

# Texas High School Completion and Success Grants: 2006-2008

## At a Glance

The Texas High School Completion and Success (THSCS) Cycle 3 Grants were designed to encourage systemic change through comprehensive research-based high school completion and success initiatives. Six Dallas ISD high schools were awarded THSCS grants: David Carter, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, Franklin Roosevelt, A. Maceo Smith, and H. Grady Spruce. The grants were originally scheduled to run from August 14, 2006, through February 29, 2008. However, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) extended the end date of the THSCS grants to May 31, 2008.

As implemented in the district, the THSCS program had three primary activities: (a) classroom instruction, which encompassed college entrance exam preparation, (b) parent involvement, offered in the form of college-readiness seminars; and (c) professional development, training of teachers and counselors on college-readiness concepts.

### Budget

Initially, the Dallas ISD was awarded \$405,000.00 by the Texas Education Agency (TEA). The amount received by schools was based on the school population size to be served. Carter, Jefferson, and Spruce received an original award amount of \$80,000. The remaining three schools received an amount of \$55,000. These funds were to be expended in four components—classroom instruction, parent involvement, professional development, and support services (e.g., evaluation services) (Figure 1).

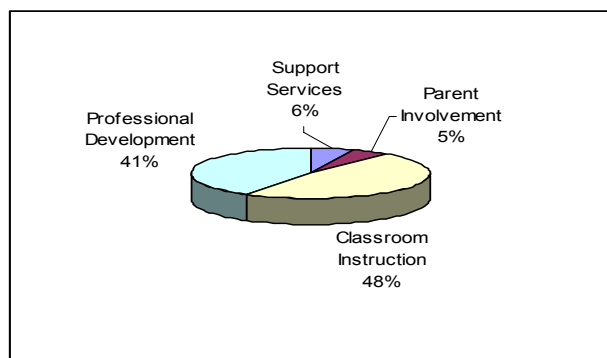


Figure 1. Proposed THSCS budget by program component across six THSCS schools.

Of the six Dallas ISD schools receiving THSCS grants, five submitted applications for and received additional funding. These five schools were Carter, Jefferson, Smith, Spruce, and Roosevelt. For those schools receiving an original award amount of \$80,000, the amount of enhancement funds received was \$22,400 (Carter, Jefferson, Spruce). For those schools receiving \$55,000, the enhancement amount awarded was \$15,400 (Roosevelt and Smith). The schools developed their own individualized plans for use of the enhancement funds. With the addition of the enhancement funds, the district received \$503,000.00 in THSCS grant funds.

### Professional Development

The Princeton Review was contracted to provide professional development to counselors and teachers. Two counselors per school were invited to attend a five-day Counselor College Readiness Training. Of the 12 funded slots, 10 counselors attended the training, with seven attending all five days of the training.

Up to five teachers per school (actual number depended upon original award amount) were to attend the ACT/SAT Teacher-to-Teacher Training. Selected teachers went through a 5-day teacher training that enabled them to teach The Princeton Review ACT or PSAT/SAT test-taking strategies. The ACT training encompassed the ACT only; no training was provided on the PSAT.

Across the six THSCS schools, funding was available for 24 teachers to attend the training. Of the 24 funded, 15 teachers were trained, with 10 attending all five days of training. Five of the six THSCS schools elected to participate in the PSAT/SAT Teacher-to-Teacher Training. Madison, however, participated in the ACT Teacher-to-Teacher Training.

### Classroom Instruction

After receiving the training through The Princeton Review, teachers were to design and implement PSAT Clinics and ACT/SAT Prep Courses on their respective campuses. PSAT Clinics included one full-length practice test and provided six to nine hours of test-preparation instruction. The five

schools that were trained by The Princeton Review on the *PSAT/SAT* hosted a *PSAT Clinic*. Across participating schools, 390 sets of *PSAT* materials (including manuals, practice tests and scantron forms) were purchased from The Princeton Review to serve students. Of those available, only 28 percent (109) of the practice tests were used.

October 2007 *PSAT* test scores of *PSAT Clinic* participants and non-participants were compared. A comparison group of non-participants in THSCS schools was created by matching on the following variables: race, grade, gender, limited English proficiency, socioeconomic status, and 2006-2007 Reading and Mathematics *TAKS* results. Students participating in the *PSAT Clinic* scored higher than the comparison group on the three subtests (Critical Reading, Mathematics, and Writing) and the composite (Table 1). The differences in averages of the two groups were statistically significant and of practical importance, having implications for future *PSAT Clinics*.

Table 1

Matched-pair *t*-test Results Comparing October 2007 *PSAT* Results of *PSAT Clinic* Participants and a Comparison Group

| Test | N  | <i>PSAT Clinic</i> Participants |      | Comparison Group |      | <i>t</i> | <i>d</i> ** |
|------|----|---------------------------------|------|------------------|------|----------|-------------|
|      |    | Mean                            | SD   | Mean             | SD   |          |             |
| CR   | 43 | 37.2                            | 7.1  | 33.8             | 7.7  | 2.4*     | 0.5         |
| M    | 43 | 40.7                            | 7.0  | 37.1             | 8.1  | 2.3*     | 0.5         |
| W    | 43 | 38.0                            | 7.0  | 34.0             | 5.8  | 3.0*     | 0.6         |
| C    | 43 | 116.1                           | 16.7 | 105.0            | 17.1 | 3.5*     | 0.7         |

Note. CR=Critical Reading. M=Mathematics. W=Writing. C=Composite. SD=Standard deviation. \**p*≤.05. \*\*Effect sizes of 0.2, 0.5, and 0.8 are considered small, medium, and large, respectively.

The *ACT/SAT* Prep courses were designed to be more robust than the *PSAT Clinics*. The prep courses were to provide 18 to 24 hours of classroom instruction in test-taking strategies in all sections of the *ACT* or *SAT*. Pre- and post-tests were available to students, with The Princeton Review providing test-scoring services. THSCS schools selected the test, either *ACT* or *SAT*, and a targeted test administration date. Only one THSCS school chose to offer an *ACT* Prep course; the five remaining schools provided the *SAT* course.

Across THSCS schools, 230 sets of *ACT/SAT* materials (including manuals, pre- and post- tests, and scantron forms) were purchased from The Princeton Review. All six THSCS schools planned to offer at least one practice test for students participating in the *ACT/SAT* prep courses. Student participation was an issue, however, at all schools. Students took a practice test at only three of the six schools. Across the six schools, 70 students took a

practice test, with only 30 percent of the available testing materials being used.

### Parent Involvement

The Princeton Review was contracted to provide two one-hour Roadmap to Success sessions at each of the six THSCS campuses. Roadmap sessions provided parents information on college entrance exams, college admissions, and the financial aid process. The content of the sessions varied, depending upon the grade level of the parents' or guardians' students.

Parent/guardian and student attendance rates at the Roadmap sessions were low (Table 2). Across sessions and THSCS schools, 76 parents and 81 students attended.

Table 2

Attendance at Roadmap to Success Sessions by School, Session, and Participant Type

| School       | Parent    |           |           | Student   |           |           |
|--------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
|              | #1        | #2        | Total     | #1        | #2        | Total     |
| Carter       | 19        | 5         | 24        | 19        | 2         | 21        |
| Jefferson    | 7         | 0         | 7         | 6         | 1         | 7         |
| Madison      | 6         | 5         | 11        | 6         | 8         | 14        |
| Roosevelt    | 4         | 2         | 6         | 4         | 2         | 6         |
| Smith        | 0         | 5         | 5         | 4         | 3         | 7         |
| Spruce       | 1         | 22        | 23        | 4         | 22        | 26        |
| <i>Total</i> | <u>37</u> | <u>39</u> | <u>76</u> | <u>43</u> | <u>38</u> | <u>81</u> |

### Longitudinal *TAKS* Achievement Outcomes

From 2005-2006 through 2007-2008, THSCS schools had the lowest percentage of their students passing all required sections of the *TAKS* compared to schools eligible to receive but non-recipients of THSCS funds (Figure 2). In terms of percentage change from year to year, a slightly larger percentage increase in the number of students passing the required subjects of *TAKS* was found for THSCS schools between 2005-2006 and 2006-2007. However, a larger percentage increase was found for eligible, non-THSCS schools than for the six THSCS schools between the school years of 2006-2007 and 2007-2008.

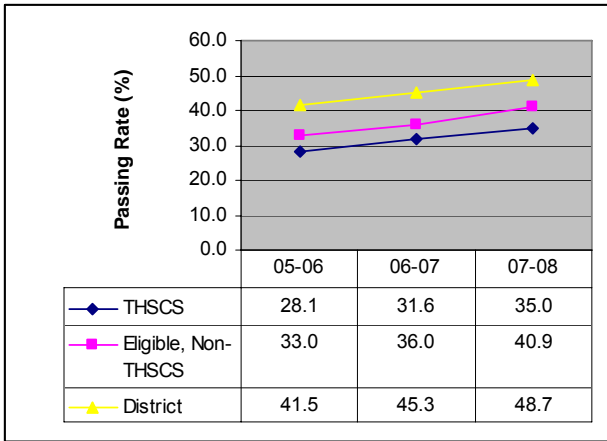


Figure 2. TAKS passing rates on all required sections of TAKS by THSCS participation and school year.