

State Compensatory Education Program: 2014-2015

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At-a-Glance

Compensatory education is defined in law as programs and/or services designed to supplement the regular education program with compensatory, intensive, and/or accelerated instruction for students identified as at risk of dropping out of school (At-Risk). The purpose of the State Compensatory Education (SCE) program is to increase academic achievement and reduce the dropout rate of At-Risk students. The goal is to reduce disparities between At-Risk and all other students in (a) performance on state-mandated assessments and (b) rates of high school completion.

Texas Education Code (TEC) §29.081 defines state criteria for identifying At-Risk students.¹ Students who meet any of the criteria are to be reported through the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) in the fall of each school year. Among the 13 criteria are students who are limited English proficient, students who failed a state assessment, or students who were retained. The district is required to submit the district improvement plan, two campus improvement plans, and the local evaluation of state compensatory education strategies, activities and programs to the Texas Education Agency (TEA) annually.

The scope of the evaluation includes the program context, implementation, and results of the SCE Program 2014-15. It examined and summarized how SCE direct cost funds were used for supplemental services and programs, as described in district and campus improvement plans and in budget allocations and expenditures.² The report also described the characteristics of the At-Risk student population, and examined how their STAAR performance, graduation rate, and dropout rate compared to their Not-At-Risk peers.³

Student Demographics

In school year 2014-2015, the district's Texas Academic Performance Report (TAPR) reported a total of 109,486 students identified as At-Risk, representing 68.4 percent of the district's grades EC-12 enrollment (N=160,148). As shown in Figure 1, the percentage of At-Risk students decreased in 2011-12 and 2012-13,

but increased in 2013-14 and 2014-15. Similar trends were noted in other large districts and for the state as a whole, and are most likely attributable to the transition from TAKS to STAAR as the state's assessment system.

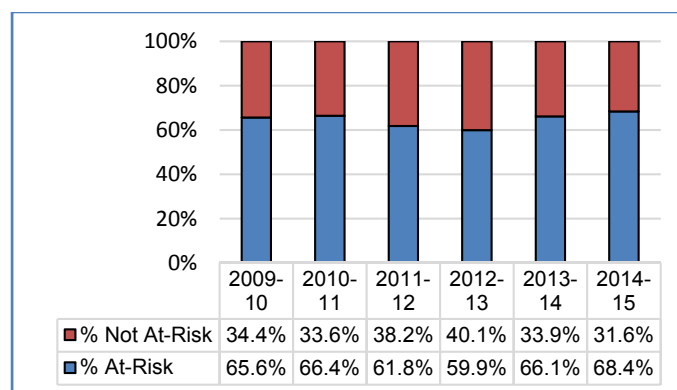


Figure 1. District student population by At-Risk status, 2009-10 through 2014-15.

Table 1 presents the demographic composition of the At-Risk student population.⁴ Compared to the district's overall student population, larger percentages of At-Risk students were male, Hispanic, and of Limited English Proficiency (LEP).

Table 1
At-Risk Student Demographic Characteristics, 2014-2015

Subgroup	District		At-Risk	
	N	Percent	N	Percent
Gender				
Male	81,059	51.1%	54,090	52.3%
Female	77,545	48.9%	50,061	47.4%
Ethnicity				
Hisp./Lat.	111,437	70.8%	82,761	80.0%
Afr. Am.	35,884	22.6%	16,944	16.4%
White	7,617	4.8%	1,810	1.8%
Other ⁵	3,666	2.3%	1,908	1.8%
Eng. Prof.				
Non-LEP	90,585	57.1%	35,404	34.2%
LEP	68,019	42.9%	68,019	65.8%
Total	158,604	100.0%	103,423	100.0%

¹ Texas Education Code (TEC) §29.081, available at <http://www.statutes.legis.state.tx.us/SOTWDocs/ED/htm/ED.29.htm#29.081>

² Budget and expenditures information provided by Dallas ISD Budget Services.

³ The report summarized the performance results of At-Risk and Not-At-Risk students; it did not link student performance to specific programs or services.

⁴ Data were obtained from the district's fall PEIMS snapshot submission, so do not correspond exactly with those reported in the TAPR.

⁵ 'Other' includes Asian, American Indian or Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, Two or More Races, and Not Available.

The most common At-Risk indicators for Dallas ISD students in 2014-15 were Limited English Proficiency (63.8% of At-Risk students), failure of state assessments (51.1%), and previously retained in one or more grades (18.9%). All other indicators each applied to 10% or fewer of At-Risk students.

SCE Programs/Services

The primary records supporting SCE program expenditures are the district and campus improvement plans, which are required by state law. The program/services must be described in DIP if the program is implemented districtwide, or in CIP if implemented at the campus level.

District Improvement Plan. The District Improvement Plan (DIP) 2014-2015 was reviewed for SCE components. All SCE required components were present in greater detail in the 2014-2015 DIP than in the previous year. The DIP contained relatively broad statements regarding strategies and activities targeting At-Risk students, with detailed plans to be developed at the campus level.

Campus Improvement Plans. A review of 16 Campus Action Plans showed that all schools reviewed conducted a needs assessment as required, and set achievement targets aligned with the campus needs assessments. The most frequent programs and services identified at the campus level for At-Risk students were tutoring, including after-school, school-day, and Saturday School programs; intervention courses; and online study programs offered through school computer labs. The majority of the plans (10 of 16) contained at least partial accounting of the use of SCE funds at the campus level.

SCE Budget and Expenditures

The 2014-2015 SCE allocation for Dallas ISD was \$165,152,695. The Direct Cost requirement was 52%, or \$85,879,401. The district budgeted \$95,608,501 to support programs/services for At-Risk students (Table 2). Actual expenditures totaled \$90,143,745.

Table 2
Summary of SCE 2014-15 Funding and Budget

Description	Amount
SCE 2014-15 Allocation received	\$ 165,152,695
Required Min. Direct Cost (52%)	\$ 85,879,401
PIC 24 (Accelerated Education)	\$ 7,689,969
PIC 26 (AEP Basic Services)	\$ 2,715,299
PIC 28 (DAEP Basic Services)	\$ 3,676,993
PIC 29 (DAEP SCE Costs)	\$ 14,230
PIC 30 (Title I, Part A)	\$ 54,835,116
PIC 34 (Prekindergarten)	\$ 26,676,894
Total SCE Direct Cost Budget	\$ 95,608,501

Figures 2 through 4 show expenditures by SCE Major Function, Object, and Program Intent Codes. The major expenditures were Instruction & Instruction Related Services (85%), Payroll Costs (98%), and Title I, Part A Schoolwide Activities (61%).

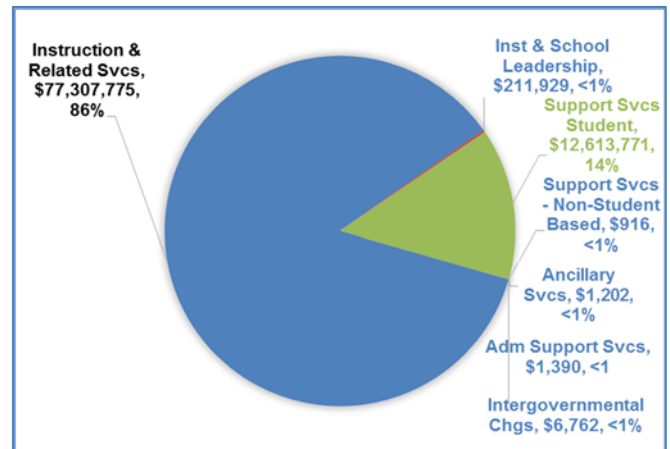


Figure 2. SCE 2014-15 expenditures by Major Function.

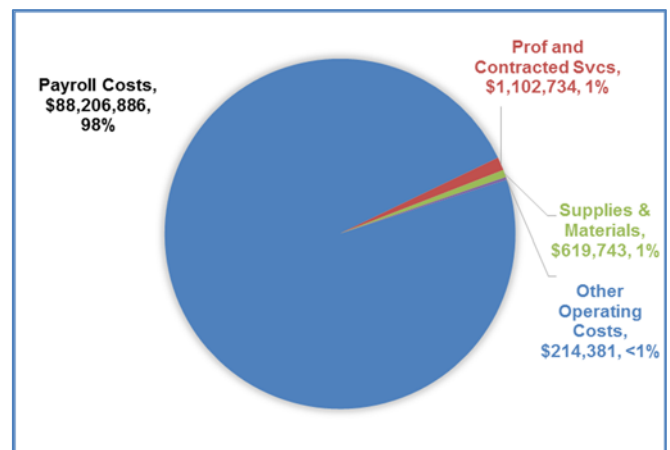


Figure 3. SCE 2014-15 expenditures by Object.

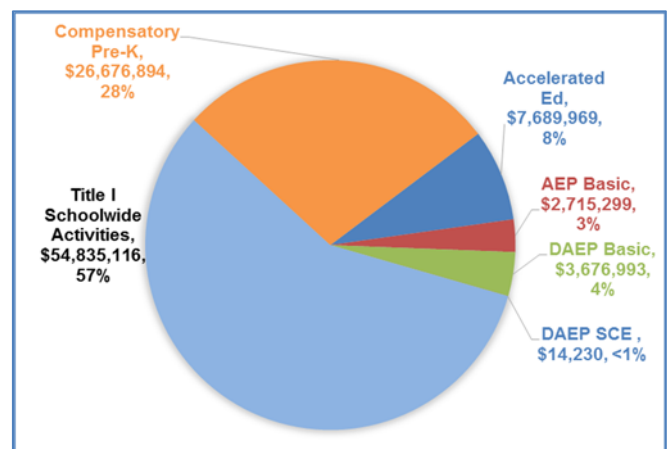


Figure 4. SCE 2014-15 expenditures by PIC.

The district funded 1647.75 Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs) with SCE funds and filled 1,463.46 (Table 3). Most FTEs were core content teachers at elementary and secondary campuses or Prekindergarten teachers and teacher assistants.

Table 3
SCE 2014-2015 Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs)

Organization Type	Funded	Filled
Campus K-12	948.00	815.80
Campus Pre-K	666.75	610.75
Campus Total	1,614.25	1,426.55
Central Organizations	33.00	36.91
Total	1,647.75	1,463.46

Table 4
SCE 2014-2015 Filled Positions by PIC

Program Intent Code (PIC)	Campus	Central
24 Accelerated Education	6.00	30.00
26 Non-Disciplinary Alt. Ed. Pgm - Basic	30.00	1.00
28 Disciplinary Alt. Ed. Pgm. - DAEP	51.00	
30 Title I, Part A Schoolwide Activities	728.80	4.91
32 Prekindergarten	610.75	1.00
Total	1,426.55	36.91

STAAR Passing Rates

At-Risk students had lower passing rates than Not-At-Risk students on STAAR and STAAR EOC tests in 2015 (Table 5). Performance gaps between At-Risk and Not-At-Risk students were calculated for 2014 and 2015, as well as the increase or decrease (point change) in the gap from the prior year.

Subject	Grade	Percent Passing		Gap	Point Change
		At-Risk	Not-At-Risk		
Reading	3	57	85	-28	0
	4	53	84	-31	-1
	5	74	95	-21	2
	6	49	90	-41	5
	7	45	90	-45	0
	8	68	97	-29	5
English I		51	90	-39	-7
English II		48	91	-43	-4
Mathematics	3	61	85	-24	-1
	4	54	84	-30	0
	5	61	90	-29	11
	6	53	86	-33	1
	7	38	76	-38	-8
	8	55	92	-37	12
Algebra I		63	94	-31	0
Science	5	49	87	-38	3
	8	46	93	-47	4
Biology		82	98	-16	-3
Social Studies	8	37	84	-51	6
U.S. History		84	98	-14	4
Writing	4	56	84	-28	0
	7	44	90	-49	-3

From 2014 to 2015, the gap decreased on 4 of 17 STAAR tests in Grades 3-8, remained the same on 4, and increased on 9. For EOC tested courses, the gap in English I, English II, and Biology performance decreased, while the gap in U.S History performance increased and the gap in Algebra 1 performance remained the same.

Graduation/Completion Rates

Figures 7 and 8 show longitudinal graduation and dropout rates for the cohorts of Class of 2008 through Class of 2015 by At-Risk status. Graduation rates of At-Risk students were lower in all years than those of Not-At-Risk students. Nevertheless, graduation rates of At-Risk students have steadily increased since 2008. The gap decreased markedly for the Class of 2015, with an increase in the graduation rate of At-Risk students of nearly seven percentage points.

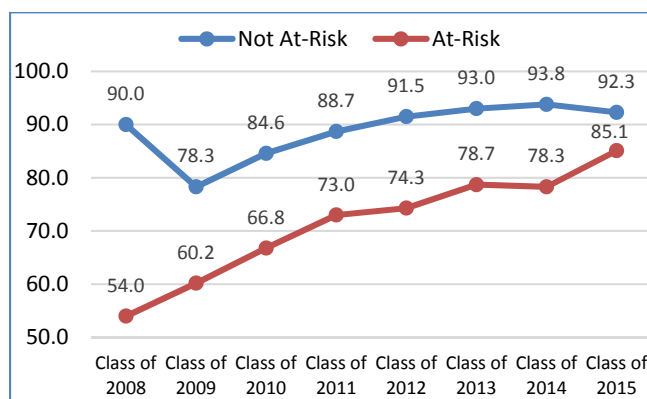


Figure 7. Graduation rates by cohort and At-Risk status.

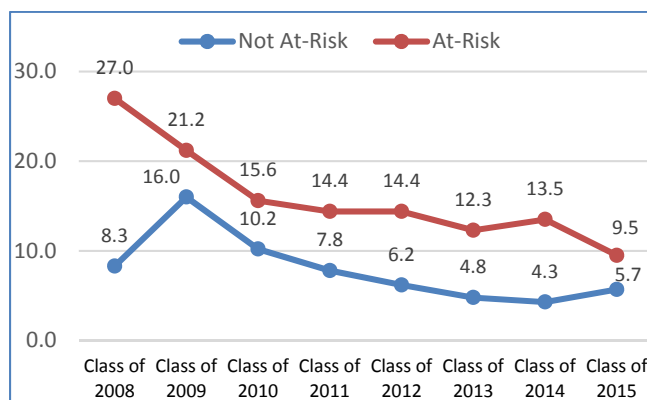


Figure 8. Dropout rates by cohort and At-Risk status.

Figure 8 shows a gradual decrease in the dropout rates of both At-Risk and Not-At-Risk students from the Class of 2008 to the Class of 2013. For the class of 2015, the dropout rate of Not-At-Risk students increased, while that of At-Risk students decreased, resulting in a narrowing of the gap for the latest cohort. As with other measures, it is difficult to distinguish effects of district programs from effects of changes in the state accountability system, which have affected both the composition of the At-Risk student population and academic outcomes of all students.

Recommendations

Available SCE funds should be focused on providing more direct and well-documented services to At-Risk students.⁶ The goal of the SCE Program is to reduce disparities in academic performance and high school completion between At-Risk and Not-At-Risk students. In practice, however, SCE appears to be addressed primarily as a compliance program rather than a strategic instructional program. SCE funds seemed to be used most extensively as an additional resource for increasing teacher and staff positions.

Beginning in 2014-2015, new legislation passed in House Bill 5 mandates districts to budget and prioritize SCE funding to support accelerated instruction each time a student fails to pass an EOC assessment.⁷ The bill also prohibits use of the funds for any other purpose until the district adopts a budget to support AI. For 2015-2016, SCE funds have been directed to support more specific use of the Reconnection Centers program for the required purpose, replacing its prior function as a general credit recovery program. At the other end of the grade sequence, there is increased district and state emphasis on Early Childhood education, particularly Prekindergarten programs. Thus, it is recommended that the district pay close attention to the effective use of potentially more limited SCE funds for grades 1-8.

Campus Improvement Plans should include more specific strategies and activities delivering direct services to At-Risk students. The majority of SCE funds were budgeted and spent at the campus level. Explicit strategies should be aligned to the particular profile of At-Risk students at each campus and the reasons for their At-Risk classification (e.g., achievement, LEP status, prior grade retention, etc.).

Evaluation of campus-based programs would be valuable to identify best-practice programs that could be duplicated across schools with similar At-Risk populations, in contrast to current fragmentation and inconsistency in program offerings. It is recommended that the 2015-2016 evaluation should compare differences in At-Risk and Not-At-Risk graduation rates at comprehensive high school campuses, and an initial study be conducted to identify programs and practices that may contribute to improved performance.

The existing student records system should be expanded to track student participation in specific programs and services. Documenting and tracking student program participation will allow more accurate,

thorough, and informative evaluation of the impact of these programs on the academic performance and high school completion of At-Risk students.

The Workscape submission requirement should be reinstated to provide improved documentation of the use of SCE funds by central organizations. In school years 2011-2012 and 2012-2013, central organizations that received SCE funds were required to submit Project Workscopes to the district's Budget Services department. That requirement was discontinued in 2013-2014. Reinstatement of this requirement would facilitate evaluation of services and activities supported by central SCE expenditures.

The district should designate a full-time manager for the SCE program. In 2014-15, the program had more than \$79.3 million available in indirect cost allocations, intended primarily to defray program administrative costs, and a total budget of approximately \$165 million. Using indirect cost funds, the district should well be able to meet the expense of a designated manager to oversee program implementation and data collection, and also to fund evaluation services necessary to assess program effectiveness. Responsibilities of the manager would include, but be not limited to:

- Familiarity with SCE program requirements and the TEA *Financial Accountability System Resource Guide (FASRG)*.⁸
- Access to current information and requirement updates for SCE from the annual Association of Compensatory Educators of Texas (ACET) conference.
- Oversight of the intent, purposes, and requirements of the SCE program, including compliance with budget allocation and expenditure requirements.
- Knowledge of effective interventions sufficient to provide assistance in selecting appropriate services and programs to meet At-Risk student needs.
- Responsibility and authority to coordinate all aspects of the SCE program.
- Maintenance and provision of required documentation at the central level.
- Monitoring of implementation and student performance, and recommending funding changes for programs and services not effectively meeting student needs.
- Reporting of program results to appropriate administrative levels.

For more information, see EA16-301-2, available at <http://www.dallasisd.org/Page/888>.

⁶ "The purpose of the SCE program is to improve student performance through direct instructional services to students at risk of dropping out of school. The more removed services are from the student, the more the resources are diluted and the more difficult it becomes for the school district to defend the use of the SCE funds and justify the effectiveness of the program in improving student performance." (ACET, 2012)

⁷ House Bill 5, 83rd Legislative Session, added new TEC §28.0217 and amended TEC §29.081.

⁸ TEA *Financial Accountability System Resource Guide (FASRG)* is available at <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/index4.aspx?id=1222>