

DROPOUT PREVENTION/RECOVERY	
<p>DISTRICT Katy ISD <i>Recognized 2007-08</i></p> <p><i>Promising Practices District, Dropout Recovery Resource Guide¹</i></p>	<p>PROGRAM SUMMARY</p> <p>The goal of Katy ISD's (KISD) program is to support at-risk students in completing high school.</p> <p>Key strategies include timely outreach and a case management approach in supporting at-risk and dropout students, the use of academic coaches at high-needs campuses, multiple alternative academic options, and highly personalized and ongoing student support.</p> <p>Outcomes include higher completion rates than the state average.²</p>
	<p>EFFECTIVENESS</p> <p>The district's overall completion rate was consistently above the state average over the last four years. In 2006-07, the most current year for which AEIS completion data were available, the district's completion rate (Completion Rate I without GED, which is used as a standard accountability indicator) was 96%, compared to the state average of 87%. The district's completion rate without GED for at-risk students was 92%, compared to the state average for at-risk students of 79%. Completion Rate I for all other KISD student groups was above the state average for the groups across the four-year period analyzed. For example, in 2006-07, the completion rate (without GED) for African American students was 94%, compared to the state average for African American students of 81%. For Hispanic</p>

¹ Information from 30 Texas districts and charter schools identified as having promising practices aligned with national dropout recovery research is included in TEA's Dropout Recovery Resource Guide (2008). For details, see http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/ed_init/PDF/dropout_recovery_resource_guide.pdf.

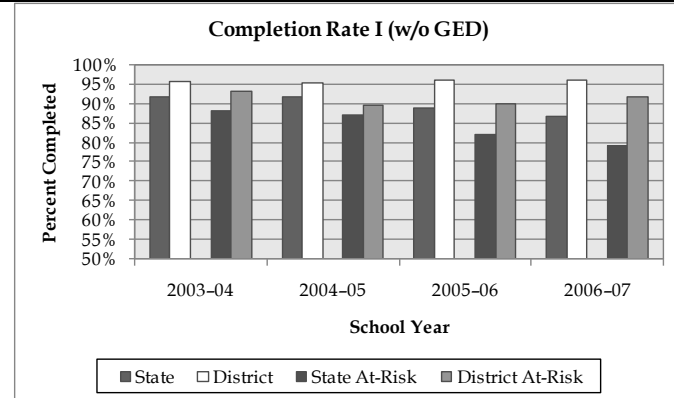
² Note: According to the 2007-08 AEIS Glossary: "Dropouts are counted according to the dropout definition in place the year they drop out. The definition changed in 2005-06. Completion rates for classes in which the national dropout definition is being phased in (i.e., classes of 2006, 2007, 2008, and 2009) are not comparable to completion rates for the class of 2005 and prior classes, nor to each other."

Please take one minute to answer the feedback survey (six questions).

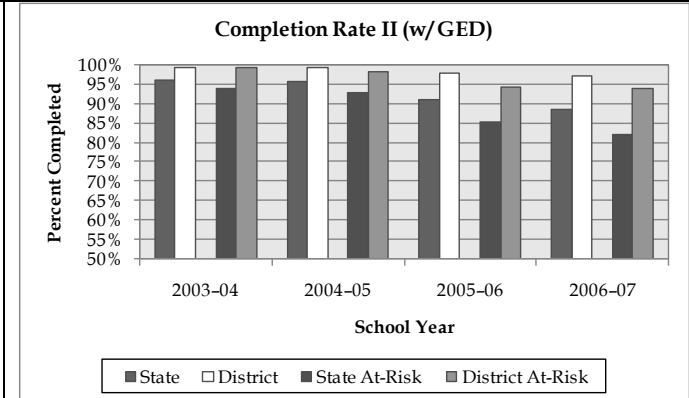
[Best Practices Feedback Survey](#)

students, the district completion rate was 92%, compared to the state average of 82%; for White students, the completion rate was 98%, compared to the state average of 92%; for economically disadvantaged students, the completion rate was 91%, compared to the state average of 81%; and for students identified for Limited English Proficient (LEP) programs, the district completion rate was 80%, compared to the state average of 65%.

Overall completion rates with GED (Completion Rate II) were also consistently higher than the state average. In 2006-07, the district's completion rate with GED was 97%, compared to the state average of 89%. The district's completion rate with GED for at-risk students was 94%, compared to the state average for at-risk students of 82%. Completion Rate II for all other KISD student groups was also above the state average for the groups across the four-year period analyzed.



Source: AEIS



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CONTEXT/IMPLEMENTATION

Demographics (2007-08)

Grade Levels Served		ECE-12	District Enrollment	53,762
Ethnic Distribution			Economically Disadvantaged	13,572 25.2%
African American	5,179	9.6%	Limited English Proficient (LEP)	7,191 13.4%
Hispanic	15,955	29.7%	At-Risk	21,121 39.3%
White	27,292	50.8%		
Native American	113	.2%		
Asian/Pacific Islander	5,223	9.7%		

Source: AEIS

Background

- The district’s program originated in 1992 with one staff member (KISD’s Academic Achievement Coordination Specialist) who initially taught and managed the district’s General Educational Development (GED) High School Equivalency Program (HSEP). In 1994, the district expanded this staff member’s responsibilities to include dropout prevention/intervention/recovery, under the direction and funding of the district’s Department of Compensatory Education/Federal Programs. In 2005-06, the district hired an additional full-time staff member (Academic Achievement Coordinator) to work with the Specialist and provide districtwide dropout prevention/intervention/recovery services in what is now designated as the Office of Academic Achievement.

Procedures

Outreach and Case Management

- At-risk students were initially identified for dropout prevention services through district, campus, teacher, parent, and community referrals or student self referrals or “walk-ins.”
- To identify and recover students who had already dropped out of school, Office of Academic Achievement staff created a list of missing students at the beginning of the school year to account for “no-show” students in Grades 7-12. Staff then contacted the registrars at the students’ last KISD campus of attendance to verify leaver reports and documentation in personal record folders and to collect information about where the student or parent indicated the student would be enrolling. Staff followed up to locate the students through phone calls, e-

mails, visits, and letters to students, parents, and other schools or districts. Staff located as many students as possible, providing verification or documentation for campuses, PEIMS, and student files maintained by the district. Staff also reviewed monthly leaver reports throughout the school year and worked to immediately (within 24 hours) contact and follow up with any student who dropped out and did not enroll elsewhere.

- Prior to contacting referred at-risk students or students who had dropped out, district staff developed an individualized plan for successful high school completion using all available records for the student from district files, including academic records and contact information. The plan included the following:
 - suggested goals or targets for course taking, grades, and credit accrual;
 - eligibility and options for online credit recovery, TAKS retesting, or in-school or afterschool tutorials; and
 - schedules for one-on-one teacher conferences, make-up work, parent notifications, three- and six-week grade and attendance monitoring, and personal and academic motivational conversations with campus/district staff.
- After developing the plan, Office of Academic Achievement staff contacted the student and/or parents to discuss specific issues with which the student was struggling, challenges and barriers that required assistance, and options the student could pursue in completing high school.
- Office of Academic Achievement staff created case files on all identified students that included the following information for each student:
 - complete student records (attendance and disciplinary records, transcripts, progress reports, teacher comments, report cards);
 - documentation notes from communications with the student, parents, teachers, counselors, attendance staff, truancy officers, and principals; and
 - the staff-created individualized graduation plans for successful high school completion.

Academic Coaches

- To expand dropout prevention services, in 2006-07, the district created three academic coach positions with High School Allotment (HSA) funds to serve the district's highest need high school campuses (based on largest numbers of referrals for dropout prevention support, TAKS performance, lowest high school completion rates, highest number of identified at-risk students, and anecdotal information from staff). Coaches were responsible for coordinating student needs with existing services and staff to help students achieve their high school completion plans.

- Academic coaches completed a rigorous three-month training during which they “shadowed” staff from the Office of Academic Achievement to observe procedures and processes, especially communication strategies and standards for working with students, families, and staff. Then coaches were introduced to campus staff through a district-arranged meeting of principals, counselors, registrars, and other key campus staff. At the meeting, district staff described the coach’s role and responsibilities, conducted a question-and-answer period to clarify, share, and shape campus-level coordination strategies for dropout prevention, and shared the district’s goals in using HSA funds to reduce dropout rates and increase graduation rates.
 - Office of Academic Achievement staff provided data analysis and reports to coaches on referred at-risk or recovered dropout students at the coaches’ campuses. With the expanded staff capacity, district staff was also able to expand dropout prevention support from only providing direct service to referred students to conducting outreach to additional at-risk student groups at each campus. Data reviewed to identify additional target groups for dropout prevention services included: TAKS failure reports, 12th-grade non-completer/retained reports, grade-level failure reports, enrollment/withdrawal reports, student semester grade reports, and transcripts. Academic coaches reached out to these targeted students at their campuses to introduce themselves, explain credit policies and options, and provide ongoing support services as needed. Target students included:
 - seniors who met all credit requirements but failed TAKS;
 - students in Grades 9–11 who had failed one or more TAKS assessments;
 - first-time ninth graders who were retained;
 - students in Grades 10–12 who were in danger of being retained; and
 - students who had earned few, if any, credits during a semester or school year.
- Academic Options
- The district had an “alternative” (accelerated, not disciplinary) high school that offered smaller class settings, flexible schedules, and individualized or self-paced instruction for identified, at-risk students and recovered dropouts. However, because the need for this individualized service was greater than the capacity at the alternative high school (150 students in Grades 10–12), many at-risk students and recovered dropouts were required to return to their home campuses.
 - Academic support options for at-risk and recovered dropout students at their home campuses included after-school tutorials, online credit-recovery programs, summer school, TAKS remediation, and TAKS retesting opportunities. All high schools in the district had computer labs where students could participate in credit recovery during the regular school day – a common option for recovered dropouts who were frequently over

age and behind on credits. Campuses also offered (and district staff supported) programs or services for homebound and homeless students as well as for pregnant students or students who were already parents. Staff also provided students with information (when requested by the parent or student) about educational alternatives outside the district, such as charter or private schools, community colleges, GED, or vocational certification programs.

- If dropout students were not recovered back into the school district, district staff continued to contact the students to determine whether the student pursued out-of-district options included in their individualized graduation plan.

Ongoing Support and Monitoring

- Regularly scheduled, one-on-one, at-school conferences with students helped staff to identify specific challenges and build rapport with students, provide ongoing personalized service, and maintain detailed records to effectively support students and monitor their progress. Conferences with students could focus on grades, attendance, compliance with behavioral expectations, earned credits, TAKS preparation, or other barriers to academic success. A formal write-up of every conference was forwarded to the appropriate campus staff for follow up.
- In addition to student conferences, district staff and campus academic coaches monitored, year round, each referred student's progress toward graduation and collaborated with campus staff as necessary to help the student overcome challenges. Student progress was specifically reviewed at important times during the school year, such as the middle of first semester, beginning of second semester, before TAKS exams, after TAKS results were received, and end of the school year.

Funding

- Initial funding for the district program (including salaries) was through the district's Compensatory Education/Federal Programs Department but was subsequently funded through HSA funds, with some continued funding for supplies and summer activities through the Department of Compensatory Education/Federal Programs.

Lessons Learned

- Reported challenges included "road blocks" to continued enrollment for at-risk students or re-enrollment for recovered dropout students. In particular, some parents and students reported they were told by school staff there was a concern that these students could potentially contribute to higher absentee and dropout rates or

discipline issues for the campus or district with implications for accountability ratings. As a result, some parents and students reported that staff members were not helpful or welcoming during re-enrollment and after re-entry. Office of Academic Achievement staff members served as student advocates in these situations by personally contacting school and district staff (either in district or out of district) to help students and parents navigate these real or perceived barriers.

- Because capacity at the alternative high school was limited, staff reported that many at-risk students or recovered dropouts had to continue in or return to the same academic setting in which they had not been successful. However, the personalized services and support provided by Office of Academic Achievement staff helped to address some of the challenges faced by these students.
- Staff reported that the district's detailed case management processes helped to build institutional memory and ensure that service, monitoring, and data were consistent over time.
- District staff reported that a high degree of personal and professional commitment to students and to the delivery of highly personalized, respectful, and ongoing services was key to the program's success and an important consideration in hiring decisions. In addition, all staff had to have a clear understanding of federal, state, district, and campus policies and procedures. District staff developed expectations and procedures that reflected standards of service, sensitivity, and accountability and that resulted in departmental credibility and student trust.

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