



Austin Independent School District

Department of Program Evaluation

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A SUMMARY OF AUSTIN INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT'S OPTIONAL EXTENDED YEAR PROGRAM ACTIVITIES, 2007–2008

The Optional Extended Year Program (OEYP), a state-funded grant, provides extended learning opportunities for students in kindergarten through Grade 12 who are at risk of academic failure. The primary focus of OEYP is to reduce and eliminate the need for student grade-level retention by providing additional instructional time for students to master the state's academic performance standards (Texas Education Code Sections 42.152 & 29.082). OEYP activities occur outside of the regular school day. Programs are designed to accommodate four school-day options: (a) extended day, (b) extended week, (c) intersession for year-round schools, and (d) summer school. A school district may provide instructional services during any of these programs for a period of time not to exceed 30 days. Participating students must receive a minimum of 240 minutes of instruction to meet the Texas Education Agency (TEA) reporting requirements. Since 1993, the Austin Independent School District (AISD) has used OEYP to reduce the number of AISD students at risk of academic failure.

TEA sets the guidelines for grade promotion through OEYP and provides OEY program policies regarding class size (i.e., no more than 16 students to a class and no fewer than 8); attendance (i.e., a minimum of 240 minutes); staff development training; and parental involvement.

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EVALUATION OBJECTIVES AND SUPPORT DOCUMENTATION

The evaluation focused on five specific objectives relevant to district reporting needs:

- To document and report AISD's OEYP activities, per state law
- To report student participation and academic outcomes
- To summarize the participation of parents in AISD's OEYP activities
- To gather information from OEYP principals regarding program implementation, including curriculum and expectations for program participants
- To provide AISD decision makers, principals, program managers, and other school staff with 2007–2008 program data to enhance the operation of AISD's 2008–2009 program, and recommendations for use of OEYP funds

In Spring 2008, an electronic survey was sent to the principals ($n = 76$) who held OEY programs on their campuses during the 2007–2008 school year. Ninety-nine percent ($n = 75$) completed the survey, but not all respondents answered every survey item. The evaluation assembled information from their responses to survey questions about program strategies, staff development training sessions, parent involvement, program information, curricula, expectations for success, and use of OEYP funds. Other program data (e.g., expenditures, student participation and promotion data) were gathered from AISD staff in the Office of Finance and the PEIMS Department.

AISD'S OPTIONAL EXTENDED YEAR PROGRAM CONFIGURATION AND COST

During 2007–2008, OEYP funds supported activities on 76 AISD campuses between November 2007 and August 2008. In Grades 3 through 5, programs provided accelerated, supplemental services, including literacy and mathematics instruction, to students whose program eligibility scores were 50% or less of items correct on the beginning of the year (BOY) benchmark tests for reading and/or mathematics. In Grades 6 through 8, reading and mathematics interventions or remediation instructions were provided to students who were at risk of failing a grade due to credit loss or poor attendance. Summer credit recovery courses in reading and mathematics were provided to eligible sixth, seventh, and eighth graders. Students could participate in extended-day sessions (before or after school), extended-week sessions (Saturday), or extended-year sessions (summer school). All OEY programs included parental involvement activities; staff development sessions for teachers; and student performance evaluations (i.e., attendance, pre- and posttest information, classroom performance, and promotion and retention information).

Program Strategies

In Fall 2007, AISD curriculum staff developed an OEYP curriculum of structured classes for 2007–2008 program participants that incorporated an interdisciplinary program and required staff to deliver the materials at a rigorous, accelerated pace to provide additional instructional time before school, after school, or on Saturdays. The OEYP was implemented for middle school students in November 2007 and for elementary participants in February 2008. The 2007–2008 OEYP application was amended in June 2008 to fund several summer activities designed to

reduce the number of middle school students at risk of failing their courses. These summer activities included reading and math classes at 4 AISD middle schools, a Jump Start program that focused on core courses at 3 high schools, and a 10-day credit accrual program. Table 1 shows the TEA-defined instructional strategies and the frequency of their use by principals who held OEY programs at their schools.

Table 1: Principals’ Self-Reported Frequency of Use of Instructional Strategies in OEYP, 2007–2008

Areas of program focus	% of program strategies used most often
Reading or language arts programs	98
Mathematics and/or science programs	98
Problem solving	98
Accelerated math instruction (AMI)	97
Accelerated reading instruction (ARI)	95
Follow-up activities	87
English as a second language (ESL)	84
Interdisciplinary program strategies	81
Readiness for next grade	80
Integration of technology	79
Mentoring	77
Parent partnerships	76

Source. OEYP Principal Survey Results (2007a, 2008a)

Staff Development Sessions

Principals (n = 75) reported offering staff development sessions for their teachers prior to implementation of OEYP. Staff development topics mentioned most often by principals were:

- Assessment strategies (n = 72)
- Questioning strategies (n = 71)
- Researched-based practices (n = 71)
- Teaching strategies in content area (n = 66)
- Accelerated instruction (n = 63)
- Grouping patterns (n = 63)
- Learning styles (n = 61)

Other topics mentioned were integrating technologies (n = 56), mentoring (n = 55), cultural and linguistic diversity (n = 55), interdisciplinary instruction (n = 55), and team teaching (n = 52).

Parent Involvement

When principals were asked how they informed parents that OEYP was available to their child or children, the majority (88%, n = 66) said they used letters to parents and parent-teacher

conferences. Survey results indicated that a duplicated count of 43,112 elementary and secondary parents participated in OEYP activities during school year 2007–2008, which almost tripled the number (n = 15,264) of parents who participated in various activities in 2006–2007. Principals reported the following as examples of activities they used most often to involve parents of students participating in their campus OEYP: coffees, conferences, assemblies, meetings, workshops, literacy activities, and literacy nights. Table 2 shows parent attendance at the parent involvement activities most frequently reported by principals (n = 56) responding to the survey. A separate event listing is available from AISD DPE records. See Table 6 for additional data on parent involvement activities between 2000–2001 and 2007–2008.

Table 2: OEYP Involvement Activities Reported Most Often by Principals, 2007–2008

Activity	# Parents participating
Literacy fairs and nights (mathematics, reading, science)	18,006
Parent teacher conferences	15,738
Parent workshops	2,965
Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) workshops	2,700
Coffee talks with principal, and parent-teacher conferences	2,417
Small-group parent involvement activities*	1,286
TOTAL	43,112

Source. *OEYP Principal Survey Results* (2007a, 2008a)

* Small-group parent activities were too numerous to list individually.

When principals were asked whether their campuses provided parents with services and other activities to increase parent involvement on their campuses, all principals (n = 75) reported using materials, and conducting meetings in the home language of the parents. A majority of the principals also reported using conferences with parents (93%), parent training about reinforcing reading skills at home (79%), and parent training in study skills strategies and how to assist with their child’s homework assignments (77%). Sixty-five percent (n = 49) of principals reported providing parent training about making mathematics manipulative to enhance student learning, 52% (n = 39) reported using child care for parents to allow involvement in activities, and 51% (n = 38) reported surveying parents to help determine program needs. Some principals (43%, n = 32) reported including parents as partners in developing their OEY programs, asking parents to serve as teacher assistants in classroom and extension services (37%, n = 28), and providing parent training in technology (36%, n = 27).

Program Cost

AISD’s OEYP budget allocation was \$410,822 for September 1, 2007 through August 31, 2008. Recorded expenditures showed 89% (\$366,674) was expended for instructional staff and associated costs (e.g., FICA, workers’ compensation, and teacher retirement); 9% (\$37,251)

for instructional supplies and materials; and \$6,315 for other costs (i.e., student field trips, student meals, refreshments for parent involvement activities).

PROGRAM INFORMATION, CURRICULA, AND EXPECTATIONS FOR SUCCESS

Of the 75 principals who returned the survey, 84% (n = 63) agreed that the rigor and pace of the curriculum offered through their OEYP were comfortable. Eighty percent (n = 60) agreed that PEIMS staff provided school staff with adequate training about OEYP data entry, that school staff were comfortable with entering and reporting PEIMS attendance data from the campus level, and that communication with OEYP program managers was adequate. Seventy-five percent (n = 56) agreed that their expectations for student success were met, and that they had received adequate information about the OEYP grant that funded the program at their school. Fifty-six percent (n = 39) of the principals agreed that parent involvement on their campuses was good. On the other hand, 14% (n = 10) of the responding principals disagreed that involvement at their school by parents of students participating in OEYP classes was good; 23% (n = 16) were undecided about whether parent participation was good, and 7% (n = 5) indicated the question was not applicable to their program. These results are a cause for concern because schools are required by state and federal law to include parent involvement in supplementary academic activities. Furthermore, parent involvement is a key element of AISD's efforts to enhance students' academic and social success, and the majority of these schools had previously participated in OEYP.

PRINCIPALS' COMMENTS OR RECOMMENDATIONS ABOUT USE OF OEYP FUNDS

When principals were asked to make comments or recommendations about how the district might enhance the use of OEYP funds, 21% (n = 16) responded. Of the respondents, 50% made recommendations about the distribution and use of OEYP funds, such as earlier distribution of funds in the school year so planning for activities could take place earlier, establishment of a district-wide elementary summer school program for students in grades other than 3 through 5, and purchases of math resources for parents and students and of healthy snacks. Twenty-five percent (n = 4) were complimentary in their remarks regarding the district's high level of support for OEYP, and 4 indicated they liked the program as it currently operates and had no comments or recommendations.

PROGRAM COMPLETION, STUDENT PROMOTION, AND RETENTION

Principals and teachers in OEYP completed records that showed whether OEYP students on their campuses were to be promoted or retained, based on the students' academic work and attendance. An electronic copy of AISD's *PEIMS Edit + Reports Data Review* (AISD, 2008b) showed that 5,810 students attended at least 1 day of an OEY program in 2007–2008. Of that number, 5,566 were promoted, 145 were retained, and 99 were served by OEYP but officially withdrew from the district prior to the end of the school year. See Table 3 for promotion, retention, and withdrawal data, by grade level.

Table 3: AISD OEYP Promotion/Retention and Withdrawal Data, by Grade Level, 2007–2008

Grade level	# Enrolled	# Promoted	# Retained	# Withdrawals
Kindergarten	39	37	2	0
01	154	138	13	3
02	144	136	6	2
03	1,463	1,398	53	12
04	1,120	1,088	21	11
05	1,269	1,232	28	9
06	541	512	6	23
07	411	392	5	14
08	669	633	11	25
TOTAL	5,810	5,566	145	99

Source. PEIMS Edit + Reports Data Review, 2007–2008 OEYP Extended Collection and Resubmission Results (AISD, 2008b)

Of the number promoted, 25% (n = 1,252) were placements. Placements occur when students who do not meet the district’s academic criteria for promotion are placed on the next grade level by the unanimous decision of the grade placement committee based on district policy.¹ Table 4 provides a review of AISD OEYP placement data across Grades 3 through 5. During 2005–2006, the highest placement numbers were at Grade 3. In 2006–2007 and 2007–2008, the highest placement numbers were at Grade 5. Although Grade 3 is a crucial level because TAKS testing begins there, students at the elementary school level still have time to catch up. The Grade 5 placements raise concerns because these students became sixth graders and transitioned to middle school the following year without meeting the program’s criteria for academic success at the fifth grade level.

Table 4: AISD OEYP Grade Placement for Grades 3 Through 5, 2005–2006 to 2007–2008

Year	Grade	Total # enrolled	#Regular promotion	# Placed	% Placed
2005–2006	3	2,249	1,798	385	21%
	4	1,433	1,071	335	31%
	5	2,257	1,478	194	13%
2006–2007	3	943	224	15	7%
	4	766	592	163	28%
	5	917	556	337	61%
2007–2008	3	1,463	1,165	233	20%
	4	1,109	822	266	32%
	5	1,260	883	349	40%
TOTAL		12,397	8,589	2,277	27%

Source. PEIMS Edit + Reports Data Review, 2006, 2007, 2008 Extended Collections and Resubmission Results (AISD, 2006, 2007b, 2008b)

Analysis of PEIMS submissions for 2006–2007 through 2007–2008 showed 998 students participated in OEYP for 2 consecutive years. Table 5 shows OEYP promotion by TEA-assigned promotion and retention codes for these 998 students. The codes are defined by TEA as follows:

¹ A student who does not demonstrate proficiency may advance to the next grade only if the student’s grade placement committee (GPC) determines by unanimous decision, in accordance with the standards for promotion established by the Board, that the student is likely to perform at grade level at the end of the next year given additional accelerated instruction.

Code 1. The student was promoted to the next grade level and met both the district’s 90% attendance and academic promotion criteria.

Code 2. The student was promoted to the next grade level based on district policy, but did not meet the 90% attendance requirement.

Code 3. The student was promoted to the next grade level based on district policy, but did not meet the district’s promotion criteria.

Code 4. The student was promoted to the next grade level, but did not meet the attendance or promotion criteria.

Code 5. The student was retained due to parental request.

Code 6. The student was retained for reasons other than parental request.

Code 7. The student was served, but officially withdrew from the district prior to the end of the school year.

Ninety-six percent (n = 960) of those 998 students were promoted to the next grade in 2007–2008. Of those promoted to the next grade, 18% (n = 181) had promotion code 3 and were promoted based on district policy (EIE-LEGAL: Promotion), but did not meet the district’s academic promotion criteria (i.e., passing a course or subject at a rate of 70% or greater). Another 5% (n = 52) had promotion code 4 and were promoted or placed using district policy, but did not meet the 90% attendance or district passing criteria for promotion. Grade 5 had the largest number (n = 71) of students who were promoted without meeting district policy (promotion codes 3 and 4). An analysis of student records on January 21, 2009 showed 89% (n = 892) of these 998 students were currently enrolled in AISD.

Table 5: End of School Year 2007–2008 Status of OEYP Students Served, 2006–2007 and 2007–2008

Grade Level	# students by promotion code				# Retained		# Withdrew	Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
1	6		8					14
2	7		6					13
3	47	6	13	1	1	2		70
4	175	17	55	3		7	2	259
5	156	10	65	6	1	6		244
6	68	31	14	26		2	5	146
7	57	34	8	8		3	2	112
8	79	34	12	8		2	5	140
Total	595	132	181	52	2	22	14	998

Source. PEIMS Edit + Reports Data Review, 2006, 2007, 2008 Extended Collections and Resubmission Results (AISD, 2006, 2007b, 2008b)

Further review showed that AISD had an average promotion rate of 96% (n = 34,336) among OEYP students (n = 34,721) served in the past 8 years, and that the majority of students were served during the fall and spring sessions. See Table 6 for more information regarding students promoted in OEYP from 2000–2001 to 2007–2008.

Table 6: AISD Students Served and Promoted in OEYP, 2000–2001 Through 2007–2008

School year	Grade level	School semester	#	%
	ranges served		Served	Promoted
2000–2001	K-8	Intersession and summer	3,518	96
2001–2002	3-8	Summer	2,609	95
2002–2003	4-8	Spring and summer	2,312	97
2003–2004	3-8	Spring and summer	3,565	97
2004–2005	K-12	Fall and spring	4,006	94
2005–2006	K-12	Fall and spring	8,428	96
2006–2007	K-8	Spring	4,473	97
2007–2008	K-8	Fall, spring, and summer	5,810	96
TOTAL			34,721	96

Source. Washington, Doolittle, & Williams (2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007)

OEYP parent involvement data were available for the same period (2000–2001 to 2007–2008) and were included in the same review. As shown in Table 7, the program actively involved large numbers of parents in a variety of OEYP activities during this same 8-year period, with 2007–2008 parent involvement counts being the greatest, compared with those of prior years. A review of the data for peak parental involvement (2005–2006 through 2007–2008) showed the majority of principals reported using the following activities most often to involve parents in activities at their campuses: sending out flyers and letters, making phone calls, holding parent teacher conferences, using materials and meetings in the home language of parents to encourage the participation of ESL parents, and offering child care.

Table 7: Parents Involved in OEYP Activities, 2000–2001 Through 2007–2008

School year	# Parents involved (duplicated count)
2000–2001	2,909
2001–2002	2,420
2002–2003	3,917
2003–2004	4,005
2004–2005	5,820
2005–2006	14,459
2006–2007	15,264
2007–2008	43,112

Source. Washington, Doolittle, & Williams (2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007)

Note. Parents could attend more than one event; therefore, the total participation count for this period includes duplicates.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Principals' responses to survey questions indicated they were in compliance with the following TEA OEYP policies:

- providing training for accelerated instructional staff,
- using state-designated curricula and approved instructional strategies,
- notifying parents about the availability of the program, and
- involving parents in various OEYP activities.

However, the percentages of responding principals who disagreed that involvement at their school by parents of students participating in OEYP classes was good (14%), were undecided about whether parent participation was good (23%), or indicated the question regarding parent involvement was not applicable to their program (7%) causes concern. Concerns include the following: (a) schools are required by state and federal law to include parent involvement in supplementary academic activities, (b) the majority of these schools had previously participated in OEYP and should have been aware of state mandates governing involvement of parents, and (c) all principals should be aware of district efforts to promote parent involvement as a key element of AISD's efforts to enhance students' academic and social success. Therefore, it is recommended that program administrators and managers ensure that all participating schools include parent involvement in their OEYP.

OEYP is a state-funded grant that provides extended learning opportunities for students in kindergarten through grade 12 who are at risk of academic failure, and AISD's program serves as an example of an effective supplemental educational program. Since 2000–2001, the district has used OEYP funds to serve 34,721 students who would have been retained without the benefit of supplemental instruction. Of that number, more than 99% ($n = 33,336$) have been promoted. However, the data also showed that almost 1,000 students had been in the OEYP for two consecutive years. Of those 1,000 students, many were being placed in the next grade levels when they had not mastered the work at their current grade levels more often than third graders in recent years. Therefore, it is recommended that district administrators, program managers, and school staff use all available resources to anticipate and make plans to address student placements (i.e., students promoted by district policy) through sustained, extensive year-round academic support that involves guided diagnostic, individualized, and prescriptive instructional intervention activities in the core subject areas (i.e., reading, math, science, social studies). According to recent studies by the Harvard Family Research Project (2008) and Johns Hopkins' National Center for Summer Learning (Alexander, Entwisle, & Olson, 2007), activities such as these can help span the gap between the end of one school year and the beginning of the next school year. Use of OEYP or other funds to provide out-of-school activities can provide struggling students with strategically planned learning experiences throughout the summer (i.e., when they most likely would be academically disengaged) that prepare them for returning to school.

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