Title I School Improvement Initiative: 2009-2010

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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 set standards in reading and mathematics performance and participation, as well as in student attendance and high school graduation rates. Failure to meet AYP for two consecutive years triggers Title I School Improvement Program requirements, which are implemented in a series of five stages. Each successive improvement stage carries more stringent requirements. In 2009-10, the Dallas Independent School District as a whole and 33 schools were in the Title I School Improvement Program.

Program Description

AYP standards for 2009-2010 included student passing rates of 73% in reading and 67% in mathematics for all students tested in grades 3-8 and 10, as well as the following student subgroups: African-American, Hispanic, white, economically disadvantaged, limited English proficient (LEP), and special education. Other AYP indicators include testing participation, attendance (elementary and middle schools), and graduation (high schools).

Campuses that do not meet AYP for the same indicator for two or more consecutive years are subject to 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 2008-2009, the district had 32 secondary schools and 1 elementary campus on Title I improvement stages. Eight schools were in Stage 1 improvement, and three were in Stage 2. In addition, five campuses were in Stage 3, seven in Stage 4, and ten in Stage 5.

Stage 5 schools were B. Adams, Adamson, Smith, Pinkston, Roosevelt, Carter, Samuell, Spruce, Sunset, and North Dallas high schools. Some campuses restructured as schools-within-schools career pathway programs for 2009-2010. Stage 5 schools are required by law to restructure. The Stage 4 campuses were Molina, Kimball, and South Oak Cliff high schools, and Hood, Long, Storey, and Hulcy middle schools. Stage 3 schools consisted of Jefferson, Lincoln, and Seagoville high schools, as well as Comstock and Hill middle schools. Woodrow Wilson High School and Cary and Seagoville middle schools were in Stage 2. The Stage 1 schools were Skyline, Hillcrest, Madison and White high schools; Browne, Jackson, and Anderson middle schools; and Central Elementary.

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).

A review of the Campus Improvement Plans (CIPs) for the 33 improvement schools found some school plans using concrete, measurable goals while other schools had more abstract goals.

Title I School Improvement Program campuses are required to offer students the opportunity to transfer to better-performing district campuses. Overall, 481 students transferred to other campuses. Conrad High School was the only destination for high school
transfers, while Greiner, Garcia, and Atwell were the most popular choices for middle school transfers.

**Supplemental Services**

*NCLB* school improvement rules require that schools at Stage 2 and higher provide Supplemental Educational Services (SES), which includes tutoring and other services provided outside the regular school day. In 2009-2010, 13,961 students (about 60% of the eligible total) in 25 campuses enrolled in SES. However, SES data indicated that a smaller number of students, 10,499, actually participated in tutoring.

**Assets Profile**

In spring of 2010, a sample of student across the district took the Developmental Assets Profile, which gives an overview of how many positive assets a student has in their life along several categories, mainly internal categories related to the student and external categories related to the student’s environment. Research has show a correlation between high scores in each category with more positive life outcomes. The results of Dallas ISD show that SIP campus students have scores below the district average in both internal and external asset scores, with the most notable differences showing in the external categories.

**Outcomes**

Almost one third of the Title I School Improvement Program campuses (10 of 33) met AYP, according to preliminary results released in August 2010 by the Texas Education Agency. Nearly all of the campuses that missed AYP did so in mathematics, indicating that mathematics performance continues to be an issue of concern.

Nine schools missed AYP for high school graduation rates, a noticeable abatement from last year, when only three schools missed AYP on this measure. Three campuses, Spruce and White high schools along with Central Elementary, met AYP for a second consecutive year, enabling them to exit from Title I school improvement status.

The Texas Projection Measure (TPM) as well as the Safe Harbor improvement measure continued to benefit most improvement campuses, which would have missed AYP without the measure. Jackson Middle School was the only SIP campus to make AYP without the help of TPM or Safe Harbor.

In addition to the campuses, the district missed AYP for reading and mathematics performance by special education students because it exceeded a cap on the number of students who can be counted as academically proficient through alternative assessments. This was the third consecutive year the district exceeded the cap, placing it on Stage 2 for this measure. The district was on Stage 1 in 2009-10 because of high school graduation. The district met AYP in 2010 for graduation and will exit for that measure.

In addition, for the first time Dallas ISD will have four middle schools in Stage 5 status: Hood, Long, Storey, and Hulcy. By law, this means these schools will have to implement their reconstruction plans. Previously, Dallas ISD has only had high school in Stage 5 improvement status.

Figure 2 below displays passing rates (without TPM) in reading and mathematics for Title I School Improvement Program campuses.

![Figure 2 – TAKS Passing Rates in Title I School Improvement Program campuses, 2009-2010.](image)

**Recommendation**

**Focus on Continued Improvement as AYP Standards Rise** – Preliminary achievement results show that the Title I School Improvement Campuses did not improve at a rate to keep up with the increasing AYP standards. It is recommended that the district step up its efforts even further, especially in mathematics. Continued improvement will be necessary, in light of higher AYP standards that take effect in 2010-2011. The passing standards rise to 80% in reading and 75% in mathematics.

**Prepare for Changes in Middle School Operations** – Preliminary AYP results indicate that Dallas ISD will have to operate with middle schools at stage 5 status, meaning those schools will have to implement their reconstruction plans. Looking ahead, there will be three middle schools entering Stage 4 status, thus being in jeopardy of entering Stage 5 status if those schools miss AYP in 2011. A new focus on improving these middle schools will be necessary.

**Developmental Assets Profile Expanded** – The DAP should be extended to serve as an intervention mechanism for students. Schools with students having low external assets scores should investigate ways to improve students’ access to these types of assets.
Ensure Students Attend All SES Tutoring – While SES tutoring is only one factor of many that affect a student’s TAKS performance, the evaluation team found that students only get a statistically significant improvement on TAKS scores if they attend more than 90% of their allocated SES tutoring hours. Students who attended less than 90% generally had no gains and had scores equivalent to students who attended no tutoring at all. While SES tutoring did not help in all aspects of TAKS, it is critical for students to attend all their allocated hours if SES is to be of any benefit.

Campus Improvement Plan Use – District leaders should review campus improvement plans and identify two to three ideal plans, including the meeting structures that went into the CIP construction. Other campuses should be shown these ideal (prototype) plans and methodology so that it can be replicated in other campuses. Hopefully, this will lead to a CIP that is of practical use and designed with measurable goals and a clear accountability structure.

For more information, see EA10-189-2, available in the future at www.dallasisd.org/inside_disd/depts/evalacct/