

Gifted and Talented Program, 2007-08

Felix U. Edoghotu, Ph.D

EA08-156-4

At a Glance

The Gifted and Talented (G/T) program is a district-wide program created as a result of a 1996 State Board of Education's adoption of the Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted and Talented students. In 2007-08, the G/T program in the Dallas ISD consisted of three components: (1) A G/T program for grades kindergarten through six, (2) A G/T seminar for grades seven through eight, and a G/T elective class for grades six students in middle schools, and (3) Advanced academic courses for grades seven through 12. The program was designed to provide curricular services that met advanced and gifted learners' needs. The evaluation resulted in the following findings.

Budget

A total of \$132,979 was budgeted for the program this year, a decrease of 93.3% compared to last year's budget.

Student Enrollment and Demographics

About 9,000 students in grades pre-kindergarten through six, 3,000 in grades seven and eight, and 6,000 in grades nine through 12 received program services this year. The majority of the students were Hispanics (about 60%), followed by African Americans (over 25%).

Higher percentages of program students than district students were identified as exited LEP students.

Of the 9,000 G/T and 94,000 district students in pre-kindergarten through grade six identified as Not LEP, Current LEP, and Exited LEP, 17.3% were exited LEP G/T students, while 8% were exited LEP district students.

Similarly, of the about 9,000 G/T students and 61,000 district students in grades seven through 12 identified as Not LEP, Current LEP, and Exited LEP, 46.2 % G/T

students were exited LEP students and 28.2% were exited LEP district students.

A total of 13,737 (duplicate count) grades seven through 12 and 7,326 (duplicate count) grades nine through 12 G/T students enrolled in Pre-AP and AP courses, respectively, this year. Average percentage enrollment per grade showed 57.1% Hispanics, 31.6% African Americans, 8.5% Whites, 2.8% Asian Americans, and 0.4% American Indians. AP enrollments were 51.3% Hispanics, 22.4 % African Americans, 21.1% Whites, 4.9% Asian Americans, and 0.3% American Indians.

Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) Test

G/T students' reading, writing, mathematics, science, and social studies passing rates on the TAKS test ranged from 86.1% in grade 10 science to 100% in grade nine science and social studies, while other district students' passing rates in these same subject areas were from 20.0% in grade eight science to 87.4% in grade eight reading.

G/T students' commended performance rates on the TAKS test were from 19.1% in grade 11 science to 73.6 % in grade eight reading, while other district students' commended performance rates were from 6.1 % in grade 11 science to 36.3% in grade eight reading.

Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS)

G/T students outperformed other district students on both the ITBS reading comprehension/vocabulary and mathematics sub-tests. This year, both student groups made positive NCE gains, compared to last year. G/T program students' gains were generally higher in reading comprehension/vocabulary than other district students'. In kindergarten and first grades, district students showed larger gains than G/T students in mathematics.

Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT)

Of the G/T high schools, the highest combined SAT verbal and mathematics mean scale score was posted by Carter (1,005), followed by Wilson (1,004), Hillcrest (991) and W.T. White (882). The lowest combined scores of G/T schools were posted by JJEAP (590), Samuell (673), Community Guidance Center (710), Roosevelt (724), and South Oak Cliff (732). Of the Magnet high schools, the highest combined mean scale score was posted by the TAG magnet (1,283), followed by Science (1,194), Arts (1,037), Health (996), and Law (977). The lowest combined scores of magnet schools were posted by Rangel (940), ESSM (942), and BMC (955). The district posted a combined verbal and mathematics SAT mean scale score of 868. Of the 34 G/T high schools, six (19%) posted combined mean scale scores higher than the district's combined verbal and mathematics mean scale score. Of the ten magnet high schools, nine (90%) posted combined verbal and mathematics mean scale scores higher than the district's combined verbal and mathematics mean scale score. Overall, magnet schools fared better than G/T schools on the SAT test.

American College Test (ACT)

Of the G/T high schools, the highest ACT combined mean scale score was posted by Wilson (44), followed by Redirection (43) and Hillcrest (39). The lowest ACT combined mean scale scores of G/T schools were posted by Smith (22), followed by Roosevelt (28), SOC (28), and Spruce (28). Except for the Arts (42) and Rangel (44), no other magnet school students took the ACT in 2007-08; therefore, no verbal and mathematics ACT mean scale scores were reported. The district's combined ACT mean scale score was 34. Seven (21%) of the G/T schools had combined ACT mean scale scores higher than the district's combined mean scale score. The ACT and SAT findings for 2005-06 and 2006-07 were similar to those discussed above for 2007-08.

Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT)

The PSAT results were similar to those discussed above for the ACT and SAT examinations. For example, the highest PSAT verbal and mathematics combined mean scale scores were posted by G/T and Magnet schools and the combined mean scale scores for these schools were also higher than the district's combined mean scale score.

Advanced Placement (AP) Examination

Approximately, 97% of G/T program students and 65% of non-G/T program students passed the AP examinations in 2008. G/T students' passing rates were from 91.5% to 100.0% and non-G/T students' passing rates were from 29 % to 100%.

Additional Evaluation Finding

Student identification for program participation at each school exceeded the minimum 8.0% required of every district school.

Recommendation

Due to this year's evaluation findings, the following recommendation is suggested.

The district's administration should increase the program's budget (this year's budget reflected a decrease of 93.3%, compared to last year's \$2 million allocation) for the 2008-09 school year to enable the program's administrative staff to continue to provide adequate and high quality program services to both teachers and students.