College Access Program: 2013-14

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At-a-Glance

The College Access Program (CAP) was created to meet Dallas ISD needs for increased student college applications, scholarship applications, participation and performance on college entrance exams, and parental involvement in the college admissions and financial aid process.

The three College Access (CA) program vendors selected for the 2013-14 school year were Education is Freedom (EIF), Academic Success Program (ASP), and The Princeton Review (TPR). The program served students in high schools receiving Title I funds. Vendors collaborated with campus counselors, other college access advisers, and other college access program staff to ensure a seamless implementation for students. Vendors provided supplemental, individual, and small group assistance to students and parents.

During the 2013-14 school year, Education is Freedom (EIF) served 20 Dallas ISD campuses and reported serving 6,487 students on an individualized basis. Academic Success Program (ASP) provided one-on-one services to 1,352 students across seven campuses, and The Princeton Review (TPR) served seven campuses and 2,233 students. Figure 1 shows the allocation of campuses by provider.

Figure 1: Percentage of Campuses by Provider

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provider</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EIF</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TPR</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASP</td>
<td>21%</td>
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Title I 2013-14 program cost requested for this component was $2,300,000.

Evaluation Purpose and Scope

The scope of this evaluation was to evaluate the effectiveness of the program based on outlined program goals and objectives, including the extent to which vendors served students and parents individually and in small groups, and the extent to which vendors met program goals.

Program Goals

The expected program goals were that 98 percent of seniors should have an active Career Cruising account and have taken an approved aptitude test; 80 percent of seniors would submit at least one college application; 50 percent of seniors would complete a financial aid application; 90 percent of juniors and seniors would take the SAT or ACT; 80 percent of seniors would receive college or scholarship essay assistance; 50 percent of seniors would attend at least one college fair; and six Postsecondary Counselor Training meetings (including vendors) would be held during the 2013-14 school year.

The expected outcomes were for counseling staff and vendor staff. Vendors and counselors were expected to work collaboratively to meet program goals. The goals stated above were aligned with the goals set by the Counseling Services department. Vendor staff and campus counselors met at the beginning of the 2013-14 school year to divide up the work necessary to meet campus goals. They completed and signed a College Access Program Vendor Goal Form as a result of that meeting.

Student Services – Individual and Small Group

Table 1 shows the percentage of all students and seniors served in CAP during the 2013-14 school year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Served in CAP</th>
<th>Total Student Population (9th-12th)</th>
<th>Seniors Only</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Served</td>
<td>25,431</td>
<td>71.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Served</td>
<td>10,072</td>
<td>28.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>35,503</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ASP students were most often seen for Apply Texas application assistance, followed by information about financial aid. EIF students were seen for Apply Texas application assistance, followed by information about applying to college. TPR students were most often seen for registering for the SAT or ACT, followed by assistance with Apply Texas applications.

On average, EIF and TPR students were served about three times per student. ASP students were served almost nine times each, though ASP had a much higher maximum number of visits, which skewed their average. Most EIF and TPR students had one or two visits with a CAP advisor. About 45 percent of ASP students had one or two visits. Another 23 percent of students were seen 10 or more times.

In previous school years, CAP vendors were permitted to hold large student and parent workshops. For the
2013-14 school year, vendors were instructed to provide only small-group sessions. About 87 percent of ASP workshops had 25 participants or fewer. About 85 percent of EIF workshops had 25 or fewer participants. About 97 percent of TPR workshops had 26 participants or fewer. Some workshops had participation of up to 502 students and parents. These data indicate that vendors were not always adhering to this policy.

**Parent Services – Small Group**

Workshops included parent only (n=5) and parent-student workshops (n=26). ASP most often provided college and financial aid information (about 73% of workshops), while EIF and TPR provided assistance with college and financial aid applications (about 63% and 60%, respectively).

The results of a vendor survey indicated that reaching parents to provide College Access Program information seemed to be an area for future focus (Figure 2). Vendors commented that parents often did not attend college access information sessions. In addition, language barriers needed to be addressed. Some vendors indicated that they had had more success working with parents in small groups while others reported one-on-one assistance was more successful.

**Figure 2: Vendor Quotes: Individual Student Assistance**

**Vendor Quotes: Small Group Parent Assistance**

- “Parents have been really great at digesting information and asking questions. I have seen much more success explaining information, such as financial aid, to parents in small groups.”

- “Many of our parents do not participate, so small groups with parents during financial aid nights were a success because I was able to offer more one-on-one attention, which they appreciated.”

- “We are working tirelessly to try to reach as many parents as possible but sometimes the language barrier makes that difficult.”

- “It is very hard to get parents to attend parent sessions and/or workshops so that has been a big issue for me this year.”

**Meeting Program Goals**

Obama Male Leadership Academy and A. Maceo Smith New Tech High School were not included because they did not serve seniors during the 2013-14 school year.

**Career Cruising:** With the exception of two campuses, all campuses (94%) met the goal of 98 percent of seniors having a Career Cruising account. The Career Cruising database showed no evidence of students taking the available aptitude test.

**College Applications:** All but one campus (Townview Business) met the goal of 80 percent of seniors submitting an application (94% met). Data for Patton Academic Center were not available through ApplyTexas. Self-report data indicated 56 percent of Patton seniors submitted a college application.

**Financial Aid Applications:** Twelve of the 32 campuses (38%) met the goal of 50 percent of the senior class submitting a FAFSA.

**College Entrance Exams:** During the 2013-14 school year, Dallas ISD funded school-day testing on the SAT for all juniors. Dallas ISD administered the SAT to juniors on February 26, 2014. As a result, the percentage of juniors who took the SAT or ACT was higher than for seniors. Twenty-one of the 34 campuses (62%) had 90 percent or more of their juniors take the SAT or ACT exams. Two campuses had 90 percent of more of their seniors take the SAT or ACT exams: Irma Lerma Rangel Young Women’s Leadership School (92%) and Dr. Wright L. Lassiter Jr. Early College High School at El Centro College (98%).

**Scholarship Assistance:** None of the campuses reached the goal of providing college and scholarship essay assistance to 80 percent of seniors; however, Lincoln High School had a higher percentage of students served compared with other campuses (58% assisted with scholarship essays). Lincoln counselors and vendors implemented a targeted approach to scholarship essay assistance during the 2013-14 school year.

**College Fairs:** Due to the method in which data is collected for the College Access Program, the evaluator was unable to determine whether 50 percent of seniors attended at least one college fair. The vendors are not required to record individual attendance at college fairs. Instead, they record overall attendance and fair dates.

**Postsecondary Counselor Training Meetings:** The Counseling Services department held six training meetings during the 2013-14 school year covering college placement exam updates, college readiness goals, graduation requirements, Special Education updates, House Bill 5 information, scholarship reports, financial aid information, and dual credit updates.

**Recommendations**

The following are recommendations based on the results of the evaluation: identify which aptitude test students should take and develop procedures to ensure students have access to the test, review best practices with regard to college and scholarship essay assistance to increase the percentage of students served, clarify policies and procedures regarding small-group workshops, and further clarify expectations of the College Access Program Goal Form meeting.

For more information, see EA14-521-2, which can be found at [http://www.dallasisd.org/Page/888](http://www.dallasisd.org/Page/888).