Optional Extended Year Program Summary   Author:
2000-2001   Wanda Washington, Evaluation Staff

Foreword

The Optional Extended Year Program is a supplemental state grant program first introduced as a Retention Reduction Pilot Program from 1993-1995 for students in first grade. The success of the Retention Reduction Program led to greater support for such initiatives in the Texas legislature. The Optional Extended Year Program (OEYP) was initiated in 1995 as a result of Senate Bill 1 in order to provide extended learning opportunities for students in kindergarten through grade 8 who are at risk of academic failure.

The primary focus of an OEY program is to immediately reduce and ultimately eliminate the need for student retention. OEY programs are designed to accommodate four school-day options; 1) extended day; 2) extended week; 3) intersession for year-round schools; and 4) summer school. A school district may provide instructional services during any of these programs for a period of time not to exceed 30 days. In 2000-01, 8 elementary schools conducted an OEY program during intersession. These 8 year-round schools served 708 students in grades K-6. In the summer of 2001, 28 schools conducted OEY funded programs and served 2,810 students.

Since 1993, the Austin Independent School District has used the OEY program for extended day, extended week, year-round schools' March intersession, and summer school to reduce the number of AISD students that were at risk of being retained in schools receiving Title I funds.

School year 2000-2001 marked the first time AISD served students at risk of failing a grade level or a course from any school within the AISD attendance area (districtwide service) during the summer program. That school year is also the first time students in grades 3-5 were involved in a summer school effort outside of their home school. This effort was successful in serving students from 82 schools throughout the district.

Because the Texas Education Agency sets the criteria for promotion, and provides OEY program policy on class size (no more than 16 students to a class and no fewer than 8), attendance, staff development and parental involvement, this report will provide operational and outcome (attendance, promotion, parent involvement, and staff development) data and recommendations to assist district program planners, administrators (principals), grants staff, and School Support Services staff (parent involvement) in the planning and delivery of services to students at risk of not being promoted to the next grade. New state law requires that in the 2002-2003 school year students who fail the new state mandated Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) in Reading at the third grade level will generally not be promoted. Thus, at-risk students whose assessed skills have been determined to be below grade level according to district standards, and/or students who need to recover a grade or grades for promotion purposes will be the primary focus in AISD's OEY programs.

Evaluation Overview

Around mid-September, TEA requires each district that receives OEY funds to submit OEY information as part of the district's electronic PEIMS report. The OEY PEIMS data contain basic demographic information about the students who participated in the previous school-year OEY program activities (e.g., student's name, PEIMS ID number, campus enrollment number, the next school year grade, OEY program type, total days of instruction, total days absent, and total number of program days). Approximately 10 days after the electronic data submission, districts are required to submit an OEY Program Evaluation and Final Expenditure report package. The report package contains the following information about students and parents who participated in 2000-2001 OEY programs:

- numbers of students retained or promoted,
- average OEY class size,
- student attendance rates,
- number of students promoted or failed in grades 6-8 who took 1-3 courses in the summer that they failed during the regular school year,
- number of teaching and district staff participating in OEY activities, provision of staff development, and
- the number of parents directly involved in OEY activities.

Teachers were also asked to provide information about their students on a roster provided by staff from the Office of Program Evaluation. Data requested were: 1) student demographics (name, student ID number, current grade); 2) daily attendance; 3) academic classes attended; 4) pre- and posttest data for program participants; and 5) student promotion or retention recommendation.

Most of this data is reported to TEA. However, TEA does not require the reporting of pre- and posttest data in the Optional Extended Year Evaluation Program report or the PEIMS report. In addition, student promotion or retention is not necessarily predicated upon pre- and posttest data or attendance.

Evaluation Objectives

1. To document AISD's OEY program (a)-1m of

Staffing and Staff Development

In 2000-01, AISD used OEY funds to hire 460 staff members, and of these, 324 were teachers and 136 were other staff (e.g., principals, teacher aides, counselors, clerks, parent support specialists, evaluation associate, special education and bilingual support staff). See Table 1 for the instructional staff information by grade level and term.

Table 1: OEY 2000-2001 Instructional Staff by Term and Grade

Grade Level	March Intersession # of Teachers	Summer School # of Teachers
K	3	0
1	8	0
2	15	0
3	17	61
4	16	55
5	12	33
6	6	21
7	0	31
8	0	46
Total	77	247

Source: AISD OEY Staff Survey

All 36 campuses that conducted OEY programs provided one or more staff professional development sessions during 2000-2001. The categories of staff development included curriculum and instruction, assessment/testing, student skills and needs, procedures and policy,

AISD schools with OEY programs (intersession and summer) held a variety of activities to engage parents in their child's learning.   The parents were notified through invitations, memos, newsletters, brochures, and phone calls about the activities.   Table 2 shows phone calls/conferences with parents and workshops were common at all school levels and program types.   Back to School Night and End of School Awards and Recognition Ceremony were common at both school levels during the summer 2001 program.

Table 2: Types of OEY Program Parent Involvement Notification and Activities in AISD, 2000-01

School Level and Program Type	Types of OEY Parent Involvement Activities
Elementary	
Intersession	Invitations, Memos, Newsletters, Brochures Sent Home
	Phone calls
	Workshops (e.g., TAAS, parenting, child's success in school, etc.)
	Field trip, recreational activities, community event
	Parents volunteering on campus
Summer Session	Invitations, Memos, Newsletters, Brochures Sent Home
	Back to School Night, Open House, Registration, Parent Day
	End-of-School Awards & Recognition Ceremony
	Workshops (e.g., parent resources)
	Parent Conferences, phone calls
Secondary	
Summer Session	Invitations, Memos, Newsletters, Brochures Sent Home
	Back to School Night, Open House, Registration
	Parent Conferences, parent visits to school, phone calls
	Workshops (e.g., high school requirements, community speakers)
	End-of-School Awards & Recognition Ceremony

Source: OEY Staff Survey, 2001

Table 3 shows the number of parents participating in the OEY program activities by school level and program type.   More parents were recorded for OEY summer program since there were more summer sites. Total numbers may have been underestimated due to incomplete records on parent participation.

Table 3:   Numbers of Parents Participating in OEY-funded Activities in AISD by School Level and Program Type, 2000-01

School Level	Intersession

Program Completion, Student Promotion and Retention

Of the 36 schools holding OEY-funded activities in 2000-01, 8 were elementary year-round schools: Allan, Becker, Maplewood, Metz, Ortega, St. Elmo, Sanchez, and Widen. In AISD's year-round program, the school year revolves around a modified 60/20 schedule (approximately 60 days in school and 20 days out) in contrast to the traditional nine-month calendar. Elementary students in grades K-6 who were falling behind in reading or mathematics and thus were possible candidates for grade retention were provided supplementary instruction through an interdisciplinary curriculum for a 5-day period during fall and spring intersession. Of the remaining 28 campuses, 12 served as elementary cluster sites for OEY SUCCESS and other-funded programs such as the Summer Opportunity to Accelerate Reading (SOAR): Blackshear, Govalle, Graham, Joslin, Linder, Mathews, McBee, Palm, Pleasant Hill, Reilly, Sims, and Winn.

Teachers make recommendations for promotion or retention based on their students' pre- and posttest scores (where available), student's academic work, and attendance. *These are teacher recommendations only. Student promotion or retention is not necessarily predicated upon pre- and post test data, student's academic work, or attendance.* Students who attend OEY activities can be promoted to the next grade in one of four situations: 1) meeting the 90% percent program attendance and district's academic requirements; 2) meeting academic requirements only; 3) meeting attendance requirement only; or 4) meeting neither attendance nor academic requirement (*subjective student placement*).

OEY program rosters with the students demographics, pre- and posttest scores, attendance information, and recommendations for promotion or retention, were provided to the home school principals who verified the teachers' recommendations for students. The verified/edited data were analyzed to complete the TEA OEY Program Evaluation report.

4% (118) were promoted after meeting neither the district's attendance nor academic requirements.

The promotions meeting only the attendance requirement or meeting neither academic nor the attendance requirement signal subjective student placement rather than earned promotion

TEA requested data on the number of students in grades 6-8 taking courses in the summer that they had failed during the regular school year (see Table 5). Two hundred eighteen students in grades 6-8 took one course in summer school that they had failed during regular school year 2000-01, and 96% (210) passed that summer course. Ninety-eight percent (217) of 221 students in grades 6-8 who took two courses in the summer that they had failed during the regular school term passed both courses satisfactorily. Two of four students who failed three or more courses during the regular school year passed the two courses that were offered to them. Access to three courses was denied because only two instructional blocks were offered during summer school, so they were automatically short one course. Overall, course passing rates for students taking one or more courses failed during the regular school year was high.

Table 5: Course Pass/Fail Data for Students in Grades 6-8
Taking Failed Regular-Term Courses During OEY Summer 2001

	# & % of Students Taking one Course Failed Regular Term		# & % of Students Taking Two Courses Failed Regular Term		# & % of Students Taking Three Courses Failed Regular Term	
Grade	# Passed	# Failed	# Passed	# Failed	# Passed	# Failed
6	30 (100%)	0	46 (100%)	0	1 (50%)	1 (50%)
7	105 (97%)	3 (3%)	65 (100%)	0	0	0
8	75 (94%)	5 (6%)	106 (96%)	4 (4%)	1 (50%)	1 (50%)
Total	**210 (96%)**	**8 (4%)**	**217 (98%)**	**4 (2%)**	**2 (50%)**	**2 (50%)**

Source: TEA Optional Extended Year Program Evaluation Report, 2000-01

Recommendations

Although, TEA requires that the local school district provide information on students' pre- assessments to determine the program design for each student, the final promotion decision for each student rests with the home school staff. This is important because review of the data signals several positive outcomes: 1) the majority (3,086 or 91%) of at-risk students served in OEY programs 2000-01 were promoted upon completion of the program meeting the academic and attendance standard; 2) cooperation between school staff and parents occurred in many retention decisions because the total number of students (119) retained included those students retained by "parent requests" (13 or 11%). However, the 118 students promoted in spite of not meeting academic or attendance requirements raises concern. Although TEA allows for such placements, it should be discouraged by the District. AISD must begin intervention earlier in the school year using other resources and OEY funds to assist all students who are struggling academically. There were also a few operational difficulties: 1) several middle school students

enrolled in courses and attended cluster sites that they were not originally assigned by their home schools; and 2) there were some inconsistency among summer staff about rules of student attendance and class size. These difficulties were minor, and were taken care of before summer school ended.

Overall, the promotion rate for summer 2001, excluding the placements, was good. Summer school effectively serves as a safety net for students with more immediate needs to accomplish promotion through such activities as bringing reading and math skills up to grade level, and grade recovery in language arts, mathematics or other core academic classes. The very nature of the OEY program is to serve students who are in danger of "retention" or who have been retained.

However, with the arrival of the TAKS test in school year 2002-03, and the knowledge that OEY does allow for a maximum of 30 days of instruction, district administrators must look at the following students groups in order to expand the impact of OEY on student learning: third

efficiently. By intervening with at-risk students earlier in the school year, it is likely that there would be a reduction in the number of students who need to attend summer school. This would result in a reduction in the number of sites needed to house students and a reduction in summer costs for staffing, maintenance, and transportation.

Also, there are benefits to be gained from looking at how other Texas school districts leverage their OEY funds to serve students. For example, during the February 10-13, 2002 16th

Austin Independent School District

Division of Accountability and Information Systems
Joy McLarty, Ph.D.