

# STATE COMPENSATORY EDUCATION , 2007-2008



Austin Independent School District  
Department of Program Evaluation

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

State Compensatory Education (SCE) is a supplemental program designed to eliminate disparities in (a) student performance assessment instruments administered under subchapter B, chapter 39 of the Texas Education Code, and (b) the rates of high school completion between students who are at risk of dropping out of school as defined by Texas Education Code §29.081 (2005), and all other students. SCE funds must be used for programs or services that are supplemental to the regular education program. Toward this end, appropriate compensatory, intensive, and accelerated instruction programs are designed and implemented to increase the achievement of at-risk students. For the 2007–2008 school year,

should work together to determine areas of greatest need and to ensure the best possible match between the identified needs and the services and resources available to address those needs. Currently, not all SCE-funded programs appear to be focused on the legislated required goals.

Monitoring at the individual program level needs to occur to ensure that each program is helping to close the achievement gap between at-risk and not-at-risk students. All individual SCE programs and services should be monitored for effectiveness in terms of student achievement and school completion outcomes.

In order to accomplish the recommended individual program evaluations, the persistent

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....i  
    Program Requirements .....i  
    Recommendations.....i  
LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES.....iv  
PART 1: INTRODUCTION .....1  
    State Compensatory Education .....1

## LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

Table 1. AISD State Compensatory Education Budget, 2007–2008 .....	2
Figure 1. AISD Student Population, At-Risk Status, 2002–2003 Through 2007–2008 .....	4
Table 2. Students Reported at Risk of Dropping out of School, by At-Risk Indicator, 2007–2008 .....	5
Table 3. Criteria by Which Students Qualified for At-Risk Status, 2007–2008 .....	6
Table 4. At-Risk, Not-At-Risk, and All AISD Students, by Ethnic Group, 2007–2008 .....	6
Table 5. Changes in Disparity Between At-Risk and Not-At-Risk Students, Based on Percentage Passing TAKS, by Content Areas, 2006–2007 to 2007–2008 .....	8
Table 6. Longitudinal Student Status Rates At-Risk and All Students in AISD for the Classes of 2006 and 2007 .....	9

## PART 1: INTRODUCTION

## STATE COMPENSATORY EDUCATION

State Compensatory Education (SCE) is a supplemental program designed to eliminate disparities in (a) student performance on assessment instruments administered under chapter 39 of the Texas Education Code (1995, amended 2007) (b) the rates of high school completion between students who are at risk of dropping out of school, as defined by Texas Education Code §29.081 (1995, amended 2007), and all other results. SCE funds are designated for implementing appropriate compensatory, intensive, or accelerated instruction programs that enable at-risk students to improve their academic achievement and to graduate. Districts therefore must identify the needs of at-risk students and examine student performance data resulting from the administration of state assessment instruments. Using these needs, district and campus staff design appropriate strategies to aid at-risk students and must include these strategies in the district and/or campus improvement plans.

The district is required to spend a certain amount of the local budget on SCE, determined in accordance with guidelines from the state's Foundation School Program (Texas Education Code §42.152, 1995, amended 2007). The amount is based on the average of the highest 6 months' enrollment of students who qualified for federal free or reduced-price school lunch program during the preceding school year.<sup>1</sup> Districts are required to allocate additional funds for each student who is educationally disadvantaged or for students without disabilities who reside in residential placement facilities in a district in which the students' parents or guardians do not reside. Districts also must allocate additional funds for each student who is in a remedial or support program because the student is pregnant or a parent.

During the 2007–2008 school year, the district allocated \$42,939,374 for SCE, which supported a variety of programs and 537.36 full-time equivalent (FTE) staff positions. In comparison, \$37,990,928 was expended and 521.34 FTE positions were funded in the 2006–2007 school year. Table 1 lists the programs and services the district implemented that were partially or fully supported through SCE funds in 2007–2008.

<sup>1</sup> According to the 2007–2008 Summary of Finance (Texas Education Agency, 2008), this amount was equal to \$34,112,518, based on the following formula: (# of educationally disadvantaged students [50467.56] x FTE allotment [\$3,358] x 0.20) + (# pregnant students [27] x FTE allotment [\$3,358] x 2.41).





SCE funds must be used for programs or services that are supplemental to the regular education program. They must be allocated so that direct costs (i.e., expenses that cannot be traced to a specific costing unit, such as a department or program) do not exceed 15% and Disciplinary Alternative Education expenditures do not exceed 1.8%. SCE funds may be used to support programs eligible under Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, and as provided by Public Law 107-110, at campuses where at least 40% of the students are educationally disadvantaged. For school-wide programs funded by SCE, a comprehensive description must be provided in each relevant campus improvement plan.

SCE legislation requires schools to develop programs that will meet the needs of at-risk students by closing the achievement gap between at-risk and not-at-risk students. Although no mechanism exists for tracking students served by most of the AISD SCE-funded programs (Schmitt, 2003), the gathering and reporting of information about students served by the School to Community Liaison (SCL) and Diversity Education through Leadership, Technology, and Academics (DELTA) programs allow for the reporting of findings and development of specific recommendations for both of these programs. However, in the case of programs and services funded through SCE for which individual student participation is not tracked, evaluation of success is limited to examination of the at-risk population as a whole. This tracking issue is being addressed in AISD's search for a new student information system.



Hispanic overrepresentation within the at-risk category was due in part to a lack of

Table 3. Criteria by Which Students Qualified for At-Risk Status, 2007–2008

Number of at-risk criteria met	Number of students	Percentage of at-risk students
1	31181	66.29%
2	10081	21.43%
3	3837	8.16%
4	1387	2.95%
5	481	1.02%
6-8	68	0.14%
Total	47035	100%

Source: PEIMS 110 and AISD student records, AISD Office of Accountability

Table 4. At-Risk, Not-At-Risk, and All AISD Students, by Ethnic Group, 2007–2008

Ethnicity	At-risk	Not-at-risk	All students	Disparity*
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## PART 2: EVALUATION OF THE STATE COMPENSATORY E



longitudinal cohorts of the classes of 2006 and 2007 shown in Table 6 and are compared with the group “all students” in each cohort. Due to student mobility, only the TEA is able to provide accurate longitudinal dropout data. However, TEA does not provide disaggregated data for the not-at-risk longitudinal cohort. Therefore, “all students” was the best available comparison group.

Table 6. Longitudinal Student Status Rates for At-Risk and All Students in AISD for the Classes of 2006 and 2007

Class of:		Percentages of students			
		Graduated	Dropped out	Continued high school	Received GED
2006	At-risk	64.9	15.2	17.7	2.2
	All students	77.3	10.2	10.9	1.6
	Disparity	-12.4	5.0	6.8	0.6
2007	At-risk	61.2	17.7	19.2	1.9
	All students	75.3	11.5	11.8	1.4
	Disparity	-14.1	6.2	7.4	0.5
* Change in disparity		1.7	1.2	0.6	-0.1

Source: TEA (2007, 2008)

\* refers to the change in percentage point difference (disparity) between at-risk and not-at-risk student passing rates from 2005–2006 to 2006–2007. Negative values represent a decrease in disparity; positive values represent an increase in disparity.

In contrast with the goal of the SCE program, from 2005–2006 to 2006–2007, the disparity increased between the percentages of at-risk students and all students who graduated, dropped out, or continued high school for a fifth year. The greatest disparity between at-risk students and all students was in the percentage who graduated (14.1 percentage points). Although both groups experienced a decrease in the percentage of students who graduated (3.7 percentage points for at-risk students, and 2 percentage points for all students), and both groups experienced an increase in the percentage of students who dropped out (2.5 percentage points and 1.3 percentage points, respectively), the magnitude of the changes were smaller for the all students group than for the at-risk group, resulting in increased disparity on both elements. There was an increase in disparity for the percentage of those who continued high school for a fifth year. The disparity decreased slightly between at-risk students and all students who received a GED, with small decreases in the percentage of students who received a GED, regardless of risk status.

### PART 3: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Decreased disparities between at-risk and not-at-risk students with respect to the 2006–2007 and 2007–2008 TAKS passing rates are promising; however, the increased disparity from 2006 to 2007 between at-risk and all students with respect to graduation and dropout rates indicates that room for improvement remains. It is possible that declines in disparity will be apparent for the graduation and dropout indicators as well, when data for the most recent graduating classes become available from TEA. In the meantime, in order to maintain and improve progress, it is necessary to better understand what is working and where improvements are needed. In order to achieve this goal the following recommendations are made.

#### GENERAL PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS

A more proactive approach to SCE (i.e., not funds strategically in an integrated program, rather than as a funding source) needs to be taken. District and campus staff should work together to determine areas of need and to ensure the best possible match between the identified needs and the services and resources available to address those needs. The programs funded with designated SCE money must meet the mandated criteria for reducing the disparity between at-risk and not-at-risk students through the provision of supplemental compensatory, intensive, or accelerated programs. Therefore, the SCE program must focus on the areas of greatest need of attention (i.e., areas of greatest disparity) and should target at-risk students. Currently, all SCE funded programs do not appear to be focused on the required goals.

Monitoring at the individual program level needs to occur to ensure that each program is helping to close the achievement gap between at-risk and not-at-risk students. All individual SCE programs and services should be monitored for effectiveness in terms of student achievement and school completion rates. Additionally, programs should be evaluated to determine the progress of participating at-risk students in meeting the legislative goal of performing at grade level by the end of the next regular term.

In order to accomplish the recommended individual program evaluations, the persistent student-level data limitations that prevent identification of students who are beneficiaries of SCE services first must be overcome. To address this issue, AISD is requiring that responders to the request for proposals for the new student information system include the capacity to track student participation in all supplemental programs, including



#### TARGET AREA RECOMMENDATIONS

Students in science and mathematics. The greatest disparity in TAKS passing rates between at-risk and not-at-risk students is to be in the areas of science and mathematics (range of 35.66 to 51.34 percentage points difference). Currently, it appears that curriculum programs funded through SCE are primarily in the reading content area. Stakeholders should carefully examine what programs and services are available to at-risk students struggling in science and mathematics and target resources accordingly. Students with LEP status. Half of all at-risk students were identified as being at risk due to LEP status. Again, careful examination of programs and services should be undertaken so that SCE resources can be appropriately directed.

Students at risk due to assessment-related failures. Nearly a quarter of all AISD students are identified as being at risk due to assessment-related reasons (e.g., failing to pass TAKS, TAAS, or end-of-course exams). This accounts for 43% of the AISD at-risk population. At-risk students experience the lowest passing rates for TAKS in the subjects of mathematics and science, but further investigation is needed regarding end-of-course exam passing rates and differences by grade levels. Assessment of content-area proficiency by grade level should be considered to facilitate targeting of SCE-funded services.

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AUSTIN INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS  
Meria J. Carstarphen, Ed.D.

OFFICE OF ACCOUNTABILITY  
Anne Ware, Ph.D.

DEPARTMENT OF PROGRAM EVALUATION  
Holly Williams, Ph.D.

AUTHOR0015 6(IR0 13.98 28O(Holl5u5.42 501.15.1(HOR0eg(18c