE staff at the beginning of their tutoring experiences, they often found the classroom environment to be more complex than anticipated and described their struggles:

“There were excessive distractions for kids who are already very distractible in the best of circumstances. I spent a lot of time just trying to gain or re-gain their attention.”

“The students can be short on attention and a little wild.”

“There seemed to be too many groups containing pairs that distracted the entire group (boys and girls flirting, boys horsing around, etc.). It would be nice to know exactly what to do about behavior problems.”

“A few of my students are uninterested in math or appear tired and lay their heads on their desk the entire period. I don't know how to pique their interest.”

As a result, many suggested additional opportunities to talk with APIE staff or other volunteers about effective student management strategies and more support from teachers within the classrooms. In this effort to better manage students, the volunteers knew that they needed to improve their practices and also requested more training about using a variety of instructional strategies to engage and interest students. A few even requested training from curriculum experts, so they could be sure they were using the same instructional practices taught within

the classroom. For example, one volunteer said, “If you have volunteers in math who are not math teachers and are older than 30, you may want to give them tutoring. Math just isn’t taught the same!”

### **Student Multiple-Response Survey Summary**

The APIE survey results for student respondents also were positive (Appendix D). Most students (89%) thought the program was beneficial to them, with 79% of the students reporting their grades improved as a result of their participation. Eighty-four percent of the student respondents liked meeting with their volunteers, and 89% of the students were happy with the amount of time they worked with their volunteer each week. Sixty-four percent of the students reported their attitude had improved because of their study group participation. As with the teacher respondents, a lower percentage of students (46%) reported they came to school more often because of their volunteer.

### **Open Survey Response Summary for APIE Student Participants**

In the fall and spring, 327 students participating in the APIE programs responded to an open-ended question that asked them to identify what they liked best about the APIE volunteer(s) with whom they worked during the school year. Most of these students reported that the APIE volunteers helped them to learn and to improve their academic achievement. Many of the students indicated they were better able to complete their assignments when they had APIE volunteer assistance than when they did not, and they reported “understanding more” as a result of their interactions with APIE volunteers. Students also wrote positive comments about the personal attributes of the volunteers with whom they were working and about their relationships with the volunteers. They described the volunteers as being “cool,” “fun,” “understanding,” and “nice.” These same students often appreciated having an adult with whom they could talk about their personal concerns and interests. Only a couple of students made negative comments about the APIE volunteers. Examples of student comments include the following:

“Whenever I need help, they are always there to help me and make sure I understand what I was struggling with.”

“I had a really good time with my volunteer in math.”

“She is nice and helps me with my work. She understands me and listens.”

“It was exciting, cool, and awesome that I could work with someone else.”

Students participating in APIE programs also were asked what they would like to change about the time they spend with their volunteer or the APIE program in general. Most

of the students indicated they would not like to change anything about the time they spent with their volunteers or the APIE program in which they were participating. From those recommending changes, the most frequent request was to have the APIE volunteers come more often and/or spend longer periods of time in their classrooms. Others indicated a desire to be actively engaged in an enjoyable learning environment, and requested that the activities planned for their time with APIE volunteers be “more fun” and “more interesting.”

The respondents also indicated they wanted to improve student behaviors during the times they worked with APIE volunteers. Some students suggested that those who were disruptive be removed from their group, so everyone else could make the most of the time with the volunteers. A few students admitted to disrupting the learning environment and expressed regret. One student said, “In the beginning of school, I was acting like the clown joke. I was not paying attention to the volunteer ... now I feel bad about it.” Another student said, “I would like to change the times I talked, ‘cause I lost out on a little math that I could have learned.” Again, these student recommendations were appreciative and supportive of their participation in APIE tutoring.

When the students were asked to provide any other thoughts or comments related to the APIE programs, they often emphasized how much fun and how helpful their experiences had been throughout the school year. The students commented on how much they liked or admired their tutors. Some pointed out that the help they had received helped them to develop a greater understanding of the academic content that helped them pass their TAKS tests. Examples of their comments include the following:

“It helped me understand the math more, so that I passed my TAKS instead of failing it like last year.”

“It is very interesting ... I would recommend it to other students, so they can improve their reading. It could maybe give you better grades.”

“This program is great for people if they want to come in and spend time with us. We can learn things about them, and they can learn things about us. It is so great to have someone like you to come and see us. Thank you.”

“I really liked the activities and the volunteers were always so nice and helpful.”

#### **APIE PROGRAM OBSERVATIONS**

In the spring semester, APIE program and Austin ISD evaluation staff observed APIE volunteers working with students in classrooms. Of 82 classes identified by APIE staff as being supported regularly by program volunteers in the spring semester, 51 or 62% were

observed. During the observations, practices were described and ratings for volunteer attitude, volunteer engagement, and student engagement were assigned.

The format the APIE volunteers used to work with students varied across program strands, schools, and grade levels. Often, the volunteers were observed working in small group settings with three to five students. In some cases, volunteers worked with just one or two students. Sometimes, a couple of volunteers worked with small student groups within a classroom along side other student groups working without a volunteer or adult. In a couple of instances, the volunteers appeared to have no formal assignment to a student or group of students, and they were randomly assisting those in the classroom who had indicated that they needed help.

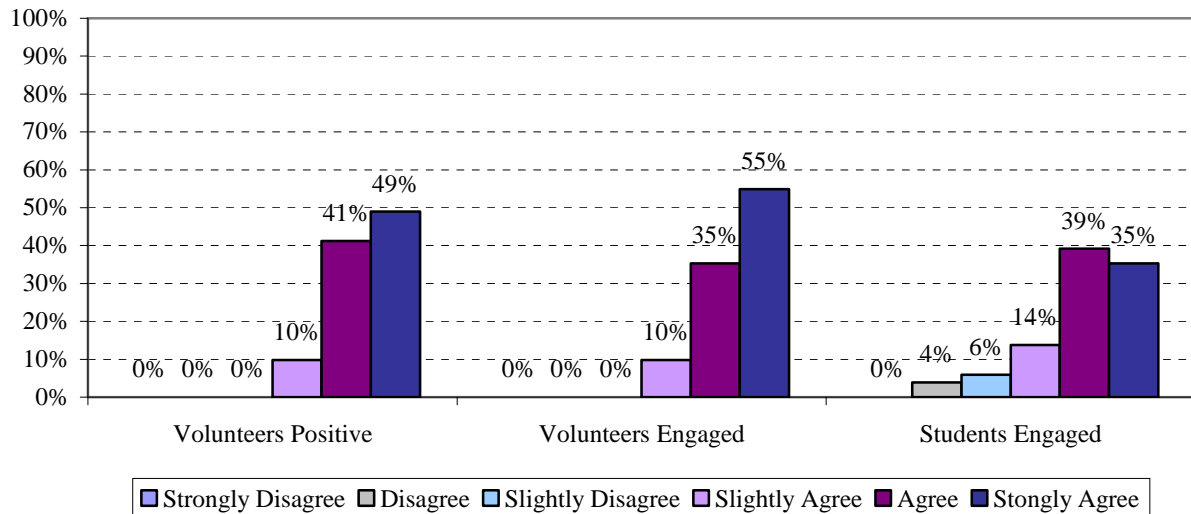
During the observations, the engagement levels of students and volunteers were examined (Figure 1). In most cases, the volunteers appeared highly engaged. The volunteers often provided instruction for students and encouragement throughout their activities together. At times, the volunteers redirected students' attention when the students were not on-task. Lower levels of volunteer engagement seemed to be a function of the instructional setting (e.g., when teachers provided instruction through a lecture format to all students in the classroom or times when the volunteers were not clearly assigned to help identified students).

Furthermore, most volunteers seemed to have positive demeanors during the tutoring sessions. Volunteers often provided encouraging comments pertaining to student efforts and praised students during the sessions for their efforts and accomplishments. For example, one volunteer enthusiastically told a student, "You are smart. I know you can do this!" When a student needed redirection, volunteers provided it in a clear and tactful manner.

The engagement levels of students working with APIE volunteers were slightly more variable across observations, compared with those of the volunteers. Observed student engagement levels were generally higher when the volunteer to student ratio was low compared with the engagement levels of groups with more than three students and/or when the students appeared to like the volunteer. Highly engaged students often exhibited pleasure while they worked with the volunteers, evidenced by smiles and laughter. Many students appeared to have established a working relationship with the volunteers; these students initiated and participated in conversations about their work and about themselves. At times, students could be distracted by others in the classroom or by events taking place within the school. In several

cases, students were not engaged and were not influenced by volunteer requests or attempts at redirection.

Figure 1: Classroom Observation Ratings for All APIE Programs, 2007-2008



Source. APIE observation records, Spring 2008

As mentioned previously, the teachers were observed while APIE volunteers worked with their students. Most often, the teachers provided direction for the groups and closely monitored the interactions throughout the tutoring sessions by circulating the room and answering questions. Sometimes these directions consisted of a short lesson followed by an assignment to be completed by the group, and at other times took the form of a prepared packet of materials with instructions for the volunteers. Teachers also were observed conducting their own tutoring groups while the volunteers worked with students. In these instances, teachers monitored the classroom in a less direct way.

Occasionally, teachers did not facilitate or monitor the volunteer-student interactions. These teachers were observed completing personal or administrative tasks or were not present in the classroom. In some instances, routines had been established previously, and the classroom functioned flawlessly without the teacher's close attention. More often, the lack of teacher engagement was observed in classrooms where student engagement was also lacking and volunteers were challenged to keep students on task.

Most of the time, teachers were expecting the volunteers and were well prepared. They arranged the desks or tables in classrooms, so the volunteers could work with small groups. Teachers often had packets ready for each volunteer that contained resources and student



materials needed for the day's lessons. These teachers clearly assigned students to groups or to a volunteer. Some teachers also provided nametags for the students and the volunteers. In a few cases, materials were not immediately available at the beginning of the class period or were not provided because the volunteers were expected to listen to the day's lecture. Sometimes, students brought their individual assignments and asked the volunteers for assistance to complete them.

Overall, the study group environment was conducive to learning. Most classrooms had sufficient space for groupings of students with additional adults and learning materials were provided. The noise levels varied depending on the tasks, with most described as a "low-level buzz". On occasion, the noise levels were observed as unusually high and distracting for students and volunteers alike.

## **DISCUSSION OF RESULTS**

To understand the results, consideration should be given to the practices of recruiting schools and recruiting teachers within schools participating in the APIE program, and to the processes of placing volunteers into classrooms. In many instances, teachers were self-selected, meaning that they requested APIE program support. In some instances, campus administrators, teachers, and APIE staff reviewed student data and strategically placed volunteers in classrooms that had critical teacher and student support needs. These practices resulted in APIE program staff and volunteers supporting classrooms in schools across the district that had very different characteristics. In fact, the program staff often placed tutors in high-needs classrooms to support students with critical needs. At other times, volunteers worked with students who were on the verge of meeting academic standards. Because of these differences, program outcomes were expected to vary.

Understanding the differing needs, APIE staff facilitated their programs in ways that would support the needs of students and their teachers. They provided training for APIE volunteers and recommendations to teachers for implementation. For example, APIE staff encouraged teachers to establish student study groups comprising three to five students and facilitated by APIE volunteers using instructional materials aligned with district curricula. However, these program implementation recommendations were tempered by APIE staff willingness to be flexible in the programs' implementation when teachers needed to modify the program delivery to better meet student needs. For example, some teachers assigned only one or two students to work with a volunteer, while others asked volunteers to circulate through the classroom and work with multiple students.

The degree to which the programs were consistently implemented according to APIE staff recommendations (e.g., for classroom-level modifications and participant attendance) was not documented consistently throughout the school year. Without this documentation, it was difficult to discern the levels of fidelity to the study group model. Additionally, the volunteers spent varying amounts of time with their students in single sessions (30 to 45 minutes), and student and volunteer attendance may have varied. These variations in program implementation may help explain the variation in APIE participant outcomes.

Overall, the academic outcomes for APIE participants varied across the programs when compared with their prior performance and with the performance of similar groups of students. For most of the programs, APIE participants performed as well or slightly better than did their

peers. In some instances, these differences were statistically significant, indicating that student participation in tutoring provided by APIE volunteers may have influenced their academic outcomes. However, LEP, economic disadvantage, and at-risk status were better predictors of whether students met TAKS passing standards than was APIE program participation.

The outcomes pertaining to APIE' College Readiness program were limited to descriptive summary. Because student participation records were not available, the evaluation could not determine whether high school student participation in tutoring provided by APIE volunteers influenced their outcomes on college readiness tests. An appropriate comparison group of students could not be ascertained, because APIE's College Readiness program was implemented in the highest performing high schools in the district; as indicated by student demographics; TAKS, SAT, and ACT scores; and postsecondary enrollment rates (Austin Independent School District and Garland, 2008).

Apart from the student academic outcomes, the survey results were remarkably positive. This may be an indication that most program participants perceived that their support needs were met by the APIE programs and staff. Participants indicated the support provided during the school year helped students personally and academically. They often reported that the learning environment became engaging and fun when students were able to work with APIE volunteers. These survey results should not be taken lightly, because research studies conducted within the district have found that the presence of a positive learning environment or school climate is an important predictor of student academic achievement (Schmitt, 2006).

Regardless of the ways the APIE programs were implemented and the associated student outcomes, it is important to recognize that APIE and campus staff identified ways they could effectively collaborate to maximize program resources and outreach for students. For example, APIE volunteers were placed in classrooms using the Read 180 program to address the needs of students who were reading well below grade level. APIE volunteers also collaborated with Project ADVANCE to support high school students preparing for college admissions tests.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

APIE has undertaken the mission of promoting effective community and school partnerships to assist all students in successfully preparing for college and future careers. Towards this end, APIE developed multiple programs assisting students at numerous grade levels and from different socioeconomic strata. Generally, program results were very promising. Program participants (teachers, volunteers, and students) felt supported by the programs, and students experienced positive outcomes. In a few cases, the positive outcomes may have been influenced by APIE program participation.

Program effectiveness can be increased with relatively minor changes in implementation. The following recommendations are provided for program staff consideration:

1. Continue to expand APIE volunteer recruitment and increase support in participating classrooms. APIE participants recommended that additional volunteers be placed in classrooms to reduce the study group size, thereby reducing the amount of student behavior management and providing more individualized assistance. Additionally, requests were made to increase the amount of time that the volunteers spent tutoring the students by having volunteers tutor in classrooms more than one time per week.
2. Provide additional or ongoing support for APIE volunteers and teachers. Both volunteers and teachers indicated they would like to have additional support during the school year to improve communication about student learning and to communicate expectations for program implementation within the classroom.
3. Rearticulate and align program goals, objectives, and success indicators in consideration of program participant characteristics. APIE programs served a number of students with differing needs, and did so to varying degrees. In some instances, the students with the most critical academic needs were served. In other instances, students who were very close to meeting the academic expectations of the district were assisted to meet those standards. The determination of success for these very different student groups should be clearly articulated, especially in cases for which all relevant program outcomes cannot be easily quantified.
4. Focus more on how APIE programs impact indirect influences on student achievement. Students and teachers emphasized the importance of the mentorship APIE volunteers provided. Students recognized that some adults were interested in their well-being. Teacher and students often reported the APIE volunteers' positive influence on student

attitudes about school and learning. These positive interactions could greatly contribute to a positive school climate that could, in turn, beneficially affect academic achievement.

5. Expand data collection to better describe program implementation and to better determine program participation results. The utilization of program participation records and the determination of the degree of program implementation in relation to an articulated standard would help describe the impact of APIE programs on students.



## **APPENDICES**

### Appendix A: Descriptive Statistics for APIE Participants and Comparison Students

	Number of classes	African American	Hispanic	White	Special ed	LEP	Econ. disadv.
PIM high school: APIE students (n=61)	5	21%	77%	*	13%	28%	97%
PIM high school: Comparison students (n=19)	2	*	74%	0%	*	*	100%
PIM middle school: APIE students (n=258)	13	13%	76%	11%	18%	28%	85%
PIM middle school: comparison Students (n=1,173)	68	11%	80%	8%	22%	33%	89%
PIR: APIE students (n=414)	28	24%	67%	7%	10%	21%	89%
PIR: Comparison students (n=418)	38	7%	91%	2%	7%	75%	96%
CEL: APIE students (n=181)	13	0%	100%	0%	*	98%	97%
PIL high school: APIE students (n=78)	3	17%	79%	*	*	18%	90%
PIL middle school: APIE Students (n=28)	28	*	86%	0%	0%	64%	96%

Source. AISD student demographic and enrollment files, 2007-2008

Notes: \* Excluded because counts are 5 or less



### Appendix B: Summary of Teacher Survey Responses, 2007-2008

Teacher survey responses	Mean	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
		4	3	2	1
The preparation I received from APIE prepared me well for this program.	3.32	41%	50%	9%	0%
I understand my role in this program.	3.48	52%	43%	5%	0%
The APIE staff have made me feel appreciated.	3.67	76%	14%	10%	0%
I am satisfied with the level of communication I have with APIE staff.	3.40	51%	38%	11%	0%
I am satisfied with the level of teacher-volunteer communication.	3.37	42%	53%	5%	0%
I feel supported by the volunteers.	3.43	52%	38%	10%	0%
I believe this program makes an overall positive difference for my students.	3.59	64%	31%	5%	0%
I believe my students have a deeper understanding of class material because of this program.	3.24	36%	52%	12%	0%
I believe that participating in the study group has helped students improve their grades / test scores.	3.27	37%	53%	10%	0%
Most of my students' attitudes about school have improved because of their participation in the study groups.	3.09	30%	49%	21%	0%
This program has made a positive impact on students' lives beyond their academic performance.	3.25	35%	55%	10%	0%
My students come to school more often because of this program.	2.81	23%	36%	42%	0%
Most of my students behave well during the study group sessions.	3.52	57%	38%	5%	0%
Most of my students participate actively in their group.	3.18	37%	49%	12%	3%
Most of my volunteers attended every week.	3.12	31%	51%	18%	0%
I enjoy participating in this Partners in Education program each week.	3.65	70%	25%	5%	0%
The materials provided were appropriate for my students.	3.38	42%	54%	4%	0%

<b>Teacher survey responses</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Strongly agree 4</b>	<b>Agree 3</b>	<b>Disagree 2</b>	<b>Strongly disagree 1</b>
<b>The materials provided were interesting to my students.</b>	3.21	25%	71%	4%	0%
<b>I will continue participating in this program next school year.</b>	3.68	74%	21%	5%	0%
<b>I would recommend this program to others.</b>	3.60	69%	26%	3%	3%
<b>I believe that participating in the study group has helped my students improve their reading skills.</b>	3.00	0%	100%	0%	0%
<b>The poetry activity is beneficial to my students.</b>	4.00	100%	0%	0%	0%
<b>The Word Wave activity is beneficial to my students.</b>	4.00	100%	0%	0%	0%
<b>The timed reading passages activity is beneficial to my students.</b>	4.00	100%	0%	0%	0%
<b>Students are improving their fluency as a result of the volunteers.</b>	4.00	100%	0%	0%	0%
<b>I believe that participating in the study group has helped my students improve their reading skills.</b>	4.00	100%	0%	0%	0%
<b>The poetry activity is beneficial to my students.</b>	3.33	33%	67%	0%	0%
<b>The Olas de palabras activity is beneficial to my students.</b>	3.67	67%	33%	0%	0%
<b>The timed reading passages activity is beneficial to my students.</b>	3.00	33%	33%	33%	0%
<b>Students are improving their fluency as a result of the volunteers.</b>	3.00	0%	100%	0%	0%
<b>I believe that participating in the study group has helped my students improve their reading skills.</b>	3.50	50%	50%	0%	0%

### Appendix C: Summary of Volunteer Survey Responses, 2007-2008

Volunteer survey responses	Mean	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
		4	3	2	1
The preparation I received from APIE prepared me well for this program.	3.25	23%	70%	7%	0%
I understand my role in this program.	3.37	37%	61%	2%	0%
The APIE staff have made me feel appreciated.	3.61	61%	39%	0%	0%
I am satisfied with the level of communication I have with APIE staff.	3.48	47%	50%	3%	1%
I am satisfied with the level of teacher-volunteer communication.	3.38	32%	53%	13%	2%
The teacher makes me feel welcomed and appreciated.	3.56	54%	43%	2%	2%
I believe this program makes an overall positive difference for my students.	3.39	38%	58%	5%	0%
I believe my students have a deeper understanding of class material because of this program.	3.26	22%	63%	15%	0%
Most of my students' attitudes about school have improved because of their participation in the study groups.	3.18	14%	64%	22%	0%
This program has made a positive impact on students' lives beyond their academic performance.	3.32	29%	60%	12%	0%
Most of my students behave well during the study group sessions.	3.22	17%	59%	22%	4%
Most of my students participate actively in their group.	3.22	17%	59%	23%	1%
I attended every week.	3.38	29%	48%	23%	0%
I enjoy participating in this Partners in Education program each week.	3.55	52%	43%	5%	0%
The materials provided were appropriate for my students.	3.28	24%	61%	13%	2%
The materials provided were interesting to my students.	3.23	17%	55%	28%	1%
I will continue participating in this program next school year.	3.46	36%	43%	20%	1%

<b>Volunteer survey responses</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Strongly agree 4</b>	<b>Agree 3</b>	<b>Disagree 2</b>	<b>Strongly disagree 1</b>
<b>I would recommend this program to others.</b>	3.49	48%	50%	2%	0%
<b>Having lesson plans in advance makes me a more effective volunteer.</b>	3.56	54%	42%	4%	0%
<b>Having lesson plans in advance makes me a more effective volunteer.</b>	3.36	31%	54%	15%	0%
<b>I believe that participating in the study group has helped my students improve their reading skills.</b>	3.00	8%	75%	17%	0%
<b>The poetry activity is beneficial to my students.</b>	3.30	27%	63%	8%	0%
<b>The Word Wave activity is beneficial to my students.</b>	3.37	31%	53%	14%	1%
<b>The timed reading passages activity is beneficial to my students.</b>	3.26	19%	53%	19%	3%
<b>Students are improving their fluency as a result of the volunteers.</b>	3.30	29%	67%	4%	0%
<b>I believe that participating in the study group has helped my students improve their reading skills.</b>	3.39	38%	59%	3%	0%
<b>The poetry activity is beneficial to my students.</b>	3.72	72%	28%	0%	0%
<b>The Olas de palabras activity is beneficial to my students.</b>	3.47	42%	47%	11%	0%
<b>The timed reading passages activity is beneficial to my students.</b>	3.53	42%	37%	11%	5%
<b>Students are improving their fluency as a result of the volunteers.</b>	3.42	42%	58%	0%	0%
<b>I believe that participating in the study group has helped my students improve their reading skills.</b>	3.56	56%	44%	0%	0%

### Appendix D: Summary of Student Survey Responses, 2007-2008

Student survey responses	Mean	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
		4	3	2	1
I am happy with the amount I see and talk with my volunteer.	3.20	34%	55%	9%	3%
I think this program is good for me.	3.27	42%	47%	7%	4%
I usually participate in my study group.	3.15	31%	56%	10%	3%
I usually behave well during my study group sessions.	3.26	40%	50%	7%	4%
I believe that participating in my study group has helped me to improve my grades.	3.10	35%	44%	16%	5%
I like math (reading).	2.70	26%	37%	19%	18%
My attitude about school has improved because of participating in my study group.	2.76	20%	44%	28%	8%
I think that my study group is important.	3.10	32%	49%	15%	4%
Having a volunteer work with me to help me with my school work is important to me.	3.12	35%	47%	15%	4%
I talk to my volunteer about things that are important to me.	2.61	21%	32%	34%	13%
I come to school more often this year because of my volunteer.	2.43	15%	31%	35%	19%
My volunteer comes every week.	2.88	26%	43%	24%	7%
I like meeting with my volunteer.	3.16	36%	48%	11%	5%
I am earning better grades in class because of my volunteer.	2.92	25%	47%	23%	5%
My volunteer helps me with my schoolwork.	3.01	28%	51%	16%	5%
I like the activities in my group.	3.02	30%	47%	19%	4%
My study group exercises are interesting.	2.91	22%	51%	22%	5%
I would recommend this program to others.	3.20	37%	50%	9%	4%

**Appendix E: Checklist for APIE Program Visitation**

Program Visitation Survey

Day, date, time \_\_\_\_\_ School \_\_\_\_\_  
 Teacher \_\_\_\_\_  
 Program \_\_\_\_\_  
 #Students \_\_\_\_\_  
 #Volunteers \_\_\_\_\_ Student/Volunteer Ratio: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Were the volunteers on time? \_\_\_\_\_ Do you know who was absent? \_\_\_\_\_

1. Rate each of the following from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
Volunteers appeared positive about experience. (Smiling, using positive reinforcement, etc.)						
Volunteers were engaged with their groups.						
Students were engaged and on task.						

2. Comment on student and volunteer engagement:

3. What was the teacher doing during the session?

4. Comment on how the teacher thanked or had the students thank the volunteers:

5. Comment on the teacher and students readiness for the volunteers:

6. Comment on the logistics (space, materials, noise level, etc.)

7. Notes:

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