

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Student Success Initiative (SSI) was created by the 76th Texas Legislature in 1999 and modified by the 81st Texas Legislature in 2009. SSI was designed to ensure that all students in grades five and eight receive the instruction and support they need to be academically successful in reading and mathematics. According to the initiative, accelerated instruction (AI) must be provided at no cost after each *State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR)* administration for “at-risk” students and for those who failed to meet the Approaches Grade Level or Above (Approaches+) performance standard. This policy includes students who did not meet Approaches+ but were advanced to the next grade through a unanimous Grade Placement Committee (GPC) decision.

AI requirements were expanded to include high school students during the 83rd Texas Legislative session with the passage of House Bill 5 (TEC §28.0217). This bill requires school districts to provide AI in the applicable subject area each time a student fails to meet Approaches+ on a *STAAR End of Course (EOC)*. *STAAR EOC* subjects include Algebra I, Biology, English I, English II, and U.S. History.

House Bill 5 requires that State Compensatory Education (SCE) funds be used to provide AI for students who failed *STAAR 3-8/STAAR EOC* before the funds can be used for other purposes. In addition, House Bill 5 amended TEC §29.081 to require each school district to evaluate the effectiveness of the district AI programs for high school students and to hold an annual public hearing to review the results of the evaluation.

The purpose of the 2019-20 SSI and AI evaluation was 1) to evaluate the effectiveness of the AI provided to students who failed grade-five or grade-eight *STAAR* mathematics or reading subtests and high school students who failed *STAAR EOCs* and 2) to describe the GPC promotion rates of SSI students. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, Dallas ISD students transitioned to at-home learning beginning March 23, 2020 (after Spring Break) and continued through the end of the 2019-20 school year. Likewise, TEA waived *STAAR* testing requirements and GPC requirements for the remainder of 2019-20. As a result, the scope of this report is limited in comparison to previous years.¹

The current evaluation provided information known prior to the district transition to at-home learning including funding,

the rates of high school students who failed December EOCs, the services provided to students in fall 2019 who failed assessments in 2018-19, and the services that were provided to students who failed the December 2019 *STAAR EOC* administration. Because of unavailable data, the evaluator was unable to conduct the other analyses generally reported in this evaluation including services provided to students after failing in April 2020 (grade five and eight students) and after failing in May (grades five, eight, and high school), the analyses of the impact of accelerated instruction on scores from one administration to the next, and the rate of students promoted through the GPC.

The evaluation was based on a review of legislation pertaining to SSI and AI, district funding documents, course files, campus-based information forms, and *STAAR EOC* data. AI information was collected for the June 2019 (all levels) and December 2019 (high school) administrations using course files and information forms. Course files were used to gather information about AI that students were provided through Applications and Study Skills Courses (ASSCs).² Principals were provided information forms to document the AI provided outside of ASSCs to students who failed one or more grade-five, grade-eight, or high school subtests. Emails about the forms were sent to campus principals and office managers after testing data were released. Campus staff members had four weeks to complete forms after each administration. The evaluator sent weekly reminders to principals of campuses who had not yet completed the forms. Campus staff members indicated the hours of AI provided outside of ASSCs during a typical week, when AI was provided, and the campus role of the most common AI provider. Staff members completed multiple entries for students who failed more than one subtest. Frequency analyses were conducted on ASSC enrollment data and campus information form data.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS/OUTCOMES

What was the source and amount of SSI and accelerated instruction funding?

A total of \$708,195.81 in SCE funding was used to pay campus staff members to provide AI during the 2019-20 school year (Table 1). An additional \$29,680.00 was spent

¹ The notice from the TEA detailing the cancellation of *STAAR* and *STAAR EOCs* can be found at <https://tea.texas.gov/about-tea/news-and-multimedia/correspondence/taa-letters/cancellation-of-staar-testing-for-the-remainder-of-the-school-year>. The *STAAR* and *STAAR EOC* assessments were suspended for the April 2020, May 2020, and June 2020 administrations. Grade five and eight students who typically must

pass *STAAR* reading and mathematics to be promoted to the next grade or be promoted by a committee consisting of the principal (or designee), teacher, and parent or guardian were promoted with local discretion. Portions of this report were modified from Hinkley (2019).

² ASSCs are for local credit only and designed for students who did not meet Approaches+ on *STAAR* subtests or are “at risk” of failing.

on curricular resources (\$12,800.00 on Algebra I and \$16,880.00 on Biology).^{3,4}

Table 1: 2019-20 State Compensatory Education Funding Allocated for Accelerated Instruction

Level	Extra-Duty Pay
Elementary School	\$301,617.95
Elementary/Middle School	\$10,582.40
Middle School	\$213,514.54
Middle/High School	\$5,616.00
High School	\$176,864.92
Total	\$708,195.81

Source: District budget department, received 05/04/20.

Note: Extra-duty pay reflects only State Compensatory Education funding and includes in-school and out-of-school tutoring.

What were the rates of students who did not meet STAAR Approaches+ and what progress did they demonstrate?

In 2020, no STAAR assessments were given for students in grades five and eight; therefore, no data is available.

For high school students, STAAR EOCs were administered in December 2019. This administration included mostly retesters. Students were required to take STAAR EOCs at each administration until they attained the Approaches+ standard or graduated. Table 2 displays the rates of students who did not meet Approaches+ by exam for the December administration.

Table 2: 2019-20 STAAR EOC Failure Rates in December by Exam

Exam	Tested <i>n</i> (% Fail)
Algebra I	1,010 (63.2)
Biology	1,112 (63.3)
English I	4,503 (71.8)
English II	3,123 (76.7)
US Hist	444 (54.3)

Source: STAAR EOC file dated 01/16/20 (December).

Note: Fail = did not meet Approaches+. US Hist = United States history.

What services were provided to SSI students who failed grade-five or grade-eight STAAR?

In grade five, AI was provided through individual or small-group instruction. In grade eight, AI was provided through individual instruction, small-group instruction, or ASSCs. Data would typically be provided to document the services students were provided after failing in 2018-19, April 2020, and May 2020. However, only services provided after failure in 2018-19 were available during the 2019-20

school year because of cancelation of STAAR. Those results are provided below.

Grade-Five and Grade-Eight 2018-19 STAAR Failures

A total of 4,140 students did not meet Approaches+ (failed) on a 2018-19 STAAR subtest and remained in the district for 2019-20. Of these, 2,211 students failed grade-five ($n = 1,097$) or grade-eight ($n = 1,114$) STAAR mathematics. Additionally, 3,480 students in grade five ($n = 1,535$) or grade eight ($n = 1,945$) failed STAAR reading. These totals include 1,551 students who failed both STAAR mathematics and reading.⁵ Even though most students with failing STAAR scores in 2018-19 were promoted to the next grade, AI was required to be provided at the campuses at which the students were enrolled in 2019-20.

In fall 2019, students who failed at least one STAAR subtest in 2018-19 were enrolled in ASSCs at 47 Dallas ISD campuses.⁶ Students attended these classes for approximately 3.75 hours per week.⁷ Thirty-five percent of students that failed STAAR reading or mathematics were enrolled in at least one relevant ASSC (some students may have been enrolled in ASSCs for both subjects; therefore they could be included in the percentage twice).

To determine what AI students were provided outside of ASSCs at the beginning of the 2019-20 school year, campus principals were sent information forms. Because some students failed multiple subtests, there were 5,691 failure occurrences (grade five = 2,632; grade eight = 3,059).⁸ Some principals reported occurrences in which only ASSCs were used to provide AI (3% of failure occurrences); 97 percent of these students were enrolled in ASSCs relevant to the subtests they failed.

For failure occurrences with available data, when AI was provided outside of ASSCs after 2018-19, campus staff members most often reported providing 1-1.99 hours of AI per week (32% of occurrences). This was followed by 3-3.99 hours (20%), and 2-2.99 hours and 4-4.99 hours (both 13%). AI most often was provided during school (62% of occurrences) or after school (26%). A teacher with content expertise most often provided AI (95% of occurrences). Campus staff members indicated that the students were no longer enrolled at their schools for less than one percent of failure occurrences. Campus staff members reported that no AI was provided for three percent of failure occurrences.

The student was not enrolled in an ASSC nor provided AI outside of an ASSC for 103 failure occurrences (grade-five mathematics = 14, grade-five reading = 4, grade-eight

³ No money was spent on resources for the other subjects in 2019-20.

⁴ Typically, money is spent over the summer to fund SSI summer school, EOC Test Prep, and June testing. STAAR testing and the related summer school programming did not occur in 2019-20 because of the district transition to at-home learning. However, the money was used to provide virtual summer learning with a focus on reading and mathematics to the neediest 20 percent of students at each prekindergarten through grade-eight campus, across grade levels, in an effort to reduce student learning losses related to COVID-19.

⁵ Data were extracted from a file provided by the Office of Institutional Research on 11/21/19.

⁶ Some students were enrolled in ASSCs at the high school level after being promoted.

⁷ Calculations were based on bell schedules posted on school websites (Hinkley, 2017 & Hinkley & Sanguras, 2016).

⁸ No information was available for 706 failure occurrences at campuses where staff members did not complete information forms.

mathematics = 32, and grade-eight reading = 53). These instances comprised two percent of all grade-five and grade-eight 2018-19 reading and mathematics failure occurrences.

What services were provided to students who failed STAAR EOC?

High school AI was provided through individual instruction, small-group instruction, or ASSCs. Data would typically be provided to document the services students were provided after failing in 2018-19, December 2019, and May 2020. However, only services provided after failure in 2018-19 and December 2019 were available during the 2019-20 school year because of cancelation of STAAR EOCs. Those results are provided below.

2018-19 STAAR EOC Failures

A total of 8,135 students enrolled in 2019-20 did not achieve Approaches+ (failed) on at least one STAAR EOC as of the June 2019 administration. Some students failed more than one exam.⁹

Students who failed STAAR EOCs attended ASSCs at 19 high schools for an average of 3.75 hours per week.¹⁰ Nine percent of students that failed STAAR EOCs were enrolled in at least one relevant ASSC (some students may have been enrolled in ASSCs for multiple subjects; therefore, they could be in the percentage more than once).

To determine what AI students were provided outside of ASSCs between the beginning of the 2019-20 school year and the December 2019 administration, high school campus principals completed information forms. Because some students failed multiple exams, there were 14,126 failure occurrences.¹¹ One campus reported occurrences in which only ASSCs were used to provide AI (less than 1% of failure occurrences); none of these students were enrolled in ASSCs relevant to the subtests they had yet to pass.

For failure occurrences with available data, when AI was provided outside of ASSCs after testing in June 2019, campus staff members most often reported providing 1-1.99 hours of AI per week (40% of occurrences). This was followed by 3-3.99 hours (15%) and 2-2.99 hours (12%). AI most often was provided after school (45% of occurrences) or during school (38%). A teacher with content expertise most often provided the AI (88% of occurrences). Campus staff members reported that no AI was provided in seven percent of failure occurrences and marked “unknown” for less than one percent of failure occurrences.

⁹ Data were extracted from a file provided by the Office of Institutional Research on 11/21/19 and included students from all administrations that had yet to pass a STAAR EOC. Students must test until they pass or graduate.

¹⁰ Calculations were based on bell schedules posted on school websites (Hinkley, 2017 & Hinkley & Sanguras, 2016).

¹¹ No information was available for 1,512 students at campuses where staff members did not complete information forms.

The student was not enrolled in an ASSC nor provided AI outside of an ASSC for 861 failure occurrences (7% of all STAAR EOC failure occurrences).

December 2019 STAAR EOC Failures

A total of 6,611 students enrolled in the district in February 2020 failed at least one STAAR EOC as of the December 2019 administration; some students failed more than one exam.¹²

Students who failed STAAR EOCs attended ASSCs at 17 high schools for an average of 3.75 hours per week.¹³ Six percent of students that failed STAAR were enrolled in at least one relevant ASSC (some students may have been enrolled in ASSCs for multiple subjects; therefore, they could be in the percentage more than once).

To determine what AI students were provided outside of ASSCs after the December EOCs, 31 high school campus principals were sent information forms. Because some students failed multiple exams, there were 11,529 failure occurrences.¹⁴ Three campuses reported occurrences in which only ASSCs were used to provide AI (16 failure occurrences). Of these, no students were enrolled in ASSCs relevant to the subtests they failed.

For failure occurrences with available data, when AI was provided outside of ASSCs after testing in December 2019, campus staff members most often reported providing 2-2.99 hours of AI per week (43% of occurrences), then 1-1.99 hours (26%), and 3-3.99 hours (14%). AI most often was provided during school (35% of occurrences), after school (27%), or on Saturday (25%). A teacher with content expertise most often provided the AI (87% of occurrences). Campus staff members reported that no AI was provided in five percent of failure occurrences. Campus staff members marked “unknown” for two percent of failure occurrences.

The student was not enrolled in an ASSC nor provided AI outside of an ASSC for 514 failure occurrences (5% of the STAAR EOC failure occurrences).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Most students who failed STAAR 3-8/STAAR EOC were provided some type of AI.

Assign a central staff member to document the services provided under SSI and accelerated instruction for high school students. Lack of data during the school year (no data were available for the 3,748 students at campuses for which data were not completed) prohibits accurate analyses. The district should appoint a central staff member

¹² Data were extracted from a file provided by the Office of Institutional Research on 03/09/20 and included students from all administrations that had yet to pass a STAAR EOC. Students must test until they pass or graduate.

¹³ Calculations were based on bell schedules posted on school websites (Hinkley, 2017 & Hinkley & Sanguras, 2016).

¹⁴ No information was available for 1,530 failure occurrences where staff members did not complete information forms.

to monitor and track accelerated instruction, thereby ensuring students are provided the services they need to be successful.

REFERENCES

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