2025-26

Evaluation of the Reset Centers and SEC Program: Key Findings

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DALLAS INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT | Program Evaluation

Website:

The Reset Center initiative was implemented in 2021-22 as an alternative to exclusionary discipline practices. Through a restorative, student-centered approach, Reset Center Coordinators (RCCs) and Positive Intervention Support Referrals (PISRs) offer a short-term educational and behavioral management service for students. The goal of the initiative is to identify root causes of student behavior, address social-emotional needs, and provide academic support. The Student Engagement Coordinator (SEC) initiative provides individualized support to at-risk students struggling with academic, attendance, and/or behavioral needs at 11 of the 54 Reset Center campuses.

Key Findings

Implementation

Reset Centers

- A total of 3,749 unique students received support services from Reset Centers throughout the school year.
- Out of 5,613 total behavioral referrals, 5,588 met Texas Education Agency (TEA) mandatory reporting criteria.
- Approximately 1 in 5 Reset Center students received specialized PISR services to address underlying behavioral needs.
- One-fourth (26%) of Reset students continued to re-engage with Reset services throughout the year, while DAEP recidivism for Reset students was 11%.
- Nearly three-fourths (70%) of RCCs achieved or maintained Tier I ratings.
- Observation Insights: While Reset Centers excel at providing welcoming, tool-rich environments for active de-escalation and restorative mentorship, their effectiveness is constrained by operational demands, such as high administrative loads and frequent student referrals for minor infractions that risk the space becoming a routine classroom escape.

SEC

- A total of 1,229 students were served by the Student Engagement Coordinator Program, an increase of 102% compared to 2024-25.
- Over three-fourths (77%) of students who received SEC services did not have an offense recorded in the district referral file.
- Of the 3,455 SEC services recorded, over four-fifths (85%) were direct student interactions, and the remainder were campus support services.

Stakeholder Feedback

RCC & SEC Survey

- All SECs and most RCCs widely affirmed the program's relationship-building and restorative impact. While most RCCs and half of SECs believed teachers aligned with this philosophy, both groups overwhelmingly agreed teachers need more training to make the SEAS initiative effective.
- Nearly two-thirds of RCCs believed the Reset Center reduced chronic absenteeism; however, about half noted that students used it to avoid class.
- Workplace morale, department culture, and supervisor support received nearly 100% satisfaction from both roles. Campus administrator support was also highly rated by SECs and most RCCs.
- While SEAS department support was highly rated, many reported needing more personal role-specific training. Both groups felt confident finding student resources, except when dealing with student substance abuse, where confidence dropped to 63%.

Campus Administrator Survey

- More than 75% of campus administrators highly endorsed the Reset Center's impact on campus climate, conflict resolution, relationship building, and restorative practices. Furthermore, two-thirds reported that the centers successfully reduced both chronic absenteeism and repeat behavioral referrals.
- Half of administrators noted that students used the center to avoid class, and less than two-thirds felt students were occasionally referred there when campus removal was more appropriate due to safety concerns.
- While less than half felt the RCCs and SECs needed more training, 76% stated that teachers required additional training to make the centers more effective. Currently, less than two-thirds believed teachers received adequate support or fully understood which infractions merited a referral. Less than half felt campus administration itself needed more training.
- Administrators expressed strong confidence in the staff; 100% of those with assigned SECs reported high satisfaction..
- Focus group participants highlighted specific growth opportunities regarding structural oversight, improving campus-wide communication, and shifting campus awareness from punitive consequences toward restorative practices.

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District Discipline Overview

- Nearly two-thirds of all reportable offenses (64%) received Reset service referrals (Reset Center or PISR).
- Over half (52%) of removals were for substance and controlled violations, and nearly half (48%) of expulsions were for weapons and severe safety violations.
- Across 21,483 total referrals (reportable and non-reportable), Reset Centers delivered direct services for 4,837 referrals (23%) and extended 776 PISRs (4%), demonstrating the center's dual role in managing formal discipline and providing proactive, early-stage behavioral support.
- Student referrals hit its highest levels during September and February.

Longitudinal Data

- One-third (39%) of 2024-25 Reset students had a discipline referral in 2025-26, and 21% returned to Reset.
- Compared to 2024-25, Reset Center referrals increased by 38%, while PISR services decreased by 58%.

Student Outcomes

- Reset student's attendance rates increased by 2%, from 87% (2024-25) to 89% (2025-26).
- Compared to 2024-25, Reset student's 9th grade On-track rates increased by 6%, from 30% to 36%, and graduation rates decreased by 8%, from 98% to 90%.
- SEC students had an attendance rate of 87%.
- SEC students' average 9th grade On-track rates were 41%, while their graduation rates were 83%.

Recommendations

- **Strengthen teacher engagement as a core component of the Reset Center model.**

  Evaluation findings suggest that frequent referrals for minor classroom incidents may undermine the Centers' intended purpose as targeted restorative interventions. The Student Engagement and Support department should regularly assess teachers' understanding and training needs through stakeholder surveys, provide targeted professional development on classroom-based de-escalation and appropriate Reset referrals, and incorporate teacher referral patterns into program evaluation. Examining referral trends alongside student re-engagement and longer-term outcomes will provide a more complete picture of program effectiveness and inform efforts to improve grade promotion and student success.

- **Establish a standardized, multi-tiered Substance & Vaping Intervention Framework aligned with Texas Education Code § 37.006.**

  Given high rates of substance-related violations, limited Reset Center referrals for these offenses, and low coordinator confidence in managing substance-related cases, the Student Engagement and Support Department should clarify and strengthen the role of Reset Centers within state requirements. The framework should establish Reset Centers as a structured option for state-mandated in-school suspension when DAEP capacity is reached, allowing students to remain safely supported on campus during required removal periods while reducing reliance on out-of-school suspension. Reset Center Coordinators should also provide PISR and restorative interventions for early-stage or non-reportable substance concerns to address behaviors before they escalate. To ensure consistent implementation, the department should consider partnering with district mental health specialists to equip coordinators with evidence-based screening tools, brief intervention training, standardized response protocols, and clear referral pathways to community-based substance use services for students and families.