

STATE COMMISSION ON JUDICIAL
EVALUATION REPORT,



AUSTIN INDEPENDENT JUDICIAL
COMMISSION REPORT, JANUARY 2011

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

State Compensatory Education (SCE) is a supplemental program designed to eliminate any disparity in student performance on assessment instruments administered under Subchapter B, Chapter 39 of the Texas Education Code, or disparity in the rates of high school completion between students at risk of dropping out of school, as defined by Texas Education Code section 29.081, and all other students. The purpose of SCE is to design and implement an appropriate compensatory, intensive, or accelerated instruction program that enables at-risk students to be performing at grade level at the conclusion of the next regular school term.

SCE funds must be used for programs or services that are supplemental to the regular education program, and must be allocated in such a way that the indirect cost allotment does not exceed 15%, and no more than 18% of the total allocation is used to fund Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs. SCE funds may be used to support a program eligible under Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as provided by Public Law 103-382 and its subsequent amendments, and by federal regulations implementing that Act, at campuses where at least 50% of the students are educationally disadvantaged. Austin ISD allocated a total of \$23,000,000 for the 2001-02 school year, which supported a variety of programs and the equivalent of 384.71 full-time staff members. The district spent a total of \$25,238,525, which represents a cost of \$636 per student identified as at-risk.

Discrepancies in Texas Education Agency (TEA) guidance allow for differing interpretations regarding how SCE funds can be used. However, the intent of the law is clear. SCE legislation requires school districts to develop programs that will meet the needs of at-risk students in order to close the achievement gap between at-risk and non at-risk students. A total of 18 programs or services in 2001-02 were designated as State Compensatory Education.

A review of TAAS scores from Spring 2001 and Spring 2002 indicates that Austin ISD has decreased the disparity in the average test scores of At-Risk and Not At-Risk students for Writing, Reading, and Math over the last school year. In addition to a decrease in the disparity, both At-Risk and Not At-Risk students improved on all three TAAS tests from 2001 to 2002.

Despite this evidence suggesting progress toward attaining the goals of SCE, it is recommended that district staff place greater emphasis on using all SCE funds for services and programs that specifically target at-risk students. District staff should also directly address the legislative intent for all at-risk students to be performing at grade level by the conclusion of the next regular school term. Although current SCE programs and services may address this intent, at this time there is no explicit district goal in place or measure of the district's progress in meeting this goal.

Several of AISD's designated SCE programs supply campuses with allocations to be used for library materials, tutorials, and transition activities that target at-risk students. Although these funds are intended for the purpose of closing the achievement gap between at-risk and non-at-risk students, progress toward this goal is unmeasurable because the students served are not tracked individually. Thus, the extent to which these

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY I

RECOMMENDATIONS II

TABLE OF CONTENTS IV

LIST OF TABLES..... VI

LIST OF FIGURES VII

PART 1: INTRODUCTION.....1

STATE COMPENSATORY EDUCATION.....1

AISS AT-RISK POPULATION, 2001-024

DECREASING THE TAAS DISPARITY5

STATE COMPENSATORY EDUCATION PROGRAM EVALUATION, 2001-02.....6

PART 2: PROGRAMS EVALUATED BY THE AISS OFFICE OF PROGRAM EVALUATION7

DILL SCHOOL7

 Dill Short Term Program.....7

 Dill Long Term Program9

 Dill Special Education Program11

 Dill Parent and Teacher Surveys, Short Term Program11

 Interviews With Dill Short Term Students12

 Recommendations.....16

VISITING TEACHERS17

 Clients Served.....18

 Client Survey19

 Administrator Survey20

 Conclusions21

 Recommendations.....21

PREGNANCY RELATED SERVICE TEACHERS22

 Students Served22

 Student Survey.....24

 Conclusions25

 Recommendation25

DIVERSIFIED EDUCATION THROUGH LEADERSHIP, TECHNOLOGY, & ACADEMICS (DELTA) Client Survey25

Absent Student Assistance Program (ASAP)	41
In-School Suspension (ISS) Monitors	42
CAMPUS ALLOCATIONS	43
Account for Learning	43
Secondary Tutorials	44
Secondary Transition Programs	44
9 th Grade Initiatives	44
Additional Library Allocation	45
Weighted Per Pupil	45
RECOMMENDATIONS	45
APPENDICES	47
APPENDIX A: DILL SCHOOL	47
Special Education Population, 2001-02	47
Dill Parent Survey Responses, Spring 2002	48
Dill Teacher Survey Results, 2001-02	51
Dill Student Interview Questions, Spring 2002	52
APPENDIX B: VISITING TEACHERS	53
APPENDIX C: DELTA	54
REFERENCE LIST	56

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE 1.1 AUSTIN ISD STATE C

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE 2.1: NUMBER OF STUDENTS SERVED EACH M 7.98 273.72 685.8T785.. 23 Tc(ACH)Tj10.02 Od.17.64 3W2 299.64 37.38 T

PART 1: INTRODUCTION

STATE COMPENSATORY EDUCATION

State Compensatory Education (SCE) is a supplemental program designed to eliminate any disparity in student performance on assessment instruments administered under Subchapter B, Chapter 39 of the Texas Education Code, or disparity in the rates of high school completion between students at risk of dropping out of school, as defined by Texas Education Code section 29.081, and all other students. The purpose of SCE is to design and implement an appropriate compensatory, intensive, or accelerated instruction program that enables at-risk students to be performing at grade level at the conclusion of the next regular school term.

Each year the district receives an allotment from the state's Foundation School Program that is based on the average of the highest six months' enrollment of students that qualify in the national school lunch program for free- or reduced-price lunches the preceding school year. Districts receive an additional allotment for students without disabilities who reside in residential placement facilities in a district in which the student's parent or guardian does not reside, and are also entitled to receive an additional allotment for each student who is in a remedial and support program because the student is pregnant or a parent. In 2001-02 the Legislative Payment Estimate to Austin ISD for SCE was \$21,342,495, of which the district was required to spend at least 85% on supplemental services or programs targeting at-risk students. The district allocated \$23,000,000 for SCE, which supported a variety of programs and the equivalent of 384.71 full-time staff members in the 2001-02 school year. Using local funds, Austin ISD spent a total of \$25,238,525 on SCE, a cost of \$636 per student identified as at-risk. Table 1.1 lists the programs and services implemented in the district that were partially or fully supported through SCE in 2001-02.

In determining the appropriate intensive accelerated instruction or state compensatory education program, districts must identify the needs of at-risk students and examine student performance data resulting from the basic skills assessment instrument and achievement tests. Using this needs assessment, district and campus staff must design appropriate strategies to help at-risk students achieve academic success and include these strategies in the campus and/or district improvement plan.

fund Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs. SCE funds may be used to support a program eligible under Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as provided by Public Law 103-382 and its subsequent amendments, and by federal regulations implementing that Act, at campuses where at least 50% of the students are educationally disadvantaged.

There are discrepancies between Texas Education Agency (TEA) staff guidance and TEA documents resulting in different interpretations among district staff regarding allowable expenses for SCE funds. TEA staff indicate that SCE funds may only be used for programs that are limited to the service of at-risk students, with the exception of services provided on Title I Schoolwide campuses. This would prohibit the use of SCE funds for programs or services such as ISS Monitors that are not limited to at-risk students. However, ISS programs are specifically listed in TEA's Financial Accounting and Reporting Guide as an example of allowable expenditures under the program intent code for SCE funds. Despite the discrepant interpretations, the intent of the law is clear. SCE legislation requires schools to develop programs that will meet the needs of at-risk students in order to close the achievement gap between at-risk and non at-risk students.

Several of AISD's designated programs supply campuses with allocations to be used for library materials, tutorials, and transition activities that target at-risk students. Although these funds are intended for the purpose of closing the achievement gap between at-risk and non-at-risk students, it is difficult to measure the progress toward this goal. The extent to which these funds serve at-risk students remains unclear. In addition, currently there is no method of documentation to indicate how funds are used to accomplish the goals of SCE. Campuses are not required to submit a list of students served by these allocations, nor are they required to account for the appropriate expenditure of all SCE funds.

It is recommended that district staff place greater emphasis on using all SCE funds for services and programs that specifically target at-risk students. District staff should also directly address the legislative intent for all at-risk students to be performing at grade level by the conclusion of the next regular school term. Although current SCE programs and services may address this intent, at this time there is no explicit district goal in place or measure of the district's progress in meeting this goal. It is

recommended that the District Improvement Plan include performance objectives and action plans for specifically addressing the legislative objectives for SCE.

AISD AT-RISK POPULATION, 2001-02

In 2001-02, 52% of AISD students (n=39,685) were identified as at-risk, a slight increase from 50% (n=38,924) in 2000-01. Half of those students were identified as at-risk because they had failed assessments such as end-of-course exams, ITBS, or TAAS (Table 1.2). Over one-third of identified at-risk students are limited English proficient (LEP), and 23% had been retained at one or more grade levels.

Table 1.2: Number and Percentage of Students Reported At-Risk in 2001-02, by Each At-Risk Indicator

At Risk Indicator	Number of Students Identified*	Percentage of Reported At-Risk Students
Assessment Related	19,974	50.3%
LEP	14,924	37.6%
Retained 1 or more grades	9,126	23.0%
Currently failing 2 or more courses	4,735	11.9%
Failed 2 or more courses	3,599	9.1%
Other	3,095	7.8%
Removal to Alt. Ed.	1,290	3.3%
Previously reported dropout	686	1.7%
Residential Treatment Facility	258	.7%
Parole, probation, cond. Release	65	.2%
Expelled under Ch. 37	37	.1%
Total Number of Students	39,685	

Source: Fall 2001 PEIMS Submission

*Note: The sum of the number of students identified with each At-Risk indicator does not equal the number of reported At-Risk students, due to students reported in more than one category.

The percentage of Hispanic students in AISD that were identified as At-Risk (63%) exceeds the percentage of students identified as At-Risk in all other ethnic groups (Table 1.3). Anglos had the smallest percentage of students identified as At-Risk (31%). The proportion of students identified as At-Risk increased with each grade level in 2001-02, as expected due to the increased opportunities for meeting the At-Risk criteria.

Table 1.3: Number and Percentage of AISD Students in Each Ethnic Group Identified as At-Risk in 2001-02

	Native American	Asian	African American	Hispanic	Anglo
Percentage (n) of Students in Each Ethnic Group Identified as At-Risk	37% (70)	46% (946)	49% (5,676)	63% (24,344)	31% (7,707)

Source: Fall 2001 AISD At-Risk Data File

Currently, AISD maintains records of students “served” by SCE programs. However, these records actually indicate the students who are to be served rather than the actual receipt of specific services. Additional indicators should be used to reflect actual services provided (or not provided) to at-risk students so that SCE services could be appropriately tracked. Thus, designated SCE programs and services must be identified before the school year begins.

DECREASING THE TAAS DISPARITY

In order to assess the district’s progress toward meeting the legislative requirement to decrease the disparity in student performance on achievement assessments, the disparity in TAAS scores of At-Risk and Not At-Risk students was calculated and compared for 2001 and 2002. A review of TAAS scores from Spring 2001 and Spring 2002 indicates that Austin ISD has decreased the disparity in the average test score of At-Risk and Not At-Risk students for Writing, Reading, and Math over the last school year (Table 1.4). In addition to a decrease in the disparity, both At-Risk and Not At-Risk students improved on all three TAAS tests from 2001 to 2002.

However, the sample used for this comparison includes less than 40% of all AISD At-Risk students and less than 45% of all AISD students not identified as At-Risk. Because the TAAS test is only administered to students in grades 3-8 and 10, this comparison of TAAS scores does not reflect the disparity in achievement for the entire district, nor does it reflect scores on the Spanish language version of TAAS.

Table 1.4: Disparity Between Average English Language TAAS Scores for At-Risk and Not At-Risk Students, Spring 2001 and Spring 2002

	Spring 2001 Average English Language TAAS TLI or Scale Scores			Spring 2002 Average English Language TAAS TLI or Scale Scores		
	Reading	Math	Writing	Reading	Math	Writing
At Risk Avg.	77.2	75.0	1580.1	79.4	77.1	1595.1
Not At-Risk Avg.	88.8	84.3	1704.0	89.6	85.0	1709.7
TLI or Scale Score Disparity	-11.6	-9.3	-123.9	-10.2	-8.0	-114.6

Source: AISD Student Records, 2002

STATE COMPENSATORY

PART 2: PROGRAMS EVALUATED BY THE AISD OFFICE OF PROGRAM EVALUATION

DILL SCHOOL

Dill School is an alternative elementary school that was organized during the summer of 1982 after the Texas Legislature passed a bill requiring that school districts provide alternative placements for elementary children who have been suspended from their school. The school provides placements for short-term suspensions (fewer than 4 days) and long-term removals (more than 4 days), a special education program, and classroom consultations with regular campus teachers by two behavior specialists before students come to Dill. The school's philosophy centers around the theory of behavior modification, and once students are referred to Dill they experience a strict program that provides very consistent positive and negative consequences for their behavior.

In keeping with the behavior modification philosophy, the staff at Dill School attempt to modify the environment so that students come to realize that appropriate behavior results in achievement of goals. Daily point sheets for long-term students keep families informed of children's progress. Parents are asked to sign the point sheets but are not expected to discipline the children for behavior that occurred at school. The Dill staff believe that they are responsible for students' behavior at school, and hope that this procedure will alleviate family stress that is often associated with poor school behavior.

Dill can maintain a maximum of 70 students enrolled at one time. However, the administration tries to keep classes at fewer than 12 students each. Dill staff attend workshops and training offered by AISD, the Texas Education Agency (TEA), and the University of Texas including: Institute for Learning, Professional Development Appraisal System (PDAS), TEA's Comprehensive Analysis Process (CAP), and Region IX ESC's Texas Behavior Support Initiative (TBSI Training). Dill received a State Compensatory Education budget allocation of \$640,000 in 2001-02.

DILL SHORT TERM PROGRAM

Each short-term suspension classroom is designed to be a 1 to 3 day classic "time-out" environment. Students are expected to sit in their seats at cubicles and make no noise. Dill teachers communicate with students only to give instructions such as "sit in your seat." Students are assigned work by their home school's classroom teacher, and

are neither encouraged to do the work nor punished for not completing assignments. Instead, Dill teachers rely on the natural consequences associated with completing or failing to complete assignments. Students in the short-term classrooms are left alone for the most part, and choose whether or not to complete their work, which may or may not result in a grade of zero from the referring home school's classroom teacher.

During 2001-02, Dill served 1197 students with a total of 2132 short-term assignments for reasons such as physical aggression toward others, disruptive/defiant behavior, and non-physical aggression. Students from all elementary grade levels and schools throughout the district attended Dill. Although the majority of students did not return to Dill, 37% of students (n=444) returned at least once during the school year, and 17% (n=204) returned more than once, some serving as many as 15 short-term assignments (Table 2.1). However, the Dill staff do not expect every child to learn appropriate behavior after only one short-term assignment, and children are considered successful if they return no more than once during the same year. During the 2001-02 school year, a total of 83% of short-term students either did not return or returned only once to Dill for short-term assignments during the same year. Only 4% of students who served short-term assignments later returned to the long-term program at Dill during the same school year.

Table 2.1: Recidivism During the Same Year for Dill Students Serving Short-Term Assignments, 2001-02

	Number Enrolled	% Returning Once to Short Term in the same year	% Returning Twice to Short Term in the same year	% Returning >2 Times to Short Term in the same year	% Not Returning to Short Term in the same year
Pre-K	7	14%	0%	14%	71%
Kindergarten	56	32%	9%	7%	52%
1st Grade	105	23%	7%	9%	62%
2nd Grade	163	17%	10%	12%	61%
3rd Grade	204	21%	5%	13%	61%
4th Grade	247	19%	8%	9%	65%
5th Grade	321	19%	9%	8%	64%
6th Grade	94	21%	7%	5%	66%
Total	1197	20%	8%	9%	63%

Source: Dill attendance records, 2001-02

DILL LONG TERM PROGRAM

Dill served 71 students in the long-term program during 2001-02. One third of those were mandatory removals (Table 2.2). Over 60% of students in the long-term

DILL SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM

Nineteen percent of those who attended Dill during 2001-02 were Special Education students, primarily students with an Emotional Disturbance or Learning Disability. The two Special Education classes at Dill are comprised almost entirely of severely emotionally disturbed students who have been referred by their home school or residential facility. Dill served 10 self-contained students through the Long Term Special Education program during the 2001-02 school year. Although they were not placed in the Special Education self-contained classrooms at Dill, 75 students in the Short Term program came from self-contained special education classes at their home schools. See Appendix A.

DILL PARENT AND TEACHER SURVEYS, SHORT TERM PROGRAM

During the Fall of 2001, a survey was sent to 553 parents of students who attended Dill for short-term assignments. One hundred forty-one parents of children from 52 elementary schools across the district returned questionnaires, yielding a response rate of 26%. While the majority of parents (58%) who responded reported feeling mostly or completely satisfied with the services provided by Dill, some reported feeling not very or not at all satisfied (10%) (Appendix A, Figures A1 to A5).

Of those who responded, 36% reported that their child had served 2 or more assignments to Dill during the Fall of 2001, and 44% reported that their child had attended Dill in previous school years. The majority of parents (64%) felt that their child's behavior at home was somewhat or much better than before, and almost as many (58%) felt that Dill assisted their children in making improvements that would help them at the home school. Although only a few parents (2%) reported that their child's behavior was somewhat worse than before attending Dill, 17% of parents did not feel that the Dill short-term program helped their child make improvements that will help at the home school.

Similar to parent survey results, responses to a survey administered to a sample of teachers who referred students to the Dill short-term program during the 2001-02 school year (n=27) reveal that over two-thirds of teachers surveyed reported that the typical student's behavior upon returning from Dill is better than before. The remaining 30% of teachers felt that the typical student's behavior is about the same after serving a short-term assignment at Dill.

Slightly more than half of the 141 parents who returned the parent survey gave responses to open-ended questions (n=82). When asked what they liked best about the services provided by Dill, parents most commonly mentioned the discipline and strict environment at Dill. Another common response indicates that parents liked Dill because the children did not like going, suggesting that parents think Dill is a good punishment for misbehavior. Many parents mentioned their appreciation for the bus service to Dill. However, several parents reported that the bus service was “inexcusably” late and problematic due to a variety of discipline incidents on the bus. Of parents responding to open-ended items, 13% stated that they liked nothing about the services provided by Dill, and 20% indicated that they knew little about Dill and would like more information (Appendix A, Table A2).

Although 11% of parents responding to open-ended items state that they would not change anything about Dill, others found some areas in need of improvement. Parents most commonly suggested that students be required to do schoolwork while there. Almost one quarter of the teachers surveyed reported that the typical student completes less than 60% of his/her assigned work while at Dill. Only 30% of teachers reported that the typical student completes 81-100% of assigned coursework.

In addition, many parents suggest that both Dill and home school staff should take more time to discuss misbehaviors and consequences with children. The combination of parent suggestions, recidivism rates, student interview results (described below), and teacher reports that 30% of students do not improve their behavior after serving short-term assignments at Dill indicates that many students do not experience a change in behavior due to Dill’s “time-out” technique alone.

INTERVIEWS WITH DILL SHORT TERM STUDENTS

In the Spring of 2002, a small sample of students (n=24) in 3rd – 6th grade who attended the Short Term program at Dill during Fall 2001 participated in a brief one-on-

Table 2.4: Percent of Students Stating Specific Feelings About Attending Dill

How did you feel when you found out you were going to Dill? (n=24)	
Bad	31%
Nervous/Scared	21%
Sad	17%
Mad	17%
Other (e.g., Disappointed, Embarrassed, etc.)	14%

*Note: 29 responses are represented because 4 students stated more than one feeling.

Source: Dill Student Interviews, Spring 2002

Although students were generally aware that Dill is not a fun place, their understanding of Dill was limited, at best. Students were unprepared for the Dill experience. Similar to parents' reported lack of knowledge about Dill, students often had misguided expectations based on faulty assumptions and rumors. When asked about their expectations of Dill, only 8% of the students said Dill was what they expected. Some students explained that they thought Dill was another room on their home school campus and were not aware they would be traveling to another location. Others did not expect to be sitting in cubicles. One student even described his fear that a "fat man was going to sit on [him]." Home school teachers and Dill staff should increase efforts to prepare students for the environment at Dill in order to promote better understanding about Dill and its purpose. This preparation would not interfere with the short-term program's "time out" approach if conducted before the student reaches Dill School.

Due to the "time-out" design of the Short Term Dill program, students do not receive direct instruction and are not required to complete their assignments; parents would like to see this changed. However, although almost half of the teachers surveyed reported that typical students they refer to Dill complete less than 80% of their assignments while at Dill, almost all of the students surveyed reported that they completed all or most of their assignments because "they don't let you do anything but work and work." In fact, one third of the students interviewed reported that they did not

got back to their regular classroom. Unfortunately, it is unclear the extent to which the students interviewed may generally feel behind in their regular classes, regardless of their Dill assignment. It is clear, however, as expected in the “time-out” model, that students did not feel supported academically during their stay at Dill. When asked if the teachers at Dill were helpful when students had questions about their work, over half reported that teachers were not helpful. The remaining students were divided evenly between responses of “Yes” and “Sometimes” teachers are helpful (Table 2.5).

Table 2.5: Dill Student Interview Responses to Academic Questions, 2001-02

	Yes	Some/Sometimes	No
Did you have enough work to keep yourself busy?	67%	0%	33%
Did you finish all of your assignments?	78%	13%	9%
Were the teachers helpful when you had questions about your work?	22%	22%	57%
When you got back to your class did you feel “behind”?	33%	8%	58%

Source: Dill Student Interviews, Spring 2002

When asked if Dill is a good place for kids who misbehave, half of the students indicated that Dill is a good place for students who misbehave because they will be punished and/or “learn a lesson.” Another 38% of students indicated that Dill is *not* a good place for students who misbehave because it is a very unpleasant place. These responses suggest that about half of the students view Dill as a good tool for altering behavior, and that most of the remaining portion feel Dill is an unpleasant consequence for misbehavior but may need assistance to make the cognitive connection between the punishment and its intended outcome.

Based on interview responses, there is no doubt that short-term students view Dill as an unpleasant place. Additionally, parents appreciate the strict discipline of Dill and the fact that students do not enjoy attending Dill. However, although most students could state the reason for their assignment to Dill, fewer than half felt that their trip to Dill would make them less likely to misbehave in the future. This suggests that the current

Almost one third of students felt that the best thing about Dill was lunch. Others

- Further investigate reasons for recidivism (>2 times) to find ways to be more effective in altering the negative behaviors of those children.

CLIENTS SERVED

Records indicate that VTs served a total of 2787 students during the 2001-02 school year (Figure 2.1). Over half of these students were served during the months of October (34%), November (11%), and April (22%), mainly for reasons related to the service categories of Academic Adjustment, School Home Communication, Emotional Problems, Non-Attendance, and Contacting Leavers/Documented Leavers. Special efforts were made in October and April to contact students who had left their schools during the school year.

Figure 2.1: Number of Students Served Each Month by Visiting Teachers, 2001-02

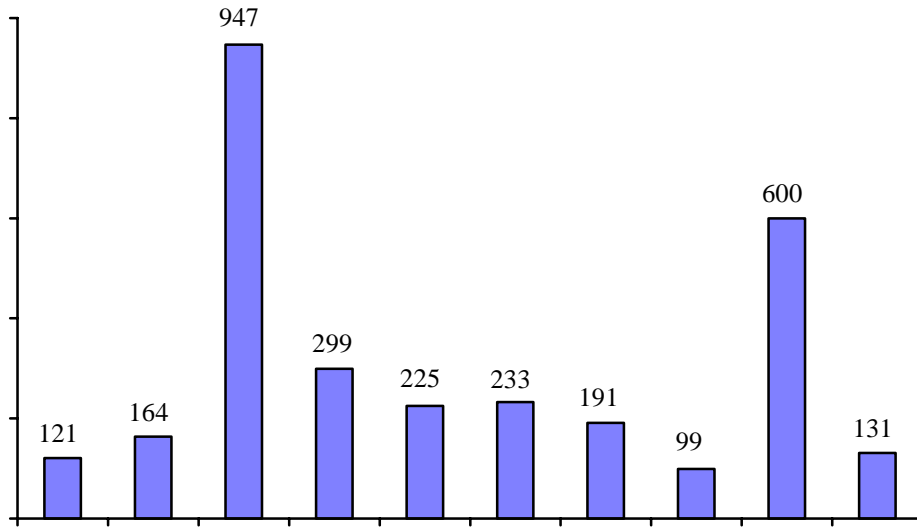


Table 2.6: Proportion of Visiting Teacher Services Provided by Category, 2001-02

Service Category	Number of VT Service Calls	Proportion of VT Services Provided
School/Home Communication	1401	27.1 %
Academic Adjustment	1078	20.8 %
Leavers/Documented Leavers	568	11.0 %
Basic Student Needs/Medical-Dental	484	9.4 %
Non-Attendance	348	6.7 %
Emotional Problems	324	6.3 %
Student		
Conduct/Delinquent/Disciplinary	283	5.5 %
Hearing/Court Appearance		
Impact Team Meetings	196	3.8 %
Family Crisis	178	3.4 %
Child Abuse/Neglect/Domestic Violence	81	1.6 %
Contracts/Social Histories	100	1.9%
School Related Crisis	60	1.2%
Teen Pregnancy	38	.7%
Drug & Alcohol Abuse	26	.5%
Total	5175	99.9%

Source: Visiting Teacher Service Log, 2002

CLIENT SURVEY

VTs delivered addressed, stamped survey cards to parents of elementary students and to secondary students or their parents in either English or Spanish. Parents (or secondary students) were asked to complete the survey and return it through the mail to the Office of Program of Evaluation. Clients of 11 of the 17 Visiting Teachers (VTs) returned survey cards, for a total of 52 surveys representing 31 schools. Seventy-nine percent of responses came from first-time clients.

The majority of parents and students report feeling “completely satisfied” with the services provided by their VT. Remaining responses are divided between “mostly satisfied” and “neutral” (Figure 2.2). All responses to the elementary survey indicate that children have been doing better in school since receiving the VT’s assistance, and almost 85% of responses to the secondary survey indicate that the VT helped a student to stay in school. All but one client said they would recommend the VT service to a friend. See Appendix B for a detailed description of survey results.

Figure 2.2: Satisfaction of Visiting Teacher Clients, Visiting Teacher Survey 2001-02

PREGNANCY RELATED SERVICE TEACHERS

Table 2.7: Number of Students Served by Pregnancy Related Service Teachers, 2001-02

School	Number Served	7 th Grade	8 th Grade	9 th Grade	10 th Grade	11 th Grade	12 th Grade
Dobie M.S.	1	1					
Fulmore M.S.	2		2				
Kealing J.H.	2		2				
Mendez M.S.	1		1				
Pearce M.S.	2		2				
Porter M.S.	1		1				
Akins H.S.	8			3	4	1	
Anderson H.S.	5			2		2	1
Austin H.S.	5			3		1	1
Crockett H.S.	19			4	6	4	5
Garza H.S.	1						1
Johnston H.S.	19			1	8	6	4
Lanier H.S.	14			4	4	3	3
LBJ H.S.	4			1		1	2
McCallum H.S.	9			2	1	3	3
Reagan H.S.	16			4	3	3	6
Travis H.S.	12			4	2	2	4
Total (%)	121	1 (1%)	8 (7%)	28 (23%)	28 (23%)	26 (21%)	30 (25%)

Source: PRS Teacher Roster, 2001-02

A review of student leaver codes for the 2001-02 school year, which document why students have left their educational setting, indicates that at least 95% of students served by the PRS Teachers remained in school after receiving services, according to either the absence of a leaver code or the presence of a code indicating that the student moved to another educational setting or completed school. Four students withdrew from school for “academic performance” reasons, and two students withdrew for “other” reasons (Table 2.8).

Table 2.8: PRS Homebound Student Leaver Codes, 2001-02

Status of Students with Leaver Codes	Leaver Reason	Number of Students
Other Educational Setting	School Change	3
	Garza	1
	Alternative Program	6
	Virtual Schools Pilot	8
	Home School	1
	Other Texas Public School	3
	Outside Texas	3
Completed School	Graduated	1
	GED	1
Left School	Academic Performance	4
	Other	2
Total "Leavers"		33
Students Who Did Not Leave School		88

DIVERSIFIED EDUCATION THROUGH LEADERSHIP, TECHNOLOGY, & ACADEMICS (DELTA)

The DELTA program is a competency-based dropout prevention and recovery program that has been in place since 1995 in AISD. It is an open-entry, open-exit, alternative diploma program that employs individualized and self-paced instruction through the use of the NovaNET computer system to deliver district curriculum and to assist students in earning credits and passing the TAAS exam. It is targeted at students age 14-21 who have already dropped out or are at risk of dropping out of high school. In recent years, priority has been given to 9th and 10th graders, who represent the highest risk group for dropping out. Since its inception, DELTA has served an increasing number of students each year and has helped more than 3,000 students earn high school diplomas.

DELTA is designed to recover students who have dropped out of school and to prevent at-risk students from leaving school before graduating. Through the use of technology, students complete course work and attain high school credits, allowing them an alternate route to graduation. Students may pace themselves and accelerate through the DELTA program, working a maximum of 20 hours per week in the DELTA lab. This program affords students the possibility to achieve multiple credits in a short amount of time. The curriculum includes a variety of assignments and experiences in addition to instructional blocks that are aligned with required district, state, and national frameworks. In addition to online course work, the curriculum contains offline work including projects, final exams, and reading that is extensive for certain courses such as Literature.

Teachers and computer lab assistants receive NovaNET training and additional staff development to ensure the delivery of a quality curriculum. Teachers confirm that the curriculum meets state and local requirements, consulting with other teachers to revise several courses each year. DELTA is funded through State Compensatory Education and additional sources such as 9th Grade Bridges to Success, Title I, Dropout Prevention, and others.

DELTA is available on every AISD traditional high school campus, the Alternative Learning Center (ALC), Gardner Betts Leadership Program and Half-way House, Phoenix House, JJAEP, Travis County Detention Center, La Fuente Learning

Table 2.10: Number and Percentage of Students Identified as Limited English Proficiency, Low Income, and by Grade Level

YEAR*

TRADITIONAL HIGH SCHOOL DELTA STUDENTS

Of the DELTA students in 2001-02 from traditional high schools, over half remained active in the program after the end of the school year. Other students withdrew from the program for various reasons. According to teachers, 12.5% of all DELTA students (over one quarter of the students who left DELTA) graduated¹, and more than one third of those who left the program returned to traditional classes (Table 2.11). Teacher records indicate that 5% of the students who left DELTA during the 2001-02 school year returned to the program the same year. Half of those who withdrew and then returned to the program left again within the same year, mostly to graduate or return to traditional classes.

Table 2.11: Teacher Descriptions of Withdrawal Reasons, DELTA 2001-02

Withdrawal Reason	% of 1 st Time Withdrawals (n=1145)	% of All DELTA Students*
Returned to Traditional Classes	36.1%	15.7%
Graduated	26.7%	12.5%
Moved/Relocated	10.8%	4.9%
Poor Attendance	6.7%	2.5%
Dropped Out	3.4%	1.5%
Pursuing GED	2.4%	1.1%
Discipline	2.4%	.6%
Pregnancy	.7%	.4%
Other	7.4%	3.4%
Unknown	3.2%	1.6%
Total	99.8%	44.2%

*Only the most recent withdrawal reason for each student is included in the calculation for % of all DELTA students leaving due to each withdrawal reason.

¹ Due to the lack of information such as exit level TAAS results, teacher records generally under-report the number of students who graduated. Although teachers report that 12.5% of all DELTA students graduated, district records show that 26% of all students who earned credits in DELTA graduated in May 2002.

Students in traditional high schools earned an average of .76 credits per student, according to teacher records. However, this statistic is misleading due to the number of students who enroll in the program near the end of a semester, leave the program after a short time, or do not attend school regularly. Therefore, students who earned no credits in DELTA were examined with the intention of documenting why students may not be successful in the program.

A total of 1191 students (47% of traditional high school DELTA students) are reported to have earned zero credits in the DELTA program (Table 2.14). Of those students, 10% were enrolled in the program for six weeks or less, and would not be expected to earn any credits. It is unclear from the data how many of the remaining 1069 students attended DELTA after their initial enrollment. Review of the number of lessons these students with zero DELTA credits completed through NovaNET indicates that 295 students completed 10 or fewer lessons. In addition, 337 of the students earning zero credits do not appear to have completed any work online. Teachers indicate that students would have no recorded online work if they were working only offline or did not attend DELTA.

Although a large number of students did not earn credits in DELTA during the 2001-02 school year, the percentage of DELTA students earning credits increased with each grade level (Table 2.13). Seniors were more than twice as likely as Freshmen to earn credits through DELTA, perhaps due to the immediate motivation to graduate.

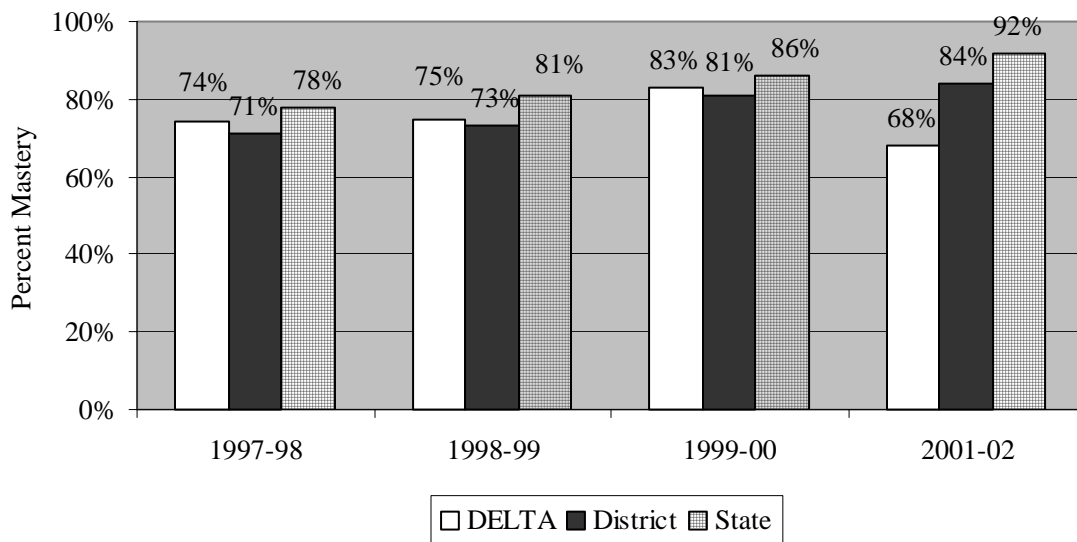
Table 2.13: Percentage of Students in DELTA Earning Credits by Grade Level, 2001-02

Grade Level	Number of Students Earning Credits	Percentage of Students Earning Credits
9 th Grade	88	29%
10 th Grade	180	39%
11 th Grade	303	58%
12 th Grade	730	65%

Source: AISD Student Records, 2002; DELTA teacher reports, 2001-02

Poor attendance may be the predominant reason many students did not experience success in the program. Discussion at monthly DELTA meetings indicates that many students enroll in the program but do not regularly attend class. Teachers are hesitant to

Figure 2.6: Percent Achieving Mastery on Exit-Level TAAS Math for the DELTA Program Only, the District, and the State, 1997-2002



Source: Delta Fifth Year Implementation report; AISD Student Records, 2002

Note: State and District data represent all 10th grade students taking the exit level TAAS.

DATA II

problems, current data is incomplete due the lack of information provided regarding

PART 3: ADDITIONAL AISD STATE COMPENSATORY EDUCATION PROGRAMS

ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAMS

GONZALO GARZA INDEPENDENCE HIGH SCHOOL (GARZA)

In 2001-02, Gonzalo Garza Independence High School (Garza) received a SCE allocation of \$1,970,000. Garza is the district's sole non-disciplinary alternative high school and has been in operation since Spring, 1997. Students at Garza complete all their coursework independently and at their own pace. Garza's non-traditional approach to learning is characterized by an integrated, inter-disciplinary curriculum that is problem- and project-based and enhanced by access to technology. Students attend for a four-hour block in either the morning, afternoon, or evening and are given the opportunity to choose among three levels of rigor in the curriculum. Within these levels students can choose between taking a final exam or creating a portfolio of their work, for example. Although students are encouraged to achieve a higher level of mastery, students are required to achieve a minimum of 70% mastery level for course completion.

Garza teachers participate in professional development throughout the school year. Texas Education Agency's Office of Alternative Education Accountability annually conducts evaluation of Garza as part of the state's accountability requirements. For more information regarding this evaluation, see <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/alt.ed/index.html>. Garza received a rating of "Acceptable" from the Texas Education Agency in 2002.

ALTERNATIVE LEARNING CENTER (ALC)

In 2001-02, the Alternative Learning Center (ALC) received a SCE allocation of \$1,920,000. The purpose of the ALC is to provide an alternative educational placement (AEP) for students as a consequence of inappropriate behavior. The ALC serves the 29 secondary schools of the district by providing an AEP for students who have violated the district's Code of Conduct, school rules, and/or state or local laws such as Senate Bill One. Students are sent, after a due process hearing, to complete a regular program, a special program, or for a specific extended period of time.

The ALC program focuses on teaching appropriate behavior and providing opportunities to practice this behavior in a group setting engaging in cooperative activities. Strengthening their academic skills to bring them to grade

proficiency is another major goal of the program. Student success is defined as the successful reintegration of students to their home schools with the behaviors, knowledge, and skills necessary to succeed. A behavior level system is used to determine student progress.

ALC staff participate in professional development activities each year. In addition to annual internal evaluation by ALC staff, ALC is evaluated by TEA in the Discipline Alternative Education Programs Annual Evaluation Report. The most recent report can be viewed online at <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/safe/2002daep.doc>.

SUMMER PROGRAMS

SUMMER OPPORTUNITY TO ACCELERATE READING (S.O.A.R.)

S.O.A.R. is a 21-day program providing early intervention to improve reading and literacy skills of students who will enter grades 1-3. Eligible students are identified by two reading assessments administered during the school year: *Texas Primary Reading Inventory* (TPRI) and *Developmental Reading Assessment* (DRA). The S.O.A.R. program utilizes a balanced literacy plan, including reading aloud to children, shared reading and writing, interactive writing, word study, guided reading, and independent reading. The curriculum is specifically designed to complement individual reading levels. Some students receive services through literacy centers, and others participate in guided reading groups led by teachers. S.O.A.R. is supervised by one principal at each campus and additional support staff in language arts. Teachers and administrators participate in professional development at the beginning of the program that focuses on strategies to improve reading skills. S.O.A.R. is evaluated annually by the AISD Office of Program Evaluation. The Summer Opportunity to Accelerate Reading (S.O.A.R.) Evaluation, 2002 is available online at http://www.austin.isd.tenet.edu/about/docs/ope_SOAR_Evaluation_2002.pdf. Key findings indicate that during the 19-day summer program of 2002, 86% of students with valid pre- and posttest scores showed reading improvement.

STUDENT UNDERSTANDING CAN CULMINATE IN EXCELLENCE IN S.92 c(.92 c(.92 3RCN.5R1.ij12 0 0 12 25

or mathematics or who are at risk of being retained are eligible to attend SUCCESS. Eligible students receive two hours of instruction each day for four weeks in language arts and/or mathematics. The mathematics portion of SUCCESS is “hands-on,” following the *Trailblazers* curriculum. Pretest and posttest scores are used to evaluate gains during the program. SUCCESS is supervised by the Principal at each campus and additional support staff in language arts and mathematics. Teachers and administrators participate in professional development at the beginning of the program that focuses on strategies to improve math and reading skills. SUCCESS is evaluated by the AISD Office of Program Evaluation as part of the annual Optional Extended Year Program Summary, available online through www.austin.isd.tenet.edu/about/accountability/oep/reports.phtml.

OTHER PROGRAMS

READING RECOVERY

In 2001-02, Reading Recovery received a SCE allocation of \$3,980,000. Reading Recovery is an early intervention program targeted at first grade students who are having the most difficulty learning to read (the lowest 20%-33% in reading skills). The goal of the program is for children to develop effective reading and writing strategies so that they can work within the average reading level in the regular classroom. At the beginning of the year, classroom teachers rank students according to reading skill level, then refer the lowest ranking students to the Reading Recovery teacher. The Reading Recovery teacher then assesses the referred students' text reading level with the *Observation Survey* to identify those most in need of Reading Recovery. The lowest four first grade students receive 30 minutes each day with the specialist in one-on-one sessions for an average of 12-20 weeks, allowing the program to serve a minimum of eight students individually at each campus during the school year. Low literacy students who do not receive the Reading Recovery instruction are placed in literacy groups conducted by Reading Recovery teachers and are eligible to move to Reading Recovery when a space becomes available.

All elementary campuses are assigned a literacy support specialist who is trained in Reading Recovery. Reading Recovery teachers are supervised by Reading Recovery Teacher Leaders, who oversee the literacy support program and train Reading Recovery

teachers. Reading Recovery Teacher Leaders must complete a one-year training at Texas Women's University (or another Reading Recovery training university) to be certified as teacher leaders. Professional development for teachers begins with the year-long graduate level study and is followed by ongoing training in succeeding years. Each year the Reading Recovery Council of North America conducts an evaluation through the National Data Evaluation Center (www.readingrecovery.org). Teacher Leaders and administrators at every site systematically collect and report data on every child. Each site receives evaluation results so they may incorporate the information into their local

COORDINATION OF DROPOUT INTERVENTION

AISD has adopted a district initiative addressing the critical issue of dropouts. The District Improvement Plan (DIP) for the last two school years has included the following specific goals related to this endeavor.

- Reduce the AISD annual dropout rate, with no campuses rated “low performing” based on their dropout rate
- Improve achievement for students identified according to TEA as “at risk”
- Improve coordination and access for students and families with school and community support services

The district has allocated \$380,000 of SCE funds towards the district’s \$1,000,000 annual budget for the Dropout Initiative. This SCE portion of the budget funds the full-time Dropout Coordinator and a variety of programs/services that are designed to reduce the number of dropouts. Specific programs funded by the designated SCE allocation are not identified in the budget. However, the overall Dropout Initiative provided funding for services such as summer reading programs, DELTA, and parent involvement resources/training.

The DIP identifies specific indicators to be used in measuring the success of the Action Plan for Graduation and Dropout Prevention/Recovery. The district’s Dropout Task Force called for external evaluation of the goals and objectives set forth in the DIP. Results of this evaluation may be found on the AISD Website under Dropout Taskforce Report at the following address:

<http://www.austin.isd.tenet.edu/k12/studentssupport/dropoutprevention/2001report.phtml>.

The report documents the success of programs such as DELTA, AVID, and Bridges to Ninth Grade Success and identifies current challenges to dropout prevention efforts.

ABSENT STUDENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (ASAP)

In 2001-02 the Absent Student Assistance Program (ASAP) received a SCE allocation of \$280,000. ASAP is a collaborative effort between AISD and Travis County Constables. Its purpose is to improve school attendance by notifying parents when their children are absent, keep students in school, and prevent their involvement with the juvenile justice system. It is also a valuable resource in preventing a student from dropping out of school. All AISD schools are expected to utilize ASAP for Grades 1-9.

When a referral is made to ASAP, a Constable Deputy makes a home visit to inform parents that their child was absent and to inquire as to the reason. This information is then reported to the school. No referrals are made to ASAP when the school has information that a student will be absent on a given day.

Each school is responsible for communication with parents and for stressing the importance of their notifying the school when their child will be absent. Schools begin referring students to ASAP on the first unexplained absence and call or contact the parent. For grades 1-5, the ASAP Constable Deputy makes a home contact visit on the student's fourth ASAP referral and issues the parent a warning letter at that time. For grades 6-9, the Constable Deputy makes a home contact visit on the third referral.

Travis County Health and Human Services & Veterans Service, Research & Planning conducts an evaluation of the program's success. The September 2001 report indicates improved attendance in AISD during the 2000-01 school year and can be found

The Texas Education Agency has failed to provide clear guidance regarding the use of SCE funds for ISS programs. Represen

year among elementary and middle school students. Mastery of TAAS reading and math among high school students remained relatively stable across the years.

SECONDARY TUTORIALS

In 2001-02, the Secondary Tutorials program received a SCE allocation of \$220,000. Secondary Tutorials funds are distributed to all middle/junior high schools and high schools. Each high school receives \$5,000 and each middle school/junior high school receives \$3,500 for tutorials. School Principals must submit plans stating their program goals and strategies for the use of tutorial funds to area superintendents in order to receive their funding. Money may be spent on a variety of strategies including one on one tutoring, study groups, TAAS workshops, study skills, and parent activities. Students participate by choice, and attendance records are maintained throughout the year.

SECONDARY TRANSITION PROGRAMS

In 2001-02, Secondary Transition programs received a SCE allocation of \$500,000. Secondary Transition funds are provided to each secondary campus on a per-pupil basis for use in easing the transition into middle and high school.

9TH GRADE INITIATIVES

In 2001-02, the 9th Grade Initiatives received a SCE allocation of \$67,000. The 9th Grade Initiatives program provides additional funding of \$6,100 to each high school campus for the purpose of easing the transition from 8th to 9th grade. These initiatives may include tutorials, study groups, support for mentors, “buddy system” programs, and other innovative approaches for improving student achievement. High schools are encouraged to collaborate with community resources such as college work study, the VICTORY Tutorial Program, and the AISD Partners in Education to leverage the funds.

Each Principal must submit a plan for the use of 9th Grade Initiatives funding in order to be approved by area superintendents for access to the money. Participating students are self-selected. The variety of transition initiatives and the self-selection process for participation suggest that 9th Grade Initiatives programs may serve many students who are not considered at-risk. In the future, participant rosters should be examined to ensure that these initiatives are fulfilling the goals and guidelines of SCE.

- Program and district staff should maintain a list of students served by each specific program or service funded by SCE.
- District staff should examine the progress of at-risk students toward accomplishing the legislative goal of performing at grade level by the end of the next regular term as part of the District Improvement Plan.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: DILL SCHOOL

SPECIAL EDUCATION POPULATION, 2001-02

Table A1: Special Education Designations of Dill Students, 2001-02

	Number of Student	% of Special Ed Students	% of All Dill Students
Emotional Disturbance	104	44%	8%

Figure A1: Self-contained Students at Dill, 2001-02

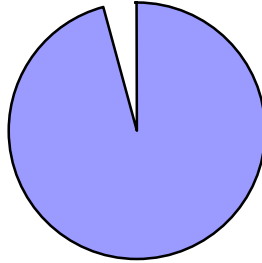
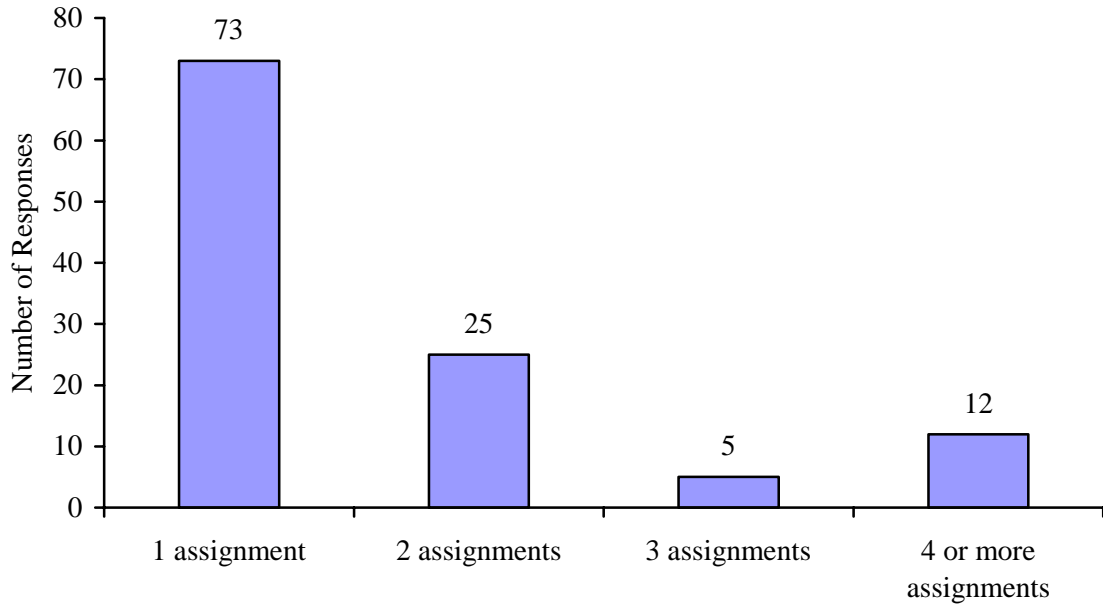
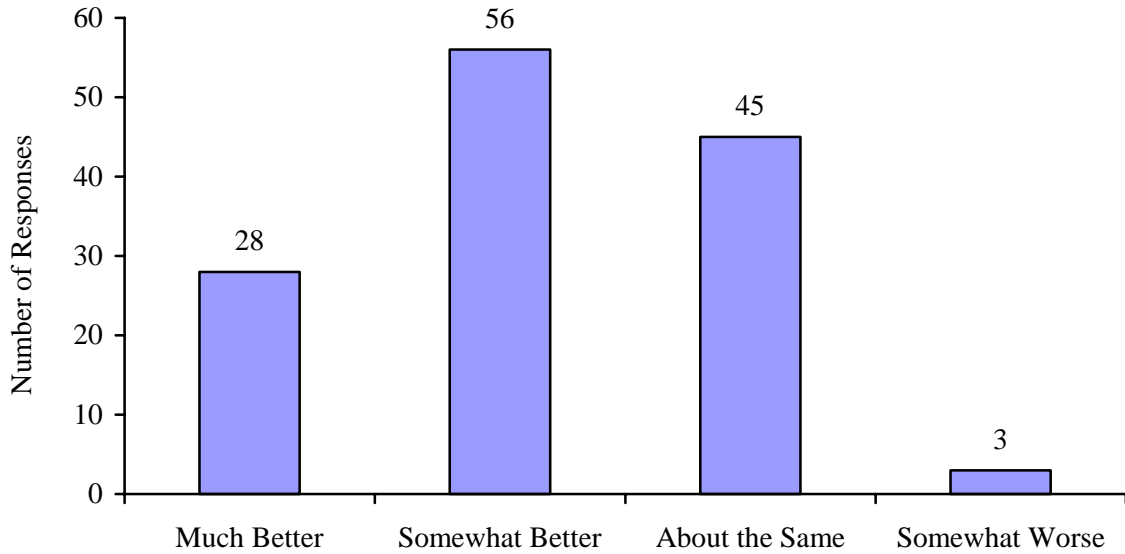


Figure A3: Parent Reported Number of Assignments Served at Dill During Fall 2001 by Children of Parents Surveyed



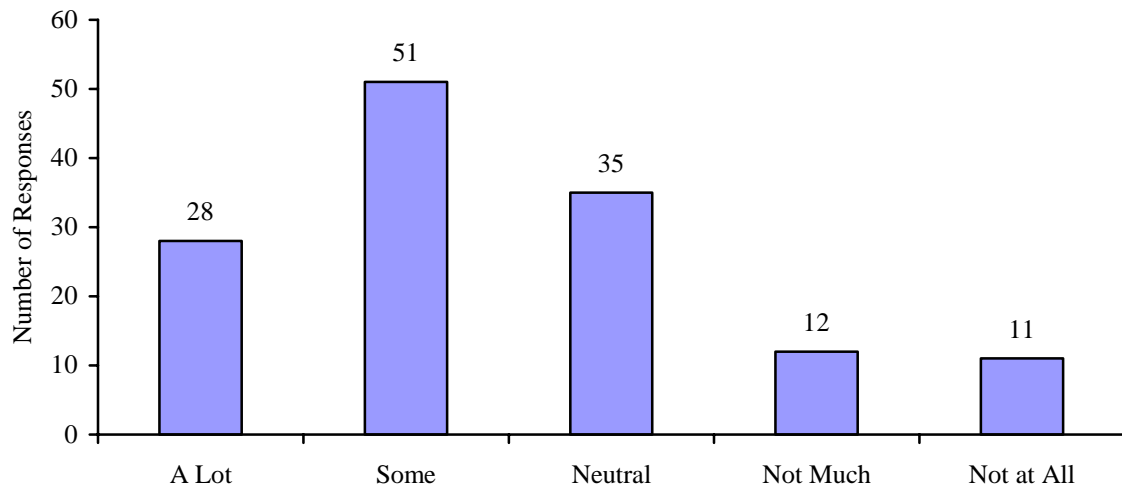
Source: Dill Parent Survey, 2001-02

Figure A4: Parent Reports of Child Behavior at Home After Attending Dill



Source: Dill Parent Survey, 2001-02

Figure A5: Extent to which Parents Feel Dill Helped Child Make Improvements that will Help at the Home School



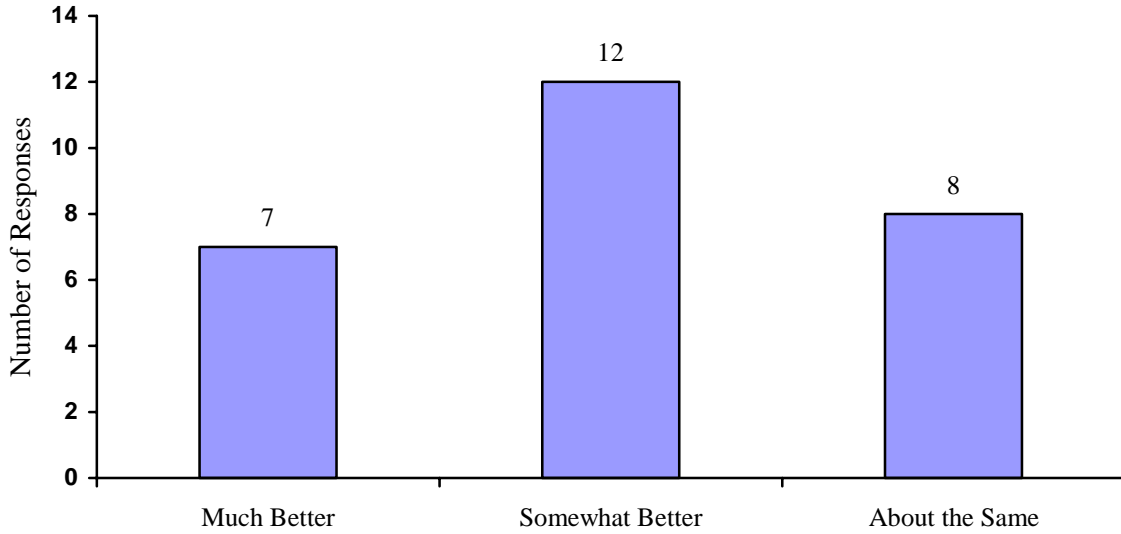
Source: Dill Parent Survey, 2001-02

Table A2: Open-Ended Responses to Dill Parent Survey, 2001-02

What Parents Like About Dill School	Percent of Parents Responding to Open-Ended Questions
Discipline	28%
Children Hate Dill	11%
Bus Service	10%
Place for Children to Go	7%
Nothing	13%
What Parents Would Improve About Dill School	Percent of Parents Responding to Open-Ended Questions
Make Students Complete Work	10%
Help Children Understand Why they are There	9%
Bus Service	9%
Food	4%
Nothing	11%
Percent of Parents Responding to Open-Ended Questions that Want More Information about Dill	20%

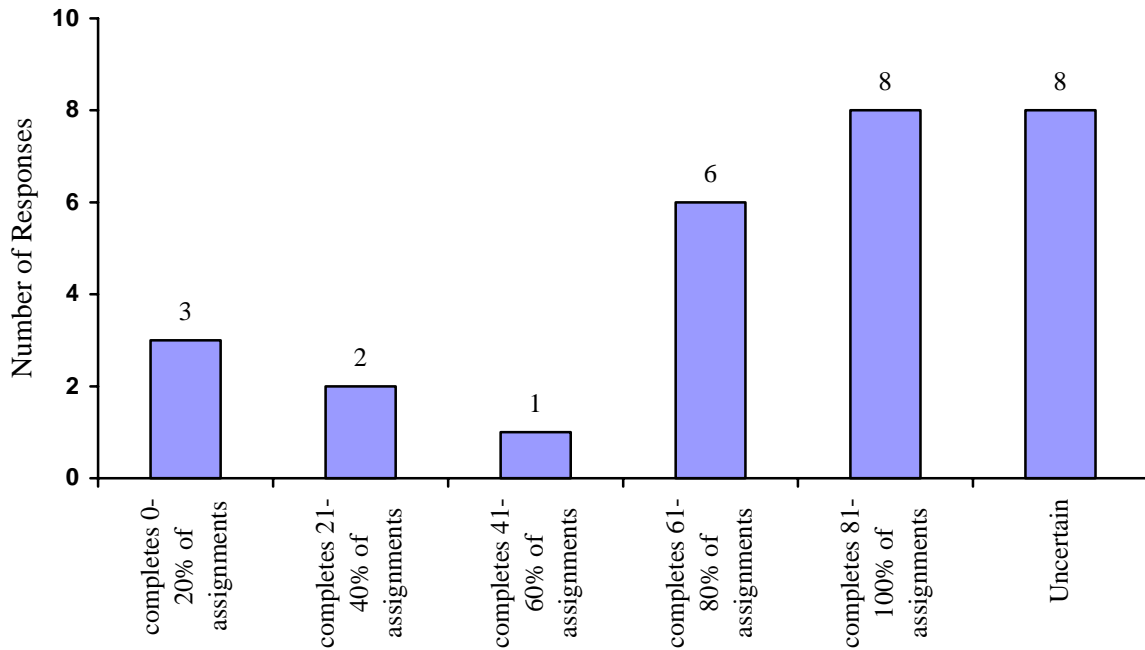
DILL TEACHER SURVEY RESULTS, 2001-02

Figure A6: Home School Teacher Reported Typical Student Behavior Upon Returning from Dill



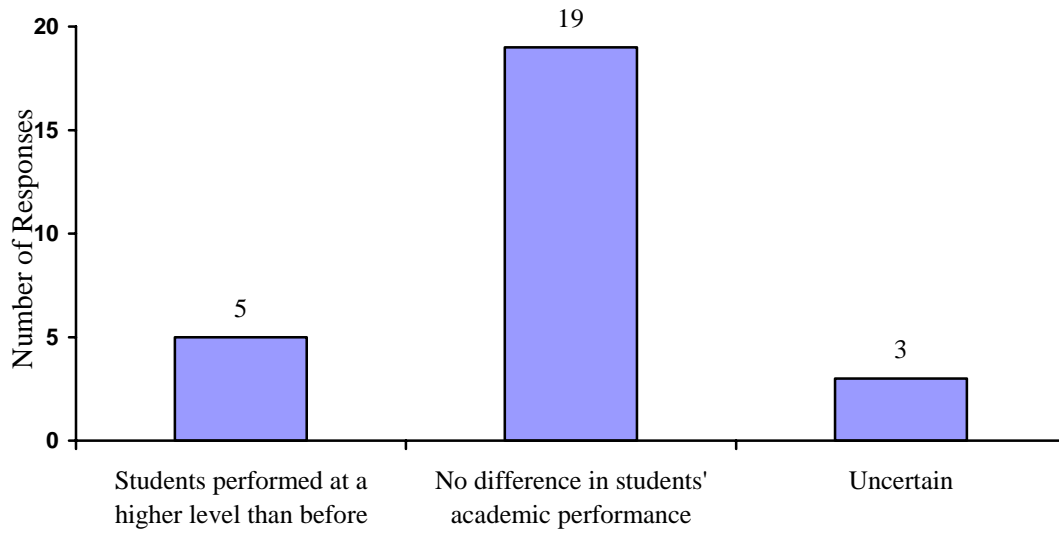
Source: AISD Employee Coordinated Survey, 2001-02

Figure A7: Home School Teacher Reported Percentage of Assignments the Typical Student Completes at Dill



Source: AISD Employee Coordinated Survey, 2001-02

Figure A8: Home School Teacher Reported Typical Student Academics Upon Returning from Dill



Source: AISD Employee Coordinated Survey, 2001-02

DILL STUDENT I

APPENDIX B: VISITING TEACHERS

Table B1: Student and Family Issues Addressed by Visiting Teachers

Type of Issue	
School Problems	School crises Suicide, grief, loss Academic adjustment School/home communication Non-attendance/truancy

APPENDIX C: DELTA

REFERENCE LIST

Keswick, K. (2000). DELTA Program Fifth-Year Implementation (OPE Publication 99.12). Austin, TX: Austin Independent School District.

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