

This program summary report is intended to provide program stakeholders with information about program implementation outcomes. Stakeholders may use the report to measure progress toward meeting articulated goals and to support ongoing decision making for program improvement.

Staff in AISD’s Department of Program Evaluation collected qualitative and quantitative data pertaining to clearly defined performance measures to assess the program’s progress toward its goals. District information systems provided student enrollment and demographic data, SAT and ACT test results, and information about transcripts sent. A program-specific database, the College Readiness Initiative System (CRIS), was used to collect information regarding project service offerings, and student and parent program participation. AISD’s high school exit survey provided information related to students’ college preparation needs, expectations about postsecondary education, and perceived educational outcomes. Project implementation requirements, quarterly report

summaries, budget records, and meeting notes provided additional information pertaining to overall implementation status.

Mixed methods were used to describe project implementation processes and to identify associated successes and challenges. Simple descriptive statistics were used to represent the characteristics of the 2006 graduates, to describe student and parent program participation, and to summarize outcomes from the tests and surveys. Content analysis techniques were used to identify important details and themes emerging from the qualitative data sources.

The primary goal for Project ADVANCE was to increase the number and percentage of AISD high school graduates who enroll in postsecondary institutions. Project ADVANCE staff tracked indicators of college preparation and readiness across school years to assess student progress and modify program implementation. Program effectiveness was measured by the outcomes for graduating seniors (Table 1). A summary of outcomes for AISD’s graduating Class of 2006 follows.

Table 1: Description of 2006 Graduates, Austin Independent School District

Native American	Asian/Pacific Islander	African American	Hispanic	White	Economically Disadvantaged
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to continue their education after high school graduation, an increase of almost 10 points from the previous year (74.6%). Higher

and school staff that offered similar college and career preparation services; thus, student outcomes may not be attributable to any single program.

Nevertheless, the coordination of services and collaboration with other programs may have provided a setting in which school and program staff could efficiently extend their outreach to all high school students, consequently increasing the likelihood that students were well prepared for postsecondary enrollment. This coordination of services may be difficult to establish and maintain because the funding for staff positions and program offerings varies across school years. The changes in programs and personnel may require a redefinition of responsibilities for the Project ADVANCE staff and others. The definitions of roles and responsibilities within the college preparation process may take on a new level of importance when AISD high schools engage in the high school redesign process.

As Project ADVANCE continues to prepare students for postsecondary enrollment, different student needs must be considered. Outcomes were found to be different when students were categorized by ethnicity or according to economic disadvantage. Reasons for these gaps have not been explored within this program summary. However, results from the 2006 AISD *High School Exit Survey* (Schmitt, 2006) may provide some indication.

On the survey, first-generation college status was identified as a factor that may have influenced successful postsecondary preparation and enrollment. Almost 37% of all survey respondents reported that their mothers had not pursued education beyond high school, and almost 28% of those planning to

attend postsecondary institutions will be the first person in their immediate family to attend. Students who were not planning to attend postsecondary institutions were almost twice as likely as those with college plans to report that their mothers did not finish high school (Schmitt, 2006).

The high school seniors surveyed reported that financial concerns influenced their postsecondary enrollment decisions. Affordability (25.0%) and need for income (23.7%) were identified by seniors who were not planning to enroll within a year of completing high school as the top two reasons for not pursuing postsecondary education. Further, 14.2% of all seniors reported that the process of obtaining financial aid was “difficult” or “very difficult” for them and their parents to understand.

Academic preparation also may have influenced students’ decisions to attend or not attend postsecondary institutions. Almost 24% of the survey respondents reported that low grades or test scores played a role in their choices. These academic preparation issues also may have been reflected in the differences in average SAT scores found between student groups.

Students whose parents had high academic expectations and were knowledgeable about college preparation processes were more likely to attend college than were students whose parents had low expectations and were not knowledgeable (The Harvard Family Research Project, 2006). On the 2006 AISD *High School Exit Survey*, 40.8% of the respondents reported that their parents or family attended a college or financial aid event. Project ADVANCE records showed that 34.1% parents and/or

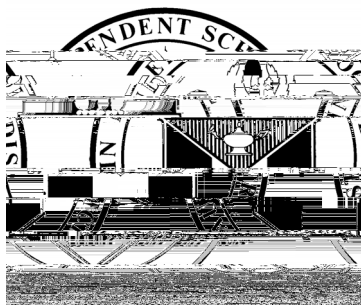
and/or scholarships. Financial aid application processes can be complex and/or intimidating to students and their families. Because financial aid concerns influence student postsecondary enrollment decisions, intensive student support is warranted, especially for students identified as potentially the first generation in their families to go to college or as having an economic disadvantage.

- *Increase general parental outreach services.* Greater parental involvement and support can improve the chances that students become enrolled in postsecondary institutions. Project ADVANCE staff should explore the barriers to parental participation in program services and develop strategies to address them. Increase general parental outreach in amncr

Pascal D. Forgione, Jr., Ph.D.

Maria Whitsett, Ph.D.

Holly Williams, Ph.D.



Karen Alderete, Ph.D.

Mark Williams, President
Rudy Montoya, Vice President
Johna Edwards, Secretary
Cheryl Bradley
Annette Lovoi, M.A.
Lori Moya
Robert Schneider
Karen Dulaney Smith
Vincent Torres, M.S.