American Indian Education Program: 2009-2010

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At-a-Glance

The American Indian Education Program (AIEP) was designed to provide enrichment and support services to American Indian and Alaska Native students and their families. It also promotes understanding throughout the Dallas Independent School District (Dallas ISD), by educating staff and the community about the culturally diverse populations within the district. The AIEP aims to address educational and culturally related academic needs of American Indian and Alaska Native students so that they may meet the same performance standards expected of all Dallas ISD students.

The program, funded by a federal grant, is designed to enhance and supplement core educational services in Dallas ISD by providing American Indian students with additional opportunities/activities that will improve academic skills and help them become more proficient in core content areas. The program also encourages postsecondary readiness and success by increasing opportunities for students to explore their postsecondary options through presentations and fairs.

Evaluation Methodology

Program documents and interviews with the program manager provided data on AIEP activities. An interview was held with the Director of AIEP in March. A specialist in the AIEP office provided a list of students who participated in the program. The Dallas ISD student databases provided additional data on these students, including demographic and test performance data. Follow-up information was collected through email and phone.

AIEP Context and Goals

Texas has had the highest rate of increase of American Indian residents during the last three years among all states. During 2009, Texas held the nation’s fourth-largest American Indian population, with 128,224 American Indians residing in the state. Texas also is home to three Indian reservations. The five largest tribal nations in Dallas ISD are the Choctaw, Cherokee, Muscogee (Creek), Navajo, and Sioux nations.

In 2009-2010, the American Indian Education Program received a federal Indian Education grant of $126,695. The program served 665 students, representing about 60 tribal nations. AIEP outlined the following goals:

- Increase American Indian student participation in cultural education,
- Support academic achievement in reading and develop reading habits among American Indian students in grades PK-8,
- Decrease dropout rates among American Indian students,
- Prepare high school students for college and the workforce,
- Provide opportunities for students to explore postsecondary options.

Program Participants

The students who participated in the AIEP were not concentrated in a small number of Dallas ISD campuses; they were spread out across many of the district’s schools. The schools with the largest numbers of program participants included George Peabody Elementary, W.E. Greiner and Raul Quintanilla middle schools and Sunset high school. Combined, these four campuses had more than 15% of the program’s participants.

By ethnicity, over half (51.6%) of the AIEP students identified themselves as American Indian, while 33.9 percent identified themselves as Hispanic. Even though not all students who participated in the AIEP were identified as American Indian by ethnicity in district databases, all participants claimed an affiliation with one of the American Indian tribal nations.

Over two thirds (76%) of AIEP participants were from economically disadvantaged families; this is defined by eligibility for the federal school lunch program. Additionally, five percent were classified as Limited English Proficient (LEP).

Program Activities

During the year, AIEP sponsored book and reading clubs for students who participated in the program to continue the goal of better reading habits and achievement. Students were encouraged to discuss and share cultural themes presented by American Indian authors found in their books during their readings.

Throughout the school year, to provide opportunities for students to explore postsecondary options and to support high school students preparation for college and the workforce, the AIEP hosted several college
and career nights at different events (Annual American Indian Student Pow-Wow) and high schools (Sunset and Skyline High School). At these events, student attendees received information packets, and learned about financial aid, career services, and academic and student life. These activities were geared toward encouraging students to remain in school and graduate. The college and career nights gave students an opportunity to investigate future college and career or employment opportunities. AIEP representatives were also available throughout the year to meet with secondary students to assist with academic or behavioral concerns.

During the summer of 2010 from June 7 – 17th, AIEP hosted a two-week summer enrichment program that offered culturally related reading, writing, and mathematics instruction. Students were exposed to a wide variety of activities including storytelling and American Indian tribal history. Field trips included weekly trips on each Thursday during the two week camp to the Ft. Worth Museum of Science and History and to the Trinity River Audubon Center located in Dallas.

The 12th Annual American Indian Student Pow-Wow was held on April 17, 2010, at Jesse Owen Memorial Complex; this was a move to a larger facility to accommodate larger crowds and provide more activities for participants. The Annual American Indian Student Pow-Wow is a free event and is open to AIEP participants and the community at large. The celebration included traditional regalia, music, dance, singing, arts, crafts, and storytellers. It also provided educational programs about American Indian culture and history. The celebration was well received and attended.

**Program Outcomes**

Figures one through three display passing rates on the *Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS)* Reading, Mathematics, and Science tests for AIEP students, compared with overall district passing rates. In most groupings, AIEP students performed similarly or passed at slightly higher rates than the district.

Figure 1 displays passing rates in TAKS Reading for students in the AEIP and the entire district. Passing rates for AEIP students were 85.6 percent, grades three through six; 86.2 percent, grades seven through eight; and 93.4 percent, grades nine through 11th. For the district, passing rates were 82 percent, grades three through six; 82.9 percent, grades seven through eight; and 88.3 percent, in grades nine through 11th.

Figure 2 displays passing rates in TAKS Mathematics for students in the AIEP and the entire district. The comparison reveals that AIEP students performed similarly to the district as a whole on the TAKS Mathematics test with the exception of 11th grade students, who performed slightly higher throughout the district.

Figure 3 displays passing rates in TAKS Science for students in the AIEP and the entire district. AIEP students outperformed the district as a whole on the TAKS Science test with the exception of 11th grade students, who performed slightly higher throughout the district.

**Plans for 2010-2011**

AIEP was scheduled to receive $129,481 in grant funds for the 2010-2011 school year and serve an
estimated 675 students they plan to continue and expand their outreach efforts throughout the district.

For more information contact Program Evaluation at 972-925-6457.