

THE EVALUATION OF THE TEXAS HIGH SCHOOL COMPLETION AND SUCCESS GRANT INITIATIVE

CYCLE 1 SUSTAINABILITY SURVEY RESULTS

for the
Texas Education Agency

December 8, 2006

A. Key survey findings regarding the degree that THSCS, Cycle 1 intervention activities continued after grant funds ended.

The majority of interventions implemented with THSCS, Cycle 1 funds were sustained seven months after funding had ceased. Only five of the survey respondents reported that they had completely discontinued Cycle 1 intervention activities at the end of the grant period.

During the grant period, 52 percent of the Cycle 1 schools used grant funds to pay for additional staff to implement the grant activities. At the time of the survey, 34 percent of the schools reported that the staff positions supported by grant funds still existed at the campus and were being supported by a combination of local, state, federal, and external grant funds. For campuses that discontinued the grant-supported positions, 50 percent noted that intervention activities were either partially or wholly maintained through transferring role-responsibilities to the regular school staff.

B. Key survey findings on factors that influenced whether the THSCS, Cycle 1 interventions continued after the grant ended.

School leadership, staff buy-in, and evidence of desired program outcomes were perceived as instrumental in maintaining program activities.

Insufficient monetary resources, insufficient staff resources, and a lack of evidence of desired program effects were factors that influenced decisions not to continue Cycle 1 grant intervention activities.

C. Key survey findings on changes that have occurred as a result of the THSCS, Cycle 1 grant program.

Overall, 75 percent of the respondents agreed that the Cycle 1 grant program had a positive effect on student achievement. Increased credit recovery and graduation rates were the most frequently cited outcomes. Small to moderate changes were reported with respect to students taking advanced level courses, being ready for college, and attending college.

In terms of school-level outcomes, respondents perceived the largest influence of the Cycle 1 program was providing increased student support services. A small to moderate impact on instruction and curriculum was noted. Parental involvement in the schools, the schools' professional development programs, and school-wide reform generally were perceived to have been impacted the least.

Overall, respondents perceived that the grant program worked well for their schools, that the program strategies implemented at their school will continue in future years, and that they would implement the THSCS interventions if they went to another school.

Finally, by the end of the 2004-05 school year, the mean percent of students receiving individual graduation plans (IGPs) was 83 percent. By the end of the 2005-06 school year, schools reported, on average, a 7 percent increase in the number of graduation plans developed (statistically significant difference: $t = 4.6$, $p < .001$). When asked how likely IGPs would continue to be developed, 94 percent of survey respondents indicated that it

would be very likely, with the vast majority of them indicating it would be extremely likely.

Limitations of Evaluation Findings

While survey findings indicate that sustainability has occurred to a large degree, either entirely or partially, these findings are based on self-reported data. Inherent biases to survey data exist (e.g., social desirability, evasiveness) and may impact the reliability of the data. To gain a more stable estimate of program sustainability, multiple data sources should be employed allowing for a triangulation of data to support survey findings. Further, survey findings only reflect short-term sustainability as the current school year is the first since funding ended. Additional evaluation data is needed to assess the extent that sustainability of these Cycle 1 programs continues on a long-term basis.

Link to complete report:

http://www.tea.state.tx.us/opge/progeval/HighSchoolCollege/thscs_c1_sustainability.pdf