

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of the State Compensatory Education (SCE) program is to supplement the regular education program with compensatory, intensive, and accelerated instruction for students identified as being at-risk of dropping out of school (At-Risk). The program is designed to reduce or eliminate disparities between At-Risk and all other students in (a) performance on assessment instruments administered under Subchapter B, Chapter 39 of the Texas Education Code ([TEC] 1995, amended 2013) 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 14 criteria are Emergent Bilingual (EB) 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.

For SCE funds to be allocated to a campus, services provided to students must be described in the district and campus improvement plan. A district's SCE allotment may be used for costs such as program and student evaluation; instructional materials, equipment, and other supplies required for quality instruction; supplemental staff expenses; salaries for teachers of At-Risk students; and reduced class size and individualized instruction.

During the 2019-20 school year, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Dallas ISD transitioned students to at-home learning on March 23 until the end of the school year. In 2020-21, Dallas ISD delayed the start of the school year until September 8, 2020 and implemented at home learning districtwide for the first four weeks.

In 2021-22, the district returned to in-person instruction for all students, with minimal exceptions. The district offered virtual learning to a small subset of students who met district eligibility requirements. To help mitigate learning loss and further support students, the district offered three different school calendars in 2021-22 (School-Day Redesign, Intersession, and Base/Traditional) and other supports.¹

The scope of this evaluation report includes the program context, implementation, and results of the 2021-22 SCE Program. It examines and summarizes budget allocations and expenditures, including how SCE direct cost funds were

used for supplemental services and programs, as described in the district and campus improvement plans (DIP and CIPs, respectively). The report describes the characteristics of the 2021-22 At Risk student population in Dallas ISD and compares their graduation and dropout rates with those of Not-At-Risk students. Finally, performance outcomes on the Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) *Measures of Academic Progress* (MAP) and the *State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness* (STAAR) assessments are compared across At-Risk and Not-At-Risk student groups.

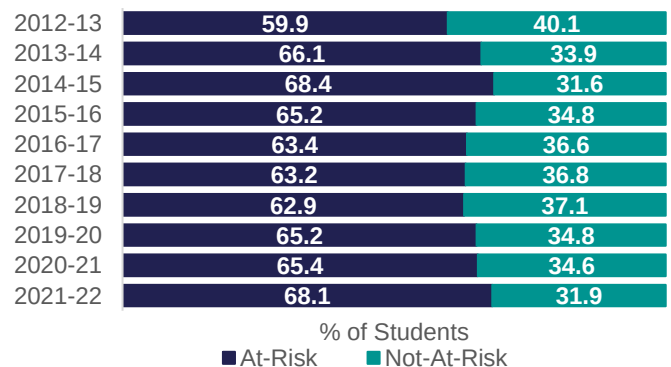
EVALUATION QUESTIONS/OUTCOMES

What were the demographic characteristics of 2021-22 Dallas ISD At-Risk students?

Results

- In 2021-22, 68.1 percent ($n = 96,322$) of the district's Early Childhood (EC) – Grade 12 students ($N = 141,504$) were identified as At-Risk (Figure 1).
- The percentage of students identified as At-Risk has gradually increased since 2018-19.

Figure 1: 2012-13 through 2021-22 District Student Population by At-Risk Status



Source: TEA 2013 to 2022 TAPR reports. District At-Risk indicator data file, 06/07/22.

- The largest percentages of At-Risk students were in grades 4 through 12 (Table 1).
- Hispanic/Latino students and EB students were over-represented among the At-Risk student segment,

¹ Additional information can be found at <https://www.dallasisd.org/timetolearn> and <https://www.dallasisd.org/esser>

compared to their proportions of the overall district student population.

- The most common At-Risk indicators for Dallas ISD students in 2021-22 were EB designation, STAAR/EOC failure, two or more course failures, and retained in one or more grades.

Table 1: 2021-22 Student Enrollment by Grade

Grade	District	At-Risk	
	<i>N</i>	<i>n</i>	%
EC	542	176	32.5
PK	10,009	4,661	46.6
KN	10,355	5,092	49.2
1	10,640	5,384	50.6
2	10,309	5,487	53.2
3	10,077	5,645	56.0
4	10,188	7,587	74.5
5	10,094	7,930	78.6
6	9,654	7,345	76.1
7	10,051	7,735	77.0
8	10,181	8,209	80.6
9	12,649	9,986	78.9
10	9,669	7,644	79.1
11	8,432	6,600	78.3
12	8,654	6,841	79.1
Total	141,504	96,322	68.1

Source: District student data file, 05/16/22.

Note: Data from district student data file may differ from TAPR report data. EC = Early Childhood. PK = Prekindergarten. KN = Kindergarten.

What programs and services were funded by the SCE Program?

2020-21 SCE Funding

In 2020-21, the district received an SCE program allotment of \$213,339,646 from the state. The minimum direct cost requirement was 55 percent for the 2020-21 school year, or \$117,336,805. The district budgeted \$109,937,466 in direct cost to support programs/services for At-Risk students, and actual expenditures totaled \$102,893,917.13.

The DIP and CIPs are the primary sources of record for expenditures attributed to the SCE program required by the state. The program and services must be described in the DIP if the program is implemented districtwide or in the CIP if implemented at the campus level.

District Improvement Plan

- The 2021-22 DIP was reviewed for SCE components. The district plan contained broad statements regarding goals, strategies, and activities targeting specific At-Risk criteria, while detailed plans were developed at the campus level.

Campus Improvement Plans

- A review of 30 CIPs 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 23 to 96 percent.

- Strategies outlined to assist struggling students generally fell into one of six areas: parent-focused (e.g., increased parental involvement), teacher-focused (e.g., use of differentiated instruction), direct academic student support (e.g., before- and after-school tutoring), non-academic student support (e.g., extra- and co-curricular activities), campus-focused (e.g., partnerships with outside agencies), and use of data (e.g., daily checks for understanding with immediate feedback).

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

MAP

- In 2022, the percentage of At-Risk students scoring at the Average or Above Growth Quintile for end-of-year (EOY) Reading and Math on MAP varied by grade level and test language (Table 2).
- A smaller percentage of At-Risk students obtained the Average or Above Growth Quintile, compared to Not At-Risk students, on nearly all tests.
- The EOY Mathematics test for Grades 1, 2, 3, and 5 were exceptions, with a greater proportion (between 2 to 5 percentage points higher) of At-Risk students scoring at the Average or Above Growth Quintile, compared to Not At-Risk students.
- The largest performance gaps between At-Risk and Not-At-Risk students scoring at the Average or Above Growth Quintile were found on Grade 4 EOY Reading–Spanish (21 percentage points), Grades 7 and 8 EOY Reading–English (16 percentage points each), and Grade 7 Mathematics (10 percentage points).

Table 2: 2021-22 MAP End-of-Year Average or Above Growth Quintile Rates and Performance Gaps

Grade	At-Risk %	Not-At-Risk %	Diff. %
Reading (English)			
1	36.8	35.7	1.1
2	44.6	51.1	-6.5
3	53.3	59.1	-5.8
4	51.4	62.8	-11.4
5	53.4	62.3	-8.9
6	48.2	57.8	-9.6
7	45.8	61.6	-15.8
8	47.0	63.3	-16.3
9	44.8	56.6	-11.8
10	43.1	55.6	-12.5
11	47.2	53.6	-6.4
Reading (Spanish)			
1	41.9	42.3	-0.4
2	37.4	43.1	-5.7
3	70.4	75.0	-4.6
4	62.3	83.3	-21.0
5	57.9	66.7	-8.7
Mathematics			
1	50.9	45.8	5.1
2	50.7	46.2	4.5
3	69.1	63.7	5.4
4	58.9	62.2	-3.3
5	52.2	50.2	2.0
6	51.6	59.6	-8.0
7	43.8	54.0	-10.2
8	49.8	54.5	-4.8
9	50.2	58.5	-8.3
10	51.5	58.5	-7.0
11	52.2	57.9	-5.7

Source: District EOY MAP data file, 06/22/22.

Note: Diff. = Difference between student groups.

STAAR

- In 2022, the percentage of At-Risk students at Approaches+ on STAAR 3-8 and STAAR EOC varied by grade level and subject (Table 3).
- The percentage of At-Risk students at Approaches+ was lower than the corresponding percentage of Not-At-Risk students on nearly all tests.
- The Grade 3 STAAR Mathematics test was an exception, with a greater proportion (four percentage points higher) of At-Risk students scoring at Approaches+, compared to Not-At-Risk students.
- The largest performance gaps between At-Risk and Not-At-Risk students were on English I EOC and English II EOC (36.8 and 37.1 percentage points, respectively), followed by Grade 8 Social Studies (32.8 percentage points).

Table 3: 2021-22 STAAR 3-8/STAAR EOC Approaches+ Rates and Performance Gaps

Subject	Grade	At-Risk %	Not-At-Risk %	Diff. %
Reading	3	63.3	70.2	-6.9
	4	60.6	84.0	-23.4
	5	72.0	88.4	-16.4
	6	54.8	82.3	-27.5
	7	65.5	88.7	-23.2
	8	73.0	89.7	-16.7
	English I EOC	47.0	83.8	-36.8
	English II EOC	53.9	91.0	-37.1
Mathematics	3	67.9	63.5	4.4
	4	61.9	76.6	-14.7
	5	72.1	83.0	-10.9
	6	62.4	81.3	-18.9
	7	53.2	79.3	-26.1
Algebra I EOC		63.8	86.6	-22.8
Science	5	55.2	76.5	-21.3
	8	55.6	83.5	-27.9
Biology EOC		72.0	93.4	-21.4
Social Studies	8	44.0	76.8	-32.8
US History EOC		80.4	97.9	-17.5

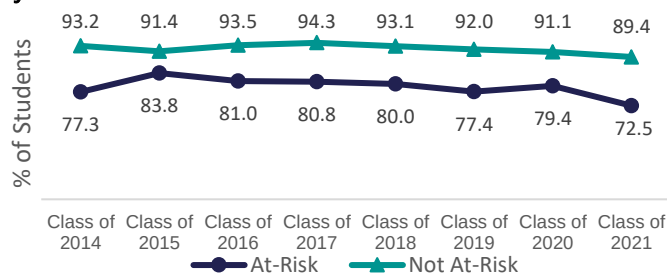
Source: District STAAR and STAAR EOC data files, 06/27/22.

Note: Diff.=Difference between student groups.

High School Graduation and Completion Rates

- Historically, the graduation rate of At-Risk students has been lower than that of Not-At-Risk students (Figure 2).
- The Class of 2021 had the lowest graduation rate in recent years, for both At-Risk and Not-At-Risk students (72.5% and 89.4%, respectively).
- The graduation rate of At-Risk students in 2021 exhibited a much greater decline (6.9 percentage points), compared to that of Not-At-Risk students (1.7 percentage points).
- The gap in graduation rates between At-Risk and Not-At-Risk students in the Class of 2021 was the widest it has been in recent history (16.9 percentage points).

Figure 2: 2013-14 through 2020-21 Graduation Rates by Cohort and At-Risk Status



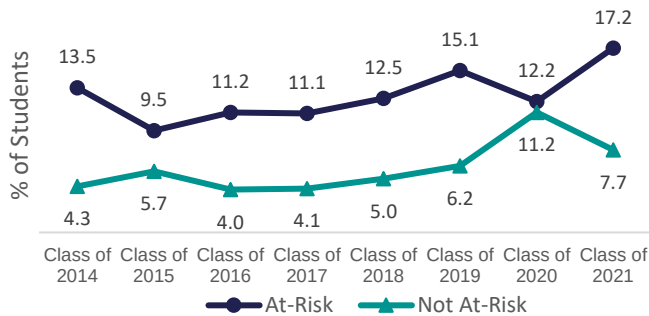
Source: TEA Completion, Graduation, and Dropout data.

Note: Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, traditional student data tracking may have been disrupted and data for the Class of 2020 should be viewed with caution.

- Historically, the dropout rate has been higher for At-Risk students compared to Not-At-Risk students.

- In 2021, the dropout rate for At-Risk students increased to an eight-year high of 17.2 percent (up from 12.2 percent in 2020).
- Conversely, the dropout rate for Not-At-Risk students in 2021 decreased, in nearly equal proportion, to 7.7 percent (down from 11.2 percent in 2020).
- The size of the gap between dropout rates for At-Risk and Not-At-Risk students increased starkly in 2021 to 9.5 percentage points (up from 1.0 percentage point in 2020).

Figure 3: 2013-14 through 2020-21 Dropout Rates by Cohort and At-Risk Status



Source: TEA Completion, Graduation, and Dropout data.

Note: Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, traditional student data tracking may have been disrupted and data for the Class of 2020 should be viewed with caution.

RECOMMENDATIONS

As recommended in previous years, designate a full-time SCE program administrator. At its current level of funding, with an overall budget of over \$213 million, oversight would help to ensure that funds are used efficiently and effectively. With up to approximately \$96 million available in 2020-21 in indirect cost allocations intended primarily to defray program administrative costs, the SCE program should be able to meet the expense of a designated program manager assigned the responsibility of overseeing program implementation and data collection.

As recommended in previous years, require 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.

As recommended in previous years, ensure adequate funding and support is provided through SCE to mitigate achievement and completion disparities between At-Risk and Not-At-Risk students. Utilize the full SCE amount allocated, on programs and services for Dallas ISD's At-Risk students. According to Dallas ISD budget data for 2020-21, the district spent less on SCE direct costs than the 55 percent minimum of the total allocation. The district should ensure that SCE funds are fully utilized on the compensatory, intensive, and accelerated instruction needed to stem poor academic outcomes for the district's most vulnerable students.

Evaluate the impact of alternative school calendars on At-Risk student outcomes. To help mitigate learning loss and further support students, the Dallas ISD Board of Trustees adopted three calendars (traditional, Intersession, and School Day Redesign) for the 2021-22 and 2022-23 school years. In 2021-22, forty-one campuses implemented the intersession school year calendar, five campuses implemented the school day redesign school year calendar, and the remaining campuses implemented the traditional school year calendar. Program evaluators should examine the impact of these initiatives on At-Risk student learning outcomes.

REFERENCES

- Texas Education Agency (2021a). *Completion, Graduation, and Dropouts*. Retrieved from <https://tea.texas.gov/reports-and-data/school-performance/accountability-research/completion-graduation-and-dropouts>.
- Texas Education Agency (2021b). *Texas Academic Performance Report (TAPR): 2012-13 through 2020-21*. Retrieved from <https://tea.texas.gov/perfreport/tapr/index.html>.

EA22-301-4

Larry Featherston, Ph.D., Manager II

Jennifer Emilia Eells, Ph.D., Evaluation Analyst I

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Dallas ISD Department of Evaluation and Assessment; H. B. Bell School Support Center; 2909 Buckner Blvd.; Box10; Dallas, TX 75228

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