THE 2007-08 EXTENDED YEAR OPERATIONS:
SUMMER SCHOOL PROGRAMS

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At-a-Glance

The Dallas Independent School District provided extended-year educational services for eligible students in elementary, middle, and high schools to receive remedial instruction for promotion to the next grade level. High school students also had the opportunity to recover course credits at a cost of $70 per course. Enrichment courses also were offered at all grade levels.

Local and legal policies require the district to offer summer school services to students to reduce retention and provide students having academic difficulties the opportunity for promotion to the next grade level. Middle and high school programs enabled students to enroll in courses necessary to complete coursework and recover credits. District policy states that any student in grades one through eight who fails to meet the criteria for promotion to the next grade level may attend extended-year programs (i.e., summer school) in applicable content areas. Students who attend at least 90% of the summer school program days and demonstrate proficiency of course content at grade level will be promoted to the next grade. However, meeting the 90% attendance criterion only allowed students to be eligible for promotion. Home school principals, using the EIE (Legal) and district (Local) policy as guides, along with teachers and parents, made the final promotion/retention decision. Thus, successful attendance at summer school was not the only criterion used by home school principals to determine a student’s promotion/retention status. The summer school program offered enrichment courses that allowed students to accelerate or enhance their educational experiences.

There were 41 elementary, 13 middle, and 13 high schools that served as summer school sites. Overall, 24,298 students were recommended for summer school. Of these, 19,177 actually attended.

Budget

Table 1 shows summer school budget allocation for 2007-08. The total allocated budget for the Summer School Program was about 1.5 million dollars. The largest allocation was for salary and benefits (83.2%), followed by supplies and materials at 7.2%. These accounted for $1,335,969 (90.4%) of the total allocation for the program.

Elementary Level

The district identified 15,202 elementary students who met the requirements to attend summer school. However, only 10,127 enrolled. Of those enrolled, 70.8% were Hispanic, 26.8% were African American, 1.9% were Anglo, 0.3% were Asian American and 0.2% were Native American.

Promotion and retention results indicated that of the 15,202 students recommended for summer school, 11,673 (76.8%) were promoted to the next grade. Of the grade three students attending summer school, 1,993 did not pass the TAKS Reading test prior to summer school, 1,137 (67.3%) were promoted. Of these, 89 (7.8%) were recommended but did not attend summer school, 133 (11.7%) were not recommended and did not attend summer school and 915 (80.5%) were recommended and attended summer school.
Of the 1,880 fifth graders who did not pass the spring TAKS, in reading, 1,505 were promoted. Of those promoted, 59 (3.9%) were recommended but did not attend summer school, 143 (9.5%) were not recommended and did not attend summer school, and 1,303 (86.6%) were recommended and attended summer school.

Of the 1,765 fifth graders who did not pass the spring TAKS, in math, 1,404 were promoted. Of those promoted, 51 (3.6%) were recommended but did not attend summer school, 101 (7.2%) were not recommended and did not attend summer school, and 1,252 (89.2%) were recommended and attended summer school.

Middle School Level

Middle school students accounted for 3,895 of the total number of students recommended for summer school. Of these 3,881 attended. The overall course-passing rate was 85.2%, which was slightly lower than the 86.3% for the 2007 summer school program.

When investigating the promotion rates among grade eight students who failed the spring TAKS Reading test and attended summer school and those who failed the spring TAKS Reading test and did not attend summer school, it was found that about 36.3% of those who failed the spring TAKS Reading test and attended summer school were promoted and 63.7% of those who failed the spring TAKS Reading test and did not attend summer school were also promoted.

High School Level

The high school general education component enrolled a total of 5,169 students in 48 general education courses. Of the total attending, 266 were seniors of which 64 graduated.

Teacher and Administrator Surveys

Teachers, regardless of level, continued to indicate that the Curriculum Guide was the most helpful resource. Principals praised both the quality of the summer school curriculum and staff at their sites. Suggestions for improvement of the Summer School Program included:

- Modify the curriculum to meet the needs of students who need basic phonics, remedial instruction, lots of practice, slower paced instruction, differentiated instruction, small group instruction, and more time to cover objectives.
- Create a reading curriculum for students who have difficulty reading by offering phonics, decoding/fluency skills, more vocabulary building activities, and on-line words with pronunciation.
- Need to have timely delivery of enough supplies and materials listed in the curriculum; prior to the beginning of summer school.

Recommendations

The findings indicate that there was a lack of consistency in the application of the standards to be promoted to the next grade. Therefore, the following recommendations are offered:

- Schools should be encouraged to follow district policy and summer school guidelines as to who should and should not be recommended for summer school, so that there will be consistency throughout the district.
- Under the current structure of the Summer School Program, a student may be recommended to attend summer school for credit recovery. However, this evaluation found that students who did not actually attend summer school were still promoted to the next grade level. It is recommended that the administrative staff investigate the lack of consistency in the application of the standards to be promoted to the next grade.