Texas High School Completion and Success

Preliminary Report on Programs Authorized by House Bill 2237

Submitted in fulfillment of HB 2237 Section 18 (80th Texas Legislature) by the

Office for Planning, Grants, and Evaluation

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Prepared by
Office for Planning, Grants, and Evaluation
Texas Education Agency

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Additional information about this report may be obtained by contacting the Texas Education Agency, Office for Planning, Grants and Evaluation at (512) 463-8992 or by e-mail at opge@tea.state.tx.us.

This report is available at the Texas Education Agency's website:
http://www.tea.state.tx.us/opge/planeval/index.html

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Purpose of Report

Section 18 of House Bill (HB) 2237, passed by the 80th Texas Legislature, directs the Texas Education Agency (TEA) to deliver to the Legislature a preliminary report on December 1, 2008, and a final report on December 1, 2010, regarding the impact assessment or evaluation of programs for which grants have been awarded under Subchapter L, Chapter 39, Texas Education Code (TEC). The present document constitutes the preliminary report in fulfillment of this mandate. It begins with an explanation of the legislative context of the report and TEA's reporting approach. The report provides a breakdown of grant award allocations for fiscal year 2008 associated with HB 2237 and/or funded by Rider 53 of Article III of the General Appropriations Act (80th Texas Legislature), descriptions of funded programs to be reported on, and preliminary evaluation findings to date. It concludes with an overview of the anticipated scope of the final report due December 1, 2010.

Legislative Context

HB 2237 is an extension of previous initiatives funded in the 78th and 79th Texas Legislatures that focused on dropout prevention and the promotion of college and career readiness. HB 2237 authorized the creation of programs specifically designed to implement and support high school completion and college and career readiness initiatives.

The 80th Texas Legislature also passed Rider 53, which significantly increased the amount of funding for programs focusing on these two critical areas of need. A total of $28.71 million per year for fiscal years 2008 and 2009 was appropriated for high school reform strategies by Rider 53(a). Also, $25 million per year for the same biennium was

appropriated for programs targeting students at risk of dropping out of high school by Rider 53(b).

High School Completion and Success Initiative Council

HB 2237 authorized the creation of a High School Completion and Success Initiative Council (Council). The goal of the Council is to identify strategic priorities and make recommendations to improve the effectiveness, coordination, and alignment of high school completion and college/workforce readiness efforts. On March 11, 2008, a Strategic Plan was adopted by the Council that designated and recommended the use of federal and state funds for five key strategies: Comprehensive Whole School Reform, Targeted Student Interventions, Effective Teachers and Leaders, Technical Assistance, and Research and Evaluation. Funding for fiscal year 2008 for each of the strategies that resulted in grants is provided in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Key Strategies under HB 2237

Key Strategies	Total FY 2008 Funding Level
Comprehensive Whole School Reform	$19,280,955
Targeted Student Interventions	$21,519,824*
Effective Teachers and Leaders	$8,817,070
Technical Assistance	$2,883,687
Total	$52,501,536

Source: Texas Education Agency, 2008
Notes: Remaining funds will be allocated to project activities consistent with HB 2237 specifications. Grants under the Research and Evaluation strategy are subsumed within the Council's four other key strategies and are not discussed separately in this report.
* Amounts include FY 2008 funds allocated to Technology-Based Supplemental Instruction Pilot Program, which was funded from state administrative funds.

Five Key Strategies of the Council

1) Comprehensive Whole School Reform models include grants awarded to secondary campuses and public school districts to support innovative high school improvement programs that prepare students for postsecondary success. This key strategy includes

grants such as Early College High Schools (ECHS), Texas High School Redesign and Restructuring (HSRR), and the Texas Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (T-STEM) Initiative.

2) Targeted Student Interventions are designed to improve student outcomes by addressing a particular issue or providing services to a specific group of students with common interests or similar needs. This key strategy includes programs such as the Collaborative Dropout Reduction (Collaborative) pilot program, Grants for Student Clubs, and the Ninth Grade Student Transition program.

3) Effective Teachers and Leaders programs address the shortage of highly effective educators and leaders trained and experienced in high school reform. Programs within this key strategy are targeted to provide teachers and leaders with critical skills needed for transforming underperforming high schools. This strategy contains programs such as the Mathematics Instructional Coaches (MIC) pilot program and Professional Development Activities for Teachers and Administrators.

4) Technical Assistance grants provide support for grantees in the implementation of grant programs and are designed to ensure that grantees have access to research-based practices; technical assistance, such as coaching and training; professional development; and access to a professional learning community. ECHS Technical Assistance and Support, T-STEM Technical Assistance and Support, Continuation Grant, and HSRR Technical Assistance are all grants included in this key strategy. As such, these initiatives are not programs in and of themselves, but rather serve as support for programs.

5) Research and Evaluation activities employ systematic, empirical methods to test hypotheses and justify general conclusions. Because many of the grants authorized under HB 2237 include an evaluation component, grants under the Research and Evaluation strategy are subsumed within the Council's four other key strategies and are not discussed separately in this report.

Approach to Assessment of Program Impact

Under Section 18 of HB 2237, TEA was directed to assess the impact of programs for which grants are awarded under Subchapter L, Chapter 39, TEC, on five key outcomes: student achievement, high school completion, college readiness, teacher effectiveness and cost-effectiveness, as well as any other factors the commissioner of education determined relevant. Given the option to include other factors, an approach to allocating resources among program assessments was developed. Criteria were established by which Subchapter L grant initiatives were selected for a basic impact assessment of relevant Section 18 outcomes, a more comprehensive evaluation, or descriptive reporting only. In the latter category were certain initiatives funded by Rider 53 that were excluded from impact assessment or evaluation efforts because they were deemed either not subject to the reporting requirements of Section 18, or not programs that directly impacted teachers or students (such as technical assistance to districts).

Thus, grant-funded HB 2237 initiatives listed in the present report fall into one of three categories: 1) programs subject to the reporting requirements of Section 18 that are receiving or will receive an impact assessment; 2) programs subject to the reporting requirements of Section 18 that are receiving or will receive a comprehensive evaluation; or 3) initiatives that are not considered programs or not subject to the reporting

requirements of Section 18, which therefore will not be evaluated or assessed for impact.

Findings

At the time of this report, programs subject to impact assessment or a comprehensive evaluation have been implemented for less than one year. To determine the impact of a given grant program on targeted populations, however, at least one full year of program implementation is required – and three to five years of implementation are considered optimal for valid assessment (Constas & Sternberg, 2006; U.S. Department of Education, 2007). Therefore, only findings from programs subject to comprehensive evaluations are discussed in this 2008 preliminary report.

Preliminary implementation findings from three Targeted Student Interventions (Collaborative, Intensive Summer Programs [ISP], and Technology-based Supplemental Instruction pilot program [R-Tech]) and one Effective Leaders and Teachers program (MIC pilot program) are summarized below.

Preliminary Findings

The Collaborative pilot program has six district grantees, each planning to provide an array of services within a multi-pronged strategy to address the dropout problem in their respective communities. In total, Collaborative grantees expect to serve 1,655 students in 15 schools, most of whom are identified as at risk of dropping out of school, by increasing graduation, reducing dropout, increasing job skills, and providing employment opportunities for student participants. All six Collaborative grantees have formed partnerships with community nonprofits and other community-based organizations that will offer

four general types of services: academic support services, workforce skill development, student and family support services, and attendance improvement. Altogether, $1,359,468 in grants were awarded for the Collaborative Cycle 1 grantees, and grantees contributed an additional $490,175 in matching funds to bring the total expected expenditures for this program above $1.8 million. All six grantees also addressed the sustainability of the Collaborative program in their grant applications. All Collaborative grantees have similar goals, but the different strategies they are using to achieve these goals will provide valuable insights into the effectiveness and impact of various dropout prevention strategies.

The ISP pilot program was awarded to 29 school districts and open-enrollment charter schools. On average, each ISP grantee plans to serve 355 students. The ISP programs will be composed of an average of 33 teachers. The majority of ISP projects (82.8%) plan to increase student readiness for college-preparatory English language arts (ELA), reading, mathematics, and science by offering a range of remediation and/or acceleration activities. Other shared program activities include professional development for teachers, parental involvement activities, and college counseling. On average, ISP grantees requested $139,781 from TEA to cover the costs of their programs, which is slightly less than the maximum allowed of $150,000 for each program.

The R-Tech pilot program was awarded to 64 rural Texas districts. Across R-Tech districts, 115 schools are participating in the R-Tech program, including 63 high schools, 48 middle schools, 3 K-12 campuses, and 1 elementary school. Analysis of grantee applications for the R-Tech program indicated that most districts plan to implement R-Tech at both the high school and middle school

levels (78%). Nearly all districts are focusing R-Tech services on math instruction (98%), and somewhat fewer districts plan to implement R-Tech in ELA (91%), science (89%), and social studies (86%). Fewer than half of the districts (48%) plan to use R-Tech funds to provide instruction in languages other than English. A majority of districts plan to use R-Tech funding to provide remediation and tutoring (94%), and smaller percentages are planning for distance learning (66%), dual credit coursework (55%), and credit recovery programs (50%). The most popular vendors were A+nyWhere Learning System and PLATO Learning – about 14% of districts selected each vendor. A majority of districts will provide supplemental instruction after school (72%) and before school (57%). Districts plan to allow students access to R-Tech services through school computer labs (59% of districts), libraries (32%), and learning centers (17%).

The MIC pilot program was awarded to 29 district grantees, which will serve mathematic teachers from 97 Texas schools. Of the 15 district grantees that reported baseline data, they plan to have an average of 25 teachers and administrators participating in MIC at the beginning of the first year of their grant project. Twenty-five grantees reported that they anticipate having an average of 30 teachers participating in MIC by the end of both Year 1 and Year 2 of the grant. In partnership with a service provider, all grantees are planning to use a combination of coaching strategies and professional development activities within their MIC program to improve teacher effectiveness and performance outcomes of students. An average of $158,128 was requested by grantees to implement MIC program activities.

Future Reporting

The 2010 final evaluation report, as required by HB 2237, will include implementation findings, program impact on targeted populations, barriers and facilitators of program success, and cost-effectiveness and sustainability of the four programs described above. Findings from comprehensive evaluations of additional programs will also be included in the 2010 report, addressing Comprehensive Whole School Reform programs (HSRR Cycle 4 and 5, ECHS Cycle 2 and 3, and T-STEM Academies) and Targeted Student Interventions (Ninth Grade Student Transition program and Dropout Recovery pilot program).

In addition, findings from programs that will undergo impact assessments will also be included in the 2010 report. These findings will address relevant Section 18-required program outcomes (e.g., achievement, high school completion, college readiness, teacher-effectiveness, and cost-effectiveness). Programs that will receive impact assessments include three Targeted Student Interventions (Grants for Student Clubs, Intensive Technology-Based Academic Intervention pilot program, and Higher Education and Workforce Readiness) and one Effective Leaders and Teachers program (Professional Development Activities for Teachers and Administrators).

Introduction

The mission of the Texas Education Agency (TEA) is to provide leadership, guidance, and resources to help public schools meet the educational needs of all Texas students and prepare them for success in the global economy. Success in the global economy is dependent upon success in education. Currently, between 50 to 80% of jobs require employees who have some college credit, and future prospects for students are just as demanding. Over the next decade, eight of every ten Texas jobs will require students to complete high school and acquire some postsecondary education (The Workforce Alliance, 2008).

The cost to individuals, communities, and states is high when students are not prepared for future employment. According to the Institute of Education Sciences (Dynarski et al., 2008), high school dropouts:

Typically earn $260,000 less than high school graduates over the course of a lifetime.

Are limited to low-income employment.

Are four times more likely than college graduates to be unemployed.

Are three times more likely than high school graduates to receive public assistance.

Are less able to contribute to and participate in the education of their children than high school graduates.

Are more likely to be incarcerated compared to high school graduates.

Have worse health outcomes and lower life expectancy rates than high school graduates.

Responding to the challenge, the 80th Texas Legislature passed House Bill (HB) 2237 and Rider 53 of Article III of the General Appropriations Act (Article III, GAA), allocating $53.71 million per year of the biennium to implement and support college and career readiness programs. As a result, TEA has undertaken a number of initiatives to better equip its schools and formed innovative partnerships between public, private, and nonprofit sectors. These efforts have resulted in higher graduation standards, redesign of existing schools, creation of new school models, and implementation of promising strategies.

In response to the requirements of HB 2237 Section 18 for a preliminary report on grants that have been awarded under Subchapter L, Chapter 39, Texas Education Code (TEC), the present report details how Rider 53 funds were expended to implement the majority of HB 2237 programs in the current biennium. The report begins with a brief description of the recent legislative history regarding high school initiatives and explication of the approach taken by TEA to meeting HB 2237 Section 18 reporting requirements. The report provides descriptions of the grant programs that have been created under HB 2237 with Rider 53 funds that will undergo impact assessment or evaluation. This report also presents available evaluation findings for these programs and provides an overview of the scope of the final report due December 1, 2010.[1]

[1] The HB 2237 Section 18 reports due in December 2010 must include an assessment of the impact of programs for which grants were awarded under Subchapter L of Chapter 39, Education Code. Programs under Subchapter L are understood as those programs cited in HB 2237 Section 39.361 Council Recommendations as well as other programs emerging from council recommendations as authorized under Section 39.361.

High School Completion and Success: Legislative History

In 2003, the 78th Texas Legislature passed Rider 67 to provide $29 million in General Revenue and $1 million in federal funds for each year of the 2004-2005 biennium to support the establishment and implementation of comprehensive high school completion and success initiatives. The majority of the funding supported intervention programs for at-risk students including tutoring, accelerated instruction, credit recovery, and counseling. Also implemented were innovative models for high school reform for at-risk students, created as a part of the Texas High School Project (THSP) – a public-private alliance committed to increasing high school graduation and college enrollment rates.[2]

In 2005, the 79th Texas Legislature passed Rider 59 to provide another $29 million for each year of the 2006-2007 biennium. Rider 59 supported innovative principal certification programs as well as principal and teacher training for high-need high schools, and established support systems and technical assistance within Education Service Centers (ESCs) and other entities.

In addition, Rider 59 funds were used to continue collaborative efforts through the THSP to:

Redesign existing low-performing high schools, and create and support innovative schools;

Assist schools in developing tutoring, online acceleration programs, counseling, and other intervention programs for students at risk of dropping out of school;

Increase access to dual credit/Advanced Placement(AP)/International Baccalaureate(IB) programs;

[2] The THSP public-private alliance is made up of TEA, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the Michael and Susan Dell Foundation, and the Communities Foundation of Texas.

Support the expansion and creation of Early College High Schools (ECHS) in partnerships with community colleges and four-year colleges and universities;

Expand the Texas Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math Initiative (T-STEM), including the following:

Create T-STEM Academies to act as demonstration schools and learning labs that develop innovative methods to improve science and mathematics instruction;

Create T-STEM Centers across the state to support the transformation of teaching methods and instruction, linking classroom activities with the expectations and needs of industry and higher education;

Establish a statewide best practices network to provide schools access to relevant online professional development and promote broad dissemination and adoption of promising practices; and

Establish a joint, public-private, multi-year (2007-2011) longitudinal evaluation of high school reform models created through the THSP.

In May 2007, the 80th Texas Legislature passed Rider 53 to appropriate funds to continue the High School Completion and Success Initiative begun by the 78th Legislature and supported by the 79th Legislature. Rider 53 substantially differed from earlier legislative appropriations in two ways. The first major difference was that Rider 53 represented a substantial increase over previous Riders in the total amount of funding for programs promoting high school completion and college and workforce readiness. Rider 53 of Article III of the General Appropriations Act approximately doubled the total amount of funding for programs promoting high school completion and college and workforce readiness. The legislature appropriated $28.71 million for each year of the 2008-2009 biennium for continuation of the innovative high school reform strategies

created through the THSP, as well as an additional $25 million per year for development and implementation of programs for students at risk of dropping out of high school. A second major difference between Rider 53 and earlier legislative appropriations was the establishment in statute of the High School Completion and Success Initiative through HB 2237, discussed in the next section.

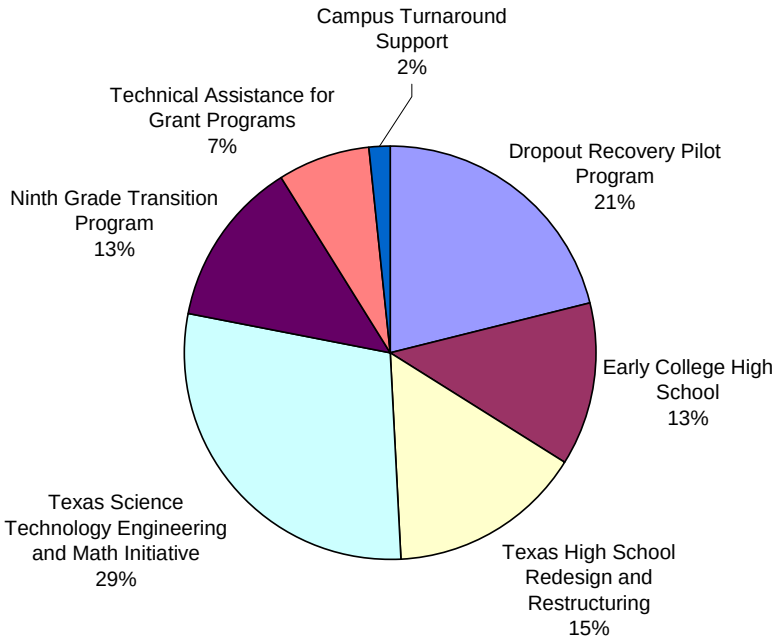
HB 2237

HB 2237, an omnibus bill targeting high school/postsecondary success and dropout prevention, was passed by the 80th Texas Legislature. The bill authorized a multitude of programs, funded through Rider 53a and Rider 53b.[3]

Programs authorized by HB 2237 and funded through Rider 53a were designed to improve high school graduation rates and postsecondary readiness, and included innovative programs for at-risk students established through the THSP, such as models to redesign high schools, ECHS, and T-STEM academies, among others. A breakdown of Rider 53(a) funds is displayed in Figure 1.

[3] Although the vast majority of programs authorized by HB 2237 are funded from Rider 53 two programs were not. The Science Laboratory Grant Program (Section 7.062, Education Code, added by HB 2237) provides funding for constructing and renovating high school science labs; it is funded with Foundation School Programs (FSP) funds. The Technology Based Supplemental Instruction pilot program (Section 29.919, Education Code, added by HB 2864) is funded from state administrative funds.

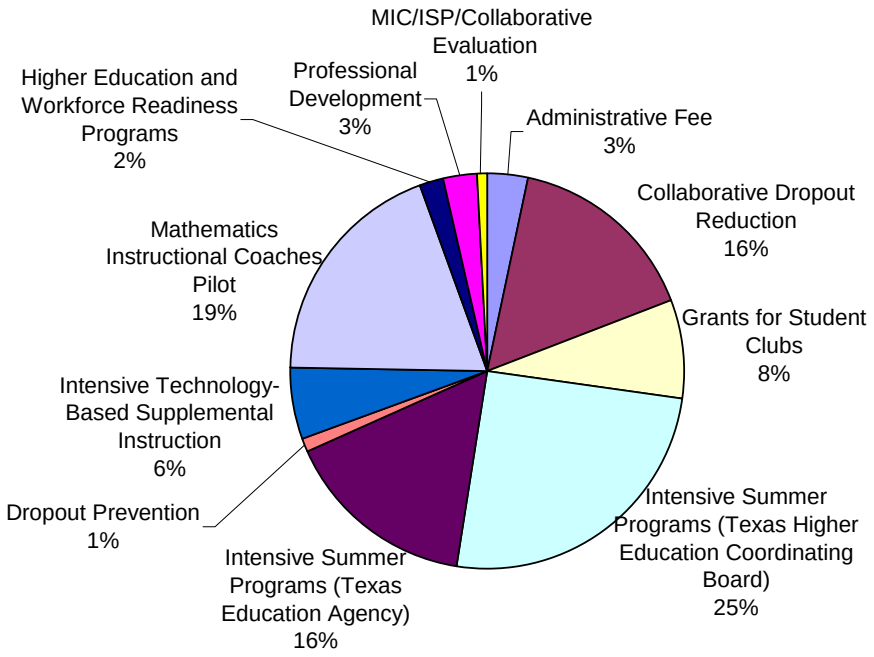
Figure 1: Rider 53(a) Grant Program Allocations



Source: Texas Education Agency, 2008

HB 2237 programs funded through Rider 53b authorized the creation of several research-based dropout prevention programs to provide instructional support and professional development to high schools serving students at risk of dropping out. These programs directed funds to high schools exhibiting characteristics that strongly correlate with high dropout rates during each of the preceding three years. Such dropout prevention programs include Intensive Summer Programs (ISP), Collaborative Dropout (Collaborative) pilot programs, Mathematics Instructional Coaches (MIC) pilot programs, Grants for Student Clubs, and Technology-Based Academic Intervention programs, among others. These programs and the funds appropriated to support them represent a substantial commitment by the state to improve high school graduation and college attendance rates. A breakdown of Rider 53(b) funds is presented in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Rider 53(b) Grant Program Allocations



Source: Texas Education Agency, 2008
Notes: MIC = Mathematics Instructional Coaches; ISP = Intensive Summer Programs; Collaborative = Collaborative Dropout Reduction

Another important feature of HB 2237 was the creation of the High School Completion and Success Initiative Council (Council) charged with providing strategic direction for the state's efforts to improve high school graduation and college/workforce readiness. Two of its directives included the determination of the use of funds appropriated through Rider 53 and the development of legislative recommendations for statutory changes pertaining to high school completion and postsecondary success. The Council is composed of the Texas commissioner of education, the commissioner of higher education, and seven members appointed by the commissioner of education from a list of nominations provided by the governor, the speaker of the house of representatives, and the lieutenant governor. In accordance with its charge, the Council developed and

adopted a strategic plan on March 11, 2008.[4] The plan focuses on economically disadvantaged students, gives priority to programs that are based on best available research and can be replicated statewide, and relies on data- and research-driven decision-making regarding the continuation or expansion of programs.

[4]The Council's Strategic Plan can be found online at http://www.tea.state.tx.us/ed_init/thscsic/StrategicPlan_ApprovedFINAL.pdf#xml=http://www.tea.state.tx.us/cgi/texis/webinator/search/xml.txt?query=high+school+completion&db=db&id=5898daea90f8362b.

Programs Authorized by HB 2237

Funded Programs

One of the objectives of the Council established under HB 2237 was to create a carefully aligned system of high school completion and success programs, including programs authorized by HB 2237, grouped by strategic approach. The Council designated and recommended the use of federal and state grant funding for five key strategies: Comprehensive Whole School Reform, Targeted Student Interventions, Effective Teachers and Leaders, Technical Assistance, and Research and Evaluation. Because many of the grants authorized under HB 2237 include an evaluation component, grants under the fifth key strategy, Research and Evaluation, are subsumed within the Council's four other strategies and therefore, are not discussed separately in this report. Table 2 displays key descriptive information of each grant authorized by HB 2237 and awarded with Rider 53 or other funds, categorized by the Council's four key strategies.

Table 2: HB 2237 Grant Award Characteristics for FY 2008

TEC §	Grant Name	Grant begin date	Grant end date	FY 2008 Amount[a]	Number of Grantees	Evaluation/ Impact Assessment	Evaluation Begin Date	Evaluation End Date	Included in 2010 HB 2237 Sec. 18 Report
Comprehensive Whole School Reform									
39.115	Texas High School Redesign and Restructuring, Cycle 4	3/1/08	2/28/10	$3,420,451	13	Evaluation (pending inclusion in THSPE)	TBD	TBD	Y
39.115	Early College High School Special Project, San Antonio ISD	8/1/08	5/31/10	$305,000	1	Evaluation (pending inclusion in THSPE)	TBD	TBD	Y
39.115	Early College High School, Cycle 2	2/1/08	5/31/10	$2,550,000	6	Evaluation (pending inclusion in THSPE)	TBD	TBD	Y
39.115	Early College High School, Cycle 3 Expansion Grant	12/1/08	5/31/11	$5,175,000[b]	Approx. 8	Evaluation (pending inclusion in THSPE)	TBD	TBD	Y
39.115	Early College High School, Small and Rural District Planning Grant	12/1/08	5/1/09	$480, 000[b]	4 to 6 estimated	N/A	N/A	N/A	N
39.115	Texas Science, Technology, Engineering and Math, Early Innovator – Waco ISD	9/1/07	2/28/09	$37,584	1	N/A	N/A	N/A	N
39.115	Texas Science, Technology, Engineering and Math, Academies Start-up Cycle 1 and Non-competitive, Continuation	6/1/08	8/31/10	$2,852,920	6	Evaluation (THSPE)	8/15/07	7/29/11	Y
39.115	Texas Science, Technology, Engineering and Math, Academies Special project continuation – Manor ISD	9/1/08	5/31/11	$3,200,000	1	Evaluation (THSPE)	8/15/07	7/29/11	Y
39.115	Texas Science, Technology, Engineering and Math, Academies, Cycle 3	3/1/08	5/31/10	$1,260,000	3	Evaluation (pending inclusion in THSPE)	TBD	TBD	Y
Total amount of grants awarded for Comprehensive School Reforms in FY 2008:				$19,280,955					

TEC §	Grant Name	Grant begin date	Grant end date	FY 2008 Amount[a]	Number of Grantees	Evaluation/ Impact Assessment	Evaluation Begin Date	Evaluation End Date	Included in 2010 HB 2237 Sec. 18 Report
Targeted Student Interventions									
29.095	Grants for Student Clubs	5/1/08	8/31/09	$1,027,983	61	Impact Assessment	N/A	N/A	Y
29.096	Collaborative Dropout Reduction Pilot	8/1/08	5/31/10	$1,359,468	6	Evaluation	9/2/08	8/31/09	Y
29.097	Intensive Technology-Based Academic Intervention Pilot Program	9/1/08	5/31/10	$627,700	13	Impact Assessment	N/A	N/A	Y
29.098	Intensive Summer Programs (to Facilitate Transition from High School to Postsecondary Institution	Cycle 1: 4/1/08 Cycle 2: 11/1/08	Cycle 1: 8/31/11 Cycle 2: 8/31/11	$3,154,500 (grant admin. by THECB)	Approx. 18 for Cycles 1 and 2	N/A (THECB)	N/A	N/A	N
29.098	Intensive Summer Programs (for Middle and High School Students)	6/1/08	12/31/09	$4,000,000	29	Evaluation	9/2/08	8/31/09	Y
29.917	Higher Education and Workforce Readiness Programs	6/1/08	8/15/09	$500,000	1	Impact Assessment	N/A	N/A	Y
29.919	Technology-Based Supplemental Instruction Pilot Program	5/1/08	5/30/10	$3,950,000 (funded by State Admin)	64	Evaluation	8/1/08	8/31/09	Y
39.115	Texas Science, Technology, Engineering and Math, Co-curricular Engineering Activities/Robotics	6/26/08	5/31/10	$950,000	1	N/A	N/A	N/A	N
39.361	Dropout Recovery Pilot Program	8/28/08	8/31/09	$5,950,173	22	Evaluation	11/1/08	8/31/09	Y
Total amount of grants awarded for Targeted Student Interventions in FY 2008:				$17,569,824					

TEC §	Grant Name	Grant begin date	Grant end date	FY 2008 Amount[a]	Number of Grantees	Evaluation/ Impact Assessment	Evaluation Begin Date	Evaluation End Date	Included in 2010 HB 2237 Sec. 18 Report
Effective Leaders and Teachers									
21.4511	Professional Development Activities for Teachers and Administrators	3/1/08	8/31/08	$14,850	1	Impact Assessment	N/A	N/A	Y
21.4541	Mathematics Instructional Coaches Pilot Program	7/1/08	5/31/10	$4,747,720	29	Evaluation	9/2/08	8/31/09	Y
21.462	Mathematics, Science, and Technology Teacher Preparation Academies	7/1/08	8/31/09	$3,154,500 (grant admin. by THECB)	2	N/A (THECB)	N/A	N/A	N
39.115	Texas Science, Technology, Engineering and Math, Pre-Service Teacher preparation Program	10/1/07	8/31/09	$900,000[c]	1	N/A	N/A	N/A	N
Total amount of grants awarded for Effective Leaders and Teachers in FY 2008:				$8,817,070					
Technical Assistance									
39.115	Early College High School Technical Assistance and Support for Cycle 2	N/A	N/A	$39,667	1	N/A	N/A	N/A	N
39.115	Texas Science, Technology, Engineering and Math, Technical Assistance and Support, Continuation Grant	7/1/08	2/28/10	$1,844,020	1	N/A	N/A	N/A	N
39.115	Texas High School Redesign and Restructuring Technical Assistance	10/1/08	2/28/10	$1,000,000[b]	1	N/A	N/A	N/A	N
Total amount of grants awarded for Technical Assistance in FY 2008:				$2,883,687					

Source: Texas Education Agency, 2008

Notes: THSPE = Texas High School Project Evaluation; THECB = Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board; TEC = Texas Education Code

Remaining funds will be allocated to project activities consistent with HB 2237 specifications.

a As of August 29, 2008.

b Amount listed is budgeted amount, not award amount.

c Total grant amount is $1,700,000 . Amount listed on table reflects FY 2008 amount.

Approach to Assessment of Program Impact

Section 18 of HB 2237 requires reports to the governor, the lieutenant governor, the speaker of the House of Representatives, and the presiding officers of the standing committees of each house of the legislature with primary jurisdiction over public education, to be submitted December 1, 2008 (preliminary report) and December 1, 2010 (final report). These reports are to include an assessment of the impact of programs for which grants have been awarded under Subchapter L, Chapter 39, TEC. The assessment of impact of these programs is to include an investigation of the following outcomes:

a. student performance on assessment instruments administered under Subchapter B, Chapter 39, TEC;
b. high school completion rates;
c. college readiness of high school students;
d. teacher effectiveness in instruction;
e. cost-effectiveness of the programs; and
f. any other factors the commissioner of education determines relevant.

Given the option to include other factors, an approach to allocating resources among program assessments was developed. Criteria were established by which Subchapter L grant initiatives were selected for either a basic impact assessment of relevant Section 18 outcomes, or for a more comprehensive evaluation, or for descriptive reporting only. In the latter (third) category were certain initiatives funded by Rider 53 that were excluded from impact assessment or evaluation efforts because they were deemed either not subject to the reporting requirements of Section 18; not programs that directly impacted teachers or students (such as technical assistance to districts); or too limited in size to make reporting cost-effective.

Thus, grant-funded HB 2237 initiatives listed in Table 2 in the present report fall into one of three categories:

1. programs subject to the reporting requirements of Section 18 that are receiving or will receive an impact assessment;
2. programs subject to the reporting requirements of Section 18 that are receiving or will receive a comprehensive evaluation; or
3. initiatives that were not considered programs; programs that were not subject to the reporting requirements of Section 18; or programs that were limited in size. These activities, therefore, will not be evaluated or assessed for program impact and will be excluded from HB 2237 Section 18 reports.[5]

Table 3 presents the programs within Subchapter L, Chapter 39, TEC that will receive a comprehensive evaluation or an impact assessment and will be included in this preliminary report and the final 2010 HB 2237 Section 18 report.

[5] Grants or programs that will not be directly evaluated or assessed for impact and that therefore, are excluded from HB 2237 Section 18 reports include the ECHS Special Project, San Antonio ISD; T-STEM Early Innovator – Waco ISD; T-STEM Co-curricular Engineering Activities/Robotics; T-STEM Pre-Service Teacher Preparation Program; ECHS Technical Assistance and Support for Cycle 2; T-STEM, Technical Assistance and Support, Continuation Grant; and HSRR Technical Assistance. Two programs (Intensive Summer Programs to Facilitate Transition from High School to Postsecondary Institution and Mathematics, Science, and Technology Teacher Preparation Academies) are being evaluated by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) and therefore are excluded from HB 2237 Section 18 reports. Special project grants and technical assistance grants are also excluded from these reports.

Table 3: Programs Under Subchapter L, Chapter 39, TEC Receiving a Comprehensive Evaluation or Impact Assessment

TEC §	Program	Receiving a Comprehensive Evaluation or Impact Assessment
21.4511	Professional Development Activities for Students and Teachers	Impact Assessment
21.4541	Math Instructional Coaches	Comprehensive Evaluation
29.095	Grants for Students Clubs	Impact Assessment
29.096	Collaborative Dropout Reduction	Comprehensive Evaluation
29.097	Intensive Technology Based Academic Intervention Pilot Program	Impact Assessment
29.098	Intensive Summer Programs	Comprehensive Evaluation
29.917	Higher Education Workforce Readiness	Impact Assessment
29.919	Technology-based Supplemental Instruction	Comprehensive Evaluation
39.115	High School Innovation Grant Initiative: Texas High School Redesign and Restructuring Early College High School Cycle 2 Cycle 3 Expansion Grant Texas Science, Technology, Engineering and Math Academies Start-up Cycle 1 and Non-competitive, Continuation Special project continuation – Manor ISD Implementation and Startup Cycle 2, Continuation Cycles 3 and 4	 Comprehensive Evaluation[1] Comprehensive Evaluation[1] Comprehensive Evaluation[1] Comprehensive Evaluation Comprehensive Evaluation Comprehensive Evaluation[1] Comprehensive Evaluation[1]
39.361	Programs created under the council recommendations: Dropout Recovery Pilot Program Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention Program	 Comprehensive Evaluation Comprehensive Evaluation

Source: Texas Education Agency, 2008
1 Pending inclusion in Texas High School Project Evaluation.

A comprehensive evaluation consists of investigating the implementation of program activities, program impact on targeted populations (e.g., student college readiness), barriers and facilitators of program activities, and cost-effectiveness and sustainability of the program. Comprehensive evaluations generally involve a contract with an external evaluator, comparison groups, extensive data collection (e.g., site visits, surveys, and interviews) and data analysis procedures, and therefore, usually require substantial evaluation funding.

Some programs authorized by HB 2237 are not cost-effective candidates for comprehensive evaluations.[6] Because these programs are still subject to the reporting requirements of Section 18, these programs are receiving or will receive an impact assessment. In contrast to comprehensive evaluations, which describe program implementation, barriers/facilitators to that implementation, and comparative analyses of outcome variables, impact assessments are more narrowly defined, and consist only of reporting performance on relevant outcome variables.

To date, all programs subject to a comprehensive evaluation or an impact assessment have been implemented for less than a year. In general, evaluations researchers prefer that a program be in place for at least one to three years in order for behavioral effects to be evident (Constas & Sternberg, 2006; U.S. Department of Education, 2007). Therefore, an assessment of program impact, as mandated in HB 2237 Section 18, is not possible at this early juncture. As a result, only implementation findings from programs that are receiving a comprehensive evaluation, if completed before the draft of this report, are included and discussed in this preliminary HB 2237 Section 18 report.

The next two sections of this report provide descriptions of programs undergoing impact assessment and of programs undergoing comprehensive evaluation, respectively. Following that is a section on preliminary findings from four comprehensive evaluations that have made substantial headway in examining grantees' plans for program implementation. Program implementation findings are provided from three programs addressing the Council's key strategy Targeted Student Intervention (Collaborative pilot

[6] TEA has determined that the cost of conducting a comprehensive evaluation for some of these programs outweighs any potential information gained, given the limited scope or nature of some of the programs.

program, ISP pilot program, and Technology-Based Supplemental Instruction pilot program) and one program addressing the Council's Effective Teachers and Leaders key strategy (MIC pilot program).[7] Following these implementation findings, the report concludes with an overview of the anticipated scope of the final HB 2237 Section 18 report due December 1, 2010.

[7] Given the similar evaluation objectives and timeline for the Collaborative, ISP, and MIC pilot programs, TEA contracted with one external evaluator for all three of these projects.

Descriptions of Programs Undergoing Impact Assessment

Programs authorized by HB 2237 for impact assessment are described in this section according to the Council's key strategy alignment system. For each program, the following information is provided: program purpose, amount of funds allocated to grantees, number of grantees, and program period by cycle.[8]

Comprehensive Whole School Reform

All programs under the Comprehensive Whole School Reform strategy are undergoing comprehensive evaluation under the THSP evaluation and are described in a later report section.

Targeted Student Interventions

Targeted interventions include activities and programs designed to improve student outcomes by addressing a particular issue or to provide services to a specific group of students with common interests or similar needs. Eight programs and activities under HB 2237 were established to provide interventions to improve student outcomes such as performance, retention, and college or workforce readiness. Of these, the following three are undergoing impact assessment:

Grants for Student Clubs

Intensive Technology-Based Academic Intervention Pilot Program

Higher Education and Workforce Readiness Programs

[8] Please see the Report on Implementation on HB 2237 for a complete list of grantees for each program: http://www.tea.state.tx.us/comm/leg_reports/08HB2237legreport_finalaccess.pdf#xml=http://www.tea.state.tx.us/cgi/texis/webinator/search/xml.txt?query=report+on+implementation+of+House+bill+2237&db=db&id=3871a0f230649a6c.

Grants for Student Clubs

Grants for Student Clubs establishes a pilot program under which eligible public school districts and open-enrollment charter schools may receive funding to support academic or co-curricular club activities, other than athletics, in which at least 50% of participating students are identified as being at risk of dropping out of school. The goal of the program is to increase student participation in positive and structured club activities that reinforce academic goals, reduce truancy and disciplinary infractions, and increase student attachment to school in order to ultimately reduce the number of students who drop out. The amount allocated for fiscal year 2008 (Cycle 1) program activities was $1,027,983. Grants were awarded to 61 school districts and open-enrollment charter schools. The grant program period is May 1, 2008 to August 31, 2009.

Intensive Technology-Based Academic Intervention Pilot Program

The Intensive Technology-Based Academic Intervention pilot Program provides intensive technology-based supplementary instruction in English, mathematics, science, or social studies to students in Grades 9 through 12 identified as being at risk of dropping out of school. The amount allocated for fiscal year 2008 (Cycle 1) program activities was $627,700. Thirteen grantees were awarded funding for the program period running September 1, 2008 to May 31, 2010.

Higher Education and Workforce Readiness Programs

The purpose of the Higher Education and Workforce Readiness Programs is to provide classroom or after-school programs, using trained volunteers, to enhance college readiness, workforce readiness, dropout prevention, or personal financial literacy. Under this initiative, TEA established the Student Excellence and Readiness through Volunteers in Education (SERVE) program. The amount allocated for this program for

fiscal year 2008 (Cycle 1) was $500,000. One grantee was awarded funding to implement the program statewide. The program period is June 1, 2008 to August 15, 2009.

Effective Teachers and Leaders

Effective teachers and school leaders are essential to any effort to improve student learning and performance. Unfortunately, Texas continues to face shortages of highly effective educators and leaders trained and experienced in high school reform. Moreover, many of the existing principal certification requirements do not address some of the most critical skills needed for transforming underperforming high schools. To this end, two programs were established under HB 2237 to provide professional development activities to Texas teachers and school leaders. Of these, the following program is undergoing an impact assessment:

Professional Development Activities for Teachers and Administrators

Professional Development Activities for Teachers and Administrators

The Professional Development Activities for Teachers and Administrators Initiative provides technical assistance and professional development activities for public school teachers and administrators through a base website that incorporates professional development materials and modules. The amount allocated for fiscal year 2008 (Stage One) was $14,850 for the period March 1, 2008 to August 31, 2008.

Descriptions of Programs Undergoing Comprehensive Evaluation

Programs authorized by HB 2237 and undergoing comprehensive evaluation are described in this section according to the Council's key strategy alignment system. For each program, the following information is provided: program purpose, amount of funds allocated to grantees, number of grantees, program period by cycle, and the amount of funds allocated for an evaluation, if applicable.[9]

Comprehensive Whole School Reform

Programs within this key strategy incorporate school-wide improvements that are meant to induce whole school systemic reform. These improvements focus on the capacity and quality of campus leadership, campus instructional programs, campus climate and culture, and district support for reform efforts. The following programs are part of Comprehensive Whole School Reform and will be undergoing comprehensive evaluation under the Texas High School Project Evaluation (THSPE), a longitudinal, comprehensive evaluation of over 100 schools that is supported by public and private funds and that began in fiscal year 2008.

Texas High School Redesign and Restructuring, Cycle 4

Early College High Schools

Early College High School Special Project, San Antonio ISD

Early College High School, Cycle 2

Early College High School, Cycle 3 Expansion Grant

Texas Science, Technology, Engineering and Math Academies

[9] Please see the Report on Implementation on HB 2237 for a complete list of grantees for each program: http://www.tea.state.tx.us/comm/leg_reports/08HB2237legreport_finalaccess.pdf#xml=http://www.tea.state.tx.us/cgi/texis/webinator/search/xml.txt?query=report+on+implementation+of+House+bill+2237&db=db&id=3871a0f230649a6c.

- Texas Science, Technology, Engineering and Math Academies Start-up Cycle 1 and Non-competitive, Continuation
- Texas Science, Technology, Engineering and Math Academies Special Project Continuation – Manor ISD
- Texas Science, Technology, Engineering and Math Academies, Cycle 3

Texas High School Redesign and Restructuring, Cycle 4

The purpose of HSRR is to provide high school campuses with resources to implement research-based reform models and to create a demonstration project, which will supply case studies and models for successful practices in turning around low-performing high schools. A total of $3,420,451 was allocated in fiscal year 2008 and was awarded to 13 grantees for the period of March 1, 2008 to February 28, 2010. Evaluation reporting for HSRR Cycle 4 is pending inclusion in the THSPE.

Early College High Schools

ECHS are designed to provide students at risk of dropping out of school, including traditionally underserved students, an opportunity to earn a high school diploma and 60 credit hours towards an associate's or a bachelor's degree in an academically supportive environment, at no cost to the student. HB 2237 funding in the amount $8,030,000 has been awarded to 15 ECHS grantees to date. Specific amounts, funding periods and number of ECHS grants awarded with HB 2237 funds are presented in Table 2. Evaluation reporting for each of these ECHS programs is pending inclusion in the THSPE.

Texas Science, Technology, Engineering and Math Academies

T-STEM Academies provide funding to continue model high schools, created in partnership with a Texas Institute of Higher Education (IHE), that prepare students for the demands of 21st century Texas. T-STEM Academies are structured to increase student achievement by exposing students to rigorous and applied science and mathematics instruction, while simultaneously acting as demonstration sites to inform math and science teaching and learning statewide. Every T-STEM Academy provides a challenging, well-rounded education; establishes a personalized culture with the expectation that all students will achieve postsecondary success; and provides teacher and leadership development. HB 2237 funding in the amount $7,350,504 has been awarded to 11 T-STEM grantees to date. Specific amounts, funding periods and number of T-STEM grants awarded with HB 2237 funds are presented in Table 2. Evaluation reporting for each of the T-STEM programs is included in the THSP evaluation.

Targeted Student Interventions

Targeted interventions include activities designed to improve student outcomes, such as performance, retention, and college/workforce readiness, by addressing a particular issue or providing services to a specific group of students with common interests or similar needs. Of the eight programs and activities under HB 2237 that were established to provide interventions to targeted populations, four are undergoing comprehensive evaluation:

Collaborative Dropout Reduction pilot program

Intensive Summer Programs

Technology-Based Supplemental Instruction pilot program

Dropout Recovery pilot program

Collaborative Dropout Reduction Pilot Program

The purpose of the Collaborative pilot program is to encourage eligible public school districts and open-enrollment charter schools to collaborate with local businesses, local governments or law enforcement agencies, nonprofit organizations, faith-based organizations, and institutions of higher education to deliver proven, research-based dropout intervention services. The amount allocated for fiscal year 2008 (Cycle 1) program activities was $1,359,468, consisting of six grantees with a program period of August 1, 2008 to May 31, 2010. A total of $249,905 has been allocated for an evaluation of program activities with an evaluation period of September 2, 2008 to August 31, 2009. Evaluation funding for additional years is subject to appropriation of funds by the Texas Legislature in future legislative sessions.

Intensive Summer Programs

ISP establish and implement pilot programs in partnership with an IHE to provide intensive academic instruction during the summer semester to promote college and workforce readiness for middle school and high school students identified as being at risk of dropping out of school. The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) was given responsibility for a portion of the Intensive Summer Programs (Sec. 29.098(b)(2) and (3), TEC). The amount allocated for fiscal year 2008 (Cycle 1) program activities was $4,000,000. The program consists of 30 grantees with a program period of June 1, 2008 to December 31, 2009. A total of $193,923 has been allocated for an evaluation of program activities, with an evaluation period of September 2, 2008 to August 31, 2009. Evaluation funding for additional years is subject to appropriation of funds by the Texas Legislature in future legislative sessions.

Technology-Based Supplemental Instruction Pilot Program

The Technology-Based Supplemental Instruction pilot program (hereafter referred to as the Texas Rural Technology [R-Tech] pilot program) provides technology-based supplemental educational services, including distance learning opportunities, to students in Grades 6-12 in high-need, rural school districts. The amount allocated for fiscal year 2008 (Cycle 1) program activities was $3,950,000, consisting of 64 grantees and a program period of May 1, 2008 to May 30, 2010. A total of $200,000 has been allocated for an evaluation of program activities, with an evaluation period of August 1, 2008 to August 31, 2009. Evaluation funding for additional years is subject to appropriation of funds by the Texas Legislature in future legislative sessions.

Dropout Recovery Pilot Program

The purpose of the Dropout Recovery Pilot Program initiative is to identify and recruit students who have already dropped out of Texas public schools and provide them with services to enable them to earn a high school diploma or demonstrate college readiness. The amount allocated for fiscal year 2008 (Cycle 1) program activities was $5,950,173. Twenty-two grantees were awarded funding, and the program period extends from August 28, 2008 to August 31, 2009. For the evaluation of program activities, $150,000 has been allocated, with a projected evaluation period of November 1, 2008 to August 31, 2009. Evaluation funding for additional years is subject to appropriation of funds by the Texas Legislature in future legislative sessions.

Effective Teachers and Leaders

Two programs were established under HB 2237 to provide professional development activities to Texas teachers and school leaders. Of these, the following program is undergoing a comprehensive evaluation.

Mathematics Instructional Coaches Pilot Program

Mathematics Instructional Coaches Pilot Program

The purpose of the MIC initiative is to establish a pilot program under which participating public school districts and open-enrollment charter schools receive grants to develop the content knowledge and instructional expertise of math teachers at the middle school, junior high school, or high school level. Grantees are required to contract with an approved service provider (ASP), which can be a regional ESC, IHE, or private organization. The amount allocated for fiscal year 2008 (Cycle 1) program activities was $4,747,720. Grants were awarded to 29 school districts and open-enrollment charter schools, with a program period from July 1, 2008 to May 31, 2010. $249,884 has been allocated for an evaluation of program activities, with an evaluation period of September 2, 2008 to August 31, 2009. Evaluation funding for additional years is subject to appropriation of funds by the Texas Legislature in future legislative sessions.

2008 Evaluation Findings

This section of the report presents preliminary findings from four comprehensive evaluations that have made substantial headway in examining grantees' plans for program implementation. Three evaluations address programs that fall within the Council's Targeted Student Interventions strategy, while the final study addresses a program under the Effective Teachers and Administrators strategy.

Evaluation of Targeted Student Interventions

Collaborative Dropout Reduction Pilot Program

TEA contracted with ICF International to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the Collaborative pilot program, Cycle 1, running from September 1, 2008 to August 31, 2009. The evaluation will consist of three phases. Phase 1 will evaluate and describe the implementation strategies and processes of the Collaborative program. Phase 2 will determine the impact of the program on students. Phase 3 will explore the associated costs to develop, implement, and sustain the Collaborative program. Phase 1 began in September 2008 and is projected to end in December 2008; Phase 2 and Phase 3 will be conducted simultaneously from January 2009 to August 2009. Therefore, only a discussion of program implementation findings to date from Phase 1 of this evaluation is presented below, and includes: background information of grantees, characteristics of students to be served, information on key partners, services to be offered by grantees, target population and anticipated participation, funding and planned expenditures, and sustainability planning. This information was collected from grantee applications and contracts between grantee districts and partners. Program implementation findings described here are, of necessity, preliminary and some are prospective in nature.

Background

The Collaborative program currently has six Cycle 1 district grantees. As with most dropout prevention programs, grantees are focusing on a variety of strategies to influence a student's decision to stay in school, including required services in four general areas: academic support services, workforce skill development, student and family support services, and attendance improvement. Grantees are located in three general areas of the state: Rio Grande Valley (Brownsville ISD and Los Fresnos CISD), San Antonio (School of Excellence in Education and Edgewood ISD), and East Texas (Houston ISD and Port Arthur ISD).

Although all grants officially started on August 1, 2008, and officially end on May 31, 2010, there was some variation in the amount of time needed for planning. Consequently, timing of initial service provision varied (see Table 3). The School of Excellence in Education, for example, does not expect to begin serving students with grant funding (via Project STEPS) until January 1, 2009. All other grantees began serving students within two months of the initiation of the grant period.

Table 4 provides a general overview of each grantee, including the grades grantees plan to serve, school type (i.e., ISD or charter), grant award amount, key dates of project operation, and number of anticipated students. All grantees plan to implement a multi-pronged strategy consisting of career and technical education, academics, college preparation, and career development, coupled with social supports. Five of the six grantees are serving students in a public school setting (including a district charter school), while one grantee is serving students in a regular charter school.

Most grantees were funded near the $250,000 level, with one district receiving a $130,000 grant. All six grantees raised the required matching funds, with some well exceeding the minimum 10% matching requirement. Therefore, total combined funds ranged from $176,000 in Edgewood ISD to just under $500,000 in Brownsville ISD. In total, 1,655 students are expected to be served by the Collaborative projects. The number of students served in each site will range from 80 in Edgewood ISD to 500 in Brownsville ISD, with an average of 276 students.

Table 4: General Information on Collaborative Dropout Reduction Pilot Program Grantees

Grantee Name	School of Excellence in Education	Port Arthur ISD	Los Fresnos CISD	Houston ISD	Edgewood ISD	Brownsville ISD
City	San Antonio	Port Arthur	Los Fresnos	Houston	San Antonio	Brownsville
Branded Program Name	Project STEPS	Ripple Effect; Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program: Successful Dropout Prevention	College, Career and Technology Academy (CCTA)	Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program	Edgewood ISD Middle College Program	Collaborative Dropout Reduction Pilot Program (+ STARS Program for Course Recovery)
Grades Served	12	9-12	10-12	9-12	9-12	12
Number of Schools Served	1	2	1	4	2	5
Number of Students Served	375	300	200	200	80	500
Setting	Charter School	ISD	ISD	ISD (3 Public Schools; 1 District Charter School)	ISD	ISD
Grant Amount	$249,975	$229,493	$250,000	$250,000	$130,000	$250,000
Matching Funds	$72,200	$21,975	$65,000	$45,000	$46,000	$240,000
Begin Date	8/1/2008	8/1/2008	8/1/2008	8/1/2008	8/1/2008	8/1/2008
Services Begin	1/1/2009	10/1/2008	8/1/2008	9/1/2008	8/1/2008	9/1/2008
End Date	5/31/2010	5/31/2010	5/31/2010	5/31/2010	5/31/2010	5/31/2010

Source: Texas Education Agency, Grantee Applications, 2008

Characteristics of Students

Across all grantees, students from 15 schools plan to be served by the Collaborative program. Table 5 presents demographics of student populations at these schools.[10] A majority of student participants are identified as at-risk, economically disadvantaged, African American or Hispanic. The percentages of students who are limited English

[10] The demographic profile presented in Table 4 is of the entire student population of schools receiving the Collaborative grant. The pilot program will serve only a subset of students in these schools.

proficient (LEP) ranges from 3.4% to 40.2%, with the highest percentage of LEP students at Lee High School in Houston ISD. Mobility rates are also presented in Table 5, defined as the percentage of the students within a school who have attended less than 83% of the school year (which translates into six or more weeks missed in a school year). Mobility rates ranged from 17.7% at Hanna High School in Brownsville ISD to 75.0% at Reach Charter School in Houston ISD. The statewide average, by comparison, was 22.3% in the 2005-06 school year. Ten of the 14 schools reported mobility rates ranked above this state average. These findings (e.g., number of students identified as at-risk and mobility rates compared to state average), indicate that the Collaborative program is reaching schools with a large population of students at risk of dropping out.

Table 5: Student Demographics and Risk Factors at Targeted Schools

		Race/Ethnicity			Risk Factors			
Grantee	School Name	African American	Hispanic	White	Economically Disadvantaged	Limited English Proficient	At-Risk	Mobility 2005-06
School of Excellence in Education	Rick Hawkins High School	35.8%	58.1%	5.2%	75.4%	3.4%	60.6%	45.4%
Port Arthur ISD	Memorial High School	58.9%	28.2%	4.8%	74.4%	4.9%	58.9%	25.1%
	Memorial 7th, 8th, and 9th Grade Academy	59.8%	29.7%	3.1%	83.9%	3.5%	56.5%	NR
Los Fresnos CISD	Los Fresnos High School	0.6%	93.5%	5.6%	83.9%	11.8%	60.1%	19.7%
Edgewood ISD	Memorial High School	2.2%	96.9%	0.8%	87.9%	8.6%	74.7%	30.0%
	JFK High School	0.7%	97.7%	1.5%	100.0%	7.6%	69.8%	24.1%
Houston ISD	Lee High School	13.3%	77.8%	3.4%	77.8%	40.2%	88.1%	42.0%
	Jones High School	68.6%	30.3%	0.2%	69.2%	5.0%	83.9%	39.8%
	Reach Charter School	26.8%	70.7%	2.4%	58.5%	8.1%	91.1%	75.0%
	Wheatley High School	59.3%	39.7%	0.2%	75.5%	9.5%	84.2%	38.8%
Brownsville ISD	Hanna High School	0.1%	94.4%	4.3%	83.3%	13.2%	56.7%	17.7%
	Porter High School	0.1%	98.7%	1.2%	98.1%	28.7%	78.2%	21.0%
	Pace High School	0.2%	96.4%	3.2%	96.1%	18.0%	68.9%	21.7%
	Rivera High School	0.2%	98.4%	0.9%	98.8%	20.0%	70.1%	22.5%
	Lopez High School	0.1%	98.8%	1.0%	98.8%	24.6%	73.5%	23.4%

Source: Texas Education Agency, Academic Excellence Indicator System, 2007.
NR=Not Reported

Table 6 presents additional context regarding the 15 schools serving students through the Collaborative programs. Twelve of the 15 schools (80%) had an accountability rating of “Academically Acceptable”, 2 schools were “Academically Unacceptable”, and 1 school was “Recognized”. None of the 15 schools achieved the highest rating of “Exemplary”. An accountability rating is based on a school’s Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) scores, State-Developed Alternative Assessment II (SDAA II) scores, completion rate, and annual dropout rate. Seven of the 15 schools reported that fewer than half of their student population met the TAKS standard for math in 2007. One school (Reach Charter School) reported that fewer than half of its population met the TAKS standard for reading in 2007. Among the 15 schools, the highest performance on TAKS reading and math was reported at the Los Fresnos High School, and the lowest performance was the charter school in Houston ISD. Only 2 of 15 schools reported enrollment rates in special education that was at or below the state average of 10.6%: Lee High School in Houston ISD and Hanna High School in Brownsville ISD. All 15 schools enrolled students in career and technology education at a higher rate than the state average of 20.6%. In fact, 13 of 15 schools reported that over half of the student body was enrolled in career and technology education.

Table 6: Academic Performance and Enrollment in Special Programs at Targeted Schools

Grantee	School Name	2007 Accountability Rating	Met TAKS Standard in Math – 2007	Met TAKS Standard in Reading – 2007	Enrolled in Special Education	Enrolled in Career & Technology Education
School of Excellence in Education	Rick Hawkins High School	Academically Unacceptable	40%	72%	15%	69%
Port Arthur ISD	Memorial High School	Academically Acceptable	48%	76%	11%	58%
	Memorial 7th, 8th, and 9th Grade Academy	Academically Unacceptable	53%	77%	13%	44%
Los Fresnos CISD	Los Fresnos High School	Academically Acceptable	76%	88%	14%	72%
Edgewood ISD	Memorial High School	Academically Acceptable	48%	76%	18%	44%
	JFK High School	Academically Acceptable	52%	83%	16%	73%
Houston ISD	Lee High School	Academically Acceptable	49%	66%	10%	82%
	Jones High School	Academically Acceptable	45%	66%	20%	65%
	Reach Charter School	Academically Acceptable	15%	20%	22%	64%
	Wheatley High School	Academically Acceptable	48%	73%	22%	99%
Brownsville ISD	Hanna High School	Recognized	72%	86%	11%	70%
	Porter High School	Academically Acceptable	57%	80%	17%	72%
	Pace High School	Academically Acceptable	54%	81%	13%	67%
	Rivera High School	Academically Acceptable	67%	83%	14%	83%
	Lopez High School	Academically Acceptable	59%	78%	16%	78%

Source: Texas Education Agency, Academic Excellence Indicator System, 2007.

Key Partners

Table 7 presents the key partnerships identified by grantees as part of their grant applications, including required partnerships. Collaborative grantees are engaged with a wide array of partners; however, differences exist among grantees in the types of partners participating. For example, Brownsville ISD and Edgewood ISD collaborated with municipal partners such as the Chamber of Commerce and Department of Community Initiatives, while Port Arthur ISD and the School of Excellence in Education collaborated with faith-based partners. Four of the six grantees engaged in partnerships with colleges and universities, while three of the six grantees partnered with courts or other justice system focused organizations. All six Collaborative grantees formed partnerships with community nonprofits.

Table 7: Key Partnerships by Organization Type

Partner Type	School of Excellence in Education	Port Arthur ISD	Los Fresnos CISD	Houston ISD	Edgewood ISD	Brownsville ISD
College/ University	St. Philip's College		Tech Prep of Rio Grande Valley; Texas State Technical College; The University of Brownsville and Texas Southmost College		Alamo Community College District; Westside Education & Training Center	The University of Texas-Brownsville
Faith-based Organizations	Antioch Community Transformation Network (ACTN)	The HOPE Center- after school program				
Community Nonprofits	Nevil Shed's Second Chances	The LAW Academy	Cameron Works-First Generation In-School Youth Program (provides 25 hours of leadership/ community volunteer time)	Intercultural Development Research Association	Project QUEST	Cameron Works
Justice	San Antonio Fighting Back	Jefferson County Truancy Court				Cameron County Juvenile Justice Department
Latino Community focused	National Council for La Raza (NCLR)		United Migrant Opportunity Services			
Community Businesses		Workforce Solutions- The Texas Workforce Center (Power Zone)	Lighthouse Counseling Center; Valley Federal Credit Union; Sheraton South Padre Island Hotels; Keppel AmFELS, Inc., A&V Lopez Supermarket; Knight's Inn & Suites; Los Fresnos Eye Clinic & Optical, Inc.; Los Fresnos Family Dentistry			
Government Organizations					City of San Antonio Department of Community Initiatives	Brownsville Chamber of Commerce

Source: Texas Education Agency, Grantee Applications, 2008

Services

Table 8 provides detail on the four required service types offered by Collaborative grantees, and also indicates whether grantees provided the services directly or contracted with external partners (i.e., brokered) for the services. The four main types of services are: academic support services, workforce skill development, student and family support services, and attendance improvement. Detailed findings on each type of service follow.

Academic Support Services. All six Collaborative grantees offer a range of academic support services. Although much of this section has focused on the differences between the six grantees, a look at the services provided reveals a great number of commonalities as well. For example, five of the six grantees offer tutoring services (mostly direct), and five grantees also provide professional development for teachers. Other commonly provided services include dual-credit courses (four grantees), individual graduation/education plans (four grantees), and credit recovery (four grantees). Ten of the 13 types of academic services provided are directly administered by the grantee organizations. All grantees provide for some type of postsecondary planning, and many of these services are brokered through partnerships with local colleges and universities.

Workforce Skill Development. Key similarities among Collaborative grantees include the provision of services related to workforce skill development. All six grantees, as required, offer some sort of paid employment opportunities, while four grantees offer job shadowing, career paths counseling, and career and technical education. Many of the career and technical-related services are offered through brokered partnerships with outside agencies.

Student and Family Support Services. When the Collaborative program was initially developed, it was anticipated that student participants would bring a range of risk factors and other problems into the school; therefore, a purely academic or career and technical approach would only solve part of the dropout problem. Through integrated student supports, students can find a mentor, counseling services, transportation, child care, or other support services to increase the likelihood that they can concentrate on learning. Among the student support services, transportation services are most commonly provided (by four grantees), followed by mentoring and a dedicated service coordinator (three grantees each). Two grantees—Los Fresnos CISD and Houston ISD—are making dedicated efforts to improve school climate, as research has found a negative climate can influence dropout (Hammond, Linton, Smink, & Drew, 2007). Other innovative programs, such as financial literacy classes and community service activities, are also planned.

All six grantees are attempting to involve families in their programs as well. Six grantees provide parenting education, while five grantees involve families in fairs, counseling sessions, or other activities to ensure parental involvement in their student's education and well-being. Three grantees—the School of Excellence in Education, Port Arthur ISD, and Brownsville ISD—provide home visits with families.

Attendance Improvement. Three of the six Collaborative grantees are attempting to improve student attendance and truancy on their campuses. Four grantees offer some type of character education, three grantees provide motivational speakers, and two grantees offer behavior management, all of which could affect student attendance.

Table 8: Specific Strategies Used by Collaborative Grantees by Provider

(D=Direct, B=Brokered to Outside Agency)						
	School of Excellence in Education	Port Arthur ISD	Los Fresnos CISD	Houston ISD	Edgewood ISD	Brownsville ISD
ACADEMIC SUPPORT SERVICES						
Tutoring	D	D, B	D	D		D
Dual credit courses	B		B		B	B
Reading/literacy program	D					
Funding for textbooks	D	D				D
Individual graduation/ education plans	D		D		D	D
Incentives to students			B	D		
Peer-to-peer tutoring		D	D	D		
Professional development for teachers	B	D	B		D	D
Academic advisors	D					
Mentoring (by Teachers)	D	D				
Educational referrals	B				B	
Academic acceleration (credit acceleration)			D			
Credit recovery	D	D	D			B
Financial aid			B			D
College Fairs, centers for college prep	D				D	B
Post secondary education assistance		B	D	B	B	D
WORKFORCE SKILL DEVELOPMENT						
Paid employment	B	B	D	D	D	B
Job shadowing	B		B		D	B
Job internship	B		D		B	
Job placement	B		B			B
Job preparation workshops		B	B		D	
Career paths		B	D		B	B
Career and technical education		B	D	D		B
Career and technical assessments/ career counseling		B	B			D, B
CO-OP classes						D

	School of Excellence in Education	Port Arthur ISD	Los Fresnos CISD	Houston ISD	Edgewood ISD	Brownsville ISD
STUDENT AND FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES						
Mentoring (by peers)		D		D		
Mentoring (by adult non-school staff)				B		B
Dedicated staff member for providing outside referrals	D			D	B	
At-Risk Counselors			D			D
Transportation	D	D	B		D	
Child care			B		D	
Attempts to improve school climate			D	D		
Parenting education	B	D	B	D	D	B
Home visits	D	B				B
Family involvement (fairs, sessions, progress reports)	B		B	D	D	D
Financial literacy	B					
Community service			B			
Pregnancy services (prenatal care; offsite instruction)						B
PR Campaign to increase community awareness			D			
Juvenile Justice coordination		B				B
ATTENDANCE IMPROVEMENT						
Means for improving attendance/truancy (e.g., attendance contracts)		B	D			D
Character education		B	B	D	D	
Motivational speakers			D	B		B
Behavior management (e.g., anger; discipline matters)		B			B	

Source: Texas Education Agency, Grantee Applications, 2008

Target Population and Anticipated Participation

Table 9 breaks down the anticipated number of students served by grade level. Two-thirds (66%) of the students served by the Collaborative programs are expected to be high school seniors, with fewer students served at the lower grade levels. Brownsville ISD anticipates serving the most students (500 seniors) and Edgewood ISD is expected to serve the fewest number of students (80).

Table 9: Anticipated Number of Students Served by Grade Level

	9th	10th	11th	12th	Total
School of Excellence in Education	0	0	0	375	375
Port Arthur ISD	75	75	75	75	300
Los Fresnos CISD	0	20	100	80	200
Edgewood ISD	10	25	25	20	80
Houston ISD	50	50	50	50	200
Brownsville ISD	0	0	0	500	500
Total	135	170	250	1,100	1,655

Source: Texas Education Agency, Grantee Applications, 2008

Grantees were asked to address their needs and objectives in the grant applications, and it is evident from this information that graduation is the top priority of Collaborative grantees. All grantees identified an increase in graduation rates as a primary focus. Other common objectives included reducing the number of students at risk of dropping out (five grantees), increasing parental involvement (four grantees), increasing TAKS scores (three grantees), and increasing participation in career readiness skills training (three grantees).

Funding and Planned Expenditures

Table 10 provides an overview of each Collaborative grantee's budget, along with their matching funds. As expected, personnel costs account for a significant portion of the grant funding, totaling just under half of all budgeted expenditures. Contracted services accounted for just over a third of projected expenditures. Supplies and other expenditures, aggregated, account for less than 20% of projected expenditures.

Across all grantees, $1,359,468 in grants were awarded for the Collaborative Cycle 1 grantees, and grantees contributed an additional $490,175 in matching funds to bring the total expected expenditures for this program above $1.8 million. Five of the six Collaborative grantees exceeded the matching requirement of 10%; in fact, Brownsville ISD nearly doubled its funding through matching.

Table 10: Planned Expenditures and Matching Funds

Category	School of Excellence in Education	Port Arthur ISD	Los Fresnos CISD	Houston ISD	Edgewood ISD	Brownsville ISD	Total Across All 6 Grantees (Average % of Total Grant Amount)
Personnel	$122,875	$151,393	$162,470	$139,275	$71,695	$0	$647,708 (47.6%)
Contracted Services	$84,200	$3,500	$27,070	$75,000	$32,900	$240,000	$462,270 (34.0%)
Supplies and Materials	$34,500	$22,800	$56,460	$1,805	$23,000	$4,000	$94,495 (10.5%)
Other	$8,400	$51,800	$4,000	$33,920	$2,405	$6,000	$106,525 (7.8%)
Grant Amount	$249,975	$229,493	$250,000	$250,000	$130,000	$250,000	$1,359,468
Matching Funds	$72,200	$21,975	$65,000	$45,000	$46,000	$240,000	$490,175
Total Funding	$322,175	$251,468	$315,000	$295,000	$176,000	$490,000	$1,849,643

Source: Texas Education Agency, Grantee Applications, 2008

Sustainability Planning

All six Collaborative grantees addressed sustainability in their grant applications, and a summary of these plans is presented in Table 11. Four of the six grantees plan to pursue sustainability strategies focused on local efforts while two grantees (Los Fresnos CISD and Edgewood ISD) plan to pursue a combination of local and state support. As evaluation data become available on the Collaborative program, these planning efforts may very well change, depending upon the results of the study.

Table 11: Sustainability Planning Initiatives Undertaken by Collaborative Grantees

Grantee	Planning Efforts
School of Excellence in Education	Marketing plan to raise community awareness
Port Arthur ISD	The goal is to create a systemic restructuring of the ISS (in-school suspension) program
Los Fresnos CISD	Financial sustainability will occur through new re-enrolled counts for state ADA reimbursements, CATE funding streams, and district commitment to efforts
Houston ISD	The Department of Student Engagement will seek budgetary commitments from campuses, regional offices and other district sources; Funds from Title I, Title III, Title IV, Title V, High School Allotment and recouped ADA funds from increased attendance
Edgewood ISD	Major initiatives and partnerships will be maintained despite grant funding. Local and state funding will be used to sustain the program. The evaluation data will inform scope changes and design of the program.
Brownsville ISD	Have a dropout committee comprised of community organizations

Source: Texas Education Agency, Grantee Applications, 2008

Summary of Implementation Findings

The Collaborative program has six district grantees, each offering a wide array of services within a multi-pronged strategy to address the dropout problem in their respective communities. In total, 1,655 students in 15 schools are expected to be served by the Collaborative projects with most of these students identified as at risk of dropping out. All grantees aimed program efforts at increasing graduation, reducing dropout rates, increasing job skills, and providing employment opportunities to student participants. All

six Collaborative grantees formed partnerships with community nonprofits that will offer four general types of services: academic support services, workforce skill development, student and family support services, and attendance improvement. Altogether, $1,359,468 in grants was awarded for the Collaborative Cycle 1 grantees, and grantees contributed an additional $490,175 in matching funds to bring the total expected expenditures for this program above $1.8 million. All six grantees also addressed the sustainability of the Collaborative program in their grant applications. The findings from the first phase of the evaluation of this program reveal that grantees have similar goals for students in the Collaborative program. The various methods they are employing to achieve these goals should provide important information about the effectiveness and impact of different dropout prevention strategies.

Intensive Summer Programs

TEA contracted with ICF International to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the ISP pilot program, Cycle 1, running from September 2, 2008 to August 31, 2009. The evaluation will follow a similar three phase design as the Collaborative program evaluation. Phase 1 will evaluate and describe the implementation strategies and processes of the ISP program. Phase 2 will determine the impact of the program on students and teachers. Phase 3 will explore the associated costs to develop, implement, and sustain the ISP program. Phase 1 began in September 2008 and is projected to end in December 2008; Phase 2, for grantees that implemented the ISP program in Summer 2008, will begin in November 2008 and end in February 2009. Phase 3 will be conducted from January 2009 to August 2009. Therefore, only a discussion of program implementation findings to date from Phase 1 of this evaluation is presented below, and includes: background information on grantees, characteristics of grantees, information on key partners, program objectives, activities to be offered by grantees, and funding

and planned expenditures. This information was collected from grantee applications and contracts between grantee districts and partners. Program implementation findings described here are preliminary and some are prospective in nature.

Background

In total, 29 ISP grants for Cycle 1 were awarded to school districts and open-enrollment charter schools. Of these 29 grants, 15 were awarded to fund projects in high schools, 12 in middle schools, and 2 grants served both high schools and middle schools. Table 12 presents the average number of students that ISP projects plan to serve in these schools. On average, ISP projects serving students in middle school projected an average enrollment of 103 Grade 6 students, 122 Grade 7 students, and 109 Grade 8 students. High school ISP projects plan to serve an average of 133 Grade 9 students, 78 Grade 10 students, 62 Grade 11 students, and 61 Grade 12 students.

Table 12: Planned Number of Students in Middle and High Schools to be Served by ISP Projects

Student Grade Level	Average
Middle Schools (n=14)	
Number of Grade 6 Students Served	103
Number of Grade 7 Students Served	122
Number of Grade 8 Students Served	109
High Schools (n=17)	
Number of Grade 9 Students Served	133
Number of Grade 10 Students Served	78
Number of Grade 11 Students Served	62
Number of Grade 12 Students Served	61

Source: Texas Education Agency, Grantee Applications, 2008

Each ISP grantee was asked to identify the targeted number of students, staff, parents, and school campuses that would be involved in the ISP, and averages for all grantees

are reported in Table 13. On average, each ISP grantee plans to serve 355 students. ISP projects serving middle schools will serve slightly more students (346) on average than high school ISP grantees (338). The ISP programs will be composed of an average of 33 teachers and 2 campuses (e.g., the school and the IHE partner). These planned numbers did not vary strongly between projects involving middle and high schools.[11]

Table 13: Average Total Numbers of Students, Staff, Students' Families, and Campuses that ISP Grantees Plan to Serve

Variables	Average for All Schools (N=29)	Average for Middle Schools (n=14)	Average for High Schools (n=17)
Total Number of Students	355	346	338
Total Number of Staff	33	32	31
Total Number of Parents (optional)	366	360	332
Total Number of Campuses	2	2	2

Source: Texas Education Agency, Grantee Applications, 2008

The next section examines the characteristics of the students across the school districts in this study. Because this information was gathered from grantee applications, it is important to note that the characteristics of the total student populations may not necessarily reflect the characteristics of the subpopulation of students who enrolled or will enroll in the ISP projects.

Characteristics of Grantees

In total, 29 ISP grants were awarded to school districts and charter schools across Texas, 7 of which were awarded two ISP grants: one grant each for middle school and high school students. The majority (76%) of grantees were urban, determined by

[11] The average number of staff for all ISP grantees was 33, while the average number of staff for high school (32) and middle school ISP grantees (31) is slightly lower. This finding is due to the fact that the two programs that served both middle and high school students had a slightly lower number of staff than the average ISP, which decreased both middle school and high school averages when examined separately.

whether the grantee was located in a metropolitan statistical area (MSA). As shown in Table 14, most of the grantee districts include a sizable number of schools. The average grantee district supervises 20 schools, although one school district oversees as many as 109 schools. The school districts and charter schools serve an average of 12,763 students, although there was a wide range in this enrollment statistic. For instance, one charter school serves as few as 286 students, while the largest school district in this study contains as many as 63,811 students. The average student-to-teacher ratio across school districts and charter schools (for fall, spring, and summer semesters) was 15 students to every teacher. This student-to-teacher ratio varied slightly with one school district having only 10 students to every teacher and one charter school having as many as 19 students to teacher. Across the 15 school districts, the average teacher had 14.8 years of teaching experience. In one school district, teachers averaged 9.5 years of experience, while in another school district, teachers averaged 16.7 years of experience in teaching.[12]

[12] The teachers' average number of years of experience variable was found in AskTED, which supplies online access to school district data from the Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS); however, data was only available for public school districts and not charter schools (n=15).

Table 14: Characteristics of the ISP Grantees

Variables	Average
Number of Schools	20
Total Students	12,763
Student to Teacher Ratio	14.8
Teachers' Experience (Avg. No. of Yrs.)	11.4

Source: Texas Education Agency, Common Core of Data 13, 2007 and Academic Excellence Indicator System, 2007.

Key Partners

As required, all ISP grantees partnered with a Texas IHE, with nine grantees partnering with more than one and another grantee partnering with the Sylvan Learning Center in addition to an IHE. The 29 ISP grantees provided detailed descriptions of their management plans with their partners that generally included three components: 1) designating the member(s) of the ISP management team, 2) dividing the responsibilities for the different ISP activities, and 3) outlining strategies for ISP management.

Objectives of Schools Served through the ISP

Each ISP grantee outlined its program objectives. Eight program objectives were set out as goals in the application for the ISP grantees to incorporate into their programs. Table 15 examines the percentage of ISP programs that selected each of these eight program objectives. The majority of ISP projects (82.8%) planned to increase student readiness for college-preparatory ELA/reading, mathematics, and science. As one might expect, high schools (88.2%) identified the college readiness objective at higher rates than middle schools (78.6%). The second most cited ISP program objective was to increase student and parental knowledge of high school and college standards in order to increase high school completion and success (72.4%). Middle school ISP grantees

[13] The Common Core of Data (CCD) provided data on all the school districts and six out of seven of the charter schools. CCD data did not contain information on East Waco Innovative School Development/Rapoport Academy Quinn Campus. Therefore, data is presented on 21 of the 22 school districts and charter schools that received ISP grants.

(78.6%) had slightly more programs that incorporated high school completion and success than high school ISP grantees (70.6%). The third most reported program objective was to plan, implement, and design a pilot program that provides intensive academic instruction during the summer sessions to promote college and workforce readiness and reduce drop outs (58.6%). High school ISP grantees (64.7%) reported this program objective at higher rates than middle school ISP grantees (50.0%).

Table 15: Percentage of ISP grantees that Incorporated the Following Program Goals

Program Goals	All Schools Percentages	Middle Schools Percentages	High Schools Percentages
Increase student readiness for rigorous college-preparatory ELA/reading, mathematics, and science coursework	82.8%	78.6%	88.2%
Increase student and parental knowledge of rigorous high school and college standards, available programs and activities, school policies and procedures, postsecondary academic and career opportunities, and other activities designed to increase high school completion and success.	72.4%	78.6%	70.6%
Plan, design, and implement pilot programs to provide intensive academic instruction during the summer semester to promote college and workforce readiness for students identified as being at risk of dropping out of school.	58.6%	50.0%	64.7%
Increase student planning and preparation for transitions to high school, college, and workforce.	51.7%	50.0%	58.8%
Increase the number of students promoted to the next grade on time and on grade level.	48.3%	28.6%	58.8%
Decrease the number of students in need of remedial and developmental interventions and coursework at the middle school, high school, and college levels.	44.8%	42.9%	47.1%
Increase collaboration among middle schools, high schools, and the participating IHE.	27.6%	28.6%	29.4%
Provide models of effective summer programs to serve as guides in planning for effective dropout prevention and postsecondary readiness programs at the state, district, and local levels.	20.7%	14.3%	23.5%

Source: Texas Education Agency, Grantee Applications, 2008

The majority of the ISP grantees (75.9%) reported additional program goals that the ISP application classified as “other” and were in addition to the TEA mandated program objectives. Among high schools, 58.8% of the high school ISP grantees identified additional goals, such as: helping students improve TAKS scores and college entrance exams, providing counseling, encouraging small group learning, and empowering teachers and staff. Among middle school ISP grantees, 92.9% identified additional goals, including: making coursework relevant, providing school and dual credit, encouraging more involvement from parents and communities, supporting small group learning, empowering teachers and staff, and teacher development.

Curriculum and Instructional Activities Selected by ISP Grantees

In their applications, ISP grantees outlined plans for implementing instructional activities in core academic areas. High school programs were required to implement intensive instruction in mathematics, ELA/reading, and science. Middle school programs were required to implement intensive instruction in mathematics and ELA/reading. The following sections describe the instructional activities and assessment activities that were part of the program. In addition, activities involving teacher professional development, parent involvement, and support services are discussed.

Mathematics Programs. The ISP grantees plan to implement a range of mathematics programs. Programs include Accelerated Math; Tex-Prep; Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM); Got Math?; College Success Curriculum; and Rice University School Math Project’s (RUSMP) Urban Program Model. Computerized programs included PLATO Secondary Mathematics, NovaNET, and WebAchiever. The programs were designed for math remediation and/or math acceleration, and offered both credit recovery and dual credit.

The most common feature of the mathematics programs includes the use of technology (e.g., online tutorials, online applications, use of scientific calculators). Several programs incorporate differentiated (individualized) instruction in which the students work at their own level. Collaborative activities (e.g., group activities, group projects) and real-world applications and problems (e.g., applications to engineering) are implemented in over one-fourth of ISP math programs. Other common features are the use of hands-on activities, interdisciplinary content (e.g., incorporating math and science concepts), and project-based learning. Table 16 presents the types of math instructional routines used in the ISP and the percentage of ISP grantees using the activity.

Table 16: Mathematics Instructional Activities
(N=29)

Instructional Activity	**Frequency of Use (Percent)**
Technology	10 (35%)
Differentiated/Individualized Instruction	9 (31%)
Collaborative Activities (e.g., Group Projects)	9 (31%)
Real World Applications	8 (28%)
Hands-On Activities (e.g., Experiments)	5 (17%)
Interdisciplinary Curriculum	4 (14%)
Project-Based Learning	4 (14%)
Test Preparation	2 (7%)
Parent Involvement	2 (7%)
Math Lab	2 (7%)
Small Group Instruction	2 (7%)
Learner-Centered Instructional Activities	2 (7%)
Tutorial Models	2 (7%)
Direct Instruction	2 (7%)
Guided Instruction	2 (7%)
Spiral Curriculum	1 (3%)

Source: Texas Education Agency, Grantee Applications, 2008

Similar to their instructional activities, the ISP grantees plan to incorporate a variety of assessment activities. The use of pre/post assessments are to be implemented in seven projects, some of which are online assessments. Two grantees will conduct diagnostic assessments at the beginning of their projects. Weekly tests and projects, progress monitoring, and student journals are also to be implemented. Three grantees will use authentic, alternate assessments. One program will allow students to develop rubrics to assess their own projects.

English Language Arts (ELA)/Reading Programs. The ISP grantees plan to implement various ELA/reading programs. The programs include Accelerated Reading, Intensive Reading, Read 180, Junior Great Book (JGB), Strength Quest Model, and Agile Minds. Several programs are computer-based, including Project BRIDGE, PLATO Writing Process and Practice series, NovaNET, WebAchiever, and FastForWord Literacy software. As with the math program, the focus of the ELA/reading program is remediation and/or acceleration.

The most common instructional activities incorporate writing activities and projects, with a focus on researching a topic, writing, and revising written work. Another common activity includes the use of targeted/individualized instruction, focusing on problematic areas for students (e.g., grammar, syntax, writing mechanics). Collaborative activities (e.g., group projects, discussions) and the use of technology (e.g., word processing programs, online tutorials and assessments) are also implemented in over one-fourth of ISP programs. Table 17 presents the types of ELA/reading instructional routines to be used in the ISP projects and the percent of ISP grantees that have selected the activity.

Table 17: ELA/Reading Instructional Activities
(N=29)

Instructional Activity	Frequency of Use (Percent)
Writing Activities and Projects	19 (66%)
Targeted/Individualized Instruction	11 (38%)
Collaborative Activities (e.g., Group Projects)	9 (31%)
Technology	8 (28%)
Interdisciplinary Curriculum	5 (17%)
Real World Applications	4 (14%)
Hands-On Activities (e.g., Experiments)	3 (10%)
Test Preparation	3 (10%)
Oral Activities and Projects	3 (10%)
Learner-Centered Instructional Activities	2 (7%)
Enrichment	1 (3%)
Family Literacy	1 (3%)
Reader's Workshop	1 (3%)
Writing Camp	1 (3%)

Source: Texas Education Agency, Grantee Applications, 2008

The primary assessment activities include authentic assessments (e.g., journals, reports, writing newspaper articles, writing and performing plays, writing resumes, etc.) and tests (e.g., pre/post assessments, TAKS, PSAT, weekly quizzes, and quarterly/end-of-semester exams). Daily and/or weekly monitoring of student progress is being implemented in nine ISP programs. Two ISP grantees are implementing personal literacy plans for their students.

Science Programs. Not all (22 of 29) of the ISP grantees are implementing a science program. Those that are, as with the math and ELA programs, are implementing a range of programs. STEM, Project BRIDGE, PLATO Secondary Science Curriculum, NovaNet, STARS Science, and New Century Programs for Science are some of the science programs that are to be utilized.

Over half of the programs include hands-on activities in the form of laboratory experiments and simulations. Customization of science activities to individual student needs is found in approximately one-third of programs. Technology activities are also common in the science programs. Some examples of computer programs include PLATO, Study Island, WebAchiever, and A+. Other common activities include interdisciplinary curriculum (incorporating math, science, and writing), real world applications (e.g., engineering, forensic and health sciences, marine biology), collaborative activities (e.g., group projects), and test preparation. Table 18 presents the types of science instructional routines being used in the ISP and the percent of ISP grantees using the activity.

Table 18: Science Instructional Activities
(n=22)

Instructional Activity	Frequency of Use (Percent)
Hands-On Activities (e.g., Experiments)	12 (55%)
Differentiated/Individualized Instruction	7 (32%)
Technology	6 (27%)
Interdisciplinary Curriculum	5 (23%)
Real World Applications	5 (23%)
Collaborative Activities (e.g., Group Projects)	5 (23%)
Test Preparation	5 (23%)
Career Exploration	4 (18%)
Science Camps	3 (14%)
Small Group Instruction	2 (9%)
Spiral Curriculum	2 (9%)
Project-Based Learning	1 (5%)
Learner-Centered Instructional Activities	1 (5%)
Tutorial Models	1 (5%)
Direct Instruction	1 (5%)

Source: Texas Education Agency, Grantee Applications, 2008

Assessment activities mirror those in the math programs. The use of pre/post assessments (including online assessments), weekly quizzes, and tests are part of over half of ISP programs. Project reports, primarily in the form of laboratory reports, are a common science assessment activity. Monitoring student progress on a daily or weekly basis is also found in several programs.

Other Optional Activities. ISP grantees are also allowed the opportunity to implement other types of activities. These include optional activities for students, teacher professional development activities, parent involvement activities, and support services. Table 19 presents the other types of activities planned by ISP Cycle 1 grantees and the percentage of ISP grantees planning to implement each activity.

Table 19: Other Optional Activities Planned by ISP Cycle 1 Grantees
(N=29)

Optional Activity	Frequency of Use (Percent)
Activities designed to promote postsecondary planning and preparation.	24 (83%)
Activities designed to encourage and increase parental involvement and participation.	23 (79%)
Individual and/or small group instruction and services, including academic and career counseling services to assist students in the development of personal graduation plans.	22 (76%)
Activities that seek to instill and reinforce school attachment and engagement.	20 (69%)
Activities that seek to remediate and reinforce areas of identified academic deficiency in the core subject areas (math, science, ELA).	19 (66%)
Activities that seek to accelerate learning and skill acquisition in core subject areas (math, science, ELA).	19 (66%)
Activities that seek to promote effective academic and study skills to prepare students for high school success and completion and postsecondary readiness.	19 (66%)
Activities that involve peer mentoring, tutoring, and/or assistance.	18 (62%)
Activities that promote and provide instruction in student leadership development.	17 (59%)
Activities that seek to reinforce the social and emotional adaptive skills of middle school students as they transition to high school.	16 (55%)
Program design activities that include innovative and/or Interdisciplinary approaches to program content delivery.	14 (48%)
Activities that support the close coordination between high schools and their feeder middle schools in the identification and selection of student participants and program design.	13 (45%)
Program activities that include the granting of credit toward the completion of district and/or state graduation requirements or the accrual of elective credit required for graduation.	12 (41%)
Activities that incorporate experiential and/or service learning.	12 (41%)
Activities that incorporate work-based experience and learning.	10 (34%)
Other research-based activities and programs that are aligned with program goals - described in the program narrative section of the application.	8 (28%)

Source: Texas Education Agency, Grantee Applications, 2008

Only one ISP grantee does not include professional development for teachers. The teacher professional development activities are designed to explicitly match the ISP program that is being implemented in the content area. Many professional development activities include familiarization with the curriculum or program, instructional activities, and assessment activities. Several instructional professional development activities include the introduction and use of technology (e.g., computer program). Some ISP

grantees include professional development in lesson planning and writing instructional objectives.

Parent involvement activities are offered in all ISP projects. The most common activities include an informational meeting/orientation to the ISP program and surveys of parent satisfaction with the ISP project. Several ISP grantees include parental participation in activities, such as committees and field trips. College counseling is also offered by several programs. This counseling includes the discussion of college applications and financial aid procedures. Another activity includes academic progress meetings and workshops to assist students (e.g., how to assist with homework, writing resumes, etc) and strategies to help the students' transition to high school or college. In one ISP, parents discuss the individualized graduation plan for their child. Several ISP grantees send out weekly newsletters to parents to continuously communicate the ISP activities.

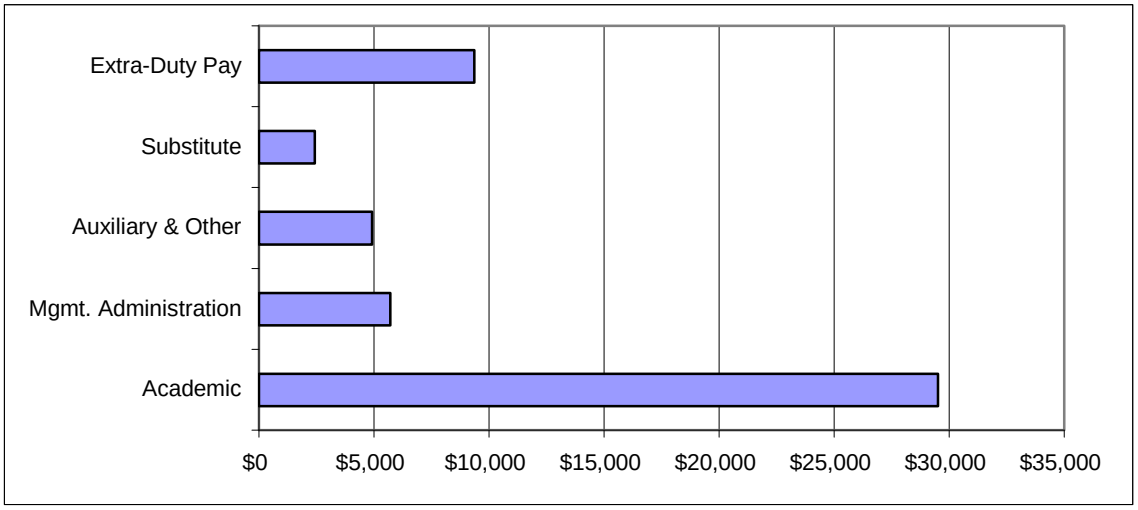
Support service activities are implemented in all 29 ISP programs. College counseling is offered by most of the programs, including assisting students with the completion of college applications, scheduling college visits, indentifying financial aid possibilities, and assisting with financial aid application procedures. Career counseling is also offered to students. This counseling includes career planning and the administration of career and technical assessments (e.g., Career Interest Inventory). Mentoring and tutoring services are offered by several ISP grantees. Some ISP programs offer transportation to the ISP site and home. Other services that are offered by several ISP grantees include social services, cafeteria services, and child care services for teen parents.

Funding and Planned Expenditures

The 29 ISP grantees submitted proposed ISP budgets that were approved by TEA. The following sections examine the average amount of funding requested across the different categories.

Payroll Costs. On average, ISP grantees requested $53,784 of funds to cover the ISP payroll costs, which made payroll costs the highest identified cost for ISP programs. As can be seen in Figure 3, the average ISP requested $29,230 for academic expenses, $13,851 for professional staff extra-duty pay, $10,470 for substitute teacher pay, $6,533 for auxiliary and other expenses, and $4,603 for program management and administration.

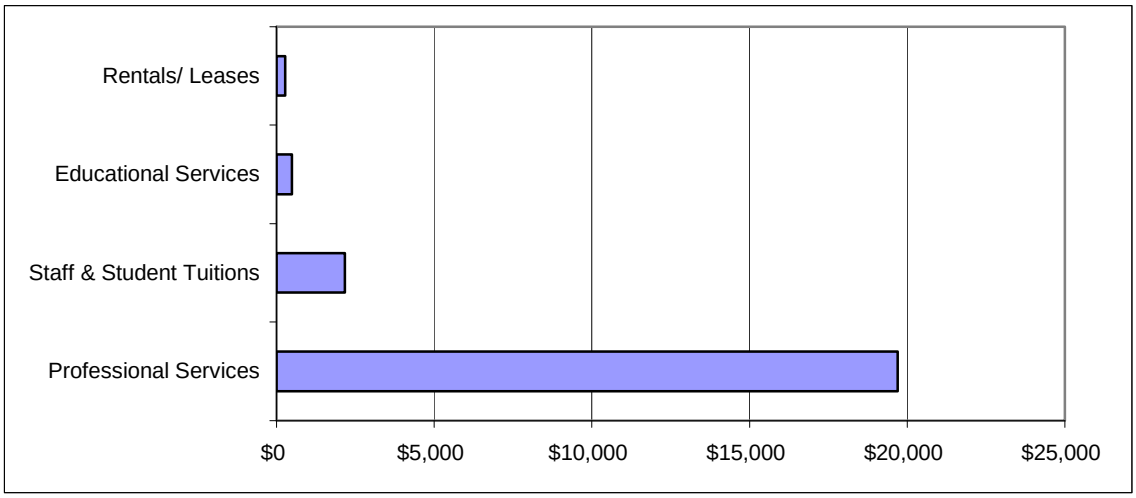
Figure 3: Average Amount of Grant Funds ISP Grantees Requested to Cover Payroll Costs



Source: Texas Education Agency, Grantee Applications, 2008

Professional and Contracted Services Costs. ISP programs requested an average of $22,183 to cover the first year of their programs. As seen in Figure 4, the highest average funding category was $19,699 for professional and consulting services, followed by staff and student tuitions ($2,165), education service center services ($483), and rental and lease equipment ($276).

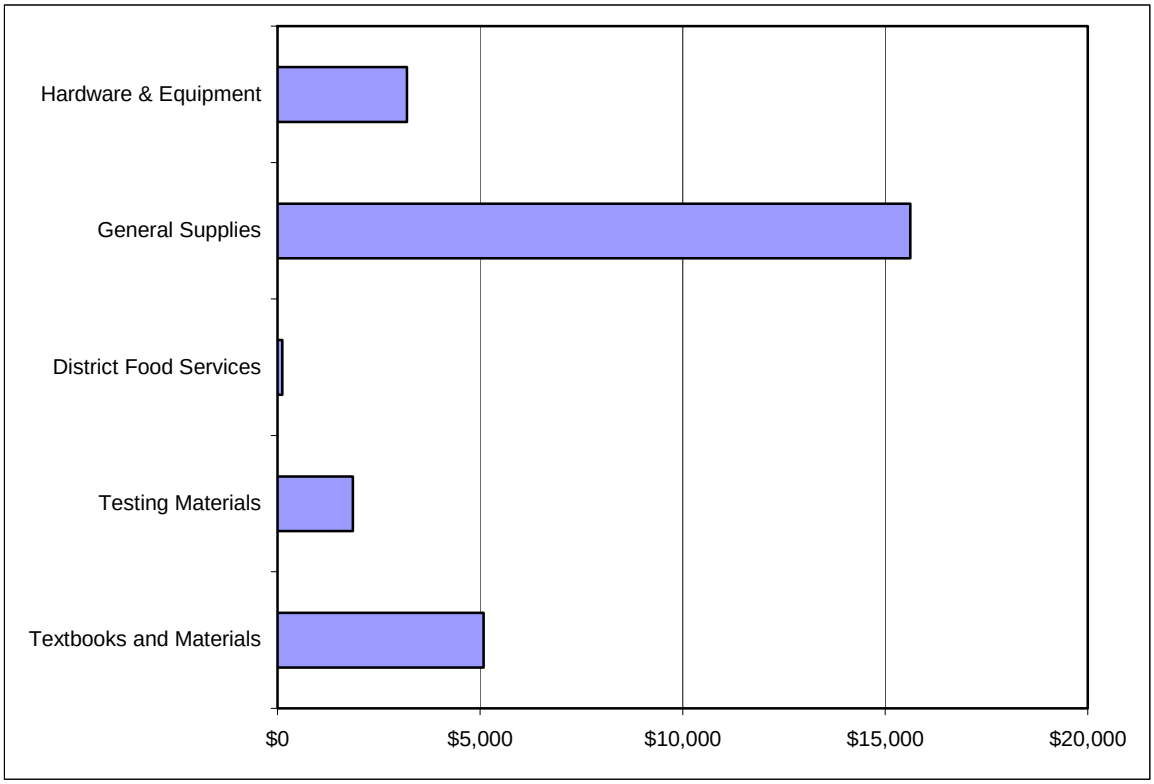
Figure 4: Average Amount of Grant Funds ISP Grantees Requested to Cover Professional and Contracted Services Costs



Source: Texas Education Agency, Grantee Applications, 2008

Supplies and Materials Costs. On average, ISP programs requested $28,833 to cover supplies and materials in their first year of operation. Figure 5 illustrates the average costs associated with the subcategories of supplies and materials. General supplies averaged the highest ($15,624), followed by textbooks and other reading materials ($5,086), hardware and equipment ($3,197), testing materials ($1,860), and district food services ($117).

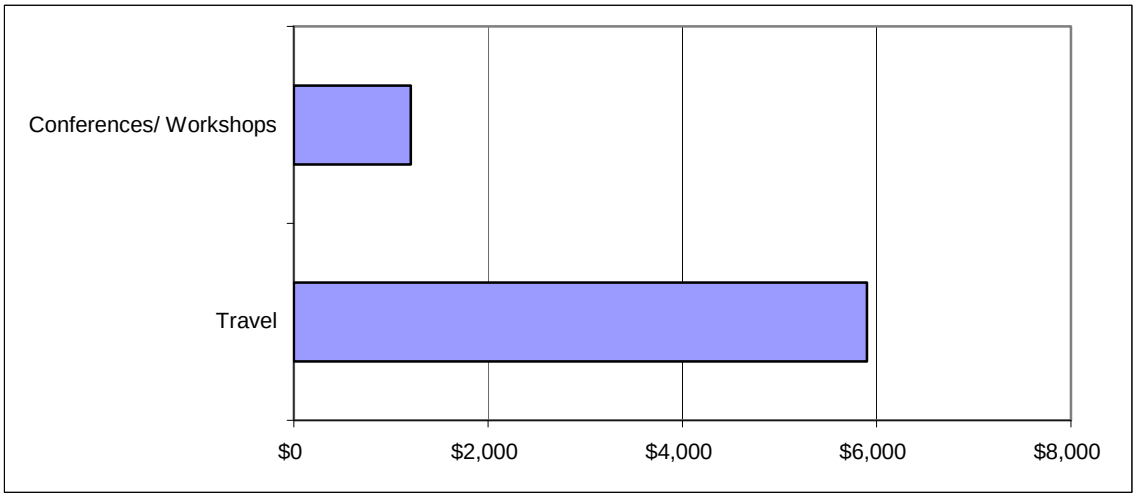
Figure 5: Average Amount of Grant Funds ISP Grantees Requested to Cover Supplies and Materials Costs



Source: Texas Education Agency, Grantee Applications, 2008

Other Operating Costs. There were additional allowable expenditures under operating costs (e.g., transportation, incentives for participation, stipends to non-employees, etc.); however, only the most frequently reported costs in this section will be reported. On average, ISP grantees requested $17,513 in other operating costs. Figure 6 illustrates that on average, ISP grantees requested $5,900 in travel costs and $1,205 in conferences, workshops, seminars, and registration fees.

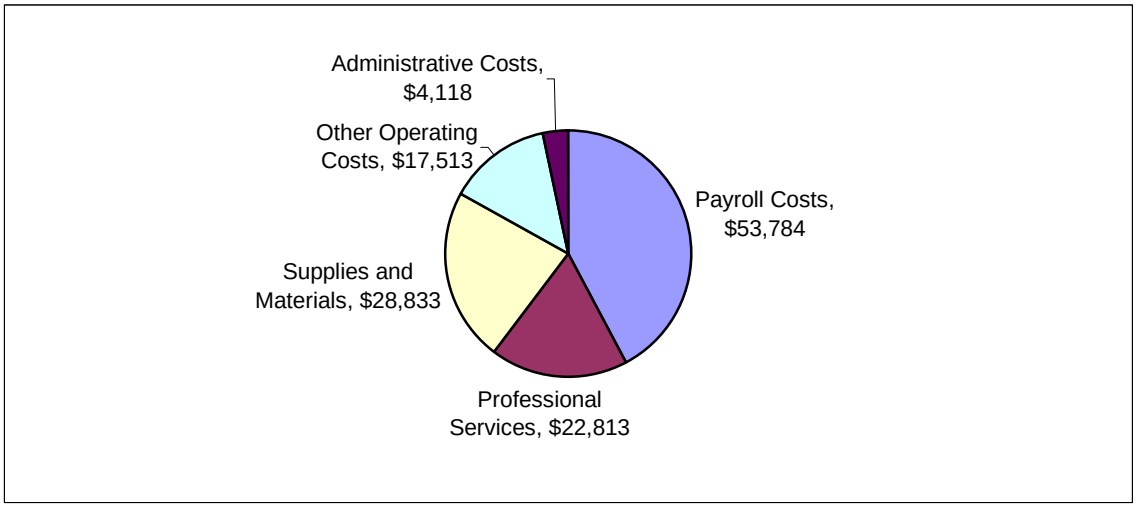
Figure 6: Average Amount of Funds ISP Grantees Requested to Cover Operating Costs



Source: Texas Education Agency, Grantee Applications, 2008

Total Budget. On average, ISP grantees requested $139,781 from TEA to cover the costs of their programs, which is slightly less than the maximum of $150,000 allowed for each program. That said, of the 29 ISP programs, 18 requested the maximum of $150,000, while the remaining 11 programs requested between $7,500 and $149,982. In examining the total budget funded by TEA across the five funding categories (Figure 7), payroll had the highest average cost ($53,784), followed by supplies and materials ($28,833), professional services ($22,813), other operating costs ($17,513), and administrative costs ($4,118).

Figure 7: Total Average Budgeted Cost of ISP Projects



Source: Texas Education Agency, Grantee Applications, 2008

One of the requirements for receiving TEA funding was that the ISP programs needed to raise matching funds (at least $250 for each participating student) from federal, state, or local funds, including private donations. On average, ISP grantees raised $54,578 in matching funds.

Summary of Implementation Findings

The ISP pilot program was awarded to 29 school districts and open-enrollment charter schools. On average, each ISP grantee plans to serve 355 students with an average of 33 teachers. The majority of ISP projects (82.8%) plan to increase student readiness for college-preparatory ELA/reading, mathematics, and science by implementing remediation or acceleration programs. Other shared program activities include professional development for teachers, parental involvement activities, and college counseling. On average, ISP grantees requested slightly less than the maximum allowable of $150,000 from TEA to cover program costs.

Technology-Based Supplemental Instruction Pilot Program

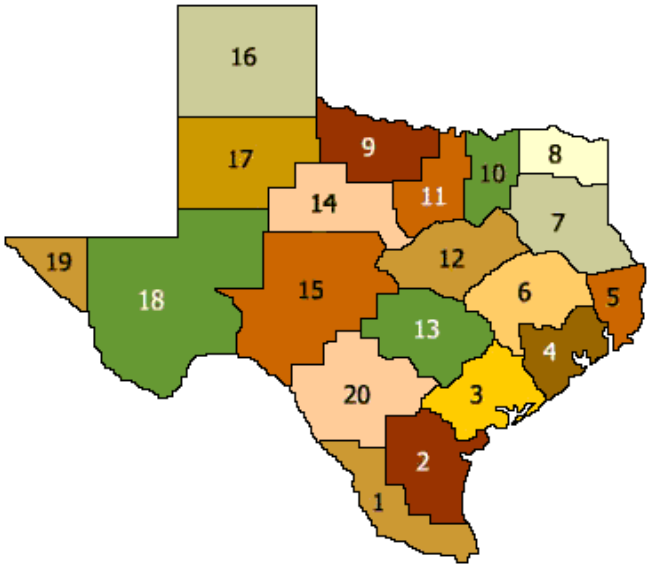
TEA contracted with Texas Center for Educational Research (TCER) to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the R-Tech pilot program, with Cycle 1 running from August 1, 2008 to August 31, 2009. The evaluation is guided by four research objectives: 1) to describe and evaluate the implementation of the R-Tech program, 2) to evaluate the impact of R-Tech on student outcomes, 3) to evaluate the impact of R-Tech on teacher effectiveness, 4) and to determine the cost-effectiveness and sustainability of the R-Tech program. Due to the recency of the program, only a discussion of program implementation findings (research objective #1) to date is presented below, which includes: background information on grantees, characteristics of students and teachers to be served, and anticipated implementation plans. This information was collected from grantee applications and contracts between grantee districts and partners. Therefore, program implementation findings described here are preliminary and some are prospective in nature. A further detailed report of preliminary implementation findings of this evaluation is presented in a separate report to the 81st Texas Legislature on December 1, 2008.

Characteristics of R-Tech Districts and Campuses

Sixty-seven Texas districts applied for Cycle 1 R-Tech funding and 64 received grant awards in spring of 2008. Within grantee districts, a total of 115 campuses participate in the R-Tech pilot. Of these, 63 are high schools, 48 are middle schools, 3 campuses serve K-12 students, and 1 campus is an elementary program that includes Grade 6 students. While all R-Tech districts enrolled fewer than 5,000 students in 2006-07, there was a substantial range in district size, with the smallest district enrolling 183 students and the largest enrolling 4,954 students. On average, R-Tech districts enrolled 1,643 students and R-Tech campuses enrolled 411 students.

Statewide Distribution of R-Tech Districts. Analysis of R-Tech districts by ESC region is a useful means by which to examine the distribution of the pilot program within the state. TEC § 8.001 provides for the establishment of 20 regional ESCs throughout the state to assist districts with educational and operational matters. ESC regional boundaries are set by the commissioner of education and are designed such that each public school district has the opportunity to access ESC services. Figure 8 maps the regions served by each of Texas' 20 ESCs.

Figure 8: Texas' Educational Service Center Regions



Source: Texas Education Agency, 2008.

As presented in Table 20, R-Tech districts are widely distributed across the state, with the largest proportion (9 districts or 14%) located in the area served by the ESC Region 10 (Richardson). The only ESC regions of the state that do not include R-Tech districts are those served by the Region 9 (Wichita Falls) and Region 19 (El Paso).

Table 20: R-Tech Districts by ESC Region

ESC Region	Location	Number of R-Tech Districts	Percentage of R-Tech Districts
Region 1	Edinburg	2	3.1%
Region 2	Corpus Christi	3	4.7%
Region 3	Victoria	1	1.6%
Region 4	Houston	6	9.3%
Region 5	Beaumont	5	7.8%
Region 6	Huntsville	4	6.3%
Region 7	Kilgore	6	9.3%
Region 8	Mt. Pleasant	3	4.7%
Region 9	Wichita Falls	0	0.0%
Region 10	Richardson	9	14.1%
Region 11	Ft. Worth	2	3.1%
Region 12	Waco	3	4.7%
Region 13	Austin	4	6.3%
Region 14	Abilene	2	3.1%
Region 15	San Angelo	2	3.1%
Region 16	Amarillo	4	6.3%
Region 17	Lubbock	1	1.6%
Region 18	Midland	2	3.1%
Region 19	El Paso	0	0.0%
Region 20	San Antonio	5	7.8%
Total		64	100.0%

Source: Texas Education Agency, Academic Excellence Indicator System, 2007

2007 Accountability Ratings of R-Tech Districts and Campuses. In addition to geographic diversity, R-Tech districts were selected because their 2007 accountability ratings indicated a need for educational services designed to improve student achievement. Table 21 presents district level accountability ratings for R-Tech districts in 2007. No R-Tech district was rated Exemplary in 2007 and only 9% of R-Tech districts were rated as Recognized. In contrast, 88% of R-Tech districts were rated Academically Acceptable. Further, no R-Tech district was characterized as an Alternative Education Accountability (AEA) district in 2007.

Table 21: R-Tech District Accountability Ratings, 2007

Rating Category	R-Tech Districts	
	Number	Percentage
Standard Accountability Procedures		
Exemplary	0	0.0%
Recognized	6	9.4%
Academically Acceptable	56	87.5%
Academically Unacceptable	2	3.1%
Not Rated: Other	0	0.0%
Total	64	100.0%

Source: Texas Education Agency, Academic Excellence Indicator System, 2007

Table 22 presents the 2007 campus-level accountability ratings for R-Tech schools. Few R-Tech campuses were rated Exemplary or Academically Unacceptable. While no R-Tech district was characterized as an AEA program in 2007, about 4% of R-Tech campuses were designed to serve at-risk students and registered as AEA programs—all of which received the AEA Academically Acceptable rating.

Table 22: R-Tech Campus Accountability Ratings, 2007

Rating Category	R-Tech Campuses	
	Number	Percentage
Standard Accountability Procedures		
Exemplary	2	1.8%
Recognized	23	20.0%
Academically Acceptable	78	67.8%
Academically Unacceptable	7	6.1%
Not Rated: Other	1	1.0%
Alternative Education Accountability (AEA) Procedures		
AEA: Academically Acceptable	4	3.5%
AEA: Academically Unacceptable	0	0.0%
AEA: Not Rated: Other	0	0.0%
Total	115	100.0%

Source: Texas Education Agency, Academic Excellence Indicator System, 2007.

Student and Teacher Characteristics in R-Tech Districts

Student Characteristics. National statistics indicate that students attending rural schools are more likely to be White and less likely to have limited proficiency in English than students in other locales (NCES, 2007). Nationally, rural schools enroll roughly similar proportions of special education students as other areas, and with the exception of suburban schools, rural schools enroll smaller proportions of low-income students than other areas (NCES, 2007). As presented in Table 23, R-Tech campuses reflect national trends in terms of the types of students they enroll.

Table 23: R-Tech Student Information, 2006-07

Student Group	R-Tech Campuses
African American	9.2%
Hispanic	25.6%
White	64.2%
Other	1.0%
Economically disadvantaged	45.6%
Special education	13.8%
Limited English proficient	2.8%

Source: Texas Education Agency, Academic Excellence Indicator System, 2007

Teacher Characteristics. National statistics indicate that rural districts tend to employ fewer teachers from ethnic minorities as well as more experienced teachers than districts in other locales (NCES, 2007). Table 24 presents the characteristics of teachers working on R-Tech campuses. Similar to rural schools nationally, teachers in R-Tech districts are less likely to be from an ethnic minority and a third have less than 6 years of teaching experience. Close to 20% of teachers in R-Tech districts have advanced degrees, and on average, R-Tech teachers work with small class sizes.

Table 24: Characteristics of Teachers Working on R-Tech Campuses, 2006-07

Teacher Characteristic	R-Tech Campuses
Minority teachers[b]	13.4%
African American	2.6%
Hispanic	10.2%
White	86.6%
Teacher average years of experience[b]	12.8
Teacher average tenure in years[b]	7.1
Beginning teachers	7.9%
1-5 years experience	22.9%
6-10 years experience	17.3%
11-20 years experience	27.7%
More than 20 years experience	24.1%
Teachers with no degree[c]	1.0%
Teachers with advanced degrees[c]	17.5%
Average beginning teacher salary[b]	$36,104
Average teacher salary[b]	$43,864
Teacher annual turnover rate[c]	17.6%
Students per teacher (average) [b]	11.8

Source: Texas Education Agency, Academic Excellence Indicator System, 2007
[b]2007 Texas Education Agency, Academic Excellence Indicator System campus staff statistics file.
[c]2007 Texas Education Agency, Academic Excellence Indicator System district staff statistics file.

R-Tech Implementation Plans

Districts have considerable flexibility in how they implement the R-Tech program and are expected to tailor their supplemental educational programs to students' specific academic needs and goals.[14] In their grant applications, districts provided evidence of their technical readiness to implement an R-Tech program and described plans to support student access to at least 10 hours of technology-based supplemental instruction each week. Districts further described the types of supplemental instruction they planned to offer (e.g., dual credit, remediation and tutoring, distance learning), the

[14] While districts are allowed flexibility in the implementation of R-Tech, they are required to implement the programs they describe in their grant applications.

content area focus of supplemental instruction, as well as the grade levels to be served by the grant. The following sections summarize information gathered through a document analysis of R-Tech district applications.

Students Served by R-Tech. Most of the 64 districts that received R-Tech grants plan to implement the program at both the middle school and high school levels (78%). However, 17% of districts plan to implement R-Tech solely for high school students, and about 5% plan R-Tech only for middle schools.

In awarding R-Tech grants, TEA considered the proportion of district students who would be served by R-Tech. The grant application included a worksheet that districts used to calculate the proportion of students in Grades 6 through 8 and in Grades 9 through 12 to be served by R-Tech. Based on data gathered from application worksheets, districts plan to serve 46% of their middle school students and 50% of their high school students using R-Tech funds.

Overview of R-Tech Program Implementation. Researchers analyzed grantee applications for general information about how districts plan to implement R-Tech, including when districts will offer R-Tech during the school year, the subjects included in R-Tech, as well as the types of programming districts chose to offer.

R-Tech districts may choose to implement R-Tech during the school year, as a summer school program, or during both instructional periods. Grant funding became available to R-Tech districts in the spring of 2008 and some districts implemented the pilot as a summer program in 2008. Table 25 presents a summary of instructional periods in which districts plan to implement R-Tech and indicates that most districts (86%) planned to

begin offering R-Tech services during 2008's summer session. Nearly all districts plan to implement R-Tech during the course of the scheduled 2008-09 and 2009-10 school years (98% for each school year), and 88% plan to include R-Tech programming during summer 2009.

Table 25: R-Tech Implementation by Instructional Periods

Implementation Period	Number of Districts	Percentage of Districts (N=64)
Summer 2008	55	86%
Academic year 2008-2009	63	98%
Summer 2009	56	88%
Academic year 2009-2010	63	98%

Source: Texas Education Agency, Grantee Applications, 2008
Note: Percentages will not total to 100%. Districts may implement R-Tech during summer school and the regular school year.

Districts may use R-Tech funding to provide supplemental educational services in the core subject areas—math, science, ELA, and social studies—as well as in languages other than English. As presented in Table 26, more than 85% of districts plan to implement R-Tech in each of the core subject areas, but less than half include a program in languages other than English. Most districts plan to implement R-Tech in at least two subject areas; however, three districts chose to focus exclusively on math. Of the core subjects, math is the area of greatest concern for R-Tech districts, with 98% of districts planning to use R-Tech funding to provide supplemental instruction in math. Somewhat fewer districts plan to offer support in ELA (91%), science (89%), and social studies (86%).

Table 26: Subject Areas Addressed by R-Tech

Subject Areas Addressed by R-Tech	Number of Districts	Percentage of Districts (N=64)
Math	63	98%
English/language arts	58	91%
Science	57	89%
Social studies	55	86%
Languages other than English	31	48%

Source: Texas Education Agency, Grantee Applications, 2008
Note: Percentages will not total to 100%. Districts may implement R-Tech in more than one subject area.

R-Tech districts may choose to implement supplemental educational services in a variety of ways, including technology-based remediation and tutoring, credit recovery programs, dual credit coursework, and distance learning opportunities. Districts may choose to implement a different type of program at the middle school than at the high school levels. For example, a district may implement remediation and tutoring programs at the middle school and dual credit or credit recovery programs at the high school. Table 27 presents the percentage of districts implementing various types of supplemental instructional support. Results indicate that nearly all districts (94%) are using R-Tech funding to provide remediation and tutoring programs, while notably fewer districts are implementing distance learning (66%), dual credit (55%), and credit recovery programs (50%). Inconsistencies across district applications did not permit the disaggregation of program types across R-Tech middle schools and high schools.

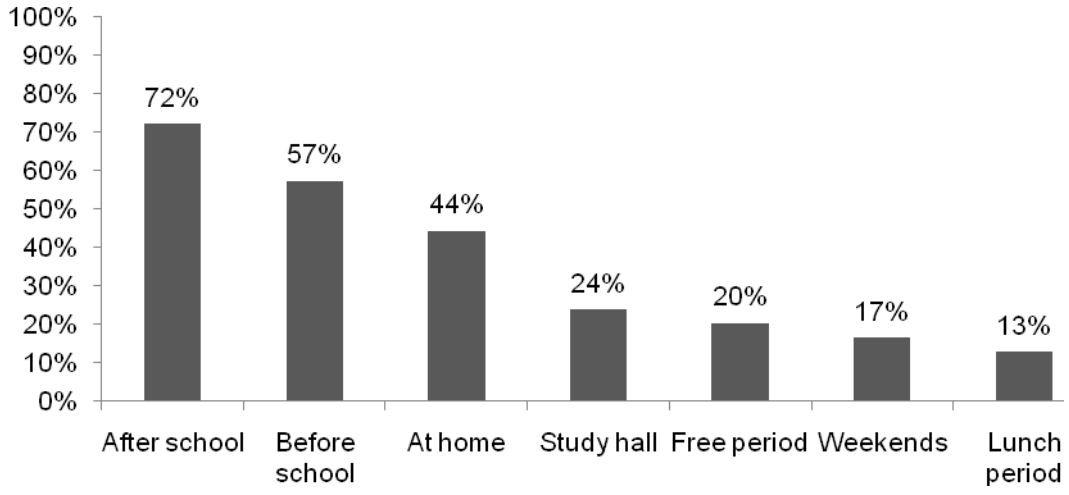
Table 27: Types of Programs Implemented through R-Tech

R-Tech Program Type	Number of Districts	Percentage of Districts (N=64)
Remediation and tutoring	60	94%
Distance learning	42	66%
Dual credit	35	55%
Credit recovery	32	50%

Source: Texas Education Agency, Grantee Applications, 2008
Note: Percentages will not total to 100%. Districts may implement more than one type of program.

When and Where R-Tech Services are Provided to Students. Because R-Tech is designed to provide supplemental instruction, students must access R-Tech services outside of their regularly scheduled coursework. An analysis of districts' R-Tech applications revealed that all districts plan to allow students to access R-Tech services at multiple times (e.g., before and after school). Figure 9 illustrates that most districts plan to make R-Tech services available to students after (72%) or before (57%) regularly scheduled classes. About 44% of districts indicate that R-Tech services would be available to students at home, either through Internet-based coursework that students may access through home computers or through programs that permit students to access R-Tech software on a district laptop that they are able to take home. Smaller percentages indicated that students may access R-Tech during a study hall (24%) or free period (20%), on weekends (17%), or during a lunch period (13%). Less than 5% of districts plan to make R-Tech available to students during an advisory period, elective class, or during recess.

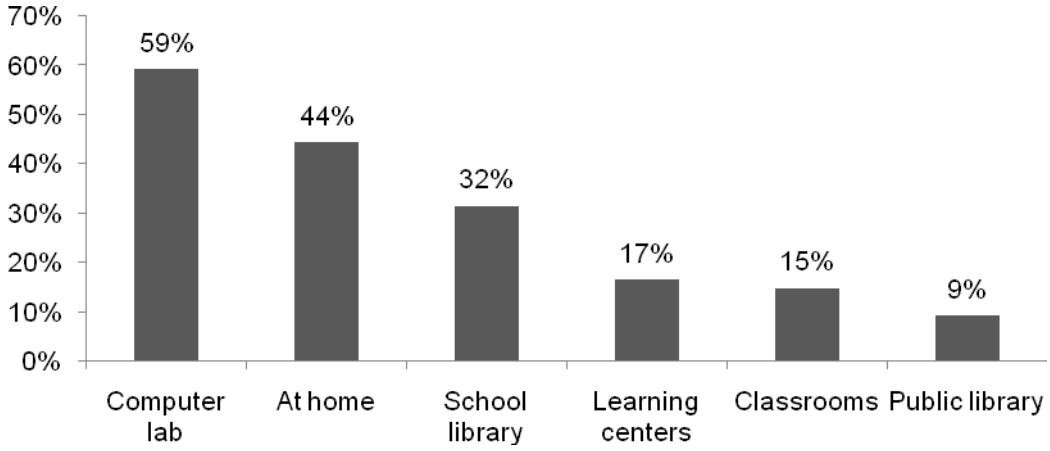
Figure 9: When Students May Access R-Tech Supplemental Instruction



Source: Texas Education Agency, Grantee Applications, 2008
Note: Percentages will not total to 100%. Districts may indicate more than one time for students to access R-Tech services.

R-Tech districts also indicate a variety of locations at which students may access R-Tech's supplemental instruction services. Of the 54 districts that indicated where they plan to offer R-Tech services, 81% indicated multiple locations (e.g., computer lab and at home). As shown in Figure 10, most districts plan to make R-Tech services available in the school's computer lab (59%) and some districts (44%) indicated that students may access R-Tech on home computers through Internet-based programs or may take home laptops that contain R-Tech software. Less than a third of districts (32%) plan to provide access to R-Tech services in school libraries, and smaller percentages offer R-Tech in learning centers (17%) and regular classrooms (15%). Nine percent of districts plan programs in which students may access R-Tech support through computers located in public libraries.

Figure 10: Locations Identified for R-Tech Supplemental Instruction Services



Source: Texas Education Agency, Grantee Applications, 2008
Note: Percentages will not total to 100%. Districts may indicate more than one place for students to access R-Tech services. Ten districts did not provide information about their planned locations for R-Tech services in their grant applications.

R-Tech Hardware and Software Selections. A majority of R-Tech districts (81%) indicated that they plan to purchase new computer hardware, including computers and smart boards (i.e., interactive whiteboards), or to upgrade aging equipment in computer labs using R-Tech funds. Of the districts purchasing new hardware, 46% planned to purchase laptops that will enable students to access R-Tech services at home.

R-Tech districts were permitted to select up to two software vendors—one vendor for the middle school and a second for the high school. Although applications were not always clear as to which vendor was chosen for which level of schooling, nearly all districts selected multidisciplinary software products that provide support for a range of subject areas (87%). Fourteen percent of districts selected ELA-specific software, and 10% chose programs that focus on math instruction.

Across R-Tech districts, 28 separate software vendors were selected to provide supplemental instruction. Table 28 presents software programs that were selected by at least three R-Tech districts. Seven districts did not indicate vendor selections in their application materials; therefore, the percentages presented in Table 28 are based on 57 of the 64 applications. As presented, the largest proportions of districts selected A^{+}nywhere Learning System and PLATO Learning programs (about 14% or 8 schools chose each vendor). A^{+}nywhere Learning System is a TAKS- and TEKS-aligned program that can be used to provide diagnostic assessments and self-paced tutorials in a broad range of subject areas. PLATO Learning can be used to provide self-paced remediation and credit-recovery programming for students in Grades 6 through 12 through online and distance learning formats. Beyond the selection of A^{+}nywhere Learning System and PLATO, few districts had vendor selections in common, with four or fewer districts selecting each of the remaining programs.

Table 28: Selected Vendors for R-Tech implementation

Vendor	Number of Districts	Percentage of Districts (n=57)[a]
A+nyWhere Learning System	8	13.8%
PLATO Learning	8	13.8%
Achieve TeenBiz 3000	4	6.9%
Compass Learning Odyssey	4	6.9%
Epic Learning	4	6.9%
NovaNET	4	6.9%
Renaissance Learning	4	6.9%
Agile Mind	3	5.2%
Apangea	3	5.2%
Apple	3	5.2%
Ascend	3	5.2%
New Century	3	5.2%

Source: Texas Education Agency, Grantee Applications, 2008
Note: Percentages will not total to 100%. Districts may select up to two vendors.
[a]Seven districts did not indicate vendor selections in their R-Tech application materials.

Professional Development Opportunities. Teachers in rural districts often experience reduced professional development opportunities because of their geographic isolation and the need to travel substantial distances in order to participate in out-of-district workshops or conferences. In order to offset these limitations, R-Tech funding may be used to increase the training available to teachers who work in rural districts. All R-Tech districts plan to provide vendor-provided training designed to introduce teachers to software purchased with R-Tech funds, and many districts plan to offer additional professional development activities. Table 29, presents the training areas common across at least five district applications and includes training in vertical alignment (28%), instructional technology (27%), pedagogical best practices (23%), and distance learning (19%).

Table 29: R-Tech Professional Development Opportunities for Teachers

Professional Development Topic	Number of Districts	Percentage of Districts (N=64)
Vertical alignment, collaboration, mentoring	18	28.1%
Instructional technology	17	26.5%
Best practices/pedagogy	15	23.4%
Distance learning	12	18.7%
Training in computer hardware	11	17.0%
R-Tech pilot program	9	14.0%
TEKS/TAKS preparation	9	14.0%
Educating at-risk student groups	7	10.9%
Dual credit opportunities	6	9.4%
Multimedia training	5	7.8%
Developing students' Personal Education Plans (PEP)	5	7.8%
Visiting other R-Tech sites	5	7.8%
Multiple topics	60	93.8%

Source: Texas Education Agency, Grantee Applications, 2008
Note: Percentages will not total to 100%. Districts may indicate multiple training topics.

Summary of Implementation Findings

The R-Tech program was awarded to 64 rural Texas districts. Across R-Tech districts, 115 schools participate in the R-Tech program, including 63 high schools, 48 middle schools, 3 K-12 campuses, and 1 elementary school that includes Grade 6 students. Analysis of grant applications for the R-Tech Program indicates that most districts plan to implement R-Tech at both the high school and middle school levels (78%). Nearly all districts are focusing R-Tech services on math instruction (98%). Somewhat fewer districts plan to implement R-Tech in ELA (91%), science (89%), and social studies (86%). Less than half of districts (48%), plan to use R-Tech funds to provide instruction in languages other than English. A majority of districts plan to use R-Tech funding to provide remediation and tutoring (94%); smaller percentages are planning for distance learning (66%), dual credit coursework (55%), and credit recovery programs (50%). The most popular vendors are A^{+}nyWhere Learning System and PLATO Learning (about

14% of districts selected each vendor). The R-Tech Program is designed to provide supplementary instruction that is offered outside of students' regularly scheduled classes. A majority of districts will provide supplemental instruction after school (72%), and before school (57%). Students may access R-Tech services in school computer labs (59% of districts), libraries (32%), or learning centers (17%).

Effective Teachers and Leaders Program

Mathematics Instructional Coaches Pilot Program

TEA contracted with ICF International to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the MIC pilot program, Cycle 1. The evaluation will consist of three phases similar to the evaluation of the Collaborative and ISP programs. Phase 1 will evaluate and describe the implementation strategies and processes of the MIC program. Phase 2 will determine the impact of the program on teachers and students. Phase 3 will explore the associated costs to develop, implement, and sustain the MIC program. Phase 1 began in September 2008 and is projected to end in December 2008; Phase 2 and Phase 3 will be conducted simultaneously from January 2009 to August 2009. Therefore, only a discussion of program implementation findings to date from Phase 1 of this evaluation is presented below, and includes: background information on grantees, characteristics of teachers, information on key partners, anticipated implementation methods, funding, and planned expenditures. This information was collected from grantee applications and contracts between grantee districts and partners. Program implementation findings described here are tentative and some are prospective in nature.

Background

The MIC program currently has 29 Cycle 1 grantees. The MIC grantees are dispersed among 13 of the 20 ESC Regions. Table 30 below lists the name of the districts awarded a grant and identifies the ESC region in which they are located, as well as the Approved Service Provider (ASP), award amount, and number of campuses to be served. Generally, ASPs are an IHE or ESC that is planning to provide the intensive coaching and professional development services to grantees. MIC grantees will serve 97 schools, including middle schools, junior high schools, and high schools. The number of campuses served per grantee ranges from 1 to 12, with an average of 3 campuses per grantee. The average award amount is $158,180, ranging from $30,000 to $225,000 (the maximum amount allowed under Cycle 1 of the MIC grant).

Table 30: General Information on Mathematics Instructional Coaches Pilot Program Grantees

ESC Region	District Name	Approved Service Provider	Award Amount	Number of Campuses Served
1	Hidalgo ISD	ESC 1	$ 180,000	2
	La Feria ISD	ESC 1	$ 180,000	2
	La Joya ISD	ESC 1	$ 225,000	3
	La Villa ISD	ESC 1	$ 90,000	2
	Pharr-San Juan-Alamo ISD	ESC 1	$ 225,000	3
	Valley View ISD	ESC 1	$ 51,340	1
	Weslaco ISD	Rice University	$ 210,400	2
2	Alice ISD	ESC 2	$ 225,000	2
	Beeville ISD	ESC 2	$ 220,000	2
	West Oso ISD	Texas A&M University	$ 150,000	2
3	Runge ISD	ESC 3	$ 34,572	2
4	Galena Park ISD	Rice University	$ 225,000	7
	Galveston ISD	Rice University	$ 225,000	4
	Houston ISD	ESC 4	$ 199,000	2
7	Diboll ISD	ESC 7	$ 150,010	2
8	Clarksville ISD	ESC 8	$ 70,000	2
10	Evolution Academy Charter School	Rice University	$ 60,000	1
	Irving ISD	ESC 4	$ 225,000	12
	Winfree Academy Charter Schools	ESC 20	$ 156,900	1
12	Covington ISD	ESC 12	$ 30,000	1
	La Vega ISD	ESC 12	$ 160,000	2
	Marlin ISD	ESC 12	$ 40,000	1
	Star ISD	ESC 12	$ 30,000	2
13	Manor ISD	ESC 13	$ 225,000	3
15	San Felipe-Del Rio CISD	ESC 15	$ 224,998	2
17	Motley County ISD[15]	ESC 16	$ 225,000	10
19	El Paso ISD	Texas A&M University	$ 225,000	10
20	Youth Empowerment Program (Higgs Carter King Gifted & Talented Charter Academy)	ESC 20	$ 100,000	3
	San Antonio ISD	Texas State University	$ 225,000	9

Source: Texas Education Agency, Grantee Applications, 2008

[15] Motley County ISD has partnered with nine other districts and created a Shared Services Agreement (SSA). Information provided here is for all ten districts.

Characteristics of Teachers Participating

Due to the collaborative nature and time constraint with this grant process (i.e., grantees were required to contract with an ASP in a very short time period after learning that they would receive the grant), as well as the time constraint with the comprehensive evaluation, exact data concerning the number of teachers to be served and the characteristics of those teachers and their students were not able to be obtained for this report. However, preliminary analysis of data that was available at the time of this report indicates that of the districts that reported baseline data, grantees on average reported that they planned to have 25 teachers and administrators participating in MIC at the beginning of the first year of their grant project. Twenty-five grantees reported that by the end of Year 1 of the grant, they anticipated having an average of 30 teachers participating in MIC, as well as for the end of Year 2. For Year 3 of the grant, the anticipated average number of teachers enrolled in MIC is 36 based upon the 17 districts that provided data.

Key Partners

Each grantee selected an ASP from a list provided by TEA to provide professional development and coaching services to its targeted mathematics teachers. ASPs were required to demonstrate significant past effectiveness in improving mathematics instruction in middle, junior high, and high schools, serving a significant number of students identified as being at risk of dropping out of school. The 29 grantees selected a total of 13 ASPs. In most cases, grantees partnered with an ESC as their ASP, but some grantees selected a university. Table 32 lists the number of grantees per ASP.

Table 31: Number of Grantees per Approved Service Provider

Approved Service Provider	Number of Grantees
ESC 1	6
ESC 12	4
ESC 4	3
Rice University	3
ESC 2	2
ESC 13	2
ESC 20	2
Texas A&M University	2
ESC 3	1
ESC 7	1
ESC 15	1
ESC 16	1
Texas State University	1
Total	29

Source: Texas Education Agency, Grantee Applications, 2008

Methods for Implementing the MIC Program

Grantees have the flexibility to design their program along with input from the partner ASP. This flexibility encourages creativity and provides the ability for districts to customize the program to meet the specific needs of teachers and students in their schools. All grantees discussed in their action plans the use of required professional development activities and coaching services to be provided by their ASP, although specific details were not always provided.

All grantees are planning to use a combination of coaching strategies with professional development. Some proposed in their action plans to use a coaching model involving classroom observations or one-to-one meetings with a coach to discuss teaching strategies and curricula development. Other programs focused more on providing opportunities for teachers to attend off-site professional development training. Overall,

there was a blend of proposed designs that incorporated both a coaching model and professional development activities. Additional details of district plans include:

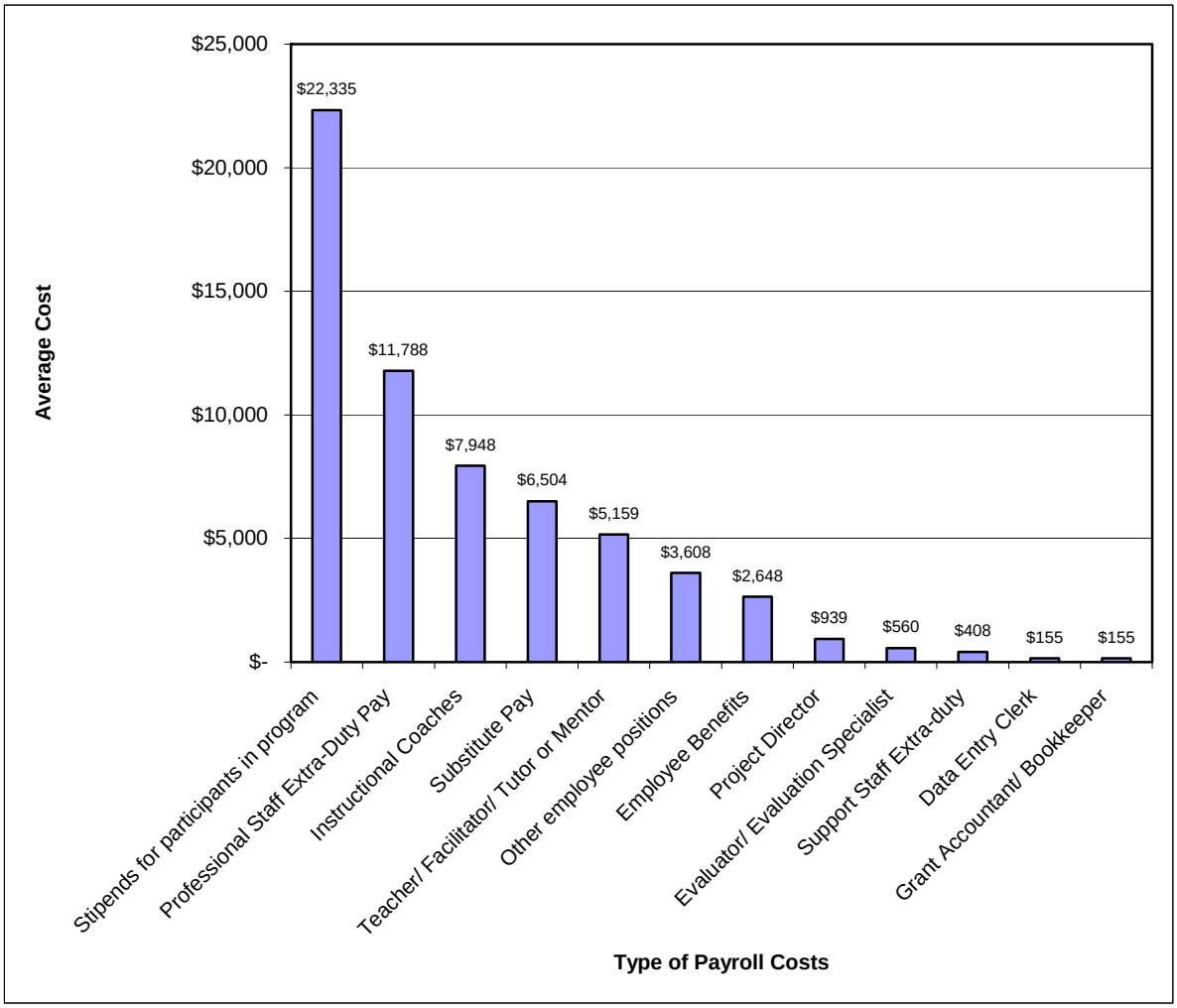
- Stipends for math teacher participants
- Math specialists/coaching teams (in-district)
- Administrator participation in all trainings
- Use of Japanese Lesson Study Model
- Peer coaching and study groups for math teachers
- Graphing calculators and training for use
- Use of model lessons
- Opportunities for math teachers to collaborate together around content issues
- Additional college level math course enrollment for teachers
- Analysis of student work on problem solving

Funding and Planned Expenditures

TEA required that grantee applications include a proposed budget to implement the MIC program in their school(s). These funds are to be used to cover the cost of payroll, professional services, supplies and materials, and other operating costs. Following is a description of the average amount of funding to be allocated to these four categories for the entire term of the grant.

Payroll Costs. The average amount of funding requested by the grantees for overall payroll costs for the term of the grant was $61,769. As shown in Figure 16, stipends for program participants will be the largest payroll cost for MIC grantees, followed by professional staff extra duty pay, instructional coaches pay, substitute pay, and teacher/facilitator/tutor/mentor pay.

Figure 11: Anticipated Average Payroll Costs for Cycle 1 MIC Grantees

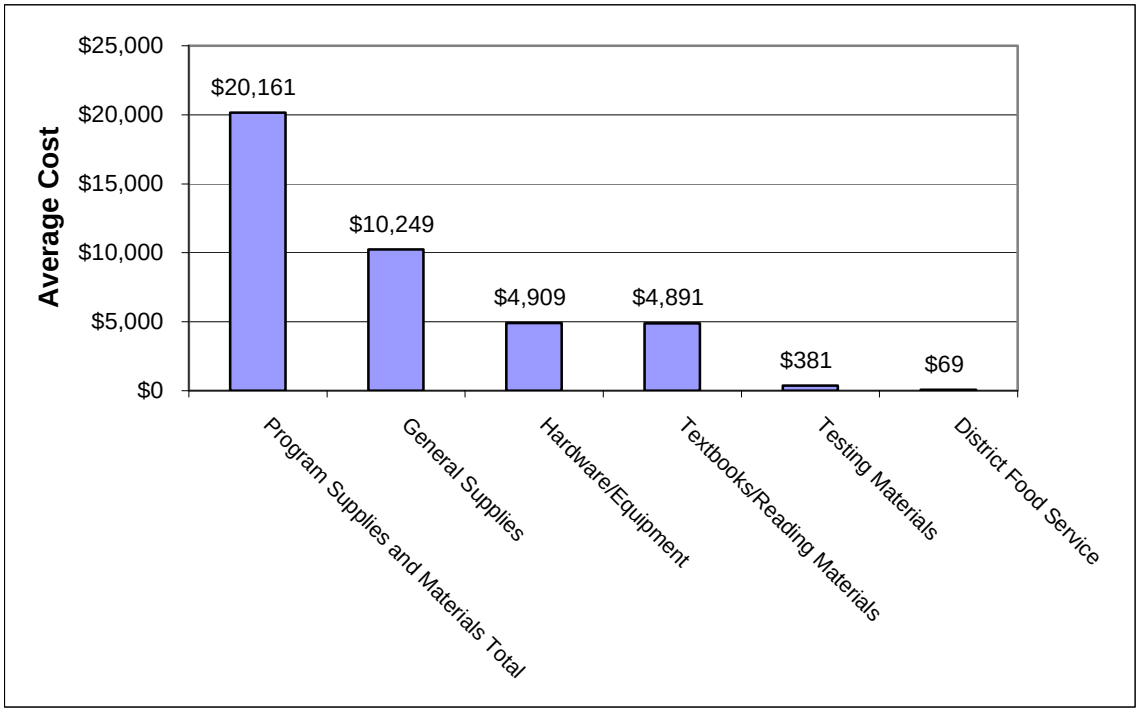


Source: Texas Education Agency, Grantee Applications, 2008

Professional and Contracted Services. Professional and contracted service funds are to be used to cover the costs of the ASP, support in the classroom, and coaching services. Other ASP expenses include curriculum development and staff development. The overall average anticipated cost for these types of services is $64,340.

Program Supplies and Materials. The overall average anticipated cost for textbooks, testing materials, district food services, general supplies, and hardware/equipment is $20,161. As depicted in Figure 17, the average request (anticipated amount) for the specific categories were as follows: $10,249 for general supplies; $4,909 for hardware/equipment; $4,891 for textbooks; $381 for testing materials; and $69 for district food services. It is important to note that some grantees opted to use the Hardware/Equipment funds to purchase computers and graphing calculators.

Figure 12: Anticipated Average Cost of Program Supplies for Cycle 1 MIC Grantees

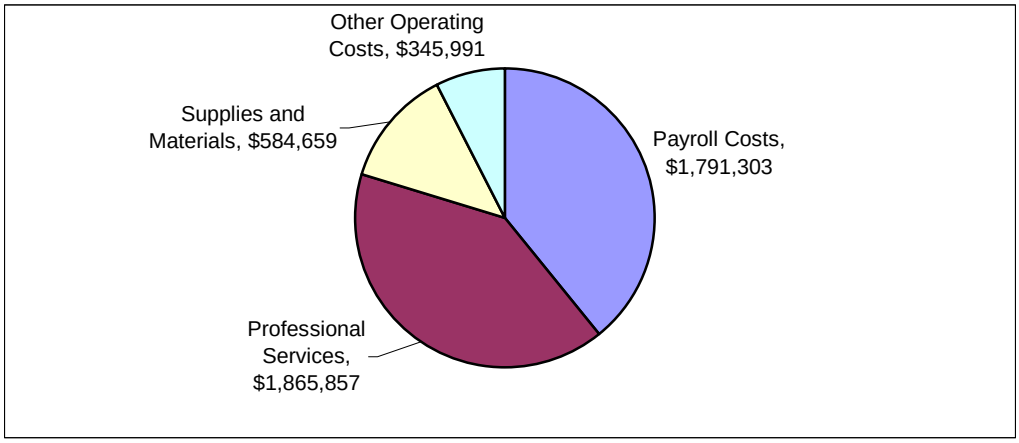


Source: Texas Education Agency, Grantee Applications, 2008

Other Operating Costs. Other operating costs include expenses such as travel and miscellaneous costs. The estimated average anticipated cost of other operating costs was $17,300.

Total Budget. An average of $158,128 was requested by grantees to implement their MIC projects. The maximum allowable amount was $225,000, which 11 grantees requested. The remaining grantees' requests ranged from $30,000 to $224,998. The total amount for all 29 grantees was $4,587,810. Figure 18 disaggregates this total amount by the expenditure categories discussed above.

Figure 13: Total MIC Program Budgets in Dollars Funded by TEA



Source: Texas Education Agency, Grantee Applications, 2008

Summary of Implementation Findings

The MIC pilot program was awarded to 29 district grantees, which will serve mathematic teachers from 97 Texas schools. Of the 15 districts that reported baseline data, grantees, on average, plan to have 25 teachers and administrators participating in MIC at the beginning of the first year of their grant project. Twenty-five grantees reported that by the end of Year 1 of the grant they anticipate having an average of 30 teachers participating in MIC, as well as for the end of Year 2. In partnership with a service provider, all grantees are planning to use a combination of coaching strategies and professional development activities within their MIC program to improve teacher effectiveness and student performance outcomes. An average of $158,128 was requested by grantees to implement the MIC program.

Future Reporting

HB 2237 authorized the creation of programs specifically designed to implement and support high school completion and college/career readiness initiatives. Section 18 of HB 2237 directs TEA to deliver to the legislature a preliminary report on December 1, 2008, and a final report on December 1, 2010, regarding the impact assessment or evaluation of these programs. This report constitutes the preliminary report in fulfillment of this mandate. Most programs subject to Section 18 reporting have been in implementation for less than one year. Thus, only preliminary baseline findings are included in this report.

The 2010 evaluation report will include implementation findings, program impact on targeted populations, barriers and facilitators of program success, and cost-effectiveness and sustainability of the four programs for which preliminary findings were reported in the present report. In addition, results of comprehensive evaluations for other programs in their early stages will be included in the later report, addressing Comprehensive Whole School Reform programs (e.g., Texas High School Redesign and Restructuring Cycle 4 and 5, Early College High School Cycle 2 and 3, and T-STEM Academies) and Targeted Student Interventions (e.g., Ninth Grade Student Transition Program and Dropout Recovery Pilot Program).

Preliminary implementation findings from comprehensive evaluations of the Collaborative, ISP, R-Tech, and MIC pilot programs indicate that these program grants were distributed, and plan to be implemented, appropriately. As reports on current and planned comprehensive evaluations and impact assessments are finalized, they will be made available to local education agencies (i.e., school districts and open-enrollment

charter schools), education system stakeholders, policymakers, and the public through the TEA website (http://www.tea.state.tx.us/opge/progeval/index.html).

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The cover art titled ***Everyone Can Learn*** by **Rita Yeung**, from Garland High School in the Garland Independent School District, was included in the 2007-2008 Texas PTA Reflections art exhibit. The exhibit featured award-winning pieces displayed at the Texas Education Agency, the Texas Commission on the Arts, and the Legislative Budget Board from April 21 through August 29, 2008.

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