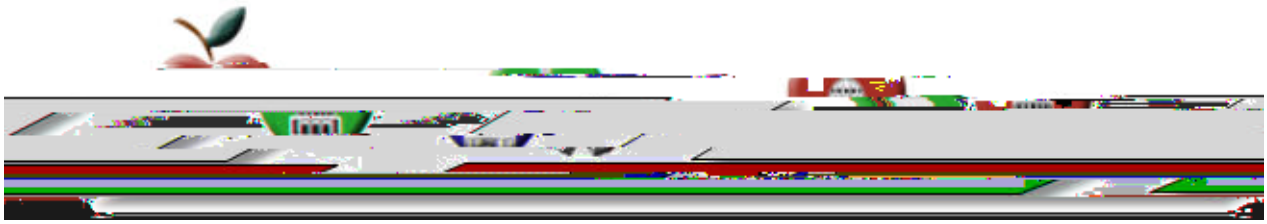

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AUSTIN INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT ’S O’IN0f1MAw7962J0.2 20.04 0 2 CTIVITIES , 2008–2009

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 eight); attendance (i.e., a minimum of 240 minutes); staff development training; and parental involvement.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A number of people worked with the AISD Department of Program Evaluation (DPE) to develop and implement the 2008–2009

instructional time before school, after school, or on Saturdays. The OEYP official start date was October 2008. Table 1 shows the TEA-defined program strategies and their reported use by principals who held OEYPs at their schools.

Table 1. Principals' Self-Reported Use of Program Strategies in the Optional Extended Year Program (OEYP), 2008–2009

Areas of program focus	Program strategies used most often
Accelerated reading instruction (ARI)	91%
Reading or language arts programs	91%
Mathematics and/or science programs	86%
Accelerated math instruction (AMI)	86%
English as a second language (ESL)	86%
Problem solving	84%

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, 35% *(n* = 15) responded. Of the respondents, 40% (*n* = 6) were complimentary in their remarks regarding the district's high level of support for OEYP, and 33% (*n* = 5) made recommendations about the distribution and use of OEYP funds (e.g., distribution of funds earlier during the school year so planning for activities could take place earlier, and year-round use of the funds). Three principals indicated they liked the program as it currently operates and had no comments or recommendations. Another responded that the program did not seem to offer the students as much academic support as it did in prior years. Finally, one wanted to know if funds could be used without writing individual campus proposals for the funds (as required by district grant administration

Table 4. Promotion, Retention, and Withdrawal Data for Optional Extended Year Program (OEYP) Students, 2008–2009

	Number of students by promotion code	Number of students retained	Number of students withdrawn	studer

students were served during the fall and spring semesters. Table 6 shows more information regarding students promoted in OEYP from 2000–2001 to 2008–2009.

Table 6. AISD Students Served and Promoted in Optional Extended Year Program (OEYP), 2000–2001 Through 2008–2009

School year	Grade level ranges served	School semester	Number of students served	Percentage of students 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
2008–2009	K-8	Fall, spring, and summer	3,623	96
TOTAL			**38,344**	**96**

Source. Washington, Doolittle, & Williams (2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008)

OEYP parent involvement data were available for the same period (2000–2001 to 2008–2009) 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 9-year period, with 2007–2008 parent involvement counts being the greatest, compared with those of prior years and the current year. A review of the data for peak parental involvement (2005–2006 through 2008–2009) found the majority of principal3dOi4own1(8 Tc (a)6(lteo)6(d)]TJ0 Tc 0 Tw16.553 0 Td( )Tj[u s)-11(i)-2(

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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, some responding principals disagreed about parent involvement issues, which raised several concerns. 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 previously participated in OEYP and should have been aware of state mandates governing the 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 38,344 students who would have been retained without the benefit of supplemental instruction. Of that number, more than 96% (n = 36,810) have been promoted. However, a review of AISD's OEYP placement data across Grades 3 through 5 for school years 2006–2007 through 2008–2009 found that larger numbers of 5th grade students, compared with students at other grade levels, were being placed in the next grade level when they had not mastered the work at their current grade level.

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

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