

Title I School Improvement Initiative: 2006-07

At-a-Glance

The *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB)* requires all public schools and school districts to demonstrate adequate yearly progress (AYP) by meeting established standards in reading and mathematics performance and participation, as well as in student attendance and high school graduation. Failure to meet AYP for two consecutive years triggers Title I School Improvement Program requirements, implemented in a series of five stages. Each stage carries more stringent requirements. In 2006-07, the Dallas Independent School District had 29 schools on Title I improvement stages.

Program Description

AYP standards for 2006-2007 included student passing rates of 60% in reading and 50% in mathematics for all students tested in grades 3-8 and 10, as well as the following student subgroups: African-American, Hispanic, white, low-income, limited English proficient (LEP), and special education. Other indicators, including testing participation, attendance (elementary and middle schools), and graduation (high schools), also help determine AYP.

Campuses that do not meet AYP for the same indicator for two or more consecutive years are subject to *NCLB's* Title I school improvement requirements, such as offering school choice and supplemental education services. Title I requires districts and campuses to implement these improvement provisions in progressive stages, based on the number of years a campus does not meet AYP for the same indicator. Improvement campuses must draft a revised campus improvement plan that includes measurable goals. They also must receive technical assistance and institute a program of professional development. They also must offer students the opportunity to transfer to a higher performing campus in the district.

In 2006-2007, the district had 29 secondary schools on *NCLB* improvement stages. As shown in Figure 1, 6 campuses were in Stage 3, while 10 were in Stage 2. Thirteen schools were in Stage 1 improvement. No elementary schools had missed AYP and were not subject to Title I school improvement measures.

Stage 3 schools were B. Adams, Adamson, Pinkston, Carter, Samuell, and Spruce high schools. The Stage 2 campuses were Smith, Molina, Roosevelt, S. Oak Cliff, Sunset, N. Dallas, and Madison high schools, and Hood, Long, and Storey middle schools. Stage 1

schools consisted of Jefferson, Kimball, Seagoville, and Wilson high schools, and Cary, Comstock, Florence, Franklin, Gaston, Hill, Hulcy, Spence, and Marsh middle schools.

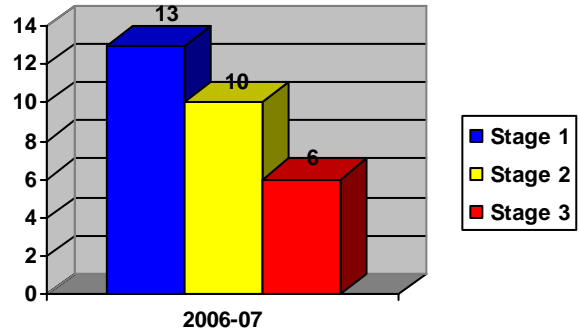


Figure 1 – *NCLB* School Improvement Program campuses, 2006-2007

Dallas Achieves

To implement school improvement efforts in the Title I School Improvement Program campuses, the district coupled *NCLB*-required reforms with those in its Dallas Achieves initiative. Dallas Achieves is a comprehensive reform effort aimed at making Dallas ISD the nation's top urban school system. Dallas Achieves emphasizes realigning the curriculum at all levels and allocating district resources more effectively.

A major thrust of Dallas Achieves was to implement a new curriculum, supported by instructional coaches. The coaches worked with teachers on instructional methods and use of the new curriculum. Many of the *NCLB* improvement schools received instructional coaching services in 2006-2007.

In a survey, most instructional coaches found teachers receptive to their ideas and assistance. Modeling lessons, providing one-to-one assistance, and demonstrating strategic interventions consumed much of the coaches' on-campus time.

Title I School Improvement Implementation

NCLB requires improvement schools to complete a campus improvement plan that includes measurable goals and outlines a program of professional development that addresses the areas in which the school missed AYP. Improvement schools also must

receive technical assistance and offer students the opportunity to transfer to higher-performing schools in the district.

Campuses at Stage 2 and higher, in addition to these requirements, must offer supplemental educational services (SES). Stage 3 campuses must implement at least one of a series of specified corrective actions. These include implementing a new curriculum, contracting with an outside expert to advise the school, or replacing instructional staff believed to be a cause of the school's repeated failure to meet AYP.

The district opted for the new curriculum and use of an outside expert as corrective actions. The new curriculum was implemented districtwide, and the district contracted with Just for the Kids, a part of the National Center for Educational Accountability, to work with campuses on data analysis and best practices of high-performing schools.

In addition to Just for the Kids, improvement schools had a wealth of other data sources to inform their instructional decisions. These included INOVA and the district's MyData Portal. Survey data revealed that most teachers liked MyData Portal the most.

Because *NCLB* views the Campus Improvement Plan (CIP) as a first step in the school improvement process, the evaluation team reviewed the CIPs of all 29 *NCLB* improvement campuses in Dallas ISD. Despite some changes to the plan template, the plans functioned more as compliance documents than as road maps for improvement. Many of them lacked measurable goals and overrelied on boilerplate language that was identical across documents.

Technical assistance providers (TAPs) worked with Stage 2 and 3 campuses, while campus administrator mentors (CAMs) worked with new Stage 1 schools. CAMs focused more on helping principals build leadership capacity, while TAPs utilized a more comprehensive approach to school improvement.

Principal and Teacher Surveys

The evaluation team surveyed principals and teachers at the *NCLB* improvement campuses. Principals saw themselves as instructional leaders and reported spending about a third of their time on campus observing classroom instruction and providing feedback to teachers. Most teachers expressed satisfaction with the curriculum and instructional coaches, but reported that teacher workload had increased, while staff morale decreased since their campuses were identified for improvement status under *NCLB*.

Supplemental Educational Services (SES)

NCLB requires that schools at Stage 2 and higher provide SES, which includes tutoring and other services provided outside the regular school day. In

2006-2007, eligible students (those identified as eligible for free or reduced-price school lunches) could choose from a wide array of private SES providers, as well as services provided by Dallas ISD. Overall, more than 2,358 students applied for SES; however, more than a third of that total never began the tutoring.

Outcomes

AYP results released by the state in August 2007 revealed that all six Stage 3 schools missed AYP, subjecting them to Stage 4. In addition, 9 of the 10 Stage 2 schools missed AYP. One Stage 2 school, James Madison High School, met AYP for a second consecutive year on academic performance, but missed AYP on its graduation rate. Among the 13 Stage 1 schools, 3 met AYP, while the others missed. Many district high schools missed AYP on their graduation rates. The district's overall graduation rate also fell short of the AYP standard. Overall, the district will begin the 2007-2008 school year with 30 schools on *NCLB* improvement stages: 6 on Stage 4, 8 on Stage 3, 10 on Stage 2, and 6 on Stage 1. Figure 2 below displays the distribution of improvement stage schools for 2006-07 and 2007-08. As shown in the figure, the number of Stage 1 schools declined, and the number of Stage 2 campuses remained the same. However, the number of campuses at stages 3 and 4 increased. These schools missed AYP at least four consecutive years, and the law requires more stringent corrective actions.

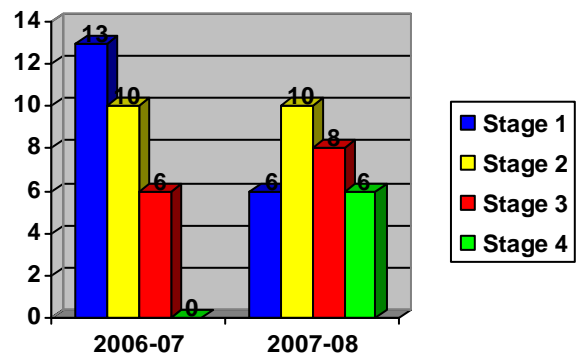


Figure 2 – *NCLB* School Improvement Program campuses, 2006-07 and 2007-08

For more information, see EA07-189-2, available at www.dallasisd.org/inside_dis/depts/evalacct/, or contact Shane Hall at 972-925-6473.