

## *EXECUTIVE SUMMARY*

**T**itle I is a compensatory education program supported by funds from the U.S. Department of Education. The purpose of Title I is to enable schools to provide opportunities for children served to

- ≠ Three Title I elementary schools (Dawson, Maplewood, and Ridgetop) were designated *Recognized* by TEA for 2000 (80% of all students and in each disaggregated group passed in each subject area).
- ≠ TEA gave additional acknowledgment for growth in scores among peer schools in reading to Dawson and Graham elementary schools.
- ≠ None of the schools that were *Low Performing* based on percent passing TAAS in 1999 remained *Low Performing* in 2000. In fact, Blackshear, Govalle, and Wooldridge, 1999 *Low Performing* schools, made impressive gains in percentages passing TAAS in 2000.

The district challenge is to improve TAAS passing rates at all AISD campuses, particularly the Title I campuses. Four of the nine low performing schools for 2000 are Title I schools. Dropout and attendance rates are of concern for secondary AISD schools as well. Only three of the schools designated *Low Performing* were for academic performance, but, as the bar is raised and 55% of students must pass TAAS for a campus to be designated *Acceptable* in 2002, schools below the 60% level this year will need to continue to monitor achievement closely.

The following recommendations for improved student achievement are offered:

- ≠ The district will need to increase efforts to monitor achievement and find ways to assist campus staff with the challenge of raising academic achievement of all students, as well as focusing on attendance and dropout prevention.
- ≠ Mandatory districtwide training for teachers in literacy, mathematics, and writing should continue in order to improve student achievement.
- ≠ Intensive structured summer programs with strong academic focus will be needed to close the gap between Title I and non-Title I schools. The district should discourage Title I schools from having loosely structured summer programs simply because there is Title I money available. If Title I funds are used for summer programs, the programs should be assessed with a pre- and posttest instrument to measure gains.
- ≠ Title I schools should utilize reading intervention for students in grades 1-3 offered in the districtwide summer program, *Summer Opportunity to Accelerate Reading*, and use Title I funds for students in other grades for reading or for students in any grade for mathematics.
- ≠ The percentage of African American, Hispanic and economically disadvantaged students passing TAAS reading and mathematics at grade 6 and grade 7 at Title I and non-Title I schools is an issue of concern. Intervention programs are needed to target those students in need of academic tutoring.

## Prekindergarten

The AISD prekindergarten program is an important contributor to reaching the state and district goal of having every student reading on grade level by the end of third grade. In 1999-2000, 57 of the 71 AISD elementary schools provided prekindergarten (pre-K) education. AISD has both half-day and full-day pre-K programs. The AISD prekindergarten program served 3,571 four-year-olds during 1999-2000. In the past, the extra half day of instruction in full-day programs was funded by Title I. In 1999-2000, AISD received a \$4.6 million *Prekindergarten Expansion Grant* from the state that was used to reimburse schools that were using Title I funds to pay for the extra half day of instruction in their full-day pre-K programs. For the complete report, see OPE Publication 99.11, *Full-Day Prekindergarten Evaluation, 1999-2000*.

## S.O.A.R.

The *Summer Opportunity to Accelerate Reading* (S.O.A.R.) program is AISD's elementary summer school program designed to improve reading and literacy. In June 2000, the 21-day program served 2,406 grade 1-3 students who were below grade level in reading and/or at risk of retention. The budget allocation of over \$2 million was funded through federal Title I (29%), a state *Student Success Initiative* grant (33%), and local dropout prevention (38%) monies. Reading instruction was provided by 176 AISD teachers who attended professional development in the elements of balanced literacy as part of the S.O.A.R. summer program.

The average gain for all students who attended the program five days or more was 2.1 reading levels as determined by the *Developmental Reading Assessment* (DRA). This gain is equivalent to about one fourth to one half of an academic year's progress, depending on the grade level of the student. During the four-week program, 92% of all students with valid pre- and posttest scores (n=2,118) showed reading improvement by advancing one or more levels on the DRA.

The S.O.A.R. program has grown each of its three years and has shown consistent reading gains for students. In addition, a total of more than 300 AISD teachers have received valuable, hands-on training in balanced literacy. For a complete copy of the report, see the Office of Program Evaluation Publication 99.07, *Summer Opportunity to Accelerate Reading (S.O.A.R.) Evaluation, 2000*.

## Year-Round Schools

In 1999-2000, the year-round school calendar was used in 11 Title I campuses. In this program, the school year revolves around an approximate 60/20 schedule (60 days in school and 20 days out) in contrast to the traditional nine-month calendar. The breaks between the 60-day sessions are called intersessions. Students falling behind in achievement are provided supplementary instruction during these intersessions. A total of 5,929 students was enrolled at the year-round campuses in 1999-2000. One of the year-round schools, Maplewood, was designated *Recognized* by TEA for 1999-2000 based on 80% of all students and 80% of students in each disaggregated group passing each of the TAAS tests. Some findings related to year-round schools include the following:

- €# Overall, in terms of TAAS passing rates, students in year-round schools outperformed students in regular-calendar Title I schools, but did not do as well as students in regular-calendar non-Title I schools, in all three subject areas tested.
- €# African American and economically disadvantaged students at year-round schools outperformed similar students at regular-calendar Title I and regular-calendar non-Title I schools in all comparisons reported. Also, Hispanic students at year-round schools achieved a higher percentage passing TAAS reading and writing than did similar students at regular-calendar Title I and regular-

- ⌘ Parent participation was encouraged by offering workshops, seminars, and activities designed to enhance parenting skills and to encourage participation of parents in the education of children.
- ⌘ The parent education staff was successful in encouraging the support of the community. For example, Title I schools with parent education staff received \$848,807 in in-kind contributions and \$110,600 in cash contributions from local *Austin Partners in Education* stakeholders. Title I schools also received 101,811 hours of volunteer service during the 1999-2000 school year.

Recommendations for the parental involvement component of Title I include the following:

- ⌘ Parent education staff should take full advantage of services offered by School Support Services, such as staff development and districtwide Parent Advisory Council meetings. It is recommended that a goal for next year's program is to increase parent educators' participation in these activities, supported by strong administrative (area superintendents) advocacy.
- ⌘ The parent education staff should take an active role in disseminating information on successful parental involvement activities at Title I campuses in the district. Principals and central administration staff should take responsibility for ensuring that campuses throughout the district are aware of successful practices currently in place.

#### Title I Migrant

Six secondary AISD schools with identified at-risk mi