

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Dallas Independent School District (ISD) eliminated out-school suspensions for prekindergarten through grade two students in 2017. With the 2021-22 school year, the district implemented the Reset Center Program at 52 comprehensive middle schools and high schools. Supported through the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Fund, the Reset Centers were overseen by the Office of Student Engagement and Support (SEAS). Through social-emotional learning activities and restorative practices tailored to student need, Reset Center coordinators help resolve issues for which a student may have previously received a discretionary in-school suspension (ISS) or out-of-school suspension (OSS) while keeping students at school, engaged in academic instruction, and where other services were available as needed.¹ As the school year progressed, managers with SEAS conducted walkthroughs of Reset Centers and provided coordinators with training that was most beneficial to the students at their campuses.

The total expenditures for the 2021-22 Reset Centers program were \$4,824,333. The program was primarily funded through a \$4,703,954 ESSER grant and supplemented with \$120,379 of general operating funds.

Reset Center Training

Campus administrative team members received an overview training for the Reset Center Program prior to the 2021-22 school year. The Campus Behavior Coordinator, an administrator responsible for enforcing campus classroom rules and district student code of conduct, received more in-depth training. Four managers with SEAS oversaw the reset centers and guided Reset Center Coordinator training.

- Each SEAS manager conducted up to four walkthroughs across their network per week. Results informed the professional development provided to Reset Center coordinators by SEAS in addition to professional development provided through Region 10.
- SEAS managers met weekly to discuss trends in Reset Center referrals, recidivism, and MHS referrals. Campuses were placed in three tiers, with tier three campuses receiving the most targeted training.
- During the second semester, SEAS managers pivoted from tiering campuses based on data analyses to tiering campuses based on implementation and administrative

buy in. Managers met directly with administrators and addressed obstacles to program implementation, program understanding, and buy in.

Reset Center Structure

The SEAS Director was hired in June 2021 and SEAS was restructured to include four managers. Each manager worked with 10-18 Reset Center campuses.

All 52 comprehensive secondary campuses established Reset Centers managed by Reset Center coordinators. The centers were in designated rooms designed to facilitate continuous educational services and personalized approaches to behavior management. The rooms included flexible seating, stationary bicycles, space for restorative circles, and space for an MHS clinician as necessary.

- A Reset Center referral was from one to three days with a maximum of 30 cumulative days during the school year.
- Students could receive Positive Intervention Support Referrals (PISR), or removals to the Reset Center for one period. PISRs did not count toward the 30-day maximum.
- When referrals ended, coordinators followed up with students and teachers to assimilate the student into the classroom.

PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION

The purpose of this evaluation was to document the implementation and outcomes of the Reset Center Program in 2021-22, including funding, student characteristics, student outcomes (disciplinary actions, recidivism, grade nine on-track and high school graduation rates), and staff perceptions. Detailed methodologies are available in the full report.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS/OUTCOMES

Did the Reset Centers meet the ESSER performance objectives for 2021-22?

Staff Member Hiring and Training

During the first semester, SEAS hired 52 Reset Center Coordinators; however, three coordinators resigned prior to

¹ The Dallas ISD Student Code of Conduct can be found at <https://www.dallasisd.org/Page/128>.

the second semester. The district did not procure Trust-Based Relational Intervention training and no coordinators completed it.

Performance Objectives

Exactly 2,627 students were referred to a Reset Center or received a PISR during the 2021-22 school year.

- Of these students, 695 (37%) committed another offense and received an additional disciplinary action. The ESSER goal that 50 percent of referred students would not commit multiple offenses was met.
- For students that visited Reset Centers at least one time, the number of visits ranged from one to seven with an average of 1.3 visits.
- Eight percent of the students who received Reset Center support also received MHS services, lower than the ESSER goal of 50 percent.

What were the characteristics of students served by Reset Centers?

Of the 2,627 students who received visited a Reset Center, 447 students were not enrolled at a Reset Center campus at the end of the year. For the students who completed the year at Reset Center campuses ($N = 2,180$):

- Compared to other students at the same campuses, a larger percentage of Reset Center students were African American (39% vs. 20%), and a smaller percentage were Hispanic (56% vs. 74%).
- A smaller percentage were considered Emergent Bilingual (32%) than other students at the same campuses (50%).

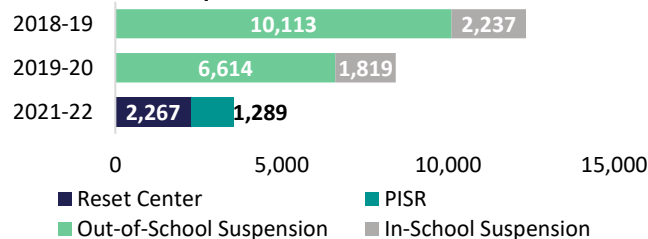
What were the outcomes for students served by the Reset Centers?

Disciplinary Actions and Recidivism

The overall number of disciplinary actions at campuses with Reset Centers decreased from 14,396 in 2018-19 to 6,019 in 2021-22.

- The number of OSS and ISS disciplinary actions – Reset Center referrals and PISRs during the 2021-22 school year – decreased from 12,350 in 2018-19 to 3,556 in 2021-22 (Figure 1).

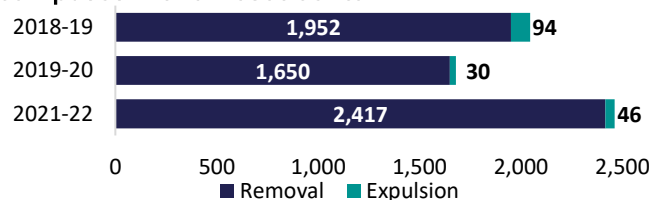
Figure 1: 2018-19, 2019-20, and 2021-22 Frequency of Suspensions, Reset Center Referrals, and PISRs for Students at Campuses with a Reset Center



Source: 2018-19 discipline file dated 08/13/2020, 2019-20 discipline file dated 08/19/2020, and 2021-22 discipline referral data received from SEAS on 08/30/2022.

- The number of removals to the DAEP at Reset Center campuses increased by 24 percent from 2018-19 (Figure 2). The number of removals was 30 percent higher than during the 2019-20 school year.

Figure 2: 2018-19, 2019-20, and 2021-22 Overall Frequency of Removals and Expulsions for Students at Campuses with a Reset Center



Source: 2018-19 discipline file dated 08/13/2020, 2019-20 discipline file dated 08/19/2020, and 2021-22 discipline referral data received from SEAS on 08/30/2022.

- The percentage of students committing the same offense multiple times has decreased from 21 percent in 2018-19 and 17 percent in 2019-20 to 14 percent in 2021-22.

Classroom Climate

Prior to the implementation of Reset Centers, 78 percent of students at Reset Center campuses responded favorably on the Student Experience Survey classroom climate scale. The proportion was slightly lower during the 2021-22 school year (75%), the first year with Reset Centers.

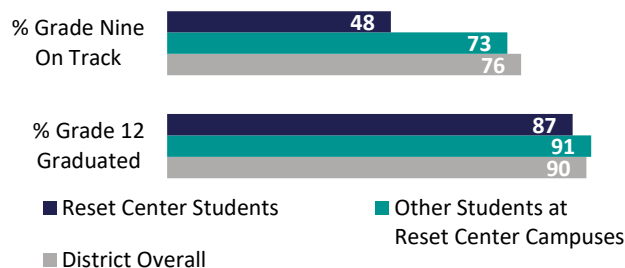
On Track and Graduation Rates

The percentages of Reset Center students, other students at the same campuses, and district students overall in grade nine and considered on track and grade 12 students graduated are presented in Figure 2.

- For grade nine students, the percentage of Reset Center students considered on track (48%) was lower than other students at the same campuses (73%) and the district overall (76%).
- Of grade 12 students, 87 percent of Reset Center students graduated in May 2022. Rates were slightly

higher for other students at the same campuses (91%) and district students overall (90%).

Figure 3: 2021-22 Grade Nine On Track and Grade 12 Graduation Rates for Reset Center Students, Students at Reset Center Campuses, and All District Students



Source: District overall, PEIMS demographic file dated 11/01/21. On Track indicator file dated 07/01/22. Graduation data received 07/18/22.
Note: Ns are available in Appendix B of the full report.

Reset Center Exit Surveys

Students completed an exit survey after each visit to a Reset Center.

- Students generally felt that Reset Center Coordinators spent time with them to understand what they were going through and found ways to support them (84%), reported that they had obtained clear strategies to rejoin their regular classes that would make a positive difference (79%), and felt much better (79%) after their time in the center.
- Students more often attributed positive descriptors than negative descriptors to their first and subsequent visits to the Reset Center. Students most often felt supported, helped, respected, and treated fairly. Conversely, few students selected the negative descriptors of left alone, disrespected, treated unfairly, ignored, and hurt.
- After first and subsequent visits, calm was the most often selected emotional descriptor. The negative descriptors anxious and angry were selected least often.

What were staff perceptions of the Reset Centers?

Methodology

Focus Groups

The evaluator developed focus group protocols and conducted a total of five focus groups – four for Reset Center Coordinators and another for SEAS managers – to solicit feedback on Center activities, barriers to implementation, and successes during the school year. Seven middle school coordinators participated in two focus groups, eight high school coordinators participated in two focus groups, and three SEAS managers participated in one focus group.

The evaluator transcribed recorded focus group interviews and used an open coding process to identify prominent themes in the data. The evaluator summarized the themes and supplemented with direct quotations to illustrate examples as appropriate.

Surveys

Using prominent themes identified from the focus group interviews and collaborating with SEAS program leadership, the evaluator developed two surveys: one for Reset Center Coordinators and another for campus principals and Campus Behavior Coordinators (CBC, all assistant principals) at campuses with Reset Centers.

Results

Focus Groups

The summarized results follow:

- Coordinators and managers indicated the program had a rough roll out during the first semester with poor campus buy-in, unclear messaging, and insufficient professional development.
- Some rooms were not large enough to accommodate the number of students. With larger numbers of students, the coordinators suggested that aides would allow them to address the needs of all students directly.
- Coordinators found success by providing teachers with strategies, interventions, and support.
- Coordinators were wary of the centers becoming a crutch for students. Many reported having rules in place to assist students only if they had a legitimate reason for visiting the centers.
- While coordinators made referrals for specialized services (mental health, special education, etc.) many reported that parents would not follow through due to a variety of reasons.
- Some believed that students with repetitive, violent tendencies should not remain on campus. Students with these behaviors required all of the coordinator's attention to the detriment of other students in the Reset Centers.

Surveys

Of the 50 Reset Center Coordinators, 51 principals, and 185 CBCs who received an invitation to complete the survey, 45 (90%) coordinators, 28 (55%) principals, and 65 (35%) CBCs completed the survey. Summarized results follow. Complete results are presented in Appendix D of the full report.

- Sixty percent of coordinators reported that the centers were very or extremely successful at improving the social and emotional skills of students (54% of

principals and 35% of CBCs) and 53% indicated that the centers were very or extremely successful at improving how well students resolved conflicts with staff members (46% principals and 32% CBCs).

- A higher proportion of principals (64%) reported that centers were very or extremely successful at improving how students resolved conflicts with other students compared to coordinators (53%) and CBCs (40%).
- CBCs were far less likely than coordinators and principals to rate Reset Centers as very or extremely successful at reducing the number of students with multiple referrals, the number of students that recidivate, physical fighting, racial inequalities, and classroom disruptions.
- All principals related that the students who visited the Reset Centers received referrals for additional services (Mental Health Services, Special Education, etc.) in a timely manner (79% coordinators and 73% CBCs).
- 93 percent of principals and 92 percent of CBCs believed that some students should not be referred to Reset Centers and should not remain on campus due to safety concerns (61% coordinators).
- Coordinators, principals, and CBCs agreed that teachers needed more training for Reset Centers to be effective (91%, 79%, and 84% respectively). CBCs were less likely than Reset Center Coordinators and principals to agree that teachers received adequate support to implement the Reset Centers (41%; vs 76% coordinators and 73% principals).
- While principals (96%), Reset Center Coordinators (78%), and CBCs (73%) agreed that campus administrators believed in the philosophy behind Reset Centers, coordinators (64%) were more likely to indicate administrators preferred to administer detentions or suspensions to students that violated the Student Code of Conduct (52% principals and 50% CBCs).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the key findings, the following recommendations are offered for stakeholders.

Provide professional development for teachers and administrators that addresses the disproportionality of Reset Center referrals for African American students.

The number of disciplinary actions for students of all racial backgrounds decreased since the 2018-19 school year. However, African American students received 44% of all Reset Center referrals despite making up 20% of the campus population.

Investigate the increase in disciplinary referrals that resulted in removal to DAEP or expulsion. The number 2021-22 removals and expulsions was 24 percent higher than in 2018-19 and 30 percent higher than in 2019-20 despite the drastic decrease in the overall number of disciplinary referrals. Future evaluations should investigate why these serious consequences have become more frequent.

Provide targeted professional development for CBCs (Assistant Principals). SEAS Managers and Reset Center Coordinators related in focus groups that some campus administrators were wary of the program and decried the lack of consequences for disciplinary infractions. On the follow-up survey, CBCs responded less positively than principals and Reset Center Coordinators about the impact of Reset Centers on conflict resolution, SEL skills, and reducing negative behaviors.

Ensure that all campus teachers and administrators understand the purpose and capabilities of Reset Centers. All surveyed groups felt that teachers needed additional training for the program to be effective. Additionally, coordinators and managers in focus groups related that campus staff members did not understand the types of behaviors that could be addressed in the Reset Center.

Ensure that all Reset Center rooms are large enough to accommodate all referred students and activities. Some coordinators related that their Reset Center rooms were too small to accommodate the number of students referred, especially if the students required distinct, separate spaces.

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