

2016-17 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 students of limited English proficiency, 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.

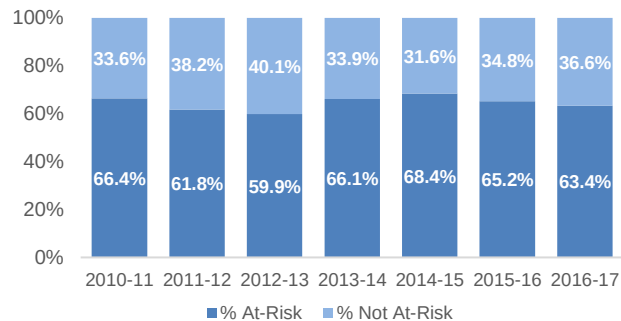
The scope of the evaluation includes the program context, implementation, and results of the SCE Program 2016-17. It outlines how SCE direct cost funds were used for supplemental services and programs, as described in district and campus improvement plans and in budget allocations and expenditures. The 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 2016-17, the district's Texas Academic Performance Report (TAPR) reported a total of 100,111 students identified as At-Risk, representing 63.4 percent of the district's grades EC-12 enrollment (N=157,787). 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



Source: TEA annual Academic Excellence Indicator System and Texas Academic Performance Reports

Table 1 presents the demographic composition of the At-Risk student population in 2016-17.¹ 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	80,663	51.1%	52,463	52.3%
Female	77,223	48.9%	47,660	47.7%
Ethnicity				
Hisp./Lat.	110,847	70.2%	81,349	81.2%
Afr. Am.	35,583	22.5%	15,040	15.0%
White	7,742	4.9%	1,730	1.7%
Other ²	3,714	2.4%	2,004	2.0%
English Proficiency				
Non-LEP	88,566	56.1%	30,803	30.8%
LEP	69,320	43.9%	69,320	69.2%
Total	157,886	100.0%	100,123	100.0%

Source: Dallas ISD Fall 2016 Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) snapshot submission.

Note: Hisp./Lat.=Hispanic/Latino. Afr. Am.=African American. LEP=Limited English Proficient.

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.

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

District Improvement Plan

The DIP 2016-17 was reviewed for SCE components. 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 55 to 87 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 \$166,081,791 from the state. The minimum direct cost requirement was 52 percent for the 2016-17 school year, or \$86,362,531.

Table 2: 2016-17 SCE Funding and Budget

Description	Amount
SCE 2016-17 Allocation received	\$ 166,081,791
Required Min. Direct Cost (52%)	\$ 86,362,531
PIC 24 (Accelerated Education)	\$ 11,260,700
PIC 26 (AEP Basic Services)	\$ 3,352,465
PIC 28 (DAEP Basic Services)	\$ 3,887,044
PIC 29 (DAEP SCE Costs)	\$ 14,230
PIC 30 (Title I, Part A)	\$ 42,365,053
PIC 34 (Prekindergarten)	\$ 29,985,040
Total SCE Direct Cost Budget	\$ 90,864,532

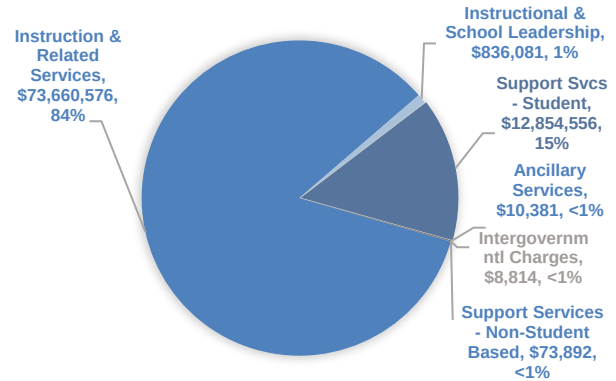
Source: Dallas ISD Budget Services Department, April 2018

Note: Min.=Minimum. PIC=Program Intent Code. AEP=Alternative Education Program. DAEP=Disciplinary Alternative Education Program.

The district budgeted \$90,864,532 in direct cost to support programs/services for At-Risk students, and actual expenditures totaled \$87,444,301.

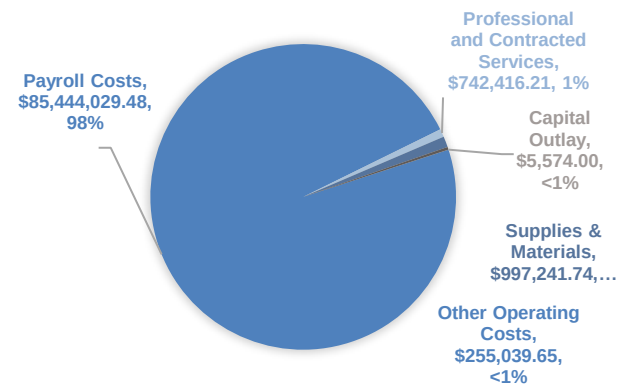
Figures 2 through 4 show expenditures by SCE Major Function, Object, and Program Intent Codes. The major expenditures were Instruction & Instruction Related Services (84%), Payroll Costs (98%), and Title I, Part A Schoolwide Activities (47%).

Figure 2: SCE 2016-17 Expenditures by Function



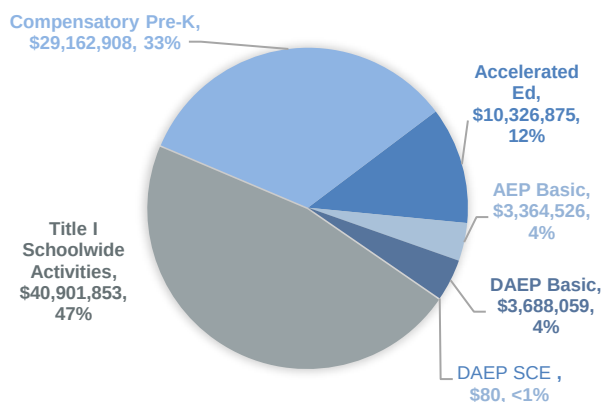
Source: Dallas ISD Budget Services Department, April 2018

Figure 3: SCE 2016-17 Expenditures by Object



Source: Dallas ISD Budget Services Department, April 2018

Figure 4: SCE 2016-17 Expenditures by PIC



Source: Dallas ISD Budget Services Department, April 2018

The district funded 1520.5 Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) positions with SCE funds and filled 1,389.59. Most FTEs under PIC 30 were counselors or core content teachers at elementary and secondary campuses. All PIC 34 (Compensatory Prekindergarten) positions were teachers or teacher assistants.

STAAR 3-8 and STAAR EOC Performance

The percentage of At-Risk students at Approaches Grade Level or Above (Approaches +) on the *State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness 3-8 (STAAR 3-8)* and *STAAR End-of-Course (STAAR EOC)* tests was lower than the percentage of Not-At-Risk students across all subjects (Table 3). From 2016 to 2017, 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 and English II performance increased, while the gap in Algebra I, Biology, and U.S. History performance decreased.

Table 3: STAAR Approaches+ Rates and Performance Gaps

Subject	Grade	Percent Approaches+		Gap	Point Change
		At-Risk	Not-At-Risk		
Reading	3	62	66	-4	-14
	4	51	85	-34	-1
	5	73	93	-20	-7
	6	43	88	-45	-1
	7	51	92	-41	-3
	8	71	96	-25	-2
English I		42	90	-48	2
English II		43	92	-49	1
Mathematics	3	72	73	-1	-15
	4	62	88	-26	-3
	5	78	95	-17	-4
	6	58	89	-31	-7
	7	43	79	-36	-3
	8	77	94	-17	-10
Algebra I		73	94	-21	-9
Science	5	59	89	-30	-3
	8	59	92	-33	-4
Biology		77	97	-20	-2
Soc. Studies	8	44	88	-44	-2
U.S. History		86	98	-12	-1
Writing	4	55	82	-27	0
	7	46	90	-44	-4

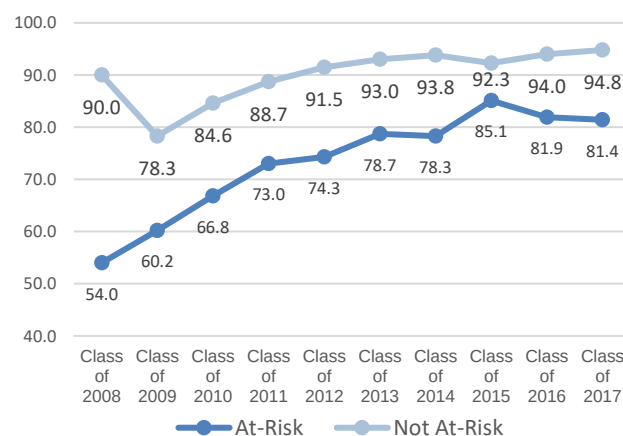
Source: Texas Education Agency 2016 and 2017 Texas Academic Performance Reports

Note: Data include all students in the Accountability Subset for each year reported.

Graduation and Dropout Rates

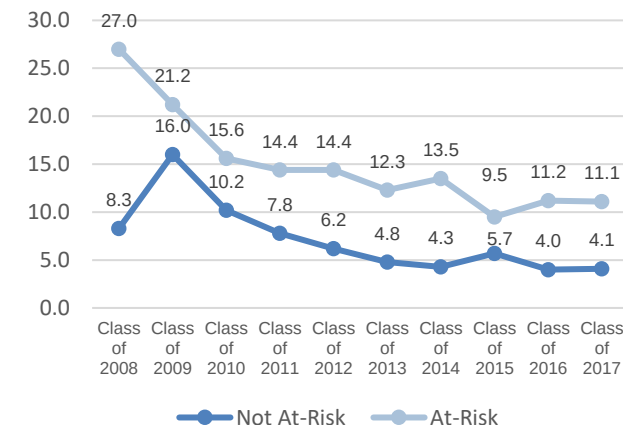
The 2017 longitudinal graduation rate for At-Risk students was lower than for Not-At-Risk students, and showed a slight decrease from the 2015 and 2016 rates (Figure 5). The dropout rate for At-Risk students was greater than the 2015 cohort rate, and approximately the same as the 2016 cohort rate (Figure 6). Nevertheless, long-term trends remained encouraging. The dropout rate of At-Risk students in the Class of 2017 was less than half of that reported for the Class of 2008. Similarly, the cohort graduation rate improved from slightly over half of At-Risk students for the Class of 2008 to more than 80 percent for three most recent cohorts. However, because no tracking system exists to link student performance to program services, no specific 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



Source: TEA annual Academic Excellence Indicator System and Texas Academic Performance Reports

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



Source: TEA annual Academic Excellence Indicator System and Texas Academic Performance Reports

Recommendations

Recommendations have not changed from those recommended in the 2015-16 report, as no major changes in program direction took place between the 2015-16 and 2016-17 school years.

- **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 2016-17, SCE funds supported use of the Reconnection Centers program for AI, 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.** Most SCE funds were budgeted and spent at the campus level. Specific strategies listed in the CIPs should be aligned to the profile of At-Risk students at each campus and the reasons for their At-Risk classification (e.g., achievement, English Proficiency 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 \$166 million, oversight would help to ensure that

funds are used efficiently and effectively. With more than \$79 million available in 2016-17 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:

- Familiarity with SCE program requirements and the TEA *Financial Accountability System Resource Guide (FASRG)*.⁵
- 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.
- 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 to campuses and central office program managers in selecting appropriate services and programs to meet At-Risk student needs.
- 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.
- 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.

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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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)

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