The Ninth Grade Transition Program was funded by a grant from the Texas Education Agency (TEA) that intended to target at-risk students entering ninth grade for a summer transition program. During the 2010-11 school year, Moises E. Molina, Franklin D. Roosevelt, and Woodrow Wilson High Schools each received $86,127 to fund the program. Each school worked independently to devise a Ninth Grade Transition Program.

The aim of Ninth Grade Transition was to provide services that target students as they left eighth grade, who were at risk of being retained in the ninth grade or dropping out. In total, 588 students were served districtwide.

Program Characteristics
The summer transition programs ran from August 2-13, 2010, for four hours per day at each school. The schedule coincided with Early Start programs at each campus. At Molina, Ninth Grade Transition was combined with Early Start, and called “Fish Camp.” Here, summer transition students participated in a social curriculum aimed at instructing students in strategies to increase high school success. These included note taking, using school resources, completing homework, the daily bell schedule, and completing credits for graduation. The academic component included three strands: English, Math, and Science, which students rotated between. Each strand had a lead teacher, support teacher, and two upper level student volunteers. The strands aimed to be interactive and engaging, focusing on providing students with an overview of the content level curriculum taught in ninth grade courses during the first six weeks of school.

At Roosevelt, the summer transition academic program provided rigorous accelerated instruction in math and English. Activities were aimed at raising academic standards, familiarizing students with campus facilities, and preparing students for the rigorous coursework of high school. A focus on college and career exploration was also included through college visits and a career exploration course. The course was designed to help students by making their high school education relevant to their career choices. It aimed to allow students to understand the significance of making good choices with regard to selecting life careers and modeling behaviors associated with job productivity.

At Wilson, students participated in Early Start in the mornings and “Cub Camp” in the afternoons. The summer transition program provided students with remediation and reinforcement of skills in math and science through hands-on activities chosen to focus on demonstrated deficiencies of the targeted students. Math and science teachers worked together to develop the lessons. Additionally, study skills and time management skills were included in the curriculum to increase high school success. Two informal parent meetings, which included students, were held to provide information on policies and procedures of the school while encouraging parental involvement throughout the year. Information was shared with parents regarding the academic and postsecondary study expectations at Wilson. A trip to Richland College was included to expose students to postsecondary study opportunities. Students were paired with a junior or senior mentor in order to form a connection with the existing student body, and to feel that they were part of the Wilson family before they began their freshman year.

Student Demographics
A total of 144 students participated in the program at Molina, or 25 percent of incoming freshmen. At Roosevelt, 48 students participated, representing 19 percent of incoming freshmen. At Wilson, 396 out of 488 incoming students participated, or 81 percent.

The majority of Ninth Grade Transition students were Hispanic (74%). African American students made up 15 percent of participants, just over nine percent of students were White, and about one percent of students in the program were of other ethnicities. The majority of participants were female, with almost 53 percent, and slightly over 47 percent were male. A total of 111 Ninth Grade Transition participants were Hispanic (74%). African American students made up 15 percent of participants, just over nine percent of students were White, and about one percent of students in the program were of other ethnicities. The majority of participants were female, with almost 53 percent, and slightly over 47 percent were male. A total of 111 Ninth Grade Transition participants were limited English proficient (18.9%). Special education students made up nine percent of the program. Most Ninth Grade Transition students were economically disadvantaged: 448 of the program’s 588 students, or 76 percent, belonged to this category.

Core Course Pass Rates
A major component of Ninth Grade Transition was on strengthening academics, and a program goal was to increase the rate at which students passed core ninth grade courses. English I, Pre-AP English, Algebra I, Geometry, Pre-AP Geometry, Biology, and Pre-AP
Biology comprise the core curriculum for the evaluation. Students participating in the program did not pass core courses at a higher rate than non-participant ninth graders across the district. In every class, Ninth Grade Transition students passed at a lower rate, ranging from 2.5 to 15.5 percentage points lower than non-participant ninth graders in the district as a whole. Recall, however, that the program targeted students at risk of failure or dropout.

**Attendance**

A program goal of Ninth Grade Transition was to increase participant student’s attendance. Specifically, the stated goal was for Ninth Grade Transition students to achieve an attendance rate of 90 percent for the ninth grade year. Attendance increased for students in the Ninth Grade Transition program relative to their non-participant classmates. Overall, Ninth Grade Transition students’ attendance rate was 94 percent, compared with 91.7 percent attendance for non-participant students at the same schools.

Table 1 presents overall ninth grade attendance for the 2010-11 school year by program participation. Over 80 percent of Ninth Grade Transition participants met or exceeded the 90 percent attendance goal. Additionally, 38 participants achieved perfect attendance for the year.

**Table 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attendance Percent</th>
<th>Ninth Grade Transition Participants</th>
<th>Non-Participant District Ninth Graders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 90%</td>
<td>19.5%</td>
<td>22.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90% - 94.9%</td>
<td>18.7%</td>
<td>19.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>95% - 99.9%</td>
<td>55.3%</td>
<td>51.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100%</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Credit Accrual**

The final program goal of Ninth Grade Transition was for participant students to accrue the five credits necessary to be classified as sophomores by the end of the ninth grade school year.

Over 90 percent of Ninth Grade Transition students had five or more credits at the end of the school year, with 40 students having earned more than ten credits. This number may be misleading, however, because 82 of the program’s 588 total participants had been retained in the grade after the 2009-10 school year, making them second time ninth graders. Nonetheless, program participant students met the goal of earning five credits at a rate over four percentage points higher than non-participants.

**Summary and Recommendations**

The purpose of the evaluation was to measure the Ninth Grade Transition Program’s effectiveness in implementing the program goals and outcomes by describing the general characteristics of the Ninth Grade Transition program at each school, and the characteristics of participants, participants’ rates of passing core courses, participants’ rates of attendance, and their number of credits at the end of the school year.

Students participating in the program did not pass core courses at a higher rate than non-participant ninth graders across the district. In every class, Ninth Grade Transition students passed at a lower rate, ranging from 2.5 to 15.5 percentage points lower than non-participant ninth graders in the district as a whole.

Attendance was higher for students in the Ninth Grade Transition program relative to their non-participant classmates. Overall, Ninth Grade Transition students’ attendance rate was 94 percent, compared with 91.7 percent attendance for non-participant students at the same schools, exceeding the goal of 90 percent attendance.

Over 90 percent of Ninth Grade Transition students had five or more credits at the end of the school year, with 40 students having earned more than ten credits by the end of the year. Participating students met the goal of earning five credits at a rate over four percentage points higher than non-participants.

Overall, Ninth Grade Transition was successful in meeting its program goals over the course of the year. One caveat to the successful outcomes of Ninth Grade Transition is that the program was planned in tandem with Early Start. The program risked being viewed as redundant, since Early Start had the same overall academic program goals. However, Ninth Grade Transition did include valuable social components, which created standalone value.

While 2010-11 was the final year of the Ninth Grade Transition grant, the following are recommendations for similar summer transition programs in the future:

- Continue to offer social support and team building, including mentoring, as a component of orientation for incoming high school students;
- Consider fine tuning or specializing academic components if they are to remain, in order to distinguish the program from existing summer academic preparatory programs in the district.
Additional information may be obtained by consulting EA11-145-2, which can be found at www.dallasisd.org/inside_disd/depts/evalacct/.