Title I Programs in Private Schools and Institutions for Neglected or Delinquent Children and Youth: 2008-09

At-A-Glance

In accordance with the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1988, as amended by the Improving America's School Act of 1994, the Dallas Independent School District (Dallas ISD) provided Title I, Part A services to eligible students enrolled in private schools and to neglected or delinquent children and youth residing in institutions. The overall purpose of the Title I program is to help disadvantaged children meet high standards by enabling schools to provide opportunities for children served, to acquire the knowledge and skills contained in the State content standards, and meet the State performance standards that were developed for all children.

Demographics

Private Schools

Title I program services were provided to eligible students in 14 private schools, that included nine Catholic Diocese of Dallas schools (Mount St. Michaels, Our Lady of Perpetual Help, St. Augustine, St. Cecilia, Santa Clara of Assisi Catholic Academy, St. Elizabeth of Hungary, St. Mary of Carmel, St. Philip the Apostle, and St. Pius) and five non-Catholic schools (Akiba Academy, Clay Academy, Fellowship Christian Academy, J. Erik Jonsson Community School, and St. Philip’s School).

A total of 329 Title I students enrolled in grades PK-8 in private schools were served. Eligible students included 61% Hispanic, 29% African American, and 10% White. There were 49% male and 51% female students. Services in eight of the nine participating Catholic Diocese schools continued to be provided by a third-party contractor, 21st Century Learning. While the Dallas ISD retained responsibility for fiscal matters, monitoring the quality of services, program evaluation, and ensuring that services provided were reasonably equitable to those provided to public school students. The Dallas ISD on the other hand, was directly responsible for providing administrative, technical, fiscal management, program evaluation, and personnel and staff development support to the non-Catholic Diocese schools.

Institutions

Title I, Part A institutions serving delinquent and neglected children or youth included Casa Shelter, Promise House, Juliette Fowler Homes (closed in February, 2009), and Our Friend’s Place. Also included was Cottrell House, a juvenile corrections community residential facility of the Texas Youth Commission, funded under Title I, Part D, Subpart 2. The focus of the Title I program in these institutions was serving delinquent or neglected children and youth with dropout prevention and easing the transition back to home and school. Cottrell House provided services that helped youth prepare for community reintegration.

Program Methodology

Private Schools

Title I students at eight of the Catholic schools received computer assisted instruction through 21st Century Learning. Instructional reading materials for grades K-1 included Dino Phonics and Team Target for grades 2-8. Schools used Team Target and a variety of other materials for mathematics instruction. Three schools used manipulatives, including Touch Math. Mount St. Michael Catholic School offered Title I services through a tutor who provided reading/language arts instruction and computer assisted instruction using the Imagination Station program. The other private schools provided services through tutoring, supplemental instructional materials, and/or a reading recovery program.

Institutions

Title I, Part A services in the institutions served students in grades 5-12. Services were provided through supplementary and tutorial instruction in all subject areas, as well as preparation for the
General Education Diploma (GED). The services were designed to be equitable in comparison to services and benefits of children attending public schools. Title I services also allowed neglected or delinquent students the opportunity to meet the same challenging State standards as children in public schools, and to make a successful transition from institutionalization to school and/or employment. With the exception of one institution (Our Friend’s Place), Title I students received on-site instructional services, five days a week. Teachers with Dallas ISD’s Hospital/Homebound program provided instructional and tutorial services at these institutions. The teachers incorporated some or all of the following forms of interventions in their instruction: computer-assisted, small group, and one-to-one.

Students residing at Our Friend’s Place attended Dallas ISD schools that included Skyline High School, North Dallas High School, Rusk Middle School, Sam Houston Elementary School, and Sudie Williams Elementary School. Students received after-school tutoring through volunteers and had access to computers, software, and resource materials for homework and research assignments.

Due to a high risk of runaways, Cottrell House allowed only the most trustworthy students to attend a Dallas ISD school (Bryan Adams High School), while the rest received on-site instruction. Transportation was provided to and from the public school campuses.

The institutions addressed the special needs of each resident through the development of social, study, and behavioral skills. They offered individual and group counseling on various topics, such as substance abuse and anger management. In addition, vocational and job-skills training, college preparation, and independent living skills/training were provided.

Outcomes

Private Schools

Comparative (pre- and post-) achievement data for Title I students in grades K-8, were only available for the Catholic schools (excluding Mount St. Michael) and Eric Jonsson Community School. Achievement data were used to determine whether Title I students had made substantial progress toward program success.

Pre- and post-test reading comprehension score outcomes showed that Title I students performed well. All eight Catholic schools showed positive mean gains ranging from 8% to 31%. All grades (K-8) also showed positive mean gains that ranged from 6% at grade 6, to 37% at Kindergarten. J. Erik Jonsson Community School administered the Diagnostic Reading Assessment (DRA) test to students in grades one and two only, in the fall and spring. Results showed substantial growth for these students. Thirty-three percent (33%) scored on grade level in the fall and 75% in the spring test administrations. Comparative achievement data were not available for Akiba Academy, Clay Academy, Fellowship Christian Academy, Mount St. Michael and St. Phillip’s School.

Institutions

Due to the transient nature of residents in the institutions, it was difficult to find valid achievement data to determine if Title I students had made substantial progress toward program success. Cumulative classroom performance grades were used for this purpose. Results showed significant improvement in classroom performance. Ninety-six percent (96%) of Title I students had reading exit grades that ranged between 71-100, as compared to 67% of students with entry grades. In mathematics, 88% of students had exit grades that ranged between 71 and 100, as compared to 65% of students. Data for Cottrell House were not included as it was inconsistent with the data provided by the other institutions.

Recommendations

- Private school representatives should attend all consultation meetings in 2009-10.
- Improve collaboration between private school and institution representatives and the Dallas ISD Grants Management Specialist, to better understand Title I regulations.
- Private schools and institutions should adhere to the guidelines for the collection and submission of accurate data in a timely manner.
- Set timelines for collecting data from Cottrell House for the end of year Texas Education Agency (TEA) Compliance report.
- In order to evaluate student growth toward program success, all private schools need to use a similar academic performance assessment for reading and mathematics that provides comparative (pre- and post-) data.

For more information refer to EA09-154-2 at: www.dallasisd.org/inside_disd/depts/evalacct/