Evaluation of the Texas Dropout Recovery Pilot Program: Cycles 1 and 2 (May 2011)

Submitted to: Texas Education Agency

Arroyo Research Services

CREDITS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents evaluation findings for the Texas Dropout Recovery Pilot Program (TDRPP), focusing on implementation and outcomes achieved from August 28, 2008 through May 31, 2010. TDRPP was designed to provide students 25 years of age or younger who have dropped out of Texas public secondary schools the opportunity to continue their education and prepare for future work and education by completing their high school diploma or demonstrating college readiness. It was established based on a recommendation of the High School Completion and Success Initiative Council and was funded by the Texas State Legislature. Eligible applicants included local school districts, open-enrollment charter schools, institutions of higher education (IHEs), county departments of education, education service centers (ESCs), and nonprofit education organizations. Competitive grant awards were made to 45 of these education organizations throughout the state.

Among Texas Education Agency (TEA) initiatives, TDRPP is unique in its focus, goals, and funding structure. TDRPP focuses on reengaging students who have already dropped out of school, rather than on preventing students from leaving school. Rather than solely focusing on high school graduation, TDRPP also encourages students who have dropped out of public school to pursue college enrollment. TDRPP grantees seek to assist students who have dropped out of public school either to earn a high school diploma or to demonstrate college readiness. College readiness is defined as earning a General Education Development (GED) certificate, in addition to meeting minimum passing standards on a Texas Success Initiative (TSI) approved instrument, and earning college credit in a core course or through advanced technical credit. The TDRPP funding structure is also unusual in that it includes a pay-for-performance model that directly ties payments to demonstrated student academic progress and program completion. Grantees may use earned performance funds to

Highlights

In its first two years, TDRPP made a meaningful impact on the lives of its graduates and filled an important gap in Texas educational services for students who have dropped out of school.

- Overall, grantees implemented TDRPP with fidelity and vigor. Grantees served 4,141 students, twice as many as projected.
- 1,283 students completed the program by earning a high school diploma or demonstrating college readiness.
- The average TDRPP graduate is expected to earn $246,348 more in his or her lifetime than a high school dropout.
- Because the program is operating beyond the evaluation cut-off date, significant additional outcomes are expected.

Evaluation estimates suggest TDRPP will save the state $95 million in current dollars

bolster services, extend the program past the end date, or offer student incentives.

TEA contracted with Arroyo Research Services (ARS) in December 2008 to conduct an evaluation of TDRPP. Focusing on implementation and outcomes achieved from August 28, 2008 through May 31, 2010, the evaluation considered four key objectives specified by TEA:

01 | Describe and evaluate the implementation of program strategies
02 | Evaluate the impact of the program on student outcomes
03 | Evaluate the impact of the program on teacher/staff effectiveness
04 | Determine the cost-effectiveness and sustainability of the program

TDRPP is demonstrating measurable student accomplishments and strong benefits in relation to costs. Key findings from the evaluation include:

- TEA funded grantees to serve 2,077 students. As of May 2010, 1,283 students had completed the program and a total of 4,141 were served, fully double the projected number.
- TDRPP is expected to save the state $95.3 million in current dollars after accounting for initial program expenditures.
- The average TDRPP graduate is expected to earn $246,348 more in his or her lifetime than a high school dropout.
- Six of the 45 grantees accounted for over one-half of all program completions.

Additional key findings for each of the evaluation objectives are highlighted in this summary and described further throughout the report.

KEY FINDINGS

01 | Implementation of program strategies

- **Grantees implemented programs that were very student-focused in design, incorporating flexible schedules, opportunities for self-paced learning, and a wide variety of academic and social support services.**
    - A majority of grantees offered students the choice of attending during regular school hours, evening (or night) hours, or flexible hours.
    - Nearly 80% provided students with the opportunity to advance through self-paced classes.
    - Ten of the 45 grantees offered the Optional Flexible School Day Program.
    - Over half (62%) of all grantees offered tutoring and/or mentoring services to their students.
    - All grantees offered a variety of social support services. The most commonly offered services included case management, child care, life services training, parenting education, and job training. Transportation was an integral service for many grantees as well.
    - Grantees also offered a wide variety of academic support services. TDRPP students with access to a greater number of academic services were more likely to advance grade levels.

- While many grantees were already operating alternative education programs prior to receipt of TDRPP funds, **most program coordinators reported that TDRPP funds allowed more intensive recruiting and a stronger focus on the needs of out-of-school youth, rather than students at risk of dropping out.**

- **Addressing social service needs was an important component of TDRPP programs.**
    - The majority (70%) of TDRPP students are economically disadvantaged, compared to a statewide average of 39%, and have significant social service needs.
    - TDRPP allowed grantees to better meet the needs of these students by funding services such as child care, transportation, and professional counseling.
    - Even with TDRPP resources, over one-third of all grantees reported service needs they were unable to meet.

- **Over 60% of all grantees provided cash incentives or other awards to students for obtaining benchmarks and/or completions**.
    - Incentives were most commonly provided to students who completed TDRPP. Of the 15 grantees that paid incentives for graduation, six paid $500 and five paid $1,000; similar incentives were offered for enrollment in an IHE.
    - Cash incentives ranged in value from $10 to $1000. Grantees also offered non-cash incentives such as laptops, tuition for college coursework, dictionaries, and gift cards.

02 | Student outcomes

- **Participation in TDRPP resulted in many students who achieved benchmarks or successfully completed the program. However, successfully recovering dropouts proved challenging, with about 1 in 3 students enrolled in TDRPP leaving prior to completion as of May 31, 2010.**
    - Overall, 31% of TDRPP students completed the program, 33% remained in the program, and 36% dropped out. Among the 33% who remained, 12% of TDRPP students continued to make progress by successfully earning at least one interim benchmark or performance indicator (see Figure 1).
    - In addition to the 1,283 students who completed the program, TDRPP students overall achieved a total of 4,259 interim benchmarks.

"Always make students feel welcomed first. Then, make sure you've hired caring staff members, because most of these students have faced or are facing some incredible hardships. Finally, make sure you provide students with flexibility and support services."

Grantee program director

- **All grantee types achieved some success with TDRPP student completion.**
    - Local school districts had the highest percentage of program completers (37%). Completion percentages for other grantee types were 21% for nonprofit education organizations, 17% for open-enrollment charter schools, and 15% for IHEs.
    - Although nonprofit education organizations had larger absolute numbers of completers compared to IHEs, as well as a higher percentage of students that completed the program, attending a nonprofit was associated with lower odds for completion relative to IHEs when controlling for other student and program characteristics that take into account prior student academic performance.

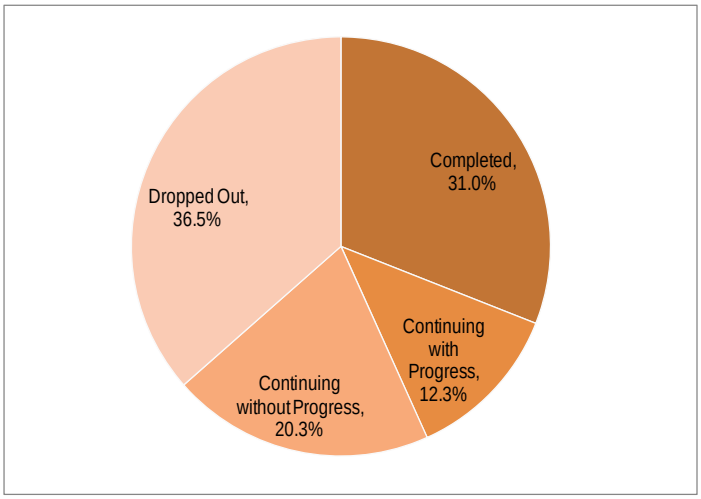

Figure 1. TDRPP student outcomes

Source: Data from performance payment reports submitted to TEA by grantees in June of 2009 and 2010.

- **Students entering TDRPP with more success in high school were more likely to graduate**. While this is not surprising, the relative success of students entering a dropout recovery program based on their prior high school performance warrants consideration when determining program goals and related policies for future dropout recovery programs. Grantees enrolling students closer to high school graduation or who have previously met Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) passing standards in several content areas will achieve more completions in a shorter period of time.
    - In brief, the higher the TDRPP student's last known grade level, the more likely it was that the student earned a high school diploma.
    - Similarly, TDRPP students who had successfully passed several TAKS content areas prior to enrolling in TDRPP were significantly more likely to earn a high school diploma than students with fewer prior TAKS successes.
    - To determine future funding guidelines, incentives, and other program features, consideration of whether the desired program goal is more completers, more overall progress by students who are further from graduation, placement into college, or other specific goals may be useful.

- **Some grantees were clearly more successful than others at achieving student completion. The six top-producing grantees accounted for nearly half of all completions (49%).**
    - Of the 1,158 students who earned high school diplomas, 550 (48%) were students at one of the six top-producing grantees.

- Similarly, 80 of the 135 students (59%) who demonstrated college readiness were students of one of the six top-producing grantees.
- All of the six top producers offered self-paced classes, compared to 73% of other grantees.
- All six top producers had prior experience with the dropout recovery population; recruited aggressively using multi-pronged recruitment strategies including recruiters on staff; allowed students to enter the program at any time; and demonstrated flexibility in overcoming potential implementation barriers.
- An effectiveness analysis controlling for student characteristics examined grantee performance in terms of predicted versus actual completions, percentage of students that completed, and total number of students that completed. This analysis found that five of the six top performers in terms of total completers were also deemed to be highly effective and were among the six top most effective grantees; the one top-producing grantee not found in the top six in the effectiveness analysis was in the top quartile.

03 | Teacher/staff effectiveness

- **Grantees consistently reported on the importance of a strong and committed staff to student success.** As the director of one of the six top-producing grantees noted, "Staffing is the crucial piece. You can have rigor and relevance, but it's the depth of the relationship that makes the difference."

- **Grantees reported successfully using grant funds to improve teacher/staff effectiveness with students who have dropped out of school.**
  - Approximately one-half of all teachers and staff in TDRPP participated in dropout recovery-specific professional development. Teachers/staff who participated in professional development found activities that offered more dropout recovery-specific and hands-on experience to be most helpful.
  - Grantees spent approximately 5% of TDRPP funds (a total of $770,982), plus an additional $295,535 in non-TDRPP funds, on teacher/staff professional development.
  - Based in part on findings from the first year of the evaluation, TEA began offering TDRPP-specific professional development opportunities to grantees during 2009-2010. Grantees found these opportunities to be very useful. As one participant noted of the TEA training session in February 2010, "It was at that point that we really 'got it'."
  - All TDRPP teachers held at least a bachelor's degree. Additionally, the majority held secondary certifications, and approximately one-third held master's degrees. One-half of all teachers reported two or more years' prior experience working with dropout recovery students.

> ***"My [TDRPP teacher] built confidence in me. Put it in my head that I can do it…"***
>
> **TDRPP Graduate**

- **TDRPP was a cost-effective investment of public funds. Ultimately, the state of Texas is estimated to benefit significantly -- $95 million -- from the students who successfully completed their TDRPP program as of May 2010. In addition, students who successfully complete TDRPP are expected to experience significant financial and personal gains relative to what they would experience as dropouts.**
    - **The average TDRPP graduate is expected to earn $246,348 more in his or her lifetime than a high school dropout.** This estimate is based on lifetime estimates of the difference in earnings for high school dropouts compared to high school graduates, students who complete some college or obtain associates degrees, and students who complete four year degrees using Texas estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau (2010) and estimation methods following Belfield and Levin (2007).
    - **TDRPP is expected to return $74,451 in net public benefits per student completing the program by earning a high school diploma or demonstrating college readiness.** This figure is an estimate of reduced public costs and increased public revenue, using Texas figures, for high school graduates compared to high school dropouts, calculated by the evaluators using 2010 dollars for the estimated working lifetime of TDRPP graduates (see Chapter 7). Multiplying this figure by the total number of TDRPP completers results in **a total of $95.3 million in net public benefits to the state of Texas after accounting for initial program costs**.

- **TDRPP grantees had an average total cost, including direct TDRPP funds, state aid, and allocated district tax revenues, of $5,571 per student served**.
    - The average total cost per student served differed by grantee type, and ranged from a low of $2,881 for IHEs to a high of $7,280 for open-enrollment charter schools.
    - The TDRPP grant award component of the total cost per student was $1,648.
    - **The total cost per TDRPP student completion was estimated to be $17,102.** Grantee costs per completion range from $5,972 for one grantee with 55 completions, to a high of $704,789 for a grantee with only 2 completions. Because grantees continued serving students after the May 31, 2010 evaluation cut-off date, the cost per student completion is expected to drop as additional students earn high school diplomas or demonstrate college readiness.

- **The six top-producing grantees had average costs per student completion of $11,754, compared to $22,275 for all other grantees. This is of course in part by definition, because the six top producers** had more completions, but it was also the case that the top producers had lower **overall costs per student served: $4,873 for the top producers compared to $6,024 for all other grantees.**

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on these findings and the detailed discussion and data within the report, the evaluation team recommends the following, by objective, for consideration should TDRPP continue in the future:

01 | Implementation of program strategies

- Continue the increased programmatic support for grantees in the form of training and technical assistance, as established in Year 2. Grantees are beginning to learn from one another and from TEA staff and technical assistance providers. This resulted in more rapid implementation in the second grant year, and in more rapid accumulation of student outcomes.
- Extend the technical assistance to organizations that are developing and submitting grant proposals to ensure high quality TDRPP designs. TDRPP designs should include long-term planning for sustainability. Overall, grantees showed variation in the extent to which they planned for long-term funding from the beginning of the program, and the extent to which they planned for accessing and using resources for the benefit of their students during the grant period. This outcome could be maximized with provision of successful models for replication, collaboration with current grantees, and additional guidance from TEA during a planning phase or prior to the proposal development process.
- During site visits to the more successful programs, evaluators observed that staff retention and motivation are major drivers of student and grantee success. However, strong motivation can be difficult to sustain over time. Based on observations of grantee technical assistance sessions, feedback obtained during site visits, and a review of grantee comments in Grantee Progress Reports and Staff Surveys, the evaluators recommend considering increased cross-grantee collaboration, both virtual and in person, as a strategy to increase the sharing of approaches and strategies as well as to sustain staff motivation.
- Streamline the grantee service tracking and benchmark/payment reporting system to assure that data are reported consistently and on time, with reduced overall demand on grantees.
- Create a TDRPP portal for dropout recovery support that links to grantee web sites, tool kits, resource guides, sustainability guidance, testimonials, project plans, and other public materials through a single site.

02 | Student outcomes

- Continue support for the broad mix of programs and eligible grantees. Grantees served unique student populations with programs that shared common elements, as well as accommodated local needs.
- Encourage and focus on larger programs. While some of the smaller programs filled local needs, most of the TDRPP outcomes were produced by programs that were designed to serve larger numbers of students. The evaluators recommend setting a higher minimum number to be served in order to qualify for funding.

- Seek to identify and develop highly motivated project leaders. TDRPP grantee leaders were instrumental in providing the motivation to staff and students that resulted in high-performing programs. These high performers accounted for a large percentage of the overall program results. Grantees should have an identified project lead in place prior to grant award.

- Review grantee performance mid-way through the grant cycle. While a small number of grantees account for the majority of program outcomes, this also means that other grantees are underperforming compared to what is possible. Establish firm mid-year or first-year benchmarks and re-allocate funds from underperforming grantees to new or established grantees.

- Improve reporting and monitoring of program outcomes. The evaluation encountered some difficulties in grantee reporting of benchmarks, completions and leave reasons, including payment report records that did not match student roster records. It is likely that this resulted from reporting error rather than any malfeasance on the part of grantees. If possible, improved reporting procedures, and more timely and complete grantee monitoring and review of incoming reports by TEA would likely result in the elimination of such errors.

03| Teachers/staff

- Encourage more teachers and staff to participate in TEA-operated or contracted professional development. Although Year 2 state-level technical assistance and professional development mentioned earlier was open to all staff, the evaluators observed that most participants were directors and coordinators. The evaluators suggest that connecting with other dropout recovery staff while focusing on strategies for success can assist in promulgating core assistance strategies, provide motivation and encouragement to teachers and staff, and create a network of resources on which grantees can call for assistance and advice. Allowing grantee TDRPP professional development funds to support attendance at these sessions in order to encourage broader participation should be considered.

04 | Costs and benefits

- Consider examining cost per completion, percentage of completers, and overall costs per student as grantee benchmarks for judging interim grantee progress, as well as to determine grant continuations and new grants to experienced grantees.

- As noted above, consider focusing on larger programs for the added reason that they can be more cost-effective. Larger programs were better positioned to leverage other financial and programmatic resources, thus producing a greater number of outcomes in a cost-effective manner.

EVALUATION RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations relate to potential future evaluations of TDRPP:

- Gather and include data regarding student use of services. Grantees provided service availability information and general percentages of service utilization on Grantee Progress Reports, but determining the effects of various services would best be done by obtaining data on individual student use of academic and social support services.
- The evaluation modified its approach to cost/benefit modeling from the first interim report to this report in order to include district and charter estimates for state aid and district tax revenue.[1] This per-grantee approach should be extended to IHEs to capture state aid to colleges, universities, and nonprofit educational organizations, as well as any additional state or local government aid that supports their dropout recovery programs.
- Two changes to grantee financial reporting would assist in evaluating costs and benefits: 1) changing Grantee Progress Reports to obtain the dollar value of non-TDRPP resources used to help students succeed, and 2) streamlining grantee financial reporting and aligning it to the reporting period for student outcomes. Successful reporting of non-TDRPP resources would likely require guidance from the evaluators, TEA, or both.
- Consider funding identification and analysis of non-TDRPP dropout recovery programs in Texas, or the creation of a comparison group of Texas dropouts who do not participate in any dropout recovery program. It is possible that some students who drop out of school return on their own to Texas public school and eventually complete a high school diploma. A control group consisting of a matched group of students who dropped out in similar years with similar characteristics to TDRPP student would allow examination of TDRPP successes relative to what happens to students who do not access drop out recovery programs.

"My past is not my future"

Motto of one of the six top performing grantees

[1] The Interim Report focused solely on total direct TDRPP expenditures per student using budgeted base funding and actual performance funding earned, and did not account for additional state aid. Interim Report cost data were also based on student enrollment as of May 31, 2009. Because Cycle 1 programs continued to enroll students for an additional year, Interim Report data are not comparable to the more complete figures presented here.

SUMMARY

In its first two years, TDRPP made a meaningful impact on the lives of its graduates, and filled an important gap in Texas educational services for students who had dropped out of school. Not only did grantees implement the program with fidelity and vigor, they served more students than initially targeted, producing considerable student outcomes and saving the state a predicted $95.3 million in current dollars after accounting for initial program expenditures.

The probability of continuing and accelerating the achievement of these outcomes, together with the demonstrated financial benefits to the state of reducing the number of dropouts, creates a strong argument in favor of continuing the program. Results reported within the body of the report suggest that, as grantees gain experience with TDRPP, they are able to expand their reach to serve larger numbers of students. The evaluators therefore anticipate further demonstration of student academic progress and improvements in cost-effectiveness as grantees continue to serve TDRPP students.

Evaluation findings presented in this report should be interpreted with caution. Because student outcomes associated with TDRPP expenditures and services are likely to be achieved between the data collection cutoff date for this report and the project end date of May 31, 2011 and beyond, significant additional outcomes are expected.

TDRPP EVALUATION REPORT

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The Texas Dropout Recovery Pilot Program (TDRPP) was designed to provide students who have dropped out of Texas public secondary schools the educational and social services they need to prepare for future work and education by completing their high school diploma or demonstrating college readiness. The program was established and funded based on a recommendation of the High School Completion and Success Initiative Council (hereafter referred to as The Council). TDRPP was funded by Rider 53 of the General Appropriations Act (GAA, Article III, 80th Texas Legislature) and further funded through Rider 51 (GAA, Article III, 81st Texas Legislature); TDRPP was included in a series of grant programs that were authorized to support the improvement of high school graduation rates and post-secondary readiness as provided by House Bill (HB) 2237 (80th Texas Legislature, 2007). Specifically, TDRPP was designed to meet the goals of Texas Education Code (TEC) §39.411(c), which required the Texas commissioner of education to consider the recommendations of The Council. Local school districts, open-enrollment charter schools, Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs), Education Service Centers (ESCs), nonprofit education organizations, and county departments of education were eligible to apply for TDRPP. This report describes TDRPP and provides evaluation results considering its operation and outcomes from August 2008 through May 2010.

SCOPE OF THE HIGH SCHOOL DROPOUT PROBLEM IN TEXAS

According to the Texas Education Agency (TEA) report on Secondary School Completions and Dropouts in Texas Public Schools 2008-09, 28,856 students who began Grade 9 in Texas in fall 2005 dropped out by spring 2009, a four-year longitudinal dropout rate of 9.4% for the class of 2009. This rate varied significantly across racial/ethnic groups. Asian Pacific Islanders and White students had relatively low longitudinal dropout rates of 3.0% and 4.5% respectively, compared to 14.8% for African American students and 12.4% for Hispanic students. Among sub-populations, Bilingual/English as Second Language (ESL) students had the highest longitudinal dropout rate of 25%; the rate for Special Education students was 14.1%; and the rate for economically disadvantaged students was 10.9%. The longitudinal dropout rate for 2008-09 was lower for every ethnic and sub-population group compared to the figures reported for 2007-08 (class of 2008). Despite the improvements, dropout rates continue to impact the state in many important ways.

Dropping out of school not only has an ongoing impact on the lives and lifestyles of students who drop out, but also on the overall productivity, economy, and well being of the state of Texas. Individuals without a high school diploma have lower earning power over the course of their lives. In 2009, the median earned income for a Texas individual without a high school diploma was only $17,667, below the official federal poverty guidelines for a family of three (United States Census Bureau, 2010). Completing a high school degree translated to an increase in earnings of $7,125 per year for a total of $24,792 per year; however, completing a bachelor's degree brought the median annual income up to $48,475. Reduced public costs for Medicaid and

incarceration and increased revenue from taxes, fees, and business activity are expected to contribute $3,168 per year per for each TDRPP student who successfully completes the program (Gottlob, 2007).

The state of Texas has aggressively sought to address these issues through a variety of state, local, and federally funded initiatives. HB 2237 (80th Texas Legislature, 2007) revised the education code and authorized additional funding for grants and programs for dropout prevention, high school success, and college and workforce readiness programs. Recently, several state funded programs have focused primarily on dropout prevention, including the Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention Program, the Collaborative Dropout Reduction Pilot Program, intensive Summer Programs, Communities in Schools, and the federally funded No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB).

While the state of Texas has made a noteworthy commitment to preventing students from dropping out, few programs have been initiated to assist individuals who have already dropped out with re-entering the educational system. TDRPP represents one such effort. Designed as a state performance based grant program,[2] it seeks to identify and recruit students who have already dropped out of Texas public schools and offer them the educational and social services they need to continue their education. TDRPP funded a total of 45 educational organizations that, as of May 31, 2010, have served 4,141 former dropouts. Cycle 1 provided initial awards totaling $3,212,173 and performance based funding authorized to a total of $2,726,000, with continuation awards of $505,000 in base funding and $1,268,000 in performance funding also made to Cycle 1 grantees through a competitive process. Cycle 2 provided initial awards totaling $3,149,925 and performance based funding authorized to a total of $2,676,000. Grantees were distributed across eight ESC regions with high numbers of dropouts (regions 1, 2, 4, 10, 11, 13, 19, and 20)[3]. Details of the program design are provided in chapter 2.

THE TDRPP EVALUATION

TEA contracted with Arroyo Research Services (ARS) in December 2008 to conduct an evaluation of TDRPP program effectiveness. The evaluation yielded the *Texas Dropout Recovery Pilot Program: Cycle 1 Evaluation Report* (2009) that contained summary findings of Cycle 1 progress though May 2009, as well as this report, which presents comprehensive evaluation findings for TDRPP Cycles 1 and 2, focusing on implementation and outcomes achieved from August 2008 through May 2010.

[2] Performance funds contingent on participant achievement of defined outcomes were a major component of TDRPP grants. This differs from many grant programs, where grantees receive a specific funding allocation regardless of performance outcomes.

[3] According to TEA dropout rates for the Class of 2006 in the Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) 2006-07 Region Performance Reports: http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/perfreport/aeis/2007/region.srch.html

The purpose of the evaluation was to examine the extent to which TDRPP supported students who had dropped out of Texas public schools by offering educational and social services designed to facilitate their earning a high school diploma and/or demonstrating college readiness. To this end, the evaluation addressed four key objectives specified by TEA:

1. Describe and evaluate the implementation of TDRPP program strategies
2. Evaluate the impact of TDRPP on student outcomes
3. Evaluate the impact of TDRPP on teacher/staff effectiveness
4. Determine the cost-effectiveness and sustainability of TDRPP

Specific evaluation questions, as well as associated methods and data sources for each, are discussed in Chapter 2 and are used to organize the subsequent chapters.

Note that this evaluation was not designed to evaluate or establish outcomes associated with individual grantees funded by the program; it was instead focused on determining the outcomes and sustainability of the program as a whole. To do so, the report discusses individual implementation and outcome issues, but does not identify specific grantees.

The evaluation methods, data collection, and associated timeframes were adjusted to account for implementation and funding adjustments made to TDRPP. The TDRPP Cycle 1 was originally awarded to operate from August 28, 2008 through August 31, 2009. That funding period was extended through December 31, 2009, allowing grantees to spend down base funding awards and to generate performance payments through the end of the year. A second extension allowed Cycle 1 grantees to continue expending base funding and generating performance funding through May 31, 2010. Performance funds generated during this time period could be spent through January 31, 2011. Cycle 1 grantees were also eligible to apply for continuation funds for the purpose of sustaining and expanding their efforts through the end of the grant period. Seven grantees received continuation grants totaling $505,000 in base payments and up to $1,268,000 in performance payments.

TDRPP Cycle 2 was originally awarded to run from June 1, 2009 through August 31, 2010. The funding period was extended through December 31, 2010, allowing grantees to spend down base funding awards and to generate performance payments through the end of the year. A second extension was also provided to Cycle 2 grantees to continue spending base funding through May 31, 2011. Performance funds generated during this time period can be expended through August 31, 2011. Cycle 2 grantees that did not request an extension and Cycle 1 grantees that did not qualify for the original Cycle 1 continuation funds could apply for new funds through the Texas Dropout Recovery Pay-for-Performance Renewal grant, which began in February 2011.

While this report is provided as a comprehensive analysis of program outcomes, additional outcomes are expected to be achieved through the extension period. An addendum report will be issued in spring 2011 to address outcomes achieved from the May 31, 2010 data collection cutoff date for the current report through December 31, 2010.

ORGANIZATION OF THE REPORT

The report is designed to answer the evaluation questions as directly as possible while providing appropriate detail from the data collection. Chapter 2 describes the overall design and structure of TDRPP; Chapter 3 presents an overview of the evaluation design and methodology; and Chapter 4 discusses specific program implementation strategies (Objective 1). Chapter 5 presents the results of detailed analysis of student outcomes (Objective 2). Chapter 6 presents data on teacher/staff effectiveness (Objective 3), and Chapter 7 examines the cost-effectiveness of the program (Objective 4). Additional technical information, survey instruments, detailed survey responses where appropriate, and supporting tables are included in the appendices.

CHAPTER 2: BACKGROUND

TDRPP PROGRAM DESIGN

TDRPP provided competitive grants to Texas education organizations in ESC regions with high dropout rates to identify and recruit students who had already dropped out of Texas public secondary schools and offer them the educational and social services they needed to continue their education. Administered by TEA, the program supported students who sought to earn their high school diploma or demonstrate college readiness in order to prepare themselves for post-secondary education. Twenty-two TDRPP grantees were funded for the period of August 28, 2008 through May 31, 2010 (including extension periods). Twenty-three TDRPP grantees were funded for Cycle 2 for the period of June 1, 2009 through May 31, 2011 (including an extension period for those not opting to end on December 31, 2010).

TDRPP was designed to accomplish the following objectives:

- Provide Texas students who have dropped out with an opportunity to obtain a high school diploma or demonstrate college readiness
- Develop a more flexible mechanism to respond to the particular needs of students who have dropped out to facilitate their ability to earn a high school diploma or demonstrate college readiness
- Expand the state's capacity to provide dropout recovery resources to students who have dropped out
- Increase the number of students who earn high school diplomas
- Increase the number of students who demonstrate college readiness

While obtaining a high school diploma is easily defined, demonstrating college readiness is more complicated. For the purposes of this program, a student demonstrated college readiness by satisfying all of the following requirements:

1. Achieved a passing score on all portions of a Texas Success Initiative (TSI) testing instrument or earned a TSI exemption based on the score received for an alternative test, such as the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) or ACT
2. Obtained a General Educational Development (GED) credential
3. Earned credit for a college course that was within an IHE's approved core curriculum (or an equivalent course offered by a private or independent IHE), or earned credit for completing an approved Advanced Technical Credit course

Students were considered to have completed the TDRPP program when they either earned a high school diploma or demonstrated college readiness per the requirements above. Although grantees could assist students in progressing toward either completion goal, as a practical matter grantees typically concentrated on one goal or the other. Local school districts and open-enrollment charter schools primarily assisted students

with the goal of earning a high school diploma, while nonprofit education organizations and IHEs primarily assisted students with the goal of demonstrating college readiness. Differences in the interim benchmarks and program completion indicators for high school completion and demonstration of college readiness are highlighted throughout the report.

TDRPP was designed by TEA to allow grantees flexibility in meeting the individual needs of students. Once student needs were assessed, grantees delivered services to students in a variety of ways, including direct instruction, online instruction, test preparation, tutoring, and mentoring. Grantees also provided a wide range of support services such as transportation, child care, and counseling. TDRPP offered grantees maximum flexibility in the services delivered with no requirements on location, length of time,[4] or student course load. Allowable grantee activities (per the request for applications for the grant) included, but were not limited to:

- Student outreach and recruitment
- Direct instruction
- Online instruction or distance learning
- Curriculum development
- Professional development for instructors and administrators
- Credit recovery
- Tutoring
- Counseling, including college readiness counseling
- Provision of social or academic support services
- Services to assist students in passing the GED test
- Educational field trips to IHEs or businesses to support implementation of students' P-16 Individual Graduation Plans (IGPs)
- Student transportation to and from school from home or work

Additional program requirements included:

- Grantees must have been located in one of eight ESC regions (1, 2, 4, 10, 11, 13, 19, and 20). These regions were selected based on their high concentration of dropouts. The most recent data prior to issuing the TDRPP request for applications (2006) showed that, of the 25,000 dropouts statewide, 19,000 (76%) dropped out of school in these ESC regions.
- Program services were provided to students 25 years of age or younger who had dropped out of a Texas public secondary school.
- Students who had dropped out of non-public Texas schools were not eligible to be served.

[4] Grantees that received Foundation School Program (FSP) payments based on the Average Daily Attendance (ADA) of eligible student students must have met minimum participant hours in order to receive these funds.

- Once students were identified and recruited, a grantee must have (1) conducted an initial student assessment to determine a student's grade level placement, and (2) developed an IGP for the student to show how the student would complete the dropout recovery program and earn a high school diploma or demonstrate college readiness.

FUNDING

Approximately $12 million was available for funding across both Cycle 1 and Cycle 2 TDRPP grantees. Eligible grantees could receive funding divided into three components: base funding, performance funding, and Other Payments. A brief overview of each follows. See chapter 7 for detailed information on funding.

Base Funding

Grantees were awarded a base amount of funding, not to exceed $150,000 during the grant period, based on the number of participants they planned to serve. The base funding was to be used for the purposes of planning, establishing an appropriate implementation infrastructure, and implementing the program for eligible students. Most grantees planned to serve more than 12 students and were awarded up to $150,000 in base funding. Grantees that planned to serve 5 – 12 students were awarded up to $75,000 in base funding. In addition to the base funding, grantees could receive performance funding as described in the next section.

Performance Funding

One of the unique features of TDRPP was that TDRPP required grantees to produce student outcomes in order to receive any funding beyond the base funds. Grantees were eligible to receive performance funding based on (1) participating students' academic performance as demonstrated by completion of established interim benchmarks, and (2) student completion of the program. Grantees could receive up to four $250 interim payments for each participating student who achieved one or more of the 12 established benchmarks as shown in Table 1 (for a total of $1,000 in interim payments per student). For example, grantees earned performance funds for each student who earned the required course credits necessary to advance to the next grade level, or who earned a passing score on all content area Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) in a grade level (including the Grade 11 exit-level TAKS). In addition, grantees received payments of $1,000 for each student who successfully completed the program by earning a high school diploma or demonstrating college readiness (as defined by TDRPP).

Table 1. TDRPP Interim Benchmarks

Interim Benchmark Title	Interim Benchmark Description
Advanced a grade	Student earned the high school course credits necessary to advance to the next grade level, including all course credits necessary to complete the 12th grade.
Passed TAKS	Earned passing scores on all subject area TAKS in a grade level, including the Grade 11 exit-level TAKS
Passed AP exam	Earned a score of 3 or higher on an Advanced Placement (AP) exam
Demonstrated readiness for AP, IB, or dual enrollment	Earned a score on the Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT) or the PLAN that predicts readiness for placement in AP, International Baccalaureate (IB), or dual enrollment courses
Earned college credit education	Earned college credit for a dual-credit course that was established through an articulation agreement with an IHE or a private or independent IHE
Earned college credit in core curriculum	Earned college credit for a course that was within an IHE's approved core curriculum or an equivalent course offered by a private or independent IHE
Earned college credit for advanced technical credit	Earned college credit for advanced technical credit
Met or exceeded TSI standards	Met or exceeded the minimum passing standards on all portions of a TSI-approved instrument
Earned GED	Earned a GED (this benchmark could only be awarded if the student also met or exceeded the minimum passing standards on all portions of a TSI-approved instrument).
Enrolled in a Texas IHE	Enrolled in a Texas IHE, including developmental education and certificate program courses
Advanced performance category on Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE)	Advanced from High Intermediate Basic Education (or below) to Low Adult Secondary Education and/or Low Adult Secondary Education (or below) to High Adult Secondary Education on all three portions of the TABE
Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB)	ASVAB Armed Forces Qualification Test (AFQT) score of 31 or better. The AFQT is comprised of test results in Arithmetic Reasoning, Math Knowledge, and Verbal Composite x 2. A score of 31 is the minimum score to enter a service branch of the armed forces.
Met other interim benchmarks proposed by applicant	Limited to other interim benchmarks proposed by applicant and approved by the Texas commissioner of education, such as passing one TSI section

Source: TEA TDRPP Program Manager

Other Payments

In addition to base funding and performance funding, local school districts and open-enrollment charter schools received payments from the Foundation School Program (FSP) based on the Average Daily Attendance (ADA) of their eligible students. Grantees not eligible for FSP payments (IHEs and nonprofit education organizations) could earn $2,000 in both the fall and spring semester ($4,000 total) for each TDRPP student who demonstrated academic progress. This funding was instituted to provide a consistent level of funding per student across all grantees and was strictly performance based.

SUMMARY OF 2008-2010 GRANTEES

TEA awarded 22 Cycle 1 grants and 23 Cycle 2 grants to education organizations as part of the TDRPP competitive grant application process. Although the fiscal agents for the grants included county offices of education and cooperative agreements, for the purposes of analysis, the evaluation team categorized each grantee according to the type of organization providing the funded services. As shown in Table 2, Cycle 1 grants funded services in 15 local school districts, two IHEs, two open-enrollment charter schools and three nonprofit education organizations. TDRPP Cycle 1 grantees initially committed to serving 974 students, but had served a total of 2,657 students by the grant end date of May 31, 2010. For Cycle 2, grants funded services in 16 local school districts, one IHE, four open-enrollment charter schools, and two nonprofit education organizations. Cycle 2 grantees committed to serving 1,103 students, but had served a total of 1,484 as of May 31, 2010. Grantees in Cycle 1 were often able to serve multiple cohorts of students because of the extension period. Cycle 2 grantees' number of students served will also increase given the extension period they were awarded. The flexible program designs used by most grantees allowed them to replace students who completed the program or dropped out with new students. Additionally, few programs established a hard cap on enrollment, and most sought to serve as many students as they could identify and recruit. Further discussion of enrollment is found in chapters 4 and 5.

Table 2. Grantees and Students Served as of May 2010, by Grantee Type

	Number of Grantees and Students Served, by Grantee Type					
	Grantees	Cycle 1 Students Proposed	Students Served	Grantees	Cycle 2 Students Proposed	Students Served
Open-enrollment charter school	2	120	171	4	285	341
IHE	2	50	99	1	75	76
Nonprofit education organization	3	100	370	2	50	75
Local school district	15	704	2017	16	693	992
Total:	**22**	**974**	**2,657**	**21**	**1,103**	**1.484**

Source: Arroyo Research Services (ARS) coding of project proposals; TEA payment reports; TEA Student Data Uploads.

Grantees were located in a broad range of communities. As summarized in Table 3, the average high school completion rate in grantee communities was 77%, with a range from 61% to 85%. The average college degree completion rate was 23%, with a range from under 10% to 44%. Similarly, unemployment, income, and percentage of families below the poverty line also varied widely, reflecting the diversity of Texas communities facing challenges in working with out-of-school youth.

Table 3. Summary Statistics on TDRPP Grantee Community Characteristics

	Grantee Community Characteristics			
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Percent with high school degree or higher	77.4	8.7	60.7	90.3
Percent with college degree or higher	23.0	9.6	9.7	43.5
Percent unemployed	7.6	1.9	4.6	11.2
Percent of families above poverty line	84.7	8.0	68.2	95.5
Median household income	$47,270	$12,203	$30,460	$70,002

Source: US Census Bureau (2010), 2005 -2009 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Data Profile

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODS

The evaluation used multiple methods to address each evaluation objective and was built on a strong base of empirical data available through TDRPP grant management procedures and associated reports, Texas extant data, and evaluator-collected data. Each data source informed a rigorous data analysis model designed to answer the research questions that guided this evaluation. This chapter describes the research questions addressed, data sources used to address them, and the methods of analysis used to determine findings.

The evaluation design was guided by multiple levels of review. TEA's Division of Evaluation, Analysis, and Planning (EAP) reviewed all designs and materials. TEA's Data Integrity Review Committee (DIRC) reviewed and approved all surveys and data requests. All surveys, parental, and subject consent documents, as well as confidential data requests, were reviewed and approved by an independent institutional review board (IRB) convened by Independent Review Consulting, Inc., an experienced nonprofit research support organization. Additionally, ARS convened a technical review committee of leading education researchers to review and provide guidance on the research methods and analysis plans.

EVALUATION SCOPE

The evaluation was specifically designed to answer research questions under the four main evaluation objectives, summarized in Table 4 and discussed in further detail within each subsequent chapter.

Table 4. Research Questions

Objective 1: Program Implementation
(A) How did grantees differ in terms of organizational background and experience?
(B) How did participating students differ by program?
(C) What specific strategies and support services, including initial student assessments, were employed by the programs?
(D) How did programs differ in overall program design, including recruitment, assessment, placement, monitoring, support, and paths through various components?
(E) How much variation was there in student participation for each program component?
(F) Did students enter the program at different points throughout the year? Did this affect the program components in which they participate?
(G) Where did programs exert the greatest effort in terms of staff time, budget, and programmatic emphasis?
(H) What were the major barriers and facilitators to implementation? How were these addressed in either program design or policy?
(I) How did Cycle 1 and Cycle 2 grantees differ in their implementation?
(J) How did grantees implement student incentives?
(K) What factors prohibited or facilitated the continuation and/or scaling up of the TDRPP grantees?

Objective 2: Student Outcomes

(A) How did student outcomes vary between and among Cycle 1 and Cycle 2 grantees, and what student, family, program site, and contextual factors explain that variation?
(B) Were there differences in student outcomes associated with the TDRPP program delivery method (e.g. tutoring, counseling, online instruction)?
(C) What instructional strategies, support services, and program features were most strongly associated with changes in student outcomes?
(D) Did student, program, or contextual characteristics mediate or moderate the effectiveness of particular instructional strategies, support services, and/or program features on student outcomes?
(E) What relationship did TDRPP program implementation measures (i.e., student participation level, frequency and duration of intervention activities) have to student outcomes?
(F) How did students' reasons for dropping out, experiences after dropping out, and reasons for participation in TDRPP associate with their success in TDRPP?
(G) Did student outcomes differ by grantee type (e.g., local school district, open-enrollment charter school, nonprofit education organization, IHE)?

Objective 3: Teacher/Staff Effectiveness

(A) What were the qualifications and characteristics of TDRPP staff and how did they differ between sites?
(B) What professional development/training was available to and/or received by TDRPP staff and how did the professional development/training vary between sites?
(C) What perceptions did instructors have of the effectiveness of TDRPP professional development/training activities?
(D) What was the relationship between staff self-efficacy, collective self-efficacy, and student outcomes?

Objective 4: Costs and Benefits

(A) How were TDRPP program funds used by grantees and how did resource allocation differ between sites?
(B) What other resources supported the TDRPP program, including ADA funds, other district funds and resources, and in-kind funds/staff/resources?
(C) What were the costs per student of the TDRPP program and how did these costs differ between grantees and grantee types?
(D) What were the costs-per-student to impact-per-student ratios, and how did these cost/benefit ratios vary between sites (i.e., which programs were most cost effective)?
(E) Which grantees had the lowest cost/benefit ratios and why?
(F) How did the costs per student in the TDRPP program compare to those of comparable alternative dropout recovery/prevention programs?
(G) How did the costs associated with helping a TDRPP participant achieve a diploma or become college ready compare to the costs to society and to the participant that would have been accrued if the student did not achieve a diploma or become college ready?

Source: Arroyo Research Services (ARS) TDRPP Evaluation Plan

DATA SOURCES

Existing Data

Student Data

TEA provided de-identified data for all students participating in the program, including: district last attended; leaver code (reason for leaving school); course and credit accumulation history; student demographics (including gender, ethnicity, LEP status, migrant student status, special education status, gifted and talented status, economically disadvantaged status, and at-risk status); and historical (2004-2008) and recent (2008-2010) TAKS performance data. District-level, campus-level, and other data (for matching purposes) were also provided. TEA matched this data to students included in the student data uploads and rosters provided by the grantees, submitting de-identified files to the evaluators. Extant student data were derived from the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) and TAKS databases.

Evaluator Collected Data

Teacher/Staff Survey

ARS designed teacher/staff surveys that were administered to key program staff. Surveys were distributed via TDRPP program coordinators, as the evaluation team had no direct means of communicating with teachers and school staff. Per the IRB review, participation in the surveys was voluntary. In some cases, where TDRPP students attended classes comprised primarily of non-TDRPP students, surveys were completed by other key TDRPP staff (program coordinators, directors, etc.), rather than by the students' classroom teacher.

The teacher/staff survey was completed by a total of 371 respondents. Because the number of staff working with TDRPP students at each site continually changed based on the classes in which students enrolled, services they used, etc., it was difficult to obtain reliable total staff numbers and to calculate a response rate for the surveys. The response was equal to 8.25 responses per site, which was a reasonably strong return. Staffing figures provided in the Grantee Progress Reports were provided in Full Time Equivalents, often including numerous part time staff, and as such could not be used to directly assess the staff response rate. A copy of the survey is included in Appendix A: Teacher/Staff Survey.

Student Surveys

Students were asked to complete an Initial Student Survey and a Student Exit Survey. Copies of each are included in Appendix B: Initial Student Survey and Appendix C: Student Exit Survey. Of the total 4,141 student participants, 814 (20%) completed the Initial Student Survey and 418 (10%) students completed the Student Exit Survey. Survey participation was voluntary and required parental consent for students younger than 18, as well as completion of a full, IRB-approved consent for all students. Consent forms were available in English and Spanish. Given the low response rates, results should be interpreted with caution and are used only in the context of additional data.

Grantee Site Visits

ARS staff conducted site visits with each of the 22 Cycle 1 grantees in March and April 2009, and conducted follow-up visits with five grantees in December 2009. The follow-up visits were focused on sites with high numbers of completers in order to examine and determine best practices. Site visits included extensive interviews with each program coordinator and their key staff, program documentation collection, observation of major program components, and review of program logic models created by the evaluators from the initial project proposals for each site. ARS staff conducted site visits with seven Cycle 2 grantees in spring 2010 that were selected to be representative of Cycle 2 regions and grantee types. Program implementation across the site visits is discussed in chapter 4.

TDRPP Grantee Reporting

Project Proposals

TEA provided completed grant applications from each grantee, which included program descriptions and initial budgets. Subsequent formal grant modifications were also provided to the evaluators by TEA.

Grantee Progress Reports

Grantees submitted Grantee Progress Reports to TEA at the end of the fall and spring semesters that included reports of progress toward the goals, benchmarks, and enrollment targets outlined in their initial proposals, as well as the extent to which they were implementing each proposed program component. For the December 2009 and May 2010 Grantee Progress Reports, ARS and TEA collaborated to reduce the overall data request load on grantees and to standardize the collection of implementation data. Jointly collected Grantee Progress Report data from December 2009 and May 2010 were used to inform the discussion and analysis of implementation, costs, staffing, and program components.

Student Data Uploads

Grantees submitted student data uploads each semester of TDRPP participation that reported the student identification numbers (ID) and basic information about each student enrolled in TDRPP, including the campus from which they dropped out and their dates and reasons for entry and exit from the program. In addition to informing the analysis directly, these data were used to obtain appropriate PEIMS and TAKS data for TDRPP participants. Data from both the PEIMS and student data uploads were de-identified before they were provided to the evaluators.

TDRPP Payment Report Information

Grantees submitted payment reports that substantiated their requests for performance funds based on students who achieved benchmarks under the terms of the program, met the requirements for Other Payments, or who fully completed the program. Payment report data is reported in Chapter 5 and Chapter 7. The mechanisms for performance payments are discussed in Chapter 3.

SUMMARY OF ANALYTIC METHODS

The evaluation used multiple methods to address each evaluation objective, including analysis of qualitative data from interviews and observations, reviews of relevant program documentation, and descriptive and inferential statistics. Specific analytic methods are described where appropriate within each chapter. In sum, the core strategies were:

Qualitative Analysis. The evaluation team reviewed all program documentation, site visit results, open-ended survey items, and interview data using both structured and semi-structured review protocols to identify program features, implementation challenges, and other aspects of student, staff, and program characteristics.

Literature Review. The report relied on targeted literature reviews to support the financial and comparative analysis of dropout recovery efforts.

Descriptive Statistics. Many of the evaluation objectives and questions of interest were answerable with basic descriptive statistics about variation in program implementation, student characteristics, staff characteristics, and achievement of various benchmarks and completion indicators.

Multi-level Modeling. The core analysis of student outcomes in Chapter 5 was conducted using multiple methods culminating in multi-level logistic regression analyses using Hierarchical General Linear Models (HGLM). HGLMs were selected to account for the nested and non-linear nature of the student and site-level data when examining their influence on program outcomes. Analysis of Variance (more commonly known as ANOVA) techniques, were used to understand mean differences for subpopulations; correlation and regression analyses assisted in the selection of student variables for subsequent modeling based on the strength of their relationship to outcomes. Details are included in Appendix E.

Financial Modeling. Supported by a review of comparable cost analyses, Chapter 7 reports descriptive statistics, basic cost calculations using budget information provided in project proposals, payment reports, program reports, and regression analyses that established the influence of program expenditures on student outcomes. Additional detail on analysis methods employed is included within the chapter.

Across methods, the report includes the following considerations:

- All student outcome data were based on TEA-provided data from PEIMS and the grantee payment reports, and therefore included all students in the program. Students with missing data on key indicators were excluded where appropriate. The number of students included in the analysis is clearly indicated where appropriate.
- Because the response rate for student surveys was lower than anticipated and varied by grantee, data from the surveys were used primarily to inform the discussion of program implementation and other areas where students provided open-ended responses. The student survey data were also used to

guide the analysis of student-level and grantee-provided outcomes. Student survey data were not included directly in the multi-level modeling.

- Some tables provide per-project breakdowns of student and program characteristics; all grantee data have been de-identified throughout.

The design was executed in the context of four basic limitations. First, because the evaluation was not a randomized controlled trial (RCT) and students voluntarily selected to participate in TDRPP, there was no available method to control for self-selection. That is, some students may have been sufficiently self-motivated that they would have re-entered school without the additional flexibility, support, or incentive of TDRPP, which is particularly relevant to the cost/benefit analysis. The evaluation took into account, to the extent possible, other district programs related to this effort and their potential effect on program success.

Second, TDRPP was a new grant program using performance based pay that was not familiar to most grantees. Funded grantees therefore began implementation with varying degrees of intensity and often engaged in trial and error before settling into full implementation relatively later in the cycle. This was true for both Cycle 1 grantees that continued through the two-year period and Cycle 2 grantees that began in 2009 and remain in operation through 2011, though differences by cycle are discussed in Chapter 4. Just as Cycle 1 grantees achieved substantial outcomes after their first year of funding, Cycle 2 grantees are expected to accrue significant additional outcomes in terms of student completions and academic progress through 2011, beyond the scope of this report.

Third, teacher and student surveys were implemented on a voluntary basis at the direction of the IRB that oversaw the project, resulting in lower than optimal response rates. The evaluators therefore used the survey data only to provide background and initial implementation findings. All data for the outcomes models were for the full sample of participating students based on data provided by TEA and TDRPP Cycle 1 and Cycle 2 grantees.

Fourth, student data, including data on enrollment, progress, and completion, was provided by grant coordinators, so it is likely that these reports contain some human error. For example, the evaluators were unable to link performance data to enrollment data for 70 students, and have therefore excluded their outcomes from the analysis. Having said that, the evaluators found the data to be generally reliable and had sufficient confidence in the reporting strategy and resulting data to use them as the basis for this report.

CHAPTER 4: PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

This chapter examines grantee implementation of TDRPP program strategies. Data presented in this chapter were derived from Grantee Progress Reports, site visits, and survey results where appropriate. Summary information for all Year 2 site visits is included in Appendix D: Site Visit Summaries.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

(A) How did grantees differ in terms of organizational background and experience?
(B) How did participating students differ by program?
(C) What specific strategies and support services, including initial student assessments, did the programs employ?
(D) How did programs differ in terms of their overall program design, including recruitment, assessment, placement, monitoring, support, and path through various components?
(E) How much variation was there in student participation in each program component?
(F) Did students enter the program at different points throughout the year? Did this affect the program components in which they participated?
(G) Where did programs exert the most effort in terms of staff time, budget, and programmatic emphasis?
(H) How did Cycle 1 and Cycle 2 grantees differ in their implementation?
(I) How did Cycle 1 grantees operate during the extension period from September 2009 through May 2010?
(J) How did grantees implement student incentives?
(K) What were the major barriers and facilitators to implementation? How might these be addressed in either program design or policy?
(L) What factors prohibited or facilitated the continuation and/or scaling up of the TDRPP grantees?

KEY FINDINGS

Grantee Prior Experience with Dropout Recovery

- **Grantees that built on prior alternative education or dropout prevention programs were able to start serving students closer to the grant start date**. Typically these grantees added intensive recruitment, case management, TAKS preparation, student incentives, and auxiliary services to existing district educational offerings in order to serve an expanded target population. New projects had longer implementation timelines, typically four to six months.

- **Grantees with existing programs in local school districts were also able to leverage broad, district-wide support for the benefit of their dropout recovery programs**. Grantee support included continued access to services for students who aged out of TDRPP eligibility, access to existing credit

recovery and individualized, computer-based instructional software, and existing networks of tutors and social service referral sources.

Background of Students Served

- **On average, TDRPP students entered the program far from high school graduation**.
    - Overall, only about a quarter of all students enrolled in the TDRPP last attended Grade 12; nearly 40% last attended Grade 9.
    - There was significant variation in grade last attended of students by grantee type. The majority of students enrolled in IHEs (68%) and open-enrollment charter schools (61%) last attended Grade 9, compared to 33% for local school districts and 39% for nonprofit education organizations.

Strategies and Support Services

- While many grantees were already operating alternative education programs, **most program coordinators reported that TDRPP funds allowed much more intensive recruiting and a stricter focus on the needs of out-of-school youth**, rather than students at risk of dropping out.
    - With additional funding through the TDRPP award, one district grantee was able to conduct an outreach event to recruit more students to their program. As the event was open to the larger community, it reached potential TDRPP students who had already dropped out of school. Without this event, the grantee would only have recruited from within the district, thus reaching students at risk of dropping out, rather than those who had already left school.

- **Addressing social service needs was an important component of TDRPP programs.**
    - The majority (70%) of TDRPP students were economically disadvantaged, compared to a statewide average of 39%, and had significant social service needs.
    - TDRPP allowed grantees to meet the needs of these students by funding services such as child care, transportation, and professional counseling.
    - Even with the TDRPP resources, over one-third of all grantees reported service needs they were unable to meet.
    - Grantees often adjusted their programs to respond to the specific needs of the enrolled students. For example, one grantee found a greater need for transportation assistance than was anticipated. To respond to this need, the grantee had program staff personally transport students to and from home or jobs. Another grantee addressed a shortage of child care by modifying its schedule so that students could participate when they had other arrangements for child care.

Differences in Program Designs

- **Grantees implemented programs that were very student-focused in design**, incorporating flexible schedules, opportunities for self-paced learning, and a wide variety of academic and social support services.

- A majority of grantees offered students the choice of attending during regular school hours, evening (or night) hours, or flexible hours.
- Nearly 80% provided students with the opportunity to advance through self-paced classes.
- Ten of the 45 grantees offered the Optional Flexible School Day Program (OFSDP), which allowed local school districts and open-enrollment charter schools to provide flexible hours and days of attendance
- Over half (62%) of all grantees offered tutoring and/or mentoring services to their students.
- All grantees offered a variety of social support services. The most commonly offered services included case management, child care, life services training, parenting education, and job training. Transportation was also an integral service for many grantees.
- Grantees also offered a wide variety of academic support services. TDRPP students with access to more academic services were more likely to advance grade levels.

- **Grantees had mixed success with planning for how best to use performance payments, a key feature of the TDRPP program**.
  - Generally, nonprofits and open-enrollment charter schools that were more experienced with soft money-funded programs had stronger initial plans for using these funds within the grant period to serve students directly.
  - Local school districts and IHEs were more likely to have access to non-grant funded resources and to make use of them to support their programs.

- **Grantees were required to offer family involvement services but typically found these events to be of little value**. Two-thirds of grantees reported hosting parent conferences during the academic year. However, grantees typically found these activities were not well attended. Comments to explain the lack of parent involvement included stating that the majority of their students were "well into their adult life" and had only marginal, if any, relationships with their parents.

Barriers and Facilitators to Implementation

- **The initial one-year grant period, with no assurance of continuation, made it difficult for many grantees to adequately plan services that were of the duration and intensity necessary to serve students who were far from graduation**.
  - While no-cost extensions were granted in spring 2009, staff members at some organizations had already been reassigned, and students had made alternate future plans, based on the assumption that the grant would end.
  - Cycle 2 grantees were provided some advanced notice of program extensions that allowed for planning, but also found it difficult to plan programs across uncertain timeframes and funding levels.

- **Grantees were able to successfully utilize the secure base funding and existing processes to address basic implementation in a timely manner**. Most grantees did not experience barriers in such basic

aspects of implementation as securing a physical location, obtaining needed curriculum and technology resources, and identifying and confirming student eligibility (dropout status).

- **Student recruitment was not a problem for most grantees**. Despite some initial start-up issues, the majority (95% in Cycle 1 and nearly 80% in Cycle 2) of grantees exceeded their initial projections for students served by the end of the reporting period.

- **Partnership arrangements with other community agencies helped grantees focus their time and resources.** Local partners provided tutoring services, mentoring support, and even GED instruction. Successful grantees stressed the importance of building partnerships with local businesses and community based organizations to support and extend the program.

- **Grantee collaboration appeared to strengthen program design**. Several grantees reported visiting other sites to obtain program implementation ideas; these visits were reported to assist in the development of strong project plans. Other grantees requested more opportunities to meet with grantees in their regions to share problems and solutions in an organized manner.

Differences between Cycle 1 and Cycle 2

- **American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA)[5] funds were leveraged by some Cycle 2 local school district grantees to support TDRPP implementation**. These funds allowed sites to begin their programs earlier in the academic year, prior to receipt of TDRPP funds.
    - For one alternative school-based dropout recovery program, the ARRA funds were received prior to TDRPP funds from TEA, enabling the program to purchase equipment and enroll students immediately. The grantee indicated that the funds would be reimbursed to the ARRA account at the end of the year after TDRPP funds had been transferred from TEA.
    - The funds also provided more overall resources to these sites. In cases where the ARRA funds were not being reimbursed, sites made purchases that supported the TDRPP students such as equipment that could be used in the district beyond the tenure of the grant. TDRPP funds in those cases were used for incentives or scholarships that would not be sustained after the grant ended.

- **Grantees increased the extent to which they worked with one another and adopted strategies and approaches developed by other TDRPP grantees**. Year two site visits and Grantee Progress Report comments revealed increased grantee interaction among Cycle 1 and Cycle 2 grantees during the second year of the program, though Cycle 2 grantees were found to be more collaborative generally.

[5] The **American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009** (**ARRA)** is an economic stimulus package enacted by the 111th United States Congress in February 2009 with the goal of creating jobs and promoting investment and consumer spending. ARRA funds were available to local school districts through the Texas Education Agency.

This was due in part to increased support from the TEA program office, additional TDRPP technical assistance contracted by TEA, and a maturing of the TDRPP model and community of grantees.

Use of Student Incentives

- **Over 60% of all grantees provided cash incentives or other awards to students for obtaining benchmarks and/or completions**.
    - Incentives were most commonly provided to students who earned a high school diploma.
    - Cash incentives ranged in value from $10 to $1000. Grantees also offered non-cash incentives such as laptops.
    - The incentives were seen as a clear differentiator of TDRPP from prior and concurrent efforts to work with similar students.

- **Cycle 1 grantees expressed more concerns about marketing or promoting use of incentive payments**.
    - The expressed concerns included potential negative community reactions to paying students for "what they should be doing anyway" and creating an incentive for students to drop out of school in order to enroll in the recovery project.
    - Cycle 2 grantees were more likely to cite low student motivation as a barrier to implementation and identify the incentives as an important means of increasing motivation. They were more likely to feature the incentives in marketing and promoting the program to potential students.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Continue the increased programmatic support for grantees, as established in Year 2. Grantees are beginning to learn from one another and from TEA staff and technical assistance providers. This resulted in more rapid implementation in the second grant year, and in more rapid accumulation of student outcomes.
- Extend the technical assistance to organizations that are developing and submitting proposals to ensure higher quality program designs. Program designs should include long-term planning for sustainability. Overall, grantees showed variation in the extent to which they planned for long-term funding from the beginning of the program, and the extent to which they planned for accessing and using resources for the benefit of their students during the grant period. This could be maximized with provision of successful models for replication, collaboration with current grantees, and additional guidance from TEA during a planning phase or prior to the proposal development process.
- Staff retention and motivation was a major driver of student and grantee success. Evaluators observed these factors during site visits to the more successful programs, but strong motivation can be difficult to sustain over time. The evaluation team recommends increasing cross-grantee collaboration, both virtual and in person, as a strategy for not only increasing sharing of approaches and strategies, but for sustaining staff motivation as well.

- Streamline the grantee service tracking and reporting system to assure that data is reported consistently and on time, with reduced overall demand on grantees.
- Create a TDRPP portal for dropout recovery support that links grantee web sites, tool kits, resource guides, sustainability guidance, testimonials, project plans, and other public materials through a single site.

SOURCES AND METHODS

Sources

The ARS evaluation team relied on Grantee Progress Reports and site visits to address the research questions in this chapter. Evaluators conducted visits to all 22 Cycle 1 grantee sites between February and March 2009. Since publication of the Texas Dropout Recovery Pilot Program: Cycle 1 Evaluation Report (2009), second-round visits to five Cycle 1 grantees were conducted. These grantees were selected based on their strong first year results in terms of performance benchmarks achieved by their students. The evaluation team sought to learn more about how they achieved their outcomes and to identify best practices that could be replicated in similar sites. Findings from these second-round Cycle 1 visits inform this chapter; more information can be found in Appendix D: Site Visit Summaries.

For Cycle 2, the evaluators visited seven of 22 grantee sites, chosen as a representative cross section of grantee types, program designs, and geographic locations. In addition to interviewing program staff at these sites, the evaluators toured facilities and collected documents during the visit. Insights from these site visits, where applicable to survey findings, are discussed in this chapter; additional detail can be found in Appendix D.

The evaluation team worked in consultation with TDRPP program staff at TEA to jointly develop and administer Grantee Progress Reports at the end of each semester. These reports combined and modified the prior Grantee Progress Reports gathered by TEA and included information about implementation, barriers, and detailed financial information. As a follow-up to these reports, the evaluation team conducted phone interviews with the 15 Cycle 2 program directors that were not visited in person.

GRANTEE BACKGROUND AND EXPERIENCE

Grantees had a variety of experience levels with dropout recovery students in terms of both institutional history and personal staff experience. On the December 2009 Grantee Progress Report, grantees categorized their programs as one of three types: brand new/somewhat new, modified within an existing program, or an extension of an existing program. Brand new/somewhat new refers to sites that provided no programs or support for dropouts prior to this TDRPP grant. Grantees categorized as “modified within an existing program” are those which previously offered some programming for recovered students but have made modifications such as increased flexible scheduling, changes in staffing patterns, or changes in recruitment strategies.

Programs that were "extensions" of an existing program typically left their core program intact and used their TDRPP funding to provide additional support for TDRPP eligible students. For example, a site in this "extension" category now offered incentives, additional social services, and scholarships to qualifying recovered students as a result of this grant, while the educational services and courses they offer run the same way they did prior to TDRPP. Most programs across Cycles 1 and 2 had been newly designed. As shown in Table 5, a total of seven grants were extensions of existing programs, 15 were modified versions of existing programs, and 23 were brand new programs.

Table 5. TDRPP Incorporation by Grantee Type

	Grantee TDRPP Incorporation		
	Brand new (or somewhat new)	Modified within existing program	Existing program
Grantee Type, Cycle 1			
IHE	2	0	0
Local school district	8	5	2
Nonprofit education organization	1	1	1
Open-enrollment charter school	0	2	0
Total	11	8	3
Grantee Type, Cycle 2			
IHE	0	1	0
Local school district	8	4	3
Nonprofit education organization	1	0	1
Open-enrollment charter school	3	2	0
Total	12	7	4

Source: December2009 Grantee Progress Reports, Cycles 1 and 2

Staff experience working with dropout recovery students can be an indicator of program commitment to serving students in the TDRPP population, and was expected to be predictive of service quality and ability to implement with reduced barriers. Across grantee types, nonprofit education organizations and local school districts had staff with the highest levels of prior experience with dropout recovery students, while IHEs and open-enrollment charter schools had the lowest experience levels with dropout recovery. Among Cycle 1 grantees, 64% of nonprofit staff, and 27% of local school district staff, had six or more years of experience with this population, while only 14% of IHEs and open-enrollment charters did so. Among Cycle 2 grantees, the

comparable figures are 22.5% for local school districts, 20% for nonprofit education organization, and 14% for open-enrollment charter schools.[6]

CHARACTERISTICS OF PARTICIPATING STUDENTS

Demographic Characteristics of Participating Students

Summary statistics for the demographics of students in TDRPP are provided in Table 6. These statistics indicate that a majority of TDRPP students were economically disadvantaged, with 75% of Cycle 2 students falling into this category. This is significantly higher than the percentage of economically disadvantaged students among statewide dropouts. The percentage of economically disadvantaged students was also higher in Cycle 2 (75%) than Cycle 1 (68%), though the evaluators observed an increase in the percentage of economically disadvantaged students initially enrolled in Cycle 1 (62% in May 2009) and those enrolled later in the program (68% by May 2010). Similarly, the majority of students identified as Hispanic, with a somewhat higher percentage in Cycle 2. In Cycle 2, the only IHE grantee served solely students identified as Hispanic (100%). African-Americans continued to be underrepresented in the sample of TDRPP participants compared to the sample of statewide dropouts. These summary statistics were brought to life in interviews and conversations with grantee staff. Said one nonprofit director,

> "…I get some of the most courageous kids, working the hardest. Had a kid had his car taken away. Ended up downtown, working until two in the morning each night, didn't have a ride. Would come back on campus because he had class in the morning, would find a stairwell, sleep in there, would shower in the gym, go to class, …I'd feed him out of my snacks…"

[6] IHEs responses are masked for Cycle 2 because they represent a single grantee.

Table 6. Summary Student Characteristics, Cycles 1 and 2

Student Characteristic	TDRPP Cycle 1 Grantees	TDRPP Cycle 2 Grantees	Percentage of Statewide Dropouts-2008-09
Economically Disadvantaged	68.0%	75.0%	39.2%
Limited English Proficiency	23.0%	22.0%	12.2%
Special Education	11.0%	13.0%	14.3%
Bilingual	10.0%	14.0%	7.9%
Immigrant	5.0%	4.0%	1.8%
American Indian or Alaskan Native	0.3%	0.4%	0.3%
Asian	1.0%	0.8%	1.2%
Black or African American	12.3%	14.8%	22.9%
Hispanic/Latino	65.8%	70.1%	58.1%
Two or more races	0.0%	0.2%	N/A
White	20.5%	13.6%	17.5%

Source: Secondary School Completion and Dropouts in Texas Public Schools, TEA, July 2010; PEIMS data. Note: 2010 revised race/ethnicity designations were used in the Cycle 1 and Cycle 2 data; the TEA report uses the former race/ethnicity designations.

Table 7 further disaggregates student demographics by grantee type. While economically disadvantaged students are relatively evenly distributed across grantee types, the open-enrollment charter schools served the lowest percentage and local school districts served the highest percentage of these students. IHEs had the highest percentage of Hispanic students, while nonprofit education organizations and open-enrollment charter schools had the highest percentages of White students. Overall, two-thirds of all students in the program identified as Hispanic.

Table 7. Student Ethnicity and Economic Disadvantage by Grantee Type

	TDRPP Grantee Type				
	IHE	Local school district	Nonprofit education organization	Open-enrollment charter school	Total
Economically Disadvantaged	71.7%	72.3%	66.0%	63.1%	70.5%
American Indian or Alaska Native	N/A	0.3%	1.0%	0.2%	0.3%
Asian	N/A	1.1%	0.5%	0.8%	1.0%
Black or African American	5.5%	13.5%	9.3%	17.4%	13.2%
Hispanic/Latino	85.5%	69.1%	63.4%	55.7%	67.4%
Two or more races	N/A	0.1%	N/A	0.2%	0.1%
White	9.0%	16.0%	25.9%	25.6%	18.0%

Source: PEIMS (n=4,141 students)

Academic Background of Students

Grantees recruited students with very different academic backgrounds. This held true through both cycles of the program. Table 8 shows the distribution of students by their grade level upon exit from school (prior to enrollment in TDRPP) by grantee type. The majority of students enrolled in both IHEs (68%) and open-enrollment charter schools (61%) last attended Grade 9. Only 6% of students in either of these grantee types last attended Grade 12. Students enrolled with local school districts were most evenly distributed across the spectrum of grade levels, with about a third of students last attending either Grade 9 or 12. Overall, only about a quarter of all students enrolled in the TDRPP last attended Grade 12. Obviously, students who last attended school in Grade 9 are substantially farther from program completion than those who last attended in Grade 12; the relationship of last grade attended and other student factors to grantee success is further explored in Chapter 5.

Table 8. Last Grade Level of Record by Grantee Type

	% of Students Who Exited School at Each Grade Level of Record			
Grantee Type	**Grade 9**	**Grade 10**	**Grade 11**	**Grade 12**
IHE	67.9%	12.2%	13.7%	6.1%
Local school district	33.1%	12.0%	23.1%	31.8%
Nonprofit education organization	39.1%	26.4%	17.8%	16.6%
Open-enrollment charter school	60.9%	8.7%	24.2%	6.2%
Total – All Grantee Types	38.4%	13.1%	22.4%	26.1%

Source: PEIMS (n=4,141 students)

GRANTEE PROGRAM DESIGN

Grantee program designs incorporated every aspect of the dropout recovery process, from identification and recruitment, to initial placement into academic and social services, to student incentives, recognition, and motivation. Grantees were very student-centered in their approaches, weaving together multiple strategies designed to ensure student progress toward program goals. Rather than recruiting students into a predefined alternative educational program, grantees tended to offer combinations of services and service delivery options. The following quote from the May 31, 2010 Grantee Progress Reports exemplifies the student-centered approach taken by grantees in designing their programs:

> "Program success revolved around several different factors. The one-on-one monitoring on a weekly basis was essential to keep these students working toward their individual graduation plan goals. Many external student and district barriers had to be overcome on a regular basis. Keeping the focus on completing student goals and providing resources to overcome obstacles was a constant challenge in helping these students succeed. Financial aid for getting the credits and classes needed was another factor that was essential for success. Tuition cost, books, day care cost, tutoring, mileage, and laptop support made it possible for students to return to finish their educational goals. Several students were self-supportive and trying to meet their goals while working full time or being full time parents."

Moreover, strong programs found ways to place students and their progress at the center of their daily work. Said one administrator:

> "Administrators have to want to work with these kids. They have to be able to hire their own staff. This place is like having straight-A kids. These kids come because they want to learn. We don't have the disruptive stuff. If you are here, you are moving ahead…celebrating every half credit they earn. Like an angel getting their wings…"

Examples of the student-centered approach include:

- Adding night school options
- Providing access to computer labs where students could pursue credit recovery through online courses
- Creating flexible schedules allowing students to attend classes in the mornings or afternoons
- Providing access to a students' home campus

In general, grantees focused on the needs of individual students to help them achieve academic outcomes. Most grantees pursued program designs that used significant portions of their funding to support case management, counseling, and direct contact with students, while relying on other district and organizational resources to meet students' educational needs. Additional information about grantee program designs is included in the site visit summaries found in Appendix D: Site Visit Summaries and in the *Texas Dropout Recovery Pilot Program: Cycle 1 Evaluation Report* (2009). Specific service and program components are discussed in the sections that follow.

Recruitment

The majority of Cycle 1 and 2 grantees actively recruited students for their programs. Local school districts and open-enrollment charter schools had access to and made use of PEIMS data, which included contact information for potential students. IHEs and nonprofit organizations did not have the same access to this data and had to develop other strategies for identifying potential students. Once potential students were identified, grantees engaged in a wide variety of activities to recruit students into the program, ranging from making phone calls to sponsoring radio announcements to canvassing neighborhoods. As noted by one grantee, the most challenging aspect faced with respect to recruitment was "getting students over the fear of returning." Another grantee summed up its own multi-prong strategy as follows:

> "Recruit a larger number of students than your target number. Use incentives throughout the program as positive reinforcement for persistence instead of at the end of the program."

The strong success in enrollment reflects the significant recruitment effort expended by grantees. Table 9 shows the variety of recruitment strategies implemented by grantee type.

Table 9. Recruiting Strategies by Grantee Type, Cycles 1 and 2

	Grantee Recruiting Strategies by Type, Cycles 1 and 2				
	Institution of higher education	Local school district	Nonprofit education organization	Open-enrollment charter school	All grantee types
Recruiter on staff	0%	26%	40%	33%	27%
Phone calls	67%	84%	40%	33%	71%
Mailed letters	33%	42%	20%	0%	33%
Neighborhood canvassing	0%	39%	0%	17%	29%
Word of mouth	33%	81%	80%	67%	76%
Flyers/posters	33%	61%	80%	50%	60%
Radio	33%	6%	0%	0%	7%
Local businesses	0%	19%	40%	17%	20%
Community groups	33%	32%	40%	50%	36%

Source: TDRPP May 31, 2010 Grantee Progress Reports (Cycle 1 n=22; Cycle 2 n=23)

Enrollment

Once students were enrolled in the programs, grantees designed student experiences within TDRPP through a P-16 Individual Graduation Plan, or IGP, that outlined what courses, etc. students needed to complete the program. Across both cycles, 80% of grantees reported that they completed a P-16 IGP for 100% of their students during the first semester.

Scheduling

Consistent with their commitment to implementing a successful dropout recovery program, grantees offered flexibility in their course schedules. Offering classes during non-traditional school hours allowed students with jobs or child care needs to continue working towards course completion. Grantees recommended flexible scheduling as a success strategy for similar dropout recovery programs. An example of a typical daily schedule for dropout recovery program participants included four hours of instructional time. Depending on their family obligations and/or transportation arrangements, students could attend in the morning, afternoon, or evening. One program director found that its charter guidelines didn't allow for an evening program, so until the charter guidelines were revised and approved, the grantee offered a "twilight" program which was held from about 3:00 pm to 7:00 pm. Table 10 shows the scheduling options offered across all grantees.

Table 10. Scheduled Offerings by Grantee Type, Cycles 1 and 2

	Scheduled Offerings by Grantee Type				
	IHE	Local school district	Nonprofit education organization	Open-enrollment charter school	All grantee types
Regular day (8 to 3)	33%	58%	100%	50%	60%
Flexible hours	100%	84%	80%	67%	82%
Twilight school	0%	45%	20%	50%	38%
Night school	67%	68%	40%	67%	64%
Saturday classes	33%	19%	0%	17%	18%
Virtual school	0%	26%	20%	0%	20%
Self-paced	33%	74%	80%	100%	76%

Source: TDRPP May 31, 2010 Grantee Progress Reports (n: IHE = 3, local school district = 31, nonprofit education organization = 5, charter school = 6, all grantee types = 45)

Nine local school district grantees and one open-enrollment chart school grantee offered the Optional Flexible School Day Program (OFSDP) promoted by TEA in the Application Guidelines. This program allows school districts to provide flexibility in the number of hours students attend each day and the number of days they attend each week; it also allows students to enroll in either more or less than a full course load. Several grantees reported that the availability of additional TDRPP funds was instrumental in convincing their districts to apply for OFSDP as part of an overall strategy to address dropouts. A grantee concurred with the statement that OFSDP was "one of the main reasons our program was successful." Effects of the OFSDP are explored in Chapter 5.

Incentives

TDRPP grantees were permitted to offer some form of incentive to students who achieved performance benchmarks or completions and thus generated performance funds. Initially some grantees expressed concerns over offering or marketing the use of incentives, with the fear that the incentives could actually encourage students to drop out of school and enroll in TDRPP. However, the majority made use of incentives in some form. Grantees noted that incentives often served a dual role of attracting students to the program and/or encouraging students to persist in the program. A program director stated that, "Financial incentives attracted students to the program as a recruiting method but were not the main motivator for the majority of the students served. The students were very grateful for the incentives and many planned on using the money to continue with their higher education goals."

Over 60% of all grantees provided cash incentives or other awards for obtaining benchmarks and/or completions. Table 11 shows the number of Cycle 1 and 2 grantees that offered these incentives and the types of activities or achievements for which students earned incentives. The most common incentivized

achievement, and the one with the highest dollar value for students, was graduation. Of the 15 grantees that paid incentives for graduation, six paid $500 and five paid $1,000. Enrollment in an IHE was nearly as common, with similar incentive levels. Overall, cash incentives ranged in value from $10 to $1,000. Other incentives awarded by grantees included laptops, tuition for college coursework, dictionaries, and gift cards.

Table 11. Grantees Offering Student Incentives by Type

Incentives Offered For:	Number of Grantees Offering
None	10
Passing assessment instrument	7
Graduation from high school	15
Achievement of interim benchmark	9
Enrollment in IHE	14
Advancing a grade level	4
Good attendance	3
Earning credit in a college course	5
Passing TAKS	6
Earning a GED	4
Other	10

Source: May 31, 2010 Grantee Progress Reports (n=45)

Academic Activities

In designing their programs, grantees were responsible for conducting a needs assessment to determine how best to support students in completing their high school diplomas or becoming college-ready. For their needs assessments, local school districts and open-enrollment charter schools had access to detailed student records that included TAKS scores, course credits accumulated, reasons for dropping out, etc. that were routinely used in designing student experiences within TDRPP. Without comparable access to these student records, nonprofit education organizations and IHEs relied upon student entrance assessments conducted during the intake and placement process.

Local school districts and open-enrollment charter schools typically focused on helping students complete their high school diplomas, while nonprofits and IHEs focused on college readiness. Eleven percent of grantees had some students pursing each TDRPP completion option, as selected by the student. Most grantees offered the following academic activities: accelerated or remedial courses, TAKS preparation, and/or TSI preparation. The teaching methods associated with these activities varied across grantees.

Table 12 shows the percentage of grantees offering each academic activity, and the delivery method they used. It shows that online-only delivery methods were rare, and that the most common delivery method across all grantee types was online and direct teach with instructional support.

Table 12. Academic Activities by Grantee Type and Delivery Method

	Online only	Online with instr. support	Direct teach only	Online and direct teach with instr. support	All delivery methods
Accelerated/compressed courses:					
IHE	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Local school district	3%	35%	6%	39%	84%
Nonprofit education organization	0%	0%	0%	40%	40%
Open-enrollment charter school	17%	0%	0%	83%	100%
All grantee types	24%	24%	4%	42%	76%
Credit recovery courses:					
IHE	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Local school district	6%	35%	0%	52%	94%
Nonprofit education organization	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Open-enrollment charter school	0%	17%	0%	83%	100%
All grantee types:	4%	27%	0%	47%	78%
Remedial courses:					
IHE	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Local school district	3%	10%	6%	32%	84%
Nonprofit education organization	0%	0%	20%	60%	80%
Open-enrollment charter school	0%	0%	0%	67%	67%
All grantee types:	12%	7%	7%	38%	76%

	Online only	Online with instr. support	Direct teach only	Online and direct teach with instr. support	All delivery methods
TAKS Preparation:					
IHE	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Local school district	3%	0%	29%	52%	84%
Nonprofit education organization	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Open-enrollment charter school	0%	17%	17%	67%	100%
All grantee types:	2%	2%	22%	44%	72%
GED preparation:					
IHE	0%	0%	67%	33%	100%
Local school district	0%	3%	23%	10%	35%
Nonprofit education organization	0%	0%	40%	60%	100%
Open-enrollment charter school	0%	17%	0%	33%	50%
All grantee types	0%	4%	24%	20%	49%
TSI preparation:					
IHE	0%	0%	67%	33%	100%
Local school district	3%	0%	29%	16%	39%
Nonprofit education organization	0%	0%	0%	100%	100%
Open-enrollment charter school	0%	0%	0%	33%	33%
All grantee types	2%	0%	18%	29%	49%

Source: May 31, 2010 Grantee Progress Reports (All grantee types, n=45; IHE, n=3; local school district, n=31; nonprofit education organizations n=5; open-enrollment charter schools, n=6)

To assess for the TSI ,[7] most grantees with a focus on college readiness used AccuPlacer or Compass. Grantees recognized that failure to achieve acceptable TSI scores was a major barrier to student receipt of college credit. One grantee recommended that students be enrolled in AccuPlacer tutoring immediately after the first GED test, in order to prepare them for success with the AccuPlacer test and enrollment in college or the Texas Higher Education Assessment (THEA) course. In addition to AccuPlacer and Compass, grantees also used the SAT and THEA.

Instructional and Social Support Services

Intensive support service provision was a key component of TDRPP. Overall, the extensive provision of support services by grantees reflected their approach to doing whatever it took to help each student progress academically and succeed within the program. In some cases, TDRPP funds were used to fully fund provision of academic services, but in many others TDRPP funds and support personnel were used to extend the flexibility of existing programs to meet the needs of TDRPP students. For example, grantees used TDRPP funds to provide child care or other support services for TDRPP students engaged in learning activities. One grantee used TDRPP funds to extend the alternative school program for the local school district into the evening, when it had not previously been offered. A program coordinator with an IHE who works with TDRPP students on a daily basis described her role as one-on-one problem solving with students, walking them through the unfamiliar aspects of signing up for college assessments, enrolling in college courses, and other bureaucratic aspects of college campus life. This coordinator said, “The shorter you can make the distance for them, the less chance you have of losing them.” While this is a specific example, social workers and program coordinators across grantees made similar comments.

Services varied by site and supported students academically, socially, and financially. One of the more unique services offered to TDRPP students was one-on-one life coaching through an outside agency. Each week for 30-60 minutes, coaches met at the site with students to help them develop action plans and stay motivated throughout the program. The program director reported that this service was most beneficial to students who were discouraged by having failed TAKS. The program director also added that a student with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP)[8] passed two TAKS subject assessments as a result of this intensive coaching. This insight from the program director supports the finding (discussed in more detail in Chapter 7), that special education

[7] The TSI is a program of assessment, advising, developmental education, and student support services that is designed to ensure that students have the skills they need to succeed in college. TSI begins with an assessment of entering students’ college readiness. Students may achieve exemption from the TSI by receiving a high score on the SAT, ACT, or Grade 11 TAKS. Students who are not exempt based on one of those scores may take one of four tests (ASSET, Compass, AccuPlacer, or THEA) to assess their skills in reading, writing, and mathematics.

[8] Students with Individualized Education Plans are students who had been determined to have special educational needs and were participating in a Special Education program.

students had higher odds of success than students who were not in special education when other demographic and program characteristics were controlled, and that these higher odds could be attributed to the ideal "fit" between grantee services and the needs of special education students.

Tutoring services were typically designed to provide one-on-one tutoring for specific subjects in which students needed assistance. Many programs offered teacher support for online courses or computer-based credit recovery that resembled tutoring, but that they did not report as such. As reported, most tutoring programs were additional sessions available to students on an as-needed basis. One grantee, for example, arranged to have volunteers available each afternoon to assist with mathematics preparation for the AccuPlacer test. Another grantee held twice weekly individual TAKS tutoring that was separate from their TAKS preparation classes.

Table 13 shows tutoring and mentoring services reported being offered by grantees during the spring 2010 semester. The table shows that 59% of Cycle 1 grantees and 60% of Cycle 2 grantees offered tutoring. Cycle 2 grantees reported higher utilization of tutoring by students. Over one-half (57%) of the grantees that offered tutoring reported that between 76 and 100% of students received the service, compared to less than one-quarter (23%) of Cycle 1 grantees reporting utilization at that rate. Several grantees cited tutoring as a "best practice" that led to their program's success. Teachers affiliated with TDRPP often served as tutors and/or mentors for student participants, though other grantees used volunteers and one partnered with a national tutoring service center to support their students.

Mentoring services were designed to provide individual mentoring or coaching to students as a strategy to keep them engaged and motivated, and to identify any specific needs that may be keeping them from succeeding in the program. Mentors were often drawn from among the grantee staff, but in some cases included volunteers recruited from the community. One Cycle 1 program provided incentives to staff that served as mentors, and tied these incentives to student academic progress; if their mentee earned a benchmark, the mentor received an incentive payment.

Mentoring services provided by grantees during the spring 2010 semester are presented in Table 13 which shows that slightly fewer grantees offered mentoring services (55% of Cycle 1 and 43% of Cycle 2 grantees) than tutoring. Cycle 1 grantees reported higher utilization of mentoring services than did Cycle 2 grantees, with three-quarters (75%) of those that offered the service reporting that between 75 and 100% of their students received mentoring. In Cycle 2, less than one-half (40%) reported utilization at that same level. Open-enrollment charter schools and IHEs were most likely to offer mentoring. In one case, a district program director reported that they identified several professionals to serve as mentors for the program participants, but the students lacked interest in participation. However, many grantees cited mentoring as an important success factor.

Table 13. Tutoring and Mentoring Services Offered by Grantee Type

	Cycle 1 and Cycle 2 Respondents			
	Tutoring		Mentoring	
	Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Cycle 1	Cycle 2
Institution of higher education	50%	100%	0%	100%
Local school district	60%	56%	67%	31%
Nonprofit education organization	67%	50%	0%	50%
Open-enrollment charter school	50%	75%	100%	75%
Total:	59%	60%	55%	43%

Source: TDRPP May 31, 2010 Grantee Progress Reports (Cycle 1 n: IHE = 2, local school district = 15, nonprofit education organization = 3, charter school = 2, total =22. Cycle 2 n: IHE = 1, local school district = 16, nonprofit education organization = 2, charter school = 4, total=23)

While formal tutoring and mentoring were important components of grantee programs, staff relationships with students were also important, if difficult to measure. During one site visit, a local school district administrator related the following regarding working with TDRPP students:

> "Two [students] came in this week. Called me and walked in my office. We talked to them. They were grilled by me, and I tell them you're going to get grilled like this by the principal, too. Just don't take it personal. Cause I talk pretty strongly to them, and I know [the principal] does also…don't mince words, have you been arrested? Are you a felon? Are you doing drugs? …don't b.s. me, cause if I find out you're lying, and if you really want a second chance you got to trust me and be open with me. We're not going to be mad at you, not going to judge you, just need to know what kind of issues you had that got you into trouble and got you kicked out of school or whatever. And once they know you're not going to be mad at them, they open up…say okay, as long as we have an understanding that you really want this…"

Grantees also offered social services to meet participating student needs; these were offered according to available resources and/or district policies. For both Cycle 1 and Cycle 2 grantees, a high percentage of students used case management services when they were provided. The majority (64%) of Cycle 1 grantees and nearly half (48%) of Cycle 2 grantees reported that over 75% of their students used case management services. Grantee case management was typically a strategy for working individually with each student to identify student needs, both academic and personal, and working with the student to identify resources that will assist them. A case manager is responsible for helping the student succeed by referring them to social services like child care or counseling, arranging tutoring or mentoring, arranging for transportation or other gaps in services needed by the student. In both cycles, nearly half of all students (46% for Cycle 1 and 48% for Cycle 2) accessed life skills services. This reflects the experience of grantees who found students in the

program generally faced challenges of "adult" lives, balancing work and/or child-rearing with their ongoing studies. Figure 2 and Figure 3 summarize the social support services offered by grantees and the percentage of student participation in them.

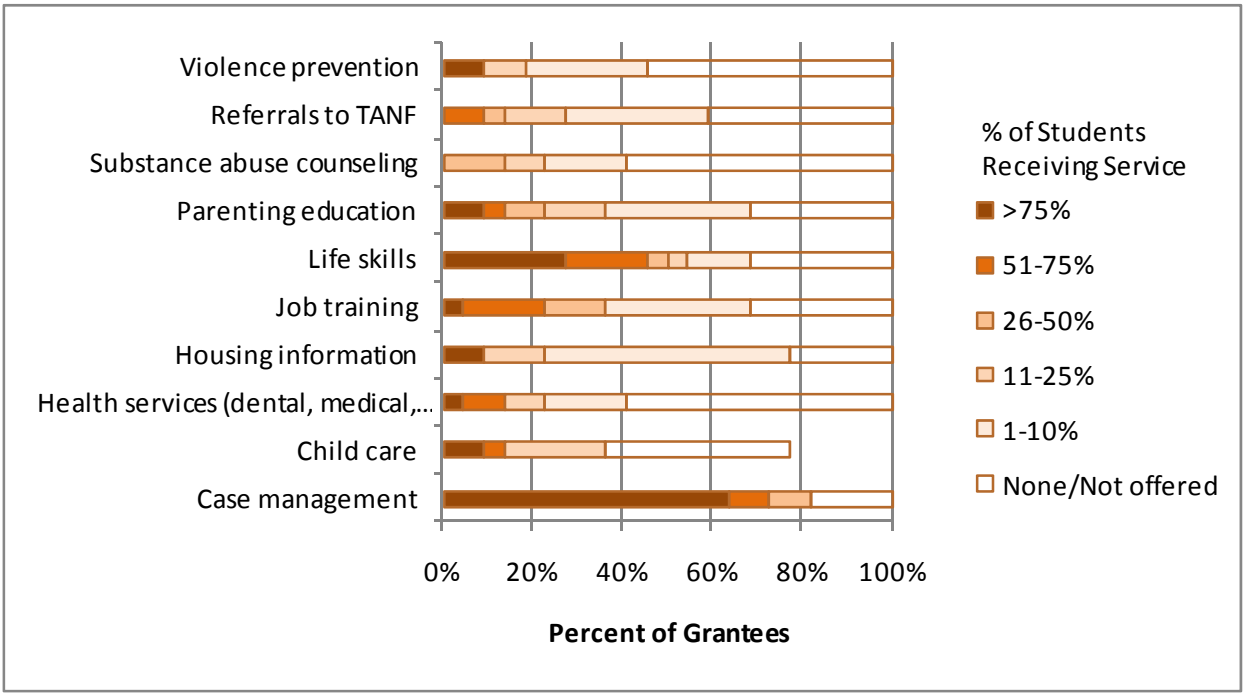

Figure 2. Grantee social service offerings, Cycle 1

Source: May 31, 2010 Grantee Progress Reports (Cycle 1 n=22). TANF = Temporary Assistance to Needy Families.

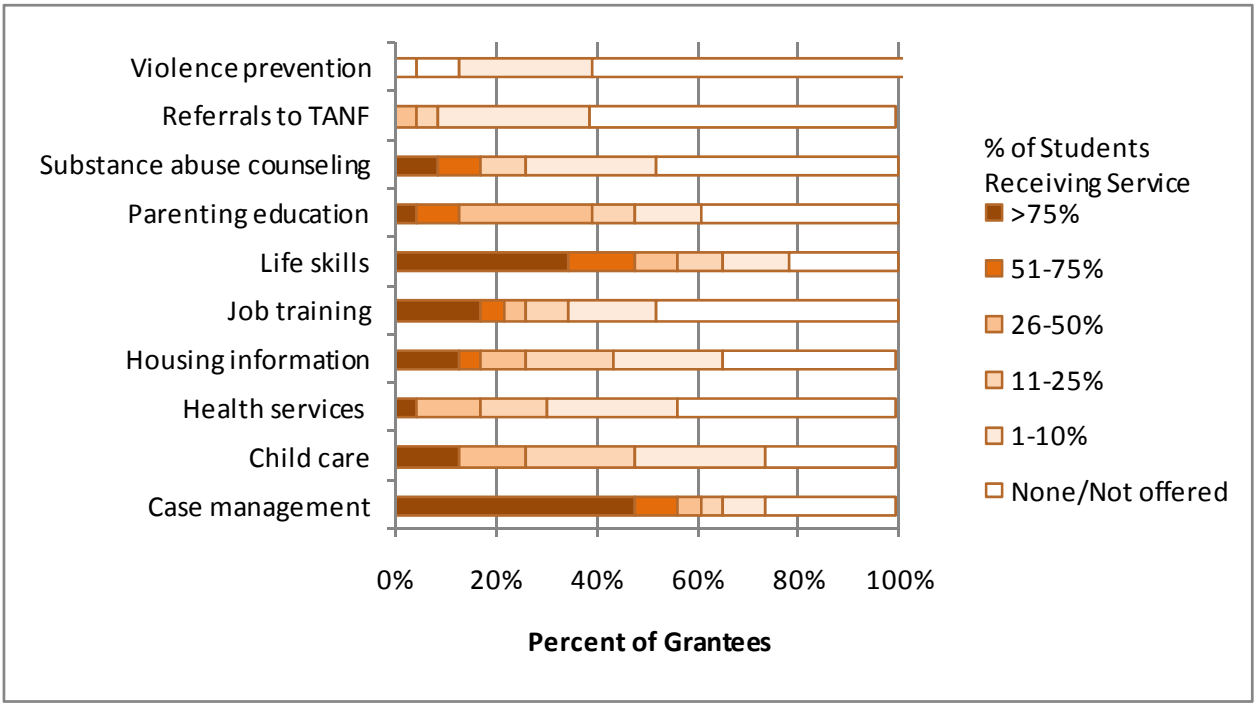

Figure 3. Grantee social service offerings, Cycle 2

Source: May 31, 2010 Grantee Progress Reports (Cycle 2 n=23). TANF = Temporary Assistance to Needy Families

Approximately 34% of Cycle 1 and 40% of Cycle 2 grantees indicated that there were service needs they were unable to meet. Typical responses for unmet social service needs across both cycles were child care, transportation, and professional counseling. Even when programs could provide child care or transportation services, the needs sometimes exceeded the available funding. One grantee noted that while they offered transportation and child care, they lacked sufficient resources to meet the need. A few grantees indicated that district policies interfered with their ability to provide bus passes or other transportation arrangements, though students needed these services. The evaluators also learned from phone interviews that the provision of social services could play a major role in program enrollment and completion. A remarkable example is provided by a Cycle 2 grantee, which lost 40% of its participating students due to homelessness and their inability to help students with housing.

A TDRPP grantee reported losing 40% of participating students due to homelessness.

Grantees were required to offer family involvement programs to support students in completing their program goals. Examples of these programs included family nights, parent conferences, and home visits. Table 14 shows the types of services offered by grantee. While these services were offered, grantees reported that these services were underutilized by

students. Grantees reported that many students were living independently and had few or no ongoing ties to parents. Some sites adapted the services to better meet their students' current family structures, hosting broader social events in which spouses, children, or other individuals significant to the student such as mentors or employers could participate. Another strategy was to meet the requirement for providing the services through phone calls or home visits, which required less effort, transportation, and child care on the part of the parents or the students.

Table 14. Family Involvement Programming Offered by Cycle 1 and Cycle 2 Grantees

	Family Involvement Programming	
	Cycle 1	Cycle 2
Parent conferences	64%	70%
Parent/family night(s)	32%	52%
Parenting classes/workshops for students	0%	0%
Service learning/volunteer activity	18%	35%
Phone calls	95%	100%
Home visits	68%	70%

Source: TDRPP May 31, 2010 Grantee Progress Reports (Cycle 1 n=22; Cycle 2 n=23)

BARRIERS AND FACILITATORS TO IMPLEMENTATION

Grantees were able to implement their projects within a reasonable timeframe, enabling them to enroll and provide services to more students than they initially proposed. Timely implementation was particularly evident in Cycle 2, in which nearly all grantees reported their programs as fully implemented within the first semester. Over half of all Cycle 2 grantees reported full implementation by the end of the first month of the program. This timely implementation reflected a number of factors, including a hurricane-free school year, increased support and technical assistance provided by TEA, experience gained from consultation with earlier grantees, and improved TEA communication and guidance.

With this success noted, grantees did experience a variety of barriers to implementation. Some of these barriers can be attributed to the start-up nature of the pilot program. Others, most notably Hurricane Ike, which affected Cycle 1 grantees in 2008, were unavoidable acts of nature. Following is a summary of the most significant barriers experienced by grantees drawn from site visit data and Grantee Progress Reports:

- Hurricane Ike (September 2008) caused significant delays in Houston-area projects that appeared otherwise ready to make significant early progress. Most were fully underway by December 2008, but often with far fewer and/or different students than they had originally recruited.

- Recruiting staff was a particular problem for grantees that were not building from existing programs or that did not have strong prior experience with externally funded programs in this domain. Staff recruitment and program continuity were also adversely affected by uncertainty regarding TDRPP program extensions and in some cases, varying degrees of experience with soft-money or grant-funded programs.
- Cycle 2 grantees most frequently reported student motivation as a barrier to implementation.
- Cycle 1 grantees more frequently cited student transportation as a barrier.

Grantee Progress Report data regarding barriers to program implementation are summarized in Table 15.

Table 15. Reported Barriers to Implementation, Cycles 1 and 2

	Barriers to Implementation	
	Cycle 1	Cycle 2
No barrier reported	36%	30%
Student recruitment or enrollment related issues	9%	17%
Student engagement or motivation as a barrier, also includes attendance	5%	30%
Scheduling issues, e.g., the time of day classes are usually offered	0%	4%
All issues related to the curriculum, either classroom or computer-based	14%	4%
Child care availability at the center or in the community	9%	0%
Budget or financial-related issues	5%	4%
Availability of transportation to center, student's home, or other community partner sites	18%	9%
Technology related	0%	0%
Administrators or other staff	9%	4%
District administration and/or policies	5%	13%
Student personal issues or other social matters that interfered with program implementation	5%	4%
TEA communications/policies as a barrier or cause for changes to implementation	5%	4%
Unusual or special consideration, e.g., natural disaster or space constraints	14%	4%

Source: May 31, 2010 Grantee Progress Reports (Cycle 1 n=22; Cycle 2 n=23)

Facilitators

As noted previously, most grantees were able to implement their programs within a reasonable timeframe. The evaluation team noted particularly strong implementation in Cycle 2 by grantees with administrators who had previously been affiliated with similar programs. These administrators were familiar with working with students who have dropped out and their particular needs as well as with the structure of dropout recovery programs. The administrators enjoyed the full support of other officials within their district or college. The following quotations provide further insight into the strategies employed by successful grantees:

> "It is very important that programs refer to their approved application and maintain focus on the objectives that need to be met. Even more important is keeping the best interest of students in mind and providing the best services possible to ensure that students succeed."

> "Success requires the efforts of a dedicated team. Two or three individuals cannot fully implement a complex dropout program."

> "Always make students feel welcomed first. Then, make sure you've hired caring staff members, because most of these students have faced or are facing some incredible hardships. Finally, make sure you provide students with flexibility and support services."

While grantees shared a substantial degree of common strategies and goals, the variation across grantees summarized in this chapter shows the extent to which programs were implemented in the unique contexts of local education organizations and communities to meet the specific needs of their students. While grantees each sought to serve the needs of out-of-school youth, the diversity in approaches was promoted by the overall program design and presents opportunities for studying differential program effects, while also presenting challenges associated with comparing projects aimed at different interim outcomes. Chapter 5 examines student outcomes and their association with the various program designs.

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CHAPTER 5: STUDENT OUTCOMES

This chapter presents evidence of TDRPP participants' progress from August 28, 2008 through May 31, 2010. The objective of this chapter is to understand the program features and student characteristics that relate to student outcomes, including program completion via high school graduation, program completion via demonstration of college readiness, academic progress indicated by benchmark achievement, and student continuation in the program (program persistence). It investigates whether students' likelihood of success in the program was related to their academic backgrounds and demographic characteristics, explores how the outcomes differed by grantee type (i.e., local school district, open-enrollment charter school, IHE, or nonprofit education organization) and examines which intervention strategies, course scheduling options, and student support services were associated with positive results.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

(A) Were there differences in student outcomes associated with the type of TDRPP program delivery method (e.g., tutoring, counseling, online instruction)?

(B) What instructional strategies, support services, and program features were most strongly associated with changes in student outcomes?

(C) Did student, family, program site, or contextual characteristics mediate or moderate the effectiveness of particular instructional strategies, support services, and/or program features on student outcomes?

(D) What relationship did TDRPP program implementation measures (student participation level, frequency and duration of intervention activities) have to student outcomes?

(E) How did students' reasons for dropping out, experiences after dropping out, and reasons for participation in TDRPP associate with students' success in TDRPP?

(F) Did student outcomes differ by grantee type (i.e., local school district, open-enrollment charter school, nonprofit education organization, and IHE)?

KEY FINDINGS

All findings were based on data for Cycle 1 and Cycle 2 grantees as of May 31, 2010, unless otherwise indicated.

Student Outcomes

- **Grantees reported 4,141 participants enrolled in the 45 TDRPP grantee sites as of May 31, 2010,** including six open-enrollment charter schools, three IHEs, five nonprofit education organizations, and 31 local school districts. Enrollments ranged from seven to 458 students per grantee, with an average of 92 students. Cycle 1 sites typically had larger overall enrollments because they added a second cohort of students at the beginning of their second year of operation.

- **Overall, 31% of TDRPP students completed the program and 33% remained in the program** (12.3% continued to make progress, as demonstrated by achieving at least one interim benchmark; 20.3% continued without such progress). **Thirty-six percent dropped out before the end of the reporting period: 1,158 students completed the program by obtaining a high school diploma and 135 students did so by demonstrating college readiness. Students also earned a total of 1,062 grade advancements; 654 students passed all required TAKS; and 559 students enrolled in a Texas IHE. A total of 4,259 benchmarks were earned by 2,109 students.**
    - IHEs had a substantially higher number (51%) of students drop out than other grantee types. Dropout figures for other grantee types were 32% for open-enrollment charter schools, 26% for local school districts, and 29% for nonprofit education organizations.
    - Local school districts had the highest percentage of program completers at 37%. Completion percentages for other grantee types were 17% for open-enrollment charter schools, 15% for IHEs, and 21% for nonprofit education organizations.
    - Students in open-enrollment charter schools were more likely than students in local school districts to advance a grade level during the reporting period. Of students enrolled in charter schools, 38% advanced at least one grade, compared to 29% of students in local school districts.

Academic Background and Demographics

- **Not surprisingly, students entering the program with more success in high school were more likely to graduate through TDRPP.**
    - Students that entered TDRPP as a Grade 12 student had the highest odds of earning a high school diploma (6 to 1 compared to all other grade levels, and statistically significant), followed by students who entered in Grade 11 (3 to 1 compared to all other grade levels, and statistically significant).

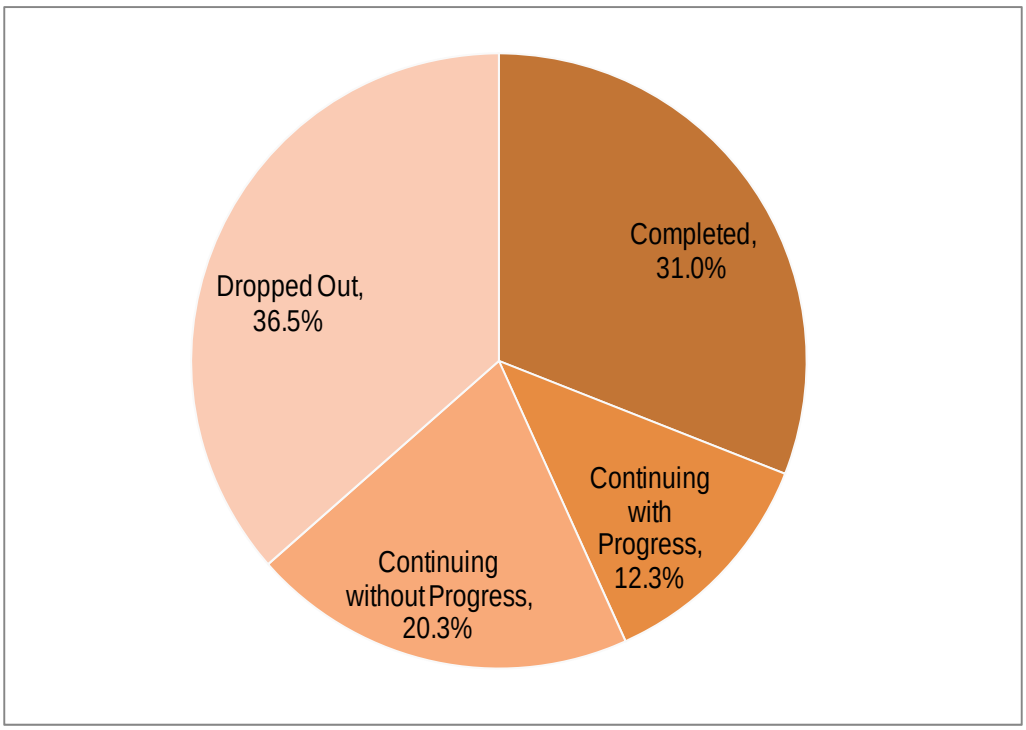

Figure 4. TDRPP student outcomes

Source: Data from performance payment reports submitted to TEA by grantees in May and June of 2009 and 2010. Results based on the complete sample of 4,141 total students enrolled in program during the reporting period. Each student was coded into only one category. Continuing with progress meant that a student earned at least one benchmark or performance indicator shown in Table 17.

- The number of units[9] completed prior to entering TDRPP was significant in predicting completion. Adding one unit to the total units completed prior to TDRPP entry was associated with higher relative odds of completion, or an approximate increase in predicted completion of 4% over students with the average number of course units.
- Students with higher attendance rates during their last year of school prior to TDRPP were more likely to obtain high school graduation via TDRPP. A one standard deviation increase in this rate (a 19 percentage point increase in attendance) was associated with a 56% increase in the predicted probability of completion.

[9] Units earned toward graduation requirements were calculated from course records extracted from PEIMS and matched by the evaluators to TEA-provided course descriptions to estimate units awarded for each course. Additional guidance on course descriptions and typologies was also provided by TEA. Units earned were estimated using the course descriptions and course history records.

- TAKS is an assessment that measures student academic performance in Texas in Grades 3 through 11; students must pass all content areas (English Language Arts, math, science, and social studies) of the Grade 11 test in order to be eligible for a Texas high school diploma. Prior TAKS achievement was strongly positively associated with TDRPP completion, either by obtaining a high school diploma or demonstrating college readiness. A one standard deviation increase in the percent of TAKS passed was associated with a 62% increase in the probability of completion. While this finding was not surprising, there are significant policy considerations related to it. For example, grantees enrolling students who have previously passed several TAKS content areas will achieve more completions in a shorter period of time, holding all other variables constant. Whether the desired program goal is more completers, more overall progress by students who are further from graduation, placement into college, or other specific goals, may determine how future funding guidelines, incentives, and other program features are designed.

- Student demographics were strongly associated with program success. Holding all other factors constant:
  - Female students were less likely than males to demonstrate college readiness or advance a grade level.
  - Students who were older were more likely to achieve a high school diploma and advance a grade than younger students.
  - Students who were classified as a special education were more likely to achieve a high school diploma and advance a grade than non-special education students.
  - Students who exited school prior to TDRPP for reasons that were not academic or TAKS-related were less likely to obtain program completion.
  - African American students were less likely than non African American students to achieve college readiness.

Grantee Effects

- Holding other predictors constant, students enrolled with grantees offering night course were less likely to complete the program than other TDRPP students.

- **Increased academic support services were associated with increased grade advancement.** That is, TDRPP programs that provided a broad range of services such as accelerated/compressed courses, credit recovery courses, remedial assistance, TAKS preparation, GED preparation, and TSI preparation were positively associated with grade advancement. While no one of these services was statistically meaningful in relation to grade advancement or program outcomes due in part to limited sample size for each, as a group they were positively associated with grade advancement.

- **Case management was positively associated with grade advancement and statistically significant when other grantee-level variables were controlled**. It was positively associated but not statistically

significant when the analysis also controlled for student characteristics. Forty-four percent of students at grantee sites offering case management achieved high school graduation benchmarks (including grade advancement), compared to 35% of students at grantee sites that did not offer case management.

- **Average time of student enrollment by grantee was associated with increased grade advancement.** An approximately one-half day increase in the average time of student enrollment by grantee (e.g., increasing the average time of student enrollment from 30 to 30.5 days) increased the predicted success for grade advancement by 6.6%. This can be understood to mean that, given more time, grantees offering services geared toward high school completion were better able to advance students toward that goal.

- A nonprofit education organization established a college partnership that enrolled most of its students in a core college curriculum course within the first semester of enrolling in TDRPP. This program design was a significant factor in its ability to assist students in achieving interim college readiness benchmarks and college readiness completions. Given that this nonprofit produced 67% of all college readiness interim benchmarks, and 59% of all college readiness completions, this program design was a significant contributor to student success.

- **Out of the 45 TDRPP grantees, the six top producers accounted for over one-half of all program completions.**
    - Of the 1,158 students who earned high school diplomas, 550 (48%) were students at one of the six top-producing grantees.
    - Similarly, 80 of the 135 students (59%) who demonstrated college readiness were students of one of the top-producing grantees.
    - 100% of the six top producers offered self-paced classes, compared to 73% of other grantees.
    - An effectiveness analysis that controlled for student characteristics while examining predicted versus actual completions, percentage of students that completed, and total number of students that completed, found that five of the six top producers in terms of total completers were also deemed to be highly effective and were among the top six most effective grantees; the one top-producing grantee not found in the top six in the effectiveness analysis was in the top quartile.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The evaluators make the following recommendations based on the findings in this chapter:

Grantee/Program Recommendations

- Continue support for the broad mix of programs and eligible grantees. Grantees served unique student populations with programs that shared common elements as well as accommodations for local needs.
- Seek to identify and develop highly motivated project leaders. Grantee leaders were instrumental in providing the motivation to staff and students that resulted in the high-performing programs that account for a large percentage of the overall program results.
- Encourage and focus on larger programs. While some of the smaller programs filled identified local needs, in terms of the magnitude of overall TDRPP accomplishment, the few programs that account for most of the program outcomes served, and were designed to serve, larger numbers of students.
- Review underperforming grantees mid-way through the grant cycle. While the six top-producing grantees accounted for the majority of program outcomes, this also means that a large number of grantees were underperforming compared to what was possible. While this was due in part to differences in the students recruited into the program, it was also due to program design and support issues. TEA is encouraged to seek ways to identify and work directly with grantees that are underperforming in order to ensure strong program implementation.
- Improve reporting and monitoring of program outcomes. The evaluation encountered numerous difficulties in grantee reporting of benchmarks, completions and leave reasons, including grantee payment report records that could not be matched to grantee student rosters. It is likely that this resulted from reporting error rather than any malfeasance on the part of grantees. If possible, improved reporting procedures, and more timely and complete grantee monitoring and review of incoming reports by TEA would likely result in a reduction of such errors.

Evaluation Recommendations

- Gather and include individual service utilization data on the student data uploads. Grantees provided service availability information and general percentages of service utilization on Grantee Progress Reports, but determining the effects of various services would be done best by obtaining individual service utilization information.
- Consider funding identification and analysis of non-TDRPP dropout recovery programs in Texas, or creation of a control group of Texas dropouts. A control group study using PEIMS data could create a statistically matched group of students who dropped out in similar years with similar characteristics,

and review whether and where they returned to a Texas public school, whether they subsequently completed a high school diploma, and the differences in the time to completion and other outcomes.

- Consider TEA creation of a definitive statewide calculation of credit accumulation toward graduation, and the number of required units accumulated for graduation. Credit accumulation toward graduation and the number of required units accumulated for graduation used in the analysis were calculated with care and the strongest available data from TEA, but they were proxies for distance from graduation, rather than definitive TEA data regarding distance from graduation. The evaluators were unable to locate a state-level source that clearly indicated what course and credit accumulation graduation requirements were met or not met by any given student who dropped out.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Figure 5 presents the conceptual framework that guided this investigation of TDRPP and student outcomes. This investigation focused on three dimensions of program success:

(1) Program Completion
To successfully complete the program, participants must have either earned a high school diploma or demonstrated college readiness per TDRPP guidelines.

(2) Program Progress
Progress was measured by the 12 TDRPP interim benchmarks shown in Table 1 These benchmarks include two requirements for students seeking to earn a high school diploma: grade level advancement and passing all required TAKS. Similarly, there were three benchmarks required for students seeking to demonstrate college readiness: earned a GED, met or exceeded TSI standards, and earned college credit in the core curriculum or advanced technical credit. The remaining benchmarks are solely indicators of progress and are not requirements for program completion.

(3) Program Persistence
Students were considered to persist in TDRPP if they did not have a leave reason or an exit date on Student Data Uploads completed by grantees.

The goal was to understand how these outcomes varied among the 4,141 students and 45 grantees, as well as to identify student and program factors that were predictive of student success or failure. Students' likelihood of completing the program, demonstrating progress, and remaining in the program was expected to be influenced by the features of each dropout recovery program. However, the impact grantees had on students may also depend on the academic and demographic characteristics of the students they served.

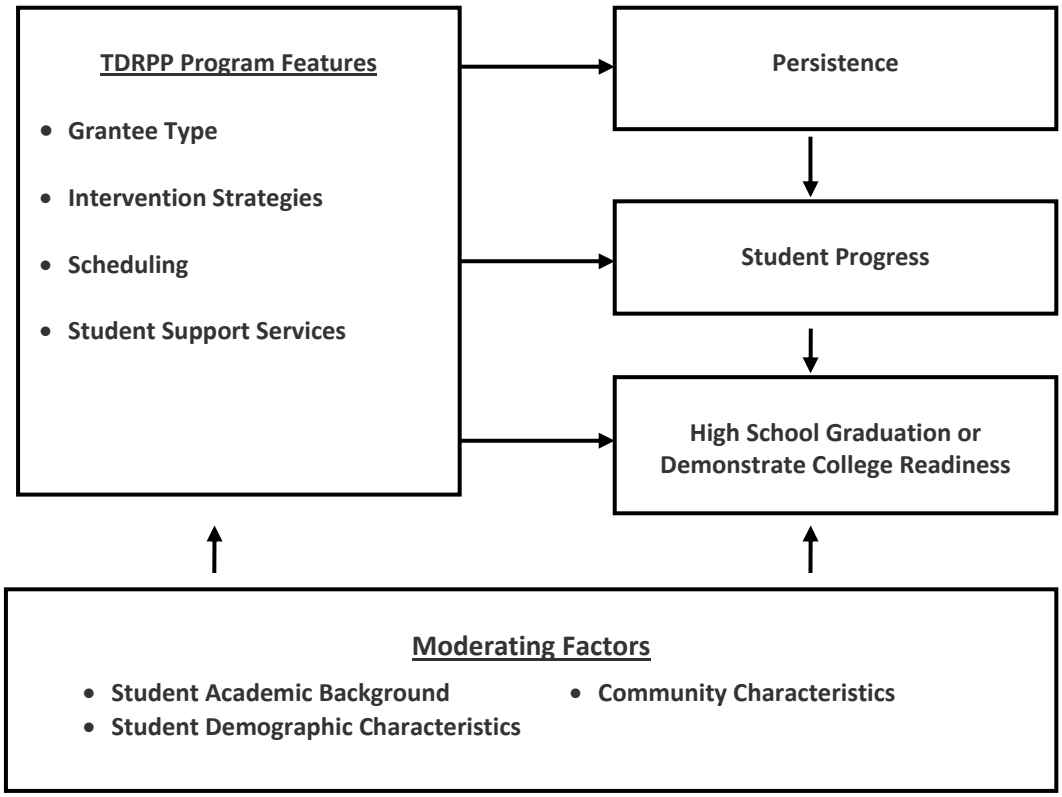

Figure 5. Conceptual framework of relationship of TDRPP to student outcomes

SAMPLE AND METHODS

Sample

As indicated in Chapter 3, participant enrollment and outcome data used for the study were reported by grantees and are therefore subject to minor error. Grantee reported enrollment records were matched to TEA PEIMS and TAKS records. Rather than stating "grantees report" prior to each related figure, the authors simply state the resulting figures.

There were 4,141 participants enrolled in the 45 TDRPP Cycle 1 and Cycle 2 grantees as of May 31, 2010. In addition to examining grant cycles, the analysis grouped students into three cohorts where appropriate:

- Cohort 1: Cycle 1 students beginning in TDRPP year 1 (school year 2008-2009), 22 sites, 1,466 students
- Cohort 2: Cycle 1 students beginning in TDRPP year 2 (school year 2009-2010), 21 sites, 1,191 students
- Cohort 3: Cycle 2 students beginning in TDRPP year 2 (school year 2009-2010), 23 sites, 1,484 students

Missing Data

When controlling for student and program factors, the sample used in the student-level analysis was limited to 3,870 students (94% of all students) for whom there was complete demographic and academic background data. The evaluators detected no pattern to the 271 students with missing or incomplete PEIMS records, and considered this amount of missing data to be within an acceptable range.

There were two sources of missing data: students reported to have earned benchmarks that were not matched to other grantee-provided data, and students who were missing all or some PEIMS data. The analysis relied on data from performance payment reports that grantees submitted to TEA in order to receive payments for meeting completion and interim benchmarks. In order to maintain student confidentiality, these reports contained student identification numbers, but did not contain student names. Grantees also reported student enrollment and roster information, with identification numbers and names, on a separate report known as the student data upload. The evaluators were unable to link the payment report records with student data upload records for 109 benchmarks achieved by 70 students spread across 28 grantees, and therefore could not identify these students for the purpose of the analysis.

The evaluation team also found minor missing data problems in student PEIMS records. PEIMS records were used in the analysis to control for prior TAKS performance, credits needed to graduate, basic demographics, and other prior academic background data. Where possible, these students were included when reporting actual figures for interim benchmarks and completions, but were not included when the analysis controlled for student academic background and demographic characteristics. Nine percent of the sample did not have course history data, meaning the number of units the students had accumulated prior to enrolling in TDRPP could not be determined. This was a concern because the analysis needed to account for students' academic standing when they entered the program. Rather than exclude these records, the evaluators imputed them by predicting their values based on students' grade level at program entry. This was a defensible approach given that the number of units earned was the primary determinant of a student's grade level.

In addition, 6.8% of students were missing indicators of whether they met proficiency on their last TAKS and 4.2% were missing attendance records. These indicators were also imputed by predicting their values based on the student's at-risk status, economic disadvantage status, LEP status, special education status, and the percentage of courses the student passed while initially enrolled in high school. Student data was missing but not imputed in the PEIMS leaver, discipline, and demographic files at 23.4%, 21.7%, and 4.1%, respectively.

Data Analysis

This chapter uses descriptive statistics and logistic regression, employing two-level Hierarchical Linear Modeling (HLM), to answer the research questions. Details on the design, specification, and results of the HLM model are presented in Appendix E. Briefly, logistic regression and HLM allowed the evaluators to explore the relationship between a given student factor or grantee factor and the likelihood of a student achieving an outcome of interest. Specific participant outcomes reviewed in this study included high school diploma obtained, college readiness achieved, program completion achieved (i.e., participant achieved college readiness and/or obtained a high school diploma), grade advancement, and any benchmark or other

performance indicator achieved. Student-level factors controlled for in the analysis included socio-demographic characteristics and academic backgrounds of participants. Grantee-level factors included TDRPP grantee type (i.e., local school district, IHE, open-enrollment charter, or nonprofit education organization), instructional strategies, scheduling options, student support services, and student population characteristics. Due to sample size limitations, not all variables of interest could be included in each model. Details on the variable selection methodology are included in Appendix E.

This report reflects student outcomes from August 28, 2008 to May 31, 2010. Data on completions and benchmarks were provided by grantees to TEA. All grantees were required to submit a fall and spring payment report to TEA documenting the number of students that met each benchmark. Performance payments were awarded using these reports. The number of completions was derived from both the TDRPP payment reports and separate information on the status of enrolled students provided by each grantee to TEA in a student upload. Table 16 describes the student and grantee measures used in the analysis.

Table 16. Measures Used to Evaluate the Relationship of TDRPP to Student Outcomes

Measures[1]	Description	Data Source
TDRPP Program Features		
Grantee Type		
Open-enrollment charter school	Grantee an open-enrollment charter school	TEA
Local school district	Grantee a local school district	TEA
IHE	Grantee an IHE	TEA
Nonprofit education organization	Grantee a nonprofit education organization	TEA
Instructional Strategies		
Tutoring	Program incorporated one-on-one tutoring	GPR[2]
Mentoring	Program incorporated one-on-one mentoring	GPR
Financial Incentives	Students offered financial incentives for meeting benchmarks	GPR
Student Academic Services	Indicator denoting intensity of academic services	GPR
OFSDP		GPR
Scheduling Options[3]		
Regular Scheduled Classes	Program offered regularly scheduled day classes	GPR
Twilight Classes	Program offered twilight (early evening) classes	GPR
Night Classes	Program offered night classes	GPR
Flexible Schedule	Program offered a flexible/customized schedule	GPR
Virtual Classes	Program offered virtual classes for off-site participants	GPR
Self-Paced Curriculum	Program offered a self-paced curriculum	GPR
Student Support Services		
Case Management	> 75% of Students provided case management services	GPR
Child care Assistance	Program provided child care assistance to students	GPR
Student Services Support	Indicator denoting intensity of student support services	GPR
Grantee Level Student Characteristics[4]		
Mean Time Enrolled in Program	Site average time enrolled in program for students	TEA/Uploads
Mean Enrollment	Site average student enrollment	TEA/Uploads
Mean Economic Disadvantage[5]	Site level of student economic disadvantage	TEA/PEIMS
Full-Time Staff Equivalent	Number of full-time equivalent staff at site (Teachers, Staff)	GPR
Mediating and Moderating Factors		
Student Academic Background *(prior to TDRPP entrance)*		
Units Earned toward Diploma[6]	# of units student earned toward graduation	TEA/PEIMS
Grade Placement	Student's grade placement (9th or less, 10th, 11th, or 12th)	TEA/PEIMS
Percent of TAKS Proficiency Met	Proficiency levels on last TAKS (5 tests)	TEA/PEIMS
Last Attendance Rate (Percent)	Student's last attendance rate	TEA/PEIMS
Gifted Indicator	Student classified as economic disadvantaged	TEA/PEIMS
At Risk Student Status	Student classified as an at-risk student (last attended)	TEA/PEIMS
In School Suspension Indicator	Student received an in-school suspension (1 or more)	TEA/PEIMS
Time in Program[7]	Time as determined by entrance and exit date	TEA/Uploads
Out of School Suspension Indicator	Student received an out-of-school suspension (1 or more)	TEA/PEIMS
Expulsion Indicator (prior to TDRPP)	Student was expelled in previous school (1 or more)	TEA/PEIMS
Truancy Indicator (prior to TDRPP)	Student was truancy in previous school (1 or more)	TEA/PEIMS
Exit Reasons	Student exited last school for academic, TAKs, or other reasons	TEA/PEIMS

Measures[1]	Description	Data Source
Student Socio-Demographic Characteristics		
Age	Age as determined by date of birth and exit date	TEA/Uploads
Cohort	Cohort as determined by cycle and entrance date	TEA/Uploads
Immigrant	Student classified as Immigrant	TEA/PEIMS
Limited English Proficiency Status	Student classified as limited English proficient	TEA/PEIMS
Migrant	Student classified as Migrant	TEA/PEIMS
Special Education Status	Student classified as a special education student	TEA/PEIMS
Gender	Student is female	TEA/PEIMS
Race/Ethnicity	TEA race/ethnicity categories	TEA/PEIMS

Notes:

1. Ethnicity categories for Asian/Pacific Islander and American Indian/Alaskan Native, At-Risk, and the indicator for Economic Disadvantage were assessed using stepwise regression and other accepted methods for exploratory statistical analysis and were determined to lack sufficient sample size, variability, or statistical power to be included in the HLM models.
2. GPR are Grantee Progress Reports submitted by grantees to TEA.
3. All scheduling and curriculum options were tested as part of the level-2 modeling approach with the exception of "Saturday class options," which had insufficient sample size to warrant inclusion.
4. These are average characteristics of students enrolled in the program that may influence student performance in the program. For example, the average performance or profile of a student's classmates was expected to influence his or her performance, and was therefore considered to be a characteristic of the grantee.
5. Although economic disadvantage was excluded from the student level model based on its low-level relationship with outcome variables, it was still considered to be an important proxy for social economic status of the students as a group, so was included at the grantee level
6. Course records were extracted from PEIMS and matched by the evaluators to TEA-provided course descriptions to estimate units awarded for each course. Additional guidance on course descriptions and typologies was provided by TEA. Units earned were estimated using the course descriptions and course history records.
7. Time in program was not entered into the HLM models at level-1 given the program was not isolating an effect or comparing covariates for program "completers" only. However, average time in program was used as a level-2 predictor for the sites.

SUMMARY OF 2008-2010 TDRPP STUDENT OUTCOMES

Table 17 reports the number of program completions, interim benchmarks, and other performance indicators (OPIs) met during the reporting period. The figures presented in this table were based on the entire sample of 4,141 students. Of the 4,141 students participating in TDRPP, 31% (*n* = 1,283) completed the program. Of these, 135 students demonstrated college readiness and 1,158 students earned high school diplomas; ten of these students were reported to have both earned a high school diploma and demonstrated college readiness. Figure 4 shows how these results were distributed across the entire TDRPP enrolled population. Table 17 reports benchmarks and completions that may be earned by the same student.

Participants met 4,261 benchmarks as of May 31, 2010, including those students who completed the program. Forty-nine percent of TDRPP participants met at least one benchmark or completed the program. Eighty-five percent of TDRPP students were enrolled in programs aimed at achieving a high school diploma. The most common outcome was earned high school diploma, which was achieved by 1,158 students. Grade advancement was the second most common benchmark with 1,062 grades advanced.[10] Passing all required TAKS was achieved by 654 participants, of whom 584 were enrolled in grantee sites operated by local school districts. For students enrolled in programs with the goal of achieving college readiness, 90% (or 559 students) achieved the benchmark for enrolling in a Texas IHE. None of the grantees reported any students passing an AP exam or demonstrating readiness for AP, IB, or dual enrollment courses.

[10] More than one benchmark for grade advancement could be earned by each student.

Table 17. TDRPP Participant Program Completion and Progress as of May 31, 2010

	# Met
Program Completion (n=4,141)	
Earned high school diploma	1,158
Demonstrated college readiness	135
High School Diploma Interim Benchmarks (n=3,521)	
Advanced grade	1,062
Passed TAKS	654
College Readiness Interim Benchmarks (n=620)	
Earned college credit for dual credit course	135
Earned college credit in core curriculum	208
Enrolled in Texas IHE	559
Earned college credit for advanced technical course	1
Met or exceeded TSI standards	135
Earned GED	107
Advanced performance category on (TABE)	22
Passed ASVAB	21
Other interim benchmarks approved by commissioner	64
Total Benchmarks Met	**4,261**
Unique Students Meeting Any Benchmark	**2,085**
Other Performance Indicators (n=620)	
Demonstrated progress on assessment instrument	354
Total Benchmarks or Other Performance Indicators	**4,615**
Unique Students Meeting Any Benchmark or Other Performance Indicator	**2,164**

Source: Data from performance payment reports submitted to TEA by grantees in May and June of 2009 and 2010. Results based on the complete sample of 4,141 total students enrolled in program during the reporting period. Grade advancements include both students who advanced a full grade level and students who entered the program as Grade 12 students and graduated from high school. 'Other Payments' could be earned by students in nonprofit education organizations or IHEs. Ten students earned a high school diploma and demonstrated college readiness.

Student Cohorts and Program Outcomes

The analysis also considered whether there were differences in outcomes among students entering TDRPP at different times. To do so, students were divided into three cohorts for the purpose of analysis. Students entering TDRPP in 2008-2009 were considered cohort 1, students entering TDRPP in 2009-2010 with Cycle 1 grantees were considered cohort 2, and students entering TDRPP in 2009-2010 with Cycle 2 grantees were considered cohort 3. When holding all other demographic characteristics equal, cohort 1 students had a greater chance of completing benchmarks and achieving college readiness than other students. As compared to cohorts 2 and 3, cohort 1 students had higher odds for achieving a high school diploma (2.56 higher) and higher odds for advancing a grade (1.7 higher). This was likely due to the additional time available to cohort 1 students to engage in the requisite coursework for advancing a grade level and for passing TAKS even if multiple attempts were required. Table 18 shows student outcomes by the three student cohorts.

Table 18. Student Outcomes by Student Cohort

	Achieved H.S. graduation	Demonstrated college readiness	Achieved H.S. graduation benchmarks	Achieved college readiness benchmarks	Achieved other interim benchmarks
Cohort 1	42.4%	26.2%	49.9%	58.7%	3.3%
Cohort 2	28.3%	21.7%	29.7%	61.5%	2.6%
Cohort 3	26.7%	7.7%	37.3%	29.4%	0.4%

Source: Data from performance payment reports submitted to TEA by grantees in May and June of 2009 and 2010, merged with PEIMS data. Figures reported are from the outcome analysis sample of 3,870 students; they are not adjusted for other student and program factors. The sample for the H.S. graduation and H.S. graduation benchmarks (passing TAKS or grade advancement) was restricted to students in the 37 grantee sites that aimed to meet this benchmark; the sample for the college readiness benchmarks was restricted to students in the eight grantee sites that aimed to meet these benchmarks. H.S. graduation benchmarks include: 1) earned required credits to advance to the next grade level and 2) earned a passing score on TAKS. College readiness benchmarks include all other interim benchmarks except those proposed by the grantees and approved by the Texas commissioner of education. Other interim benchmarks include benchmarks proposed by the grantees and approved by the Texas commissioner of education and are from the outcome analysis sample.

STUDENT OUTCOMES BY GRANTEE GOAL

Examining program outcomes by grantee goals illuminates how grantees pursued different paths to success as defined by TDRPP. Program completion was defined as either high school graduation or demonstrating college readiness. Table 19, Table 20, and Table 21 show student outcomes by grantee goal, with open-enrollment charter schools and local school districts pursuing high school graduation, and IHEs and nonprofit education organizations pursuing college readiness outcomes. As the tables show, a higher percentage of students both sought and obtained high school diplomas than demonstrated college readiness. Demonstrating college readiness required attainment of three different benchmarks that typically needed to be accomplished sequentially (e.g., obtaining GED, enrolling in an IHE, and earning college credit in a core course). It was therefore not surprising that demonstrating college readiness took longer to accomplish than high school graduation, resulting in a lower percentage of completions for students seeking this goal. Student persistence, as shown in Table 19, was defined as the percentage of students who do not have an exit reason and do not have an exit date; they either remained in the program or are not known to have dropped out. Overall, 33% of students persisted, and 64% of students either completed or persisted.

Table 19. Student Outcomes by Grantee Goal

	Grantee Goal		
	H.S. Diploma (n=3,521)	**College Readiness (n=620)**	**Overall (n-4,141)**
Completed Program	33.0%	19.4%	31.0%
Persisted in Program	30.5%	44.2%	32.5%
Dropped Out of Program	36.5%	36.4%	36.5%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: Data from performance payment reports submitted to TEA by grantees in May and June of 2009 and 2010, PEIMS, and ARS coding of grantee types.

Table 20. Percentage of Students Meeting College Readiness Interim Benchmarks

Interim Benchmark	Students Reaching Benchmark (n=620)
Earned College Credit in Core Curriculum	32.4%
Enrolled in Texas IHE	46.3%
Met other Interim Benchmarks Proposed by Applicant	8.4%
Earned GED	16.5%
TSI	18.5%
Advanced Performance Category on Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE)	1%

Source: Data from performance payment reports submitted to TEA by grantees in May and June of 2009 and 2010, PEIMS, and ARS coding of grantee types.

Table 21. Percentage of Students Meeting H.S. Diploma Interim Benchmarks

Interim Benchmark	Students Reaching Benchmark (n=3,521)
Grade Advancement	30.2%
Passing Score on TAKS	18.5%

Source: Data from performance payment reports submitted to TEA by grantees in May and June of 2009 and 2010, PEIMS, and ARS coding of grantee types.

STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS AND PROGRAM OUTCOMES

Student Academic Background and Program Outcomes

The evaluation site visits revealed important differences in the academic backgrounds of TDRPP students across grantees. Some grantees targeted students who needed just a few credits in order to earn a diploma, or students who just needed to pass TAKS. Other grantees focused on students who dropped out in Grade 9 or 10 and required intensive coursework over multiple years in order to graduate high school. These student differences explained a substantial amount of the differences in program outcomes across grantees. This section explores the relationship of some measures of students' academic background to their likelihood of program completion, program progress, and persistence.

Last Grade Level Prior to TDRPP Entry

Students' grade level upon entry into TDRPP was used to analyze the role of prior academic performance in TDRPP completion and progress.[11] As expected, students entering TDRPP in Grade 12 were far more likely to complete the program than those entering in lower grades. After other student and program factors were controlled, among students at grantee sites whose goal was completing a high school diploma, the odds of students entering TDRPP as Grade 11 students completing the program were 3.2 times higher than those in other grades; for students entering as Grade 12 students, the odds of completing were 6.0 times higher than students in other grades. Figure 6 summarizes actual, unadjusted attainment of completions for high school diploma by last grade attended.

For programs designed for students to demonstrate college readiness, grade at entry differences were found in interim benchmarks, but not in program completion. Although higher percentages of these students had been out of school for more than a year, students whose last grade level attended was Grade 11 or 12 were significantly more likely to demonstrate progress by achieving an interim college readiness benchmark than students entering at Grade 9 or 10, when controlling for student and program characteristics. Differences in last grade level attended among students seeking to demonstrate college readiness did not have statistically significant effects on completion when controlling for other student and program characteristics. Figure 7 shows attainment of completions for college readiness sites by last grade attended.

Prior Units Earned

Accumulation of course credits required for graduation prior to entering TDRPP (prior units earned) was also positively associated with program outcomes. Texas students are required to accumulate 22 units in order to graduate under the minimum graduation plan. The evaluators, therefore, examined whether the number of

[11] Grade level upon entry was calculated across several fields with grade level information in PEIMS and TAKS records. In general, we took the highest reported grade level from PEIMS for each student.

units that a student earned prior to TDRPP entry was statistically related to program outcomes. Not surprisingly, students who had earned more units prior to entering TDRPP had a significantly greater probability of completing high school. Adding one course unit to the total units completed prior to entry into TDRPP was associated with an increase in predicted graduation of approximately 4% over students with the average number of course units. That is, each additional credit earned prior to entering TDRPP made it 4% more likely that a student would complete TDRPP.

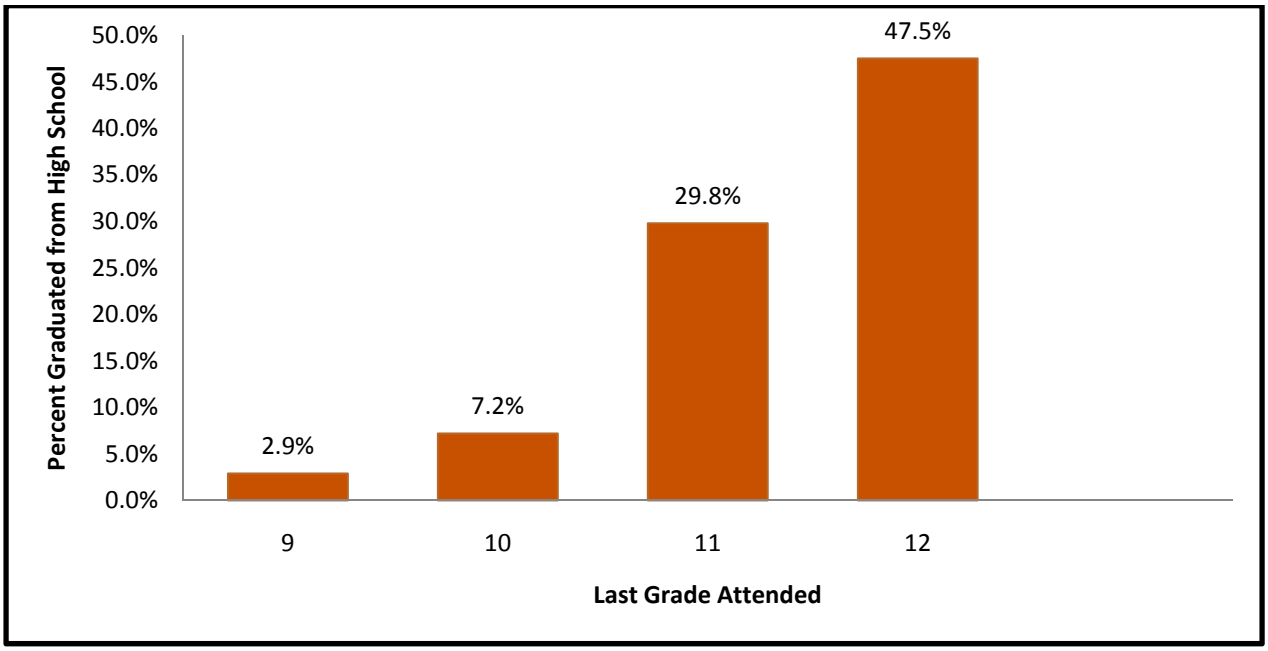

Figure 6. Percentage of students achieving high school diploma benchmarks by last grade attended

Source: Data are from performance payment reports and student data uploads submitted to TEA by grantees and matched with relevant PEIMS data by TEA. Figures reported are from the sample of 3,521 students in programs designed to achieve high school graduation; they are not adjusted for other student and program factors.

Prior TAKS Performance

The extent to which students had passed required TAKS prior to entering TDRPP was also positively associated with success in TDRPP, including both obtaining a high school diploma and demonstrating college readiness. The evaluators calculated the number of required TAKS passed by each student prior to entering TDRPP. TAKS is an assessment that measures student academic performance in Texas in Grades 3 through 11. Students must pass all content areas (English Language Arts, math, science, and social studies) of the Grade 11 test in order to be eligible to receive a Texas high school diploma. Given the importance of TAKS, the evaluators looked at each student's history with TAKS prior to entering TDRPP by calculating the percentage of Grade 11 TAKS required for graduation passed by each student, and found that **a one standard deviation increase in the percent of TAKS passed was associated with a 62% increase in the probability of completion.** While the TAKS finding was

not surprising, there are significant policy considerations related to this finding. For example, grantees enrolling students who have previously passed several TAKS content areas will achieve more completions in a shorter period of time, holding all other variables constant. Whether the desired program goal is more completers, more overall progress by students who are further from graduation, placement into college, or other specific goals, will determine how future funding guidelines, incentives, and other program features are designed.

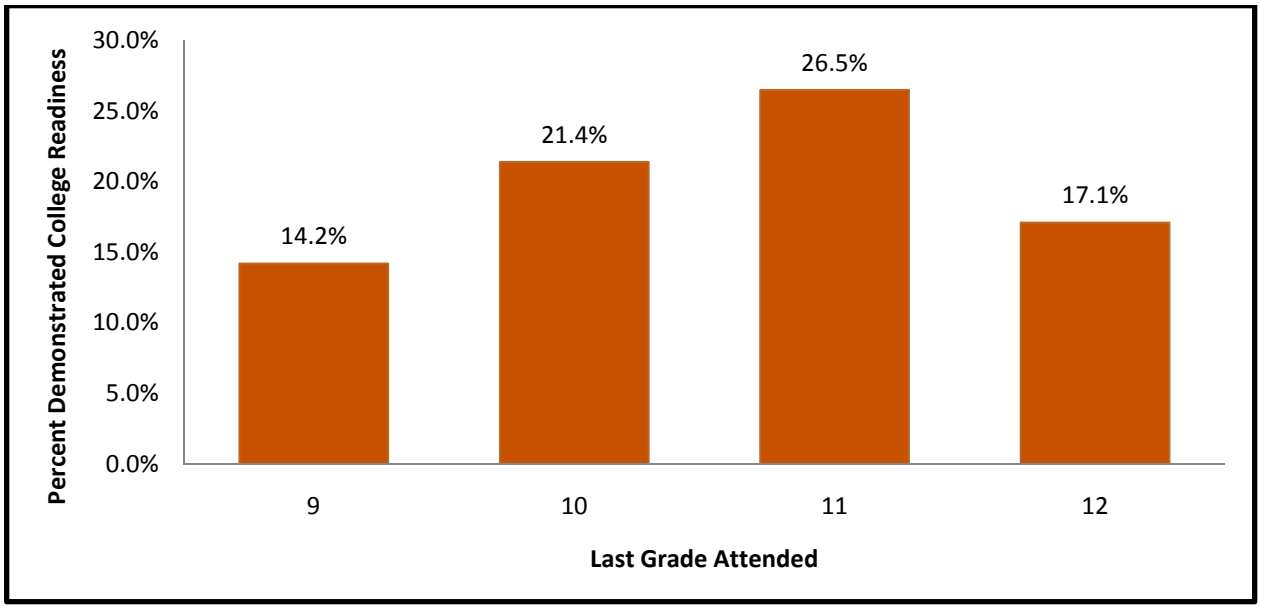

Figure 7. Percentage of students achieving college readiness benchmarks by last grade attended

Source: Figures reported are from the sample of 620 students in programs designed to achieve college readiness; they are not adjusted for other student and program factors. Data are from performance payment reports and student data uploads submitted to TEA by grantees and matched with relevant PEIMS data by TEA.

Prior Attendance and Dropout Reasons

The study examined the relationship of a student's prior attendance rate to program outcomes. Attendance rate was used as a proxy for student motivation and engagement in school. The study used the student attendance rate during their last year of school prior to dropping out. Students with higher attendance rates during their last year of school prior to TDRPP were more likely to obtain high school graduation via TDRPP. A one standard deviation increase in this rate (a 19 percentage point increase in attendance) was associated with a 56% increase in the predicted probability of completion.

Additionally, the reason a student dropped out of their last school was expected to have an influence on their performance in TDRPP. Each TDRPP student had a leaver code in PEIMS that indicated why they exited their last school. Two exit reasons had statistically significant relationships with TDRPP completion rates after

controlling for other student and program characteristics. Students who dropped out due to "academic performance" issues were 5.5 times more likely to advance a grade level than students who dropped out for other reasons when all other factors were held constant. Students who dropped out for an exit reason of "other" were 0 .7 times less likely to obtain a high school diploma via TDRPP than students who dropped out for other reasons when all other factors were held constant.

Time in Program

The study reviewed the time enrolled for students completing the program and the time enrolled for those not completing by grantee type. Students at local school districts took the least amount of time to complete their program as compared to the other grantee types by a fairly sizable margin. Also, students who did not complete the program left local school district sites much sooner than those who participated at other sites. Table 22 shows the average time in program for these groups.

Table 22. Time in Program by Completion Status and Grantee Type

Grantee Goal	Grantee Type	Average Time to Completion in Days	Average Time in Program in Days, Non-Completers
College Readiness	IHE	349	228
College Readiness	Nonprofit education organization	212	252
H.S. Diploma	Local school district	169	189
H.S. Diploma	Open-enrollment charter school	229	216

Source: Data are from performance payment reports and student data uploads submitted to TEA by grantees and matched with relevant PEIMS data by TEA. Figures reported are from the full sample of 4,141 students; they are not adjusted for other student and program factors.

Student Demographic Characteristics and Program Outcomes

Student demographics were expected to be strongly predictive of student outcomes. The evaluators therefore examined the influence of student demographics in three different ways: analyzing the performance of different demographic subgroups, analyzing the outcomes associated with each demographic characteristic while holding all others constant, and holding student demographics constant when analyzing the effects of TDRPP program features. Subgroup performance differences and the demographic effects are discussed in this section; the effects of TDRPP program features are discussed later in this chapter.

Subgroup Differences

Table 23 shows the differences in outcomes by various demographic subgroups. These are not adjusted for other student and program factors; they simply show the percentages of students in each category (as compared to all other students not in the specific category) who have achieved the various program outcomes. Not every apparent difference was statistically significant due to sample size limitations as well as correlation among multiple characteristics. However, meaningful subgroup differences were found. Examining only differences of greater than 10 percentage points revealed the following differences of note:

Special Education

- 36% of students classified as special education and 54% of students who were not achieved college readiness benchmarks

Gifted

- 51% of students classified as gifted and 32% of students who were not obtained a high school diploma
- 33% of gifted students and 20% of students not classified as gifted achieved college readiness
- 54% of gifted students and 39% of students not classified as gifted demonstrated progress on high school graduation benchmarks

African American

- 23% of African American students compared to 34% of non-African American students obtained a high school diploma
- 9% of African American students and 20% of non-African American students demonstrated college readiness
- 30% of African American students and 41% of non-African American students demonstrated progress on high school graduation benchmarks

White

- 28% of white students and 17% of non-white students demonstrated college readiness
- 48% of white students and 38% of non-white students demonstrated progress on high school graduation benchmarks

Hispanic

- 53% of Hispanic students and 42% of non-Hispanic students achieved college readiness benchmarks

Migrant

- 44% of migrant students and 31% of non-migrant students obtained a high school diploma
- 40% of migrant students and 52% of non-migrant students achieved college readiness benchmarks

Immigrant

- 50% of immigrant students and 20% of non-immigrant students demonstrated college readiness
- 30% of immigrant students and 40% of non-immigrant students demonstrated progress on high school graduation benchmarks

ESL

- 42% of ESL students and 52% of non-ESL students achieved college readiness benchmarks

Table 23. Student Outcomes by Student Demographic Characteristics

	Achieved H.S. graduation	Demonstrated college readiness	Achieved H.S. graduation benchmarks	Achieved college readiness benchmarks	Achieved other interim benchmarks
Economically Disadvantaged	31.9%	19.1%	38.5%	51.0%	1.5%
All Others	33.5%	22.8%	41.3%	54.3%	3.5%
LEP	33.0%	26.1%	36.5%	47.8%	0.3%
All Others	32.1%	19.8%	40.2%	52.5%	2.6%
ESL	32.1%	21.1%	34.8%	42.1%	0.3%
All Others	32.3%	20.0%	39.5%	52.0%	2.5%
Special Education	29.1%	9.4%	38.4%	35.9%	1.8%
All Others	32.8%	21.7%	39.4%	54.2%	2.1%
Gender					
Male	31.4%	24.6%	39.4%	53.9%	2.5%
Female	33.2%	16.1%	39.2%	50.3%	1.8%
Immigrant	28.2%	50.0%	29.9%	50.0%	0%
All Others	32.6%	20.1%	39.8%	52.1%	2.2%

	Achieved H.S. graduation	Demonstrated college readiness	Achieved H.S. graduation benchmarks	Achieved college readiness benchmarks	Achieved other interim benchmarks
Bilingual	33.2%	31.8%	36.9%	45.5%	0%
All Others	32.5%	19.6%	39.3%	51.9%	0%
Migrant	44.0%	10.0%	36.0%	40.0%	N.A.
All Others	31.0%	18.6%	39.6%	52.0%	1.9%
At Risk	31.3%	17.0%	38.0%	49.0%	0.9%
All Others	34.1%	23.9%	41.5%	55.5%	1.2%
Gifted	50.6%	33.3%	54.4%	53.3%	2.0%
All Others	31.9%	20.0%	38.9%	52.1%	2.1%
African American	23.1%	8.5%	29.6%	44.7%	1.6%
All Others	34.2%	19.7%	41.3%	49.2%	2.1%
Hispanic	32.7%	18.9%	38.8%	52.9%	1.5%
All Others	32.8%	18.8%	41.4%	41.9%	3.0%
White	37.2%	27.9%	48.2%	51.6%	4.9%
All Others	31.9%	16.7%	38.1%	48.2%	1.5%

Source: Data are from performance payment reports and student data uploads submitted to TEA by grantees in May and June of 2009 and 2010 and matched with relevant PEIMS data by TEA. Figures reported are from the sample of 4,141 students; they are not adjusted for other student and program factors. The sample for the H.S. graduation and H.S. graduation benchmarks (Passing TAKS or grade advancement) was restricted to students in the 37 grantee that aimed to meet this benchmark; the sample for the college readiness benchmarks was restricted to students in the eight grantee sites that aimed to meet these benchmarks. H.S. graduation benchmarks are: 1) earned required credits to advance to the next grade level and 2) earned a passing score on TAKS. College readiness benchmarks include all other interim benchmarks except those proposed by the grantees and approved by the Texas commissioner of education. Other interim benchmarks include benchmarks proposed by the grantees and approved by the Texas commissioner of education and are from the full sample.

Subgroup Effects

When demographic characteristics were examined together in the multi-level analysis to determine which were related to TDRPP outcomes, only five characteristics had a statistically significant relationship with TDRPP outcomes. The analysis took into account all demographic characteristics at the same time, determining the relationship of each variable that was in addition to all the other variables. This is sometimes described as

"holding the other variables constant", and often yields a different picture than solely relying on the average differences shown in Table 23. These five significant relationships included the following:

- Female students were less likely to advance a grade (0.9 times as likely) and achieve college readiness (half as likely) than male students.
- Students classified as gifted and enrolled in local school districts and open-enrollment charter schools were 1.7 times more likely to complete TDRPP than students not classified as gifted.
- African American students were 0 .3 times as likely to achieve college readiness than non-African American students.
- Immigrant students enrolled in local school districts or open-enrollment charter schools had lower odds of completing the program via either obtaining a high school diploma or demonstrating college readiness than non-immigrant students (0.7 times as likely).
- Students who were classified as special education had greater predicted odds to achieve a high school diploma (1.5 times as likely) and advance a grade (1.6 times as likely) than non-special education students.

The finding that students classified as special education had greater predicted odds of achieving a high school diploma and advancing a grade level warranted further investigation. Table 23 shows that fewer special education students graduated than non-special education students, 29% compared to 33%, and that approximately the same percentage of special education and non-special education students achieved the interim benchmark of grade advancement, 38% compared to 39%. When holding other student and program characteristics constant, however, students classified as special education had greater predicted odds of achieving a high school diploma (1.6) or advancing a grade level (1.6).

To explore why this might be the case, the evaluators examined how other variables related to special education status. Students classified as special education were more likely to be white, male, and classified as at risk of dropping out. They were more likely to have been expelled or suspended and to have a last known grade of 11. They were less likely to be Hispanic, LEP, gifted, or to have a last known grade of 12. Sixty-seven percent of all TDRPP students categorized as special education were enrolled in local school districts, and 18% were enrolled in open-enrollment charter schools. Using ANOVA, the evaluators examined differences in the high school graduation and grade advancement of students classified as special education by grantee type, and found that when controlling for prior credits earned, prior TAKS performance, and last attendance rate, students classified as special education who attended local school districts performed better than those in open-enrollment charter schools.

When taking into account the effects of these additional student and program characteristics that correlate with special education, students classified as special education have higher predicted TDRPP success. This result may be due in part to the responsiveness of students classified as special education to the individualized educational approaches, mentoring, tutoring, case management, and social and other services offered by grantees. While all students had access to these services, they may have been particularly well suited to helping special education students achieve academic advancement.

Grantee Type and Program Outcomes

TDRPP outcomes differed by grantee type. Table 24 summarizes these differences across the four grantee types and shows that local school districts had the highest completion rate at 37%. The only statistically significant association for grantee type was a negative association with program completion for nonprofit education organizations in comparison to IHEs. Although a higher percentage of students in nonprofit education organizations completed the program compared to IHEs, attending a nonprofit was associated with lower relative odds for completion than IHEs when controlling for other student and program characteristics.

Table 24. Completion and Persistence by Grantee Type

	N	Completed Program	Persisted	Dropped	Total
Open-enrollment charter schools	512	17.4%	50.4%	32.2%	100%
Local school districts	3009	35.7%	27.1%	37.2%	100%
IHEs	175	15.4%	32.6%	52.0%	100%
Nonprofit education organizations	445	20.9%	48.8%	30.3%	100%

Source: Data are from performance payment reports and student data uploads submitted to TEA by grantees in May and June of 2009 and 2010 and matched with relevant PEIMS data by TEA. Figures reported are from the sample of 4,141 students; they are not adjusted for other student and program factors.

IHEs had a substantially higher percentage of students drop out of the program than other grantee types. As shown in Table 24, 52% of students enrolled in IHEs dropped out, compared to 30% of students enrolled in nonprofit education organizations.

The analysis also considered differences by grantee type in the extent to which students met interim benchmarks that indicated progress toward demonstrating college readiness or advancing toward high school graduation.

Table 25 reports the percentage of students achieving grade advancement benchmarks by grantee type. The table compares only open-enrollment charter schools and local school districts because the vast majority of their students were seeking to graduate from high school, and therefore grade advancement and TAKS passage were appropriate interim benchmarks. A higher percentage of students in open-enrollment charter schools (38%) than students in local school districts (29%) advanced one grade level while participating in TDRPP. Nineteen percent of local school district students and 14% of open-enrollment charter school students passed all required TAKS while participating in TDRPP.

Table 25. Percentage of Students Meeting High School Graduation Interim Benchmarks by Grantee Type

	Grade Advancement	Passed TAKS
Open-enrollment charter schools	37.9%	13.5%
Local school districts	28.8%	19.4%

Source: Data are from performance payment reports and student data uploads submitted to TEA by grantees in May and June of 2009 and 2010 and matched with relevant PEIMS data by TEA, and evaluator coding of grantee types; results based on the 3,521 students enrolled in open-enrollment charter schools and local school district as of May 2010.

The vast majority of TDRPP students at IHEs and nonprofit education organizations sought to demonstrate college readiness. Differences in benchmarks that indicate progress toward this goal are shown in Table 26. In comparison to IHEs, nonprofit education organizations had substantially larger percentages of their students achieve interim benchmarks in each category listed in Table 26. Among the reasons for this, nonprofit education organizations were more likely to operate individualized programs that allowed students to work at their own pace and to take and pass assessments whenever they were ready to do so, while IHEs were more likely to operate semester-based programs where specific activities, including assessments, were conducted for all students at set times.

Additionally, one nonprofit education organization established a college partnership that enrolled most of its students in a core college curriculum course within the first semester of enrolling in TDRPP. This program design was a significant factor in its ability to assist students in achieving interim college readiness benchmarks and college readiness completions. Given that this nonprofit produced 67% of all college readiness interim benchmarks and 59% of all college readiness completions, program design was a major contributor to student success.

Table 26. Percentage of Students Meeting College Readiness Interim Benchmarks by Grantee Type

	Earned college credit in core curriculum	Met or exceeded TSI standards	Earned GED	Enrolled in Texas IHE	Advanced performance category on TABE	Other interim bench-marks
IHEs	4.0%	7.4%	7.4%	33.7%	0.0%	0.0%
Nonprofit education organizations	43.6%	22.9%	20.0%	51.2%	1.3%	11.7%

Source: Data are from performance payment reports and student data uploads submitted to TEA by grantees in May and June of 2009 and 2010 and matched with relevant PEIMS data by TEA and ARS coding of grantee types. Results based on the complete sample of 620 students enrolled in IHE or nonprofit education programs.

Scheduling Options and Student Outcomes

The evaluation team also examined grantee course scheduling options. A key focus of dropout recovery programs was making a determination about how best to accommodate students who had other obligations during the day, such as full-time employment or parenthood. Grantees reported that flexible scheduling made it easier for students to stay in school by minimizing the costs that arose when students had to give up employment or home life responsibilities to attend classes during the regular school day.

The percentage of program completers (i.e., those obtaining a high school diploma or demonstrating college readiness) across grantees with different scheduling options (see Figure 8) was substantially similar. Only one scheduling option, night classes, was statistically significant when controlling for student and other program factors. The availability of night classes was found to have a statistically significant and negative influence on program completion for students enrolled in local school districts or open-enrollment charter schools.

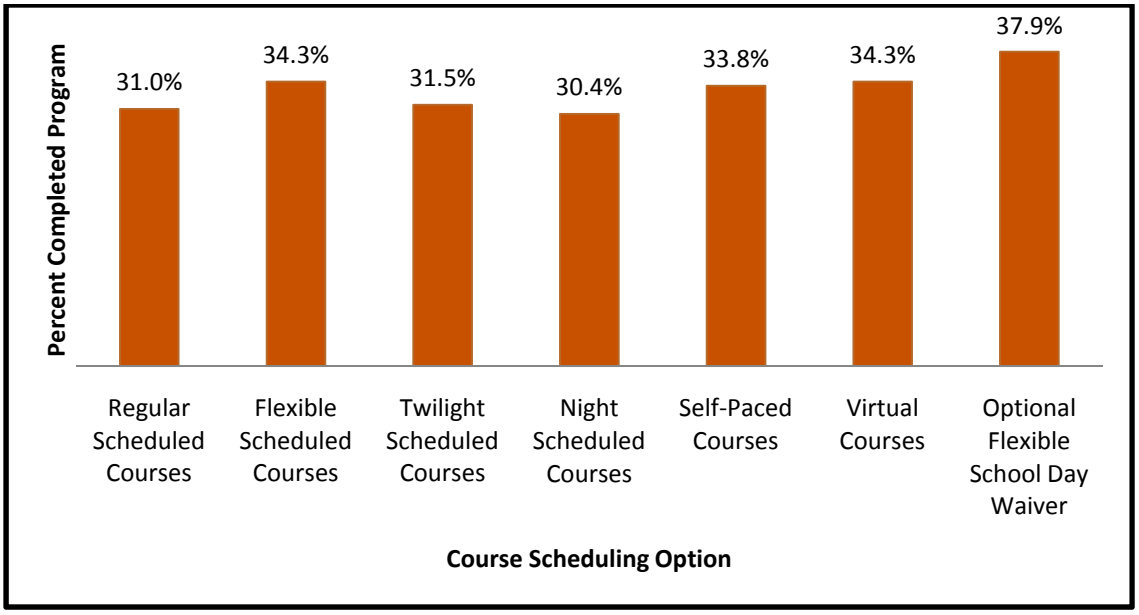

Figure 8. Program completion by course scheduling options

Source: Data are from performance payment reports and student data uploads submitted to TEA by grantees in May and June of 2009 and 2010 and matched with relevant PEIMS data by TEA, student data reported by grantees to Arroyo ARS, and ARS coding of grantee types. Figures reported are from the sample of 4,141 students; they were not adjusted for other student and program factors.

Intervention Strategies and Program Outcomes

Each grantee also engaged in intervention strategies designed to support and motivate participating students. This study sought to determine the level of association between these grantee intervention strategies and student outcomes in order to inform future TDRPP intervention designs. Four intervention strategies commonly used by the grantees were examined in the analysis: (1) one-on-one tutoring programs, (2)

structured mentoring programs, (3) student financial incentives, and (4) academic support services. These were not mutually exclusive categories; many programs used more than one of the four intervention strategies in combination with other program design options discussed earlier in this report.

Among these four intervention strategies, the only statistically significant relationship was between academic support services and grade advancement; no association between individual tutoring, mentoring, or financial incentives and student outcomes were found. For the purpose of this analysis, academic support services was a composite variable that counts the number of academic services provided among accelerated/compressed courses, credit recovery courses, remedial courses, TAKS preparation classes, GED preparation, and TSI preparation. None of these academic services by themselves had a statistically significant relationship with grade advancement. However, when the number of different academic services provided was used as a proxy for the breadth and intensity of academic services, a positive relationship was found between academic services and grade advancement. That is, providing more academic services was associated with a higher likelihood of demonstrating progress through grade advancement.

This finding for academic services confirms site visit observations of grantees using multiple academic services to address individual student needs, making use of existing organizational programs and resources, identifying additional academic services that meet specific student needs, and arranging for the services most appropriate for each student. Moreover, site visits and Grantee Progress Reports revealed considerable differences across grantees in how mentoring and tutoring were defined and executed. Although the evaluators observed examples of strong mentoring and tutoring, grantee terminology and reporting of these efforts appeared to differ significantly by grantee, and therefore a finding of no association with student outcomes was also not surprising.

Student Support Services and Program Outcomes

The relationship between support services offered by grantees and student program completion or progress was investigated to determine whether students who received support services were more likely to achieve TDRPP benchmarks. Most grantees provided support services to address the emotional and physical well being of their students. Some of these services identified during the site visits were healthcare and dental services, food assistance, and substance abuse counseling. This study focused on the following support services: (1) case management, (2) child care assistance for students who are also parents, and (3) student support services.

Case management was a strategy for working with each individual student to identify and meet specific service needs, either through program-provided services or referral to other agencies. Child care assistance was provided by two-thirds of all grantees, many of which identified the ability to use TDRPP funds to provide child care as an important differentiator of TDRPP compared to other educational strategies for this population.

Similar to the academic services composite variable, the composite variable for student support services was developed by counting the number of services provided among health services, housing assistance, job training, life skills training, parent education, substance abuse services, and violence prevention services. None of these student support service offerings had a statistically significant effect on student progress or outcomes by itself; the composite student support services variable was intended to serve as a proxy for the breadth of

student support services provided by each grantee, and in some preliminary analyses showed limited associations with student outcomes.

The final data analysis showed that only case management had a limited statistically significant relationship to student outcomes. Case management was positively associated with grade advancement and statistically significant when other grantee-level variables were controlled; however, it was positively associated but not statistically significant when the analysis also controlled for student characteristics. Table 27 shows the percentage of students who achieved specific outcomes at grantee sites offering case management and child care. As shown, 44% of students at grantee sites offering case management achieved high school graduation benchmarks (including grade advancement), compared to 35% of students at grantee sites that did not offer case management. No other relationships between support services and student outcomes were statistically significant.

Table 27. Student Outcomes by Support Services

	Achieved H.S. graduation	Achieved college readiness	Achieved H.S. graduation benchmarks	Achieved college readiness benchmarks	Achieved other interim benchmarks
Case Management					
Grantee offered service	30.7%	7.2%	44.1%	15.1%	3.4%
Grantee did not offer service	35.3%	29.3%	34.5%	79%	0.5%
Child care					
Grantee offered service	32.5%	21.8%	38.2%	62.5%	1.0%
Grantee did not offer service	33.5%	11.9%	45.3%	16.8%	5.6%

Source: Data are from performance payment reports and student data uploads submitted to TEA by grantees in May and June of 2009 and 2010 and matched with relevant PEIMS data by TEA, student data reported by grantees to ARS, and ARS coding of grantee types. Figures reported are actual, unadjusted figures from the sample of 4,141 students. The sample for program completion and high school graduation benchmarks was restricted to the 3,521 students in the 37 programs; the sample for the college readiness benchmarks and other benchmarks was restricted to the 620 students in the eight programs that aimed to meet these benchmarks.

During site visits and interviews, grantees reported that child care, case management regarding social services, and other support services were critical to convincing students to enroll initially and to remain in the program.

These services may in part enable programs to enroll students with higher needs than would otherwise be possible. The evaluators, for example, observed multiple sites where onsite child care services appeared to be a major component of the program, differentiating TDRPP from other grantee operated programs. Students at these sites reported onsite childcare to be a contributing factor to their ability to participate in the program.

Other Grantee-level Characteristics and Program Outcomes

Two additional grantee-level factors showed statistically significant relationships with student outcomes: average time of student enrollment and the number of staff measured in full-time equivalents. Average time of student enrollment was calculated as the average number of days students were enrolled with the grantee, counting from the date of entry until they completed the program, dropped out, or for students still enrolled, until the end of the reporting period. For students who exited and returned to the program, these figures were adjusted to account for time spent outside of the program.

Average time of student enrollment by grantee was associated with increased grade advancement. An approximately one-half day increase in the average time of student enrollment by grantee (e.g., increasing the average time of student enrollment from 30 to 30.5 days) increased the predicted success for grade advancement by 6.6%. This can be understood to mean that, if given more time, grantees offering services geared toward high school completion would be able to better advance students toward that goal.

The full time equivalent (FTE) variable summarized the total number of staff people working in the program as teachers, counselors, administrators, and support staff. FTEs were negatively associated with grade advancement at a statistically significant level. That is, higher reported staffing levels were associated with lower odds of students advancing grade levels. No other statistically significant associations between FTE and student outcomes were found. Based on site visits and reviews of Grantee Progress Reports, the evaluators hypothesized that grantees reporting larger numbers of FTEs likely used more staff members to provide services, but had less focused time available from staff whose sole focus was TDRPP than did other grantees.

The Six Top-producing Grantees

Out of the 45 TDRPP grantees, six accounted for over one-half of all program completions. Of the 1,158 students who earned high school diplomas, 550 (48%) were students at one of the top six grantees. Similarly, 80 of the 135 students (59%) who demonstrated college readiness were students of one of the top-producing grantees.

The significant achievement of these grantees merited further investigation to see how they compared to other grantees in terms of program and student characteristics. Table 28 provides basic information on these six grantees. As shown, four of these six were Cycle 1 grantees and all but one were local school districts that sought to assist students with high school diplomas. Both the high number of Cycle 1 grantees and the high number of local school districts in the six top-producing grantees were expected. First, Cycle 1 grantees had more time to assist students with achieving program outcomes. Second, demonstrating college readiness was a three-step process that was thought to require more time to achieve than obtaining a high school diploma.

Finally, given that the vast majority of grantees are local school districts, it was not surprising that they comprise five of the six top producers.

Not all of the six top-producing grantees graduated the highest percentage of their students, but all enrolled relatively high numbers of students, often by filling slots of the completers with new students. Table 28 shows that the percentage of completing students enrolled at top producers ranged from 34% to 57%, averaging 41% across all six grantees. The relationship between completion percentage and overall effectiveness is addressed later in this chapter.

Table 28. Six Top-producing Grantees by Type, Cycle, and Program Outcomes

Grantee	Grantee type	Cycle	Total # students served	# H.S. diplomas achieved	# Demonstrated college readiness
1	Local school district	1	458	158	0
2	Local school district	2	235	129	0
3	Local school district	1	301	101	0
4	Local school district	1	193	87	0
5	Nonprofit education organization	1	221	0	80
6	Local school district	2	131	75	0

Source: Data from performance payment reports and student data uploads submitted to TEA by grantees in May and June of 2009 and 2010, and ARS coding of grantee types.

The evaluators next looked at student characteristics for the six top-producing grantees compared to all other grantees. As shown in Table 29, the top producers had higher percentages of students who were categorized as immigrant, LEP, bilingual, ESL, and at-risk than did all other grantees. This is an interesting finding, suggesting that at least with respect to these student characteristics, the top-producing grantees served students with equal or greater needs than did other grantees. Notably, students with immigrant status were less likely to complete the program than were other students.

The six top producers also had a higher percentage of female students. Overall, holding all other demographics equal, female students had a lower chance of completing benchmarks and achieving college readiness than male students. All other grantees had higher percentages of special education and gifted students. When the analysis controlled for other demographic characteristics, both special education and gifted students were found to have higher odds of completing the program than other students.

The evaluators also examined the six top producers by student characteristics related to prior educational experience, including prior expulsions, truancy, credits completed prior to enrollment in TDRPP, and last known grade level. As shown in Table 30, there were some notable differences between the students of the

six top producers and other grantees. Other grantees had nearly twice the proportion of students who had been expelled prior to enrollment in TDRPP, but when other demographic characteristics were controlled, the analysis found that neither prior expulsion nor truancy were related to the odds of completing TDRPP. However, prior credit accumulation and last known grade level both were associated with higher odds of completion. In both of these characteristics, the six top producers had an advantage over other grantees.

Table 29. Student Characteristics: Six Top-producing Grantees vs. All Other Grantees

	% Students by Characteristic							
	Female	Immigrant	LEP	Bilingual	ESL	Special Education	Gifted	At-Risk
Top-producing grantees	56%	7%	32%	17%	14%	9%	2%	69%
Other grantees	52%	4%	21%	10%	9%	13%	3%	59%

Source: Data are from performance payment reports and student data uploads submitted to TEA by grantees in May and June of 2009 and 2010 and matched with relevant PEIMS data by TEA.. Figures reported are from the sample of 4,141 students; they are not adjusted for other student and program factors.

Table 30. Student Prior Educational Experience: Six Top-producing Grantees vs. All Other Grantees

	Expulsion Indicator	Truancy Indicator	Credits Accumulated before TDRPP	Last Known Grade Level
Top-producing grantees	2.7%	25.0%	22.0	10.8
Other grantees	5.2%	24.2%	19.2	10.2

Source: Data are from performance payment reports and student data uploads submitted to TEA by grantees in May and June of 2009 and 2010 and matched with relevant PEIMS data by TEA. Figures reported are from the sample of 4,141 students; they are not adjusted for other student and program factors.

Finally, program characteristics of the top-producing grantees were examined to determine whether specific program designs contributed to their success. As shown in Table 31, a higher percentage of the six top producers offered a regular school day schedule, while a lower percentage of these grantees offered options including flexible scheduling, twilight, night, or virtual school options. However, 100% of the six top producers offered self-paced classes.

Like all grantees, the six top producers offered a variety of social services to support their students' progress toward program completion. Table 32 shows the support services offered by the top six as compared to other grantees. While a lower percentage of the six top producers reported providing case management services, a closer examination of their Grantee Progress Reports revealed that two of these grantees reported that over 75% of their students received case management, while a third cited the importance of the social work background of its program coordinator and its overall emphasis on the social and psychological aspects of students' lives as key factors in its success.

Table 31. Academic Schedule: Six Top-producing Grantees vs. All Other Grantees

	Regular School	Flexible Schedule	Twilight School	Night School	Self-Paced Classes	Virtual School	Flexible Day Waiver
Top-producing grantees	66.7%	66.7%	33.3%	50.0%	100.0%	16.7%	33.3%
Other grantees	60.0%	83.3%	46.7%	70.0%	73.3%	23.3%	26.7%

Source: Data from Grantee Progress Reports submitted to TEA by grantees in December 2009 and May 2010. Figures reported are from the sample of 45 grantees.

The top six were more likely to offer tutoring (67%) than other grantees (60%), but less likely to offer mentoring (50% vs. 57% respectively). A closer examination of these services found that two-thirds of the six top producers reported that the majority of their students received tutoring for four or more hours per week. Overall, only about one-third of all grantees reported providing this level of tutoring to a majority of their students. Finally, the six top-producing grantees were less likely to offer incentives to their students.

Table 32. Support Services: Six Top-producing Grantees vs. All Other Grantees

	Tutoring	Mentoring	Case Management	Child care	Incentives
Top-producing grantees	66.7%	50.0%	33.3%	83.3%	50.0%
Other grantees	60.0%	56.7%	56.7%	66.7%	70.0%

Source: Data from Grantee Progress Reports submitted to TEA by grantees in December 2009 and May 2010. Figures reported are from the sample of 45 grantees.

Overall, the six top-producing grantees differed in some meaningful ways from other grantees. The top producers did enroll students with more credits accumulated and with a higher last known grade level than did other grantees. They were also more likely to offer self-paced classes. However, the evaluation of these top producers found them to be fairly similar to all other grantees in terms of student and program characteristics.

This suggests that what set these grantees apart may be characteristics that are more difficult to quantify, such as the leadership and dedication of program directors and staff, flexibility in their approach to students, and strong relationships to other organizations within their communities. A review of Grantee Progress Reports and site visit findings from these grantees[12] pointed to these more qualitative differences. For example, all six grantees had prior experience with the dropout recovery population. All recruited aggressively, using multi-pronged strategies and including recruiters on staff. All allowed students to enter the program at any time. All six implemented their programs in a timely manner and demonstrated flexibility in overcoming potential implementation barriers. As the following comments from these top-producing grantees illustrate, perhaps the most important quality they shared was a strong relationship to their students.

> "You can have rigor and relevance, but it's the depth of the relationship that makes the difference."
>
> "Build relationships with students."
>
> "Don't be afraid to mix the order of benchmarks based on student readiness."
>
> "Implement a primary person connection for the students, even if it's not a mentor."

Effectiveness Analysis

In order to compare grantee effectiveness, the evaluators developed a protocol to predict grantee performance based on the characteristics of students enrolled in the program, and then to compare the results to the grantees' actual performance. This analysis of grantee effectiveness was modeled on utility analysis, often used in the field of program evaluation and in cost-effectiveness analysis to assess effectiveness (Levin & McEwan, 2001). This approach was part of an effort to ensure that the top producers identified and discussed in the previous section were not simply a function of grantees having recruited or selected a group of students with the highest probability for completing the program. This analysis also allowed cross-validation of the variables used in the HLM analysis and promoted a deeper understanding of top performer grantees.

To delve deeper into the differences between top producers and the rest of the sample, the evaluation team undertook a variety of analyses[13] designed to assess how well the top producers did with students in the various groups. These analyses were based on a discriminant analysis that is described more fully in Appendix F. Significant findings comparing the six top-producing grantees to the rest of the sample include:

- Grade 11 and Grade 12 students performed significantly better among the top six producers
- Students classified as immigrants did significantly better among the top six producers
- African American students completed at a higher rate among the top six producers

[12] Site visits were conducted with five of the six top-producing grantees.

[13] Primarily univariate mean difference analyses.

- Students in cohorts 1 and 2 performed significantly better than cohort 3 among the top six producers
- Cohort 1 students performed significantly better than cohort 2 among the top six producers
- Controlling for all known student characteristics, students enrolled in charter schools and nonprofits among the top six producers s performed significantly better than students at the same grantee type for the rest of the sample. That is, the top-producing grantees not only produced a high number of completers, they were also highly effective in working with students from a variety of backgrounds.

Following this analysis, the evaluation team created an effectiveness model to identify top-performing grantees. This effectiveness analysis relied on the weighting of three key variables: (1) the total number of completers, (2) the percent of the total enrollment that completed at the site, and (3) the difference between the actual completed percentage and the predicted completed percentage based on the known characteristics of students at that site. This allows one to determine whether or not the top producers had an advantage based on the characteristics of their students. The analysis of effectiveness in producing TDRPP completions was conducted using a method known as utility analysis, described more fully in Appendix F.

Appendix F presents the results of the effectiveness analysis in two masked lists of sites. The first list is by the three key weighted variables and is sorted on the difference between the percentage of actual completions and the predicted completion percentage. The second list is sorted from least effective to most effective on the overall effectiveness score derived from the three weighted variables. Five of the six top producers in terms of total completers were also in the top six of the effectiveness analysis; however the top producer, which was not in the top six most effective, was in the top quartile.

Note the open-enrollment charter school with the highest difference between predicted versus actual completions. This grantee graduated 33 percentage points more students than would be predicted based on those students' prior academic and demographic characteristics. The same grantee also graduated 65% of its students, the highest percentage of any grantee.

CHAPTER 6: TEACHER AND STAFF EFFECTIVENESS

This chapter reviews the characteristics of teachers and staff and their association with program effectiveness. The chapter provides an overview of the research methodology, discusses the data sources relied on to address the research questions, and addresses each question within the following key themes:

- Staff characteristics and qualifications
- Professional development activities
- Staff perceptions
- Self-efficacy and collective self-efficacy

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

(A) What were the qualifications and characteristics of TDRPP staff and how did they differ between sites?

(B) What PD/training was available to and/or received by TDRPP grantee staff and how did the PD/training activity vary between sites?

(C) What perceptions did instructors have of the effectiveness of TDRPP PD/ training activities?

(D) What was the relationship between staff self-efficacy[14] and collective self-efficacy and student self-efficacy and motivation?

KEY FINDINGS

- **Grantees consistently reported on the importance of a strong and committed staff to student success.** As the director of one of the top six-performing grantees noted, "Staffing is the crucial piece."
- **All TDRPP teachers held at least a bachelor's degree** (a TDRPP requirement)
    - Forty-one percent of Cycle 1 teachers and 34% of Cycle 2 teachers also held a master's degree.
    - For Cycle 1, 50% of the teacher respondents held secondary certifications, as did 70% of Cycle 2 respondents.

[14] Self-efficacy is defined as the extent to which a teacher believes that he or she can influence student performance (Tschannen-Moran, Hoy & Hoy 1998). Goddard et al (2000) extend the research on teacher self-efficacy from individual to collective efficacy. Collective efficacy is the teacher's belief that the efforts of the whole faculty can have an influence on student achievement and motivation. Emerging research suggests a strong positive association between higher collective teacher efficacy and student achievement

- One-half of all teachers reported two or more years' prior experience working with dropout recovery students.

- TDRPP teachers who responded to the survey across Cycles 1 and 2 were predominately female (64% and 53%, respectively) and aged 35 years or older (68% and 71%, respectively), similar to the general population of teachers in Texas.

- **Grantees spent $770,982 (about 5%) of TDRPP funds, plus an additional $295,535 in non-TDRPP funds, on professional development.**
  - Approximately one-half of all teachers and staff in TDRPP participated in dropout recovery-specific PD.
  - Grantees found the PD opportunities offered by TEA to be very useful. As one participant noted of the TEA training session in February 2010, "It was at that point that we really 'got it'."

- The evaluators measured self-efficacy and collective efficacy through the teacher and staff surveys. However, overall, the analysis did not provide significant insight into program effectiveness.
  - From this analysis, across all mean scores for sub-items in self-efficacy, the question, "How much do you believe you are able to assist families in helping a student do well in the program?" garnered the lowest mean score from both Cycle 1 and Cycle 2 teacher respondents. This is consistent with our finding of limited parent involvement among the majority of TDRPP grantees.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Professional development, expanding on the sessions developed during Year 2, should be provided by TEA staff or contracted with relevant vendors and made available to key teachers and staff who interact with students, in addition to directors and coordinators. Connecting with other dropout recovery staff while focusing on strategies for success can assist in developing core assistance strategies, provide motivation and encouragement, and create a network of resources on which grantees can call for assistance and advice.

SOURCES AND METHODS

Sources

The evaluation team relied on three data sources for this chapter: surveys, site visits, and Grantee Progress Reports. Staff surveys inquired about each theme stated in the research questions for this chapter, and applied self-efficacy measures adapted from the Ohio State Teacher Efficacy Scale (OSTES). Among Cycle 1 grantees, 262 teachers, program staff, and administrators completed surveys in April 2009, representing all but one site. There were fewer respondents to the Cycle 2 surveys, administered in May 2010: across all Cycle 2 grantees, 109 completed surveys were received from teachers, program staff, and administrators. The numerical difference in completed surveys was due in part to the evaluators' request in May 2010 that only teachers and

staff directly involved with the grant respond to the survey. It is possible that more Cycle 1 respondents worked in district and/or headquarter capacities with little direct involvement in program operations.

Site visits were designed to provide data regarding program implementation and operations. The evaluation team conducted site visits of all 22 Cycle 1 grantees during February and March 2009. In the second program year, site visits were conducted for 12 grantees, including five Cycle 1 and seven Cycle 2 sites. The evaluators selected the sites to best reflect the geographic and programmatic diversity across all grantees. In addition to interviewing program staff, the evaluators toured facilities and collected documents at each site. Insights from this data collection effort related to teacher and staff effectiveness are discussed here. Excerpts from site visit summaries provided to TEA in April 2009 and May 2010 are included in Appendix D.

Grantees submitted Progress Reports to TEA at the end of the fall and spring semesters. These reports included information related to grantee's progress toward full implementation of their programs, including costs, staffing, and various program components such as recruitment, types and schedule of courses available, and usage of various support services. Data from the December 2009 and May 2010 Progress Reports were used to provide a broader scope of information than that available from the surveys and site visits.

Research methods

The evaluation team conducted quantitative and structured qualitative analyses of survey items to describe staff characteristics, PD activities, staff perceptions, and staff self-efficacy. These are described in detail within each section.

TEACHER AND STAFF DEMOGRAPHICS

This section considers the demographic characteristics of all survey respondents, distinguishing teachers who reportedly had direct contact with students from program staff and administrators who, in their respective project roles, may or may not have interacted directly with students.

Demographic characteristics

Table 33 breaks down the gender, age, and racial background of surveyed teachers, program staff, and administrators. Teacher respondents across Cycles 1 and 2 were predominately female (64% and 53%, respectively) and aged 35 years or older (68% and 71%, respectively). This was similar to demographics of the general population of teachers in Texas, of whom 77% were female (Texas Education Agency, 2010a), with an average age of 42 (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2009). Program staff respondents were also predominately female, while administrators across Cycle 1 and 2 were more equally represented by gender.

Teacher respondents represented a mix of races and ethnicities. Teacher respondents at Cycle 1 sites included 47% White, 25% Hispanic, 22% Black or African American, and 4% Asian. Cycle 2 teacher respondents included 38% White, 40% Hispanic, 17% Black or African American, and 2% Asian. Overall, despite a significant increase in the percentage of Hispanic teachers between Cycle 1 and Cycle 2 and a 48% Hispanic program staff during

Cycle 2, all respondents were much less likely to be Hispanic than the 2008-2010 TDRPP program participants, who were 66% Hispanic at Cycle 1 sites and 70% Hispanic at Cycle 2 sites. Compared to the general teacher population in Texas, a much higher percentage of TDRPP teachers were Black or African American (statewide 10%) and a lower percentage were White (statewide 67%) (TEA, 2005 - 2009).

Table 33. Demographic Characteristics of Survey Respondents

	% Survey Respondents			
	Teachers	Program staff	Administrators	Overall
Cycle 1: Gender				
Female	64.3%	79.3%	46.2%	69.3%
Male	35.7%	19.5%	53.8%	30.7%
Cycle 1: Age				
18-24	2.9%	6.9%	0.0%	4.2%
25-34	29.3%	6.9%	15.4%	19.8%
35-44	19.3%	29.9%	15.4%	21.4%
45-54	25.0%	29.9%	15.4%	26.3%
55-65	22.9%	21.8%	53.8%	23.7%
66+	0.7%	2.3%	0.0%	1.1%
Cycle 1: Race/Ethnicity				
Asian	3.7%	8.0%	0.0%	2.7%
Black or African American	21.6%	26.4%	38.5%	22.1%
Hispanic	24.6%	17.2%	30.8%	23.3%
Other	3.0%	34.5%	0.0%	2.3%
White	47.0%	8.0%	30.8%	46.2%
Cycle 2: Gender				
Female	52.5%	72.0%	60.0%	58.7%
Male	47.5%	28.0%	40.0%	41.3%
Cycle 2: Age				
18-24	1.7%	8.0%	0.0%	2.8%
25-34	27.1%	28.0%	12.0%	23.9%
35-44	20.3%	28.0%	16.0%	21.1%
45-54	27.1%	20.0%	44.0%	29.4%
55-65	20.3%	16.0%	24.0%	20.2%
66+	3.4%	0.0%	4.0%	2.8%
Cycle 2: Race/Ethnicity				
Asian	1.7%	0.0%	4.0%	1.9%
Black or African American	17.2%	24.0%	28.0%	21.5%
Hispanic	39.7%	48.0%	40.0%	42.1%
Other	3.4%	20.0%	20.0%	3.7%
White	37.9%	4.0%	4.0%	30.8%

Source: ARS Teacher/staff surveys (Cycle 1 n=262, April 2009; Cycle 2 n=109, May 2010)

TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS

Statutory requirements for TDRPP specify that grantee faculty and administrators must hold a baccalaureate or advanced degree[15]; there was no specific qualification requirement for other grantee staff positions. This sub-section, therefore, considers teacher survey respondents' degrees, certifications, and years of teaching experience.

Table 34 presents the various Texas certifications reported by teacher respondents. Each site met the degree requirement in that all respondents with a primary role as "Teacher" had earned at least a bachelor's degree. Forty-one percent of Cycle 1 teacher respondents and 34% of Cycle 2 teacher respondents also held a master's degree. While there were no specific requirements for further certification, teacher respondents held varied Texas certifications, with 50% of Cycle 1 teacher respondents and 70% of Cycle 2 respondents holding secondary certifications. By point of reference, of the general Texas teacher population, 10% of employed teachers (by FTE) at the secondary level do not hold certifications (TEA, 2005 – 2009).

Table 34. Texas Certifications Held by Teacher Respondents

	Teacher Respondents	
	Cycle 1	Cycle 2
ESL	15%	19%
English Language Arts	22%	29%
Generalist (Grade Level 4-8)	7%	14%
Sciences	23%	24%
Mathematics (Grade Level 8-12)	19%	31%
Principal (Grade Level EC-12)	6%	11%
Special Education (Grade Level EC-12)	11%	11%
Superintendent	0%	2%
None	0%	7%

Source: ARS Teacher/staff surveys (Cycle 1 n=140, April 2009; Cycle 2 n=59, May 2010)

[15] Texas Administrative Code 102.1056, Commissioner's Rules Concerning Pilot Programs, Dropout Recovery Pilot Program, See http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/rules/tac/index.html, Title 19, Part 2, Ch 102, Subchapter EE.

Staff experience with working with dropout recovery students can be an indicator of program commitment to serving students in the TDRPP population, and was expected to be predictive of service quality and ability to implement with reduced barriers.[16] Survey respondents reported their years of experience in three categories on the survey: years of experience with the grantee program, years with dropout recovery students, and years with their particular school/organization. Table 35 indicates that approximately 60% of Cycle 2 teachers had at least two or more years of experience working with dropout recovery students. In contrast, over half of the Cycle 1 teacher respondents had a year or less of experience with dropout recovery students. This table also shows that teachers in Cycle 1 had longer tenure with their organization than teachers in Cycle 2, with 42% of Cycle 1 teachers and 34% of Cycle 2 teachers reporting six or more years with their school or organization.

Table 35. Cycle 1 and Cycle 2 Teacher Respondents' Years of Experience

	Teacher Respondents' Years of Experience		
	Years with the TDRPP program	Years with dropout recovery students	Years with the school/organization
Cycle 1			
0-1	70.7%	52.1%	30.7%
2-5	16.4%	24.3%	26.4%
6-9	4.3%	11.4%	17.9%
10+	7.1%	10.0%	24.3%
Cycle 2			
0-1	67.8%	40.7%	22.0%
2-5	28.8%	44.1%	44.1%
6-9	1.7%	5.1%	13.6%
10+	1.7%	10.2%	20.3%

Source: Arroyo Research Services (ARS) Teacher/staff surveys (Cycle 1 n=140, April 2009; Cycle 2 n=59, May 2010)

Table 36 shows years of experience working directly with dropout recovery students based on grantee type. The results indicate that open-enrollment charter schools and institutions of higher education in Cycle 1 had higher percentages of teachers with less than a year of experience working with dropout recovery students. The majority of teacher respondents for districts, nonprofits, and charter schools in Cycle 2 had two or more

[16] Inconsistencies in per grantee survey response rates and difficulties in connecting specific teachers and students precluded use of the experience data in the multivariate analyses discussed in chapter 5.

years of experience working with dropout recovery students. There were no teachers with 10 or more years of experience with dropout recovery students at open-enrollment charter schools in either Cycle 1 or 2.

Table 36. Teacher Respondents' Years of Experience Working Directly with Dropout Recovery Students by Grantee Type

	% Teacher Respondents			
Years with dropout recovery students	Institution of higher education	Local school district	Nonprofit education organization	Open-enrollment charter school
Cycle 1				
0-1	66.7%	49.1%	20.0%	71.4%
2-5	16.7%	24.1%	40.0%	23.8%
6-9	.0%	12.0%	40.0%	4.8%
10+	16.7%	12.0%	.0%	.0%
Cycle 2				
0-1	N/A[17]	43.5%	.0%	33.3%
2-5	N/A	43.5%	66.7%	44.4%
6-9	N/A	2.2%	.0%	22.2%
10+	N/A	10.9%	33.3%	.0%

Source: Arroyo Research Services (ARS) Teacher/staff surveys (Cycle 1 n=140; April 2009; Cycle 2 n=59, May 2010)

STAFF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

TEA's Request for Applications (RFA) for TDRPP allows grantees to spend grant funds on PD and requires them to describe their PD plans. Grantees spent $770,982 (approximately 5% of the total TDRPP funds) on PD, and an additional $295,535 in non-TDRPP funds on PD.

PD can have a meaningful effect on program effectiveness. To have the greatest impact, PD must take place within the unique context of particular teachers within their particular setting. "Differences in communities of school administrators, teachers, and students uniquely affect professional development processes and can strongly influence the characteristics that contribute to professional development's effectiveness" (Guskey,

[17] Too few respondents to report in this category.

2003). While there was no "one size fits all" approach, current research suggests that there are some characteristics or traits associated with more effective PD. Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman, and Kwang (2001) found that different types of PD activities have varying levels of effectiveness as determined by: (1) collective participation of teachers, staff, and administrators, (2) duration of the activity, and (3) form of the activity. Their research suggests that more collective participation, or participation in the same PD experiences by more staff members, is more effective than each staff member selecting and participating in PD individually. Similarly, research suggests that activities sustained over time tend to be more effective. Examples of types of PD found to effective by Garet et al. include professional networks, mentoring, and peer coaching, which encourage teachers to learn from other teachers and share best practices to affect student performance. The evaluation team therefore gathered information within the Garet et al. typology in order to better understand the likelihood that PD would have an effect on teacher practices, and to understand how sites differed in their approach to PD.

Available professional development

Grantee Progress Reports submitted by each grant coordinator included specific questions regarding the type of PD offered by each grantee. Table 37 summarizes the available forms of PD and the percentage of sites that participated in these activities. Overall, the majority of grantees reported offering traditional workshops and conferences.

Table 37. Professional Development Offered by Category

	Workshops	Conferences	Course: online or classroom	Professional networking	Study group/book discussion	Peer coaching
Percentage of sites (n=45) offering	80%	78%	31%	64%	24%	36%

Source: May 31, 2010 Grantee Progress Reports. Respondents could indicate multiple types of professional development.

Table 38 shows the variation by staff type. Overall, teachers were the most likely to participate in the types of PD recommended by Garet et al., with over 40% participating in peer coaching, compared to approximately 30% of program staff and administrators. Both Cycle 1 and Cycle 2 grantees showed strong participation in workshops and conferences. The evaluators believe this was at least partially due to the PD opportunities offered to all grantees by TEA. During phone interviews with grantees, several directors mentioned participating in these worthwhile training sessions and remarked that they could have benefited more by

participating earlier in the program year. As one participant noted, “Hold the training session we went to in February of 2010 at the beginning of the grant. It was at that point that we really ‘got it.’”

Table 38. Percent of Grantees with Staff Participating in PD, by Staff Type and Cycle

	Percent of Grantees with Staff Participating in PD					
	Teachers		Program staff		Administrators	
	Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Cycle 1	Cycle 2
Conference	63.6%	60.9%	77.3%	87.0%	90.9%	82.6%
Workshops	86.4%	82.6%	90.9%	87.0%	81.8%	73.9%
Online course	40.9%	30.4%	36.4%	13.0%	31.8%	21.7%
Classroom course	36.4%	26.1%	22.7%	17.4%	9.1%	13.0%
Professional networking	77.3%	69.6%	81.8%	78.3%	81.8%	78.3%
Study group	31.8%	26.1%	31.8%	17.4%	27.3%	13.0%
Book discussion	45.5%	13.0%	31.8%	13.0%	36.4%	13.0%
Peer coaching	40.9%	43.5%	31.8%	30.4%	31.8%	30.4%

Source: May 31, 2010 Grantee Progress Reports (n=45)

Professional development participation

Nearly half of all participants and a large majority of program administrators participated in dropout-recovery specific PD. Table 39 shows the percentages of survey respondents who reported participating in this particular kind of PD by primary role held. Again, this may in part reflect the importance of the training sessions held by TEA.

Table 39. Participation in Dropout Recovery-specific PD

	% Respondents Reporting Participation in Dropout Recovery-Specific PD	
	Cycle 1	Cycle 2
Teachers	47.1%	40.7%
Program staff	41.4%	36.0%
Administrators	84.6%	80.0%
All	47.5%	49.5%

Source: ARS Teacher/staff surveys (Cycle 1 n=262, April 2009; Cycle 2 n=109, May 2010)

Survey items in Cycle 2 were modified to better align to current research and the evaluators' prior findings on PD. Updated items on the staff survey for Cycle 2 asked closed-ended questions regarding the type of dropout recovery-specific PD in which respondents participated and the total time spent in dropout recovery-specific PD. Cycle 2 respondents indicated that they had participated in the types of dropout recovery-specific PD activities shown in Table 40.

Table 40. Cycle 2 Participation in Dropout Recovery-specific PD Activities

	% Cycle 2 Survey Respondent Participation in Dropout Recover-Specific PD Activities		
	Teachers	Program staff	Administrators
Conference	18.6%	20.0%	64.0%
Workshops	22.0%	8.0%	44.0%
Course Seminar	1.7%	8.0%	0.0%
Task force	0.0%	0.0%	4.0%
Professional networking	3.4%	16.0%	32.0%
Coaching/mentoring in classroom	3.4%	12.0%	16.0%
Study group	1.7%	4.0%	8.0%

Source: ARS Teacher/staff surveys (n=109, May 2010)

Staff survey results from Cycle 2 indicated that the duration of respondent participation in these activities varied by role. Table 41 shows that administrators reported spending far more time in PD activities than did teachers or program staff.

Table 41. Estimated Time Spent in PD Activities, Cycle 2

	% Cycle 2 Survey Respondent Time Spent in PD Activities		
	Teachers	Program staff	Administrators
1 - 5 hours	37.5%	33.3%	5.0%
5 - 10 hours	12.5%	22.2%	10.0%
11 - 20 hours	29.2%	11.1%	35.0%
More than 21 hours	20.8%	33.3%	50.0%
Average hours	10.77	11.22	16.8

Source: ARS Teacher/staff surveys. Average hours calculated as the weighted mean using the midpoint of each range and 21 for the "More than 21 hours" response. (Cycle 2 n=109, May 2010).

STAFF PERCEPTIONS OF TDRPP PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT EFFECTIVENESS

Cycle 1 PD activities were not independently evaluated by ARS, but were informed by teacher and staff surveys administered early in the spring semester. The Teacher/Staff Survey included open-ended items regarding PD activities. PD participants indicated what they found most and least helpful about the experience. Participants often found PD activities that offered more dropout recovery specific and hands-on experience to be most helpful. A number of staff commented that the least helpful aspect of their experience was the "lack of time" for further PD.

TEACHER SELF-EFFICACY AND COLLECTIVE-EFFICACY

- The evaluators measured self-efficacy and collective-efficacy through the teacher and staff surveys conducted in both Cycles 1 and 2. Overall, the analysis did not provide significant insight into program effectiveness.
    - From this analysis, across all mean scores for sub-items in self-efficacy, the question, "How much do you believe you are able to assist families in helping a student do well in the program?" garnered the lowest mean score from both Cycle 1 and Cycle 2 teacher respondents. This is consistent with our finding of limited parent involvement among the majority of TDRPP grantees.

Details on the constructs and findings related to self-efficacy and collective-efficacy are provided in Appendix H.

CHAPTER 7: COSTS AND BENEFITS

This chapter identifies costs and benefits associated with TDRPP program participation. The findings include estimates of all funds expended on behalf of program participants, increased future earnings of participants, decreased costs of future public programs, and increased revenue related to education levels and associated economic activity achieved by TDRPP graduates. The analysis of both costs and benefits should be considered preliminary rather than definitive because significant program outcomes resulting from grantee effort may occur subsequent to the reporting deadline (May 31, 2010) through the end of the program period and beyond.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

(A) How were TDRPP program funds used by grantees and how did the resource allocation differ between sites?

(B) What other resources supported the TDRPP program, including ADA funds, other district funds and resources, and in-kind funds/staff/resources?

(C) What were the costs per student of the TDRPP program and how did these costs differ between grantees?

(D) What were the costs per student completion and how did these vary between grantees?

(E) Which grantees had the lowest cost/benefit ratios and why?

(F) How did the costs per student of TDRPP compare to those of comparable alternative drop out recovery/prevention programs?

(G) How did the costs associated with helping a TDRPP participant achieve a high school diploma or become college ready compare to the costs to society and to the participant that would be accrued if the student did not achieve a diploma and/or become college ready?

KEY FINDINGS

- **TDRPP was a cost-effective investment of public funds. Ultimately, the state of Texas is estimated to benefit significantly -- $95 million – from the students who successfully completed their TDRPP program as of May 2010. In addition, students who successfully complete TDRPP are expected to experience significant financial and personal gains relative to what they would experience as dropouts.**

- **The average TDRPP graduate is expected to earn $246,348 more in his or her lifetime than a high school dropout.** This estimate is based on lifetime estimates of the difference in earnings for high school dropouts compared to high school graduates, students who complete some college or associates degrees, and students who complete four year degrees using Texas estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau (2010) and estimation methods following Belfield and Levin (2007).
- **TDRPP is expected to return $74,451 in net public benefits for each student who completes the program by earning a high school diploma or demonstrating college readiness.** This figure is an estimate of reduced public costs and increased public revenues, using Texas figures, for high school graduates compared to high school dropouts,calculated by the evaluators using 2010 dollars for the estimated working lifetime of TDRPP graduates. Details on the calculation are included within the chapter.
- **TDRPP is expected to return a total of $95.3 million in net public benefits to the state of Texas after accounting for initial program costs.** This figure was calculated by the evaluators using the per-graduate public benefit of $74,451 shown above, multiplied by the number of TDRPP completers.

- **TDRPP grantees had an average total cost, including direct TDRPP funds, state aid, and allocated district tax revenues, of $5,571 per student served.**
  - The average total cost per student served differed by grantee type, and ranged from a low of $2,881 for IHEs to a high of $7,280 for open-enrollment charter schools.
  - The TDRPP grant award component of the total cost per student was $1,648.
  - **The total cost per TDRPP student completion was estimated to be $17,102.** Grantee costs per completion range from $5,972 for one grantee with 55 completions, to a high of $704,789 for a grantee with only 2 completions. Details per grantee are shown in Appendix G. Because grantees continued serving students after the May 31, 2010 evaluation cut-off date, the cost per student completion is expected to drop as additional students earn high school diplomas or demonstrate college readiness.

- Cycle 2 grantees had higher levels of completions and earned more performance pay during their first nine months of operation than Cycle 1 grantees did during their first nine months of operation. The Cycle 2 grantees appear to have benefited from the experience TEA gained during Cycle 1, resulting in better and more timely communication to the grantees about performance funding and how to earn and receive it.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The evaluators make the following recommendations based on the findings in this chapter:

- The evaluation modified its approach to cost/benefit modeling from the first interim report to this report in order to include district and charter estimates for state aid and district tax revenue.[18] This per-grantee approach should be extended to IHEs in order to better capture state aid to colleges and universities and to nonprofit educational organizations in order to capture any additional state or local government aid that also supports their dropout recovery programs.
- Two changes to grantee financial reporting would assist in evaluating costs and benefits: 1) changing Grantee Progress Reports to obtain the dollar value of non-TDRPP resources used to help students succeed, and 2) streamlining grantee financial reporting and aligning it to the reporting period for student outcomes. Successfully accomplishing the reporting of non-TDRPP resources would likely require guidance from the TDRPP evaluators, TEA, or both.

DATA SOURCES

TDRPP program expenditure data used for this evaluation are drawn from the following TDRPP sources:

TDRPP Program Budgets

Each grantee was required to submit a program budget as part of its grant application. TEA provided these budgets to the evaluators. Grantees report expenditures against these budget estimates in their Grantee Progress Reports.

Performance Payment Reports

Grantees submitted periodic Performance Payment Reports, in a format required by TEA, with detailed individual student progress information and earned benchmark and completion payments. This analysis was based on Performance Payment Reports from August 28, 2008 through May 31, 2010. Findings in the chapter were based on analysis of financial data available from TEA and TDRPP grantees as of May 31, 2010. Additional enrollments, outcomes and expenditures will occur though the end of the grant program period, resulting in increased costs, outcomes, and benefits.

[18] The Interim Report focused solely on total direct TDRPP expenditures per student using budgeted base funding and actual performance funding earned, and did not account for additional state aid. Interim Report cost data was also based on student enrollment as of May 31, 2009. Because Cycle 1 programs continued to enroll students for an additional year, Interim Report data is therefore not comparable to the more complete figures presented here.

TEA Integrated Statewide Administrative System (ISAS) Reports and Grantee Progress Reports.

TEA ISAS reports provided data regarding fund expenditure by grantee as recorded in the state financial system. Grantee Progress Reports included grantee-reported financial data on funds budgeted and expended, as well as funds from other sources expended on behalf of the program. The chief differences in the two sources were (1) that ISAS is the system by which grantees submit for reimbursement, while Grantee Progress Reports are grantee self-reports on services provided and funds expended, and (2) the timeliness of data availability, where Grantee Progress Reports were immediately available to the evaluators, and ISAS reports were subject to lag time for grantee requests for reimbursement and associated reporting. While grantees were encouraged to submit requests to draw down funds through ISAS regularly throughout the grant period, they were not required to do so until the end of the grant period. Where possible, Grantee Progress Report data was cross-validated with ISAS data. When one source was considerably closer to the May 31, 2010 cutoff date for the student outcome data, the analysis used the data that was closest to the reporting date. Because the deadline for Cycle 1 ISAS submission was May 31, 2010, ISAS was used for Cycle 1 actual base funds expended. Grantee Progress Report Data was used for Cycle 2 grantee actual base funds expended.

Additional data on income and education level, enrollment and state school funding were drawn from four key sources: U.S. Census Bureau, Texas Education Agency Student Enrollment Reports, and Texas Education Agency Summary of Finances.

U.S. Census Bureau

Texas-specific income-by-education-level estimates were drawn from the 2005 - 2009 American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau (2010).

TEA Student Enrollment Reports

High school enrollment figures drawn from TEA Student Enrollment Reports for the 2009-2010 school year were used to create per student tax revenue and state aid estimates for high school students.

TEA Summary of Finances (SOF)

Primary data for estimating state aid and district tax revenue were drawn from the Texas Summary of Finances (SOF) produced by TEA as part of the Foundation School Program (FSP). School District Data was provided by TEA. Charter school SOF data was accessed directly online via the Texas Education Agency (2010d).

The analyses presented in this section also drew upon findings from a literature review of research studies on dropout recovery and prevention costs and cost/benefit studies of education programs.

RESEARCH METHODS

Analyses and findings developed in this chapter were based on composite methods that incorporated relevant cost analyses, benefit calculations, and cost/benefit analyses as appropriate to the research questions. Relying strongly on general methodology of the Center for Benefit-Cost Studies of Education at Teachers College, Columbia University (Belfield & Levin, 2007), the chapter also used Texas-specific estimates and methodology advanced by Gottlob (2007). In general, the study used actual TDRPP expenditures, estimated state aid and district tax revenue using TEA-provided data, conservatively calculated returns to the Texas public, conservatively estimated income gains, and used actual program completion figures. That is, when faced with decisions about methods or figures, the evaluation team chose to err on the side of overestimating costs and underestimating benefits, unless presented with a definitive calculation or figure. The analysis alternated between consideration of all grantees and consideration of Cycle 1 grantees only, as appropriate to the questions of interest. Because Cycle 1 grantees were in operation for up to 21 months at the end of the reporting period, they expended a larger percentage of available funds and account for 70% of all program completions. When examining actual expenditures, costs, and related benefits, the analysis excluded four grantees (one in Cycle 1 and three in Cycle 2) with either missing or incomplete expenditure data from Grantee Progress Reports, or missing tax revenue data.

OVERVIEW OF TDRPP FUNDING

Approximately $12 million was available to the 45 Cycle 1 and Cycle 2 TDRPP grantees during the reporting period (August 28, 2008-May 31, 2010). The total grant funding includes base funding, performance funding, and 'Other Payments'.

Base Funding

All grantees were eligible to receive maximum base funding of $75,000 for serving a minimum of five students up to a maximum of 12 students, or maximum base funding of $150,000 for serving more than 12 students. Only one grantee proposed serving fewer than 12 students and was therefore awarded $75,000. The remaining 44 grantees received the maximum base funding of $150,000, or an amount slightly below the maximum.

Each grantee budgeted for this base funding in the grant application. These funds were to be used for the purposes of planning, establishing the infrastructure required to implement the program, and implementing the program for eligible students.

Performance Funding

In addition, all grantees were eligible to receive performance funding for both student academic progress and program completion. Academic progress was measured by interim benchmarks, including, for example, advancing a grade level, passing a TAKS subject test, or earning college credit. Grantees received $250 for each

student benchmark attained, up to a maximum of $1,000 per student. Grantees also received a payment of $1,000 for each student who completed the program by earning a high school diploma or demonstrating college readiness.

The total amount of performance funding available to a grantee was determined by the initial number of students projected to be served. However, grantees were allowed to serve additional students (above the projected number) and receive performance funds for benchmarks and completions achieved by these additional students, as long as the maximum amount determined by TEA was not exceeded. The performance funding that would have been earned for a student who did not complete the program or attain the maximum benchmarks was available to be earned via another student. Among the grantees in the cost/benefit analysis, 83% served more students than initially projected.

Other Payments

Under the Foundation School Program (FSP), Texas school districts are entitled to funding to provide a basic education for each student based on ADA. As a result, school districts and open-enrollment charter schools participating in TDRPP received FSP payments for the TDRPP students they served. Texas public schools received an average of $5,898 per student in 2008 in FSP funds (Texas Legislative Budget Board, 2009).

Because IHEs and nonprofit education organizations are not eligible to receive FSP payments based on ADA, TDRPP Other Payments were designed to provide a consistent level of per-student funding across all grantees. Through Other Payments, grantees not eligible for FSP payments could earn $4,000 ($2,000 per semester) for each student who demonstrated academic progress on a pre-approved assessment instrument.[19] Other Payments were capped based on the number of projected students: grantees could earn up to a total of $4,000 for each projected student, even if they subsequently enrolled a higher number of students.

Table 42 shows the average TDRPP funding composition for each grantee type. Overall, a total of $5,472,000 in performance funds was available to grantees, $4,372,000 for completions and interim benchmarks, and $1,100,000 for Other Payments.

[19] IHEs and nonprofit education organizations identified the assessment instrument and explained how progress would be measured in their grant applications. Examples of approved instruments include standardized tests or performance assessments with standardized scoring protocols. All assessment instruments were approved by the Texas commissioner of education prior to grant award. The same instrument was used upon initial enrollment in the program and at the end of each subsequent semester.

Table 42. Average Base Funding and Available Performance Funding by Grantee Type, Cycles 1 and 2

Grantee Type	Average Number of Proposed Students to be Served	Average Base Funding Amount	Average Completion and Benchmark Performance Payments Available	Average Other Payments Available	Average Total Grant Amount
IHE	42	$150,000	$83,333	$166,667	$400,000
Nonprofit educational organization	30	$150,000	$60,000	$120,000	$330,000
Open-enrollment charter school	68	$150,000	$135,000	$0	$285,000
Local school district	47	$147,395	$97,161	$0	$244,566

Source: Project proposals, Performance Payment Reports August 2008 through May 30, 2010 (n=45 grantees)

Grantees earned an average of 43% of available performance funds as of May 2010, with a range of 0% to 100%. As shown in Table 43, the range of performance funding earned varied by grantee type. Cycle 1 nonprofit education organizations showed the highest earned percentage of available performance funding, at an average of 83%. Cycle 1 IHEs earned the lowest average, 22% of available performance funds. Cycle 2 grantees did not have as much time to achieve completions and benchmarks required for earning performance pay. However, as of May 31, 2010, the end of their first school year of operation, Cycle 2 grantees in the analysis earned 28% of available performance pay, more than twice the 11% rate earned by Cycle 1 grantees during their first school year. Several factors may have contributed to this accelerated earning of performance payments. Cycle 1 grantees reported more implementation delays than Cycle 2 grantees, most significantly those due to Hurricane Ike.[20] Also, two IHEs, which earned performance payments at the slowest rate, were funded in Cycle 1 compared to one in Cycle 2. Cycle 2 grantees may also have benefited from the experience TEA gained during Cycle 1, resulting in improved grantee understanding of performance funding and how to earn it. Finally, two Cycle 2 grantees accounted for 18% of all TDRPP completions and were among the six top-producers of program completions.

[20] Hurricane Ike made landfall near Galveston, TX on September 13, 2008 and caused disruption throughout the greater Houston area.

Table 43. Performance Funding Earned by Grantee Type and Cycle

Grantee Type	Cycle 1			Cycle 2		
	Funding available, range	Funding earned, range	Average Funding earned as a percent of available	Funding available, range	Funding earned, range	Average Funding earned as a percent of available
Open-enrollment charter school	$40,000 - 200,000	$34,000 - $58,500	57%	$30,000 -$400,000	$6,750 -$115,000	23%
IHE	$40,000 - $60,000	$2,250 - $51,250	22%	$150,000	$8,750	29%
Nonprofit education organization	$40,000 -$120,000	$83,500 - 360,000	83%	$40,000 -$60,000	$2,000 - $3,750	33%
Local school district	$12,000 - $200,000	$11,250 - 199,000	64%	$26,000 -$200,000	$2,750 -$126,250	28%

Source: Grantee Budgets and Performance Payment Reports provided by TEA as of May 31, 2010.
Note: Does not include Other Payments

Table 44 highlights Cycle 1 Other Payments as proposed in the grant application, together with actual expenditures for this category for each eligible Cycle 1 grantee. Nonprofit educational organizations were far more likely than IHEs to earn their available Other Payments by demonstrating progress within a semester. This difference between nonprofit education organizations and IHEs may be due in part to increased frequency and flexibility regarding administration of the tests used for determining progress. Nonprofits tested more often and tended to have more self-paced programs, while IHEs tended to test only at the end of each semester and had more semester-based programs. Additionally, the evaluators observed during site visits that nonprofits were focused on earning performance funding to assure the sustainability of their efforts, while IHEs in some cases had no plans for how to spend performance funds and exhibited less direct interest in assuring that students met these interim performance targets.

Table 44. Other Payments Available and Earned by Eligible Cycle 1 Grantee

Grantee ID	Grantee Type	Proposed # of students	Proposed Other Payments	Total Other Payments Earned	% Other Payments Earned
B	IHE	20	$80,000	$32,000	40%
C	Nonprofit education organization	60	$240,000	$240,000	100%
D	Nonprofit education organization	20	$80,000	$80,000	100%
F	Nonprofit education organization	20	$80,000	$72,000	90%
P	IHE	30	$120,000	$0	0%
Totals		150	$600,000	$424,000	71%

Source: Project proposals, Performance Payment Reports. Other Payments earned are as of May 31, 2010.

Table 45 shows Other Payments for Cycle 2 grantees. As expected, Cycle 2 grantees earned a lower percentage of Other Payments (41%) than Cycle 1 grantees (71%), reflecting the shorter time period in which they could earn these funds.

Table 45. Other Payments Available and Earned by Eligible Cycle 2 Grantee

Grantee ID	Grantee Type	Proposed # of students	Proposed Other Payments	Total Other Payments Earned	% Other Payments Earned
	IHE	75	300,000	120,000	40
	Nonprofit education organization	20	80,000	56,000	70
	Nonprofit education organization	30	120,000	28,000	23
Totals		125	$500,000	$204,000	41%

Source: Project proposals, Performance Payment Reports. Other Payments earned are as of May 31, 2010.

External, Non-TDRPP Funding

By design, direct TDRPP funds covered varying percentages of the overall effort associated with educating and supporting TDRPP program participants. Site visits clearly revealed that each grantee was supported by multiple funding sources beyond TDRPP funds, including the school district, private foundations, and community-based agencies. Additionally, several grantees shared costs, such as space and administrative support, with a school district or community agency. Resources (such as volunteers) were often provided in-kind, which made it difficult to assess their value. The evaluators sought additional information about non-TDRPP direct expenditures and in-kind contributions of resources and personnel. However, data reported by

grantees, despite significant follow-up, was inconsistent and therefore did not warrant inclusion. For example, district grantees sometimes reported non-TDRPP district funds as in-kind contributions or outside funding, when these were often paid through state aid and district tax revenues generated by TDRPP students. Other grantees reported the dollar value of in-kind transportation, but not of facilities. In order to assure that a) funding sources were mutually exclusive, and b) that the analysis focused on public costs carried by the organizations, the analysis was based on direct TDRPP expenditures and public funds generated by TDRPP participants. Examples of other funding or support identified by grantees (but not included in the cost/benefit analysis) included in-kind resources provided by other grantors: use of facilities, utilities, insurance coverage, janitorial services, administrative support, transportation and other support services provided by local community organizations, as well as social workers, counselors, and facilities provided by school districts.

PUBLIC COSTS OF TDRPP

The analysis used actual TDRPP program expenditures, estimated tax collections, and estimated state aid generated by TDRPP participants. This section discusses the sources and methods used for each to determine overall public costs of TDRPP. Additional per-grantee cost detail is provided in Appendix G.

Direct TDRPP Expenditures

Actual, direct TDRPP expenditures for both base funds and performance funds were used in the cost analysis. Base funds expended, as used in the analysis, were based on grantee expenditure reports, while performance funds were calculated from grantee payment reports.[21] [22] Actual expenditures reflecting only performance funds earned and base funds expended, were used rather than budget figures because they more accurately reflect program costs for the students included in the analysis.

Table 46 shows direct TDRPP funds expended per student served, including both base and performance funds.

[21]Regarding initial base funds, one grantee received a budget allocation of $75,000 to support fewer than 12 students. All other grantees received approximately $150,000 to support an expected range of students from 12 to 100.

[22] Performance funds were calculated by multiplying the number of benchmarks, completions, and Other Payments reported on Performance Payment Reports by the payment amounts for each benchmark achieved. These reports were the basis for grantee draw-downs of performance funds, and were specifically aligned to the reporting period. The evaluators compared calculated performance payments to actual performance payments reported via ISAS for July 2010 (Cycle 1) and October 2010 (Cycle 2) and determined that the calculated payments were both better aligned to the reporting period, which ended May 31, 2010, and within acceptable range for comparison with the July Cycle 1 ISAS amounts. Note that one IHE grantee reported substantial numbers of Other Payments earned after the end of the reporting period. These were shown in the ISAS reports but were not present in the Performance Payment Reports available to the evaluators and used to determine outcomes, and were therefore not used for this analysis. For actual expenditures of base funds, TEA provided expenditure reports for Cycle 1 grantees based on ISAS that corresponded with the May 31, 2010 cutoff for expenditure of Cycle base funds. Cycle 2 base funds actual expenditures were based on the May 31, 2010 Grantee Progress Reports.

Table 46. Direct TDRPP Funds Expended per Student Served by Grantee Type and Cycle

Grantee Type	Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Both Cycle 1 and Cycle 2 Combined
Open-enrollment charter school	$2,165	$1,103	$1,457
IHE	$2,762	$3,036	$2,881
Nonprofit education organization	$2,661	$4,317	$2,940
Local school district	$1,278	$1,674	$1,399
All Programs	$1,593	$1,754	$1,648

Source: TEA-provided ISAS reports, July 2010; Grantee Progress Reports May 2010; Student Data Uploads, May 2010. (n =45 grantees)

State Aid

State Aid was provided only to local school districts and open-enrollment charter schools. It was calculated using figures provided by TEA from the Summary of Finances (SOF), together with high school enrollment figures from TEA Student Enrollment Reports. Three primary figures from the SOF were used: Refined ADA, Total State Aid, and the High School Allotment. Refined ADA[23] was a calculated average number of students in attendance each day, and it was the principal foundation for FSP payments and state aid. Total State Aid accounted for all state funding sources to the district, including the High School Allotment. The High School Allotment provided local school districts and open-enrollment charter schools with $275 for each student in ADA in Grades 9 through 12. To compute estimated state aid per TDRPP student per year, the evaluators subtracted the High School Allotment from the Total State Aid, divided this by the Refined ADA, and then added this to the High School Allotment divided by the number of high school students enrolled. The resulting formula for estimating State Aid was therefore:

$$\text{State Aid per TDRPP Student} = \frac{\text{(Total State Aid – High School Allotment)}}{\text{Refined ADA}} + \frac{\text{High School Allotment}}{\text{High School Enrollment}}$$

[23] Refined ADA is a TEA figure used in school finance calculations. TEA defines it in School Finance 101 (2010) as follows: "A simple calculation of the number of students in ADA can be found by adding the number of students who are in attendance each day of the school year for the entire school year and then dividing that number by the number of instructional days in the school year.

The actual calculation of the number of students in ADA is slightly more complex. In this calculation, which produces a number known as refined ADA, the sum of the number of days attended by all students in a six-week period (sum of all students' days of attendance) is divided by the number of days taught in the six-week period. The results for all six-week periods in a school year are then summed, divided by six, and rounded to three decimal places.

This formula produced a range among grantee local school districts from $1,554 to $7,830, and among open-enrollment charter schools from $9,548 to $9,953. Note that only local school districts had access to district tax revenue.

Estimated state aid generated by TDRPP participants was calculated to account for the time each student spent enrolled in TDRPP. For each student, the evaluators calculated the number of days enrolled in TDRPP using entrance and exit dates reported on Grantee Progress Reports. Students still enrolled at the end of the program were assumed to have a last day enrolled of May 31, 2010, the end of the reporting period. Days of enrollment were converted to months. Because most TDRPP programs operated throughout the year, or used the OFSDP, the number of months served was divided by 12 and multiplied by the annual state aid per TDRPP participant in order to estimate the monthly state aid generated by each student.

Allocated Tax Revenue

Estimated allocated tax revenue generated by TDRPP participants was also calculated to account for the time each student spent enrolled in TDRPP. Tax revenue figures were only used for school districts, and were obtained from the TEA SOF. For the purpose of this analysis, Allocated Tax Revenue per TDRPP Student was calculated by dividing Total Tax Collection by Refined ADA. Tax revenue per student ranged from $1,370 to $8,299 per TDRPP grantee local school district, with an average amount of $4,424. Table 47 shows the average estimated state aid and annual tax revenue per student by grantee type.

Table 47. Average per Student State Aid and Tax Revenue by Grantee Type, Cycle 1

Grantee Type	Estimated State Aid Per H.S. Student	Annual Tax Revenue Per Student	Total
Local school district	$4,401	$4,424	$8,825
Open-enrollment charter school	$9,751	NA	$9,751
IHE	NA	NA	NA
Nonprofit education organization	NA	NA	NA

Source: TEA Summary of Finances, 2010; TEA Student Enrollment Reports, 2010. ARS calculations. (n=21 grantees) Note: Although IHE grantees are also supported by public funds, including legislative funds, the evaluation team was unable to create a reliable per student estimate based on funds anticipated to be generated by TDRPP participants. IHE estimates are therefore assumed to be lower than they would be if these funds were included.

As of May 31, 2010, TDRPP grantees included in the cost/benefit analysis generated an estimated total of $21,799,566, including $10,098,478 in state aid, $5,251,016 in allocated district tax revenue, and $6,450,072 in actual TDRPP expenditures.

The average TDRPP total cost per student served was $5,571. This figure includes direct TDRPP funds of $1,648 per student, as well as state aid and allocated district tax revenue. The costs per student served differed by grantee type, as shown in Table 48. IHEs and nonprofit education organizations had the lowest cost per student, and open-enrollment charter schools had the highest cost per student. Although IHE grantees are also supported by public funds, including legislative funds, the evaluation team was unable to create a reliable per student estimate based on funds anticipated to be generated by TDRPP participants. IHE estimates are therefore assumed to be lower than they would be if these funds were included. Nonprofit education organizations were more likely to make use of external funding sources to support their programs, though these are not accounted for fully in this analysis. The lower costs for IHEs and nonprofit educational organizations can partially be explained by the observation that fewer public funds are available to these organizations than to local school districts or open-enrollment charter schools.

Table 48. Funding Sources and Costs per Student by Grantee Type

Grantee Type	Total State Aid Generated	Total Allocated District Tax Revenue	Total TDRPP Direct Funds (Actual)	Total Costs	Total Students Served	Total Cost Per Student Served	Total Student Months Enrolled	Total Cost Per Student Months Enrolled
Open enroll-ment charter school	$2,981,311	NA	$746,178	$3,727,489	512	$7,280	3,681	$1,013
IHE	NA	NA	$504,187	$504,187	175	$2,881	1,427	$353
Nonprofit education org.	NA	NA	$1,308,350	$1,308,350	445	$2,940	3,603	$363
Local school district	$7,117,167	$5,251,016	$3,891,357	$16,259,540	2,781	$5,847	17,048	$954
All Programs	$10,098,478	$5,251,016	$6,450,072	$21,799,566	3,913	$5,571	25,759	$846

Source: TEA Summary of Finances, 2010; TEA Student Enrollment Reports, 2010. Student Data Uploads. Performance Payment Reports. ARS calculations. (n = 41 grantees, 21 Cycle 1 grantees, 20 Cycle 2 grantees)

Costs per student, per month served were also calculated in order to control for length of enrollment. TDRPP grantees had an average cost per student, per month of $846. IHEs and nonprofit educational organizations had nearly indistinguishable costs per student, per month of $353 and $363 respectively, while open-enrollment charter schools and local school districts were nearly indistinguishable at $1,013 and $954, respectively. These differences are partly, though not entirely, an artifact of the TDRPP funding structure, and partly an artifact of the formulas used in this analysis. For local school districts and open-enrollment charter schools, each additional month of enrollment, while not necessarily earning additional TDRPP funds, led to receipt of additional state aid. For local school districts, each additional month of student enrollment also increased the proportion of district tax revenue that the evaluators determined to be allocated to TDRPP.

BENEFITS OF TDRPP

The analysis of benefits examined both individual benefits (increased participant earnings) and public benefits (reduced public costs and increased public revenue) using models specific to Texas for each. It compared them to adjusted TDRPP costs as presented in the preceding section.[24] The analysis focused strictly on financial benefits and did not adjust for the social costs of not graduating from high school, social rewards to accumulated educational attainment, or other personal costs of failing to obtain additional education post-high school. Such calculations were outside the scope of this evaluation. The methods for determining the individual and public benefits are described as follows.

Individual Benefits

A simple way to calculate the individual benefit of TDRPP is to look at the income differential, as shown in Table 49, between a high school graduate and someone without a high school degree. Using current Texas income figures, this differential is $7,125 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). That is, a TDRPP graduate can expect to earn $7,125 more per year than a dropout. However, to estimate this differential over an average lifetime career, the analysis took into account the likelihood that some TDRPP graduates would continue their education, as well as the effect of inflation.

The likelihood of further education was calculated from Belfield and Levin's (2007) research on future educational attainment rates of students in the lowest quartile of reading achievement nationally, a group not dissimilar to TDRPP students. They found that 80% terminated their studies with a high school diploma (or equivalent), 15% continued to obtain some college or an associate's degree, and 5% completed a bachelor's degree. These percentages were applied conservatively in calculating future earnings. For the first four years post-high school, the evaluators used the earnings differential between Texas residents with a high school

[24] The methodology for determining costs and benefits was modeled generally on the work of the Center for Benefit-Cost Studies of Education at Teachers College, Columbia University (Belfield & Levin, 2007).

education and Texas residents with less than a high school education, or the $7,125 calculated previously. The chances of further education, using the Belfield and Levin percentages, were then applied over the balance of an average working career of 40 years.[25] The net present value of the resulting income stream, using the Congressional Budget Office standard discount rate of 2% (King et al, 1999; Kohyama, 2006), was then calculated. The result of these calculations is an estimated increase in earnings of $246,348 that a TDRPP graduate can expect over a 40-year career.[26] This estimated lifetime earnings differential is quite similar to the national earnings differential calculated by economist Cecelia Rouse (2005). Rouse modeled lifetime earnings differentials between high school graduates and non-graduates, using discounted present value and other means, and came to a lifetime differential of $260,000.

Table 49. Texas Income by Education Level

Education Level	Median Annual Income
Less than high school	$17,667
High school (diploma or equivalency)	$24,792
Some college or associates	$31,461
Bachelor's degree	$48,475
Graduate or professional degree	$61,120

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2010)

Public Benefits

As will be calculated in the text that follows, the state of Texas could save an estimated $74,451 per TDRPP graduate. These savings would be achieved via increased tax revenues and reduced costs of public health, criminal justice, and welfare payments. This section discusses the expected public benefits, or savings, related to TDRPP and presents the method used to calculate their dollar value.

To calculate the public benefits of TDRPP, the evaluators looked at the well-documented public costs related to failing to graduate from high school. These costs include lost tax revenues and increased costs in healthcare, criminal justice services, and welfare benefits (Martin & Halperin, 2006). The National Governor's Association

[25] Beginning in year five of the analysis, the annual increase in income was calculated as .8 * the difference between high school and no high school, plus .15 * the difference between some college and no high school, plus .05 * the difference between a bachelor's degree and no high school, or $9,309.50.

[26] Following Kane and Staiger (2002) and using a 3% discount rate yields an estimate of $207,067; Kohyama (2006) also recommends and alternate public benefit program discount rate of 0 or undiscounted, which yields an estimate of $363,642

(2008), for example, estimated that over the course of a lifetime, a high school dropout costs society on average $40,500 in increased healthcare costs, $26,600 from increased criminal activity, and $3,000 in increased welfare costs. For the purposes of this study, the public benefit calculation was based on Texas-specific differences in public revenues and costs between high school graduates and dropouts. A recent study by Gottlob (2007) used published Texas public costs per high school dropout for lost revenues from taxes and fees, increased Medicaid costs, and increased incarceration costs, to arrive at a cost per dropout of $3,168.[27] Thus, one could state that the public benefit related to each high school graduate is equal to the public cost of each high school dropout. The analysis used the $3,168 figure as the public benefit per TDRPP graduate, per year.

To calculate the lifetime public benefit of each TDRPP graduate, this estimated benefit per graduate ($3,168) was projected over an average career of 40 years, using 2010 dollars. The net present value was then calculated using the Congressional Budget Office standard discount rate of 2% as the discount factor (King et al, 1999; Kohyama, 2006). That is, in the net present value analysis, TDRPP funds are compared to an assumed rate of public return of 2%. This calculation results in estimated lifetime public benefits per TDRPP graduate of $74,451.[28]

Program Costs

Program costs discussed in detail earlier in this chapter were divided in the cost/benefit analysis by the total number of completions to derive a cost per TDRPP completion. As shown in Table 48, the 41 grantees for which complete financial information was available had total costs of $21,799,566, including direct TDRPP expenditures, state aid, and allocated district tax revenue. These same grantees produced 1,280 total completions (high school graduation or college readiness). Dividing the total cost by the total completions produces a total cost per TDRPP student completion of $17,031.

Costs per completion by grantee are shown in Appendix G, and they vary by grantee, grantee type, and cycle. By grantee, costs per completion range from $5,972 for a grantee with 55 completions, to $704,789 for a

[27] In the study, Gottlob determined lost revenues using economic modeling to estimate the reduction in disposable income of graduates versus dropouts. This figure was used to estimate revenue loss for state sales tax revenues and other fees, such as business property and franchise taxes. For increased Medicaid costs, Gottlob compared the probability that a Texas high school dropout (or his/her dependent child) would be on Medicaid to the probability for high school graduates, and then multiplied the difference in the number of expected Medicaid recipients by the average cost per Medicaid recipient. Finally, Gottlob based the increase incarceration costs on the differences in the probability that individuals with different levels of educational attainment will be incarcerated in any one year. In Texas, a high school dropout is more than twice as likely to be incarcerated in any one year than a high school graduate.

[28] Following Kane and Staiger (2002) and using a 3% discount rate yields an estimate of $60,483; Kohyama (2006) also recommends an alternate public benefit program discount rate of 0 or undiscounted, which yields an estimate of $116,249.

grantee with only two completions. Appendix G also shows (in bold italics) the six top-producing grantees, or those with the highest number of TDRPP completions. These top-producing grantees had average costs per student completion of $11,754, compared to $22,275 for all other grantees. This was of course in part by definition, because the top producers had more completions, but it was also the case that these grantees had lower overall costs per student served, $4,873 for the top producers compared to $6,024 for all other grantees.

Costs vs. Benefits

Net public benefits focused on two specific areas: public savings per completer, and the overall public savings for the entire TDRPP program. Public benefits accruing from students who made progress short of completing were not calculated. Net public savings for each TDRPP completer were calculated according to Net Present Value (NPV) analysis, using the program costs per completer of $17,102 calculated in the preceding section and the annual public benefits per completer of $3,168. Costs, charged in the first year of the NPV cash flows, and benefits, extrapolated over the working lifetime of the completer, were discounted using the Congressional Budget Office standard 2% discount rate for public programs using 2010 dollars (King et al, 1999; Kohyama 2006). This method produces an estimated net public benefit per TDRPP graduate of $74,451.[29] That is, each TDRPP completer is estimated to reduce public expenditure or increase public revenue by $74,451 more in 2010 dollars over their lifetime than were expended on their behalf during the reporting period. For the program as a whole, considering the total cost of the program compared to the total public benefits of the program, TDRPP generates $95.3 million in net public benefits.[30] This public benefit is in addition to increased contributions to the Texas economy and society anticipated from TDRPP graduates over time, and the $248,348 average additional lifetime earnings per TDRPP graduate. Because the program is still in operation, the costs per student completion are expected to drop as additional students complete the program, thereby further lowering the costs per student.

[29] Following Kane and Staiger (2002) and using a 3% discount rate yields an estimate of $60,483; Kohyama (2006) also recommends and alternate public benefit program discount rate of 0 or undiscounted, which yields an estimate of $116,249.

[30] Calculated as per TDRPP completer benefits of $74,451 x 1,280 TDRPP completers produced by the 41 grantees included in the cost/benefit analysis.

COSTS/BENEFITS OF ALTERNATIVE PROGRAMS

While several studies, including those cited earlier in this chapter, have conducted estimates of the public costs of dropouts, none of these programs, and no other dropout recovery programs of which the evaluation team was aware, has conducted a detailed analysis of the overall public costs of their programs that would enable a useful comparison. A summary discussion of total program costs for state and federally funded dropout prevention programs was provided in the *Texas Dropout Recovery Pilot Program: Cycle 1 Evaluation Report* (2009). Based on National Dropout Prevention Center/Network and program annual reports, where available, the data included only summary costs and did not include data on participant success.

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS

In its first two years, TDRPP made a considerable impact on the lives of its graduates and filled an important gap in Texas educational services for students who have dropped out of school. Not only did grantees implement the program with fidelity and vigor, serving 4,141 students to date (double initial projections) and assisting 1,283 students with completing TDRPP by obtaining a high school diploma or demonstrating college readiness, the program is predicted to save the state $95.3 million in current dollars after accounting for initial expenditures.

Although specific recommendations related to each chapter were made throughout the report, the evaluators also have the following overall commentary and recommendations:

- TDRPP was a new program, in operation for 21 months as of May 31, 2010. The implementation challenges identified throughout the report are within normal range for new programs; recommendations are intended to improve outcomes and solidify program implementation.
- **The number of students served exceeded grantees' initial projections, and the number of students that graduated from high school or demonstrated college readiness exceeded the evaluators' expectations for a new program.** The evaluators observed increased grantee efficiency in identifying and meeting student needs as grantees settled into defined processes for student intake and program operation.
- The pay-for-performance component of TDRPP was innovative and its impact differed by grantee. It was a key driver for nonprofit educational organizations, combining accountability for outcomes with incentives for success. That is, because a significant percentage of payment to nonprofit educational organizations was performance based, they had, and responded to, an incentive to focus on moving students forward and were also held accountable for results. Though an equally large percentage of IHE payment, performance funding played a less central role for IHEs, in part because IHE staff and programs could draw on other funding sources in addition to TDRPP. Use of performance based pay varied across open-enrollment charter schools and local school districts. All of the higher-performing grantees demonstrated awareness of the requirements for earning performance based pay, had specific plans for how it would be spent if earned, and used these funds as a central part of their programming. Although grantees had a steep learning curve regarding planning and use of performance based pay, the evaluators suggest keeping it as a component of future dropout recovery programs both because of its potential for focusing funds where they are being put to use best, and in order to study the efficacy of the funding model further.
- Providing student incentives using cash or other tangible benefits, an experimental component of TDRPP, was used with mixed success. Cycle 2 grantees were more favorably inclined toward the incentives than Cycle 1 grantees and saw incentives as a way to motivate their students. While student incentives can be useful, successful use of incentives likely depends on the specific student population, the way they are deployed, and other factors that were beyond the scope of this evaluation. Although the evaluation collected expanded student incentive information during year two of TDRPP, these data are not yet decisive about the effects of student incentives. The evaluators therefore recommend

further experimentation with student incentives in future dropout recovery programs, and more specific study of their effects.

- The significant success demonstrated by top performers, with six grantees accounting for half of all TDRPP completions (either obtaining a high school diploma or demonstrating college readiness), combined with the lack of notable accomplishment by the lowest performers, suggest both evaluation changes and program changes. First, many of the differences between high and low performers, either measured by types of student served or features of the grantee programs, were not captured by the measures employed by the evaluation. This suggests expanding the investigation of high performers in future evaluations as a way to discover more about the indicators of probable future grantee success. Second, from a program perspective, the evaluators recommend establishment of interim grantee benchmarks to inform a mid-point continuation decision. For example, future programs could establish a one-year review, at which point programs would be recommended for a) continuation, b) intervention or technical assistance, or c) discontinuation, based on their year one performance. Funds recouped from discontinued programs could be redirected to high-performing programs. Interim benchmarks might include student enrollment, student progress, percent of base funds used, and other indicators of implementation progress and student success.
- Although some grantees achieved student success regardless of how close a student was to fulfilling graduation requirements upon entry into TDRPP, overall, whether a student obtained a high school diploma or demonstrated college readiness was highly associated with how close that student was to completing graduation requirements when he or she entered the program. This suggests a number of policy questions, including whether all completions are valued equally, whether funding determinations should take into account the number and types of students targeted, and whether programs should be directed toward certain types of students.
- Evaluating the program is made more difficult by the lack of equivalence between the requirements for, and program approaches to, obtaining a high school diploma and demonstrating college readiness. In significant respects, TDRPP functions as two different dropout recovery programs, one for nonprofit education organizations and IHEs, and one for local school districts and open-enrollment charter schools. Whether to continue these two different tracks within the same program is a policy decision that should be considered. They are both clearly targeted at students who need encouragement and services to assist in moving forward with their education, but they operate differently from one another. If continued as a single program, TEA might consider more clearly delineating them into separate subprograms or tracks, and specifying distinct evaluation questions and evaluation data collection for each.
- Evaluation findings presented in this report should be interpreted with caution. Because student outcomes associated with TDRPP expenditures and services are likely to be achieved between the data collection cutoff date for this report and the project end date of May 31, 2011 and beyond, significant additional outcomes are expected.

Overall, the probability of continued and accelerated attainment of program outcomes, the financial benefits to the state of reducing its number of dropouts, and the usefulness of additional data for determining cost effectiveness and optimal program strategies suggest the advisability of continuing the program. Results

reported earlier in this report suggest that, as grantees gain experience with TDRPP, they are able to expand their reach to serve larger numbers of students. The evaluators therefore anticipate further demonstration of student academic progress, and improvements in cost effectiveness, as grantees continue to serve TDRPP students.

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APPENDIX A: TEACHER/STAFF SURVEY

Texas Dropout Recovery Pilot Program
Staff and Teacher Survey

Target Population: All teachers and staff who work directly with participating students.
Administration: online via Survey Monkey. Formatting will be done using standard, professional online templates.

This survey is designed for teachers and staff who work with students in projects funded by the Texas Dropout Recovery Pilot Program. It is being conducted by Arroyo Research Services, the Texas Dropout Recovery Pilot Program Evaluator contracted by the Texas Education Agency. All responses will be confidential. No personally identifiable information will be reported or released to the Texas Education Agency. Your participation in this survey is voluntary. Thank you for your assistance in this effort.

1) With which Dropout Recovery Program or district do you work? [dropdown]
   a. Alief ISD
   b. American Youthworks
   c. Arlington ISD
   d. Austin Community College
   e. Birdville ISD
   f. Christian Fellowship of San Antonio
   g. Clear Creek ISD
   h. Community Action Inc. of Hays, Caldwell & Blanco Counties
   i. Dallas County Community College District
   j. Dallas ISD
   k. El Paso ISD
   l. Galveston ISD
   m. Grand Prairie ISD
   n. Harlandale ISD
   o. Harris County Department of Education
   p. Healy-Murphy Center, Inc.
   q. Lewisville ISD
   r. Pasadena ISD
   s. Pharr-San Juan-Alamo ISD
   t. Round Rock ISD
   u. San Antonio ISD
   v. Winfree Academy Charter School
   w. Other: (please describe)_____

2) Primary role:
   a. Teacher
   b. Program Staff (tutor, mentor, case worker, social worker)
   c. Other (please describe):_____

3) For teachers: Course(s) you teach

4) Years of experience with this program? [dropdown list: 0-1, 2-5, 6-9, 10+]

5) Years of experience working directly with dropout recovery students? [dropdown list: 0-1, 2-5, 6-9, 10+]

6) Years of experience with this school or organization? [dropdown list: 0-1, 2-5, 6-9, 10+

7) Bachelor's degree?
   a. Yes
   b. No
      Major:_____

8) Master's degree?
   a. Yes
   b. No
      Major Field of Study: _____

9) Type(s) of Texas certification (check all that apply)
   a. Educational Diagnostician (Grade Level EC-12)
   b. English as a Second Language Generalist (Grade Level 4-8)
   c. English as a Second Language Generalist (Grade Level EC-4)
   d. English as a Second Language Supplemental (Grade Level NA)
   e. English Language Arts and Reading (Grade Level 4-8)
   f. English Language Arts and Reading (Grade Level 8-12)
   g. English Language Arts and Reading/Social Studies (Grade Level 4-8)
   h. Generalist (Grade Level 4-8)
   i. Generalist (Grade Level EC-4)
   j. Generalist (Grade Level EC-6)
   k. Life Sciences (Grade Level 8-12)
   l. Mathematics (Grade Level 4-8)
   m. Mathematics (Grade Level 8-12)
   n. Mathematics/Science (Grade Level 4-8)
   o. Physical Sciences (Grade Level 8-12)
   p. Principal (Grade Level EC-12)
   q. School Counselor (Grade Level EC-12)
   r. School Librarian (Grade Level EC-12)
   s. Science (Grade Level 4-8)
   t. Science (Grade Level 8-12)
   u. Special Education (Grade Level EC-12)
   v. Superintendent (Grade Level EC-12)
   w. Other: please describe _____

   Subject areas (if applicable):

10) Gender:
   a. Male
   b. Female

11) Race/Ethnicity:
   a. American Indian or Alaska Native
   b. Asian
   c. Black or African American
   d. Hispanic
   e. Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
   f. White
   g. Other

12) First language:
   a. English
   b. Spanish
   c. Other (please describe): _____

13) I can also communicate effectively in:
   a. English
   b. Spanish
   c. Other (please describe): _____

14) Age
   a. 18-24
   b. 25-34
   c. 35-44
   d. 45-54
   e. 54-65
   f. 66+

15) How would you characterize the students you teach/support (e.g., demographics, motivation level, etc.)?

16) **How much of an issue are the following to students you serve:**	**1 – Not an issue**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5 – A major issue**
Parents' lack of involvement	○	○	○	○	○
Drug use	○	○	○	○	○
Criminal activity	○	○	○	○	○
Low grades	○	○	○	○	○

17) What do you think the program has accomplished to date, if anything?

18) What factors facilitated any program successes to date?

19) **Please indicate your opinion about each statement below[31]:**	**1 – Not at all**	**2**	**3- Very Little**	**4**	**5 – Some Influence**	**6**	**7 - Quite a Bit**	**8**	**9 – A Great Deal**
How much do you believe you are able to control disruptive behavior in the classroom?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
How much do you believe you are able to motivate students who show low interest in course work?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
How much do you believe you are able to get students to believe they can do well in course work?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
How much do you believe you are able to help your students value learning?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
How much do you believe you are able to assist families in helping a student do well in the program?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

[31] Adapted from the *Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale* short form. Tschannen-Moran, M. & Hoy, A.W. (2001). Teacher efficacy: Capturing an elusive construct. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *17*, 783-805.

20) **Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements regarding teachers and students in your program.**[32]	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
If a child doesn't learn something the first time teachers will try another way.	○	○	○	○	○
Drugs and alcohol abuse in the community make learning difficult for students here.	○	○	○	○	○
If a child doesn't want to learn teachers here give up.	○	○	○	○	○
Learning is more difficult at this school because students are worried about their safety.	○	○	○	○	○
Students here just aren't motivated to learn	○	○	○	○	○
Teachers here are confident they will be able to motivate their students.	○	○	○	○	○
Teachers here are well-prepared to teach the subjects they are assigned to teach.	○	○	○	○	○
Teachers here don't have the skills needed to produce meaningful student learning.	○	○	○	○	○
Teachers here fail to reach some students because of poor teaching methods.	○	○	○	○	○
Teachers here need more training to know how to deal with students.	○	○	○	○	○
Teachers in this school are able to get through to difficult students.	○	○	○	○	○
Teachers in this school are skilled in various methods of teaching.	○	○	○	○	○
Teachers in this school do not have the skills to deal with student disciplinary problems.	○	○	○	○	○
Teachers in this school have what it takes to get the children to learn.	○	○	○	○	○
Teachers in this school really believe every child can learn.	○	○	○	○	○
The lack of instructional materials and supplies makes teaching very difficult.	○	○	○	○	○

[32] Adapted from Goddard, Hoy, and Hoy (2000).

20) **Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements regarding teachers and students in your program.**[32]	**Strongly Disagree**	**Disagree**	**Neutral**	**Agree**	**Strongly Agree**
The opportunities in this community help ensure that these students will learn.	○	○	○	○	○
The quality of school facilities here really facilitates the teaching and learning process.	○	○	○	○	○
These students come to school ready to learn	○	○	○	○	○
Teachers in this school think there are some students that no one can reach.	○	○	○	○	○

21) Did you participate in any dropout-recovery-specific professional development since the beginning of the project?

a. Yes (if yes, continue to question 22)
b. No (if no, please skip to question 24)

22) Please indicate the dropout recovery-specific professional development in which you have participated since the beginning of the project:

Professional Development or Training	**Number of hours**	**What did you find most helpful about this experience?**	**What did you find least helpful about this experience?**
a)			
b)			
c)			
d)			

23) What additional professional development, if any, have you received that supports your work with dropout recovery students?

24) On a scale of 1(lowest) to 5(highest), how would you rate the support you've received thus far to be successful at working with dropout recovery students?

	Lowest 1	2	3	4	Highest 5
From TEA	○	○	○	○	○
From Parents	○	○	○	○	○
From Administrators	○	○	○	○	○
From Program Staff	○	○	○	○	○

For teachers (using branching on Q2)

25) How often do you collaborate/meet with other instructors to discuss student performance?
   a. Daily
   b. Weekly
   c. 2-3 times a month
   d. Monthly
   e. Rarely
   f. Never

26) What pre-assessments or other methods do you use to place students and plan for their instruction?

27) How do you determine student progress and performance?

28) How do your students receive feedback on their performance?

For staff (using branching on Q2):

29) How often do you meet with fellow staff to discuss student progress?
   a. Daily
   b. Weekly
   c. 2-3 times a month
   d. Monthly
   e. Rarely
   f. Never

30) How do you determine student progress and performance?

31) What are the steps taken to get a new dropout recovery student the services you offer?

32) What services, in addition to those already offered through the TDRPP, do you think would benefit the dropout recovery students currently in your program?

33) How are you notified if a student is at-risk of leaving the program?

34) What do you do when a student is absent for an extended period?

35) Additional comments:

Texas Dropout Recovery Pilot Program
Parental Consent Form

February 16, 2009

Reference: Evaluation of the Texas Dropout Recovery Pilot Program

Dear Parent/Guardian:

We are asking for your permission to allow your child to take part in a study of the Texas Dropout Recovery Pilot Program. The study is being conducted by Arroyo Research Services.

Please read this letter and enclosed permission form. After you do that, please complete and sign the permission form. You may return the form to Arroyo Research Services in 1 of 4 ways as indicated on the top of the permission form. Please return the form by February 28, 2009.

Your child is or recently was enrolled in the Dropout Recovery Pilot Program at <insert program name>. This program is designed to help students complete their high school education and prepare for college and/or a career. By taking part in this study, your child will help the Texas Education Agency and the Texas Legislature understand the Dropout Recovery program's impact on Texas students. They seek to learn about the experiences of students in the program. Findings from the student surveys will help us improve the program.

Your child will receive no direct benefit from participating in the study. However, he or she may take pride in being part of a study that will help us learn more about their education.

As part of the study, your child will be asked to fill out 2 or 3 surveys. The surveys should take about 30 minutes and will be completed online. One survey will be done within the next month. A second survey will be done when your child completes or leaves the program.

The surveys will ask some basic questions about your child and your family. We will ask about work and school, your child's reasons for dropping out, and what school was like before he or she dropped out. We will ask about future plans and your child's confidence.

Information obtained about your child as part of this study will be strictly confidential. Your child has the right to stop the survey at any time without punishment, either by their own choosing or by yours. The answers your child provides will not affect his or her grades.

Your child's survey answers will be seen only by the research team. TEA or your child's school will not see the surveys or know whether your child took part. Arroyo Research Services will protect your child's information and will destroy all identifying information at the end of the study.

While strong protections will be in place, there is a slight risk that your child's information or survey answers could be released. Arroyo Research Services has conducted many studies and has never released any information in the past.

If you have questions about this study, you can contact Arroyo Research Services directly:

Kirk Vandersall
Director/Principal Investigator
Telephone: 213-291-1556
Email: kirk@arroyoresearchservices.com

If you have questions about your rights or complaints you don't want to take to them, you can call an impartial reviewer, Independent Review Consulting at 800-IRC-3421 or write to them at P.O Box 170, San Anselmo, CA 94979.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Kirk Vandersall

Arroyo Research Services

PARENTAL/GUARDIAN PERMISSION FORM

Evaluation of the Texas Dropout Recovery Pilot Program

Directions: Please complete this form and return it to Arroyo Research Services in 1 of 4 ways:

At School: Have your child return the signed form to <coordinator name> at school

By Mail (please use attached self-addressed, stamped envelope):

Kirk Vandersall

Arroyo Research Services

858 Adelaide Drive

Pasadena, CA 91104

By Fax: 213-607-3106 Attn: Kirk Vandersall

By Email: kirk@arroyoresearchservices.com

Participation in the Dropout Recovery Pilot Program Student Survey

I have read the information about the student survey being done as part of the evaluation of the Texas Dropout Recovery Pilot Program. By giving my consent, my child will be asked to complete a survey up to three times between January 2009 and December 2010. In addition to my consent, my child will also be asked for their consent to complete the survey. My child can stop participating in the survey, either by their own choosing or by mine, at any time without penalty. The answers my child provides will not impact his or her grades. All information my child provides will remain confidential and will not be made available to anyone other than the research staff.

Please check the box below, fill in the information requested, sign, and return the form.

☐ **I DO** give my consent for my child to agree to complete surveys for this evaluation.

☐ **I DO NOT** give my consent for my child to agree to complete surveys for this evaluation.

Child First and Last Name: _____

Parent/Guardian First and Last Name (print): _____

Signature of Parent/Guardian: _____

Date: _____/_____/_____

Texas Dropout Recovery Pilot Program
Initial Student Survey

Target Population: All students in a Texas Dropout Recovery Pilot Program
Administration: Online.

Survey Introduction Letter

We are asking you to complete this survey because you are participating in a program funded by the Texas Education Agency's Dropout Recovery Pilot Program. The survey is being conducted by Arroyo Research Services, who was hired by TEA to collect information about you and your experience in the dropout recovery program. The results of this survey will help the Texas Education Agency understand how well the program is working and what can be changed to make the program more successful in the future.

The survey should take approximately 30 minutes to complete. Your participation is completely voluntary. You do not have to complete the survey and you may stop at any time. You do not need to answer any questions you feel are inappropriate.

All of your responses will be confidential. No personally identifiable information will be released to your program or the Texas Education Agency.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey!

1. Your name: _____
2. Maiden name, if applicable: _____
3. Your Date of Birth:(survey will have designated spaces for month, day, and year)
4. Through which school district or organization are you participating in this dropout recovery program? [dropdown]

    a. Alief ISD
    b. American Youthworks
    c. Arlington ISD
    d. Austin Community College
    e. Birdville ISD
    f. Christian Fellowship of San Antonio
    g. Clear Creek ISD
    h. Community Action Inc. of Hays, Caldwell & Blanco Counties

i. Dallas County Community College District
j. Dallas ISD
k. El Paso ISD
l. Galveston ISD
m. Grand Prairie ISD
n. Harlandale ISD
o. Harris County Department of Education
p. Healy-Murphy Center, Inc.
q. Lewisville ISD
r. Pasadena ISD
s. Pharr-San Juan-Alamo ISD
t. Round Rock ISD
u. San Antonio ISD
v. Winfree Academy Charter School
w. Other: (please describe)_____

5. Last school attended (prior to this program):_____ District:_____

6. Please indicate the group that best describes your race/ethnicity
   - O American Indian or Alaska Native
   - O Asian
   - O Black or African American
   - O Hispanic
   - O Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
   - O White

7. Please indicate your gender
   - O Female
   - O Male

8. Do you speak English fluently?
   - O Yes
   - O No

9. Do you speak a language other than English at home?
   - O Yes
   - O No (Skip to question 11)

10. What language do you use most frequently at home?
    - O English
    - O Spanish
    - O Other: please indicate_____

11. Approximately when did you drop out of school? (Indicate year and month)

12. What grade were you in when you dropped out of school? (Drop down list with grades)

13. Are you a primary care provider for a child?

    O Yes
    O No (Skip to question 15)

14. (If Yes to 13) how many children do you care for?

    O 1
    O 2
    O More than 2

15. Do you have a job?

    O Yes
    O No (Skip to question 17)

16. (If Yes to 15) approximately how many hours a week do you work?

    O Less than 10 hrs
    O Between 10 and 20 hrs
    O Between 21 and 30 hrs
    O Between 31 and 40 hrs
    O More than 49 hrs

17. Are you living with your parent(s), legal guardian(s), or other relatives?

    O Yes
    O No

18. For the following statements, please rate your level of agreement using the following scale:

1 = *strongly disagree* 2 = *disagree* 3 = *neutral* 4 = *agree* 5 = *strongly agree*

My parents or guardians are supportive of my decision to participate in this program	1	2	3	4	5
My parents or guardians help me with my homework	1	2	3	4	5
I have friends or family that are available to help me with my homework	1	2	3	4	5

19. Do you have any siblings that dropped out of school?

- O Yes
- O No
- O Unsure

20. Did either of your parents or legal guardians graduate from high school?

- O Yes
- O No (Skip to question 22)
- O Unsure

21. (If Yes to 20) Did either of your parents or legal guardians graduate from college?

- O Yes
- O No
- O Unsure

22. How many of your friends have dropped out of high school?

- O None
- O Very Few
- O Some
- O About Half
- O Most
- O All

23. Did you have to quit your job to participate in the program?

Yes	O
No	O

24. In the space below, please describe any sacrifices you are making to participate in the program?

_____

_____

25. Please rate the level of importance each reason below played in your decision to drop out of school using a scale from 1 to 5, where *1 = not at all important* and *5 = extremely important.*

	Not at all Important	Not Very Important	No Opinion Either Way	Somewhat Important	Extremely Important
Classes were not interesting	1	2	3	4	5
To care for a family member	1	2	3	4	5
To get a job and make money	1	2	3	4	5
To spend more time with friends	1	2	3	4	5
Was doing poorly in school	1	2	3	4	5
Had to repeat a grade	1	2	3	4	5
Became a parent	1	2	3	4	5
Didn't get along with other students	1	2	3	4	5
Didn't get along with teachers	1	2	3	4	5
Teacher/Administrator suggested I leave	1	2	3	4	5
Was expelled	1	2	3	4	5
Family moved	1	2	3	4	5
Language barrier	1	2	3	4	5

26. Were there other reasons why you decided to leave school?
    - O Yes
    - O No (Skip to question 28)

27. (If Yes to 26) Please describe the other reasons you dropped in the space below:

_____

_____

_____

28. When did you first start thinking about dropping out of school?

- O Before 9th grade
- O 9th grade
- O 10th grade
- O 11th grade
- O 12th grade

29. Please indicate your level of confidence in each subject area *before you dropped out of school* on a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 = *not at all Confident* and 10 = *Totally Confident*

	Not at All Confident									Totally Confident
Mathematics	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Reading	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Writing	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Science	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Computers/Technology	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

30. In what extra-curricular activities did you participate while attending school? (check all that apply)

- O Sports
- O Theater/drama
- O Choir
- O Band
- O None
- O Other

31. What types of grades did you receive before you dropped out of school?

- O Mostly A's
- O Mostly B's
- O Mostly C's
- O Mostly D's
- O Mostly F's

32. Were you ever suspended from school?

- O Yes
- O No (Skip to question 35)

33. (If Yes to 32), approximately how many different occasions were you suspended?

- O Once
- O Twice
- O More than twice

34. (If Yes to 32) What was the most common reason you were suspended from school?

_____

35. Were you ever expelled from a school?

- O Yes
- O No (Skip to Question 38)

36. (If Yes to 35) how many different occasions were you expelled?

- O Once
- O Twice
- O More than twice

37. (If Yes to 35) Please explain the reason(s) why you were expelled from school?

_____

_____

38. Did you repeat any grades before you dropped out of school?

O Yes
O No (Skip to Question 40)

39. Please indicate the grades you repeated.

O	1st grade	O	7th grade
O	2nd grade	O	8th grade
O	3rd grade	O	9th grade
O	4th grade	O	10th grade
O	5th grade	O	11th grade
O	6th grade	O	12th grade

40. Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements using the following scale[33]:

1 = *Not at all True* 2 = *Hardly True* 3 = *Moderately True* 4 = *Exactly True*

If I try my best, I can be successful in school	1	2	3	4
I can always manage to solve difficult problems if I try hard enough*	1	2	3	4
It is easy for me to stick to my aims and accomplish my goals*	1	2	3	4
I can solve most problems if I invest the necessary effort*	1	2	3	4
When I am confronted with a problem, I can usually find several solutions*	1	2	3	4
If I am in trouble, I can usually think of a solution*	1	2	3	4
I can usually handle whatever comes my way*	1	2	3	4

[33] Jerusalem, M. & Schwarzer, R. General Self-Efficacy Scale items indicated by *

41. Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements using the following scale[34]:

1 = *strongly disagree* 2 = *disagree* 3 = *neutral* 4 = *agree* 5 = *strongly agree*

I feel that I am a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others.	1	2	3	4	5
I feel that I have a number of good qualities.	1	2	3	4	5
All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.	1	2	3	4	5
I am able to do things as well as most other people.	1	2	3	4	5
I feel I do not have much to be proud of.	1	2	3	4	5
I take a positive attitude toward myself.	1	2	3	4	5
On the whole, I am satisfied with myself	1	2	3	4	5
I wish I could have more respect for myself.	1	2	3	4	5

42. Please rate the level of importance of each reason for participating in this program using a scale from 1 to 5, where *1 = not at all important* and *5 = extremely important.*

	Not at all Important	Not Very Important	No Opinion Either Way	Somewhat Important	Extremely Important
To get a good job	1	2	3	4	5
To go to college	1	2	3	4	5
To feel good about myself	1	2	3	4	5
Because I enjoy learning	1	2	3	4	5
To make my parents happy	1	2	3	4	5
To have a better future	1	2	3	4	5
To support my family	1	2	3	4	5

43. How did you find out about this program?

O Somebody from the program contacted me
O A friend told me about it

[34] The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale Items

- O My parents told me about it
- O Other (please specify):_____

44. What do you plan to do after you graduate from high school:

- O Go to college
- O Get a job
- O Enlist in the military
- O Go to a trade school
- O Not sure yet
- O Other (please specify): _____

45. Do you have a career goal?
- O Yes
- O No (Skip to 46)

46. (If Yes to 44) Please describe your career goal in the space below.

_____
_____

47. When did you enroll in this program? (Designated spaces for month, day, year)

48. For the following statements, please rate your level of agreement using the following scale:

1 = *strongly disagree* 2 = *disagree* 3 = *neutral* 4 = *agree* 5 = *strongly agree*

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
I am glad I am participating in the (PROGRAM NAME)	1	2	3	4	5
I am enjoying the (PROGRAM NAME) more than my previous school	1	2	3	4	5
My teachers are challenging me to achieve	1	2	3	4	5
Participating in the (PROGRAM NAME) has been a positive experience for me	1	2	3	4	5
I would recommend (PROGRAM NAME) to other students	1	2	3	4	5
The activities in this program fit with how I like to learn	1	2	3	4	5
I feel motivated to work hard in this program	1	2	3	4	5
There is at least one adult in this program who personally cares about my success	1	2	3	4	5

49. How much homework are you currently doing?

- O None
- O Less than 1 hour per day
- O Between 1 and 2 hours per day
- O Between 2 and 3 hours per day
- O More than 3 hours per day

50. Please indicate your current level of confidence in each subject area on a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 = *not at all Confident* and 10 = *Totally Confident*

	Not at All Confident									Totally Confident
Mathematics	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Reading	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Writing	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Science	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Computers/Technology	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

51. What is one thing you like about this program so far?

_____

_____

52. What is one thing you would change about this program?

_____

_____

Texas Dropout Recovery Pilot Program
Student Exit Survey

Target Population: All students in a Texas Dropout Recovery Pilot Program that are exiting the program prior to the evaluation's scheduled administration of the follow-up survey.
Administration: online via Survey Monkey. Formatting will be done using standard, professional online templates. Paper administration where necessary using auto-generated forms from Survey Monkey.

Survey Introduction Letter

We are asking you to complete this survey because you participated in a program funded by the Texas Education Agency's Dropout Recovery Pilot Program. The survey is being conducted by Arroyo Research Services, which was hired by TEA to collect information about you and your experience in the dropout recovery program. The results of this survey will help the Texas Education Agency understand how well the program is working and what can be changed to make the program more successful in the future.

The survey should take approximately 15 minutes to complete. Your participation is completely voluntary. You do not have to complete the survey and you may stop at any time. You do not need to answer any questions you feel are inappropriate.

All of your responses will be confidential. No personally identifiable information will be released to your program or the Texas Education Agency.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey!

1. Your name: _____
2. Maiden name, if applicable: _____
3. Your Date of Birth: Month:_____ Day:_____ Year:_____
4. What is your current status with the dropout recovery program?
   a. Completed
   b. Current participant
   c. Left the program without completing

5. If you completed, on what date did you complete the program?

6. Which of the following indicated that you completed the program?
    a. Obtained GED
    b. Obtained High School Diploma
    c. Received passing score on TSI, ACT or SAT
    d. College/career credit
    e. Other (please specify):_____

7. Why did you leave the program?

8. (If answered c. to question 4) Please rate the level of importance each reason below played in your decision to leave the program using a scale from 1 to 5, where *1 = not at all important* and *5 = extremely important.*

	Not at all Important	Not Very Important	No Opinion Either Way	Somewhat Important	Extremely Important
Classes were not interesting	1	2	3	4	5
To care for a family member	1	2	3	4	5
To get a job and make money	1	2	3	4	5
To spend more time with friends	1	2	3	4	5
Was doing poorly in my classes	1	2	3	4	5
Became a parent	1	2	3	4	5
Didn't get along with other students	1	2	3	4	5
Didn't get along with teachers	1	2	3	4	5
Teacher/Administrator suggested I leave	1	2	3	4	5
Was expelled	1	2	3	4	5
Family is moving	1	2	3	4	5
Language barrier	1	2	3	4	5
Transferring to a different school or dropout recover program	1	2	3	4	5

9. Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements using the following scale[35]:

1 = *Not at all True* 2 = *Hardly True* 3 = *Moderately True* 4 = *Exactly True*

If I try my best, I can be successful in school	1	2	3	4
I can always manage to solve difficult problems if I try hard enough*	1	2	3	4
It is easy for me to stick to my aims and accomplish my goals*	1	2	3	4
I can solve most problems if I invest the necessary effort*	1	2	3	4
When I am confronted with a problem, I can usually find several solutions*	1	2	3	4
If I am in trouble, I can usually think of a solution*	1	2	3	4
I can usually handle whatever comes my way*	1	2	3	4

10. Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements using the following scale[36]:

1 = *strongly disagree* 2 = *disagree* 3 = *neutral* 4 = *agree* 5 = *strongly agree*

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
I feel that I am a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others.*	1	2	3	4	5
I feel that I have a number of good qualities.*	1	2	3	4	5
All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.*	1	2	3	4	5
I am able to do things as well as most other people.*	1	2	3	4	5
I feel I do not have much to be proud of.*	1	2	3	4	5
I take a positive attitude toward myself.*	1	2	3	4	5
On the whole, I am satisfied with myself*	1	2	3	4	5
I wish I could have more respect for myself.*	1	2	3	4	5

[35] Jerusalem, M. & Schwarzer, R. General Self-Efficacy Scale items indicated by *

[36] The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale Items

11. For the following statements, please rate your level of agreement:

1 = *strongly disagree* 2 = *disagree* 3 = *neutral* 4 = *agree* 5 = *strongly agree*

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
Graduating from high school is vital to my future success	1	2	3	4	5
I intend to earn a high school diploma	1	2	3	4	5
I feel motivated to work hard to earn a diploma	1	2	3	4	5

12. What do you plan to do now that you have completed or left the program?

- O Go to college
- O Get a job
- O Enlist in the military
- O Go to a trade school
- O Not sure yet
- O Other (please specify): _____

13. Do you have a career goal?

- O Yes
- O No (Skip to 15)

14. (If Yes to 13) Please describe your career goal in the space below.

_____
_____
_____

15. For the following statements, please rate your level of agreement about this dropout recovery program:

1 = *strongly disagree* 2 = *disagree* 3 = *neutral* 4 = *agree* 5 = *strongly agree*

I am glad I participated in this program	1	2	3	4	5
I am enjoyed this program more than my previous school	1	2	3	4	5
My teachers challenged me to achieve	1	2	3	4	5
Participating in this program was a positive experience for me	1	2	3	4	5
I would recommend this program to other students	1	2	3	4	5
The activities in this program fit with how I like to learn	1	2	3	4	5
I was motivated to work hard in this program	1	2	3	4	5
There was at least one adult in this program who cared about my success	1	2	3	4	5

16. Please indicate your current level of confidence in each subject area on a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 = *not at all Confident* and 10 = *Totally Confident*

	Not at All Confident									Totally Confident
Mathematics	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Reading	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Writing	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Science	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Computers/Technology	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

17. What about the dropout recovery program was most important to your success?

_____

_____

18. What changes would improve the dropout recovery program for others?

_____

_____

APPENDIX D: SITE VISIT SUMMARIES

Per TEA policy, all reports have been de-identified. Year one site visits were conducted in March and April 2008 and were reported in the December 2009 Interim Report.

CYCLE 1 SITE VISIT SUMMARIES, DECEMBER 2009

Grantee # 1

Urban region: Austin

Project Summary: This Community College/IHE program prepares students to complete a GED, pass the TSI, and enroll in college with scholarship support. The program focuses on academics, using the same Developmental Education teachers that prepare students for the TSI to teach the GED portion, thereby minimizing transitions from one set of teachers to another. The program also provides active case management and support using counselors, advisors, and a program coordinator. Students that pass the TSI are enrolled in college and provided scholarship support of up to $1,000. Students also receive up to $600 in incentives for attaining benchmarks. TDRPP funds pay for instructors, a coordinator, case management services, incentives, and scholarships. The college pays for advisors, space, executive management, and introduction to college activities (e.g., College for a Day). Where possible, the program places students into related transition programs when they complete the TDRPP program.

The program builds on multiple prior successful programs designed to serve adult students who are returning to school and preparing for college. This program serves students who are at the older end of the TDRPP eligibility range, but who are younger than most students served by the college transition programs. Originally slotted for 20 students, at the time of the site visit 14 students had completed the program, three had dropped out, and one was working toward passing TSI.

Who was interviewed/observed: Executive Director for Adult Education, Student Transition and Success Supervisor, Program Coordinator.

What was different about this program compared to others? What key features stand out?

Several features stand out regarding this program:

- It has far fewer students than most TDRPP programs. Its initial target enrollment was the minimum allowed of 20 students, and they aimed to meet this exactly. They consequently had the highest per student costs of any program, but some of the strongest early outcomes. Small size enabled the program to focus their resources on these students, maintain personal ties, and use a small cadre of teachers who could follow students through the program.

- The program was highly focused on keeping students engaged and moving them through the academic components of the program. Introduction to college programs, career fairs, and other support programs were scheduled to not interfere with academic support and classes, and advisors

encouraged students to think about future goals and college plans while focusing on and completing their studies. Students were screened for the desire to not only complete a GED, but to attend and complete college as well.

- The program focused on minimizing transitions. By keeping the number of teachers low, and using the Developmental Education instructors to also teach the GED portions of the program, students maintained participation in fundamentally the same program until they enrolled in the core college curriculum.

- The IHE made strong use of indirect college resources to support the program. More detail is provided below regarding overall budgeting, but significant salary support for senior administrators and program designers, advisors, and space were provided out of other college funds.

- The program has strong experience with adult education, GED, and transition to college programs, albeit with usually older students.

- While the program has the highest nominal per-student costs in Cycle 1, on review they were operating at a significantly lower per-student cost than we anticipated. The program did not budget for how they would use Other Payments, nor were the program staff clear about what they were and how they were earned. The program was essentially run using base funds and indirect resources only.

How did the program operate during the extension period?

The program operated very lightly during the extension period. No additional students were recruited into the program. A part time coordinator worked approximately 10 hours a week, down from 20 during the period through August 31. The program served approximately 14 students in the fall, and arranged whatever services they needed to continue. Most were enrolled in core college classes for the fall. All but four completed.

How did the program recruit/enroll during the extension period?

It did not do any further recruitment.

What did we discover that has implications for the TDRPP program managers?

Programs need guidance on planning for Other Payments and their use. Programs need guidance on incentive payment options, or pre-proposal opportunities to gather ideas regarding incentive payment options.

How will the program operate (or not) after December? Sustainability Plan?

At the time of our visit, the program had significant funding to be carried through to the end of the funding period, but no plans to recruit a new TDRPP cohort. Our understanding is that the program intended to use its remaining Other Payments and incentive awards to fund other adult education/transition programs designed to serve similar populations.

Other Comments:

Within the limited scope of students they chose to serve, this program was very successful. There is significant potential to grow this program, using the same model and general assumptions, with more complete consideration of the funds the program generates.

Grantee # 2

Urban region: Dallas

Project Summary: This grantee was a Texas Public School District that funds a cohort of TDRPP students as part of a new Alternative High School designed to serve a similar population. Compared to the rest of the Alternative High School, TDRPP students had dropped out of school rather than been referred by another school in the district; they tended to be older and were more likely to have children. TDRPP students received extra case management services, first consideration for special partnership programs like working with a business advisor from the local chamber of commerce, and payment for working in internships. Partnerships included the Marine Corp and U.S. Army, Lockheed Martin, the local Chamber of Commerce, local city government and others. TDRPP students participated in a work program, made use of the OFSDP, participated in Pathways to Scholarship, and had access to child care. Students received laptops upon completion and cash incentives for attaining benchmarks. The program graduated 24 students as of May 31, 2009.

The program anticipated that services would end in August 2009, so the full-time coordinator left. However, an ARRA-funded position supported the project during the fall and services were provided using limited remaining TDRPP funds. That same fall, tutoring options went from having a set schedule to ad hoc as needed and staffing overall was reduced. Students still had access to credit recovery/accumulation, but with more limited additional support.

The program staff had to be asked several different times, in several different ways, to explain how the TDRPP-funded program/cohort differed from the non-TDRPP participants in the Alternative High School. Other than funds for recruiting, additional support, and first priority for special programs, most services provided, and all academic work, was identical to that of the rest of the school.

Who was interviewed/observed: All senior staff: the former coordinator, Principal, district grants staff, two teachers, one counselor. We also toured the entire facility and spoke with child care staff, students, and teachers.

What was different about this program compared to others? What key features stand out?

The full-time coordinator in 2008-2009 appeared to be a strong student advocate with significant experience working with at risk youth. The program has clear pathways for students interested in military service. The business mentoring/internships were more of a focus than in most other programs.

How did the program operate during the extension period?

The program operated with reduced staffing, limited tutoring, and with a mix of district and limited TDRPP funds. Students were still pursuing credit accumulation/recovery, were still taking TAKS, and were enrolled in the Alternative High School.

How did the program recruit/enroll during the extension period?

No recruitment or additional enrollment was done during the extension period.

What did we discover that has implications for the TDRPP program managers?

Nothing of note.

How will the program operate (or not) after December? Sustainability Plan?

No plans to operate after December, save for allowing students to continue in the Alternative High School.

Other Comments:

None.

Grantee # 3

Urban region: Austin

Project Summary: This TDRPP grantee was an open-enrollment charter school. TDRPP funds were used to identify and serve 20 students that met the TDRPP requirements and had a high commitment to success, but who needed additional assistance to advance. As of May 31, 2009, the site had graduated five students and 15 students had attained benchmarks. At the time of the site visit, 17 students were reported to have completed the program, three were continuing, and 17 new students were enrolled.

All students in this open-enrollment charter school have Academic Coaches; the 20 TDRPP students were assigned to the same Coach, who had a reduced caseload in order to work solely with the TDRPP students. The Coach created individual graduation plans, monitored attendance daily, set goals with each student, conducted home visits, placed students into mentoring programs, worked on college and other post-secondary planning, and monitored and motivated the TDRPP students. Student incentives were limited to books, entrance exam fees, and graphing calculators for students who enrolled in college or trade school. TDRPP students otherwise participated in the regular school program for academics.

Who was interviewed/observed: Superintendent, Principal, TDRPP Academic Coach, students.

What was different about this program compared to others? What key features stand out?

While most programs identified case managers or coordinators who paid personal attention to TDRPP students, this program assigned the Academic Coach to specifically work on establishing relationships with each individual student and identifying what it took to spark their intrinsic motivation. The program focused on staying on top of students, daily interactions, and motivating them to achieve.

How did the program operate during the extension period?

The program continued to operate at full capacity during the extension period. The school initially planned to cover the Academic Coach's salary from city funds in order to continue serving the TDRPP students but was able to extend TDRPP funding to continue with 20 students, including 17 who entered the program in the fall semester.

How did the program recruit/enroll during the extension period?

The program continued to enroll students after they graduated the majority of their initial cohort. Recruitment was not an additional effort for TDRPP, but involved extra interviews of incoming students to determine the extent to which they were eligible for the program and motivated to perform better than they had in the past.

What did we discover that has implications for the TDRPP program managers?

The program staff said they had no contact with other programs and were interested in establishing a community of practice and sharing of ideas with other sites.

How will the program operate (or not) after December? Sustainability Plan?

The program can expand and contract depending on funding. At the time of our visit, the program planned to use city funds to continue paying the Academic Coach, and to use limited additional base and performance funds for incentives and ancillary services.

Other Comments:

As with Site #1, this site appeared to run the program primarily using base funds for the minimum number of students, so their per-student costs were relatively high. Additionally, it was not clear how performance funds fit into the overall program budget.

This site's success is notable because it was achieved with students from a broad range of ages, prior credit accumulation, and distance from graduation.

Only one of the original 20 students opted for a GED.

Students did not identify as TDRPP students or any other special group. They identified with being assigned to their Academic Coach.

Grantee # 4

Urban region: San Antonio

Project Summary: This grantee was a nonprofit educational organization that served high school dropouts in the San Antonio area. As of May 31, 2009, students had attained 132 benchmarks, including 57 students who had earned credit in the core college curriculum. Participating students worked to attain a GED, study for the TSI, take and pass TSI exams, and earn college credit in the core curriculum. Students worked primarily in space provided by San Antonio ISD adjacent to a local college. The program has a strong partnership with the college resulting in special sections of core curricular classes being specially designed and offered for TDRPP students.

Unique to this program, students first take part in AccuPlacer preparation, take the initial AccuPlacer assessment, then take part in two 8-week (Flex 1 and Flex 2) sessions that include: attending a core curriculum course at the college, content work in mathematics and reading, and AccuPlacer tutorials and self-study. Once students have passed the college course and the TSI, they go back to complete the GED requirements. This helps emphasize that this is a college preparation program, minimizing entrance by students who are only seeking a GED and maximizing early attainment of benchmarks that fund the program. Additionally, the program believes that participation in the college course, which is augmented by additional reading activities and student counseling funded by the grantee, helps students perform better on the AccuPlacer. Within this structure, the program has some time before it must complete Student Data Uploads or Performance Payment Reports. Because they enroll more students than they projected in their grant application, they choose which students to report based on which they think are most likely to complete the program. The program serves 115-120 students at a time but reports only 100 students.

Student incentives are limited to payment of college entrance fees and student testing fees. Also unique to this program: staff are paid low base salaries plus bonuses for each student who achieves benchmarks.

The military is a strong and growing partner for placements. Twenty-five percent of the fall 2009 students and a higher percentage of spring 2010 students were interested in military placements. Recruiters were contacting them directly.

The program is fully funded by the TDRPP grant, with some additional support for extra items coming from their host organization. It is clear that this program will not continue without TDRPP funding.

Who was interviewed/observed: All senior staff, including Program Director and Administrator, as well as the teachers and students.

What was different about this program compared to others? What key features stand out?

While most GED programs concentrate first on the GED, next on passing the TSI, and then on placing students within the core college curriculum, this program works in the opposite order. Additionally, the program is one of the few that operate almost entirely from TDRPP funds. Although one other Cycle 1 site pays incentives to

mentors for program completions, this is the only program we observed that used performance based pay for staff. The program also served a relatively large number of students within its model, and continuously enrolled new students.

How did the program operate during the extension period?

The program continued to operate in the extension period and to serve new and continuing students using primarily Other Payments and performance payments.

How did the program recruit/enroll during the extension period?

Students continued to be referred/recruited during the extension period as they were during the regular grant period: through neighboring educational programs that weren't able to meet the needs of these students, through community organizations, school counselors, and the host organization's community outreach programs. New cohorts entered the program in each semester and during the summer. Prior to forming a cohort, the program allows students to take part in tutoring and AccuPlacer preparation.

What did we discover that has implications for the TDRPP program managers?

Clearer guidance on what constitutes an enrolled student for the purpose of Student Data Uploads and Performance Payment Reports appears warranted.

How will the program operate (or not) after December? Sustainability Plan?

The program will continue to operate using all earned Other Payments and performance payments and using staff and volunteers. We do not anticipate that the program will continue once TDRPP funds have been exhausted.

Other Comments:

Quotation from the director: "…I get some of the most courageous kids, working the hardest. Had a kid had his car taken away. Ended up downtown, working until two in the morning each night, didn't have a ride, would come back on campus because he had class in the morning, would find a stairwell, sleep in there, would shower in the gym, go to class, …I'd feed him out of my snacks…"

Grantee # 5

Urban region: San Antonio

Project Summary: This grantee was a Texas Public School District that used TDRPP funds as part of a new Alternative High School. Base funds were used to acquire computers and software, fund the initial school staffing, and support aggressive recruitment of students who fit the TDRPP eligibility requirements. The Alternative Education director had 27 years of experience in the district and the principal had 30 years of experience. The principal hand picked the teachers and school staff. The program was designed to serve 30 students. As of May 31, 2009, the program had 17 graduates. At the time of the site visit, the program reported having graduated 42 students out of a total of 57 who where technically enrolled in the TDRPP program. Specific program elements of note:

- TDRPP funds were treated as start-up funds, rather than operational funds. TDRPP paid for computers, software, and the principal's salary. All else was covered by the district from ADA or general funds. The program will continue through access to ADA.
- Program includes use of PLATO, Penn Foster, and direct instruction. Eight-hour days, all on site.
- Program was running a child care facility as of fall 2009. During the initial program year, students ran an unofficial cooperative child care room where they watched each other's kids while they worked on their studies using wireless laptops.
- Recruitment was focused on PEIMS-identified dropouts who met the TDRPP criteria. The principal and home liaison made over 100 home visits as part of the recruitment effort.
- Incentives of $200 were paid to students via a check upon graduation.
- Focus was on earning a high school diploma and pursuing post-secondary options. Seventy percent of graduates are in post-secondary options.
- The program was continuously recruiting new students. The program had 158 students enrolled at the time of the site visit, of which 90% were qualified for TDRPP, but only 30 were being reported at a time. As students graduate, they place new students on the TDRPP roster.
- The program appeared to have a vigorous, personal connection to each student.

Who was interviewed/observed: Principal, director of alternative education programs, teacher, child care coordinator.

What was different about this program compared to others? What key features stand out?

The program planned for sustainability from the beginning by thinking through the total costs and their ability to carry them with ADA funding.

The program is a well-run alternative educational setting.

How did the program operate during the extension period?

The program expanded during the extension period to serve even more students, up to 158 from the original 32 students that were enrolled. From the initial staffing of one principal, a secretary, home liaison, and part-time teacher, the program added three full-time teachers, two part-time teachers, and the child care center.

How did the program recruit/enroll during the extension period?

The program recruited the same way during the extension period as they did during the regular grant period: through identifying students in PEIMS and conducting extensive home visits.

What did we discover that has implications for the TDRPP program managers?

The program could benefit from clear guidance about whom to report as a student.

How will the program operate (or not) after December? Sustainability Plan?

The program will continue to operate fully using ADA and other district funds. Although more funding for capital startup expenses was being sought by the program staff, ongoing operating costs appeared to have secured or planned. Additionally, the program staff recommends to TEA that they consider revising the policy regarding paying ADA for 22-25 year old students. They serve a considerable number of them and have the most difficulty funding their ongoing participation without TDRPP funds.

Other Comments:

Notable quotations:

“Administrators have to want to work with these kids. They have to be able to hire their own staff. This place is like having straight-A kids. These kids come because they want to learn. We don’t have the disruptive stuff. If you are here, you are moving ahead…celebrating every half credit they earn. Like an angel getting their wings…”

“Two [students] came in this week. Called me and walked in my office. We talked to them. They were grilled by me, and I tell them you’re going to get grilled like this by the principal, too. Just don’t take it personal. Cause I talk pretty strongly to them, and I know [the principal] does also, frankly, about …don’t mince words, have you been arrested, are you a felon, are you doing drugs…don’t b.s. me, cause if I find out you’re lying, and if you really want a second chance you got to trust me and be open with me. We’re not going to be mad at you, not going to judge you, just need to know what kind of issues you had that got you into trouble and got you kicked out of school or whatever. And once they know you’re not going to be mad at them, they open up…say okay, as long as we have an understanding that you really want this…”

School motto: “My past is not my future.”

Grantee #1

Urban region: San Antonio

Project Summary

This grantee is a multi-campus open-enrollment charter school in the San Antonio area. This is the first year of their dropout recovery program, based on-site at a community college. Rather than create a dropout recovery program from scratch, the charter school sought the expertise and experience of an existing program for recovering students. The curriculum program is supported through the ADA passed from the grantee. In turn, the grantee keeps a portion of the ADA to cover its administrative overhead.

The program's curriculum model includes classroom instruction with an adjunct faculty and a "Resource Specialist" (RS). Every student must place at the Grade 8 reading level in pre-assessments in order to enroll in the program. Upon qualifying, students attend a daily five-hour schedule of classes towards completion of their high school diploma. The five-hour daily schedule consists of two hours with the RS and three hours of coursework. The RS serves as a teacher, tutor, mentor, counselor, and more to the students in their cohort. If the RS has a content expertise in language arts, then the RS focuses on that content area during their time together daily. The RS/student ratio is generally 25:1 and there are about 700 students in the college curriculum program from all over the area.

This TDRPP grantee is one of six partner organizations that the program services. PLATO is used for credit recovery. All recovered students (as participants in the community college program) must participate in one sport/social group and complete a service learning opportunity.

By contracting directly with a proven dropout recovery program for curriculum and instruction, the charter school can focus its efforts of student recruitment, enrollment, and support services. TDRPP funding is primarily used to cover program staff, recruitment efforts, and support services. The grantee also oversees two additional partners who provide support services to students, such as substance abuse counseling, motivational talks, organizational skills seminars, or workforce development services.

What was different about this program compared to others?

- Unlike other grantees, this grantee doesn't "control" any aspect of the delivery. Where other TDRPP charters provided the curriculum, at a minimum, this program operated more as an administrative pass-through.

- They described themselves as a “district” and visited other local school districts to determine how to design their program. They didn’t refer to themselves as a charter or refer to other charter TDRPP grantees. This site seems to have taken more initiative to gather information from other grantees.

- This grantee experienced more internal disruptions at the start of the program than other grantees. The administrators mentioned registration issues (students not having data in the system or updated immunizations), the grantee’s limited special education services/experience, poor internal communication, and school leadership turnover. Administrators identified student motivation as an ongoing problem.

What did we discover that has implications for the TDRPP program managers?

This grantee stated that they “have no data yet.” They did not have a plan for tracking student success. This would be an opportunity for TDRPP program managers to provide assistance in how/what data to collect prior to and during the grant implementation.

The grantee recommended that TEA host a “symposium” to exchange information among grantees.

Student demographics: 40+% employed; 60% parents; Average age is 17-1/2 years old.

Partner(s) and their role: Partner #1 – Community college program – deliver academic curriculum; Partner #2 – drug/gang/parenting/motivation/job tours; Partner #3 – leadership development/role modeling from the program director (African American male)/esteem/job readiness

Critical success factors:

- Structure of a proven curriculum model

- Community-based partnerships for social service support

- Bilingual staff

Sustainability Plan: Ongoing receipt of ADA. Grantee gets $9 ADA for enrolled students, while community college program receives $26 ADA.

Grantee #2

Urban region: Brownsville

Project Summary

Prior to this grant, free GED preparation courses were offered through the nearby ESC for the Brownsville area. This IHE therefore anticipated offering a route for recovered students to complete their high school diplomas. The administration secured a Memorandum of Understanding from area superintendents to move forward with its plan. The grantee expressed that there are high school students who come to their campus for classes and they originally anticipated being able to piggyback on those programs in order to offer a high school diploma. The ESC however, lost its funding, which created a greater demand for GED services. In its recruiting efforts, this IHE grantee found that more students (perhaps including those who would have gone to the ESC) desired to earn a GED instead of a high school diploma.

With the support of other departments at the college, this IHE grantee offers a classroom-based course for those seeking a GED. Thus, this project serves the area's need for additional GED preparation. Students may take classes in the morning or afternoon, five days per week. The teachers typically introduce the lessons by lecture then assist students as needed with textbook activities. Students work at their individual pace. GED students have access to all support services offered on the IHE campus. The director of the TDRPP grant, in fact, supervises the departments and interfaces with new students. These departments provide study skills services, course planning, and other support to transition students into the post-secondary community.

TDRPP funding largely covers salaries for program staff and teachers. The college funds other resources needed by recovered students.

What was different about this program compared to others?

Cross department alliances were very strong with this program. The grant administrator also has as her responsibility the migrant program (HEP) and other support services for incoming students at this campus.

The administrator stressed the difficulties of keeping students motivated to stay in the program. She expressed it as a "working mentality" in that community.

What did we discover that has implications for the TDRPP program managers?

This grantee seemed disconnected from other grantees and didn't know about other IHE grantees. TDRPP program managers may consider offering a "kick-off" meeting or other meeting to convene grantees earlier in their funding cycle. Breakout sessions by grantee type during this introductory meeting would provide time for grantees to discuss the strategies and nuances specific to their organizational structure.

Student demographics: <30% employed; Average age is 20-21 years old. Many of the students had reportedly been through the judicial system.

Partner(s) and their role: Numerous partners in the community support this grantee, which in turn, benefits TDRPP students.

Sustainability Plan: Anticipate winning additional grants but have not discussed receiving further support from the IHE for recovery students (or, more specifically, non-HEP students).

Grantee #3

Urban region: Houston

Project Summary

This local school district offers a dropout recovery program with flexible scheduling for students to complete course work online towards a high school diploma. The diploma completion program is based at a local high school where students use a computer lab with a classroom teacher. The program director, formerly a teacher at that high school, had already started a recovery program prior to this grant. The director conducted home visits to recruit students and encourage them to return. TDRPP funding allowed the teacher to continue these efforts, expand their reach, and offer support services not typically offered to other students. One of the services planned for recovered students was a formal mentoring program. Through networking with the Latino community in Houston, the program director arranged for numerous Mexican business people to serve as mentors. Unfortunately, none of the students connected with these adult professionals so the program never went forward.

Students recruited to this program also expressed great interest in GED completion. In response to this demand, the ISD recently partnered with the county department of education to deliver a GED program for recovered district students. The GED program is an off-campus program that offers small group instruction.

With the TDRPP funding, the district now offers an incentive to pay for the first two college courses when recovered students complete their diploma or GED.

What was different about this program compared to others?

This grantee is supporting a number of GED students, though they had not originally proposed doing so. It is noteworthy that the grantee found a solution to meet student needs. (At the time of our visit, they reported 16 GED and 18 HS students).

This cohort of students is different from other program cohorts in that they haven't really used any of the social services available. The coordinator mentioned that babysitting, medical/dental, and rehabilitation have been offered but not accepted. Students did not feel comfortable asking for a ride to school. To accommodate these students, the program now has a school social worker drive students in his personal vehicle. The social worker is then reimbursed with a gas card from the program.

What did we discover that has implications for the TDRPP program managers?

This program had unexpended funds into the second semester of its program and it was not clear how the TDRPP funds would be used. TDRPP program managers could use payment reports to track when grantees are slower to expend funds, then provide recommendations from similar grantees to help amend budgets and expend funds to the maximum benefit of students.

The grantee mentioned that partnerships were required by TEA for this grant. The grantee established those partnerships, but in hindsight they were premature, given the actual student population. Although the grantee hadn't initially partnered with the county department of education, the county has become one of their more important partners. This program modification may be included in non-budget related amendments.

Student demographics: 50-60% employed; 45% parents; 30% living at home; Average age is 20.

Partner(s) and their role: (See note under program summary.) The county department of education and local community college are delivering GED courses for the district's recovered students.

Critical success factors:

- Multiple home visits

Sustainability Plan: No plans/conversations with the district.

Grantee #4

Urban region: Dallas

Project Summary

This dropout recovery program, offered through a local school district, is a complement to the district's alternative high school. The alternative high school serves a similar student population and has been in existence for about five years. While the students in the alternative high school have transferred from other district high schools, TDRPP funding has extended the program's reach to students who have dropped out. The instructional program for TDRPP students is the same as students in the alternative high school. Dropout recovery students attend classes for a maximum four hours daily to complete computer-based courses. In addition to the four 1-hour sessions daily, each student meets with his/her "coach." The coach for these 15-minute sessions is a teacher who tracks attendance and remains with the student through program completion.

The culture of this program relies on intense student recognition and accountability. There are weekly events held to recognize achievement and the building principal has a missionary zeal for honoring students. The principal is very engaged in the day-to-day operations of this program and seems to have strong support from staff and district leaders. She emphasized that students at this school are "personally validated" every day. All students participate in a weekly wall signing, where they write the course they completed and sign their name. The school even has a promotional video they show to publicize the success of the program. A point system is offered for attendance and course completion. As students build points, they can "buy" from the school store, which, in turn, strengthens school spirit. PD has included teaching staff what language to use with students.

What was different about this program compared to others?

- The district had been forward-thinking in its efforts to support students by addressing the dropout problem in 2006.
- The school culture infused every aspect of program operations.
- Student recruitment efforts were far-reaching. The district hosted a dropout fair for all students who dropped out last year.
- The assistant administrator is tasked with tracking all students and has developed an ACCESS database for the school to closely monitor student progress and attendance. This is a formal approach that we have not seen at other grantees and should be shared.

What did we discover that has implications for the TDRPP program managers?

The internal database that this program has developed may be a model that TEA could share with all grantees, particularly those who are struggling with data tracking.

Program administrators complained that incentives from TEA arrive so late, grantees “can’t rely” on them.

Student demographics: 45% parents; 60% living at home.

Partner(s) and their role: None mentioned. Grantee referred to having a “champion” and full support at the district level.

Critical success factors:

- Personal validation
- Rigorous curriculum
- “Long-suffering” staff

Sustainability Plan: None mentioned.

Grantee #5

Urban region: Austin

Project Summary

The dropout recovery program offered at this open-enrollment charter school is an extension of its four hour-per-day high school. All enrolled students are first assigned an adviser who serves as an advocate, counselor, and mentor. All TDRPP students are assigned to the program coordinator for advising. Advising is a central feature that distinguishes this program.

The program curriculum relies on a combination of classroom based courses or PLATO credit recovery on the computer. Students may attend 7:45 am to noon or 12:45 pm to 4:45 pm. TDRPP students have the option of participating in a "twilight" program, from 2:45 pm to 7 pm. The original charter didn't allow for a night school as the grantee had planned, thus, instead, the current students come for the last two hours of the day and end by 7 pm, in order to qualify for ADA.

This charter program recently received approval to offer a night school and receive ADA for those students. The school would be open from 5 pm to 9 pm, allowing more employed, recovered students to complete their diplomas. It wasn't clear if the "twilight" students would change their schedule and start later or whether the night students would be comprised of all new students.

Teachers had been providing tutoring previously. Approximately $20,000 was expected to come through TDRPP funds for a tutoring program that will hire tutors to support recovering students during the day, in class.

What was different about this program compared to others?

- While other programs expressed having strong support from their district, the relationship between the Academy and its "corporate office" (as they referred to them) seemed rather distant. The staff at this school seemed to more closely follow the direction of its principal.

- There is a healthy balance of computer-based courses offered through PLATO and instructor-led courses. To best support students, all math and science courses are only offered through direct instruction. PLATO is offered on a limited basis for credit recovery.

- The coordinator reported that this program, unlike most others, has a lot of parent involvement. The majority of the students in this program live with a parent. Over half the students have children and over half are employed.

What did we discover that has implications for the TDRPP program managers?

There should be a form or process in place for program amendments, such as the introduction of an evening program, to be communicated to TDRPP program managers. The steps toward making these changes may also be informative for other grantees.

When are most students expected to graduate or demonstrate College Readiness? What future/after-completion plans do students have?

About half of the students are expected to complete the program in June. The school just announced a 4-week summer school offering which may allow students to now complete within the extended grant year. The program coordinator anticipated that most of the students in this program would pursue employment after completion.

Student demographics: 50+% employed; 50+% parents; 75+% living at home.

Partner(s) and their role: A local community college sends a representative to this school to discuss enrollment, financial aid, etc. A number of other community partners support the school through in-kind services or monetary awards.

Critical success factors:

- Advising relationships for all students
- Strong building principal with ties to local community

Sustainability Plan: None mentioned.

Grantee #6

Urban region: El Paso

Project Summary

This local school district program is located on the grounds of an alternative high school in the El Paso area. This program has a very strong relationship with the district and offers a different scheduling option. The district fully supports this program through facilities, administrative championing, equipment, funds, etc.

The goal of this program is for recovered students to obtain a high school diploma through the use of a computer-based instructional program. Teachers in the program answer questions and monitor student progress as students work on computers. Dropout recovery program students attend the program in 4-hour blocks, offered daily from morning to night. The 4-hour shifts, in fact, were created to accommodate more students with a limited number of computers. Courses are offered year-round on a 9-week plus 2 -week vacation schedule.

Although the dropout recovery program is housed on the same campus as the district's alternative high school, it is a separate program with shared resources. Some of the shared resources include staff, cafeteria, counseling services, and Business Information Systems classes. Most of the TDRPP funds cover salaries and online course fees.

Prior to the TDRPP award, the district had approved two years of funding support to this program. Thus the district has committed to supporting this program for another year beyond the TDRPP June 30 expiration.

What was different about this program compared to others?

- This program has generous support from its district board and administration. The program director had previously served as a superintendent in another Texas district and had the full confidence and backing of the district to run this program even prior to any TDRPP grant funding.
- Communities In Schools has funded an on-site counselor who offers social service programming to TDRPP students.
- Prior to the TDRPP funds, ARRA stimulus monies were used for this program and the site will re-categorize the funds to TDRPP this spring.
- This is the first program we have visited that is using E2020 software for instruction.
- All students who come to the campus must meet with the counselor in the non-traditional high school. That counselor then decides which program enrolls the student.

What did we discover that has implications for the TDRPP program managers?

ARRA funds were used for preliminary and expanded funding. An awareness of additional funding that grantees receive from other sources may influence the timing or use of TDRPP funding in future cycles.

Staff from this grantee visited another local school district prior to developing their proposal, which they say helped in their own design. TEA should consider facilitating these introductions for future potential grantees.

Student demographics: ~25% employed; <25% parents; 95+% living at home.

Partner(s) and their role: The primary partner for the recovery students is Communities In Schools. Students in this program are not currently benefiting from any other partner relationships. The administrator did make preliminary arrangements with two local colleges to support students on post-secondary transition once they were closer to completion.

Critical success factors:

- Daily one-on-one interactions with caring teachers and program staff.

Sustainability Plan: The district will support for an additional academic year.

Grantee #7

Urban region: Austin

Project Summary

This grantee is a nonprofit educational organization that has traditionally served adults seeking to complete their GED. This program prepares students to take the GED through small, instructor-led courses. The administrator who started the program 15+ years ago also teaches in the program. In the building where this program is housed are other community-based agencies that serve the social needs of similar populations.

Prior to TDRPP funding, the program served a student population of older adults, typically over 30 years of age, who had been in the workforce. TDRPP funds allowed the grantee to extend its GED preparation program to younger students. The director admitted that they were unaware of the differences that a younger student population might bring to their program. For example, the motivation to complete a GED is often stronger among older students who had worked and realized the need to further their education. Likewise, the director sought support from a local community college since the grantee had limited experience with college readiness or younger students. Once TDRPP students complete their GED requirements, they can enroll in the "Advanced Program" to help them with the TSI.

What was different about this program compared to others?

- The program offers incentives that include Wal-Mart gift cards, textbooks, GED fees, etc. to encourage participation and progress toward benchmarks.
- The program offers GED services to Grade 11 and 12 students who may be better candidates for a high school completion program. Other GED programs serve students that are much further behind in credits.

What did we discover that has implications for the TDRPP program managers?

Although there are several TDRPP grantees in their local area, this program seemed to be somewhat isolated. They probably could have benefited from hearing about what similar programs learned in working with a younger student population. Again, this would be an opportunity for TDRPP managers to introduce and connect grantees for networking and sharing best practices with their counterparts.

Student demographics: 50% employed; 10% parents.

Partner(s) and their role: None

Critical success factors: None mentioned

Sustainability Plan: Have not planned at this time. It did not appear that this grantee has a strong desire to serve younger students unless there is specific funding support to do so.

APPENDIX E: LOGISTIC REGRESSION RESULTS

Following suggested steps for model building by Raudenbush and Bryk (2002), univariate frequency distributions and bivariate relationships of the variables available for modeling were reviewed (See Chapter 5 for a description of available variables). Eight HLM models were generated to review the impact of grantee level program features on outcomes. Four of these models had sufficient variance remaining to be explained after taking into account student level factors to allow review of grantee-level effects. To determine what grantee-level variables would be included, a separate analysis of the 19 potential site-level variables was conducted for each of these four models. These separate exploratory models were used to assure an objective rationale for determining which variables would be included in the full model to explain effects. The limited sample size restricted our ability to enter all 19 variables into the model simultaneously. Variables with significant effects at the grantee level were selected for entry into each full model. Stepwise OLS regression was used for cross-level exploratory analysis for each level-2 site effects study (2002). This allowed preliminary review of regression intercepts and slopes due to characteristics in the data such as sample size, and narrowed the choices of predictors for each level-1 model. To account for the nesting of students within 45 sites, as well as the dichotomous nature of the outcome variables of interest (completion, high school diploma, college readiness, grade advancement, and any benchmark achieved), we specified the following two-level logistic regression model using Hierarchical Linear Modeling (Bryk et al., 2004) to examine the factors that explain variation in student outcomes.[37] We estimated variances and covariances separately for random and fixed effects using restricted maximum likelihood or REML.

Variables

Table 50 describes the student and grantee measures used in the analysis.

[37] In many of the 45 sites the students are served at different campuses. This may create additional clustering that is not accounted for in a two level model. We do not account for this clustering because we lack sufficient information to reliably link students to the campuses where they actually attended classes. There had been plans at the interim-report stage that additional data from grantees would be collected to address this concern, thus allowing a three-level HGLM: students nested in campuses nested in schools. However, the sample size was not sufficient to allow for such modeling.

Table 50. Measures Used to Evaluate the Relationship of TDRPP to Student Outcomes

Measures[38]	Description	Acronym
TDRPP Program Features (level-2)		
Grantee Type		
Open-enrollment charter school	Grantee an open-enrollment charter school	CHARTER
Local school district	Grantee a local school district	DISTRICT
IHE	Grantee an Institution of Higher Education	IHE
Nonprofit education organization	Grantee a nonprofit education organization	NON_PROFIT
Instructional Strategies (level-2)		
Tutoring	Program incorporated one-on-one tutoring	TUTOR
Mentoring	Program incorporated one-on-one mentoring	MENTOR
Financial Incentives	Students offered financial incentives for meeting benchmarks	INCENT
Student Academic Services	Indicator denoting intensity of academic services	STUACAD
OFSDP	Indicator of whether grantee was approved for OFSDP	FLEX
Scheduling Options (level-2)[39]		
Regular Scheduled Classes	Program offered regularly scheduled day classes	REGSCHED
Twilight Classes	Program offered twilight (early evening) classes	TWILIGHT
Night Classes	Program offered night classes	NIGHT
Flexible Schedule	Program offered a flexible/customized schedule	FLEXSCHED
Virtual Classes	Program offered virtual classes for off-site participants	VIRTUAL
Self-Paced Curriculum	Program offered a self-paced curriculum	SELF
Student Support Services (level-2)		
Case Management	> 75% of Students provided case management services	CASEM
Child care Assistance	Program provided child care assistance to students	CHILDCR
Student Services Support	Indicator denoting intensity of student support services	STUSUP
Grantee Level Student Characteristics[40]		
Mean Time Enrolled in Program	Site average time enrolled in program for students	MTIME
Mean Enrollment	Site average student enrollment	MENROLL
Mean Economic Disadvantage[41]	Site level of student economic disadvantage	MECON

[38] Ethnicity categories for Asian/Pacific Islander and American Indian/Alaskan Native, At-Risk, and the indicator for Economic Disadvantage were assessed using stepwise regression and other accepted methods for exploratory statistical analysis and were determined to lack sufficient sample size, variability, or statistical power to be included in the HLM models.

[39] All scheduling and curriculum options were tested as part of the level-2 modeling approach with the exception of "Saturday class options," which had insufficient sample size to warrant inclusion.

[40] These are average characteristics of students enrolled in the program that may influence student performance in the program. For example, the average performance or profile of a student's classmates is expected to influence his or her performance, and is therefore considered to be a characteristic of the grantee.

[41] Although economic disadvantage was excluded from the student level model based on its low-level relationship with outcome variables, it was still considered to be an important proxy for social economic status of the students as a group, so is included at the grantee level.

Full-Time Staff Equivalent	Number of full-time equivalent staff at site (Teachers, Staff)	FTE
Mediating and Moderating Factors		
Student Academic Background		
(Prior to TDRPP entrance)		
Units Earned toward Diploma	# units student earned toward graduation	UNITS_PRIOR
Grade Placement	Student's grade placement (9th or less, 10th, 11th, or 12th)	NINTH (example)
Percent of TAKS Proficiency Met	Proficiency levels on last TAKS (5 tests)	TAKS_PRIOR
Last Attendance Rate (Percent)	Student's last attendance rate	LAST_ATTEND
Gifted Indicator	Student classified as economic disadvantaged	GIFTED
At Risk Student Status	Student classified as an at-risk student (last attended)	ATRISK
In School Suspension Indicator	Student received an in-school suspension (1 or more)	INSCH
Out of School Suspension Indicator	Student received an out-of-school suspension (1 or more)	OUTSCH
Expulsion Indicator (prior to TDRPP)	Student was expelled in previous school (1 or more)	EXPUL
Truancy Indicator (prior to TDRPP)	Student was truancy in previous school (1 or more)	TRUAN
Exit Reasons	Student exited last school for academic, TAKs, or other reasons	EXIT_REASON
Student Demographic Characteristics		
Age	Age as determined by months between birth date and exit	AGE
Cohort	Cohort as determined by cycle and entrance date	COHORT1-3
Immigrant	Student classified as limited English proficient	IMMIG
Limited English Proficiency Status	Student classified as limited English proficient	LEP
Migrant	Student classified as limited English proficient	MIGR
Special Education Status	Student classified as a special education student	SPECED
Gender	Student is female	FEMALE
Race/Ethnicity	TEA race/ethnicity categories	Name of Category

Centering

In HLM, the decision about how the predictors should be centered was relative to considerations about how the coefficients should be interpreted. Although more than one approach to centering is viable in this context, our decision was influenced by a prevailing interest in understanding how different a student is in relationship to the site average (or contextual effects) for the outcome and how this context impacts the probability of attainment. As a result, all level-1 student variables were centered on their group mean and this results in the intercept being interpreted as the average outcome for each group (i.e., if one differs from the average for the group by one unit, the probability for achievement will increase by X units).

Modeling Stages

Unconditional Model

To understand the magnitude of variation among sites for an outcome, we first estimated a full unconditional model or null model. The equation for the unconditional model follows:

Level-1 Model

$$Prob(Y = 1|B) = P$$

$$log[P/(1-P)] = B0$$

Level-2 Model

$$B0 = G00 + U0$$

$B0$ is a measure of differences in outcomes between the sites.

Models with Level-1 Predictors

The next step in the analysis was to consider the effects of various student-level characteristics on the log-odds of outcome attainment. We examined the variance explained by the student level variables for each outcome against the null model.

Specifically, at level 1 we had the following student level equations

The Logit-link function for each model

$$\eta_{ij}=log = \left(\frac{\varphi_{ij}}{1-\varphi_{ij}}\right) \text{ or } Prob(Y = 1|B) = P \text{ \& } log[P/(1-P)$$

The Logit-link function for each model

$$\eta_{ij}=log = \left(\frac{\varphi_{ij}}{1-\varphi_{ij}}\right) \text{ or } Prob(Y = 1|B) = P \text{ \& } log[P/(1-P)$$

College Ready

Level-1 Model

η_{ij} = β_{0j} + β_{1j}(FEMALE) + β_{2j} (AFRICAN_AMERICAN) + β_{3j} (TAKS_PRIOR) + β_{4j} (EXIT_ACADEMIC) + β_{5j} (EXIT_TAKS) + β_{6j} *(EXIT_OTHER) + β_{7j} (INSCH) + β_{8j} (IMMIGRANT)

High School Diploma

Level-1 Model

η_{ij} = β_{0j} + β_{1j}(COHORT1)$_{ij}$ + β_{2j} (COHORT2)$_{ij}$ + β_{3j} (HISPANIC)$_{ij}$ + β_{4j} (HISPANIC)$_{ij}$ + β_{5j} (UNITS_ PRIOR)$_{ij}$ + β_{6j} *(TAKS_PRIOR)$_{ij}$ + β_{7j} (LAST_ATTEND)$_{ij}$ + β_{8j} (EXIT_ACADEMIC)$_{ij}$ + β_{9j} (EXIT_OTHER)$_{ij}$ + β_{10j} (SPECED)$_{ij}$ + β_{11j} (GIFTED)$_{ij}$ + β_{12j} (ELEVENTH)$_{ij}$ + β_{13j} (TWELFTH)$_{ij}$ + β_{16j} (AGE)$_{ij}$

Grade Advancement

Level-1 Model

$\eta_{ij} = \beta_{0j} + \beta_{1j}(\text{COHORT1})_{ij} + \beta_{2j}(\text{COHORT2})_{ij} + \beta_{3j}(\text{FEMALE})_{ij} + \beta_{4j}(\text{AFRICAN\_AMERICAN})_{ij} + \beta_{5j}(\text{TAKS\_PRIOR})_{ij} + \beta_{6j}*(\text{EXIT\_ACADEMIC})_{ij} + \beta_{7j}(\text{EXIT\_TAKS})_{ij} + \beta_{8j}(\text{EXIT\_OTHER})_{ij} + \beta_{9j}(\text{BILINGUAL})_{ij} + \beta_{10j}(\text{SPECIAL\_ED})_{ij} + \beta_{11j}(\text{ELEVENTH})_{ij} + \beta_{12j}(\text{TWELFTH})_{ij} + \beta_{13j}(\text{NINTH})_{ij}$

Completed (College Ready and High School Diploma) – IHE and Nonprofits

Level-1 Model

$\eta_{ij} = \beta_{0j} + \beta_{1j}(\text{COHORT1})_{ij} + \beta_{2j}(\text{COHORT2})_{ij} + \beta_{3j}(\text{FEMALE})_{ij} + \beta_{4j}(\text{AFRICAN\_AMERICAN})_{ij} + \beta_{5j}(\text{TAKS\_PRIOR})_{ij} + \beta_{6j}*(\text{LAST\_ATTEND})_{ij} + \beta_{7j}(\text{EXIT\_TAKS})_{ij} + \beta_{8j}(\text{EXIT\_OTHER})_{ij} + \beta_{9j}(\text{INSCH})_{ij} + \beta_{10j}(\text{IMMIGRANT})_{ij} + \beta_{11j}(\text{LEP})_{ij}$

Completed (College Ready and High School Diploma) – ISD and Open-enrollment charter schools

Level-1 Model

$\eta_{ij} = \beta_{0j} + \beta_{1j}(\text{COHORT1})_{ij} + \beta_{2j}(\text{COHORT2})_{ij} + \beta_{3j}(\text{HISPANIC})_{ij} + \beta_{4j}(\text{AFRICAN\_AMERICAN})_{ij} + \beta_{5j}(\text{UNITS\_COMPLETED\_PRIOR})_{ij} + \beta_{6j}*(\text{TAKS\_PRIOR})_{ij} + \beta_{7j}(\text{LAST\_ATTEND\_RATE})_{ij} + \beta_{8j}(\text{EXIT\_ACADEMIC})_{ij} + \beta_{9j}(\text{EXIT\_OTHER})_{ij} + \beta_{10j}(\text{INSCH})_{ij} + \beta_{11j}(\text{IMMIGRANT})_{ij} + \beta_{12j}(\text{SPECED})_{ij} + \beta_{13j}(\text{GIFTED})_{ij}\ \beta_{14j}(\text{ELEVENTH})_{ij} + \beta_{15j}(\text{TWELFTH})_{ij} + \beta_{16j}(\text{AGE})_{ij}$

Any Benchmark Achieved (All Performance Indicators) – IHE and Nonprofits

Level-1 Model

$\eta_{ij} = \beta_{0j} + \beta_{1j}(\text{FEMALE})_{ij} + \beta_{2j}(\text{UNITS\_ PRIOR})_{ij} + \beta_{3j}(\text{TAKS\_PRIOR})_{ij} + \beta_{4j}(\text{TRUAN})_{ij} + \beta_{5j}(\text{ESL})_{ij} + \beta_{6j}*(\text{TENTH})_{ij}$

Any Benchmark Achieved (All Performance Indicators) – ISD and Open-enrollment charter schools

Level-1 Model

$\eta_{ij} = \beta_{0j} + \beta_{1j}(\text{COHORT1})_{ij} + \beta_{2j}(\text{COHORT2})_{ij} + \beta_{3j}(\text{FEMALE})_{ij} + \beta_{4j}(\text{AFRICAN\_AMERICAN})_{ij} + \beta_{5j}*(\text{TAKS\_PRIOR})_{ij} + \beta_{6j}(\text{EXIT\_ACADEMIC})_{ij} + \beta_{7j}(\text{EXIT\_TAKS})_{ij} + \beta_{8j}(\text{EXIT\_OTHER})_{ij} + \beta_{9j}(\text{BILINGUAL})_{ij} + \beta_{10j}(\text{SPECED})_{ij} + \beta_{11j}(\text{GIFTED})_{ij}\ \beta_{12j}(\text{ELEVENTH})_{ij} + \beta_{13j}(\text{TWELFTH})_{ij} + \beta_{14j}(\text{NINTH})_{ij}$

Where:

The outcome is either the log odds of TDRPP participant *i* in school *j* earning a high school diploma, the log odds of the student advancing a grade, the log odds of a student achieving college readiness, the log odds of a student achieving any benchmark or performance indicator, the log odds of a student achieving either college readiness or obtaining a benchmark ("completer") by grantee type and overall.

Models with Level-2 Predictors

To examine the variance explained by the program level variables (grantee type, scheduling, student support services, etc.), the final unrestricted model was tested against the student-level model for each outcome. All models are estimated with robust standard errors and both the unit-specific and population average coefficients and standard errors and the population-average odds-ratios are presented below. At level-2, the intercept is random and the remaining coefficients are fixed, that is,

$$\beta_{0j} = \gamma_{00} + \mu_{00},$$

$$\beta_{pj} = \gamma_{p0} \; for \; p > 0$$

At the grantee level, the average outcome β_0 of site *j* after adjusting for the student factors is explained by various features of the TDRPP programs (see description of level-2 variables in Table 16). Note that we only have eight and 37 observations at level 2 for the sites focused on supporting students in achieving college readiness sites and those focused on supporting students in obtaining a high school diploma, respectively. Therefore, we have limited degrees of freedom and we cannot examine all program factors of interest. Consequently, our approach to addressing theoretical and empirical assumptions about what mattered at level-2 was tested via exploratory analyses. Specifically, we assessed the unique contribution of each level-2 variable by testing a separate model for each variable for each outcome where the remaining level-2 variance requiring explanation was significant. This resulted in 19 variables being tested for 4 models (or 76 tested models) prior to a final model being created at level-2. We also tested a level-2model to assess differences between the 4 grantee types for completion (not represented in formulas above) to assess if there were any differences unique to a grantee type in comparison to all other sites and not just between a charter school and local district or an IHE and a nonprofit within each goal orientation (college ready or high school diploma).

The results of the logistic regression are presented in Table 51. The estimates presented in the tables are odds ratios, where a value of one indicates the likelihood of the outcome is equivalent for values of the independent variable. A value greater than one indicates the odds of the outcome increase for a one unit increase in the independent variable. Correspondingly, a value less than one indicates a negative association.

Table 51. Odds Ratios

	Program Completion (ISD & Charter)	Program Completion (IHE & Nonprofit)	Grade Advance -ment	College Ready	HS Dipl.	Benchmark/ Perf. Indicator Achieved (ISD & Charter)	Benchmark/ Perf. Indicator Achieved (IHE & Nonprofit)
Student Academic Background *(prior to TDRPP entrance)*							
Units Earned	1.021 *				1.019 *		0.990
Percent of TAKS Proficiency Met	5.001 **	5.746 **	4.852 **	4.895 *	5.330 **	2.514 *	1.455
Last Attendance Rate (Percent)	3.789 **	0.473			3.914 **		
Gifted Indicator	1.675 *				1.525	1.550	
At Risk Student Status							
School Exit Reason - Academic	1.141		5.548 *	1.089	1.226	2.612	
School Exit Reason -TAKS not Met		0.000	0.350	0.000		0.884	
School Exit Reason – Other	0.706 *	0.792	0.877	0.862	0.714 *	0.804	
In School Suspension Indicator	0.912	0.733		0.753			
Out of School Suspension Indicator							
Expulsion Indictor (prior to TDRPP)							
Truancy Indicator (prior to TDRPP)							0.788
9th Grade or earlier			0.825			0.810	
10th Grade							1.670 *
11th Grade	3.232 **		1.766 *		3.818 **	1.142	
12th Grade	5.989 **		2.367 *		7.140 **	3.355 *	
Age (months)	1.011 *				1.012 **		
Duration (Site Level)							
Mean Time Enrolled in Program			1.006 *				
Student Demographic Characteristics							
English as a Second Language Status							0.631
Limited English Proficiency		1.876					

	Program Completion (ISD & Charter)		Program Completion (IHE & Nonprofit)		Grade Advance -ment		College Ready		HS Dipl.		Benchmark/ Perf. Indicator Achieved (ISD & Charter)		Benchmark/ Perf. Indicator Achieved (IHE & Nonprofit)	
Status														
Special Education Status	1.675	*			1.625	*			1.570	*	1.137			
Bilingual					0.782						0.907			
Immigrant	0.696	*	3.649				6.572							
Female			0.486	*	0.851	*	0.534	*			0.986		0.759	*
Black or African American	0.919		0.326		0.832		0.292	*	0.960		0.927			
Hispanic/Latino	0.897								0.903					
White														
Cohort 1 (2008, Cycle 1)	2.563	**	2.058		1.695	*			2.558	**	1.183			
Cohort 2 (2009, Cycle 1)	1.339		1.371		0.818				1.349		0.620			
Cohort 3 (2009, Cycle 2)														
Community Characteristics (Site Level)														
Mean Enrollment														
Mean Economic Disadvantage														
Grantee Type[42]														
Open-enrollment charter school	0.687								0.704					
IHE			0.85											
Nonprofit education organization			0.29	*										
Local school district/ISD	1.456								1.419					
Grantee Staffing (Site Level)														
Full-Time Equivalent Employees (All)					0.916	*								

[42] Separate level 2 models were run for each grantee type to isolate an effect without any level 2 controls given lack of significance or issues with level 2 convergence when entered together or along with other level 2 controls.

	Program Completion (ISD & Charter)	Program Completion (IHE & Nonprofit)	Grade Advance -ment	College Ready	HS Dipl.	Benchmark/ Perf. Indicator Achieved (ISD & Charter)	Benchmark/ Perf. Indicator Achieved (IHE & Nonprofit)
Instructional Strategies (Site Level)							
Tutoring							
Mentoring							
Financial Incentives							
Student Academic Services			1.242 *				
OFSDP							
Scheduling Options (Site Level)							
Regular Scheduled Classes							
Twilight Classes							
Flexible Schedule							
Virtual Classes							
Self-Paced Curriculum							
Night Classes	0.698 *						
Student Support Services (Site Level)							
Case Management			1.211				
Child care							
Student Support Services Offered							
Pseudo R-Squared	.41	.57	.29		.52	.37	.35

Note: Odds are only shown for variables that loaded into the HLM models. *p < .10, **p < .05, ***p < .01.

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VARIANCE AND MODEL FIT STATISTICS FOR LOGISTIC REGRESSION MODELS

The Intraclass Correlation (ICC) distinguishes between variation in outcomes that are explained between the sites and within the sites. It expresses the between-site variance as the proportion of the total variance in the sample. A low ICC indicates a relatively small amount of the variance is between-sites.

Calculating the ICC when the outcome of interest is categorical or dichotomous is more complex than when the outcome is continuous. The logistic distribution of level 1 variance, σ_R^2 , implies a variance of $\pi^2/3 = 3.29$ (Snijders & Bosker, 1999). Therefore, the ICC for a two-level logistic random intercept model with a random intercept of τ_0^2 is:

Equation 1. Interclass Correlation

$$\rho = \frac{\tau_0^2}{\tau_0^2 + \sigma_R^2}$$

We measure the proportion of overall variance in the outcomes that is explained by the predictors using the method recommended by (Snijders & Bosker, 1999, p. 225). The variance in a two-level model is equal to:

Equation 2. Variance in Two-Level Logistic Regression Model

$$\text{var}(Y_{ij}) = \sigma_F^2 + \tau_0^2 + \sigma_R^2$$

Where σ_F^2 = is the explained part of the variance, which is found as the variance in the linear prediction of the fixed portion of the model. τ_0^2 is the intercept (between-site) variance, and σ_R^2 is the level 1 (within site) variance, which in a logistic regression is fixed to $\pi^2/3 = 3.29$. Using these three variance components, the variance explained by the model is found as:

Equation 3. Logistic Regression Model Variance

$$R^2_{\log} = \frac{\sigma^2_F}{\sigma^2_F + \tau^2_0 + \sigma^2_R}$$

The remaining (residual) ICC is found as:

Equation 4. Logistic Regression Model Residual/ICC

$$\rho_M = \frac{\tau^2_0}{\tau^2_0 + \sigma^2_R}$$

Table 52, Table 53, and Table 54 present the Pseudo R-squared statistic and ICC using these formulas.

Table 52. Variance and ICC Statistics for Program Completion by Grantee Type

	Program Completion (ISD & Charter)			**Program Completion (IHE & Nonprofit)**		
	Null	+ Student Factors	+ Site Factors	Null	+ Student Factors	+ Site Factors
Pseudo R-squared	--	.39	.39		.57	--
ICC/Residual ICC	.19 (ICC)	.27	.26	.27	.33	--

Table 53. Variance and ICC Statistics for Benchmark Achieved by Grantee Type

	Benchmark Achieved (ISD & Charter)			**Benchmark Achieved (IHE & Nonprofit)**		
	Null	+ Student Factors	+ Site Factors	Null	+ Student Factors	+ Site Factors
Pseudo R-squared	--	.37	--		.35	--
ICC/Residual ICC	.25 (ICC)	.29	--	.41	.43	--

Table 54. Variance and ICC Statistics for Grade Advancement, High School Diploma, and College Readiness

	Grade Advancement			High School Diploma			College Readiness		
	Null	+ Student Factors	+ Site Factors	Null	+ Student Factors	+ Site Factors	Null	+ Student Factors	+ Site Factors
Pseudo R-squared	--	.26	.29		.35	.41			
ICC/ Residual ICC	.21 (ICC)	.23	.15	.05	.29	.28	.28	.33	--

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APPENDIX F: DISCRIMINANT ANALYSIS AND EFFECTIVENESS RESULTS

Following suggested steps for discriminant analysis by the Statistical Consulting Group (UCLA) and Garson (2008), Dunteman (1984), William (1980), and Tabachnick and Fidell (2001), we utilized this approach to assist us in cross-validating our HLM findings and to provide the requisite information to pursue an effectiveness analysis for the outcome *completion*. Although many of the same assumptions found in linear regression (i.e., linear and homoscedastic relationships, and untruncated interval or near interval data) must be met when choosing discriminant analysis, it is useful to employ this procedure to cross-validate binomial regression findings because it "involves fewer violations of assumptions (independent variables needn't be normally distributed, linearly related, or have equal within-group variances), is robust, handles categorical as well as continuous variables, and has coefficients which many find easier to interpret" (Garson, 2008).

All possible predictor variables available for the HLM analyses were entered into the model and variable selection was undertaken via forward stepwise procedures which select the most highly correlated independent variables until selection of an additional independent does not increase the associations between predictors and outcome variables by a significant amount. To guard against chance associations, we reviewed these variables in relationship to those found to be significant in the multilevel models. For the most part, they exhibited a high degree of similarity to the outcomes resulting from those procedures. We also produced a separate model for the college readiness outcome and the high school diploma outcome.

Tests of dimensionality for the discriminant analysis, as shown in Table 55, indicate that dimension 1 (HS Diploma - Completion) is statistically significant for the local school districts and open-enrollment charter schools (n=3,288). Dimension 1 had a canonical correlation of 0.49 between the predictor variables and completion. Additionally, dimension 1 (College Readiness – Completion) is also significant for IHEs and nonprofit education organizations, but the canonical correlation is much lower at 0.35 (n=566). The discriminant dimension reflects a bipolar completer/non-completer dimension.

Table 55. Tests of Discriminant Dimensions

Dimension	Canonical Correlation	Chi-square	Df	p
Model 1 (HS Diploma), Dimension 1	0.448	733.327	13	0.000
Model 2 (College Readiness), Dimension 1	0.353	74.778	6	0.000

Table 56 presents the standardized canonical coefficients for Completion for local school districts and open-enrollment charter schools. The discriminant dimension is positively weighted by entering cohort 1, TAKS met prior to TDRPP entrance, last attendance rate prior to TDRPP entrance, special education status, gifted status, local school district attendance, eleventh grade, twelfth grade, and age (measured in months). It was strongly negative for entering cohort 2, African American status, exited program for reasons other than TAKS and academic, and immigrant status.

Table 56. Standardized Canonical Discriminant Function Coefficients (Model 1)

	Function
	1
Cohort1	.158
Cohort2	-.177
African American, Not of Hispanic Origin	-.096
TAKS_Met_Prior	.480
Last_Attend_Prior	.224
Exit-Other Reasons	-.171
Immigrant	-.101
Special Education	.117
Gifted	.115
Local school district	.192
Eleventh Grade	.405
Twelfth Grade	.850
Age (Months)	.201

Table 57 presents the standardized canonical coefficients for Completion for IHEs and nonprofit education organizations. The discriminant dimension for this grouping is positively weighted by entering cohort 1, TAKS

met prior to TDRPP entrance, and bilingual status. It was strongly negative for entering cohort 3, female student status, and African American student status.

Table 57. Standardized Canonical Discriminant Function Coefficients (Model 2)

	Function
	1
Cohort1	.331
Cohort3	-.448
Gender (female)	-.485
African American, Not of Hispanic Origin	-.280
TAKS_MET_Prior	.633
Bilingual	.283

The following tables present the results of the effectiveness analysis via two masked lists of sites. Table 58 lists the three key weighted variables and is sorted on the difference between the percentage of actual completions and the probability for completing, expressed as a percentage, derived from the discriminant score for each site. The second list is sorted from least effective to most effective on the overall effectiveness score that was derived from the three weighted variables using the utility formula of Levin and McEwan (2001, pg. 196). The chart is color coded by quartile (sorted in ascending order).

Equation 5. Utility Function with Proportional Scoring

$$U\ (x)=l\left(\frac{x-lowest}{1Highest-Lowest}\right)x100$$

To help clarify, the general approach to effectiveness (also called a “utility" analysis in the cost/benefit literature) was as follows: a standardized score was calculated for each variable, weights were determined by the evaluation team, and these were converted to an effectiveness score (see formula above). The underlying assumption was that the weighted attributes were linearly associated with the outcome effectiveness.

Table 58. Total Completers and Difference Between Predicted Probability of Completion and Actual Completions by Grantee, Masked

TDRPP Grantee *(Weight)*	Total Completers *(0.400)*	Completers as a Percent of Total Enrolled by Grantee *(0.150)*	Difference between % Completed and Probability of Completion* (*sorted-descending) *(0.45)*
Open-enrollment charter*	24.00	64.9%	0.33
Local school district*	67.00	60.4%	0.33
Open-enrollment charter	8.00	30.8%	0.25
Local school district	13.00	52.0%	0.20
Local school district	28.00	45.2%	0.18
IHE	10.00	34.5%	0.12
Local school district	2.00	28.6%	0.12
Nonprofit education organization*	80.00	36.9%	0.10
Local school district*	83.00	45.6%	0.09
Local school district	27.00	47.4%	0.09
Open-enrollment charter	45.00	34.6%	0.07
Local school district	29.00	37.2%	0.05
Local school district	23.00	39.7%	0.04
Local school district	13.00	33.3%	0.04
Local school district*	97.00	47.8%	0.02
Local school district	34.00	30.9%	0.01
Local school district	52.00	36.4%	0.01

TDRPP Grantee *(Weight)*	Total Completers *(0.400)*	Completers as a Percent of Total Enrolled by Grantee *(0.150)*	Difference between % Completed and Probability of Completion* (*sorted-descending) *(0.45)*
Nonprofit education organization	4.00	10.5%	0.01
IHE	6.00	8.5%	(0.00)
Local school district	31.00	29.8%	(0.01)
Local school district	21.00	45.7%	(0.01)
Local school district	34.00	34.7%	(0.01)
Local school district	32.00	34.8%	(0.01)
Local school district	14.00	32.6%	(0.02)
Open-enrollment charter	3.00	9.7%	(0.02)
Open-enrollment charter	5.00	15.6%	(0.02)
Local school district	30.00	45.5%	(0.02)
Local school district	83.00	29.9%	(0.03)
IHE	9.00	19.6%	(0.03)
Local school district	9.00	47.4%	(0.05)
Local school district	5.00	15.6%	(0.05)
Local school district*	147.00	34.0%	(0.05)
Local school district	2.00	16.7%	(0.07)
Local school district	55.00	44.0%	(0.08)
Local school district	9.00	15.5%	(0.08)
Local school district	13.00	39.4%	(0.09)
Nonprofit education organization	1.00	2.9%	(0.09)

TDRPP Grantee *(Weight)*	Total Completers *(0.400)*	Completers as a Percent of Total Enrolled by Grantee *(0.150)*	Difference between % Completed and Probability of Completion* (*sorted-descending) *(0.45)*
Local school district	4.00	19.0%	(0.10)
Nonprofit education organization	7.00	13.0%	(0.12)
Local school district	6.00	16.2%	(0.12)
Open-enrollment charter	2.00	0.9%	(0.14)
Local school district	16.00	18.4%	(0.14)
Local school district	6.00	9.2%	(0.15)
Local school district	4.00	4.6%	(0.15)
Nonprofit education organization	1.00	1.2%	(0.18)

Table 59. Effectiveness Score Quartiles

Quartile	Effectiveness Score
AVERAGE	30.03
25th Quartile	15.87
50th Quartile	31.14
75th Quartile	41.61

Table 60. Rank Order of Effectiveness ("Utility") by Grantee, Masked

Cycle	TDRPP Name	Effectiveness SCORE
Cycle 1	Nonprofit education organization	0.09
Cycle 2	Open-enrollment Charter	4.12
Cycle 2	Local school district	4.12
Cycle 2	Local school district	6.38
Cycle 2	Nonprofit education organization	8.49
Cycle 1	Nonprofit education organization	9.79
Cycle 2	Local school district	10.17
Cycle 1	Local school district	11.96
Cycle 2	Local school district	12.43
Cycle 2	Local school district	14.00
Cycle 2	Local school district	14.28
Cycle 2	Local school district	15.87
Cycle 2	Open-enrollment Charter	16.79
Cycle 2	Open-enrollment Charter	18.72
Cycle 2	IHE	18.76
Cycle 1	IHE	19.49
Cycle 2	Nonprofit education organization	19.54
Cycle 2	Local school district	20.68
Cycle 1	Local school district	25.02
Cycle 1	Local school district	25.56
Cycle 1	Local school district	30.17
Cycle 2	Local school district	30.66
Cycle 1	Local school district	31.14
Cycle 1	Local school district	31.46
Cycle 1	Local school district	32.06
Cycle 2	Local school district	32.50
Cycle 1	Local school district	32.89
Cycle 2	Local school district	33.29
Cycle 1	Local school district	33.99
Cycle 2	Local school district	34.97
Cycle 1	Local school district	36.11
Cycle 1	IHE	36.91
Cycle 1	Local school district	38.77
Cycle 1	Local school district	41.61
Cycle 1	Open-enrollment charter school	42.05
Cycle 1	Local school district *	42.54
Cycle 2	Open-enrollment Charter	46.56
Cycle 2	Local school district	48.99
Cycle 2	Local school district	49.89
Cycle 1	Nonprofit education organization*	54.82

Cycle	TDRPP Name	Effectiveness SCORE
Cycle 2	Local school district *	54.96
Cycle 1	Local school district*	56.68
Cycle 1	Local school district *	58.99
Cycle 1	Open-enrollment Charter	66.30
Cycle 2	Local school district *	76.84

*Top six producers of completions.

Table 61. Cost/Benefit Detail by Grantee

Cycle	Grantee type	Proposed Students to be Served	Actual Students Enrolled	Total Number of Completions	Total District Tax Revenue Generated	Total State Aid per High School Student	Total State Aid Generated by TDRPP Students	Total Direct TDRPP Expenditures	Total TDRPP Perf. Pay Earned	Total Actual TDRPP Base Funding	Total Cost	Total Cost per Student Served	Total Cost per Student Month Enrolled	Total Cost Per Completion
1	IHE	75	76	6	.	.	.	230,725	128,750	101,975	230,725	3,036	751	38,454
1	IHE	20	31	10	.	.	.	148,928	51,250	97,678	148,928	4,804	484	14,893
1	IHE	30	68	11	.	.	.	124,535	2,250	122,285	124,535	1,831	153	11,321
1	Nonprofit educational organization	20	86	1	.	.	.	246,750	96,750	150,000	246,750	2,869	338	246,750
1	Nonprofit educational organization	60	221	81	.	.	.	509,871	360,000	149,871	509,871	2,307	304	6,295
1	Open-enrollment charter school	20	37	24	.	9,953	300,384			127,711	462,095	12,489	1,276	19,254
1	Open-enrollment charter school	100	134	45	.	9,549	953,018	161,711 208,500	34,000 58,500	150,000	1,161,518	8,668	970	25,812

Cycle	Grantee type	Proposed Students to be Served	Actual Students Enrolled	Total Number of Completions	Total District Tax Revenue Generated	Total State Aid per High School Student	Total State Aid Generated by TDRPP Students	Total Direct TDRPP Expenditures	Total TDRPP Perf. Pay Earned	Total Actual TDRPP Base Funding	Total Cost	Total Cost per Student Served	Total Cost per Student Month Enrolled	Total Cost Per Completion
1	Local school district	6	20	9	85,570	3,601	64,330	77,858	11,250	66,608	227,758	11,388	1,062	25,306
1	Local school district	20	44	14	160,332	4,895	213,694	128,231	21,750	106,481	502,258	11,415	959	35,876
1	Local school district	80	48	21	169,743	3,294	97,192	166,982	27,750	139,232	433,918	9,040	1,226	20,663
1	Local school district	32	59	29	289,241	1,555	54,180	112,958	34,250	78,708	456,379	7,735	1,091	15,737
1	Local school district	60	79	29	275,344	2,450	96,293	175,822	38,250	137,572	547,459	6,930	1,161	18,878
1	Local school district	50	107	33	318,699	2,853	137,018			85,662	587,629	5,492	1,020	17,807
1	Local school district	20	99	36	85,369	7,819	487,214	131,912	472,582	46,250	132,582	745,165	7,527	997	20,699
1	Local school district	100	128	39	256,729	5,163	440,019	218,874	40,000		149,874	915,622	7,153	895	23,477
1	Local school district	20	118	39	516,902	2,622	198,190	190,000	69,000		150,000	905,091	7,670	998	23,207
1	Local school district	50	128	55	61,499	5,481	122,141	144,830	40,000		75,580	328,470	2,566	1,228	5,972
1	Local school district	50	147	56	225,056	5,867	472,426	169,851	69,250		96,601	867,333	5,900	898	15,488
1	Local school district	100	193	89	288,952	7,115	1,326,915	217,299	73,250	126,000	91,299	1,833,165	9,498	819	20,597

Cycle	Grantee type	Proposed Students to be Served	Actual Students Enrolled	Total Number of Completions	Total District Tax Revenue Generated	Total State Aid per High School Student	Total State Aid Generated by TDRPP Students	Total Direct TDRPP Expenditures	Total TDRPP Perf. Pay Earned	Total Actual TDRPP Base Funding	Total Cost	Total Cost per Student Served	Total Cost per Student Month Enrolled	Total Cost Per Completion
1	Local school district	30	301	103	419,814	5,395	738,548	208,831	60,000	148,831	1,367,193	4,542	832	13,274
1	Local school district	100	458	159	956,362	3,509	764,856	349,000	199,000	150,000	2,070,218	4,520	791	13,020
2	Nonprofit educational organization	20	35	1	.	.	.	181,346	59,750	121,596	181,346	5,181	1,352	181,346
2	Nonprofit educational organization	30	40	4	.	.	.	142,423	30,000	112,423	142,423	3,561	410	35,606
2	Nonprofit educational organization	20	63	9	.	.	.	227,961	83,500	144,461	227,961	3,618	319	25,329
2	Open-enrollment charter school	200	234	2	.	9,842	1,271,022	138,556	115,000	23,556	1,409,578	6,024	910	704,789
2	Open-enrollment charter school	15	31	3	.	10,311	100,156	33,230	6,750	26,480	133,386	4,303	1,144	44,462
2	Open-enrollment charter school	50	48	7	.	8,971	227,297	122,989	12,250	110,739	350,286	7,298	1,152	50,041
2	Open-enrollment charter school	20	28	16	.	10,300	129,435	81,192	11,500	69,692	210,627	7,522	1,397	13,164
2	Local school district	15	7	2	15,635	4,649	11,120	103,110	2,750	100,360	129,865	18,552	4,525	64,932
2	Local school district	25	21	4	63,127	2,444	23,976	95,462	5,250	90,212	182,565	8,694	1,551	45,641
2	Local school district	60	32	5	112,774	4,093	67,234	72,262	10,000	62,262	252,270	7,883	1,280	50,454
2	Local school district	50	75	6	118,929	4,693	134,942	77,682	18,250	59,432	331,553	4,421	961	55,259

Cycle	Grantee type	Proposed Students to be Served	Actual Students Enrolled	Total Number of Completions	Total District Tax Revenue Generated	Total State Aid per High School Student	Total State Aid Generated by TDRPP Students	Total Direct TDRPP Expenditures	Total TDRPP Perf. Pay Earned	Total Actual TDRPP Base Funding	Total Cost	Total Cost per Student Served	Total Cost per Student Month Enrolled	Total Cost Per Completion
2	Local school district	30	38	7	116,245	1,900	27,531	57,848	7,750	50,098	201,624	5,306	1,160	28,803
2	Local school district	20	62	10	70,637	5,903	195,287	50,635	10,500	40,135	316,558	5,106	797	31,656
2	Local school district	20	26	14	13,369	8,594	102,318	121,665	21,750	99,915	237,352	9,129	1,661	16,954
2	Local school district	20	34	14	72,304	2,402	25,877	81,550	17,750	63,800	179,731	5,286	1,390	12,838
2	Local school district	50	59	23	62,271	4,790	93,907	114,694	25,000	89,694	270,872	4,591	1,151	11,777
2	Local school district	40	64	28	74,892	5,583	151,434	118,005	14,250	103,755	344,331	5,380	1,058	12,298
2	Local school district	75	68	30	81,935	4,082	80,661	143,706	37,500	106,206	306,301	4,504	1,292	10,210
2	Local school district	45	131	75	261,328	4,416	225,289	175,167	90,000	85,167	661,784	5,052	1,081	8,824
2	Local school district	100	235	131	77,959	8,046	764,576	214,539	126,250	88,289	1,057,074	4,498	927	8,069

Source: TEA Summary of Finances, 2010; TEA Student Enrollment Reports, 2010. Student Data Uploads. Performance Payment Reports. ISAS Reports. ARS calculations. (n = 41 grantees, 21 Cycle 1 grantees, 20 Cycle 2 grantees)

APPENDIX H: TEACHER SELF AND COLLECTIVE EFFICACY

This appendix considers two well-researched aspects of teacher beliefs about their ability to influence student performance: self-efficacy and collective-efficacy.

Self-efficacy

Teacher self-efficacy is defined as a teacher's belief in his or her capacity to influence student achievement and motivation. Extensive research over the past 20 years has established a strong connection between teacher self-efficacy and teacher behaviors that foster student achievement (Tschannen-Moran, Hoy, & Hoy, 1998). For TDRPP staff survey items, self-efficacy measures were adapted from the Ohio State Teacher Efficacy Scale (OSTES). The OSTES uses a 9-point scale to measure efficacy in student engagement, efficacy in instructional strategies, and efficacy in classroom management.

TDRPP survey respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with certain statements on a scale of 1 – "Not at all" to 9 – "A great deal." There were four items on the survey for each of three types of self-efficacy as follows:

Student engagement:

- How much do you believe you are able to motivate students who show low interest in course work?
- How much do you believe you are able to get students to believe they can do well in course work?
- How much do you believe you are able to help your students value learning?
- How much do you believe you are able to assist families in helping a student do well in the program?

Instructional strategies:

- To what extent can you craft good questions for your students?
- How much can you use a variety of assessment strategies?
- How much do you believe you can provide an alternative explanation or example when students are confused?
- How well can you implement alternative strategies in your classroom?

Classroom management:

- How much do you believe you are able to control disruptive behavior in the classroom?
- How much do you believe you can get students to follow classroom rules?
- How much can you calm a student who is disruptive or noisy?
- How much do you believe you can establish a classroom management system with each group of students?

Cycle 1 teachers reported mean scores for student engagement of 6.79, as shown in
Table 62. The fifth self-efficacy item on the Cycle 1 survey was related to classroom management; the mean score for that single item was 7.63, with a range of 3 to 9. An overall mean score for Cycle 1, which included all five items, was 6.96.

Cycle 2 teachers report an overall self-efficacy mean score of 7.61, with scores ranging from 1 to 9. As indicated in
Table 62, the overall score includes responses related to efficacy in student engagement (7.22), instructional practices (7.80), and classroom management (7.82).

Table 62. Teacher Self-Efficacy, Mean Scores

	Teacher-Reported Self-Efficacy, Mean Scores for Cycles 1 and 2			
	Student engagement	Instructional strategies	Classroom management	Overall mean score
Cycle 1	6.79 Range: 5.60 to 7.49	unavailable	unavailable	6.96
Cycle 2	7.22 Range: 5.88 to 7.95	7.80 Range: 7.36 to 8.20	7.82 Range: 7.66 to 7.98	7.61

Source: ARS Teacher/staff surveys (Cycle 1 n=140; Cycle 2 n=59) Note: For Cycle 1 participants, only five of the twelve statements were included on the survey. Four of those items were related to student engagement. On the Cycle 2 survey, all twelve statements of the OSTES were included.

Across all mean scores for sub-items in self-efficacy, the question, “How much do you believe you are able to assist families in helping a student do well in the program?” garnered the lowest mean score from both Cycle 1 and Cycle 2 teacher respondents. This is consistent with our finding of limited parent involvement among the majority of TDRPP grantees. Likewise, teacher respondents rated support from parents as lowest when compared to support from administrators, program staff, or TEA. One teacher’s description of her students is that “they are mostly independent; they do not live with a parent or guardian.”

The questions, “How much do you believe you are able to control disruptive behavior in the classroom?” and “How much do you believe you are able to get students to believe they can do well in course work?” received the highest mean scores from both Cycle 1 and Cycle 2 teacher respondents. This, too, is consistent with other findings from site visits and Grantee Progress Reports. Administrators commented on the importance of strong staff. For example, one administrator noted, “Staffing is the crucial piece. You can have rigor and relevance but it’s the depth of the relationship that makes the difference.”

Collective-efficacy

Goddard et al (2000) extended the research on teacher self-efficacy from individual to collective-efficacy. Collective-efficacy reflects a teacher's belief in whether the efforts of the whole faculty can influence student achievement and motivation. Research suggests a strong positive association between higher collective teacher efficacy and student achievement.

Based on the Collective Teacher Efficacy Scale (CTE) developed by Goddard et al., the ARS teacher/staff surveys used a 5-point scale for measuring collective -efficacy that took into account group competence and an analysis of the teaching task. The underlying rationale for considering both group competence and task analysis was that collective-efficacy resulted from teachers considering the difficulty of the task in relation to the group's capability. Task analysis statements on the CTE scale examined perceptions of available resources or barriers to success. Group competence statements on the CTE scale considered the faculty's expertise or methods.

Although the CTE was intended for teachers, in the context of dropout recovery the concepts also apply to nearly all staff that interacted with students. Indeed, there was no appreciable difference in response by role within grantee types. That is, teachers, program staff, and other staff had average responses that were substantially similar when compared with grantee type. The most notable differences were observed between grantee types. The mean group competence score ranged from 3.9 for open-enrollment charter schools to 4.5 for nonprofit education organizations (on a scale of 1 to 5). Teaching task analysis scores ranged from 3.3 for nonprofit education organizations to 3.8 for IHEs. Staff at the nonprofit education organization grantees reported the highest levels of group competence and the lowest access to available resources/higher barriers to success. Overall, IHEs reported the highest levels of collective-efficacy, as shown.

Table 63. Collective Teacher/Staff Efficacy by Grantee Type, Mean Scores

	Collective Self-Efficacy Component		
	Group competence	Teaching task analysis	Overall mean score
IHEs	4.2	3.8	4.1
Local school districts	4.2	3.5	3.9
Nonprofit education organizations	4.5	3.3	3.7
Open-enrollment charter schools	3.9	3.5	3.9
Overall mean score	4.1	3.5	3.9

Source: Arroyo Research Services (ARS) Teacher/Staff Surveys, May 2009 through May 2010 (n=354)