

2015-16 Evaluation of the State Compensatory Education Program

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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.

State criteria for identifying At-Risk students are defined by Texas Education Code (TEC) §29.081. 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 limited English proficiency, failure of a state assessment, and retention in grade. 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 2015-16. It outlines 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. The report also describes the characteristics of At-Risk students in Dallas ISD, and examines how their assessment performance, graduation rate, and dropout rate compared to their Not-At-Risk peers.

Student Demographics

In school year 2015-16, the district's Texas Academic Performance Report (TAPR) reported a total of 103,370 students identified as At-Risk, representing 65.2 percent of the district's grades EC-12 enrollment (N=158,495). As shown in Figure 1, the percentage of At-Risk students has ranged from approximately 60 to 68 percent in recent years. Similar fluctuations were noted in other large districts and for the state as a

whole, and were at least partially attributable to changes in the state's assessment system.

Figure 1: District Student Population by At-Risk Status

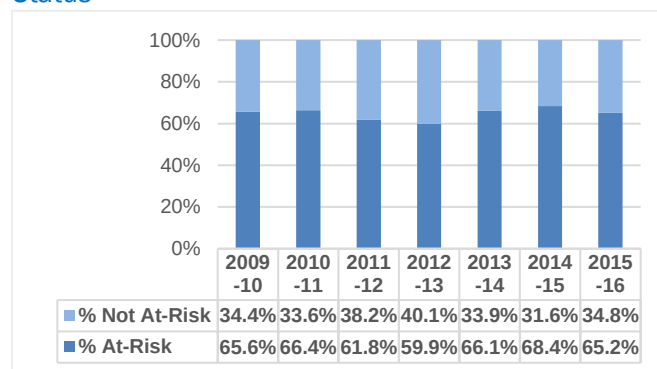


Table 1 presents the demographic composition of the At-Risk student population in 2015-16.¹ Compared to the district's overall student population, larger percentages of At-Risk students were male, Hispanic, and of limited English proficiency (LEP).

Table 1: Student Demographic Characteristics

Subgroup	District		At-Risk	
	N	Percent	N	Percent
Gender				
Male	81,059	51.1%	54,090	52.3%
Female	77,545	48.9%	49,333	47.7%
Ethnicity				
Hisp./Lat.	111,437	70.3%	82,761	80.0%
Afr. Am.	35,884	22.6%	16,944	16.4%
White	7,617	4.8%	1,810	1.8%
Other ²	3,666	2.3%	1,908	1.8%
English Proficiency				
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%

SCE Programs and Services

The primary records supporting SCE program expenditures are the district and campus improvement plans, which are required by state law. The funded program/services must be described in the District Improvement Plan (DIP) if the program is implemented

¹ Data were obtained from the district's fall PEIMS snapshot submission, so do not correspond exactly with those reported in the TAPR.

² 'Other' includes Asian, American Indian or Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, Two or More Races, and Not Available.

districtwide, or in Campus Improvement Plans (CIPs) if implemented at the campus level.

District Improvement Plan

The DIP 2015-16 was reviewed for SCE components. All SCE required components were present in the DIP. 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 20 CIPs (five comprehensive high schools, five middle schools, and ten elementary schools) showed that all schools reviewed conducted a needs assessment as required, and set achievement targets aligned with the campus needs assessments. The percentage of At-Risk students at the sampled schools ranged from 58 to 86 percent. Therefore, strategies aimed at improving achievement schoolwide were by necessity aimed primarily at At-Risk students. One promising trend seen across schools was a decreased reliance on tutoring and remediation as a primary means of providing assistance to struggling students. While tutoring was still widely offered, greater emphasis was placed on good first instruction and strategies such as small-group, tiered instruction, and blended learning, along with increased use of data for progress monitoring and identification of individual students' strengths and weaknesses.

SCE Budget and Expenditures

The district received an SCE program allotment of \$170,961,500 from the state. The minimum direct cost requirement was 52 percent for the 2015-16 school year, or \$88,899,980 (Table 2). The district budgeted \$100,922,295 to support programs/services for At-Risk students, and actual expenditures totaled \$93,834,680.

Table 2: 2015-16 SCE Funding and Budget

Description	Amount
SCE 2015-16 Allocation received	\$ 170,961,500
Required Min. Direct Cost (52%)	\$ 88,899,980
PIC 24 (Accelerated Education)	\$ 13,318,172
PIC 26 (AEP Basic Services)	\$ 3,378,345
PIC 28 (DAEP Basic Services)	\$ 3,749,575
PIC 29 (DAEP SCE Costs)	\$ 14,230
PIC 30 (Title I, Part A)	\$ 50,169,236
PIC 34 (Prekindergarten)	\$ 30,292,737
Total SCE Direct Cost Budget	\$ 100,922,295

Figures 2 through 4 show expenditures by SCE Major Function, Object, and Program Intent Codes. The major expenditures were Instruction & Instruction Related Services (84%), Payroll Costs (98%), and Title I, Part A Schoolwide Activities (52%).

Figure 2: SCE 2015-16 Expenditures by Function

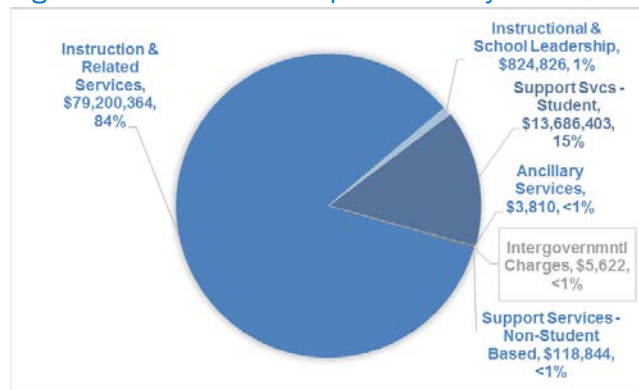


Figure 3: SCE 2015-16 Expenditures by Object

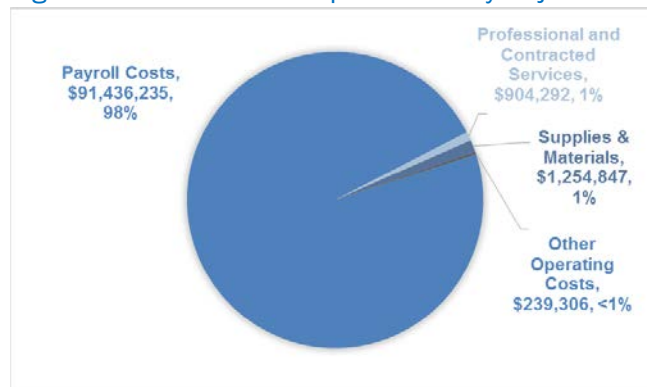
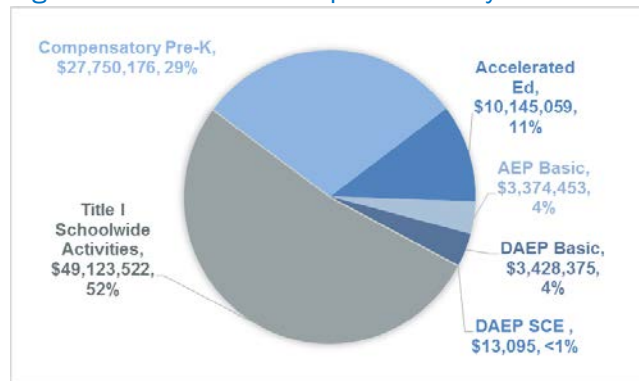


Figure 4: SCE 2015-16 Expenditures by PIC



In 2015-16, the district funded 1618.5 Full-Time Equivalent (FTEs) positions with SCE funds and filled 1,455.35 (Table 3). Most FTEs under PIC 30 were core content teachers at elementary and secondary campuses (Table 4). All PIC 34 (Compensatory Prekindergarten) positions were teachers or teacher assistants.

Table 3: 2015-16 SCE Full-Time Equivalents

Organization Type	Funded	Filled
Campus K-12	833.50	713.27
Campus Pre-K	673.50	626.00
Campus Total	1,507.00	1,339.27
Central Organizations	111.50	116.08
Total	1,618.50	1,455.35

Table 4: 2015-16 SCE Filled Positions by PIC

Program Intent Code (PIC)	Campus	Central
24 Accelerated Education	9.00	62.50
26 Non-Disciplinary Alt. Ed. Pgm	42.30	0
28 Disciplinary Alt. Ed. Pgm.-DAEP	50.00	0
30 Title I, Part A Schoolwide Activities	611.97	18.58
32 Prekindergarten	626.00	35.00
Total	1,339.27	116.08

STAAR 3-8 and EOC Passing Rates

Passing rates of At-Risk students on the *State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness 3-8 (STAAR 3-8)* and *STAAR End-of-Course (STAAR EOC)* tests were lower than those of Not-At-Risk students across all subjects (Table 14). From 2015 to 2016, the performance gap between At-Risk and Not-At-Risk students decreased on the majority of STAAR 3-8 tests. For EOC tested courses, the gap in English I, English II, and Biology performance increased, while the gap in Algebra 1 and U.S. History performance decreased.

Table 5: STAAR Passing Rates and Performance Gaps

Subject	Grade	Percent Passing		Point Gap	Point Change
		At-Risk	Not-At-Risk		
Reading	3	58	76	-18	-10
	4	54	89	-35	4
	5	69	96	-27	6
	6	43	89	-46	5
	7	46	90	-44	-1
English I	8	71	98	-27	-2
		46	92	-46	7
English II		43	91	-48	5
Mathematics	3	62	78	-16	-8
	4	57	86	-29	-1
	5	76	97	-21	-8
	6	52	90	-38	5
	7	39	78	-39	1
Algebra I	8	66	93	-27	-10
		65	95	-30	-1
Science	5	60	93	-33	-5
	8	55	92	-37	-10
Biology		76	98	-22	6
Soc. Studies	8	42	88	-46	-5
U.S. History		86	99	-13	-1
Writing	4	58	85	-27	-1
	7	41	89	-48	2

Graduation and Dropout Rates

The 2016 longitudinal graduation rate for At-Risk students was lower than for Not-At-Risk students, and showed a slight decrease from the 2015 rate (Figure 5). The dropout rate for At-Risk students increased from the 2015 cohort rate (Figure 6). Nevertheless, long-term trends remained encouraging. The dropout rate of At-Risk students in the Class of 2016 was less than half of that reported for the Class of 2009, and the graduation rate improved from 54 percent of At-Risk students to more than 80 percent across the same time period. However, because no tracking system exists to link student performance to program services, no particular SCE programs or services could be associated with the changes. A further challenge continues in disentangling the effects of changes in state testing requirements from the effects of programs and services at the district level.

Figure 5: Graduation Rates by Cohort and At-Risk Status

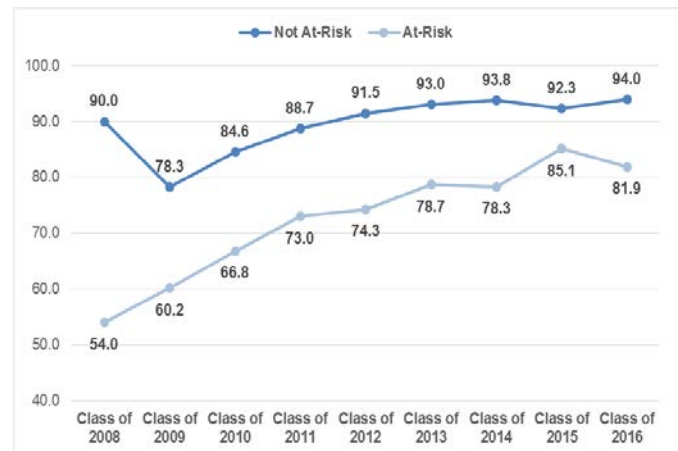
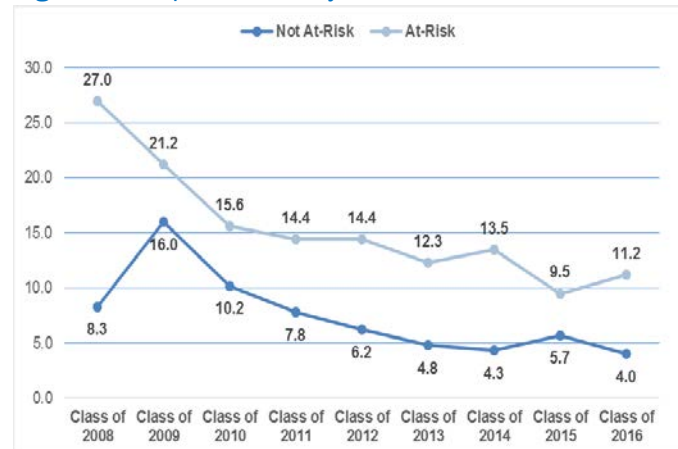


Figure 6. Dropout Rates by Cohort and At-Risk Status



Recommendations

- **Available SCE funds should be focused on providing more direct services to At-Risk students.**³ Beginning in 2014-15, new legislation passed in House Bill 5 mandated that districts are required to separately budget and prioritize SCE funding to support accelerated instruction (AI) each time a student fails to pass an EOC assessment.⁴ The bill also prohibits use of the funds for any other purpose until the district adopts a budget to support AI. Consequently, AI has become a primary service in grades 9-12. For 2015-16, SCE funds were 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, district and state emphasis on Early Childhood education, particularly Prekindergarten programs, has increased. Thus, it is recommended that the district pay closer attention to the effective use of potentially more limited SCE funds for grades 1-8.
- **Campus Improvement Plans should be more specific concerning strategies and activities delivering direct services to At-Risk students.** The majority of SCE funds were budgeted and spent at the campus level. Specific strategies listed in the CIPs 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, grade retention, etc.).
- **The Workscope submission requirement should be reinstated to provide improved documentation of the use of SCE funds by central organizations.** In 2011-12 and 2012-13, central organizations that received SCE funds were required to submit Project Workscopes to the district's Budget Services department. That requirement was discontinued in 2014-15. Reinstatement would facilitate evaluation of services and activities supported by central SCE expenditures.
- **The district should designate a full-time SCE program administrator.** At its current level of funding, with an overall budget of approximately \$171 million, oversight would help to ensure that funds are used efficiently and effectively. With more than \$82 million available in 2015-16 in indirect cost allocations intended primarily to defray program administrative costs, the SCE program should well be able to meet the expense of a designated

program manager assigned the responsibility of overseeing program implementation and data collection. Responsibilities of the manager should include, but not be limited to:

- o Familiarity with SCE program requirements and the TEA *Financial Accountability System Resource Guide (FASRG)*.
- o Access to information from the annual Association of Compensatory Educators of Texas (ACET) conference, where current information and requirement updates for SCE are usually presented. The information should be reviewed and provided to district department heads impacted by SCE.
- o Oversight of the intent, purposes, and requirements of the SCE program, including compliance with budget allocation and expenditure requirements.
- o Knowledge of effective interventions sufficient to provide assistance to campuses and central office program managers in selecting appropriate services and programs to meet At-Risk student needs.
- o Responsibility and authority to coordinate all aspects of the SCE program and act as a liaison with other district functions to collect, maintain, and provide data for records and reports.
- o Maintenance and provision of required documentation at the central level.
- o Monitoring of implementation and student performance, and recommending funding changes for programs and services not effectively meeting student needs.
- o Reporting of program results to appropriate administrative levels.

The full 2015-16 report can be found at www.dallasisd.org/Page/888. For more information, please contact Program Evaluation at evaluation@dallasisd.org.

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³ "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)

⁴ House Bill 5, 83rd Legislative Session, added new TEC §28.0217 and amended TEC §29.081.