

2017-18 Evaluation of the College Access Program

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At-a-Glance

The College Access Program (CAP) was created in 2010 by the Dallas Independent School District (ISD) to increase student college and scholarship applications, participation and performance on college entrance exams, and parental involvement in the college admissions and financial aid process.

For the 2017-18 school year, Academic Success Program (ASP), Education is Freedom (EIF), and Southern Methodist University (SMU) were selected as CAP vendors to provide college access services to high schools receiving Title I funds in the Dallas ISD. The program was supported by \$2,325,000 of Title I funds, and guidelines associated with Title I funding required that CAP vendors supplement, but not replace, counselor job responsibilities to assist in reaching program goals. Each CAP vendor assigned a CAP advisor to provide individual and small group assistance to students and parents that supplemented the work of the counseling staff. CAP vendors served a total of 12,876 students at 36 high school campuses. This assistance included advisement on the following:

- Using Naviance (an online college and career readiness tool)
- Completing college applications
- Completing financial aid applications
- Registering and preparing for the SAT, ACT, or Texas Success Initiative Assessment (TSIA)
- Completing college and scholarship application essays
- Attending college fairs

Purpose and Methodology

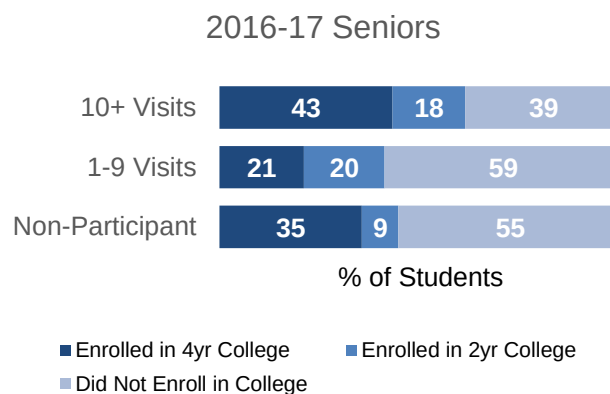
The purpose of this evaluation was to examine the effectiveness of the program based on outlined program goals and objectives. CAP vendors provided data files to the evaluator between July 17, 2018 and July 23, 2018. Files included the number of times each student visited a CAP vendor, the reasons for each visit, and the type of workshops that vendors led during the school year. Files were merged with district demographic data from June 4, 2018. In addition, the evaluator downloaded Naviance (June 22, 2018) and FAFSA¹ (June 27, 2018) data for each campus, and retrieved district SAT and ACT data files on

June 6, 2018 and July 2, 2018, respectively. Lastly, CAP program staff members provided data regarding the Summer Melt Texting² program on July 20, 2018.

CAP Participation and College Enrollment

Analysis of National Student Clearinghouse data for 2016-17 graduates showed that slightly more CAP participants (46.2%) than non-participants (44.6%) enrolled in colleges within one year of high school graduation³. CAP participants were more likely to enroll in two-year colleges than non-participants, and 2016-17 seniors who did not participate in CAP were more likely to enroll in four-year colleges than CAP participants (Figure 1). These results were similar for 2015-16 seniors (Barton, 2017). CAP participants who visited a CAP vendor at least 10 times had a slightly higher average GPA (85.9) than those who visited between one and nine times or those who never participated (83.5 and 85.2, respectively). Seniors who never visited a CAP vendor also had a slightly higher average GPA⁴ than those who visited a CAP vendor nine times or less.

Figure 1: 2016-17 Two- and Four-Year College Enrollment Based on the Number of Student Visits to CAP Vendors



Source: CAP participation data file from July 18, 2017, and district demographic data file from June 1, 2017. National Student Clearinghouse data files from February 7, 2018

Note: $n = 1,854$ CAP participants in 2016-17 with 10+ visits; $n = 5,019$ CAP participants in 2016-17 with 1-9 visits; $n = 734$ non-participants in 2016-17. Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

¹ FAFSA stands for Free Application for Federal Student Aid.

² Summer Melt Texting program provides Dallas ISD graduates resources and tips on steps to take to enroll in college.

³ 2016-17 CAP and non-participants differed in by at least 10 percentage points across categories of ethnicity and socio-economic status. As a result, comparisons between the CAP and non-CAP participants should be viewed with caution.

⁴ GPA stands for grade point average.

The 2018 National Student Clearinghouse data file included college enrollment data for 49 percent (n = 3,505) of 2015-16 Dallas ISD seniors. For these students, 96 percent of 2015-16 CAP participants and 97 percent of non-participants remained enrolled in college during the 2017-18 school year. These results were similar for 2014-15 seniors (Barton, 2017).

CAP Participation Data

During the 2017-18 school year 33 percent of Dallas ISD students in grades 9-12 and 91 percent of seniors were served by a CAP vendor.

ASP served 4,382 students at 15 Dallas ISD campuses, EIF served 7,649 students at 20 campuses, and SMU served 847 students at one campus. On average, students were served 5.5 times by CAP vendors over the course of the 2017-18 school year. While the percentage of students served dropped from 37 percent in 2016-17 to 33 percent in 2017-18, the average number of visits with a CAP vendor increased. CAP vendors continued to focus on providing services related to college applications and financial aid. During the 2017-18 school year, ASP and EIF most often provided information about applying to college, and SMU most often helped students with FAFSA or TASFA⁵ applications. Furthermore, CAP vendors generally focused on providing student and parent workshops regarding college fairs and visits, college and financial aid information and applications.

Meeting Program Goals

CAP vendors worked collaboratively with Dallas ISD counselors to meet the following goals:

- 95 percent of seniors utilizing Naviance College and Career Exploration tools
- 95 percent of seniors completing at least one college application
- 70 percent of seniors completing at least one financial aid application
- 50 percent of seniors opting to participate in the Summer Melt texting program
- 95 percent of seniors registering for and taking the SAT or ACT
- 70 percent of seniors completing the Impact Survey⁶
- 50 percent of seniors attending at least one college fair
- CAP vendors were to meet with counselors at a minimum twice per 6 weeks period

CAP vendors successfully helped counselors meet or almost meet CAP goals regarding college applications,

financial assistance, the SAT and ACT exams, and the Summer Melt texting program.

Ninety-four percent of 2017-18 seniors completed at least one college application, 68 percent of seniors completed a FAFSA or TASFA application, 92 percent of seniors took the SAT or ACT, and 73 percent participated in the Summer Melt texting program. On the other hand, CAP vendors and counselors fell short of meeting the goals related to the Naviance College and Career Exploration tools and Impact Survey. Forty-three percent of 2017-18 seniors completed the Naviance Career Interest Profiler and College Search or SuperMatch, while only 34 percent of the seniors completed the Impact Survey. However, seniors that responded to the Impact Survey had an overall positive outlook of CAP; 74 percent agreed that services CAP provided were very useful and 90 percent noted that providers were knowledgeable and adequately answered their questions. Overall, 86 percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that Dallas ISD and their school prepared them to enter the workforce or continue with their education. Data for two goals was not available (college fair participation) or could not be independently verified (meeting with counselors).

Recommendations

- **College Access and Counseling Services program staff members should identify how the percentage of seniors utilizing Naviance College and Career Exploration tools can be increased.** Only two of 35 campuses (6%) achieved the CAP goal for Naviance College and Career Exploration in 2017-18. CAP vendors and counselors should investigate why the Naviance college and career exploration tools were not being used and whether any procedures for administering the tools can be improved. The low response rate on the Impact Survey could be due to the low utilization rate of the Naviance system as the survey was administered through Naviance.
- **CAP staff members should reevaluate program goals in 2018-19 to ensure that necessary data are available for each goal.** In 2017-18, data were not available from all CAP vendors to determine whether 50 percent of seniors attended at least one college fair. As a result, the evaluator was not able to determine whether this goal was met during the 2017-18 school year. Furthermore, campuses could choose among several providers to administer the Summer Melt Texting program. Due to the lack of unified tracking mechanisms, CAP vendors self-reported the number of seniors that enrolled in the Summer Melt Texting program.

⁵ TASFA stands for Texas Application for State Financial Aid.

⁶ Impact Survey collected program feedback to help CAP management with future program development and program evaluation.

However, vendors often did not sufficiently differentiate if the enrollee was a senior or a parent.

References

Barton, M. (August 2017). 2016-17 Evaluation of the College Access Program. Dallas, TX: Dallas Independent School District.

Douglas, N., & Barton, M. (August 2016). Evaluation of the College Access Program: Final report. Dallas, TX: Dallas Independent School District.

An electronic version of this report as well as the full 2017-18 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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