College Access Program: 2014-15

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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 CAP vendors selected for the 2014-15 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 2014-15 school year, Education is Freedom (EIF) served 13 Dallas ISD campuses and reported serving 7,998 students, Academic Success Program (ASP) provided services to 3,491 students across 12 campuses, and The Princeton Review (TPR) served nine campuses and 2,410 students. Figure 1 shows the allocation of campuses by provider across three school years.

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Program Participation and College Enrollment

Though the strength of the relationship between CAP participation and college enrollment was relatively weak, an analysis of National Student Clearinghouse data for 2013-14 Dallas ISD graduates indicated that CAP was making some contributions to students’ college enrollment. CAP students were slightly more likely to enroll in college than non-participants and CAP students who received assistance 10 or more times were slightly more likely to enroll in 4-year colleges than were students who received CAP services between one and nine times (Figure 2).

![Figure 2: Type of Enrollment by Frequency of CAP Participation](image)

CAP students who were served 10 or more times were most likely working on college or scholarship essays, or were seeking assistance in preparing for their entry into college (i.e., housing assistance). Students who did not participate in CAP could have been receiving college application assistance from other sources such as parents, counselors, or teachers.

Service Provision over Time

When reviewing CAP student data over the 2012-13, 2013-14, and 2014-15 school years it is apparent that the program has remained stable over time. There has been fluctuation in the number of campuses each vendor served, but vendors have continued to focus primarily on providing information and assistance to students about applying to college and for financial aid. The Princeton Review has also provided test preparation services to its campuses. The number of students served has increased over time with more juniors being served each year, potentially indicating that vendors are providing college access information in advance of the students’ senior year so that they will be more prepared to make college-related decisions in their senior year. In 2014-15, CAP vendors served about 37 percent of the entire student body and almost 87 percent of the senior class (Figure 3). The majority of students received services from a CAP vendor one time throughout the school year, but there continued to be students seeking out services more than 10 times over the course of the year.
Vendors conducted small group workshops for parents and students. These workshops focused primarily on college and financial aid information and applications and college fairs, college visits, and visits from college representatives. The workshops were mainly presented to the senior class.

**Meeting Program Goals**

College Access vendors were to work collaboratively with Dallas ISD counselors in order to meet the following goals:

- 98 percent of seniors should complete Career Cruising/Naviance registration.
- 98 percent of seniors will have taken the Career Cruising/Naviance or other approved district career/interest/aptitude test.
- 80 percent of seniors will complete at least one college application.
- 50 percent of senior class will complete a financial aid application: Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), Texas Application for State Financial Aid (TASFA), or scholarship.
- 90 percent of seniors will register and take the SAT or ACT.
- 80 percent of the senior class should receive college and scholarship essay assistance (in conjunction with other school/curricular support activities).
- 50 percent of seniors will attend at least one college fair.
- At least six Postsecondary Counselor Training meetings (vendors included) will be held during the 2014-15 school year.

Results of the 2014-15 evaluation indicated that the College Access program vendors were successfully supplementing the work of counselors in a collaborative effort to meet district goals. All campuses had 80 percent of seniors complete at least one college application through ApplyTexas and 65 percent of campuses had a FAFSA completion rate of 50 percent or higher. The majority of students served in CAP were submitting applications to 4-year colleges (Figure 4).

Dallas ISD funded in-school testing on the SAT for all juniors and ACT for all seniors during the 2014-15 school year. Ninety percent of more of seniors at 16 out of 34 (47%) campuses took either the SAT or ACT. CAP vendors lagged behind on the college and scholarship essay assistance goal. Assisting students with essays is a time consuming task and the goal of assisting 80 percent of seniors is difficult to achieve. The amount of assistance with essays increased from the 2013-14 school year. Two schools provided scholarship essay assistance to 80 percent or more of seniors (Emmett J. Conrad and Obama Leadership Academy) and one school provided college essay assistance to 80 percent or more of seniors (Townview Science and Engineering Magnet).

**Recommendations**

The following are recommendations based on the results of the evaluation:

1. College Access program staff and Counseling Services staff have worked to improve their communication and collaboration with regards to implementing CAP. These efforts have resulted in clearer expectations and increased service. The results of this report indicate that program staff should continue these positive efforts.

2. College Access program and Counseling Services staff members should identify which aptitude test students should take and work with counselors and vendors to implement appropriate procedures for taking the test.

3. College Access program, Counseling Services and vendor staff members should review best practices with regard to college and scholarship essay assistance to increase the percentage of students served.

For more information, see EA15-521-2, which can be found at [http://www.dallasisd.org/Page/888](http://www.dallasisd.org/Page/888).