Bridges to Ninth Grade Success

Program Description:
The Bridges to Ninth Grade Success program is a grant-funded program aimed at reducing the dropout and retention rates of AISD’s ninth grade population. The program focuses on prevention, intervention, enhancing classroom learning environments, and professional development.

The main strategies for the ninth grade initiative include the following:
• Extended learning opportunities, including before, during and after school, and summer opportunities;
• Linkages to middle school, to smooth the transition of eligible 8th grade students to high school;
• Capturing Kids’ Hearts and other staff development activities to engage students and help teachers work effectively with targeted students; and,
• Teaming, including creating smaller learning environments, continuous assessment and other restructuring to better serve eligible students.

Eligibility Criteria:
Students are considered eligible if he/she is a ninth grader who,
• Failed one or more parts of TAAS (including science and social studies) in grade 8, or
• Was retained in one or more grade levels in 6-8, or
• Failed one or more classes in a reporting period in grade 9, or
• Received a grade below 75 in any class in a reporting period in grade 9, or
• Had excessive absences.

Program Objectives:
• 90% of participating ninth graders will demonstrate increased academic achievement as evidenced by the following: passing all core academic subjects and making at least a 10 point improvement between administrations of released TAAS Teaming and Mathematics.
• The overall retention rate of ninth graders will be reduced to 10% or less. The retention rates for each student group will be reduced to 10 % or less (from 27% for African-American students, from 27% for Hispanic students and from 23% for Low Income students.
• The overall dropout rate of ninth graders will be reduced to 6% or less (from 10%) over the project period.
• The overall attendance rate of ninth graders will increase to 94% over the project period.
Summary of Action Steps that have been completed or planned, Fall 2000

Number of students served in Fall 2000 (11 campuses): 5018

Teaming, including creating smaller learning environments, continuous assessment and other restructuring to better serve eligible students

- Nine campuses implemented interdisciplinary teaming or a modified teaming approach with their ninth grade students;
- Five campuses developed a ninth grade center to support students through tutorials, redirection, problem-solving strategies, grade recovery and/or credit recovery;
- Two full time equivalent teacher positions were available to each campus to create smaller learning environments;
- DELTA lab was used for students who had been retained.
- Curriculum development for use in restructured learning environments (such as ninth grade centers, after school academies and credit recovery opportunities) is approximately 50% complete. This curriculum will allow for self-paced mastery in a teacher instructed environment. The completion date for curriculum to be written and submitted to the curriculum supervisors for approval and/or revisions is April 2001.

Extended learning opportunities, including before, during and after school, and summer opportunities

- 1,570 students participated in the grant supported tutorial and/or after-school academies/programs. Ninth grade teachers of the classes designated as first year high school SBOE classes led the extended day sessions. These sessions were tutorials, acceleration, supplemental learning and credit recovery in nature.
- Summer programming will be offered for all 11 high school campuses that serve ninth grade students. This will include an Optional Extended Year funded program for 8th graders who are retained, and Bridges funded programs for all ninth graders retained. Additional programs are being developed on each campus and include early credit options for incoming 8th graders, specialized academies focused around interests and themes and/or academic skills academies focused on reading and pre-algebra skills.
- Saturday Academies are being piloted on 4 campuses and include opportunities for students to earn credits, recover credits and attend tutorials for the purpose of grade recovery.

Linkages to middle school, to smooth the transition of eligible 8th grade students to high school

- Intensive summer programming to meet the academic needs of incoming 8th grade students as well as the use of local transition money to provide orientations designed to smooth the transition to high school have been planned;
- Planning and organizational meetings between middle school teachers, counselors and principals and their counterparts at the high school level have begun and will continue through February 2001.
Capturing Kids’ Hearts and other staff development activities to engage students and help teachers work effectively with targeted students

- A total of 170 teachers representing each of the high schools have attended Capturing Kids’ Hearts, a three-day workshop that combines management and teacher effectiveness training, allowing teachers to create a classroom where there is genuine caring and concern. Attendance and registration continued through the fall semester and all 11 campuses participating in the program would send representatives from their ninth grade team by the end of the summer term.
- The Flip Flippin organization, which conducts Capturing Kids’ Hearts, will be presenting a one-day in-service presentation at Reagan High School on February ninth.
- Periodic meetings are held at high schools to address issues and concerns being faced by the ninth grade students. These meetings address one of three goals: 1) individual student or a group of students’ needs; 2) professional development in best practices; or 3) planning, implementation and organizing sessions.

**Plan for Implementing Long Term Action Steps:**

- Teachers working with eligible ninth grade students will participate in the activities and staff development opportunities provided through this grant. A review of the budget to determine remaining funds for Capturing Kids’ Hearts training and additional appropriate professional development opportunities will be completed by February 16, 2001. Communication of these opportunities will also be shared with the campuses by that date. Principals will involve all ninth grade teachers so the strategies and techniques provided through this initiative will be used in all classes with eligible students.
- All Principals have been asked to involve their guidance counselors in the development of this initiative at their schools. It is important for these students to be actively involved in the schools’ guidance and counseling program for them to have a successful high school career.
- Curriculum to support the before and after school academies as well as the ninth grade centers will be completed by May 2001.
- Summer programming will focus on credit recovery for ninth graders who have not met their course requirements for advancement to 10th grade and focus on mastery for 8th grade students who have not met their requirements for advancement to ninth. For incoming ninth grade students who were both promoted and eligible for services, programming will continue to emphasize reading, study skills, and necessary math concepts. The efforts of these programs will be further enhanced by the use of local transition funds focused on orientation to the new school and expectations.
- Plans are being developed on each campus to provide a maximum of two field trips per school, to take place this spring or summer session. One will be an interdisciplinary trip of an educational nature. The other will be to a university for career exploration.
Sustainability
The grant cycle will end August 31, 2001. TEA will implement a competitive application process if the legislature funds the grant for the next two years.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Required or optional</th>
<th>Grade Level</th>
<th>Type of Program</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Program Description</th>
<th>Funding Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Required 9</td>
<td>Credit Recovery</td>
<td>Home campus</td>
<td>Self-paced or teacher guided in 4 core subjects.</td>
<td>Bridges</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Required 8</td>
<td>Promotion based summer school</td>
<td>Feeder HS</td>
<td>Traditional 8th grade summer school held at the high school campus. Taught by 8th grade teachers</td>
<td>Optional Extended Year</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Optional 9</td>
<td>No Credit recovery (absences)</td>
<td>Home campus</td>
<td>Use DELTA programs; formula for determining number of units for each subject which must be completed to regain credit.</td>
<td>Bridges</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Optional 8 or 9</td>
<td>Specialized academies</td>
<td>HS campus</td>
<td>Intensive ESL camp. Specifics and courses to be developed by Bilingual/ESL department. No core academic classes, including ESOL 1, should be provided.</td>
<td>Bridges</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Optional 8</td>
<td>Early Credit Option</td>
<td>Feeder HS</td>
<td>Teacher led instruction designed to provide early credit options to at-risk incoming ninth graders (promoted). Courses to be determined by campus. <strong>Electives only.</strong></td>
<td>Bridges</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Optional 8</td>
<td>Skill readiness</td>
<td>Feeder HS</td>
<td>Math and English skills. Cannot be TAAS oriented remediation. Instruction could include reading improvement skills and pre-algebra.</td>
<td>Bridges</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The 8th grade summer school supported by Optional Extended Year funds will have specific standards and expectations since this replaces the traditional summer school opportunities. This does not replace any orientation style programs. Transition funds (local) could also be used to support non-grant funded portions of these programs.
**Diversified Education through Leadership Technology & Academics (DELTA)**

**Program Description:**
DELTA is an open-entry/open-exit diploma program for students, aged 14-21, who have dropped out of school or who are at risk of dropping out. The program uses a combination of computer-based educational materials (NovaNet) and activities developed in Austin ISD to help students earn academic credit toward graduation.

The program was first implemented in August 1996, in the District’s 10 comprehensive high schools. Since that time it has expanded to include Garza, Akins High School, and programs at the alternative Learning Center, Gardner-Betts Juvenile Detention Facility, Huston-Tillotson, and other organizations that serve potential and recovered dropouts. At least one lab director and a lab assistant staff each lab. Five additional lab directors were hired in for the 2000-2001 school year to better serve students in schools with large numbers of eligible students (Lanier, Johnston, Austin, Crockett, Reagan).

Students are admitted to the DELTA program after a review and assessment of their academic records, skills, and needs, as well as their health, safety, and general well being. The student, parents, counselors, teachers, administrators and other appropriate staff are involved in the decision to place a student in DELTA.

**Program Objectives**
Provide individualized, self-paced instruction to potential or recovered dropouts in a supportive setting.
- Help at-risk students earn credits needed to be promoted to the next grade or to graduate.
- Provide a supportive environment that will encourage potential and recovered dropouts to stay in school and graduate.
- Link families, school professionals—other teachers, counselors and administrators, visiting teachers,—and social services to meet the needs of potential and recovered dropouts.

**Accomplishments and Program Initiatives for 2000-2001**
In 1999-2000, over 1900 students participated in the DELTA program. Of these, 601 or 31 percent completed the courses needed to graduate. Projections for the 2000-2001 school year indicate that enrollment will be similar, but greater emphasis is being placed on serving ninth-grade students, and graduation rates may decline somewhat.

**Summer Programs**
- During summer 2000, the District provided a free DELTA summer school program for DELTA students needing one or two credits to graduate. Approximately 55 students participated in this program.
In addition to the District summer school, each comprehensive high school and Garza offered opportunities for selected students to earn credits through DELTA/NovaNet. Program designs differed, but they emphasized helping students graduate and helping repeating ninth-grade students earn credits needed for promotion. Over 200 students participated in campus-based summer DELTA programs.

2000—2001 School Year Initiatives

- DELTA labs are organizing to provide services to larger numbers of ninth grade students.
- With the addition of staff, more DELTA labs are open before and after school. Travis, Bowie, Reagan, and Lanier have evening DELTA program, and other schools are opening their doors during “zero” hour and immediately after-school.
- New NovaNet lessons have been inserted into the curriculum. Several curriculums development projects are being scheduled for summer 2001.
- DELTA computers will be upgraded as part of the District’s technology initiatives.

Long-Term Action Steps

- Revise and enhance the DELTA/NovaNet curriculum to better meet the needs of potential and recovered dropouts.
- Integrate DELTA, the Bridges Program, and other projects designed to reduce dropouts and prevent students from falling far behind in their work.
- Develop systems for collaborating with IMPACT teams and others in the school community to better serve potential and recovered dropouts.
Summer School Opportunities

Program Description:
The district dropout prevention/reduction plan includes the provision of programs to prevent students from falling behind academically and to assist those students who have fallen behind to catch up. Last year, the district summer academic offerings included free classes for rising K-1st grade LEP students and rising 1st - 3rd grade students reading below grade level. Tuition based summer school classes were available for retained middle school students and high school students needing to recover credits. There were no district-wide academic programs for retained 3rd through 5th grade students.

Program Objectives:
This year, the planning for district summer programs is beginning with a focus on particular student needs. Resources from various funding sources are being aligned to meet those needs. These resources include the $1.3 million in Optional Extended Year funds that must be used to provide academic programs designed to reduce the number of students who are retained. Other funding sources for summer programs include the Bridges to 9th Grade, TEA Accelerated Reading, Title I, Bilingual Education & Migrant, and funding from the AISD Dropout Initiative.

The highlights of the 2001 summer academic program are:
- Limited English proficient students will be served in all programs.
- Special education extended year programs will be provided for students ages 3 though 21.
- The SOAR program will provide literacy classes for rising K-3rd grade students who are reading below grade level.
- TEA Optional Extended Year funds will be used to provide free district-wide summer school programs for 3rd-8th grade students who are being retained or are at-risk of retention.
Math and language arts classes will be provided for retained 3rd - 5th grade students. As with all other elementary summer school classes, there will be no charge for these classes.

- Math and language arts classes for retained 6th & 7th grade students will be held at five middle schools. Science and social studies classes will only be offered if a significant number of students need to re-take these classes in order to be promoted. There will be no charge for these classes.
- Retained 8th grade students and students eligible for the Bridges to 9th Grade program will be eligible to attend classes at the high school they will be attending next year. Due to construction, summer Bridges to 9th Grade classes for Johnston HS students will be held at one of the summer high school sites. There will be no charge for these classes.
- Summer high school will offer core 9th - 12th grade classes for a tuition fee of $115 per semester (½ credit). Students may earn a total of one full credit during the summer.

**Long Term Action Steps**
The charts on the following pages provide summaries of the preliminary plans for 2001 district wide summer academic programs. These plans are subject to change.

**Program Accomplishments:**
Evaluation Information pending (each program will be evaluated separately)
### Elementary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target Student Group / Program Contact Persons</th>
<th>Program Goal</th>
<th>Sites/Dates/Times</th>
<th>Estimated Enrollment</th>
<th>Estimated Cost &amp; Funding Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Rising K-1st Grade LEP Students</em></td>
<td>Improve language and literacy skills.</td>
<td>Barrington, Brooke, Blanton, Rodriquez, Wooten</td>
<td>May 31-June 29 8am-1pm</td>
<td>1,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEP Summer School</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Della May Moore</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graciela Conde</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Anna Salinas</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Rising 1st - 3rd Grade Students Reading Below Grade Level</em></td>
<td>Bring reading skills up to grade level.</td>
<td>Blackshear, Govalle, Graham, Joslin, Linder, Mathews McBee, Palm, Pleasant Hill, Reilly, Sims, Winn,</td>
<td>June 4-28 7:45am - 11:45pm</td>
<td>2,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOAR Program</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maria Hohenstein</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peggy Mays</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Kathryn Stone</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>3rd - 5th Grade Students At-Risk of Retention Success</em></td>
<td>Bring math and reading skills up to grade level for promotion.</td>
<td>Blackshear, Govalle, Graham, Joslin, Linder, Mathews McBee, Palm, Pleasant Hill Reilly, Sims, Winn,</td>
<td>June 4-28 7:45am - 11:45pm</td>
<td>3,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade Special Education Students Ages 3-21</td>
<td>Maintenance of targeted IEP goals and objectives.</td>
<td>Clifton, Pecan Springs, Rosedale, (Rodriquez - not confirmed)</td>
<td>June 6 - July 20(not confirmed) 7:45 am - 3:30 pm</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Secondary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target Student Group / Program</th>
<th>Program Goal</th>
<th>Sites/Dates/Times</th>
<th>Estimated Enrollment</th>
<th>Estimated Cost &amp; Funding Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rising 6&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; - 8&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; Grade Special Education Students Who are Struggling Readers</td>
<td>Improve reading skills.</td>
<td>Reagan or Travis June 4 - 29 9 am - 1:15 pm</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>Local - $40,000 (not confirmed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rising 6&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; - 8&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; Grade New Immigrant Students</td>
<td>Improve English language and literacy skills through the content areas.</td>
<td>Reagan HS June 4-29 9am - 1:15pm</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>TEA Immigrant Program - $58,000 (No Tuition Fees)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retained 6&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; &amp; 7&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; Grade Students</td>
<td>Grade recovery for promotion.</td>
<td>Bedichek, Kealing, O Henry, Porter, Webb June 4-29 9am - 1:15pm</td>
<td>728</td>
<td>TEA Optional Extended Year - $399,676 (No Tuition Fees)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Selected Rising 8&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; Grade Students</td>
<td>Prepare students for academic acceleration from regular courses to pre-AP/honors courses.</td>
<td>Bedichek, Kealing, O Henry, Porter, Webb June 4-29 9am - 1:15pm</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>Federal Gear Up Grant - $75,000 (No Tuition Fees)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target Student Group / Program</td>
<td>Program Goal</td>
<td>Sites/Dates/Times</td>
<td>Estimated Enrollment</td>
<td>Estimated Cost &amp; Funding Source</td>
</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retained 8th Grade &amp; Bridges Eligible 8th &amp; 9th Grade Students</td>
<td>Grade recovery for promotion, credit recovery and acceleration, and math/language arts skill building.</td>
<td>High Schools June 4-29 9am - 1:15pm</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>State OEY - $147,497 State Bridges - $465,659 (No Tuition Fees)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bridges to 9th Grade Lisa Newman</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>9th - 12th Grade DELTA Students</td>
<td>Credit recovery</td>
<td>High Schools June 4-29 9am - 1:15pm</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>Local - $66,400 (No Tuition fees)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DELTA Program David Earle</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>9th - 12th Grade Students</td>
<td>Credit recovery and acceleration</td>
<td>Reagan HS Travis HS June 11-29 July 5-26 9am - 1:15pm</td>
<td>1,300</td>
<td>Local - $487,241 (Tuition - $115 per ½ credit course)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer High School John Moore</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
**Student Leaver / Recovery Initiative Guidelines**

**Description:**
Based on interviews with a sample of campus personnel and volunteers who have assisted in the dropout recovery process, the following guidelines were developed to identify strategies and Best Practices that several AISD campuses implement successfully to locate students identified on a leaver, no-show or dropout list.

**Objectives:**
To identify strategies and actions taken that have resulted in the successful recovery of students. To identify strategies campus Administrators may implement when using volunteers to assist in the recovery of students. Based on the data obtained from the various stakeholders, develop guidelines that campuses may consider when dropout recovery is necessary and specifically when volunteers are requested. **Note:** this is a living document and therefore subject to change as additional strategies are identified that may assist campuses with their dropout recovery efforts.

Outlined below are a few examples of specific recovery strategies that campuses internal staff as well as volunteers may consider in the recovery of students:

**Coordination of Task and Communication**
- Identify a single point of contact for volunteers assisting in the recovery process. One school identified the visiting teacher. Schools with dropout prevention specialist may consider designating this individual as the point of contact.

- The point of contact would be responsible for meeting daily with the team of volunteers to discuss progress, strategies and difficulties. The point of contact would in turn meet with the Principal weekly and provide a status update.

**Recovery Strategies**
- Campus staff should provide an overview of the no-show / leaver list progress made to date and strategies already performed by campus staff and others assisting in dropout recovery, the strategies that have proven successful. For example, when the address and telephone numbers were incorrect, one school had the advisory teachers review the list of names with students in an attempt to identify current address and/or telephone numbers for students.

- Have the PEIMS coordinator provide a briefing and distribute copies of the forms and explanation of the supporting documentation required to remove a student from a campus no-show / dropout list, in the event a student is located.

- Campus staff and /or the visiting teacher should provide a briefing and handouts on all available campus and local resources that may assist in encouraging students to complete their education. IMPACT Teams will be knowledgeable of available resources.

- Campus staff should have readily available any pertinent records that may contain telephone numbers and an address. For example, access to the student care cards.
• If the telephone numbers/address for a student is not current then a query of the different AISD databases may be feasible. For example, STIF/FAMS printout provides student family/siblinging information. Columbia printout can provide demographic information, and SGID printout can provide credit information that is useful in trying to develop academic alternatives for a student. A computer should be made available for this purpose, or the identification of a specific person(s) who could provide this type of support. One high school was very successful in locating students via the identification of younger siblings at other AISD schools.
• Calls to home telephone numbers may produce better results in the evening and/or weekends.
• Keep in mind when distributing the list, attempt to identify when a person with Spanish speaking skills may be applicable. While the student may be proficient in English, it is not unusual to find family members who may have limited English-speaking skills.

Assistance from Other Private/Public Entities/Alternative Educational Programs
Note: The accountability office staff can review enrollment data for ACC, AmeriCorps, Austin Learning Academy, and Lifeworks

Home Visits
Home visits are often necessary; however when a campus has the need to utilize AISD volunteers to assist with home visits, different campuses considered the following:
• If a volunteer did not feel comfortable making home visits, one campus utilized these individuals as substitutes for their office staff, who in turn made the visits.
• Several volunteers interviewed stated they felt more comfortable making home visits in pairs. It was also recommended during the interview process that (pairs) of males (volunteers) who are not known to students be discouraged from making home visits to recover female students.
• Organize and distribute the list based on criteria that may influence the type of assistance needed and/or recovery materials. For example, students under 16 years of age are not under normal circumstances eligible for GED.

In addition, undocumented students, i.e., immigrants without a social security card are not eligible to take the GED exam. In this case work with the Impact team on your campus to identify available educational resources and strategies to address the academic needs of this particular student.
• Identify childcare openings and/or referral, identify scheduling flexibility to address employment needs

Additional Action Steps:
• Continue to identify internal and external best practices in the area of student recovery
• Identify and develop best practices / strategies to promote student retention when a student is recovered.
• Have Impact Teams specific strategies to address the needs of (recaptured) students