

2016-17 Evaluation of the Collegiate Academies

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At-a-Glance

In an effort to expand opportunities for traditionally underrepresented students determined to be first-generation college students, the Dallas Independent School District (Dallas ISD) opened eight new Collegiate Academies in 2016-17 in partnership with the Dallas County Community College District (DCCCD; see Table 1). The Collegiate Academy (CA) program was supported by \$14,425,812 in Dallas ISD general operating funds, and provided students with the opportunity to earn up to 60 hours of college credit or an associate's degree tuition-free before graduating from high school. Approximately 100 freshmen formed cohort I of students at each of the eight CAs. These students will move together through high school graduation.

Seven of the eight new CAs were formed with the intention of attaining TEA designation as Early College High Schools by the 2017-18 school year, and one had already received official designation prior to opening.¹ Therefore, all CAs were designed around the Early College High School model, earning dual credit for both high school and college courses simultaneously. The purpose of this evaluation was to provide a brief overview of CA program implementation and to examine short-term outcomes for the eight new cohort I campuses.

Table 1: 2016-17 Dallas ISD Cohort I Collegiate Academies

Collegiate Academy	Collegiate Partner
David J. Carter CA (Carter CA)	Cedar Valley
Dr. Emmett J. Conrad Global CA (Conrad CA)	Richland
James Madison CA (Madison CA)	El Centro
Pinkston Preparatory CA (Pinkston CA)	El Centro
Franklin D. Roosevelt CA (Roosevelt CA)	El Centro
Seagoville P-TECH at Eastfield (Seagoville PT)	Eastfield
South Oak Cliff CA (SOC CA)	Mountain View
Thomas Jefferson CA (Jefferson CA)	Brookhaven

Source: District website 11/16/2016.

Note: All collegiate partners are part of the Dallas County Community College District.

Program Components

School Design

Each CA was physically designed as a "school within a school" facility to provide a sense of cohesiveness for students. Most grade nine and grade ten courses were taken in this facility, with the exception of fine arts,

health, physical education, and foreign languages, which were attended at the comprehensive high school. The district provided transportation to and from college partner campuses for CA students.

Student Applications

Grade eight students from across the district applied to enroll in CAs through an online application that required selection of up to three desired CAs and an essay. Students also were required to participate in an admissions interview. For fall 2016 admission, applications opened in December 2015, and acceptance decisions were delivered in March 2016.

Program Timeline

CA students take increasing numbers of dual credit courses each year. Students take the majority of classes during grade nine and grade ten at the high school campuses, and then take the majority of classes at college partner campuses during grade eleven and grade twelve.

Campus Staffing

Dedicated CA staff included one assistant principal to serve as campus administrator, one workplace learning coordinator, one dedicated counselor, one dedicated clerk, and dedicated teachers.

Pathways and Industry Partners

CA students selected pathways to guide their progress from grade nine toward a specialized field. Two to four pathways were available at each of the 2016-17 cohort I CAs. To supplement education related to selected pathways, industry partners provided students with a variety of related hands-on learning experiences.

Texas Success Initiative Assessment (TSIA)

To be eligible for dual credit coursework, CA students were required to demonstrate college readiness by meeting the minimum passing standard on the TSIA, preferably by the end of grade ten. While students previously could take the TSIA twice per year per subject through the higher education partner, the district became a licensed TSIA testing center in spring 2017, thereby allowing students who exceeded the threshold of attempts with additional retest opportunities.

¹ Seagoville P-TECH at Eastfield was designated before fall 2016. For cohesiveness, Seagoville was referenced as one of the Collegiate Academies in this report.

Summer Bridge Program

CAs partnered with DCCCD to provide a summer bridge program to prepare incoming grade nine students to meet *TSIA* requirements. The summer bridge program for cohort I students consisted of four sessions in June 2016 that focused on four dimensions: 1) contextual skills and awareness, 2) academic behaviors, 3) key content knowledge, and 4) key cognitive strategies.

Student and Teacher Demographics

Cohort I CA students were comprised of 906 students who were 59 percent Hispanic, 36 percent African American, 58 percent female, 84 percent economically disadvantaged, and 64 percent at risk. Although cohort I student demographics were similar to 2016-17 district high school students overall, CA students were more likely than district high school students to be African American, more likely to be female, less likely to be Hispanic, and less likely to be enrolled in special education.

The eight cohort I CAs employed 37 teachers, with four to five teachers at each campus. Forty-one percent of teachers held a master's degree, and 21 percent had been employed by the Dallas ISD for six or more years.

Short-Term Outcomes

Dual Credit Courses

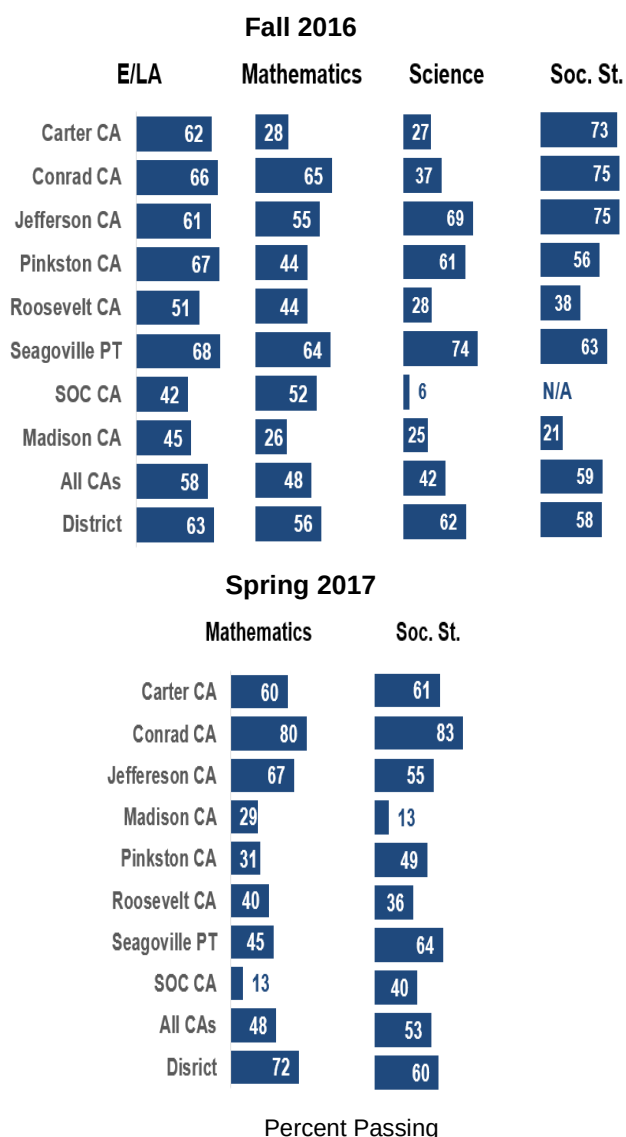
CA students earned 99 percent of credits attempted for dual credit courses in fall 2016 and 97 percent of credits attempted for dual credit courses in spring 2017.

Assessment of Course Performance (ACP)

Fall 2016 *ACP* passing rates for CA students slightly exceeded district rates for the social studies exam (59% CA versus 58% district), but lagged behind the district for English/language arts (58% CA versus 63% district), mathematics (48% CA versus 56% district), and science (42% CA versus 62% district). Four of the eight CA campuses (50%) beat district passing rates for social studies, three campuses beat district passing rates for English/language arts (38%), and two campuses (25%) beat district passing rates for mathematics and science.

Spring 2017 CA *ACP* passing rates lagged behind those for the district in mathematics (48% CA versus 72% district) and social studies (53% CA versus 60% district). One of the eight campuses (13%) exceeded district passing rates for mathematics, and three campuses (38%) exceeded district passing rates for social studies.

Figure 1: 2016-17 Collegiate Academy ACP Passing Rates



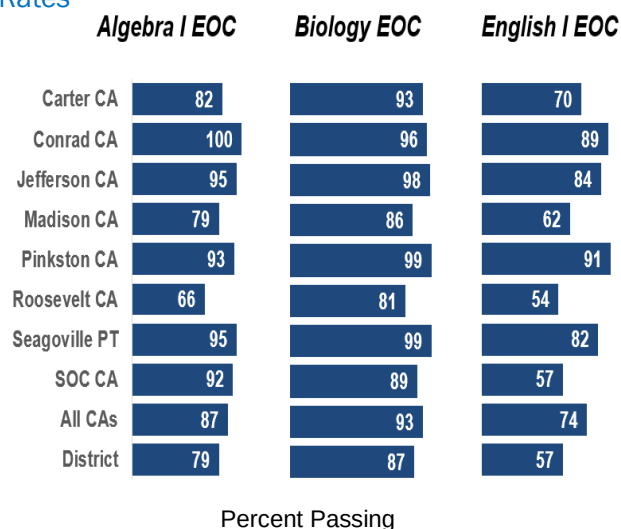
Source: Fall 2016: District *ACP* data file dated 5/8/17. District demographic data file dated 10/31/16. Spring 2017: District *ACP* file dated 6/20/17, demographic file dated 5/22/17.

Note: CA = Collegiate Academy. PT = P-TECH. SOC = South Oak Cliff. N/A = Not Applicable. E/LA = English/language arts, Soc. St. = Social Studies.

State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR)

Passing rates of CA students overall exceeded those of the district for the *Algebra I* EOC (87% CA versus 79% district), *Biology* EOC (93% CA versus 87% district), and *English I* EOC (74% CA versus 57% district). Six of the eight CA campuses (75%) beat district passing rates for the *Algebra I*, *Biology*, and *English I* EOCs.

Figure 2: 2017 Collegiate Academy STAAR Passing Rates



Source: STAAR EOC data file 06/14/2017 and demographic file dated 10/31/2016.

Note: Rates are for students enrolled in the district at each campus as of 10/31/2016 for first and second administration of all versions but *Alternate 2* of STAAR EOC exams. Rates represent students who have met or exceeded the approaches grade level standard. CA = Collegiate Academy. PT = P-TECH. SOC = South Oak Cliff.

Attendance

Attendance rates for CA students exceeded attendance rates for non-CA students at all campuses and overall (96% CA versus 92% non-CA).

Student Retention

Rates of student retention ranged from 93 percent (Roosevelt CA) to 98 percent (Conrad CA and Pinkston CA). Overall, 96 percent of CA students enrolled at the beginning of the 2016-17 academic year remained enrolled at the same CA campus at the end of the year.

Campus Parent Activities

A brief survey of CA principals revealed a comprehensive list of parent activities held on CA campuses, including 1) cohort signing day, 2) parent orientation, 3) parent meetings/conferences, 4) parent volunteer open house, 5) parent/scholar night, 6) parent classes, 7) parent/teacher association (PTA) nights, and 8) college field trips.

Student Perceptions

Eighty percent of CA students ($n = 722$) responded to an online survey that requested information related to CA goals, participation in industry partner activities, and perceptions of the CAs. Students were generally positive about the impact of CA participation on their lives. At least 80 percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they were 1) completing courses to help earn an associate's degree (90%), 2) gaining skills

to help transition to college successfully (86%), 3) earning at least one industry certificate (82%), and 4) learning to communicate professionally (80%). Students were least likely to agree that they had participated in at least three activities with industry partners (58%). When asked about the industry partner activities in which they had participated, students were most likely to indicate they had participated in technology training (45%) and activities related to selecting a career path/career exploration (44%); they were least likely to indicate they had participated in activities related to conflict/dispute resolution (8%) and peer mentoring of younger students (7%).

When asked to describe the CA environment in their own words, students were mostly positive, with the highest rate of students describing the environment as professional, focused, and challenging (17%) and generally positive (17%). A small percentage of students described the CAs as isolated, excluded, or separate (9%), while some described the environment as no different from a regular campus (6%).

Students were most likely to mention what they liked best about being a CA student as being on track to earn college credit or an associate's degree (27%) and on track to be prepared for college and the future (15%). Students most frequently mentioned that they least liked the uniforms (16%) and the amount of work (14%).

Recommendations

- **Find ways to reduce student perceptions of separation and isolation.** Although not a strong consensus, nine percent of student survey respondents described the CA environment as isolated, excluded, or separate. This sentiment may put some students at risk for not completing the program. While there are benefits to the "school within a school" environment for keeping students focused on the rigorous course load, administrators should be careful to identify those students who may be challenged by feeling isolated from their friends and the general campus population. It will be important to find ways to help students feel more socially connected.
- **Increase opportunities for students to interact with industry partners.** As of the time of the student survey, 53 percent of respondents indicated that they had participated in at least three activities with industry partners. Program leadership should ensure that all students are exposed to the wealth of experiences that industry partners can provide to bolster the impact of their depth of path-related knowledge during their time as CA students.

- **Determine the most appropriate and informative outcomes to measure Collegiate Academy success.** Because students who chose to attend CAs were likely to be academically motivated, a certain level of selection bias should be acknowledged when comparing CA student assessment outcomes to those of the general population at the same campus. More successful outcomes for CA students would not be surprising. Therefore, comparisons of these outcomes between these two groups, while convenient, may not provide the most useful actionable information for program evaluation and improvement. Program leadership should examine available outcomes with the 2017-18 evaluator and choose the most appropriate measures and desirable outcomes and goals to frame future evaluations.

The full 2016-17 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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