

2016-17 Evaluation of the Transition Program

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EA17-613-4

At-a-Glance

Administered by Psychological & Social Services, the primary goal of the Transition Program is to provide transitional support for students returning to campuses from alternative placements. These include the Disciplinary Alternative Education Program (DAEP), Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program (JJAEP), psychiatric hospital stays, and mental health related homebound placements. The Transition Program received \$186,441 in Title I funding, which primarily covered personnel expenses. The goals of the Transition Program for the 2016-17 school year were to improve school achievement and attendance by assisting students to:

- Remain on campus and avoid placement in more restrictive school or community placements,
- Improve behavior and school functioning, and
- Reduce Juvenile Justice Involvement.

The purpose of this evaluation was to evaluate the extent to which the Transition Program was implemented with fidelity, met expected outcomes as outlined in program documents, and impacted school climate. Data were collected and provided by the program staff from Psychological and Social Services.

What were DAEP referral reasons?

There were 1,997 offenses that led to student placement into DAEP. The most common reason students were referred to DAEP was the possession or sale of marijuana or other controlled substances (58.6%). Eight percent of Dallas ISD students were referred to DAEP for assault against district personnel or volunteers (Class C assault). The same number of students were referred to DAEP for repetitive Level I offenses. Five percent of students were referred to DAEP for major disruptive school behavior. Three percent of students were referred for student on student assault (Class A). An additional three percent of students were referred for alcohol.

Table 1: Offenses Leading to DAEP Placement

Offense	N	%
Drugs (non-felony)	1,170	58.6
Assault (Class C)	163	8.2
Repetitive Level I Offenses	163	8.2
Major Disruptive Behavior	97	4.9
Assault (Class A)	68	3.4
Alcohol (non-felony)	60	3.0
Profanity/obscene gesture	56	2.8
Fighting	47	2.4
Other	173	8.7

Source: Data were extracted from district disciplinary records.

Note: Percentages do not add to 100 percent due to rounding.

What were the demographic characteristics of students referred to DAEP?

There were 1,757 Dallas ISD students who were placed into DAEP during the 2016-17 school year. Sixty-four percent of students were Hispanic while 32.2 percent were African American. Seventy percent of referred students were male and 29.6 percent were female. Thirty-seven percent of students were English Language learners which is less than the percentage of English Language learners in the district (44.4%). Eleven percent of students were enrolled in special education services.

Table 2: Demographic Characteristics of Program Participants

Variable	N	%
Ethnicity		
Hispanic	1,123	63.9
African American	565	32.2
White	47	2.7
Other	22	1.2
Gender		
Male	1,237	70.4
Female	519	29.6
English Language Learner	643	36.6
Special Education	196	11.2

Source: Data were extracted from Dallas ISD Chancery file.

Note: Gender information was missing for one participant.

Who provided the interventions?

During the 2016-17 school year the Transition Program was provided funding for three clinicians. However, due

to the number of DAEP referrals and schools impacted, the program used their existing staff of 43 social workers and psychologists as well as four interns to provide the services.

Transition program records show that there were 930 students (53%) who provided consent to work with a clinician during their DAEP stay. There were 402 consent forms to the Learning Alternative Center for Empowering Youth (LACEY) at Village Fair. There were 474 consent forms to the School Community Guidance Center (SCGC) during the 2016-17 school year.

During the 2016-17 school year, a clinician personally met with 57 students for two or more times during their stay at DAEP.

Counseling Services

There were nine clinicians who provided services to students after their release from DAEP. Program documents show that the clinicians were able to locate 93 students following their DAEP stay. Thirty-seven of the 93 students provided consent to receive further help from the clinicians. Of these 37 students, 25 entered the program. Twenty of the 25 students were seen less than five times. Students spent an average of 128 days in school and were absent an average of 14.8 days. Students spent an average of 26.7 days in DAEP and were absent from DAEP 6.7 times. The average total number of days in school was 146.8 and the average total number of days out of school was 126.5.

Recidivism Rate

Of all the students in the district, 221 were referred to DAEP more than once during the 2016-17 school year (12.6% of all referred students). Eighteen students were referred to DAEP three times while 203 students were referred two times. Of the 25 students who entered the transition program, four of them were referred to DAEP more than once during the school year indicating a recidivism rate of 16.0 percent. Ten of the 25 students received additional disciplinary referrals after entering DAEP (40.0 percent). Sixty percent of transition services students did not receive any disciplinary referrals after entering DAEP.

Attendance Rate

Students who were placed in DAEP demonstrated lower levels of attendance than other district students. DAEP students attended school on average 122 days compared to 152 days for all students in the district. Students referred to DAEP attended school on 81.2 percent of the days in which they were enrolled while district students attended school on 94.8 percent of their enrolled days on average. The average number of excused absences granted was 5.1 for DAEP students and 2.9 for district students. DAEP students had an average of 20.4 unexcused absences during the

2016-17 school year compared to 4.4 for all students in the district.

The 25 students who entered the transition program attended school an average of 142 days during the 2016-17 school year, 85.6 percent of enrolled days on average. Students had slightly fewer unexcused and excused absences than other DAEP students in the district.

Table 3: 2016-17 DAEP Attendance

	Transition Students	DAEP Students	District Students
Number of Days Attended	142	122	152
% of Days Attended	85.6	81.2	94.8
Excused Absences	4.0	5.1	2.9
Unexcused Absences	19.8	20.4	4.4

Source: Data were extracted from district attendance records. All statistics are mean calculations.

A review of internal program data suggests that the Transition Program could benefit from a system to track students as they return to their regular campuses. Transition Program staff members were challenged by the need to get a new student/parent permission slip each time a student changed schools. The result was the inability to provide services to the returning students. Due to incomplete internal tracking data, the outcomes addressed in this evaluation cannot be attributed solely to Transition Program services.

Recommendations

- **Establish Program Database.** The transition program could benefit from a dedicated database to track movement of DAEP students within the Dallas ISD and to keep appropriate records of services provided for each student.
- **Develop Transition Program awareness among Dallas ISD teachers.** Create a program flyer providing information about the program and services provided to solicit teacher referrals.

For more information, please contact Program Evaluation at evaluation@dallasisd.org.

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