

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Compensatory education is defined in law as programs and services designed to supplement the regular education program with compensatory, intensive, and 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 English learners (EL) or students of limited English proficiency (LEP), students who failed a state assessment, or students who were retained. The district is required to submit the District Improvement Plan (DIP), two Campus Improvement Plans (CIP), 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 budget for 2018-19. 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 2018-19 At-Risk students in the Dallas Independent School District (Dallas ISD) and examines how their assessment performance, graduation rate, and dropout rate compared to their Not-At-Risk peers.

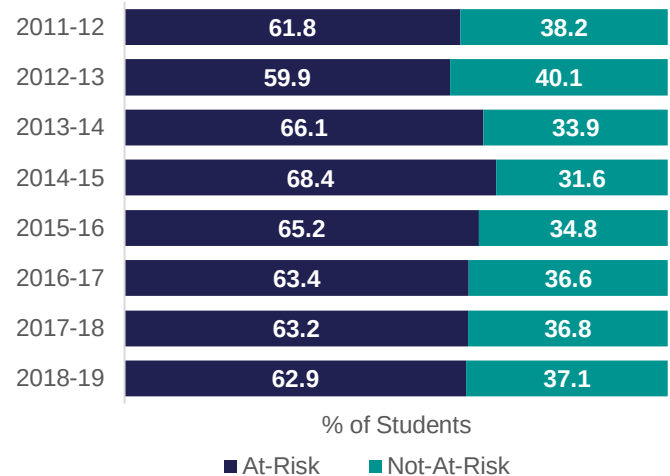
EVALUATION QUESTIONS/OUTCOMES

What were the demographic characteristics of 2018-19 Dallas ISD At-Risk students?

Results

During the 2018-19 school year, a total of 97,476 Dallas ISD students were identified as At-Risk according to the TEA Texas Academic Performance Report (TAPR) District Profile, representing 62.9 percent of the district's grades EC-12 enrollment ($N=155,030$). As shown in Figure 1, the percentage of At-Risk students increased between 2012-13 and 2014-15. From 2014-15 through 2018-19, a gradual decline in the percentage of At-Risk students was found.

Figure 1: 2011-12 through 2018-19 District Student Population by At-Risk Status



Source: TEA 2012 AEIS and 2013 to 2019 TAPR reports.

The largest number of At-Risk students were in grades 5 and 9; grades 4 through 10 had the largest percentages of students identified as At-Risk (Table 1). A larger proportion of At-Risk students were identified as Hispanic compared to the overall district student population. Similarly, a larger proportion of At-Risk students were identified as EL compared to the overall district student population.

Table 1: 2018-19 Student Enrollment by Grade

Grade	District <i>N</i>	At-Risk	
		<i>n</i>	%
EC	180	41	22.8
PK	12,737	6,369	50.0
KN	10,992	5,478	49.8
1	11,234	5,925	52.7
2	11,314	6,260	55.3
3	11,518	6,414	55.7
4	12,197	8,470	69.4
5	12,248	9,378	76.6
6	11,144	8,064	72.4
7	10,554	8,011	75.9
8	10,424	7,728	74.1
9	12,192	9,041	74.2
10	10,603	6,803	64.2
11	9,398	5,332	56.7
12	8,502	4,054	47.7
Total	155,237	97,368	62.7

Source: PEIMS district data file, 10/26/18.

Note: Data from the PEIMS submission may differ from data obtained from the TAPR report.

What programs and services were funded by the SCE Program?

2018-19 SCE Funding

In 2018-19, the district received an SCE program allotment of \$178,339,900 from the state. The minimum direct cost requirement was 52 percent for the 2018-19 school year, or \$92,736,748. The district budgeted \$95,306,764 in direct cost to support programs/services for At-Risk students, and actual expenditures totaled \$86,273,103.

The primary sources of documents for SCE program expenditures are the DIPs and CIPs, which are required by state law. SCE funded programs and services must be described in the DIP if the program is implemented districtwide or in CIP if implemented at the campus level.

District Improvement Plan

The 2018-19 DIP 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 26 CIPs (six comprehensive high schools, seven middle schools, and thirteen elementary schools) showed that all schools conducted a needs assessment as required and set achievement targets aligned with campus needs assessments. The percentage of At-Risk students at sampled schools ranged from 26 to 92 percent. Strategies utilized to provide assistance to struggling students included differentiated instruction, increased use of data for progress monitoring and identification of individual students' strengths and weaknesses, greater emphasis placed on quality instruction and strategies such as small-group, and in-school and out-of-school tutoring. Greater emphasis was also placed on increased teacher professional development, parental involvement and education, and use of Personalized Learning Communities (PLCs).

What were the academic performance outcomes, graduation rates, and dropout rates of At-Risk and Not-At-Risk students?

STAAR 3-8 and STAAR EOC Performance

On nearly all STAAR 3-8 and STAAR EOC tests in 2019, the percentage of At-Risk students at Approaches Grade Level or Above (Approaches+) was lower than the percentage of Not-At-Risk students (Table 2). On the STAAR Reading tests in grade 3, the percentage of At-Risk students at Approaches+ was the same as the percentage of Not-At-Risk students. On the STAAR Mathematics tests in grade 3, the percentage of At-Risk students at Approaches+ was one percentage point higher than the percentage of Not-At-Risk students.

Table 2: 2019 STAAR 3-8/STAAR EOC Approaches Grade Level or Above Rates and Performance Gaps

Subject	Grade	2019 % Approaches+		Diff.
		At-Risk	Not-At-Risk	
Reading	3	72	72	0
	4	59	89	-30
	5	81	98	-17
	6	48	85	-37
	7	58	94	-36
	8	74	99	-25
English I EOC		49	93	-44
English II EOC		47	94	-47
Mathematics	3	77	76	1
	4	69	91	-22
	5	86	98	-12
	6	69	92	-23
	7	55	87	-32
	8	86	98	-12
Algebra I EOC		81	97	-16
Science	5	63	93	-30
	8	69	95	-26
Biology EOC		78	98	-20
Social Studies	8	53	91	-38
US History EOC		87	99	-12
Writing	4	58	81	-23
	7	50	91	-41

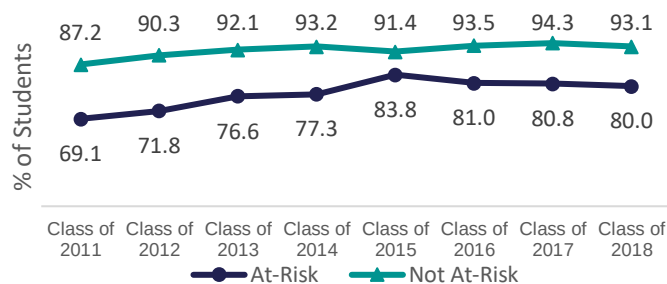
Source: TEA 2019 TAPR reports.

Note: Data include all students in the Accountability Subset for each year reported. Diff.=Difference. Approaches+=Approaches Grade Level or Above.

High School Graduation and Completion Rates

Overall, there has been a positive trend in graduation rates of At-Risk students since 2011. However, graduation rates of At-Risk students continue to be lower than those of Not-At-Risk students, resulting in a gap between the two groups (Figure 2). The gap for the Class of 2018 decreased slightly but was due to the 1.2-point decrease in the Not-At-Risk student graduation rate.

Figure 2: Graduation Rates by Cohort and At-Risk Status: Class of 2011 to Class of 2018



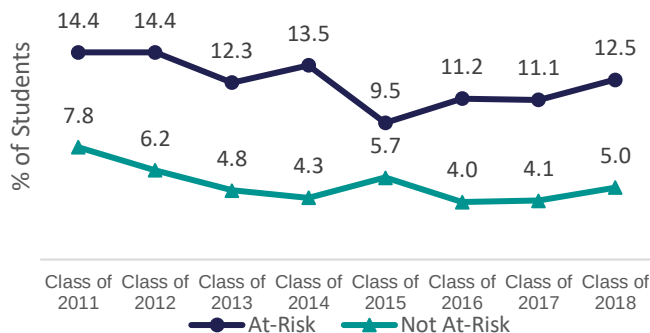
Source: TEA Completion, Graduation, and Dropouts data.

Note: Data reported are the federal graduation rates and are different than prior year reports which reported state accountability graduation rates.

Overall, dropout rates of At-Risk students were lower for the Classes of 2015 to 2018 compared to the Classes of 2011

to 2014. The Class of 2015 had the lowest dropout rate (9.5%) but rates increased gradually in subsequent years. Dropout rates of At-Risk students are higher than those of Not-At-Risk students, resulting in a *gap* between the two groups (Figure 3). The *gap* widened for the Class of 2014 but decreased markedly for the Class of 2015. For the Classes of 2016 and 2017, the *gap* narrowed slightly but increased for the Class of 2018.

Figure 3: Dropout Rates by Cohort and At-Risk Status: Class of 2011 to Class of 2018



Source: TEA Completion, Graduation, and Dropouts data.

RECOMMENDATIONS

As recommended in previous years, designate a full-time SCE program administrator. At its current level of funding, with an overall budget of approximately \$178 million, oversight would help to ensure that funds are used efficiently and effectively. With more than \$85 million available in 2018-19 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.

Investigate how the passage of House Bill 3 will impact the funds allocated for prekindergarten compensatory education. Based on the 86th Texas Legislature passage of HB 3 mandating the state to provide funding for full-time prekindergarten, it will be important for district staff to carefully consider how HB 3 funding will interact with SCE funding.

Require, as recommended in previous years, central organizations to apply for SCE funds. 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 provide documentation for the use of SCE funds and facilitate evaluation of services and activities supported by central SCE expenditures.

Ensure adequate funding and support is provided through SCE to decrease At-Risk student dropout rates. The dropout rate was higher for the Class of 2018 (12.5%) compared to the Class of 2015 (9.5%), 2016 (11.2%), and 2017 (11.1%).

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