EVALUATION OF THE TEXAS GRANTS TO REDUCE ACADEMIC DROPOUTS PROGRAM: INTERIM REPORT

PROGRAM ACTIVITIES THROUGH SUMMER 2004

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Prepared by
The Evaluation Group
Department of Teaching, Learning and Culture
College of Education and Human Development
Texas A&M University
412 Harrington Tower
4232 TAMU
College Station, TX 77843-4232

Prepared for the
Texas Education Agency

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

Over the past decade, Texas has instituted a number of programs and initiatives aimed at improving the quality of high school programs and increasing the graduation rate and success of high school students. Despite overall gains in graduation rates and student achievement resulting from these programs, certain student groups in Texas high schools continue to fare better than others.

As a first step toward ensuring the success of all students, the 77th Texas Legislature passed Senate Bill 702, which required the development of a measurable state plan to reduce the dropout rate. In 2001, a dropout prevention initiative was instituted. Two years later, the 78th Texas Legislature, building on the earlier dropout prevention initiative, appropriated $60 million for high school completion and success initiatives through Rider 67 of Section III of the General Appropriations Act. Funding under this rider facilitates the Texas High School Project, a public-private partnership, which includes the State of Texas, the Office of the Governor, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the Michael and Susan Dell Foundation, and the Communities Foundation of Texas. The goal of the Texas High School Project is to boost graduation rates and increase the number of high school students prepared for the full range of postsecondary opportunities.

The Texas Grants to Reduce Academic Dropouts program, referred to herein as the Texas dropout prevention grant (TXDPG), a $5 million dropout intervention program, is one component of the Texas High School Project. It provides funding for programs in high schools, middle schools, and elementary schools that will result in increased numbers of students attaining a comprehensive base of knowledge and skills and earning a high school diploma. The Evaluation Group (TEG) at Texas A&M University is conducting the evaluation of this grant program for the Texas Education Agency (TEA). The overall purpose of the evaluation is to assess the impact of the activities and strategies implemented through the TXDPG program on student achievement. The purpose of this interim report is to provide context for the evaluation

by describing the characteristics of the campuses that received the grant and the types of activities the campuses are implementing over the first term of the grant period.

Evaluation Design

The evaluation of the TXDPG grant program will progress in four overlapping stages, which include context, comparative, observational, and student-level data analyses. Because of the timing of this interim report in relation to TXDPG project implementation, the results presented herein focus on the first stage of the descriptive study: the context analysis. The report describes the TXDPG program, the research design for the entire evaluation project, the characteristics of the campuses that received TXDPG funds, and the activities implemented by these campuses during the first term of the grant period (i.e., Summer 2004).

During this first stage of the TXDPG evaluation, TEG relied heavily upon two sources of information: grantee progress reports and TEA databases (Academic Excellence Indicator System-AEIS, Public Education Information Management System-PEIMS, and results from the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills-TAKS data). The first progress report, which included data from Summer 2004, provided evidence on the progress of the initial implementation phase of the TXDPG project. The AEIS, PEIMS, and TAKS data provided detailed information on student characteristics (including both demographics and academic performance), supplying a context for the project's implementation. Descriptive statistics were computed in order to determine the baseline characteristics of participating campuses, student achievement levels, strategies/activities implemented, and students served. These detailed statistics are described below.

Characteristics of Campuses Receiving TXDPG Grant Funding

TXDPG funds were awarded at the end of Spring 2004 to 13 organizations, including open enrollment charter schools, that serve 61 campuses. The schools are most heavily concentrated within metropolitan areas (i.e., major urban or suburban) surrounding Dallas, Fort Worth, Austin, San Antonio, and Corpus Christi. The majority of campuses enroll between 1501–2000 students, although approximately one-quarter enroll 500 or fewer students. The average enrollment at the

end of the 2002–03 school year was approximately 1,328. The majority of campuses offer Regular Instruction to students in grades 9 through 12.

Students enrolled in participating campuses during 2003-04 were predominantly Hispanic (56%). This is 17% higher than Hispanic enrollment across Texas high schools at large. The number of African American students at TXDPG schools (22%) also exceeded the respective state percent (14%). The percentage of White students at grantee campuses (19%) was less than half that of all Texas high schools (44%).

Over one-tenth (14%) of the students enrolled in participating campuses were classified as limited English proficient (LEP), twice that of LEP students in grades 9-12 statewide (7%). Across grantee campuses, there were approximately equal percentages of Special Education students and those participating in Gifted/Talented programs. The numbers of students at TXDPG campuses in both types of programs mirror those of all Texas high schools.

Five percent of the students at grantee campuses received disciplinary placement under Chapter 37 of the *Texas Education Code*. This is comparable to the disciplinary placement rate for all Texas high school students. Approximately four out of every ten (41%) grade 9-12 students throughout the state were classified as economically disadvantaged, compared to over half (56%) of the students at TXDPG campuses.

Students at campuses receiving TXDPG funds generally had lower passing rates on the statewide assessment test battery, the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS), than the state as a whole. Achievement gaps were most consistent across the ninth grade subgroups examined. Just over three quarters (76%) of the ninth graders at TXDPG campuses met the state standard on the English Language Arts (ELA) portion of the 2004 TAKS test, compared to 84% of ninth grade students statewide. Similarly, 46% of ninth grade students attending TXDPG campuses passed the mathematics portion of the TAKS test; while 59% of all ninth grade students in Texas met the passing standard for the math portion of the TAKS.

Although the discrepancies in performance narrowed in tenth grade, consistent gaps remained when all TXDPG students were compared to all high school students. The most pronounced difference in student performance was on the science test (TXDPG, 54% vs. Statewide, 64%). The performance gap between TXDPG students and students across the state narrows further for students in the eleventh grade. Higher proportions of both TXDPG students (84%) and all Texas eleventh graders (87%) met the state standard on the ELA portion of the 2004 TAKS test. Approximately eight out of ten students (81%) at TXDPG campuses passed the mathematics portion of the TAKS test compared to 85% statewide.

For all grades, the performance gap between TXDPG students and the statewide passing rates widens when *all tests passed* is used as the benchmark. Less than half of ninth grade students attending TXDPG campuses (45%) passed all TAKS tests in 2004, compared to 57% statewide. Tenth grade passing rates for all tests dropped even further: 39% of the tenth grade students at TXDPG campuses passed all TAKS tests taken versus 49% of the tenth graders statewide. Eleventh grade students fared the best of the three grades analyzed. Just under two thirds of the eleventh graders passed all tests taken (66%), compared to 72% of all eleventh grade students in Texas.

Project Progress Report: Summer 2004

A progress report was designed to record information from the grantees regarding the number of students served, the types of strategies implemented, and the number of staff that were involved in providing services. Data collected through the first Project Progress Report (PPR1), which includes activities completed during Summer 2004, are reported in this section. Results are based on 62 campuses (97%) that submitted a PPR for Summer 2004.[1] It is strongly recommended that these results be interpreted in terms of Summer 2004 only and not the grant program in its entirety. Program results for Fall 2004 and Spring 2005 semesters should reveal the full extent to which grant projects are serving students and implementing strategies and activities.

[1] Thirteen organizations serving 61 campuses received Texas dropout prevention grants. Three campuses were simultaneously served by two separate grant organizations. Since a PPR was submitted by each organization based on the specific strategies and activities funded on each campus, these three campuses were treated separately, bringing the total number of campuses to 64.
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Students Served by the TXDPG Program

Approximately 26,370 students are projected to be served during the grant period (2/1/04 to 8/31/05). The *projected* number refers to the total students grantees *anticipate* serving during the grant period. According to 2003-04 PEIMS data, total student enrollment for the 62 campuses that responded to the PPR1 is roughly 79,450. Of those, approximately 46,900 (59%) students are at-risk of dropping out of school. The projected number of students corresponds to 33% of total student enrollment and 56% of enrollment for at-risk students.

Of the 25,181 high school students projected to receive services over the grant period, approximately seven percent received services during Summer 2004. Campuses reported that 1,189 students are projected to be served in grades five through eight during the grant period. However, no elementary or middle school students received services during Summer 2004.

On average, grantees intend on serving about one third of the total students enrolled or half of the at-risk student enrollment. Students in grades five through eight comprise a small portion of the total number of students projected to receive services during the grant period. Only high school students received services during Summer 2004, and of the number projected for the grant period, less than 10% received services.

Strategies and Activities Implemented During Summer 2004

The TXDPG program focuses on activities directed toward students exhibiting characteristics that are identified as indicators of a greater propensity for dropping out of school prior to graduation from high school. To meet the goals and objectives of the grant program, grant recipients selected strategies and activities from a list of allowable uses of grant funds. Funds were directed towards activities and strategies that best serve the needs of at-risk students on their campuses.

The activity supported by the greatest number of campuses during Summer 2004 was professional development for teachers to meet the needs of diverse learners (47%). Other frequently implemented activities were extended learning opportunities (36%) and credit

recovery programs (31%). Strategies and activities supported by the fewest number of campuses were parent or community volunteer programs (0%), dual high school/college course credit opportunities (2%), and service learning opportunities for students (2%).

The majority of strategies and activities supported by grant funds during Summer 2004 supplemented programs already in place. Exceptions to this trend include new programs such as online diagnostic assessment for students, hiring of additional counselors, and professional development for counselors. On average, support appears to be supplemental rather than directed towards new programs.

Students Participating in Strategies and Activities. Detailed information on students served by grant-funded activities will be addressed in a Fall 2004 Student Information Report (see Appendix A) that will be available in Summer 2005. Items in the summer progress report were developed to provide preliminary information on the number of students who participated in a select group of activities.

Of the students served during Summer 2004, the greatest number participated in credit recovery programs (69%) followed by participation in programs that were expansions of the Ninth Grade Success Initiative (35%). The fewest number of students participated in service learning opportunities (0%), work study programs (<1.0%) and services for pregnant/parenting students (<1.0%). With the exception of these strategies and activities, the percentage of students participating in all other activities ranged between 3% and 27%.

In general, the majority of campuses used funds to support professional development for teachers and credit recovery programs for students. Grantees tended to focus on activities that assisted students with the accrual of needed credits.

Personnel Involved in the TXDPG Program During Summer 2004

A total of 319 staff members participated in the grant program during Summer 2004. The majority of staff involved in the TXDPG program during the summer were highly qualified teachers (70%). Together, paraprofessionals or instructional assistants, administrators, and

counselors accounted for the remaining 30%. Whereas the majority of highly qualified teachers (93%) and counselors (86%) who provided services during the summer were funded by the grant, just under half of the paraprofessionals (42%) and administrators (49%) were grant funded. In addition to staff, 185 parents were involved in the grant program during Summer 2004.

A total of 663 individuals received training in the needs of diverse learners by the end of Summer 2004. The vast majority of those trained were highly qualified teachers (98%). More teachers received training in the needs of diverse learners than provided services during Summer 2004. This finding suggests that teachers received professional development in preparation for the Fall 2004 term.

Grantees were also allowed to use funds to reduce the student-to-counselor ratio in their district. Based on the number of counselors involved in the grant program over the Summer 2004 term (22) and the total number of students served by grant funds over summer (1,730), the student-to-counselor ratio for Summer 2004 was 79:1.

Both peer and adult mentors participated in the grant program during the summer term. Campuses reported that each peer mentor was assigned to a single student but multiple students were assigned to each adult mentor. On average, few students participated in a mentoring program during the summer term.

Conclusion

The data support the fact that TXDPG programs are targeting a population of students in need of accelerated academic services. This is evidenced by the socio-economic/demographic status (e.g., economically disadvantaged and/or LEP status) and academic performance (e.g., 2004 TAKS results) comparisons to statewide benchmarks. Based on the comparative analysis of TXDPG campuses and all Texas high schools, it appears that TXDPG grants were awarded to campuses in clear need of assistance. Additionally, campuses are beginning to implement allowable and required activities under the grant program.

SECTION I: BACKGROUND AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Following the 77th Texas Legislative session in 2001, a comprehensive effort to develop and implement a systematic measurable plan for dropout prevention began. Senate Bill 702, which was passed during the 2001 session, required the development of a measurable state plan to reduce the dropout rate in Texas public schools in addition to the data and information requirements stipulated in the *Comprehensive Annual Report on Texas Public Schools.* The legislation also added new dropout reporting criteria and requirements. The new criteria expanded the definition of students at risk of dropping out of school, thereby increasing the number of students eligible for dropout prevention and recovery programs and services.

The Texas High School Project, a public-private partnership to improve Texas high schools, was established in 2003. Additional funds, including $29 million in general revenue and $1 million in federal funds in each fiscal year of the 2003-05 biennium, were provided through Rider 67, High School Completion and Success, to support the establishment and implementation of comprehensive completion and success initiatives. The Texas Grants to Reduce Academic Dropouts program, referred to herein as the Texas dropout prevention grant (TXDPG) program, is one component of the larger Texas High School Project.

The intent of the TXDPG program is to provide funding for dropout related intervention programs that will result in increased numbers of students attaining a comprehensive base of knowledge and skills and earning a high school diploma. The goals of the grant program are to increase the number of students that graduate from high school in districts that exhibited lower than state average completion rates and to proactively address some of the issues that are cited as underlying factors that cause some students to drop out of school prior to receiving their high school diploma.

The Texas dropout prevention grant program provides $5 million in grant funds to 61 campuses across the state for programs such as:

- Early intervention programs;

- Programs that reduce student–to-counselor ratios for schools with high dropout rates;
- Credit recovery programs, which help students earn course credit;
- Flexible scheduling and work/study programs; and,
- After-school, evening, or summer learning opportunities.

Rider 67 of the General Appropriations Act also authorized a comprehensive evaluation of programs funded through the rider including the Texas High School Completion and Success Grant Program and the Texas Grants to Reduce Academic Dropouts. The Evaluation Group at Texas A&M University is conducting the evaluation of the Texas dropout prevention grant program with the intent of determining the extent of implementation of grant activities and the effectiveness of various grant activities.

Literature Review

State of Texas

Taking a look at state statistics regarding dropout rates and graduation rates helps provide a broader context for understanding the purpose and goals of the TXDPG grant program. A dropout in Texas is defined by TEA as a student who is enrolled in school at some time during the school year but either leaves school during the school year without an approved excuse or completes the school year and does not return the following year (TEA, 2004). According to the agency (TEA, 2004), the statewide annual dropout rate for Grades 9-12 was 1.3%, unchanged from that of 2001-02. There were 15,665 Grade 9 - 12 dropouts in 2002-03, up 3.6% from 15,117 in 2001-02. Annual dropout rates for African American, Hispanic, and Native American students (1.7%, 1.9%, and 1.2%, respectively) were about two to three times higher than that of White students (0.6%) and Asian/Pacific Islander students (0.5%). Males (1.4%) dropped out at a slightly higher rate than females (1.1%) from Grades 9 to 12, whereas female dropouts were more likely to leave school in Grades 7 and 8 than were males. Students identified as economically disadvantaged had an annual dropout rate of 1.5%. The highest dropout rates for most student groups appeared in Grades 11 and 12. Hispanic students and economically disadvantaged students had the highest longitudinal dropout rates (7.1% and 6.6%, respectively).

The TEA also calculated a grade 9-12 attrition rate for the year 2003 by comparing 2002-03 Grade 12 enrollment to 1999-00 Grade 9 enrollment. An attrition rate is the percentage of students not enrolled in grade 12 out of the students enrolled in grade 9 four years earlier. The Grade 9-12 attrition rate for the state was 33.6%. There were much higher attrition rates for Hispanic (43.0%) and African American (40.9%) students than the rates for White (23.9%) and all students (21.3%). The Grade 7-12 attrition rate was 21.0% for 2003 (TEA, 2004).

Research on Dropout Prevention Strategies

The TXDPG program focuses grant resources on activities that are described in the dropout prevention literature as effective in increasing the number of students who receive their high school diploma. The following two sections review some of the dropout literature and show how the Texas dropout prevention grant incorporates the findings from the literature.

Dropout literature points out that students leave school for a variety of reasons. Several studies have found poor academic performance to be the strongest predictor of risk of dropping out. Additional reasons include repeating one or more grades, coming from a low socio-economic background, speaking English as a second language, becoming pregnant, and being frequently absent. E. Gregory Woods of the Northwest Regional Education Laboratory reviewed the research findings regarding the characteristics of effective dropout prevention programs. He notes that dropouts have dissimilar characteristics and therefore need different kinds of programs which respond to their individual circumstances and needs. (E. Gregory Woods, 1995 also, Reumann-Moore, 2000; Lee and Burkham, 2001; Gándara, et. al., 1997; Steele, 1997; Pirog and Magee, 1997; Pallas, 1991).

To respond to individual circumstances and needs, effective dropout prevention strategies provide individualized instruction, remediation and accelerated instruction, counseling and mentorship, and flexibility in programming and scheduling. Other strategies that may have a positive impact on keeping students in school include having a trained and committed staff, increasing parental involvement, providing for collaboration with the community and businesses, and matching services to needs.(Rumberger, May, 2001; Texas Education Agency, (August),

2001; 2002; Louis and Miles, 1990; Roderick and Camburn, 1999; Stringfield, et. al., 1992; Slavin and Fashola, 1998; MacNeil, 1999; Ancess and Wichterle, 2001; IDRA, 2002).

Other studies have pointed out some additional strategies that seem to help prevent students from dropping out of school. The National Dropout Prevention Center/Network, located at Clemson University, has identified systemic renewal at the school level, safe learning environments, family engagement, early childhood education, and early literacy development as effective strategies. Other basic core strategies include mentoring/tutoring, service-learning, alternative schooling, and after-school opportunities. Jobs for the Future points to high academic standards transparently linked to future learning and work opportunities; individualized flexible programs with high expectations and clear rules of behavior; and opportunities for youth to catch up and accelerate knowledge and skills as ways to increase graduation rates (Jobs for the Future, 2004). Researchers from Harvard University note that smaller schools, individualized attention, and strong academic intervention, particularly in the 9th grade, appear to improve the odds that students will finish high school (Johnston, R., 2001 also Legters and Kerr, 2001; Neild, et. al., 2000; 2001; Texas Center for Education Research, 2002).

The Southern Regional Education Board in its research comments that the process for dropping out of school begins early and that strategies that improve student achievement are strategies that reduce the dropout rate. An essential strategy is to identify at-risk students early and provide them with both academic and social interventions to help them overcome problems that begin in preschool and continue through elementary, middle and high school (SREB, 2002).

The allowable strategies and activities under the Texas dropout prevention grant program are based on the above research findings on effective dropout prevention strategies. They are also supported by the findings of a series of school dropout prevention focus group meetings conducted in Fall 2002 by the Texas Education Agency. Focus group participants identified numerous causes and possible solutions to the dropout problem. Some of the factors identified as causes for students to dropout of school include:

- loss of eligibility for extracurricular activities;
- lack of a safe school environment;

- poor attendance by at-risk students;
- the size of some very large schools;
- the lack of a challenging and flexible curriculum;
- lack of academic skills and credit hours;
- lack of a system to support students who are at risk of dropping out of school;
- lack of motivation on the part of some at-risk students;
- teenage pregnancy and parenting;
- peer pressure;
- a climate of intolerance of diversity in some schools;
- being overage for their grade level; and,
- family environment (TEA, 2002).

In addition to identifying reasons why students leave school early, focus group participants recommended strategies and programs to address the problem. Among the recommendations were the following:

- individualized instruction for all students;
- establishment of high student expectations by teachers and additional training and staff development opportunities for teachers;
- restructuring of schools to make them more conducive to students staying in school and graduating;
- providing career and technology education courses in middle schools;
- extended-day programs such as after-school tutoring and other after-school programs including summer school programs;
- dual enrollment in high school and postsecondary education;
- implementation of character and values education programs;
- programs and services for pregnant students and students who are parents;
- creating a sense of belonging in schools;
- additional counseling;
- mentoring programs;

- partnerships and collaboration between schools and community groups and organizations; and,
- parent involvement in education (TEA, 2002).

Many of these activities and those mentioned in the literature were supported through funding under the TXDPG program as explained below.

Allowable Grant Activities

Allowable grant activities under the Texas dropout prevention grant program are based on the effective strategies described in the dropout prevention and recovery literature and the recommendations of the focus groups. These strategies and activities are presented below in eight categories based on similarity.

Credit Accrual

- ***Online diagnostic assessment for students.*** Students use a computer program to receive immediate feedback on their academic status. This type of assessment identifies the specific areas that have been passed and failed by the student. Software programs commonly used in online diagnostic assessment include but, are not limited to, Plato, Nova-net, and School-Net.
- ***Credit recovery programs to assist students who are behind in credit accrual.*** Oftentimes taken in a lab setting or a night program, students make up credits in needed courses. A credit recovery program may include on-line diagnostic assessment and accelerated instruction. Some credit recovery programs use TEA-approved curriculum such as American Preparatory Institute (API).
- ***Accelerated credit accrual programs.*** After identifying the parts of a course that have been failed, students receive fast-paced instruction and accrue credits in these areas. Software programs commonly used include but, are not limited to, Plato, Nova-net and School-Net.
- ***Dual high school/college course credit opportunities.*** Students earn both high school and college credit by taking one course. The high school typically has an articulation agreement with the local community college to provide these courses. Career and technology courses are common examples. Courses can be taught at the high school or on a college campus.

Staff Hiring and Development

- ***Professional development for teachers to meet the needs of diverse learners.*** *Diverse learners* include but are not limited to students identified as limited English proficient, students with disabilities and migrant students. Professional development materials, training and/or courses introduce teachers to instructional strategies that are well-suited to the needs of these learners.
- ***Professional development for counselors***
- ***Hiring of additional counselors***
- ***Funding of highly qualified paraprofessionals or teacher assistants to assist teaching staff.*** Highly-qualified refers to individuals who have accrued a specified number of professional development credit hours and/or course work. These individuals may teach small group instruction under the supervision of a teacher and provide assistance in a variety of ways that include but are not limited to, organizing a credit recovery lab, keeping records of student participation, attendance and performance in the lab, book-keeping, etc.

Expanded Learning Opportunities

- ***Extended Learning Opportunities***. Learning opportunities for students beyond the regular school day such as before or after school, in the evening or on week-ends as well as summer classes.
- ***Computer Assisted Instruction***
- ***Trailer courses.*** These are courses offered in the term immediately following the semester in which the identified course was failed. For example, a student fails Algebra I in the Fall semester. In the Spring semester, the student retakes the Fall term of Algebra I in an out-of-school time frame and continues with the Spring term of Algebra II. The student has an opportunity to remain on track with course credit and graduation requirements by successfully completing both sections in the Spring term.
- ***Flexible scheduling.*** Similar to flexible entry/exit courses; while enrolled in Algebra I, the student makes up missing credits in Geometry. However, in comparison to flexible entry/exit courses, flexible scheduling is generally regarded as a component of program development.

- ***Flexible entry/exit courses.*** These courses are likely to take place in a credit recovery lab where a student is enrolled in one course and makes up missing credits in another at the same time. Students may be scheduled into an elective to make up missing credits.
- ***High quality tutoring services for students identified as at-risk.*** Tutoring is provided to students by teachers certified in a particular field. Teachers certified in English who provide tutoring in math would *not* be considered high-quality tutors. Tutors use individual-level data to plan individual lessons for students.

Mentoring (by peers and adults)

- Role models work with students for the purpose of improving their academic, decision making, and problem solving skills. Students are assigned to a mentor, and are afforded a connection with someone on campus who takes an interest in them.

Guidance and Support Services

- ***Character education.*** Activities include anger management, as well as drug, gang and pregnancy prevention.
- ***Services for pregnant/parenting students***
- ***Service learning opportunities for students.*** These are opportunities to do service work or volunteer work in the community. In some schools, students take a course and earn elective credit for service learning. Service learning programs provide students with training specific to their project and create an extensive network for students.

Early Intervention

- ***Early intervention programs targeting at-risk students.*** Students who show early signs of not being able to complete high school in four years are identified and provided with follow-up support services that address their specific needs.
- ***Expansion of the Ninth Grade Success Initiative (NGSI) grant program.*** Campuses that received NGSI funds could continue or expand those previously-funded activities, courses, labs or curriculum using local funds or additional grants. The goals of this program are to increase academic achievement, offer credit recovery, and provide support services to ninth graders in at-risk situations.

College/Career Preparation

- ***Work study programs.*** Students earn credits by participating in cooperative education. These programs allow students to gain work experience and high school credit at the same time. Advanced Career and Technology Education (CATE) courses often involve work study credit.
- ***Career awareness/planning activities for students***
- ***College awareness/planning activities for students***

Parent and Community Involvement

- Activities include (student) home visits, educational or career training for parents, efforts to involve parents in the educational process, parent or community volunteer programs (non-mentoring), distribution of printed materials in the Spanish language or hiring of bilingual personnel, and advertisement of grant program features and/or recruitment via the media.

Based on current research and the recommendations of the focus groups, these strategies and activities were offered as a means of lowering the risk of students dropping out of school and increasing high school completion rates. Grant recipients direct funds towards activities and strategies they believe will best serve the needs of at-risk and other targeted students in their district.

Rationale for an Evaluation of the Grant Program

Academic research has identified the risk factors associated with a propensity for dropping out prior to graduation (National Center for Education Statistics, 2002; Christenson, Sinclair, Lehr & Godner, 2001; U.S. Department of Education, 2001). Current dropout prevention and intervention programs target students who have been identified as at risk for dropping out of high school (Fashola, & Slavin, 1998; Scharge & Smink, 2001). However, few comprehensive studies have focused on evaluating the effectiveness of dropout prevention and school completion programs (Christianson & Thurlow, 2004). According to Lehr et al. (2003), in a review of dropout intervention studies, the majority of research has been descriptive in nature and few controlled studies have been conducted.

The limitations associated with much of the current research on student dropout and completion point to the need for a rigorous and comprehensive evaluation of programs designed to increase the number of students attaining a diploma. Moreover, state-level initiatives require educational programs to be based on reliable research and evaluated according to empirical evidence. Each component of the grant program is rooted in current research but the effectiveness in achieving goals and serving students most in need has not yet been examined. The purpose of the evaluation of the TXDPG program is to determine the effectiveness of grant-funded activities in promoting high school graduation.

The Evaluation Group (TEG) at Texas A&M University is conducting the evaluation of the TXDPG program and has prepared this interim report. It consists of four additional sections. The next section details the purpose of the evaluation, as well as the evaluation design. The third section summarizes characteristics of grantee campuses and their students. Section Four describes strategies/activities implemented and students served with TXDPG funds during Summer 2004. Conclusions and future actions to be undertaken in this evaluation effort are outlined in the final section.

SECTION II: EVALUATION DESIGN

The overarching purpose of the evaluation of the TXDPG program is to assess the impact of the activities implemented through this program on student achievement. Over an approximate eighteen-month period, The Evaluation Group (TEG) of Texas A&M University will conduct both formative and summative evaluations, analyzing the extent to which strategies and activities were implemented and, more importantly, the effectiveness of these strategies/activities. Analyses will be based upon both campus and individual student-level data. The features of the evaluation design over the program's entirety are outlined below. Specific questions addressed within this initial report are then identified, followed by a brief description of the contents of the final evaluation report that TEG will submit when the TXDPG program has been completed.

Research Questions

The comprehensive evaluation of the TXDPG program addresses four broad questions. In order to fully address these broad questions, the more specific questions given below must also be answered.

1. Who is participating in the TXDPG program?
    1.1. What are the characteristics of the project campuses?
    1.2. What are the characteristics of students served through project funds?
    1.3. How do the student characteristics of grantee campuses differ from those for all Texas high school students?

2. How effectively was the TXDPG program implemented?
    2.1. How many students were served?
    2.2. Which types of strategies/activities did grantees implement on their campuses?
    2.3. Were these strategies/activities fully implemented?
    2.4. Did implemented strategies/activities change over time?
    2.5. What are the characteristics of staff involved in the program?

3. Were TXDPG program goals achieved?
    3.1. What were the program's effects on student achievement?
    3.2. What were the program's effects on schools?

4. What are the "Best Practices" used by participating TXDPG campuses?
    4.1. Which strategies/activities were most effective?
    4.2. Why were these strategies/activities most effective?
    4.3. What lessons were learned about implementing a project of this nature?
    4.4. What recommendations can be offered for future projects pertaining to Texas high school reform programs?

This interim report focuses primarily on the first two research questions posed above.

Methodology

This evaluation will progress in four overlapping stages. The first relies upon TXDPG campus responses to progress reports, as well as state databases maintained by TEA. Descriptive statistics will be computed in order to determine baseline characteristics of the participating campuses, student achievement levels, strategies/activities implemented, and students served. These analyses will be repeated after each progress report administration in order to document changes over time.

The second component of this evaluation will consist of matching each of the TXDPG campuses with a comparable campus that did not receive TXDPG funding. Comparison campuses will be chosen using a stratified proportional sampling plan. The first set of criteria will be those used in determining funding decisions (e.g., a 50% or lower passing rate across all tenth graders on the standardized Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills [TAKS] tests). Strata will be defined by variables such as geographic location, community type, and student demographic variables. In addition to analyzing the change in student achievement (in terms of dropout rates, completion rates, and standardized test scores, etc.) from the beginning to the end of the project at TXDPG

campuses, achievement levels can also be compared to those of non-funded campuses with similar student populations.

The third stage of the evaluation involves compilation of observational data. Site visits will be conducted at six of the participating campuses (approximately 10%) also selected via a stratified proportional sampling plan. Strata will again include variables such as geographic location, community type, and student demographic variables such as the percent eligible for free or reduced-price lunch and ethnic composition. These site visits will occur in March and early April, 2005 and will supply information—both quantitative and qualitative—that will aid in identifying "best practices."

The fourth stage of this evaluation design involves collecting individual student-level data in order to compare the academic achievement results of students attending TXDPG campuses to students with similar characteristics enrolled in non-funded campuses. A key component of each progress report is submission of the identification numbers of students served by the grant. This will allow TEG to identify the characteristics of students served and determine the grant activities in which students participated. TEG will then examine the relationship between the activities/strategies in which students participated and the individual student's academic achievement. Through this analysis, TEG hopes to determine which types of grant activities had the greatest impact on student achievement and offer information about best practices used by participating campuses. TEG will also track a sample of TXDPG students over time to determine lasting program effects.

Data Sources

Three data collection measures have been developed or adapted for this evaluation. (See Appendix A for copies of these instruments.) The first is the Project Progress Report (PPR). This measure was developed by TEG after reviewing the grant Request for Applications (RFA) document and is designed around the strategies/activities that campuses were allowed to implement or supplement with grant funds. This self-report instrument will be administered to project directors online at the end of: Summer 2004 (PPR1, due Oct. 15, 2004), Fall 2004 (PPR2, due Feb. 15, 2005), Spring 2005 (PPR3, due July 15, 2005), and Summer 2005 (PPR4,

due Oct. 15, 2005). All four PPRs are to be completed for each participating campus. As a component of each PPR, project directors are asked to submit a limited amount of student-level data to TEA, including the aforementioned identification numbers of individuals served through program funds. (See Appendix A for a copy of the form project directors were instructed to use for Fall 2004 individual student-level data submission.)

The second instrument is the High School Classroom Observation Measure (HSCOM). The HSCOM was adapted for this project after reviewing the literature on school reform evaluations that have been undertaken in other states. It will be used to document data collected by researchers during the course of site visits and is comprised of two sections. The first section requires site visitors to record their observations of a classroom during a five-minute interval regarding the following: 1) subject area(s) taught; 2) instructional orientation(s); 3) instructional component(s) [teacher behavior(s)]; 4) student behavior(s); 5) teaching and learning context; 6) student attention/interest/engagement; and 7) academically focused time. Site visitors will document the above for each of ten classrooms observed on the campus. The second section of the HSCOM, "Overall Observation," summarizes the site visitor's impressions within the above seven categories across the ten classrooms on a five-point scale: 0 = Not Observed; 1 = Rarely Observed; 2 = Occasionally Observed; 3 = Frequently Observed; and 4 = Extensively Observed.

A third instrument, the High School Implementation Review (HSIR), will provide data resulting from self-reports by the leadership team at each campus. The HSIR consists of 17 items that document the degree of implementation of specific strategies/activities allowed under grant funds on a five-point scale: 1 = No Evidence of Development or Implementation; 2 = Low Level of Development or Implementation; 3 = Limited Development/Partial Implementation; 4 = Fully Functioning at Operational Level; and 5 = Exemplary Implementation. This instrument will be sent by mail to all TXDPG campuses and also posted on the TEG website. The leadership teams at site visit campuses will be asked to review their responses with site visitors. The HSIR will be administered twice—both midway through the project and at the program's end. In addition to the ordinal, quantitative data resulting from these ratings, this instrument will yield qualitative information. Overall, this in-depth documentation of program implementation will both validate and supplement the data obtained via PPR responses.

In addition to the above three data sources, TEG will utilize state databases maintained by TEA. Data from TEA's Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) and Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) were used to establish the baseline characteristics of participating campuses. Data from TEA's standardized TAKS test battery files provided baseline TXDPG student achievement information. The individual student-level data derived from PEIMS will also be used to document the characteristics of students served under grant funds.

Interim Report

This interim report first describes the characteristics of the project campuses. Project directors' responses to the first PPR regarding activities undertaken during Summer 2004 are then summarized. Results reported herein will establish baseline data. Specifically, the following research questions are addressed in this report.

1.1. What are the characteristics of the project campuses?

1.3. How do the student characteristics of grantee campuses differ from those for all Texas high school students?

2.1. How many students were served?

2.2. Which types of strategies/activities did grantees implement on their campuses?

2.5. What are the characteristics of staff involved in the program?

Findings pertaining to questions 1.1 and 1.3 are presented in the following section. The remaining three (2.1, 2.2, and 2.5) questions are addressed in Section IV.

Final Evaluation Report

The final evaluation report for the TXDPG program will be available in August 2006. This report will first describe the characteristics of TXDPG schools, the students who participated in program activities, and how these characteristics compare with those of all Texas high schools. Utilizing data from the PPRs and site visits, it will then detail the strategies/activities implemented across TXDPG campuses. Analyses will also document changes in program implementation that occurred over time, assess the degree to which proposed strategies/activities were fully implemented, and document the total number of students served. The report will then

focus on the impact of the activities implemented through this grant program on student achievement, including 2005 TAKS scores. The final report will also provide evidence on promising practices for student academic achievement in Texas high schools. Finally, the report will include details on lessons learned when implementing a project of this nature and recommendations for future projects pertaining to Texas high school reform programs.

SECTION III: DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT CAMPUSES

The findings of the first stage of the TXDPG program evaluation, included in this report, are organized around the five specific research questions outlined in Section II of this report (1.1, 1.3, 2.1, 2.2, and 2.5). This section describes the characteristics of the 61 campuses awarded TXDPG grants,[2] and compares the characteristics of students from TXDPG campuses to those of all Texas high school students.

Broad campus characteristics (i.e., geographic location, the type of communities in which they are located, enrollment size, and the instructional method offered) are discussed first. The demographic characteristics of students served by grantee campuses are then presented. Third, student achievement on the 2004 Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) test battery is documented. Finally, 2003 dropout and completion rates of students at TXDPG campuses are compared to those of high school students across the state.

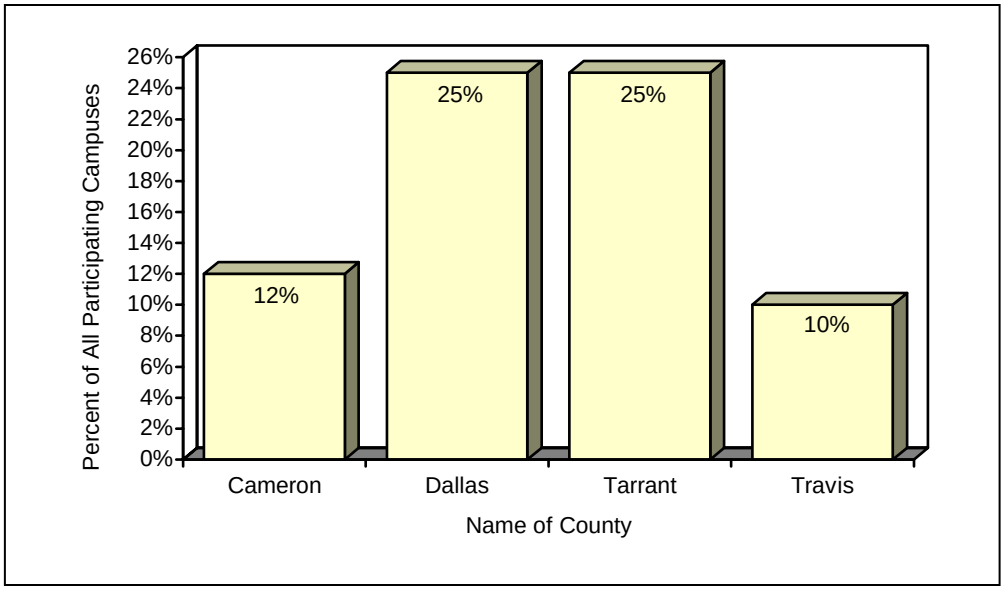
Broad Characteristics of Project Campuses

Geographic Location

The campuses are located within 12 school districts distributed across nine of the 254 counties within the State of Texas. As seen in Figure 3.01, 72% of campuses were located in four counties: Dallas, Tarrant, Cameron, and Travis Counties. Dallas and Tarrant, adjacent counties located in North Texas, encompass the Dallas and Fort Worth metropolitan areas. Travis County includes Austin. Cameron County lies in the southern tip of the state and borders Mexico. The other counties in which school districts received the Texas dropout prevention grants are primarily located in South and East Texas.

[2] Three of these campuses were supported by two grantees.

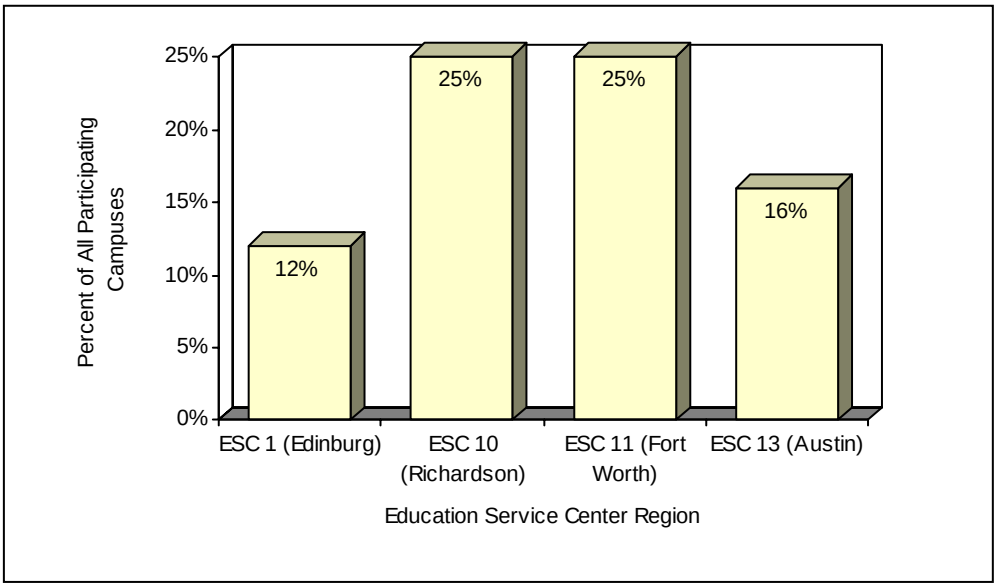
Figure 3.01. Texas Grants to Reduce Academic Dropouts: Counties with Highest Percentages of TXDPG Grantee Campuses



Source: The Texas School Directory, 2003-04; Texas Education Agency, 2004.

TXDPG grantees are located within eight of the state's 20 Education Service Center (ESC) regions. As seen in Figure 3.02, each of the following Education Service Center regions contained more than 10% of participating campuses: ESC 1 (Edinburg), ESC 10 (Richardson), ESC 11 (Fort Worth), and ESC 13 (Austin). As seen in Table 3.01, approximately 44% of the TXDPG campuses are located in the central and southern part of Texas in ESC 1 (Edinburg), ESC 2 (Corpus Christi), ESC 13 (Austin), or ESC 20 (San Antonio). The remaining campuses are located in the Dallas/Fort Worth metropolitan area.

Figure 3.02. Texas Grants to Reduce Academic Dropouts: ESCs with Highest Percentages of TXDPG Grantee Campuses



Source: The Texas School Directory, 2003-04; Texas Education Agency, 2004.

Table 3.01. Texas Grants to Reduce Academic Dropouts: Distribution of TXDPG Grantee Campuses Across ESC Regions

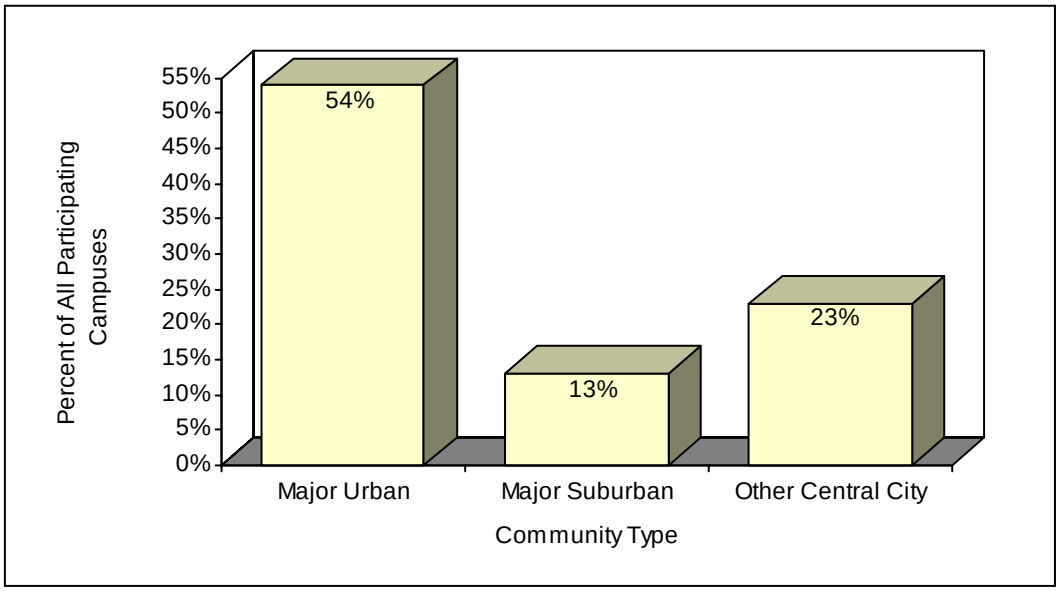
ESC	1	2	5	7	10	11	13	20
#	7	5	1	3	15	15	10	5
%	11.5	8.2	1.6	4.9	24.6	24.6	16.4	8.2

Source: The Texas School Directory, 2003-04; Texas Education Agency, 2004.

Community Type

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) classifies campuses into one of nine community size categories based upon factors such as school size, growth rate, student economic status, and proximity to urban areas. All charter schools are grouped together as one community type. (See Appendix B for category definitions.) Given the above discussion of grantee geographic location, it is not surprising that over 90% of the grantees were located in relatively large cities (Figure 3.03). Less than 7% (n = 4) were charter schools (Table 3.02).

Figure 3.03. Texas Grants to Reduce Academic Dropouts: Community Types with Highest Percentages of TXDPG Grantee Campuses



Source: Snapshot-- School District Profiles, 2001-02; Texas Education Agency, 2004.

Table 3.02. Texas Grants to Reduce Academic Dropouts: Distribution of TXDPG Grantee Campuses by Community Type

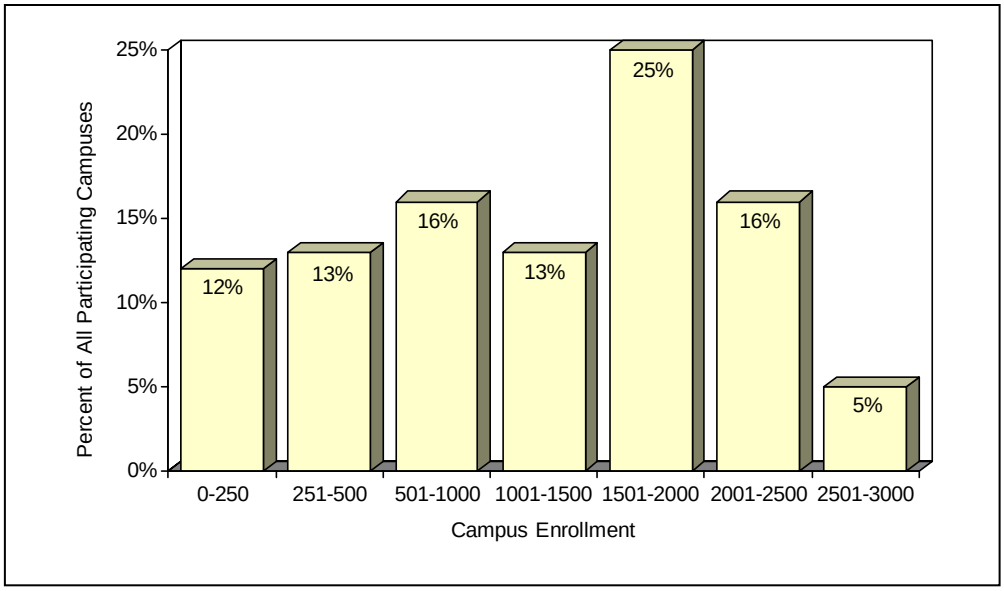
Community Type	Number of Campuses	Percent of Campuses
Major Urban	33	54.1%
Major Suburban	8	13.1%
Other Central City	14	23.0%
Other Central City Suburban	2	3.3%
Independent Town	0	0.0%
Non-Metro: Fast Growing	0	0.0%
Non-Metro: Stable	0	0.0%
Rural	0	0.0%
Charter School	4	6.6%
Total	**61**	**100.0%**

Source: Snapshot--School District Profiles, 2001-02; Texas Education Agency, 2004.

Campus Enrollment

Participating campuses, while predominantly located within metropolitan areas, did not uniformly enroll a large of number of students. As seen in Figure 3.04, approximately 25% (n = 15 campuses) enrolled 500 or fewer students. However, the majority of campuses were relatively large, enrolling between 1501 – 2000 students. Overall, the average enrollment across all participants at the end of the 2002-03 school year was approximately 1,328.

Figure 3.04. Texas Grants to Reduce Academic Dropouts: Distribution of TXDPG Grantee Campuses by Student Enrollment

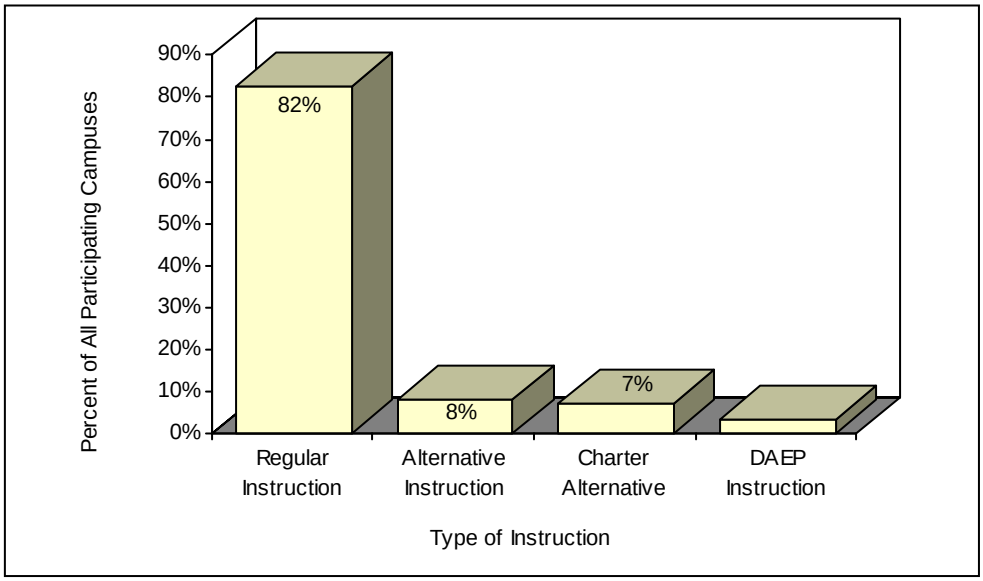


Source: The Texas School Directory, 2003-04; Texas Education Agency, 2004.

Instructional Classification

Within The Texas School Directory, campuses are listed according to instructional classification. As seen in Figure 3.05, only four instructional methods were represented within the participating campuses, with the majority (82%) offering Regular Instruction to their students. While 8% of the campuses provided Alternative Instruction, only 3% (n=4) were Disciplinary Alternative Ed Placement (DAEP) Instructional schools. Most grantees (74%) served students in grades 9 through 12.

Figure 3.05. Texas Grants to Reduce Academic Dropouts: Distribution of TXDPG Grantee Campuses by Instructional Type



Source: The Texas School Directory, 2003-04; Texas Education Agency, 2004.

Student Demographic Characteristics

Student demographic data for the grantee campuses and for all high school students in Texas were extracted from PEIMS for the 2003-04 school year. These data were used to calculate the proportions of students in various demographic categories (e.g., ethnicity, economically disadvantaged, etc.) at grantee campuses and for the population of all high school students (grades 9-12) in Texas. This analysis allows for a meaningful comparison of the student population at campuses funded by the TXDPG program and the overall population of Texas high schools to determine if TXDPG funds were directed at campuses in great need of assistance. Results are provided in Table 3.03.

Table 3.03. Texas Grants to Reduce Academic Dropouts: Student Demographic Characteristics

Student Subgroup	TXDPG GRANTEES		STATE OF TEXAS, Grades 9-12	
	Number of Students	Percent of Students	Number of Students	Percent of Students
Ethnicity				
African American	17,181	21.8%	171,527	14.3%
Hispanic	44,462	56.4%	464,080	38.8%
White	15,311	19.4%	519,508	43.5%
Other Characteristics				
Limited English Proficient (LEP)	11,066	14.0%	81,221	6.8%
Gifted/Talented	8,148	10.3%	114,307	9.6%
Special Education	9,066	11.5%	148,604	12.4%
Disciplinary Placement	3,964	5.0%	57,907	4.8%
Economically Disadvantaged	44,019	55.8%	484,330	40.5%
Total Number of Students	78,863		1,195,530	

Source: Public Education Information Management System, 2003-04; Texas Education Agency, 2004.
Note: TXDPG grantees included 4 elementary, 11 middle, and 1 multi-level school. However, as mentioned, the majority of participants (45) offered instruction to students in Grades 9-12. Therefore, the State of Texas comparison group was defined as Grade 9-12 high schools.

Ethnicity

Students enrolled in participating campuses during 2003-04 were predominantly Hispanic (56%). This is 17% higher than Hispanic enrollment across Texas high schools at large (39%). The number of African American students at TXDPG schools (22%) also exceeded the respective state percent (14%). The percentage of White students at grantee campuses (19%) was less than half that of all Texas high schools (44%).

Other Characteristics

Over one-tenth (14%) of the students enrolled in participating campuses were classified as limited English proficient (LEP). LEP students are identified by the Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC) according to criteria established in the Texas Administrative Code. As seen in Table 3.03, the proportion of LEP students attending TXDPG schools was twice that of LEP students in grades 9-12 statewide (7%).

Across grantee campuses, there were approximately equal percentages of Special Education students (i.e., those served by programs for students with disabilities) and those participating in Gifted/Talented programs (i.e., students who perform at, or show the potential for performing at, a remarkably high level of accomplishment when compared to others of the same age,

experience, or environment). The numbers of students at TXDPG campuses in both types of programs mirror those of all Texas high schools.

Five percent of the students at grantee campuses received disciplinary placement under Chapter 37 of the *Texas Education Code*. This is comparable to the disciplinary placement rate for all Texas high school students. Approximately four out of every ten (41%) grade 9-12 students throughout the state were classified as economically disadvantaged (i.e., eligible for free or reduced price lunch or eligible for other public assistance), compared to over half (56%) of the students at TXDPG campuses.

Student Standardized Test Achievement

2004 TAKS Passing Rates

The Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) is a comprehensive testing program for public school students directly linked to the state-mandated Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) curriculum. These tests replaced the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) program and were administered for the first time in Spring 2003 to students in grades 3–11. The percentages of students across grantee campuses in grades 9, 10, and 11 who were administered the English version of the test battery in March 2004 and met minimum passing standards are presented below. For grades 9 and 10, the minimum passing standard for each test was defined in Spring 2004 as a score that fell no more than one standard error of measurement (SEM) below the State Review Panel's Recommendation. For grade 11, the minimum passing standard for each test was defined in Spring 2004 as a score that fell no more than two SEMs below the State Review Panel's Recommendation. Pass rates were computed by dividing the number of students passing the TAKS by the total number of test-takers across grantee campuses.

Tables 3.04–3.06 depict the percent of all students and various subgroups across participating campuses that met the minimum standards within the content areas administered to that grade on the first administration of the test battery, as well as those who met minimum standards across all tests required for each grade. These tables also present the 2004 state passing rates for all students and major ethnic groups, as well as by economically disadvantaged, LEP, and Special

Education subgroups. These averages were obtained from the TEA Division of Assessment web link and are given for comparative purposes.

2004 TAKS Passing Rates for Grade 9. Students in ninth grade were administered exams in reading and mathematics in Spring 2004. With the exception of White student scores, TXDPG pass rates were lower than those of the state across subgroups in each content area and across both tests (Table 3.04).

Table 3.04. Texas Grants to Reduce Academic Dropouts: Percentage of Grade 9 Students Who Met the Minimum Passing Standard,* 2004 TAKS Test Results by Subject Area

	Reading		Mathematics		All Tests	
	TXDPG Students Tested	All Students Tested	TXDPG Students Tested	All Students Tested	TXDPG Students Tested	All Students Tested
All Students	76%	84%	46%	59%	45%	57%
African American	70%	77%	33%	43%	33%	42%
Hispanic	72%	77%	40%	46%	38%	45%
White	93%	93%	76%	75%	75%	74%
Economically Disadvantaged	71%	76%	38%	44%	37%	43%
Limited English Proficient	35%	38%	18%	21%	14%	17%
Special Education	52%	61%	20%	28%	22%	31%

Source: TAKS Results (March 2004 Administration); Texas Education Agency, 2004.
* In Spring 2004, this was defined as a score that fell no more than 1 standard error of measurement (-1 SEM) below the State Panel's recommendation.

Ninth grade students at TXDPG campuses—as well as those within the state at large—performed highest in reading. However, only three-quarters of TXDPG students passed the reading portion of the TAKS, compared to 84% of all Texas ninth graders. The greatest subgroup discrepancies occurred for Special Education students at participating campuses (nine points below the respective state passing rate), followed by African Americans (seven points lower). Low

percentages of LEP students at grantee (35%) and all campuses in Texas (38%) met the state standard on the reading portion of the TAKS exam.

The greatest difference between all ninth grade TXDPG students and those within the entire state occurred in mathematics. Less than half (46%) of the students attending grantee campuses passed this portion of the TAKS battery, compared to 59% of all Texas ninth graders. African American scores were ten points below the state rate, while those of Special Education students were eight points lower.

The results across both reading and mathematics tests largely parallel those for mathematics. Specifically, the performance of all TXDPG students was 12 percentage points below the passing rate of all Grade 9 students in Texas. The percentages of African American and Special Education students who met the minimum standards were nine points below the respective state figures.

2004 TAKS Passing Rates for Grade 10. Students in tenth grade were administered exams in English/Language Arts (ELA), mathematics, science, and social studies. As seen in Table 3.05, the passing rate of White TXDPG students equaled or exceeded that of the respective state group across all content areas. Compared to Grade 9, the Grade 10 TAKS performance gaps between students at grantee campuses and statewide narrowed somewhat for most of the other subgroups.

Table 3.05. Texas Grants to Reduce Academic Dropouts: Percentage of Grade 10 Students Who Met the Minimum Passing Standard,* 2004 TAKS Test Results by Subject Area

	English/ Language Arts		Mathematics		Science		Social Studies		All Tests	
	TXDPG Students Tested	All Students Tested	TXDPG Students Tested	All Students Tested	TXDPG Students Tested	All Students Tested	TXDPG Students Tested	All Students Tested	TXDPG Students Tested	All Students Tested
All Students	68%	75%	56%	63%	54%	64%	83%	87%	39%	49%
African American	63%	68%	39%	45%	40%	46%	79%	81%	25%	30%
Hispanic	62%	67%	50%	51%	46%	49%	79%	80%	30%	34%
White	84%	84%	79%	77%	82%	81%	95%	94%	67%	65%
Economically Disadvantaged	60%	65%	47%	49%	43%	47%	78%	79%	28%	32%
Limited English Proficient	21%	24%	27%	27%	20%	19%	53%	49%	7%	8%
Special Education	33%	41%	26%	29%	26%	31%	55%	63%	13%	15%

Source: TAKS Results (March 2004 Administration); Texas Education Agency, 2004.
* In Spring 2004, this was defined as a score that fell no more than 1 standard error of measurement (-1 SEM) below the State Panel's recommendation.

The most noticeable gaps between TXDPG students and Grade 10 students statewide exist for Special Education and African American students. The passing rate for the former fell below eight points below the state rate on both the ELA (33% vs. 41%) and social studies (55% vs. 63%) portions of the TAKS tests. The passing rate of African Americans enrolled in grantee campuses was six points lower than the state average in mathematics (39% vs. 45%) and science (40% vs. 46%). Though comparable to the state passing rate across all tests, only 7% of TXDPG LEP students passed all four content areas.

The passing rate of all TXDPG students was consistently lower than that of Grade 10 students statewide across all content areas. The most pronounced difference in student performance was on the science test (TXDPG, 54% vs. Statewide, 64%). As was the case with Grade 9, a substantially lower percentage of TXDPG students (39%) passed all four portions of the TAKS test, compared to almost half (49%) of the students tested statewide.

2004 TAKS Passing Rates for Grade 11. Table 3.06 displays the Grade 11 2004 passing rates. Students in eleventh grade were also administered exams in ELA, mathematics, social studies, and science. Passing this battery of tests is a graduation requirement for students enrolled in grade 8 or lower as of January 1, 2001 and graduating in the 2004–05 school year or later.

Table 3.06. Texas Grants to Reduce Academic Dropouts: Percentage of Grade 11 Students Who Met the Minimum Passing Standard,* 2004 TAKS Test Results by Subject Area

	English/ Language Arts		Mathematics		Science		Social Studies		All Tests	
	TXDPG Students Tested	All Students Tested	TXDPG Students Tested	All Students Tested	TXDPG Students Tested	All Students Tested	TXDPG Students Tested	All Students Tested	TXDPG Students Tested	All Students Tested
All Students	84%	87%	81%	85%	80%	85%	96%	97%	66%	72%
African American	81%	82%	71%	73%	74%	74%	96%	96%	56%	58%
Hispanic	79%	81%	78%	78%	73%	75%	95%	95%	58%	61%
White	93%	92%	93%	91%	95%	93%	99%	99%	86%	83%
Economically Disadvantaged	78%	79%	75%	76%	71%	74%	94%	94%	55%	58%
Limited English Proficient	42%	42%	59%	59%	45%	47%	83%	81%	23%	24%
Special Education	49%	56%	56%	55%	53%	57%	85%	88%	30%	35%

Source: TAKS Results (March 2004 Administration); Texas Education Agency, 2004.
* In Spring 2004, this was defined as a score that fell no more than 2 standard errors of measurement (-2 SEM) below the State Panel's recommendation.

Overall, eleventh grade students in Texas performed very well on the social studies portion of the TAKS battery (and relatively well on the ELA test), as did TXDPG students. Unlike other grades discussed, Grade 11 students scored approximately as well in mathematics as in ELA. White TXDPG students passing rates equaled or exceeded state rates across all content areas. The performances of the remaining subgroups examined were generally comparable to the respective state groups.

Within each of the four content tests, the gap between the performance of all TXDPG students and Grade 11 students throughout Texas ranged from one to five percentage points. The largest

discrepancy occurred in science, where 80% of the eleventh grade students at participating campuses met minimum passing standards compared to 85% of all Texas students in Grade 11. While 66% of the TXDPG students passed all four required tests, 72% of the eleventh grade students throughout the state met the Grade 11 exit-level requirements.

2003 Four-Year High School Outcomes

The PEIMS database includes a completion rate indicator. This indicator documents the status of students after four years of high school. The cohort consists of students who first attended ninth grade in 1999-00. They were followed through their expected graduation as the class of 2003. The classifications that define the completion rate indicator include: 1) the percentage of students who dropped out and did not return by the fall of the 2003-04 school year; 2) the percentage of students who graduated from high school within four years; 3) the percentage who received a General Educational Development certificate before March 2003; and, 4) the percentage still enrolled as students in the fall of the 2003-04 school year.

2003 Four-Year Dropout Rates

Table 3.07 displays the 2003 four-year dropout rates for the 1999-2000 student cohort group enrolled in TXDPG campuses versus those in Texas high schools across the state. In terms of all students, the dropout rate of TXDPG students exceeded that of the state by almost one and one-half percentage points. There were slightly fewer TXDPG Hispanic students reported as having dropped out of high school relative to the respective state population, but rates differed by only one-half of a percentage point. Dropout rates were somewhat higher, but also comparable to the state, for TXDPG economically disadvantaged and White students. The TXDPG subgroup rates that most highly exceeded the respective state groups were those for African Americans and Special Education students. While the dropout rate was highest for LEP students, the TXDPG figure did not exceed the state value.

Table 3.07. Texas Grants to Reduce Academic Dropouts: 2003 Four-Year Dropout Rates

SUBGROUP	TXDPG GRANTEES	STATE OF TEXAS
All Students	5.9%	4.5%
African American	8.2%	6.3%
Hispanic	6.6%	7.1%
White	2.9%	2.2%
Economically Disadvantaged	6.7%	6.6%
Limited English Proficient	16.6%	18.1%
Special Education	8.3%	6.6%

Source: Public Education Information Management System, 2003-04; Texas Education Agency, 2004.

2003 Four-Year Graduation Rates

Table 3.08 depicts the 2003 four-year graduation rates for students enrolled in TXDPG campuses as compared to those in Texas high schools across the state. Though the rate was comparable to the state value for White TXDPG students, graduation rates were lower for all students and all subgroups at grantee campuses. Special Education and LEP students lagged farthest behind other students throughout the state.

Table 3.08. Texas High School Completion and Success: 2003 Four-Year Graduation Rates

SUBGROUP	TXDPG GRANTEES	STATE OF TEXAS
All Students	80.9%	84.2%
African American	80.2%	81.1%
Hispanic	76.2%	77.3%
White	89.2%	89.8%
Economically Disadvantaged	76.8%	77.8%
Limited English Proficient	51.4%	54.5%
Special Education	71.5%	75.0%

Source: Public Education Information Management System, 2003-04; Texas Education Agency, 2004.

Summary

Texas Grants to Reduce Academic Dropouts funds were awarded at the end of Spring 2004 to 13 organizations which serve 61 campuses. The schools are most heavily concentrated within metropolitan areas (i.e., major urban or suburban) surrounding Dallas, Fort Worth, Austin, San Antonio, and Corpus Christi. The majority of campuses enroll between 1501–2000 students,

although approximately one-quarter enroll 500 or fewer students. The average enrollment at the end of the 2002–03 school year was approximately 1,328. The majority of campuses offer Regular Instruction to students in grades 9 through 12.

When compared to all 9-12 Texas high schools, Hispanic and African American students are over-represented within TXDPG campuses while Caucasians are under-represented. Students enrolled at participating campuses are more likely to be classified as LEP and/or economically disadvantaged. Further, the standardized 2004 TAKS test scores of TXDPG students tended to lag behind statewide passing rates. Achievement gaps were most consistent across the ninth grade subgroups examined. Although the discrepancies in performance narrowed in tenth grade, and lessened even more for several Grade 11 subgroups, consistent gaps remained when all TXDPG students were compared to all high school students. The passing rate of students at participating campuses fell below state rates for all subject areas, particularly science. Further, the passing rates of all TXDPG students across all content tests taken lagged behind those of all Texas students in Grades 9, 10, and 11. Across all students and the majority of subgroups, four-year dropout rates were slightly higher for TXDPG students while four-year completion rates were lower.

Based upon the comparative analysis of TXDPG campuses and all Texas high schools, it appears that the competitive grant process undertaken by TEA has successfully awarded TXDPG funds to campuses in clear need of assistance. The on-going evaluation process will document implementation strategies and activities and the impact they have on narrowing student achievement gaps.

SECTION IV:
FINDINGS FROM SUMMER 2004 PROJECT PROGRESS REPORT

A key element in the evaluation of the TXDPG program is to monitor the progress of grant recipients in implementing projects on their campuses. A Project Progress Report (PPR) was designed to document basic aspects of the grant program. At the end of each semester, grantees report on the:

a) number of students served;
b) type of strategies and activities implemented; and,
c) number of staff that provided services.

The Project Progress Report for Summer 2004 (PPR1) is the first of four progress reports to be administered during the grant period (February 1, 2004 to August 31, 2005). Each of the 61 campuses (from 12 districts) was required to complete PPR1 by September 30, 2004.[3] By mid-October, 62 (97%) of 64 campuses had submitted the summer Project Progress Report. All information contained in the discussion below is based on responses from only the 62 campuses that submitted the PPR1.[4]

Of the 62 campuses that submitted PPR1, 24 campuses (38%) conducted summer school. However, in one district a single campus served students from four other campuses. Results are presented below in three main sections that include: 1) Students Served; 2) Grant-Funded Strategies and Activities; and 3) Personnel Involved in the Grant.

Students Served by Grant Funds During Summer 2004

A fundamental piece of information provided by the PPR1 is the number of students served by grant funds during Summer 2004. Grant recipients were asked to report the number of students *projected* or *expected* to be served in each grade during the grant period. The projected number of students referred to herein is an approximation of the total students campuses expect to serve

[3] Thirteen organizations serving 61 campuses received Texas dropout prevention grants. Three campuses were simultaneously served by two separate grant organizations. Since each organization submitted a PPR based on the specific strategies and activities funded on each campus, these three campuses were treated separately, bringing the total number of campuses to 64.
[4] A non-response bias analysis suggests that results from the PPR1 were not biased for or against any particular subset of variables (See Appendix C).

during the course of the grant. In addition, grantees were asked to report the number of students in each grade who were provided with services during Summer 2004

Table 4.01 presents total student enrollment during the 2003-04 school year. Based on 2003–04 PEIMS data, total student enrollment for the 62 campuses that responded to the PPR1 is roughly 79,450. Of those, approximately 46,900 (59%) students are classified as at-risk of not completing high school within four years. The term at-risk refers to students who are at risk for not completing high school in four years after entering ninth grade as defined in the Texas Education Code, Section 29.081 (d).

The total number of students projected to receive grant-funded services during the grant period is 26,370; 33% of total student enrollment and 56% of enrollment for at-risk students. Campuses reported that 10,755 students were enrolled during Summer 2004 and approximately 1,730 students were served by grant funds (16%).

Table 4.01. Texas Grants to Reduce Academic Dropouts: 2003–04 Student Enrollment, Students Projected to be Served During Grant Period and Students Served During Summer 2004

Students	2003–2004 Student Enrollment (PEIMS)	Students Projected to be Served During Grant period 02/01/04 – 08/31/05	Percentage Projected out of 2003–2004 Enrollment	Summer 2004 Student Enrollment	Number of Students Served During Summer 2004	Percentage Served out of 2004 Summer Enrollment
Total	79,450	26,370	33%	10,755	1,730	16%

Source: Project Progress Report; The Evaluation Group at Texas A&M University, 2004.
Note: Table content is based on 62 of 64 campuses that submitted Summer 2004 progress reports by October 30, 2004.

Table 4.02 shows that 1,189 students are also projected to be served in grades five through eight during the grant period. However, campuses reported that no elementary or middle school students received services during Summer 2004.

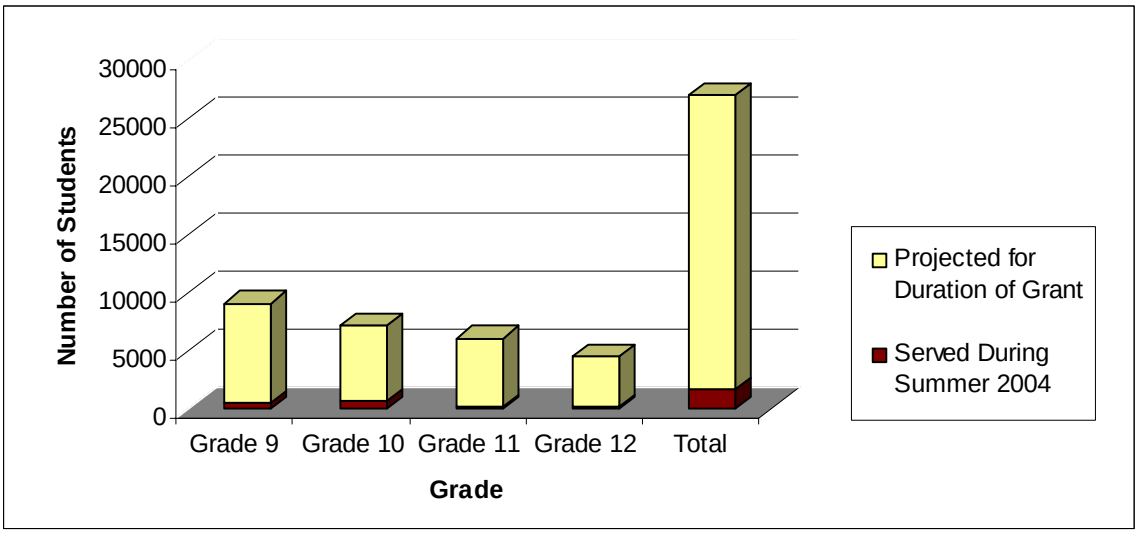
The number of high school students projected to be served during the grant period in relation to the number served during Summer 2004 is presented in Figure 4.01 and Table 4.03. Of the 25,181 high school students projected to receive services, seven percent received services during the summer term. With the exception of tenth grade where 11% of the projected number received services, the percentage of high school students served during summer ranged between five and six percent.

Table 4.02. Texas Grants to Reduce Academic Dropouts: Students in Grades Five through Eight Projected to be Served During the Grant Period and Served During Summer 2004

Grade	Students Projected to be Served During Grant Period (2/1/04–8/31/05)	Percent of Elementary/Middle School Total	Students Served During Summer 2004
5th	172	15%	0
6th	283	24%	0
7th	293	25%	0
8th	441	37%	0
Elementary/Middle School Total	1,189	100%	0

Source: Project Progress Report; The Evaluation Group at Texas A&M University, 2004.
Note: Table content is based on 62 of 64 campuses that submitted Summer 2004 progress reports by October 30, 2004.

Figure 4.01. Texas Grants to Reduce Academic Dropouts: Number of Students Projected for Duration of the Grant in Relation to the Number Served During Summer 2004.



Source: Project Progress Report; The Evaluation Group at Texas A&M University, 2004.
Note: Figure is based on 62 of 64 campuses that submitted Summer 2004 progress reports by October 30, 2004.

Table 4.03. Texas Grants to Reduce Academic Dropouts: High School Students Projected to be Served During the Grant Period and the Number Served During Summer 2004

Grade	Projected Number Of Students (02/01/04 to 08/31/05)	Percentage of Projected High School Total	High School Students Served Summer 2004	Percentage of High School Students Served Summer 2004	Percentage of Projected Number
9th	8,615	34%	480	28%	6%
10th	6,517	26%	726	42%	11%
11th	5,832	23%	266	15%	5%
12th	4,217	17%	258	15%	6%
High School Total	25,181	100%	1,730	100%	7%

Source: Project Progress Report; The Evaluation Group at Texas A&M University, 2004.
Note: Table content is based on 62 of 64 campuses that submitted Summer 2004 progress reports by October 30, 2004.

These findings suggest that on average, grantees intend on serving about one third of the total students enrolled or half of the at-risk student enrollment. Students in grades five though eight comprise a small portion of the total number of students projected to receive services during the grant period. Only high school students received services during Summer 2004, 7% of the number projected for the grant period. These percentages are expected to increase significantly during the course of the program.

Strategies and Activities Implemented During Summer 2004

Items in the PPR1 asked respondents to identify the strategies and activities that were implemented on each project campus during the Summer 2004 semester. To meet the goals and objectives of the grant program, districts selected strategies and activities from a list of allowable uses of funds. Districts direct funds towards activities and strategies they believe best serve the needs of students on their campuses.

Allowable Uses of Grant Funds

Items in the PPR1 asked respondents to identify the strategies and activities that were implemented on each project campus during Summer 2004. Two sets of findings are presented below:

1) The number of campuses that implemented each strategy or activity during Summer 2004; and
2) The percentage of campuses in which the strategy or activity was new to the campus or a continuation of a previously funded program.

The strategies and activities allowable under the grant were ordered by similarity and presented in eight categories: Credit Accrual; Staff Hiring and Development; Expanded Learning Opportunities; Mentoring; Guidance and Support; Early Intervention; College and Career Preparation; and Parent and Community Involvement. The number of campuses that funded and implemented each strategy and activity by the end of the Summer 2004 term is presented in Table 4.04.

The most frequently supported activity was professional development for teachers to meet the needs of diverse learners (47%). Diverse learners include, but are not limited to, students identified as limited English proficient, students with disabilities and migrant students. Professional development materials, training and/or courses introduce teachers to instructional strategies that are well-suited to the needs of these learners.

Other frequently implemented activities were extended learning opportunities (36%) and credit recovery programs (31%). Extended learning opportunities allow students to attend classes after-school, in the evening, on the weekend and during the summer. Credit recovery programs typically take place in a lab setting or a night program and allow students to make up credits in needed courses. Strategies and activities supported by the fewest number of campuses were parent or community volunteer programs (0%), dual high school/college course credit opportunities (2% or n = 1), and service learning opportunities for students (2% or n = 1). These findings suggest that grantees tended to direct grant funds towards professional development for teachers and the opportunity for students to make up missing credits during the summer term.

In addition to identifying individual strategies and activities that comprise their project, respondents were asked to indicate whether each allowable strategy and activity was new to the campus or a continuation of a previously funded program. Table 4.04 reveals that the majority of strategies and activities supplemented programs already in place. Exceptions to this trend include new programs such as online diagnostic assessment for students (100%), hiring of additional counselors (100%) and professional development for counselors (80%).

These data provide indirect information on implementation. It can be argued that funds going to support a previously funded activity supplement an established service. Conversely, funds directed towards a new strategy or activity raise the possibility that implementation is in an early stage. On average, support appears to be supplemental rather than directed towards instituting new programs.

Table 4.04. Texas Grants to Reduce Academic Dropouts: Number of Campuses Implementing Each Strategy/Activity by the End of Summer 2004

STRATEGY/ACTIVITY	Implemented during Summer 2004		New to Campus	Continuation of a Previous Program
	Number	Percentage	Percentage	Percentage
Credit Accrual				
Online diagnostic assessment for students.	7	11%	100%	0%
Credit recovery programs to assist students who are behind in credit accrual	19	31%	16%	84%
Accelerated credit accrual programs	11	18%	0%	100%
Dual High school/college course credit opportunities	1	2%	0%	100%
Staff Hiring and Development				
Professional development for teachers to meet the needs of diverse learners.	29	47%	41%	59%
Professional development for counselors.	5	8%	80%	20%
Hiring of additional counselors.	8	13%	100%	0%
Funding of highly qualified paraprofessionals or teacher assistants to assist teaching staff	3	5%	0%	100%
Expanded Learning Opportunities				
Learning opportunities for students before or after school evening, week-end or summer classes	22	36%	50%	50%
Computer Assisted Instruction	13	21%	31%	69%
Trailer courses.	6	10%	0%	100%
Flexible scheduling.	6	10%	0%	100%
Flexible entry/exit courses.	10	16%	30%	70%
High quality tutoring services for students identified as at-risk.	9	15%	44%	56%
Mentoring				
Mentoring by peers	4	7%	50%	50%
Mentoring by adults	9	15%	78%	22%
Guidance and Support Services				
Character education (e.g., anger management, drug, gang, pregnancy prevention)	6	10%	67%	33%
Services for pregnant/parenting students	4	7%	75%	25%
Service learning opportunities for students	1	2%	0%	100%
Early Intervention				
Early intervention programs targeting at-risk students	2	3%	0%	100%
Expansion of the 9th Grade Initiative grant program	15	24%	0%	100%
College/Career Preparation				
Work study programs	2	3%	0%	100%
Career awareness/planning activities for students	12	19%	25%	75%
College awareness/planning activities for students	11	18%	18%	82%
Parent and Community Involvement				
Home visits	5	8%	60%	40%
Educational or career training for parents	3	5%	33%	67%
Efforts to involve parents in the educational process	9	15%	33%	67%
Parent or community volunteer programs (non-mentoring)	0	0%	0%	0%
Printed materials in the Spanish language or bilingual personnel	14	23%	21%	79%
Advertisement of program features/recruitment via the media	16	26%	75%	25%

Source: Project Progress Report; The Evaluation Group at Texas A&M University, 2004.

Note: Table content is based on 62 of 64 campuses that submitted Summer 2004 progress reports by October 30, 2004.

Students Participating in Strategies and Activities During Summer 2004

The TXDPG program focuses on activities directly connected to students exhibiting characteristics that are identified as indicators of a greater propensity for dropout prior to graduation from high school. Detailed information on students served by grant-funded activities is addressed in the Fall 2004 Student Information Report (see Appendix A). Given that results from this report will not be available until Summer 2005, items in the PPR1 were developed to provide preliminary information on the number of students who participated in a select group of activities. Key strategies and activities are presented in seven categories: Student Achievement; Credit Accrual; Guidance and Support; Mentoring; Early Intervention; College and Career Preparation; and Parent and Community Involvement.

Table 4.05 presents the number of students served by each strategy and activity. Of the students that participated in grant funded activities during Summer 2004, the largest number were involved in credit recovery programs (69%) followed by programs that expanded on the Ninth Grade Success Initiative (35%). Activities with the fewest number of students were service learning opportunities (n = 0), work study programs (<1.0%) and services for pregnant/parenting students (<1.0%). With the exception of the strategies and activities named above, the percentage of participating students ranged between 3% and 27%. These findings suggest that during Summer 2004, efforts were focused on helping students make up missing credits. In addition, ninth grade students who exhibit signs of not completing high school received support services and received assistance in improving academic achievement.

Table 4.05. Texas Grants to Reduce Academic Dropouts: Number of High School Students Who Participated in Activities During Summer 2004

Strategy /Activity	Students	Percentage of High School Students Served during Summer 2004
Student Achievement		
Online diagnostic assessment for students	191	11%
High quality tutoring services for students identified as at-risk	272	16%
Computer Assisted Instruction	195	11%
Credit Accrual		
Credit recovery programs to assist students who are behind in credit accrual	1,200	69%
Accelerated credit accrual programs	260	15%
Trailer courses	314	18%
Flexible scheduling	197	27%
Guidance and Support Services		
Character education (e.g., anger management, drug, gang, pregnancy prevention)	113	7%
Services for pregnant/parenting students	5	<1%
Service learning opportunities for students	0	0%
Early Intervention		
Early intervention programs targeting at-risk students	46	3%
Expansion of the 9th Grade Initiative grant program	597	35%
College and Career Preparation		
Work study programs	5	<1%
Career awareness/planning activities for students	334	19%
College awareness/planning activities for students	290	17%
Parent and Community Involvement		
Home visits	54	3%
Educational or career training for parents	112	7%
Efforts to involve parents in the educational process	343	20%

Source: Project Progress Report; The Evaluation Group at Texas A&M University, 2004.
Note: Table content is based on 62 of 64 campuses that submitted Summer 2004 progress reports by October 30, 2004.

Personnel Involved in the Grant Program During Summer 2004

Four of the allowable uses of grant funds target staff members that provide services. Districts can use grant funds to hire additional counselors to assist students. A goal for these campuses is a reduction in the student counselor ratio. Districts may also use grant funds to hire highly qualified paraprofessionals or teacher assistants. Highly-qualified refers to individuals who have accrued a specified number of professional development credit hours and/or course work. These individuals may teach small group instruction under the supervision of a teacher and provide assistance in a variety of ways that include but are not limited to, organizing a credit recovery lab, keeping records of student participation, attendance and performance in the lab, book-

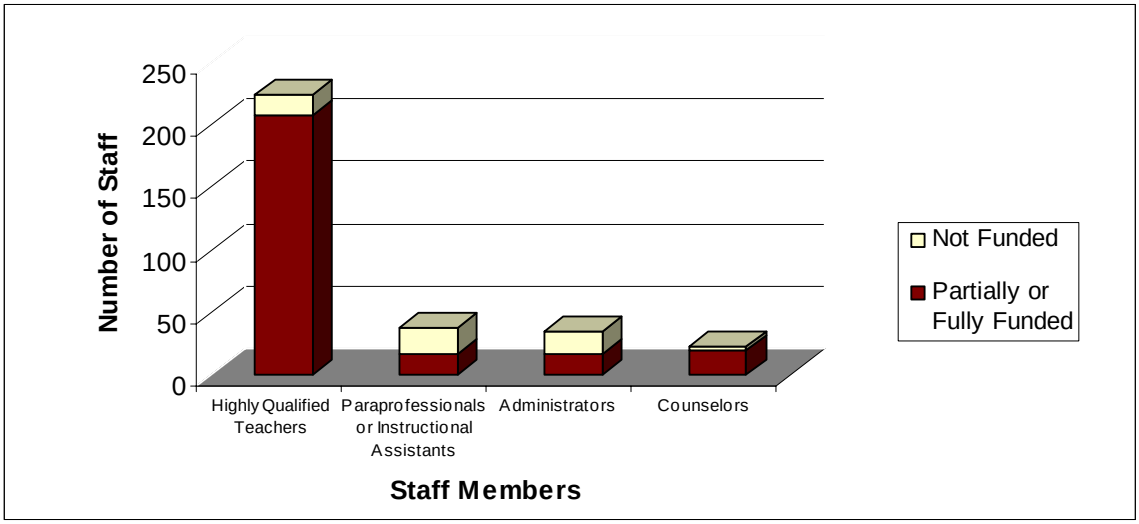
keeping, etc. Districts may also fund professional development for counselors and professional development for teachers to meet the needs of diverse learners. Two final allowable uses of grant funds are mentoring by adults and peer mentoring. Four sets of findings are presented below: type and number of staff involved in the grant program; teachers and counselors that received professional development; the student-to-counselor ratio; and the number of mentors reported and trained.

Staff

Grant recipients were asked to report on four groups of school staff that were involved and funded by the grant during Summer 2004: 1) highly qualified teachers: 2) paraprofessionals or instructional assistants; 3) administrators and 4) counselors. For each staffing group, grantees also reported the number of staff members that were involved in the grant program, the number fully funded with TXDPG monies, and the number of staff members partially funded with TXDPG monies. Staff members who were either fully of partially funded were collapsed into a single group of funded staff. These results are presented in Figure 4.02 and Table 4.06.

A total of 319 staff members participated in the grant program during Summer 2004. Figure 4.02 shows that the largest number of staff involved during the summer was highly qualified teachers (70%). Together, paraprofessionals or instructional assistants, administrators and counselors accounted for the remaining 30%. Table 4.06 shows that the majority of highly qualified teachers (93%) and counselors (86%) who provided services were funded by the grant. Conversely, just under half the paraprofessionals (42%) and administrators (49%) were funded. In addition to staff, a total of 185 parents assisted with the grant program during the summer. Grantees reported that the number of other volunteers was zero.

Figure 4.02. Number of Staff Participating in the Texas Grants to Reduce Academic Dropouts Program in Relation to the Number Funded.



Source: Project Progress Report; The Evaluation Group at Texas A&M University, 2004.
Note: Figure is based on 62 of 64 campuses that submitted Summer 2004 progress reports by October 30, 2004.

Table 4.06. Staff Participating and Funded by the Texas Grants to Reduce Academic Dropouts Program During Summer 2004

Staff	Staff Participating during Summer 2004		Staff Funded during Summer 2004			
	Number Of Staff	Percentage of Total Participating Staff	Partially Funded Staff	Fully Funded Staff	Total Funded Staff	Percentage of Participating Staff that were Funded
Highly Qualified Teachers	224	70%	23	185	208	93%
Paraprofessionals or instructional assistants	38	12%	6	10	16	42%
Administrators	35	11%	8	9	17	49%
Counselors	22	7%	4	15	19	86%
Total	319	100%	41	219	260	82%

Source: Project Progress Report; The Evaluation Group at Texas A&M University, 2004.
Note: Table content is based on 62 of 64 campuses that submitted Summer 2004 progress reports by October 30, 2004.

Professional Development

Two allowable strategies districts can choose to fund are professional development for counselors and professional development for teachers to meet the needs of diverse learners. Table 4.07 shows that a total of 663 individuals received training in the needs of diverse learners

by the end of Summer 2004. Highly qualified teachers comprised the overwhelming majority (98%). More teachers received training in the needs of diverse learners than provided services during Summer 2004, suggesting that teachers received professional development in preparation for the Fall 2004 term.

Table 4.07. Texas Grants to Reduce Academic Dropouts: Staff Who Received Training in the Needs of Diverse Learners by the end of Summer 2004.

STAFF	Received Training	Percentage of Total
Highly Qualified Teachers	651	98%
Counselors	12	2%
Total	663	100%

Source: Project Progress Report, The Evaluation Group at Texas A&M University, 2004.
Note: Table content is based on 62 of 64 campuses that submitted Summer 2004 progress reports by October 30, 2004.

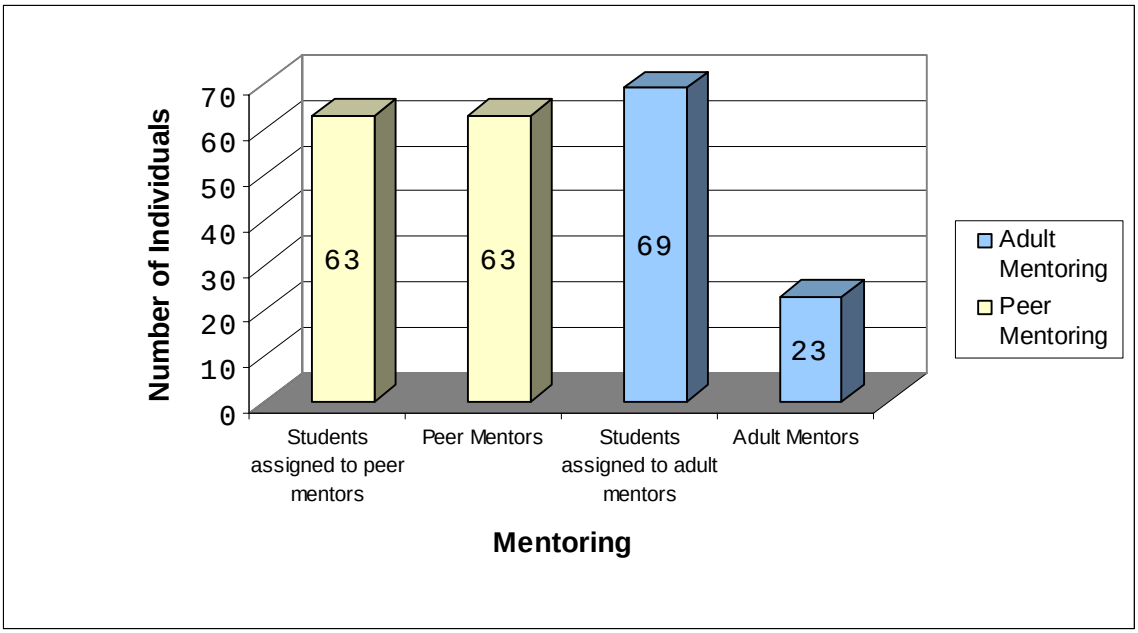
Student-to-Counselor Ratio

Of the activities allowable under the grant, recipients may choose to reduce the student-to-counselor ratio in their district. Based on the number of participating counselors (n = 22) and the total number of students served by grant funds (n = 1,730), the student-to-counselor ratio during Summer 2004 was 79:1. Given that only a portion of students attend summer school, the ratio is likely to change during the Fall 2004 semester.

Mentors

Students assigned to a mentor are afforded a connection with someone on campus who takes an interest in them. Mentors work with students to improve their academic, decision making, and problem solving skills. To gather more information on the mentors involved in providing services, grantees were asked to report the number of peer and adult mentors that provided services over summer. Figure 4.03 presents the number of peer and adult mentors alongside the number of students assigned to each during Summer 2004. There was a one-to-one correspondence between the number of peer mentors and the number of students (n = 63). Conversely, adult mentors (n = 23) were assigned multiple students (n = 69). Overall, these findings indicate that few students participated in a mentoring program during the summer term.

Figure 4.03. Texas Grants to Reduce Academic Dropouts: Number of Peer and Adult Mentors and the Number of Students Assigned to Each Type of Mentor.



Source: Project Progress Report; The Evaluation Group at Texas A&M University, 2004.
Note: Figure is based on 62 of 64 campuses that submitted Summer 2004 progress reports by October 30, 2004.

Summary

During the first term of the grant period, Summer 2004, project campuses served less than 10% of the high school students they intend to serve during the grant period. None of the elementary and middle school students projected for the grant period received services during Summer 2004. The majority of campuses focused on providing professional development for teachers to meet the needs of diverse learners. Grantees also funded extended learning opportunities and credit recovery programs for targeted students. During the summer term, most high school students served by the grant participated in credit recovery programs and in programs that expanded the Ninth Grade Success Initiative. Few students participated in guidance and support services such as service learning opportunities, services for pregnant/parenting students and work study programs. In general, during Summer 2004, grant recipients primarily targeted students with insufficient credits. Accordingly, funds were directed towards activities that afford students the opportunity to accrue missing credits and to professional development for teachers.

Of the staff that participated in the grant program during Summer 2004, the largest group was highly qualified teachers. Together, paraprofessionals or instructional assistants, counselors, and administrators accounted for one-third of the total staff that participated. The overwhelming majority of highly qualified teachers and counselors were supported by the grant but just under half the paraprofessionals and administrators were funded. In preparation for the Fall 2004 term, many teachers received professional development. In fact, more teachers received training in the needs of diverse learners than provided services during Summer 2004. Few students participated in a mentoring program during the summer term but of those who did, multiple students were assigned to adult mentors while each peer mentor was assigned a single student.

SECTION V: CONCLUSIONS

This interim report presents the results of the first set of analyses conducted to evaluate the TXDPG program. It establishes baseline characteristics of participating campuses and compares those characteristics to those of the entire population of Texas high schools. A total of 1,730 students were served during the initial project implementation phase in Summer 2004. Approximately 26,370 students are projected to be served during the life of the grant, which concludes August 31, 2005.

Pertinent Findings

The data support the fact that TXDPG programs are targeting a population of students in need of accelerated academic services. This is evidenced by the socio-economic/demographic status (e.g., economically disadvantaged and/or LEP status) and academic performance (e.g., 2004 TAKS results) comparisons to statewide benchmarks. Based on the comparative analysis of TXDPG campuses and all Texas high schools, it appears that the competitive grant process at TEA has successfully awarded Texas dropout prevention grants to campuses in clear need of assistance.

Campuses reported that approximately 26,370 students are projected to be served by the grant during the grant period. On average, grantees intend on serving about one third of the total students enrolled or half of the at-risk student enrollment. During the 2004 Summer term less than ten percent of the high school students projected to receive services over the grant period were served. Students in grades five though eight comprise a small portion of the total number of students projected to receive services during the grant period but none received services during the summer term.

Grantees primarily focused on providing professional development for teachers and on targeting students who lack needed credits. Accordingly, the majority of high school students served during the summer term participated in credit recovery programs and in programs which were an expansion of Ninth Grade Success Initiative programs. On average, grant funds were directed

towards supplementing activities that provide high school students the opportunity to accrue missing credits.

Of the personnel that participated in the grant program during Summer 2004, the largest group was highly qualified teachers. Grant funds primarily supported highly qualified teachers and counselors and to a lesser extent, paraprofessionals and administrators. In addition to staff, some parents provided assistance during the summer term.

The student-to-counselor ratio during the summer term was large, suggesting that few counselors were available to assist students during the summer term. Reports for the Fall 2004 semester are likely to yield a ratio that reflects the number of counselors available to students during a regular school semester. Very few students were involved in mentoring programs during the summer term. Of the students who were assigned a mentor, it appears that each student was paired with a single peer mentor but multiple students were assigned to each adult mentor.

It is recommended that these results be interpreted in terms of the summer term only and not the grant program in its entirety. The data presented in this interim report provide a descriptive account of how grant recipients are beginning to direct funds and serve students. Results for Fall 2004 should reveal the full extent to which grant projects are serving students and implementing strategies and activities.

Next Steps for Project Implementation

The next phase of Texas dropout prevention grant implementation will involve additional program intervention strategies and activities for an increased number of students. TXDPG grantees all must work to accomplish the overarching goals of the Texas Grants to Reduce Academic Dropouts grant program; however, the specific strategies and interventions implemented on each campus vary according to the needs of the students. In the next phase of implementation, grantees may establish a number of allowable activities, including hiring additional counselors and instituting trailer courses, flexible scheduling, work/study programs, and early intervention programs targeting at-risk students. Because community engagement is a required activity, grantees will continue to implement activities that accomplish a high level of

engagement from the community. Finally, all grant campuses will be implementing mentoring programs that connect students with a caring adult or peer in the school. Some grant participants will be engaging in mentor training provided by the TEA and the Governor's Mentoring Initiative.

Final Evaluation Report

The final evaluation report for the Texas dropout prevention grants will be available in August 2006. This report will detail pertinent findings on the ultimate outcomes of the grant program. The research and analysis will focus on school, and most importantly, student outcomes. In addition, the results of the evaluation study will detail findings from the site visits and the subsequent progress reports. Results from the 2005 TAKS administration will be considered in the final analysis of the project's impact on student academic achievement. The final report will also provide suggested evidence on best practices for student academic achievement in Texas high schools. Finally, the report will include details on lessons learned when implementing a project of this nature and recommendations for future projects pertaining to Texas high school programs.

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APPENDIX A:
COPIES OF INSTRUMENTS

Texas Grants to Reduce Academic Dropouts
Project Progress Report #1
Summer 2004

Campus Information

County/District Number (9 digit#): __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __

Campus Name: _____

REMINDER: The *Texas Grants to Reduce Academic Dropouts* program focuses on activities directly connected to students exhibiting characteristics that are identified as *indicators of a greater propensity for dropout* prior to graduation from high school. The primary goal of the program is to increase graduation rates among students particularly among economically disadvantaged students and/or students that historically account for a high percentage of dropouts.

SECTION 1: Projected Student Participation (Duration of Grant)

A. Students Projected to be Served by *Texas Grants to Reduce Academic Dropouts* Grant Funds

1.1 Enter the number of targeted students *projected or expected* to be served by grant funds during the *duration of the* ***project (5/1/03 – 7/31/04).***

_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
9th	10th	11th	12th	Total

B. Elementary and Middle School Students

___ No
___ Yes

1.2. Are elementary or middle school students served by *Texas Grants to Reduce Academic Dropouts* funds in your district?

If yes,

1.3. Enter the number of targeted elementary or middle school students *projected or expected* to be served by *Texas Grants to Reduce Academic Dropouts* grant funds during the *duration of the* ***project (5/1/03 – 7/31/04).***

_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
5th	6th	7th	8th	Total

SECTION 2: Summer Term 2004

A. Students Enrolled during Summer 2004

___ Yes
___ No

2.1. Was summer school conducted on your campus during summer 2004?

If yes,

_____ 2.2. Enter the *total number* of students enrolled during summer 2004.

_____ 2.3. Enter the number of students targeted by the grant who were enrolled during summer 2004.

SECTION 3: Project Activities/Strategies

INSTRUCTIONS: The following activities & strategies are allowable uses of *Texas Grants to Reduce Academic Dropouts* grant funds.
Indicate whether the activity/strategy is part of your project and is supported by *Texas Grants to Reduce Academic Dropouts* funds (check *yes* or *no*).

If yes:

* Indicate whether *Texas Grants to Reduce Academic Dropouts* funds support a strategy/activity that is new to the campus *or* provide continued support for strategies/activities already in place (check *new* or *continuation*).
* If requested, please briefly describe the activity or strategy.
* Indicate whether the activity/strategy was implemented by summer 2004 term (check *yes* or *no*).
* If yes, enter the number of students participating in activities or receiving services during summer 2004 (where applicable).

A. Credit Accrual

____ No 3.1. Online diagnostic assessment for students.

____ Yes *If yes:*

____ New ____ Continuation

Implemented by the conclusion of summer 2004 term? ____ No ____ Yes

_____ Enter the number of students who took an online diagnostic assessment during summer 2004.

____ No 3.2. Credit recovery programs.

____ Yes *If yes:*

____ New ____ Continuation

Please briefly describe the program. _____

Implemented by the conclusion of summer 2004 term? ____ No ____ Yes

_____ Enter the number of students who participated in a credit recovery program during summer 2004.

____ No 3.3. Accelerated credit accrual programs.

____ Yes *If yes:*

____ New ____ Continuation

Please briefly describe the program. _____

Implemented by the conclusion of summer 2004 term? ____ No ____ Yes

_____ Enter the number of students who participated in the program during summer 2004.

____ No 3.4. Dual high school/college course credit opportunities.

If yes:

____ Yes

____ New ____ Continuation

Implemented by the conclusion of summer 2004 term? ____ No ____ Yes

_____ Enter the number of students who enrolled in a dual high school/college course during summer 2004.

B. Hiring of Staff and Staff Development

____ No 3.5. Professional development for teachers to meet the needs of diverse learners.

____ Yes *If yes:*

____ New ____ Continuation

Implemented by the conclusion of summer 2004 term? ____ No ____ Yes

---

____ No 3.6. Professional development for counselors.

____ Yes *If yes:*

____ New ____ Continuation

Implemented by the conclusion of summer 2004 term? ____ No ____ Yes

---

____ No 3.7. Hiring of additional counselors.

____ Yes *If yes:*

Implemented by the conclusion of summer 2004 term? ____ No ____ Yes

---

____ No 3.8. Funding for highly qualified paraprofessionals or teacher assistants to assist teaching staff.

____ Yes *If yes:*

____ New ____ Continuation

Implemented by the conclusion of summer 2004 term? ____ No ____ Yes

C. Expanded Learning Opportunities

____ No 3.9. Computer Assisted Instruction.

____ Yes *If yes:*

____ New ____ Continuation

Implemented by the conclusion of summer 2004 term? ____ No ____ Yes

_____ Enter the number of students who utilized computer assisted instruction during summer 2004.

3.10.Trailer courses.

If yes:

____ New ____ Continuation

Implemented by the conclusion of summer 2004 term? ____ No ____ Yes

_____ Enter the number of students who enrolled in trailer courses during summer 2004.

____ No 3.11.Flexible scheduling.

____ Yes *If yes:*

____ ____
New Continuation

Implemented by the conclusion of summer 2004 term? ____ No ____ Yes

_____ Enter the number of students who utilized flexible scheduling during summer 2004.

____ No 3.12.Flexible entry/exit courses.

____ Yes *If yes:*

____ ____
New Continuation

Implemented by the conclusion of summer 2004 term? ____ No ____ Yes

---

____ No 3.13.High quality tutoring services.

____ Yes *If yes:*

____ ____
New Continuation

Implemented by the conclusion of summer 2004 term? ____ No ____ Yes

_____ Enter the number of students who received high quality tutoring services during summer 2004.

____ No 3.14.Learning opportunities for students (before or after-school, evening, week-end or summer classes).

If yes:

____ Yes

____ ____
New Continuation

Implemented by the conclusion of summer 2004 term? ____ No ____ Yes

Enter the number of students participating in:

_____flexible entry/exit courses.
_____weekend classes.
_____after-school courses.
_____evening classes.
_____summer school

This section is applicable to fall and spring terms only.

3.15. Other type of expanded learning opportunity not listed above.

D. Guidance and Mentoring

____ No 3.16. Early intervention programs targeting at-risk students at the middle school or elementary level.

____ Yes *If yes:*

____ New ____ Continuation

Implemented by the conclusion of summer 2004 term? ____ No ____ Yes

_____ Enter the number of students who participated in an early intervention program during summer 2004.

____ No 3.17.Programs that target ninth graders: expansion of the Ninth Grade Success Initiative.

____ Yes *If yes:*

Implemented by the conclusion of summer 2004 term? ____ No ____ Yes

_____ Enter the number of 9th grade students who participated in the program during summer 2004.

____ No 3.18.Work study programs.

____ Yes *If yes:*

____ New ____ Continuation

Implemented by the conclusion of summer 2004 term? ____ No ____ Yes

_____ Enter the number of students who participated in a work study program during summer 2004.

____ No 3.19.Service learning opportunities for students.

____ Yes *If yes:*

____ New ____ Continuation

Implemented by the conclusion of summer 2004 term? ____ No ____ Yes

_____ Enter the number of students who took part in a service learning opportunity during summer 2004.

____ No 3.20.Character education (e.g., anger management, drug/gang/pregnancy prevention).

____ Yes *If yes:*

____ New ____ Continuation

Implemented by the conclusion of summer 2004 term? ____ No ____ Yes

_____ Enter the number of students who participated in character education during summer 2004.

____ No 3.21.Services for pregnant/parenting students.

____ Yes *If yes:*

____ ____
New Continuation

Implemented by the conclusion of summer 2004 term? ____ No ____ Yes

_____ Enter the number of students who received services designated for pregnant/parenting adults during summer 2004.

____ No 3.22.Mentoring by peers.

____ Yes *If yes:*

____ ____
New Continuation

Implemented by the conclusion of summer 2004 term? ____ No ____ Yes

---

____ No 3.23.Mentoring by adults.

____ Yes *If yes:*

____ ____
New Continuation

Implemented by the conclusion of summer 2004 term? ____ No ____ Yes

---

____ No 3.24.*Career* awareness/planning activities for students.

____ Yes *If yes:*

____ ____
New Continuation

Implemented by the conclusion of summer 2004 term? ____ No ____ Yes

_____ Enter the number of students who took part in career awareness/planning activities during summer 2004.

____ No 3.25.*College* awareness/planning activities for students.

____ Yes *If yes:*

____ ____
New Continuation

Implemented by the conclusion of summer 2004 term? ____ No ____ Yes

_____ Enter the number of students who took part in college awareness/planning activities during summer 2004.

3.26. Other type of guidance and mentoring not described above.

E. Parent and Community Involvement

____ No 3.27.Home visits.

____ Yes *If yes:*

____ New ____ Continuation

Implemented by the conclusion of summer 2004 term? ____ No ____ Yes

_____ Enter the number of students home visits that took place during summer 2004 (include multiple visits to a single home).

____ No 3.28.Educational or career training for parents.

____ Yes *If yes:*

____ New ____ Continuation

Implemented by the conclusion of summer 2004 term? ____ No ____ Yes

_____Enter the number of individuals who took part in educational or career training for parents during summer 2004.

____ No 3.29.Efforts to involve parents in the educational process.

____ Yes *If yes:*

____ New ____ Continuation

Implemented by the conclusion of summer 2004 term? ____ No ____ Yes

_____ Enter the number of individuals who received instruction in the educational process (for parents) during summer 2004.

____ No 3.30.Printed materials in the Spanish language, or bilingual personnel.

____ Yes *If yes:*

____ New ____ Continuation

Implemented by the conclusion of summer 2004 term? ____ No ____ Yes

---

____ No 3.31.Parent or community volunteer programs (non-mentoring).

____ Yes *If yes:*

____ New ____ Continuation

Implemented by the conclusion of summer 2004 term? ____ No ____ Yes

---

____ No 3.32. Advertisement of program features/recruit via the media.

If yes:

____ Yes ____ ____
New Continuation

Implemented by the conclusion of summer 2004 term? ____ No ____ Yes

3.35. Other type of parent or community involvement activity not described above.

SECTION 4: Students Served by Grade

Students Served by *Texas Grants to Reduce Academic Dropouts* Funds (Summer 2004)

4.1. Enter the number of students in each grade that received grant services *during summer 2004.*
NOTE: If elementary or middle school students were not served by grant funds, enter 0.

_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
9th	10th	11th	12th	Total

_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
5th	6th	7th	8th	Total

SECTION 5: Project Staff

A. Counselors and Paraprofessionals

_____ 5.1 Enter the number of counselors working during summer 2004.

_____ 5.2 Enter the number of paraprofessionals or instructional assistants working during summer 2004.

B. Project Staff Supported by *Texas Grants to Reduce Academic Dropouts* Funds

5.3. Enter the number involved in the grant project during Summer 2004.

_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Highly qualified teachers	Paraprofessionals or instructional assistants	Administrators	Bilingual Personnel	Counselors	Parents	Mentors	Other volunteers

5.4. Enter the number funded 100% by the grant during Summer 2004.

_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Highly qualified teachers	Paraprofessionals or instructional assistants	Bilingual Personnel	Administrators	Counselors

5.5. Enter the number partially funded (less than 100%) by the grant during Summer 2004.

_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Highly qualified teachers	Paraprofessionals or instructional assistants	Bilingual Personnel	Administrators	Counselors

5.6. Enter the number who received training in the needs of diverse learners (by end of Summer 2004).

_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Highly qualified teachers	Paraprofessionals or instructional assistants	Counselors	Parents	Mentors

C. Mentors Participating in *Texas Grants to Reduce Academic Dropouts* Project

5.8 Enter the number of *students* assigned to each type of mentor as part of the *Texas Grants to Reduce Academic Dropouts* program during summer 2004.

_____	_____
Peer Mentors	Adult Mentors

5.9 Enter the number of *mentors* who participated in the *Texas Grants to Reduce Academic Dropouts* funded mentoring program during summer 2004.

_____	_____
Peer Mentors	Adult Mentors

SECTION 6:

6.1 Briefly describe **the most** successful element/activity/strategy of the *Texas Grants to Reduce Academic Dropouts* project on your campus.

6.2 Briefly describe **the least** successful element/activity/strategy of the *Texas Grants to Reduce Academic Dropouts* project on your campus.

School Name: _____ Observer Name: _____

Observation Date: _____ Project ID #: _____ Observer Role/Affiliation: _____

High School Classroom Observation Measure (HSCOM)

Method: Record observation in 5-minute intervals (1 minute to observe & 4 minutes to record). Exit classroom and continue with remaining classes. Reflect upon the extent to which each of the following is present in individual classrooms.

Part 1: Interval Coding	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**
A. Subject Areas Enter time →	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
English/Language Arts										
Math										
Social Studies										
Science										
Foreign language										
Technical/Trade										
Computer Technology										
Learning/Credit Recovery Labs										
B. Instructional Orientations	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Direct instruction (whole class lecture)										
Cooperative/collaborative (small group)										
Independent/individual work										
Co-teaching/team teaching										
Individual tutoring (teacher, peer, aide)										
Paraprofessionals/teaching assistants										
C. Instructional Components/ Teacher Behaviors	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
(mark all that apply)										
Aligns instruction with TEKS/TAKS										
Relates to student experience/real world										
Use of higher level questioning										
Differentiates instruction										
Models/demonstrates										
Higher level instructional feedback										
Teacher acting as a coach/facilitator										
Integration of subject areas										
Project-based learning										
Parent/community involvement										
Computers for instructional delivery										
Technology as a learning tool										
Uses alternative assessment strategies										
On-line diagnostic assessment										
Student self-assessment										
Control/discipline										
Appropriately paces instruction										
No instruction										

(Date developed: 10.23.04) **PAGE 1**

High School Classroom Observation Measure (HSCOM) – Continued

D.	**Student Behaviors**	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	(mark all that apply)										
	Independent seatwork										
	Experiential/hands-on										
	Working with computers/technology										
	Sustained reading										
	Sustained writing (creative)										
	Calculating										
	Interactive discussion										
	Presenting/performing										
	Studying										
	Transitioning										
	Waiting										
E.	**Teaching and Learning Context**	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	Level of Instructional Taxonomy										
	Low										
	Moderate										
	High										
	Effective classroom management										
	Low										
	Moderate										
	High										
	Resources available for instruction										
	Low										
	Moderate										
	High										
F.	**Student Attention/ Interest/Engagement**	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	(How many students are on task?)										
	All										
	Mostly All										
	Half										
	Very few										
	None										
G.	**Academic Engaged Time**	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	(For how much time during interval do students have opportunities to learn?)										
	All										
	Mostly all										
	Half										
	Very few										
	None										

Part 2: Classroom Observation Summary

Directions: Reflect upon the extent to which each of the following is present in the school.

	0 = Not Observed	1 = Rarely	2 = Occasionally	3 = Frequently	4 = Extensively
Instructional Orientation					
1. Direct Instruction (whole class lecture)					
2. Small group/cooperative/collaborative learning					
3. Independent/individual work					
4. Co-teaching/team teaching					
5. Tutoring (teacher, peer, aide)					
6. Paraprofessionals/teaching assistants					
Instructional Components	0	1	2	3	4
7. Instruction aligned with TEKS/TAKS objectives					
8. Connections to students' background knowledge, or real world problems					
9. Higher level questioning					
10. Differentiated instruction					
11. Modeling/demonstrations					
12. Higher level instructional feedback					
12. Teachers acted as coaches/facilitators					
14. Integration of subject areas					
15. Project-based learning					
16. Parent/community involvement					
17. Computers for instructional delivery					
18. Technology as learning tool					
19. Alternative assessment strategies					
20. On-line diagnostic assessment					
21. Student self-assessment					
22. Discipline/classroom management problems					
23. Appropriate pacing of instruction					
Student Behaviors	0	1	2	3	4
24. Experiential/hands-on					
25. Computers/technology as learning tool					
26. Sustained reading					
27. Sustained writing (creative)					
28. Calculating					
29. Interactive discussion					
30. Presenting/performing					
31. Studying/transitioning/waiting					

Context of Teaching and Learning	**Low**	**Moderate**	**High**
32. Challenging activities (higher-level taxonomy)			
33. Effective classroom management			
34. Instructional resources (texts, computers, etc.)			
35. Student engagement			
36. Academically-focused class time			

(Date developed: 10.23.04)

High School Implementation Review (HSIR)

Contact Information

Name: _____ Title: _____ Phone: _____
Mailing Address: _____ City: _____, TX Zip: _____
Email: _____ Fax: _____

Campus Information

County/District Number (9 digit #): ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___
Campus Name: _____

Completion Activities

1. High Quality Tutoring Services
(Check items that are appropriate)

_____ Instruction aligned with TEKS/TAKS Objectives
_____ Instruction aligned with student IGP's
_____ Adequate resources available for instruction
_____ Systematically planned and scheduled
_____ Certified teachers/tutors deliver instruction
_____ Frequent feedback provided to students
_____ Learning activities are motivating for students
_____ Students generally fully participate
_____ Students regularly attend
_____ Other (not listed) _____

Strengths: _____
Concerns: _____
Wish List:_____

Rating:	1	2	3	4	5
	No evidence of development or implementation	Low level development or implementation	Limited development/partial implementation	Fully functioning at operational level	Exemplary implementation

2. Programs to improve student academic achievement by providing assistance to students who have been truant, suspended, or expelled.
(Check items that are appropriate)

_____ API (American Preparatory Institute) self-paced modules
_____ University of Texas Independent learning - Correspondence courses
_____ Texas Tech Independent learning - Correspondence courses
_____ American School Independent Study Courses
_____ Nova Net Credit Recovery program
_____ Plato Credit Recovery program
_____ On-line program
_____ Other (not listed) _____

Strengths: _____
Concerns: _____
Wish List:_____

Rating:	1	2	3	4	5
	No evidence of development or implementation	Low level development or implementation	Limited development/partial implementation	Fully functioning at operational level	Exemplary implementation

3. Credit recovery programs consisting of SBOE-approved high school courses in English Language Arts, mathematics, science, and social studies, to assist students who are behind in credit accrual.
(Check items that are appropriate)

_____ Nova Net Credit Recovery Program
_____ API Credit Recovery Program
_____ Plato Credit Recovery Program
_____ Staffed Learning Lab
_____ Other (not listed) _____

Strengths: _____
Concerns: _____
Wish List:_____

Rating:	1	2	3	4	5
	No evidence of development or implementation	Low level development or implementation	Limited development/partial implementation	Fully functioning at operational level	Exemplary implementation

4. Direct instruction by highly qualified teachers.
(Check items that are appropriate)

_____ All teachers are certified in teaching area
_____ Students are getting on-line interactive instruction
_____ Evening classes with highly qualified teachers
_____ Saturday classes with highly qualified teachers
_____ Zero hour classes
_____ Articulated and/or Dual Credit Courses at the Jr. College level
_____ Properly staffed Learning Lab
_____ Other (not listed) _____

Strengths: _____
Concerns: _____
Wish List:_____

Rating:	1	2	3	4	5
	No evidence of development or implementation	Low level development or implementation	Limited development/partial implementation	Fully functioning at operational level	Exemplary implementation

5. Acceleration with structured academic enrichment learning programs, including additional assistance to student to improve academic achievement.
(Check items that are appropriate)

_____ Active participation/work study programs
_____ Integrated course completion
_____ Nova Net with enhanced activities
_____ development or experimental courses
_____ API curriculum with additional hands on projects
_____ Monitored Learning Lab
_____ Dual Credit Courses
_____ Other (not listed) _____

Strengths: _____
Concerns: _____
Wish List:_____

Rating:	1	2	3	4	5
	No evidence of development or implementation	Low level development or implementation	Limited development/partial implementation	Fully functioning at operational level	Exemplary implementation

6. Additional counselors to assist students in the development or their individualized graduation plans.
(Check items that are appropriate)

_____ Instructional Focus Team support
_____ Teacher mentors assigned
_____ Peer mentors assigned
_____ Trained volunteer community mentors
_____ Other (not listed) _____

Strengths: _____
Concerns: _____
Wish List:_____

Rating:	1	2	3	4	5
	No evidence of development or implementation	Low level development or implementation	Limited development/partial implementation	Fully functioning at operational level	Exemplary implementation

7. Transportation for students receiving services through this grant.
(Check items that are appropriate)

_____ Late free bus
_____ Early free bus
_____ Organized car pooling
_____ Local community center/apt. housing tutoring
_____ Other (not listed) _____

Strengths: _____
Concerns: _____
Wish List:_____

Rating:	1	2	3	4	5
	No evidence of development or implementation	Low level development or implementation	Limited development/partial implementation	Fully functioning at operational level	Exemplary implementation

8. Assistance from highly qualified paraprofessionals or teacher assistants.
(Check items that are appropriate)

_____ Required, ongoing paraprofessional staff development
_____ Plan in place for hiring, training and maintaining paraprofessionals
_____ System in place for monitoring, supervising and evaluating paraprofessionals
_____ Pull out program
_____ Individualized in class assistance
_____ Co-teaching (in core classes)
_____ Before school assistance
_____ After school assistance
_____ Neighborhood center tutorials
_____ Other (not listed) _____

Strengths: _____
Concerns: _____
Wish List:_____

Rating:	1	2	3	4	5
	No evidence of development or implementation	Low level development or implementation	Limited development/partial implementation	Fully functioning at operational level	Exemplary implementation

9. Innovative and/or intensive intervention strategies
(Check items that are appropriate)

_____ Algebra Camp (summer or break program)
_____ Learning Lab
_____ Blocking with intense hands on applications
_____ School with-in a school for each core area
_____ Re-test policy modification
_____ Other (not listed) _____

Strengths: _____
Concerns: _____
Wish List:_____

Rating:	1	2	3	4	5
	No evidence of development or implementation	Low level development or implementation	Limited development/partial implementation	Fully functioning at operational level	Exemplary implementation

10. Participation in conference on innovative campus redesign grants.
(Check items that are appropriate)

_____ TEA sponsored
_____ Region Service Center Sponsored
_____ Professional Organization sponsored (English teachers, Social Studies teachers, Principals Association, etc.)
_____ Local School district sponsored
_____ Nationally Sponsored
_____ Vendor Sponsored
_____ Other (not listed) _____

Strengths: _____
Concerns: _____
Wish List:_____

Rating:	1	2	3	4	5
	No evidence of development or implementation	Low level development or implementation	Limited development/partial implementation	Fully functioning at operational level	Exemplary implementation

11. Trailer Courses
(Check items that are appropriate)

_____ Fall Semester
_____ Spring Semester
_____ Summer Semester
_____ In conjunction with current semester (evening/morning)
_____ Other (not listed) _____

Strengths: _____
Concerns: _____
Wish List:_____

Rating:	1	2	3	4	5
	No evidence of development or implementation	Low level development or implementation	Limited development/partial implementation	Fully functioning at operational level	Exemplary implementation

12. Expansion of the Ninth Grade Success Initiative grant programs.
(Check items that are appropriate)

_____ Activities of grant picked up with local funding
_____ Activities ceased to exist
_____ Additional funding procured (where/what _____)
_____ Activities now embedded in regular funding
_____ Other (not listed) _____

Strengths: _____
Concerns: _____
Wish List:_____

Rating:	1	2	3	4	5
	No evidence of development or implementation	Low level development or implementation	Limited development/partial implementation	Fully functioning at operational level	Exemplary implementation

13. Flexible scheduling and work/study programs.
(Check items that are appropriate)

_____ CATE funded Co-operative programs
_____ Innovative Cooperative internships programs
_____ Community funded internships
_____ IEP developed work/study programs
_____ Other (not listed) _____

Strengths: _____
Concerns: _____
Wish List:_____

Rating:	1	2	3	4	5
	No evidence of development or implementation	Low level development or implementation	Limited development/partial implementation	Fully functioning at operational level	Exemplary implementation

14. Activities that extend learning opportunities to after-school, evening, and summer classes for students who are academically at risk.
(Check items that are appropriate)

_____ Self-paced summer school (Using API, Nova Net, Plato or other curriculum)
_____ Self-paced night school (Using API, Nova Net, Plato or other curriculum)
_____ Self-paced early morning classes
_____ Other (not listed) _____

Strengths: _____
Concerns: _____
Wish List:_____

Rating:	1	2	3	4	5
	No evidence of development or implementation	Low level development or implementation	Limited development/partial implementation	Fully functioning at operational level	Exemplary implementation

15. Early intervention programs targeting at-risk students.
(Check items that are appropriate)

_____ Summer programs for incoming students in all core areas. (Bring in all students who failed TAKS – 3 weeks before school starts and provide fun interactive learning and team building activities.)
_____ Jump start summer programs for incoming students in English
_____ Jump start summer programs for incoming students in Social Studies
_____ Jump start summer programs for incoming students in Science
_____ Academic team building programs offered in the local neighborhood community in the evening during the summer
_____ Work with local community churches to offer academic enrichment and team building in the summer at the churches
_____ Extend school year for incoming freshman
_____ Intervention programs are all staffed with highly qualified teacher
_____ Other (not listed) _____

Strengths: _____
Concerns: _____
Wish List:_____

Rating:	1	2	3	4	5
	No evidence of development or implementation	Low level development or implementation	Limited development/partial implementation	Fully functioning at operational level	Exemplary implementation

16. Online diagnostic assessment.
(Check items that are appropriate)

_____ Using _____
_____ Early immersion into high school program
_____ Team building/leadership programs
_____ Locally-developed
_____ Other (not listed) _____

Strengths: _____
Concerns: _____
Wish List:_____

Rating:	1	2	3	4	5
	No evidence of development or implementation	Low level development or implementation	Limited development/partial implementation	Fully functioning at operational level	Exemplary implementation

17. Online high school courses essential for Exit-level TAKS, limited to: Algebra I, Geometry, Biology, Integrated Physics & Chemistry.

_____ Yes (what subjects?: Algebra I, Geometry, Biology, Integrated Physics & Chemistry)
_____ No
_____ Other (not listed) _____

Strengths: _____
Concerns: _____
Wish List:_____

Rating:	1	2	3	4	5
	No evidence of development or implementation	Low level development or implementation	Limited development/partial implementation	Fully functioning at operational level	Exemplary implementation

Texas Grants to Reduce Academic Dropouts
Instructions for Completing the
Student Information Report for FALL 2004

1. Please complete a Student Information Form for each campus represented in the application.

2. The student information can only be sent to TEA on CD-ROM. Please use a PC to enter information. The format or order of column arrangement must not be changed because it impacts the analysis of the data.

3. Please enter student names and information for all columns of the Student Information Form. For assistance with the spreadsheet, please call Roberto Manzo at 512-936-6060. For questions about the information, please call The Evaluation Group at 979-845-8363.

4. Please complete one Student Information Form Coversheet for each CD-ROM.

5. All Student Information Reports for FALL, 2004 are due no later than January 30, 2005. Please mail the CD-ROM and the Coversheet to

   Roberto Manzo
   Office of Education Initiatives
   Texas Education Agency
   1701 North Congress Avenue
   Austin, TX 78701

6. To download and individualize the header on each page of the Student Information Form, follow steps 1 through 8:

Steps	General Instructions for downloading the spreadsheet.
1	Access the *Texas Grants to Reduce Academic Dropouts* Student Information Form for Fall 2004 from the TEA Web site: http://www.tea.state.tx.us/opge/grantdev/reports.html.
2	Before entering any information, do a " Save As," and save the form to your hard drive using your district name in the file title.
3	To individualize the header, go to the File Menu.
4	Click on Page Setup.
5	Click on the Header-Footer tab.
6	Click on Custom Header. Enter the Project Number: (15 digit number that appears on the Notice of Grant Award (NOGA)).
7	In the Header center column, enter the district name, campus name, and county district number (i.e. Wood ISD; Green HS 298-901-001) Enter each school in a separate workbook. Multiple workbooks may be copied to a single CD-Rom to be sent to TEA, if appropriate to the size of the submission.
8	After completing the entry, be sure to click "OK"; otherwise the entry will be lost.

7. Instructions on entering data into the EXCEL Spreadsheet:

For each student that received *Texas Grants to Reduce Academic Dropouts* services during the Fall 2004 semester, please provide information on whether the student participated in the activities listed below. Please complete the information for each student even if *Texas Grants to Reduce Academic Dropouts* funds did not support the activity.

> For example, if a student targeted by the grant accrued credits during the fall semester through a trailer course, this information would be entered even if *Texas Grants to Reduce Academic Dropouts* funds did not support the activity on your campus.

Later, these data will be merged with the Project Progress Report (PPR2) to determine the number of credits that can be attributed to grant funds and the number attributed to other sources.

All information requested below is for the FALL, 2004 semester.

	Student Information
A	District Name
B	District ID number
C	Campus Name
D	County/District/Campus number
E	Last Name
F	First Name
G	Middle Name or Initial
H	Student Social Security Number or state assigned Student ID number. (Do not use the local district ID number).
I	Birth Date: (e.g., MM/DD/YYYY)
J	Current Grade: Enter current grade for student as of the end of the fall semester 2004. (e.g., 09, 10, 11,12)
K	Served by grant funds: Enter (1) if the student was served by grant funds during fall 2004. Enter (2) if the student was targeted and (at least partially) served by grant funds during fall but did **not** complete the semester or is no longer in enrolled.
	Student Attendance
L	Enter the number of courses taken by the student during the fall term.
M	Enter the number of courses **passed** by the student during the fall term.
N	Enter the number of courses **failed** by the student during the fall term.
O	Enter the number of courses failed due to the 90% attendance rule during the fall term.
	Credit Accrual
P	Enter the total number of credits earned by the student prior to the start of the fall semester.
Q	Enter the total number of credits earned by the student at the close of the fall semester.
R	Enter (1) if the student progressed to the next grade level by the close of fall**.** Enter (0) if the student remained in the same grade or was retained.
S	Enter (1) if the student graduated by the close of fall 2004. Enter (0) if the student did not graduate (or was not in 12th grade).

T	Enter (1) if an on-line diagnostic or assessment instrument was used by the student during the fall

	semester. Enter (0) if an on-line diagnostic or assessment instrument was **not** used.
U	Enter the number of classes in which the student received instruction from a highly qualified teacher. Enter (0) if the student did **not** receive instruction from a highly qualified teacher.
V	Enter (1) if the student participated in an augmented school schedule (such as extended hours, Saturday school, or summer school). Enter (0) if the student did not participate.
W	If yes to column W, enter the number of credits earned by the student through an augmented school schedule. If no to column W, enter 0.
X	Enter (1) if the student received accelerated instruction in at least one area of academic weakness. Enter (0) if the student did **not** receive accelerated instruction.
Y	If yes to column Y, enter the number of hours in accelerated instruction received by the student. If no to column Y, enter 0.
Z	Enter (1) if the student participated in a credit recovery program in ***English Language Arts***. Enter (0) if the student did **not** participate.
AA	Enter (1) if the student participated in a credit recovery program in ***mathematics***. Enter (0) if the student did **not** participate.
AB	Enter (1) if the student participated in a credit recovery program in ***science***. Enter (0) if the student did **not** participate.
AC	Enter (1) if the student participated in a credit recovery program in ***social studies***. Enter (0) if the student did **not** participate.
	Columns AD – AG refer to programs that consist of SBOE-approved high school courses in English Language Arts, mathematics, science, and social studies.
AD	Enter the total number of credits earned by the student through participation in a credit recovery program.
AE	Enter the number of on-line courses (essential for Exit-level TAKS) completed by the student during the fall term. Enter (0) if the student did **not** complete an on-line course.
AF	Enter the total number of credits earned by the student through online courses. Enter (0) if the student did **not** complete an on-line course.
AG	Enter the number of trailer courses completed by the student. Enter (0) if the student did not enroll in a trailer course.
	If at least one trailer course was completed, enter the subject area of the trailer course(s) in columns AI, AJ, & AK. ***Enter (0) in each column if no trailer courses were taken.***
AH	
AI	
AJ	
AK	Enter (1) if the student received high quality tutoring services in ***English Language Arts***. Enter (0) if the student did not.
AL	Enter (1) if the student received high quality tutoring services in ***mathematics***. Enter (0) if the student did not.
AM	Enter (1) if the student received high quality tutoring services in ***science***. Enter (0) if the student did not.
AN	Enter (1) if the student received high quality tutoring services in ***social studies***. Enter (0) if the student did not.
AO	Enter the approximate number of hours the student received tutoring (in any subject) during the term.
	College Preparation (FALL, 2004)
AP	Enter the total number dual high school/college credit courses completed by the student during the fall term. Enter (0) if the student was **not** enrolled in any dual credit courses.
AQ	Enter (1) if the student participates in the Minimum High School Plan (MHSP). Enter (2) if the student participates in the Recommended High School Plan (RHSP).

	Enter (3) if the student participates in the Distinguished Achievement Plan (DAP).
AR	Enter (1) if the student participated in college awareness/planning activities Enter (0) if the student did **not** participate in college awareness/planning activities
	Community Involvement & Mentoring (FALL, 2004)
AS	Enter (1) if the student took part in a work study program during the fall semester. Enter (0) if the student did **not** take part in a work study program.
AT	Enter (1) if the student was assigned a mentor by the end of the fall semester. Enter (0) if the student was **not** assigned a mentor.
AU	Enter (1) if the student received peer mentoring during the fall semester. Enter (2) if the student received adult mentoring. Enter (0) if the student did **not** receive mentoring.
AV	Enter (1) if the student participated in career awareness/planning activities the fall semester. Enter (0) if the student did **not** participate.
	Guidance and Support Services (FALL, 2004)
AW	Enter (1) if the student participated in an early intervention program (designed for at-risk students at the middle or elementary school level) Enter (0) if the student did not participate in an early intervention program or is in high school
AX	Enter (1) if the student participated in a program that targets ninth graders (such an expansion of the Ninth Grade Success Initiative) Enter (0) if the student did not participate in a program or is not in 9th grade
AY	Enter (1) if the student participated in a service-learning opportunity Enter (0) if the student did **not** participate.
AZ	Enter (1) if the student participated in character education (e.g., anger management, drug/gang/pregnancy prevention) Enter (0) if the student did **not** participate in character education
BA	Enter (1) if the student received services for pregnant/parenting students Enter (0) if the student did **not** receive pregnant/parenting services
BB	Enter the number of home visits received by the student. Enter (0) if the student did not receive home visits.

APPENDIX B:
DEFINITIONS OF COMMUNITY TYPES

Districts are classified on a scale ranging from major urban to rural. Factors such as size, growth rates, student economic status, and proximity to urban areas are used to determine the appropriate group. All the charters are grouped together as one community type. The community types are:

- **Major Urban**
  The largest school districts in the state that serve the six metropolitan areas of Houston, Dallas, San Antonio, Fort Worth, Austin, and El Paso. Major urban districts are the districts with the greatest membership in counties with populations of 650,000 or more, and more than 35 percent of the students are identified as economically disadvantaged. In some cases, other size threshold criteria may apply.

- **Major Suburban**
  Other school districts in and around the major urban areas. Generally speaking, major suburban districts are contiguous to major urban districts. If the suburban district is not contiguous, it must have a student population that is at least 15 percent of the size of the district designated as major urban. In some cases, other size threshold criteria may apply.

- **Other Central City**
  The major school districts in other large, but not major, Texas cities. Other central city districts are the largest districts in counties with populations between 100,000 and 650,000 and are not contiguous to any major urban districts. In some cases, other size threshold criteria may apply.

- **Other Central City Suburban**
  Other school districts in and around the other large, but not major, Texas cities. Generally speaking, other central city suburban districts are contiguous to other central city districts. If the suburban district is not contiguous, it must have a student population that is at least 15 percent of the size of the district designated as central city. In some cases, other size threshold criteria may apply.

- **Independent Town**
  The largest school districts in counties with populations of 25,000 to 100,000. In some cases, other size threshold criteria may apply.

- **Non-Metro: Fast Growing**
  School districts that are not in any of the above categories and that exhibit a five-year growth rate of at least 20 percent. These districts must have at least 300 students in membership.

- **Non-Metro: Stable**
  School districts that are not in any of the above categories, yet have a number of students in membership that exceeds the state median.

• **Rural**

School districts that do not meet the criteria for placement into any of the above categories. These districts either have a growth rate less than 20 percent and the number of students in membership is between 300 and the state median, or the number of students in membership is less than 300.

• **Charter Schools**

The 180 open-enrollment schools granted a charter by the State Board of Education and in operation by the fall of the 2001-02 school year.

Taken from Snapshot 2002

APPENDIX C:
RESPONSE RATES BY COMMUNITY TYPE, INSTRUCTIONAL SCHOOL TYPE AND ESC

Table C1. Response Rate by Community Type

Community Type	Total Campuses		Respondents		
	Number	Percentage of Total Campuses	Number	Percentage of Total Campuses	Percentage of Community Type
Major Urban	33	51.6	32	51.6	97.0
Major Suburban	8	12.5	8	12.9	100.0
Other Central City	17	26.6	16	25.8	94.1
Other Central City Suburban	2	3.0	2	3.2	100.0
Independent Town	0	NA	0	NA	NA
Non-Metro: Fast Growing	0	NA	0	NA	NA
Non-Metro: Stable	0	NA	0	NA	NA
Rural	0	NA	0	NA	NA
Charter	4	6.3	4	6.5	100.0
Total	64	100.0	62	100.0	97.0

Table C2. Response Rate by Instructional School Type

Instructional School Type	Total Campuses		Respondents		
	Number	Percentage of Total Campuses	Number	Percentage of Total Campuses	Percentage of Instructional School Type
Regular Instruction	52	81.3	51	82.3	98.1
Alternative Instruction	6	9.4	5	8.1	83.3
Charter Alternative Instruction	4	6.2	4	6.5	100.0
DAEP Instruction	2	3.1	2	3.2	100.0
Total	64	100.0	62	100.0	97.0

Table C3. Response Rate by Education Service Center

ESC	Total Campuses		Respondents		
	Number	Percentage of Total Campuses	Number	Percentage of Total Campuses	Percentage of ESC
1	7	11.0	7	11.3	100.0
2	5	7.8	5	8.1	100.0
3	0	NA	0	NA	NA
4	0	NA	0	NA	NA
5	1	1.6	1	1.6	100.0
6	0	NA	0	NA	NA
7	6	9.4	5	8.1	NA
8	0	NA	0	NA	NA
10	15	23.4	14	22.6	NA
11	15	23.4	15	24.2	NA
12	0	NA	0	NA	NA
13	10	15.6	10	16.1	NA
14	0	NA	0	NA	NA
15	0	NA	0	NA	NA
16	0	NA	0	NA	NA
17	0	NA	0	NA	NA
18	0	NA	0	NA	NA
19	0	NA	0	NA	NA
20	5	7.8	5	8.1	100.0
Total	64	100.0	62	100.0	