

# Texas High School Completion and Success Grant, Cycle 2



*Program Evaluation  
Final Report*

**GIBSON**  
CONSULTING GROUP

SOUTHWEST EDUCATIONAL  
**SEDL**  
DEVELOPMENT LABORATORY

August 2007

A FINAL PROGRAM EVALUATION REPORT OF THE

# Texas High School Completion and Success Grant, Cycle 2

FOR THE TEXAS EDUCATION AGENCY

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901 South MOPAC • Building One • Suite 415  
Austin, Texas 78746  
Phone 512.328.0884 • Fax 512.328.0886



211 East 7<sup>th</sup> Street • Suite 200  
Austin, Texas 78701  
Phone 512.476.6871 • Fax 512.476.2286

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### Exhibit Index

<b>Section A: Executive Summary</b>	<b>Page A-1</b>
<b>Section B: Introduction and Approach</b>	<b>Page B-1</b>
<b>Section C: Student Impact</b>	<b>Page C-1</b>
<b>Section D: Implementation</b>	<b>Page D-1</b>
<b>Section E: Cost</b>	<b>Page E-1</b>

### Appendices

*Appendix A – Cycle 2 Survey*

*Appendix B – Survey Cover*

*Appendix C – Database Guide*

*Appendix D – Interventions List*

*Appendix E – Survey Cover Letter*

*Appendix F – Survey Postcard*

## INDEX OF EXHIBITS

**Exhibit B-1: Texas Graduation Rates by Race/Ethnicity and Economically Disadvantaged Status, 2000-2003**

**Exhibit B-2: Overview of the THSCS Grant Program**

**Exhibit B-3: Organization of Evaluation Questions**

**Exhibit B-4: Conceptual Overview of Approach**

**Exhibit B-5: Cycle 2 Survey Response Rates by Campus**

**Exhibit B-6: Cycle 2 Campus Survey Response and Position of Respondents after Data Transformation**

**Exhibit B-7: Characteristics of Participating Schools, 2005 and 2006 On-Site Visits**

**Exhibit B-8: District Response Rate to Student Participation Database**

**Exhibit B-9: Campus Response Rate to Student-Level Database by Data Collection Period**

**Exhibit C-1: Characteristics of Campuses Receiving THSCS, Cycle 2 Grants**

**Exhibit C-2: Characteristics of THSCS, Cycle 2 Students**

**Exhibit C-3: Frequency of Student Participation in Interventions**

**Exhibit C-4: Percentage of Students Served by Intervention**

**Exhibit C-5: Spring 2006 Student Level Interventions**

**Exhibit C-6: TAKS Reading Performance over Three Years**

**Exhibit C-7: TAKS Mathematics Performance over Three Years**

**Exhibit C-8: TAKS Reading Performance by Ethnicity for Three Years**

**Exhibit C-9: 2005-06 Student Achievement Outcomes for THSCS, Cycle 2 and Matched Comparison Schools**

**Exhibit C-10: Student Cohorts Included in Analyses**

**Exhibit C-11: Characteristics of Students Included in Estimations of THSCS Program Impact**

**Exhibit C-12: TAKS Reading/ELA and Mathematics Mean Scale Scores and Passing Rates By THSCS and Comparison-Group Students**

## INDEX OF EXHIBITS

**Exhibit C-13: 2005-06 TAKS Achievement for THSCS and Comparison-Group Students**

**Exhibit C-14: 2005-06 TAKS Attendance Rates for THSCS and Comparison Students**

**Exhibit C-15: Grade-Level Promotion Outcomes for THSCS and Comparison Students (Cohort 1)**

**Exhibit D-1: Types of Grant-Supported Interventions Identified at the Sites**

**Exhibit D-2: Respondents Reporting Grant Funded Interventions**

**Exhibit D-3: Degree of Intervention Implementation**

**Exhibit D-4: Stages of Implementation at Sites in 2006**

**Exhibit D-5: Implementation of the THSCS Grant Interventions**

**Exhibit D-6: Percent of Staff Still at Campus Since Grant Program Began**

**Exhibit D-7: Respondents' Mean ratings of Factors Facilitating Intervention Implementation**

**Exhibit D-8: Respondents' Mean Ratings of Factors Hindering Intervention Implementation**

**Exhibit D-9: Effectiveness of the THSCS Grant Interventions**

**Exhibit D-10: Percent of Respondents Reporting Change or No Change in School Outcomes as a Result of the Program**

**Exhibit D-11: Percent of Respondents Reporting Change or No Change in Student Outcomes as a Result of the Program**

**Exhibit D-12: Overall Rating of How Well THSCS Programs are Working at the Schools**

**Exhibit D-13: Best Practice Characteristics**

**Exhibit E-1: Grant Spending by Type of Expenditure, 2004-05 through 2005-06**

**Exhibit E-2: Selected Schools Detailed Types of Grant Expenditures**

**Exhibit E-3: Selected Schools' Expenditures by Interventions, 2004-05 and 2005-06**

## A. Executive Summary

During the regular legislative session of 2003, the State of Texas authorized funding for high school completion and success initiatives. The Texas High School Completion and Success (THSCS) Grant Program was created as an innovative strategy to improve high school completion rates. The program was designed to target under-performing high schools and high schools with low completion rates through competitive grants. Cycle 2 of the THSCS Grant included awards to 106 school districts and open enrollment charter schools. Programs were implemented at 173 campuses within these school systems. Funding for Cycle 2 started in October 2004 and ended in February 2007. Amounts awarded to school districts ranged from \$15,000 to \$600,000.

This report presents an evaluation of the THSCS, Cycle 2 Grant program and makes recommendations to the Texas Education Agency (TEA) that may benefit this and other state-level programs. The following objectives for the evaluation project were defined by TEA:

- To assess the quality of the THSCS, Cycle 2 Grant programs implemented at grantee campuses and their impact on student achievement results.
- To document observed changes at THSCS, Cycle 2 grantee campuses between the spring 2005 and spring 2006 site visits, and complete a cross-site analysis of programmatic successes (activities that were successful in improving student achievement) and failures (activities that failed to significantly affect graduation rates and student achievement).
- To determine how the grant program has affected the attitudes and culture of the campuses where the project was implemented.
- To determine best practices for improving student achievement and increasing graduation rates observed at sampled THSCS, Cycle 2 grantee campuses and create case studies of each of the sampled campuses.
- To determine if participation in the THSCS, Cycle 2 Grant program resulted in better student achievement outcomes (e.g., graduation rates, grade retention rates, and Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills [TAKS] passing rates) for Cycle 2 grantees than for similar unfunded campuses.
- To determine which activities and strategies, or combinations of activities and strategies, seemed to have the most profound impact on the various student achievement outcomes.

TEA selected Gibson Consulting Group, Inc. (Gibson) and the Southwest Educational Development Laboratories (SEDL) to conduct this evaluation. The work began in March 2005 and was completed in August 2007, and evaluated two years of program activity.

An interim report on the Cycle 2 evaluation was provided to TEA in February 2007. Since the interim report, additional analysis has been conducted and the evaluation has been updated. This final report presents findings, conclusions and recommendations for the entire study, but does not replicate the detailed work contained in the interim report. A separate, final report on the sustainability of THSCS, Cycle 1 grant activities was also previously provided to TEA.

The Cycle 2 program evaluation methodology included two surveys, 34 site visits, statistical analyses, and a cost analysis. To support an analysis of effective strategies, the evaluation team identified campus

and student intervention categories based on the types of services provided by schools. These categories were not defined at the inception of the grant program because TEA wanted to provide schools with maximum flexibility in implementing innovative strategies to improve high school completion. Student interventions such as tutoring or credit accrual classes involved direct services to students. Campus interventions, such as the addition of counselors and parent involvement programs, served to improve high school completion through more indirect means. The statistical analysis of the program impact on student achievement was performed at both the campus and student level.

The major findings from this evaluation are summarized below:

- Based on survey results, factors that facilitated successful intervention implementation included having district support, strong school leadership, school staff buy-in and collaboration, and an alignment of interventions with other school activities and priorities. Lack of time for planning was the most significant constraint cited by school and program administrators. Survey results from the 2006 administration generally reinforced the 2005 administration results.
- Implementation strategies applied by schools through this grant program were found to be aligned with current literature and research on best practices for improving high school completion. Further, there were several school-level and intervention-level effective practices that influenced successful programs. School-level promising practices included school and program leadership qualities, alignment with other campus programs, data-driven decision-making, and the existence of high expectations. At the intervention level, flexible activity options, individualized attention, the use of technological learning tools, and exposure to college environments were recognized as best practices.
- Though improvements in TAKS and on attendance rates did not emerge among THSCS campuses, program participation did seem to be related to grade advancement. Specifically, THSCS students had a slightly higher 2005-06 promotion rate than comparison-group students (93.4 percent versus 92.3 percent). About 88 percent of both THSCS- and comparison-group students were on-track to graduate from high school within four years.
- Overall, more than two-thirds of grantees indicated that their interventions were making a significant difference in their schools. Perceived student outcomes most associated with grant interventions were increased student motivation, improved TAKS performance, credit accrual/recovery, and increases in graduation rates.
- Overall, improved student performance at THSCS campuses was not observed on TAKS or attendance outcomes. Specifically,
  - Campus-level analyses investigating differences between THSCS schools and well-matched comparison schools detected no statistically significant differences on the 2006 TAKS reading and mathematics assessments (as measured by passing rates), or on student attendance rates.
  - Looking at individual student scores, there was also no difference detected on the TAKS reading or mathematics assessments between Cohort 1 students (those attending THSCS campuses for 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade from 2004-05 to 2005-06) and their matched comparison-group students, or between Cohort 2 (those attending THSCS campuses for 9<sup>th</sup> grade in 2005-06) and their matched comparison group, on the reading assessment. Cohort 2



comparison-group students had a slightly higher and statistically significant TAKS mathematics scale score than THSCS students.

- In Cohort 1, comparison-group students had significantly higher 2005-06 school attendance rates than THSCS students. There were no differences in attendance rates among Cohort 2 were students.
- Approximately one-half of grant related expenditures were for personnel resources, such as supplemental teacher pay and substitute costs. Other significant uses of funds included software costs and teaching supplies. Software costs related primarily to instructional software used in connection with credit recovery and/or accelerated instruction interventions. Schools showing greater improvement in student achievement tended to spend more on personnel than other schools; however, the difference was not materially significant.
- The lack of service definition precluded the ability to analyze expenditures at the intervention level on a per student headcount or per full-time-student equivalent (FTE) basis. Grantees stated that they are willing and able to track expenditures at lower levels if they are provided the instructions prior to the inception of the program.

The THSCS, Cycle 2 Grant achieved many of the goals established for the program. While the perceived impact on student performance was greater than the statistically proven impact, the collective research shows that this program contributed to the improvement of initiatives supporting increased high school completion and student success through the development of a variety of successful campus and student level interventions. Student benefits may accumulate over time.

Gibson and SEDL wish to express their thanks to the school and district staff who participated in this program evaluation, as well as TEA research staff.

## B. Background and Approach to the Project

This section presents an overview of national and state statistics as well as initiatives related to high school completion, sets forth the objectives of this particular study, and defines the analytical approach in conducting this work.

### Background of the Texas High School Completion and Success Grant

#### *National Statistics on Dropout and School Completion*

According to a report by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), several hundred thousand students leave school early each year without a diploma (NCES, 2002). Highlights from this report are as follows:

- Approximately one in eight children in the United States never graduate high school.
- Hispanic students are more likely to drop out of school than African-American or White students.
- On average, students from low-income families are at an increased risk of not completing school. The dropout rate is 10 percent for low-income students while 1.6 percent for high-income students.
- The dropout rate for students with emotional disturbance is approximately twice that of general education students.

Federal legislation has focused national attention on increasing the rate of school completion. The federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act holds schools accountable for student progress using indicators of Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). These indicators include measures of academic performance and rates of school completion. Schools are identified as needing improvement if their overall performance does not annually increase or if identified subgroups do not meet specified criteria.

#### *Understanding and Redefining the Dropout Problem*

Predictors associated with high school dropouts have been identified through various research efforts. Some of these predictors are “status” variables that cannot be influenced by educators, such as:

- **Age.** Students who drop out are more likely to be older than their grade-level peers.
- **Gender.** Male students are more likely to drop out than female students. Females who drop out often do so due to reasons associated with pregnancy.
- **Socioeconomic background.** Dropouts are more likely to come from low-income families.
- **Ethnicity.** The rate of dropout is higher on average for Black, Hispanic, and Native American youth than for White youth.
- **Native language.** Students who come from non-English speaking backgrounds are more likely to have higher rates of dropout.

- **Family structure.** Students who come from single-parent families are at a greater risk of dropping out.<sup>1</sup>

Other variables are possible to change and can be influenced by students, parents, educators, and community members. Some examples are:

- **Grades.** Students with poor grades are at greater risk of dropping out.
- **Disruptive behavior.** Students who drop out are more likely to have had disciplinary problems in school.
- **Absenteeism.** Low attendance rates are a strong predictor of dropping out.
- **School climate.** Positive school climate is associated with lower dropout rates.
- **Stressful life events.** Increased levels of stress and the presence of stressors (e.g., financial difficulty, health problems, and early parenthood) are associated with increased dropout rates.<sup>2</sup>

If schools can implement programs to address these variables, resulting increases in attendance rates and student performance should ultimately improve their dropout rates.

In recent literature, there has been a notable shift in focus from preventing dropout to promoting school completion. Although dropout and school completion can be viewed as two sides of a single issue, they differ in meaning, orientation, and implications for intervention and research practices. According to Christenson, Sinclair, Lehr, and Hurley (2000), school completion encompasses more than preventing dropout.

*School completion is oriented toward a longitudinal focus, whereby interventions aim to promote a "good" outcome, not simply prevent a "bad" outcome for students and society. (p. 472)*

Instead of using approaches designed to increase attendance that temporarily mask the dropout rates, interventions to enhance school completion address core issues associated with student alienation and disengagement from school. In addition, more attention is being given to understanding the complex interplay between student, family, school, and community variables (Lehr, Hansen, Sinclair, & Christenson, 2003). Starting in 2003, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) began reporting completion rate statistics in addition to graduation statistics in the Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) report.

### ***Interventions that Improve School Completion***

Components of educational interventions designed to address dropout and school completion are routinely practiced in schools across the United States. These interventions vary widely and can include counseling services, tutoring, attendance monitoring, after-school programs, alternative school placements, and pregnancy prevention interventions. Reviews of prevention and intervention studies addressing dropout or school completion have identified a wide range of strategies for retaining students in schools.

<sup>1</sup> Macmillan, 1991; Rosenthal, 1998; Rumberger, 1995, 2001

<sup>2</sup> Macmillian, 1991; Rosenthal, 1998; Rumberger, 1995, 2001

These strategies include<sup>3</sup>:

- Creating small schools with smaller class sizes and more personalized environments.
- Allowing teachers to know students better (e.g., building relationships, enhanced communication).
- Monitoring and targeting the occurrence of risk behaviors (e.g., regularly collect data and measure effects of timely interventions).
- Providing early interventions including comprehensive family involvement, early childhood education, and strong reading and writing programs.
- Using community relationships to take a broader approach to dropout prevention (e.g., career education, school-to-work programs, and conflict resolution and violence prevention programs to enhance effective personal skills).
- Providing individual assistance (academic and behavioral).
- Helping students address personal and family issues through counseling and access to social services.
- Assisting students to obtain General Educational Development (GED) certificates.
- Recognizing the importance of families in their children's achievement and school completion.
- Providing opportunities for success in schoolwork (e.g., intensive reading instruction in early grades, tutoring, and curriculum modification to increase relevance).
- Creating caring and supportive environments (mentoring, organizing extracurricular environments).
- Helping students with personal problems (e.g., on-site health care, counseling, child care).

### ***Origins of the Texas High School Completion and Success Grant Program***

Based on AEIS reports, approximately 81 percent of Texas high school seniors graduated in 2000. However, certain groups of Texas students fared better than others, with 87 percent of White students graduating compared to 73 percent of Hispanic and 77 percent of African American students. Graduation rates improved from 2000 to 2003, but significant disparities among ethnic groups and economic status remained. **Exhibit B-1** shows graduation rates for the state of Texas and selected sub-groups for 2000 through 2003, before the THSCS Grant program was initiated.

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<sup>3</sup> Martin, Tobin, & Sugai, 2002; Rumberger, 2001; Lehr, et al., 2003

**Exhibit B-1**  
**Texas Graduation Rates by Race/Ethnicity and Economically Disadvantaged Status**  
**2000-2003**

Demographic	2000	2001	2002	2003
African American	76.9%	77.7%	79.8%	81.1%
Hispanic	72.8%	73.5%	75.7%	77.3%
White	86.7%	86.8%	88.2%	89.8%
Economically Disadvantaged	72.6%	73.2%	75.8%	77.8%
State Total	80.7%	81.1%	82.8%	84.2%

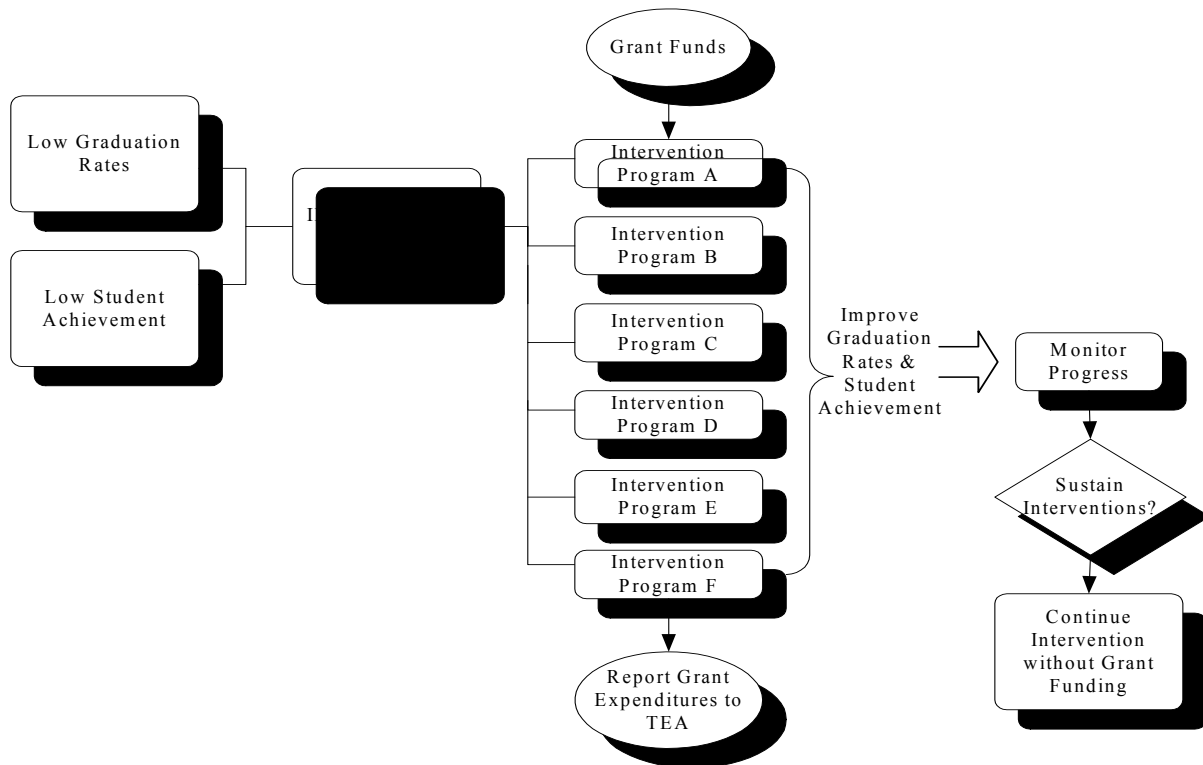
*Source: 1999-2000 thru 2002-03 AEIS reports, Texas Education Agency*

Statistics such as these prompted the State of Texas to institute a number of interventions and initiatives designed to improve the quality of high school programs and increase completion rates and success of high school students. During the regular session in 2003, the 78th Texas Legislature, through Rider 67 of Article III of the General Appropriations Act, authorized funding for high school completion and success initiatives. The Texas High School Completion and Success (THSCS) Grant was established as an innovative strategy to improve high school completion rates. The program was designed to target under-performing high schools and high schools with low high school completion rates through a student-focused competitive grant that provides support services to students in grades 9 through 12. While the driving statistics related to graduation rates, the program recognized the importance of shifting the emphasis to high school completion and success.

The first cycle (Cycle 1) of THSCS Grants were awarded to 244 campuses located in 129 school districts and charter schools. Award periods began in February 2004 with funding through February 2006. TEA published an evaluation report covering Cycle 1 prepared by the College of Education and Human Development, Texas A&M University. Cycle 2 of the THSCS Grants included awards to 106 school districts and open enrollment charter schools; programs were implemented at 173 campuses within these districts. Funding was originally scheduled during the period of October 2004 to August 2006. Amounts awarded to school districts ranged from \$15,000 to \$600,000. This report presents findings on the progress and impact of the program among Cycle 2 campuses.

**Exhibit B-2** presents an overview of the THSCS, Cycle 2 Grant program. School districts and campuses identify and seek to act on indicators of low performance, such as low graduation rates and low student performance on standardized tests. The data is disaggregated to identify specific students and specific needs. These needs may be addressed through one or more interventions. The THSCS Grant funds are used to provide resources for these interventions, and the campuses report their grant expenditures to TEA periodically. Schools and school districts are responsible for monitoring the progress of these students based on specific interventions by analyzing student performance data. At the end of the grant period, if it is determined that one or more interventions were successful, then the school may choose to continue supporting the interventions by allocating its own local maintenance funds to support them. This is an example of how grant funding is to be used in public education – to experiment with new ideas to see what works in addressing specific student needs.

**Exhibit B-2  
Overview of the THSCS Grant Program**



TEA provided eight guiding principles for applicants to use in designing the THSCS Grant program strategies and activities, but did not define or prescribe specific interventions or categories of interventions. This approach was applied to provide schools with the maximum flexibility to develop innovative interventions. The eight guiding principles are:

- High expectations and performance-based accountability
- Personalized learning environment
- Common focus and shared values
- Staff development and time to collaborate
- Learning partnerships with parents and the community
- Support and networking
- Technology as a tool
- Coordinated resources

**Evaluation of THSCS, Cycle 2**

In February 2005, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) for a third-party consultant to evaluate the second cycle of the Texas High School Completion and Success (THSCS) Grant, in accordance with the requirements of Rider 67, High School Completion and Success, of Article III of the General Appropriations Act, 78th Legislature. The evaluation was to include:

- A comprehensive analysis of THSCS, Cycle 2 Grant programs, which shall include a qualitative evaluation of THSCS, Cycle 2 Grant programs and a quantitative campus-level analysis of THSCS, Cycle 2 Grant programs.
- A sustainability analysis of THSCS, Cycle 1 grantees to determine the degree to which activities and strategies implemented during the grant period continued after funding concluded in February 2006.

In March 2005, TEA selected the proposal submitted by Gibson Consulting Group, Inc. (Gibson) and the Southwest Educational Development Laboratories (SEDL). Gibson and SEDL partnered with two other firms, Academic Information Management, Inc. (AIM) and Shapley Research Associates, LLC (Shapley), to conduct the study. Each firm was responsible for different elements of the study, with Gibson providing overall project management for the study.

This report is a comprehensive analysis of THSCS, Cycle 2 Grants that includes a qualitative evaluation and a quantitative campus-level analysis of this grant program. The THSCS, Cycle 1 sustainability report was delivered separately, and published by TEA in July 2007.

An interim report on the Cycle 2 evaluation was provided to TEA in February 2007. Since the interim report, additional analysis has been conducted and the evaluation has been updated. This final report presents findings, conclusions and recommendations for the entire study, but does not replicate the detailed work contained in the interim report.

### **Evaluation Objectives and Approach**

The following objectives for this project were defined by TEA in the RFP:

- To assess the quality of the THSCS, Cycle 2 Grant programs implemented at grantee campuses and their impact on student achievement results.
- To document observed changes at THSCS, Cycle 2 grantee campuses between the spring 2005 and spring 2006 site visits, and complete a cross-site analysis of programmatic successes (activities that were successful in improving student achievement) and failures (activities that failed to significantly affect graduation rates and student achievement).
- To determine how the grant program has affected the attitudes and culture of the campuses where the project was implemented.
- To determine best practices for improving student achievement and increasing graduation rates observed at sampled THSCS, Cycle 2 grantee campuses and create case studies of each of the sampled campuses.
- To determine if participation in the THSCS, Cycle 2 Grant program resulted in improved student achievement outcomes (e.g., graduation rates, grade retention rates, and Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills -TAKS passing rates) for Cycle 2 grantees than for similar unfunded campuses.
- To determine which activities and strategies, or combinations of activities and strategies, seemed to have the most profound impact on the various student achievement outcomes.

To address these objectives, the evaluation questions were grouped into four areas of analysis as shown in **Exhibit B-3** below.

**Exhibit B-3  
Organization of Evaluation Questions**

Area of Analysis	Evaluation Questions
Quality and Progress of the THSCS, Cycle 2 Grant Interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ How were grant funds used by THSCS, Cycle 2 grantees and what types of interventions were implemented?</li> <li>▪ To what degree and quality were grant interventions implemented during the grant period?</li> <li>▪ What factors contributed to or hindered implementation of various interventions at THSCS, Cycle 2 campuses?</li> <li>▪ To what degree was the implementation of THSCS, Cycle 2 interventions perceived to be associated with improved school environment and culture?</li> </ul>
Relationship between THSCS, Cycle 2 Grants and Student Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Are student outcomes levels higher for certain groups of students in THSCS, Cycle 2 schools (e.g., student groups included in TEA’s accountability analyses)?</li> <li>▪ How do THSCS, Cycle 2 student outcomes compare to those of other unfunded schools with similar characteristics and student demographics?</li> </ul>
Cost Effectiveness of THSCS, Cycle 2 Campus Support Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ How are schools allocating their resources?</li> <li>▪ What do the interventions cost?</li> </ul>
Identification of Best Practices Supporting High School Graduation and Post-Secondary Enrollment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Across the Cycle 2 schools, what intervention strategies were associated with higher levels of student outcomes?</li> <li>▪ Of the Cycle 2 schools identified as having higher than average increases in student achievement and graduation rates, what intervention features were reported as most essential?</li> <li>▪ To what degree do interventions identified by cross-site analyses align with the literature on dropout prevention and high school completion?</li> </ul>

*Source: Gibson Consulting Group & Southwest Educational Development Laboratory*

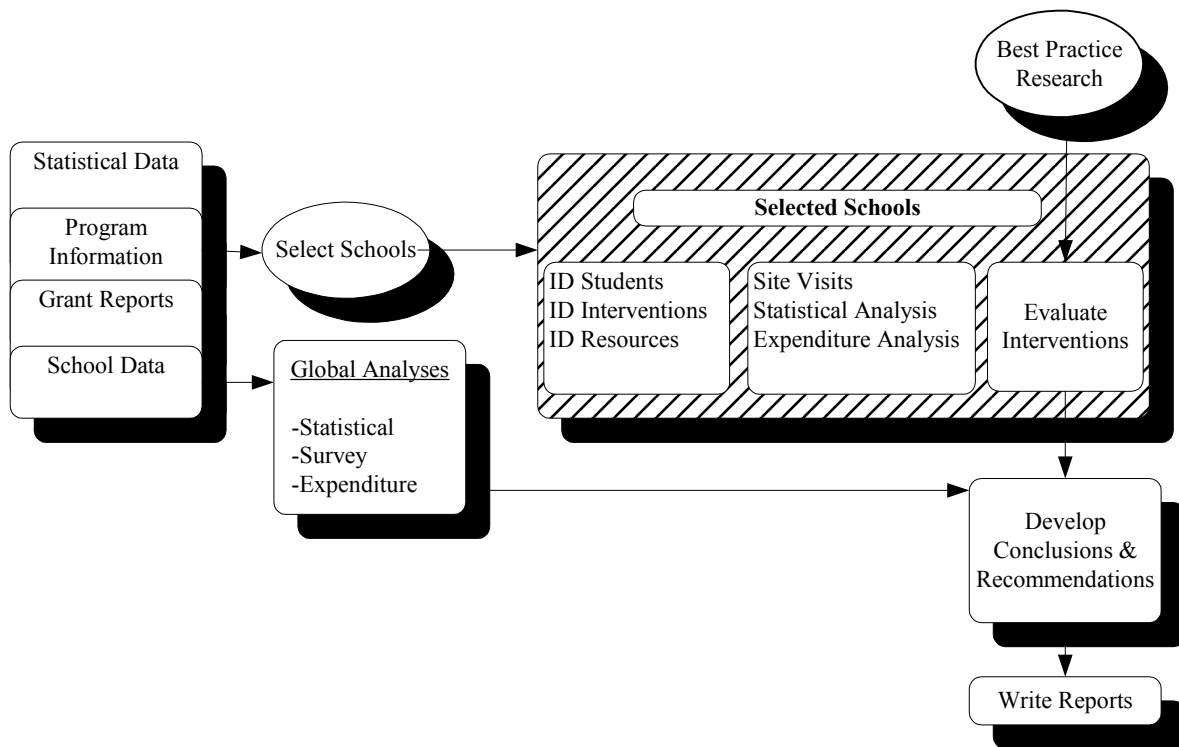
One of the challenges of this study was the wide variation that existed among interventions across the different schools. Each THSCS, Cycle 2 funded campus has a variety of student needs and had consequently designed a variety of approaches and interventions to address these needs. Furthermore, each campus had received various levels of funding and was expected to implement different interventions. Each campus, however, worked toward the same goal to improve student outcomes, such as student achievement and graduation rates.



The evaluation accommodated the diversity of interventions and approaches by addressing the common aspects of the THSCS Grants. Additional contextual information was also collected that may be unique to each school but is supportive of their THSCS intervention implementation.

To perform the analysis required by the RFP, data were collected and analyzed, surveys were conducted, and schools were selected for site visits. The work also involved the identification and analysis of campus-level and student-level interventions and the intervention’s impact on student performance. The scope of work was expanded to include an analysis of program expenditures. Cost is an important factor in program decisions, as school districts and charter schools must consider the cost of specific interventions in deciding to continue or sustain them. **Exhibit B-4** represents the conceptual approach to this work.

**Exhibit B-4**  
**Conceptual Overview of Approach**



**Survey Development**

The surveys were created based on the evaluation team's understanding of the THSCS, Cycle 2 interventions gained through document reviews of the funded grant applications, a review of relevant research and existing surveys, and feedback provided by site evaluators who had completed THSCS, Cycle 2 site visits in the summer and fall of 2005.

The Cycle 2 survey was designed to collect school staff's perceptions regarding the following elements:

- Background and experiences
- Types of grant-supported interventions that existed at the schools
- Degree of implementation
- Factors that facilitated and impeded implementation
- Support from central office, campus administration
- Changes planned for next year and reasons for such changes

**Survey Administration**

Two rounds of survey administrations occurred at Cycle 2 grantee campuses. The 2005 surveys (*Appendix A*) were administered by mail to the principal at each Cycle 2 campus. The cover letters (*Appendix B*) requested that the campus principals complete one of the surveys and identify three to five key staff to also complete the surveys. The surveys were again administered in 2006 although some changes were made based on what was learned from the 2005 survey. For this administration, campus principals only were requested to complete the survey. If principals felt someone else at the campus (e.g., an assistant principal, a grant coordinator, lead teacher) could more appropriately provide the information about the grant intervention, they were asked to distribute the survey to that person for completion. Web versions of the surveys were also made available. Each survey respondent was given the option to return the paper survey using an enclosed, pre-paid return envelope or to complete an online version of the survey using a unique identification number. The identification number allowed the evaluation team to track the school response rates and identify non-respondents. To ensure a reasonable response rate, the evaluation team conducted follow-up activities (e.g., phone calls and e-mails) to Cycle 2 principals to encourage survey completion.

The 2005 survey sample consisted of up to six school staff working closely with the grant-supported interventions. The 2006 survey sample consisted of campus administrators or grant directors/coordinators. **Exhibit B-5** shows the response rates for the surveys administered in fall 2005 and fall 2006 by number of campuses returning surveys.

**Exhibit B-5  
Cycle 2 Survey Response Rates by Campus**

	2005/06	2006/07
Number of Campuses Surveyed	178	173
Number of Campuses Removed from Sample*	5	1
Total Number of Campuses in Sample	173	172
Number of Campuses Responding	142	99
Response Rate	82%	58%

*Source: Survey of THSCS, Cycle 2 Grantees.  
\*Indicated they were not receiving THSCS funds.*

The 2005 survey was completed by multiple staff at each campus and the 2006 survey was completed primarily by campus administrators or grant directors/coordinators. To facilitate comparisons between the two survey samples as appropriate, the data sets were restricted to one survey per campus that had been completed by a campus administrator or grant director/coordinator. This resulted in a reduction of the total number of campuses responding from each survey administration, since on some campuses no administrator or grant director/coordinator completed a survey (12 from the 2005 data set and 13 from the 2006 data set). **Exhibit B-6** shows the response rates based on the data transformation.

**Exhibit B-6**  
**Cycle 2 Campus Survey Response and Position of Respondents after Data Transformation**

Position	2005/06		2006/07	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Grant Director/Coordinator	53	41%	35	41%
Campus Administrator	86	66%	66	76%
<i>Total</i>	139		101	
# of respondents who marked both roles	9	7%	15	17%
Total respondents/campuses submitting surveys	130	100%	86	100%

*Source: Survey of THSCS, Cycle 2 Grantees.*

After the elimination of campus/grant staff other than administrators or grant directors/coordinators from the 2005 survey sample, if two or more administrators and/or grant directors/coordinators remained, the selection of the most appropriate respondent was first based on responses to the survey item, *To what extent are you involved in the daily operation of the THSCS program at your school?* The respondent indicating a higher level of involvement was selected. If ratings were equal, their ratings on another survey item, *What percentage of your time is dedicated to the THSCS grant program?* were compared, with selection based on the higher rating. In the event both items were rated equally by respondents, then one individual was randomly selected.

Survey data were entered into a standard database and analyzed and summarized using SPSS software. Descriptive statistics were used to compile responses to survey items for both survey administrations. Where comparisons were made, t-tests were performed to determine if any differences were statistically significant.

**Site Visits**

An important element of the evaluation design was to collect data from on-site visits to validate the data collected by the Cycle 2 surveys. The site visit data captured a richer understanding of the factors that contribute to or detract from the implementation of various THSCS Grant interventions and perceptions regarding related school and student outcomes. Two rounds of site visits were completed. The first round of site visits occurred in the summer and fall of 2005. Follow-up site visits occurred in the spring and summer of 2006. Results from these site visits are incorporated into cross-site summaries and contributed to the identification of best practices. A team of eight evaluators (six SEDL staff and two AIM staff) conducted the site visits.

TEA supplied the evaluation team with the Cycle 2 awardees' grant applications from which the team created a list of schools receiving Cycle 2 funds. With the target of obtaining approximately 20 sites for the study, the evaluation team selected a stratified sample of 45 Cycle 2 schools representing a variety of program interventions, geographic areas, and student demographics. This sample size allowed for non-response and scheduling conflicts that might eliminate potential sites. The evaluation team reviewed the sample and discussed the benefits and challenges related to certain schools on the list.

The list of suggested schools for the sample was submitted to TEA for review and approval. Letters and postcards were mailed to the principals at the 45 Cycle 2 schools, explaining the site-visit schedules and asking them to indicate preferred dates for the visits on a postage-paid postcard. A total of 34 schools responded with site-visit preferences (75 percent response rate). A draft site-visit schedule was prepared and site visits were arranged for a total of 26 Cycle 2 schools. Inclusion as a site occurred when site preferences aligned with the travel schedules of evaluators and when travel arrangements were possible. One site, Paul Brown Alternative school in Beaumont, was removed from the sample in September 2005 as a result of the damage sustained from Hurricane Rita, reducing the sample size to 25 schools. **Exhibit B-7** presents the schools that received site visits, their region, and school characteristics.

**Exhibit B-7  
Characteristics of Participating Schools  
2005 and 2006 On-Site Visits**

Site	High School Name	District Name	ESC	Student Enrollment	Percent Economically Disadvantaged	Percent African American	Percent Hispanic	Percent White	Percent Other
1	Cooper <sup>1</sup>	Abilene	14	1,898	38.1%	13.7%	20.4%	63.6%	2.3%
	EXCEL <sup>1</sup>	Abilene	14	238	66.0%	10.5%	55.5%	32.8%	1.2%
2	Caprock	Amarillo	16	1,732	57.4%	3.9%	61.3%	34.4%	.4%
3	James Bowie	Arlington	10	2,767	44.7%	38.1%	23.6%	26.5%	11.8%
4	GRAD	Bryan	6	78	69.2%	30.8%	51.3%	17.9%	0.0%
5	Burnet <sup>2</sup>	Burnet	13	961	34.3%	1.8%	16.0%	81.1%	1.1%
	Quest <sup>2</sup>	Burnet	13	40	45.0%	0.0%	32.5%	67.5%	0.0%
6	Carrizo Springs	Carrizo Springs	20	704	78.0%	2.0%	86.8%	10.8%	0.4%
7	Bowie	El Paso	19	1,284	93.1%	0.2%	99.3%	0.5%	0.0%
8	Bush	Fort Bend	4	2,532	39.1%	36.2%	33.8%	12.8%	17.2%
9	Lee	Goose Creek	4	2,602	63.8%	22.1%	48.8%	27.9%	1.2%

Site	High School Name	District Name	ESC	Student Enrollment	Percent Economically Disadvantaged	Percent African American	Percent Hispanic	Percent White	Percent Other
10	Ross Sterling	Goose Creek	4	2,839	37.1%	21.1%	32.3%	45.1%	1.5%
11	Groesbeck	Groesbeck	12	472	40.9%	10.8%	13.3%	75.0%	0.9%
12	Keys Academy	Harlingen	1	159	66.7%	0.6%	88.7%	10.7%	0.0%
13	Barbara Jordan	Houston	4	1,175	78.9%	56.7%	41.8%	1.3%	0.2%
14	Huntsville	Huntsville	6	1,810	48.5%	27.1%	18.8%	52.5%	1.6%
15	Mercedes	Mercedes	1	1,288	92.5%	0.2%	98.8%	1.0%	0.0%
16	Mesquite Academy <sup>3</sup>	Mesquite	10	111	26.1%	12.6%	25.2%	59.5%	2.7%
	North Mesquite <sup>3</sup>	Mesquite	10	2,469	33.7%	19.6%	32.6%	4.5%	43.5%
17	Coleman <sup>4</sup>	Midland	18	154	45.5%	13.6%	57.1%	27.9%	1.4%
	Midland Freshman <sup>4</sup>	Midland	18	862	48.6%	9.6%	49.2%	39.9%	1.3%
	Midland <sup>4</sup>	Midland	18	2,010	30.9%	8.7%	41.1%	48.8%	1.4%
18	Pittsburg	Pittsburg	8	673	57.1%	22.3%	23.8%	52.7%	1.2%
19	Montwood	Socorro	19	2,939	86.7%	0.2%	98.0%	1.2%	0.6%
20	Wichita Falls	Wichita Falls	9	1,512	52.3%	15.5%	35.1%	46.4%	3.0%

Source: 2005-2006 Campus AEIS Reports, Texas Education Agency.

<sup>1-4</sup> Combined high schools into one site.

Four additional site visits were conducted in fall 2006 to identify promising practices of programs that were shown to be effective. Effectiveness was determined based on better-than-average performance gains in reading and math scores on the TAKS tests from 2005 to 2006. Other criteria that narrowed the selection to four were (1) the number of students who received services from THSCS; (2) average daily attendance; (3) demographic considerations (e.g., diversity and geographic distribution); and (4) school that were still implementing the program in fall 2006. Schools were then rank-ordered based on these factors.

### Student Performance Analysis

A primary objective of the evaluation is to determine if participation in the THSCS, Cycle 2 Grant program results in better student achievement outcomes (e.g., grade retention rates, TAKS passing rates) for grantees than for similar non-funded campuses and their students. That is, are the students receiving the grant services doing better than students who did not receive the services provided by that grant?

To assess the nature of student achievement, evaluators conducted both campus- and student-level analyses. Campus-level analyses assumed that *all* students enrolled at a THSCS-funded campus might have benefited from grant funds through the provision of campus-wide resources such as additional guidance counselors or teacher professional development, even though all students at a campus did not receive directly targeted grant services. Data for campus-level analyses came from school statistics reported through AEIS.

Student-level analyses focused on a particular subset of students at THSCS, Cycle 2 campuses who received direct THSCS-funded support services, such as credit recovery courses, tutoring, or mentoring. THSCS grantees reported which students received targeted services, the types of services they received, and the approximate number of contact hours received through an online submission process managed by SEDL. Additional data for student-level analyses came from requests to the TEA for individual student demographic, enrollment, and attendance data, and TAKS scores.

The effect of THSCS participation was determined by comparing grantee campuses and students with well-matched comparison groups. Comparison groups were selected by matching the participating THSCS schools and students with schools and students having similar characteristics, but did not receive THSCS Grants (although these schools/students may have had similar types of services through other funding sources). A propensity score matching process allowed the creation of closely matched comparison groups that simulated an experimental design with treatment (THSCS, Cycle 2) and control groups.

A variety of data acquisition strategies and sources were used to obtain information suitable for analyses directed to answering the project's research questions. The data were integrated across these sources to form a research database, and the performance of students reported as receiving interventions were compared to other students within the reporting campuses. This database was examined using a variety of statistical tools including both proprietary and commercially available software.

#### *Collected Data*

Through the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS), TEA collects a variety of information regarding students, teachers, and expenditures from districts. For this study, data at the individual student level were provided to the evaluation team by TEA. These data were retained only to support the statistical analysis.

The following PEIMS data elements were deemed to be appropriate for analysis in this study:

- Student Name
- Ethnicity
- Gender
- Economic Disadvantaged
- Grade Level
- Campus
- Course Completion
- Discipline Records
- Leaver Code
- Graduation Code

In addition to these data, student-level information was also obtained regarding performance on the state assessment, the TAKS. These data were extracted from the TEA Student Assessment Division data files. Information included a score code (used to indicate valid scores) and a passing indicator for reading / English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics. TAKS also assesses social studies, science, and writing in selected grade levels. These later assessments are not in contiguous grade levels for the most part and, therefore, limited in applicability to this study. Data were also obtained for the State Developed

Alternative Assessment, Version II (SDAA II). An initial analysis of the SDAA II data indicated that there were insufficient numbers of students with these data to be further considered in this context.

Campus-level demographics, performance, and other information were obtained from the TEA AEIS reports through 2004-05, was updated for fall 2006 and incorporated into the final analyses. The AEIS data are located on the TEA web site and downloaded into appropriate electronic files. These files were separate from the student-level research databases.

*Online Student-level Database*

The evaluation team designed and launched an online student-level database system to track individual student participation in interventions implemented with the THSCS Grant funds. The database was designed to collect two types of data: (a) campus-level information regarding the number and types of THSCS-supported interventions at a Cycle 2 school, and (b) student-level information regarding the extent to which students participated in the interventions (i.e., contact hours per intervention).

The THSCS database was pre-populated with PEIMS student data for the Cycle 2 schools including student name, grade level, and the last four digits of each student’s social security number. Because of the confidential student information, the Cycle 2 district superintendents were asked to identify and authorize school staff at each of the Cycle 2 campuses to assist with data entry. **Exhibit B-8** shows that 86 percent of superintendents receiving THSCS, Cycle 2 Grant funds responded to the request for designating data entry staff. Once district permission forms were submitted, unique ID numbers and passwords were distributed to individuals authorized to enter the secure database.

**Exhibit B-8**  
**District Response Rate to Student Participation Database**

Number of School District Superintendent Permission Forms Mailed	Number of Superintendent Forms Received	Number of Superintendents NOT Responding	District Response Rate
106	91	15	86%

*Source: Gibson Consulting Group & Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, February 2006.*

Guidelines for navigating the online database and submitting data were developed (see *Appendix C*). In addition, THSCS, Cycle 2 administrators participated in a Texas Education Telecommunications Network (TETN) session, which presented an overview of the online database system and the process for collecting school and student-level information. Finally, the evaluation team provided ongoing technical assistance during the data-collection periods to assist designated school staff with entering data into the online database.

The database consisted of several screens organized by data collection steps. In the first two steps, school staff reported whether certain campus-level and student-level interventions existed at their schools by checking “yes” or “no” from a list of possible grantee-supported activities. Data entry staff at each campus recorded the student name and related contact hours for each student-level intervention. The database allowed data entry staff to search for students by name, grade level, and the last four digits of their social security number or add student records when needed. The final step was to mark a data submission button, which indicated that data entry was complete for the campus.

Data entry occurred during two collection periods: 1) Information for the fall 2005 semester was collected during January and February of 2006; and 2) Information for the spring 2006 semester was collected during May and June of 2006. **Exhibit B-9** below describes the campus response rate for completing data entry into the evaluation student-level database. In spring 2006, approximately 74 percent of the campuses submitted campus-level information and 66 percent of the campuses submitted student-level data.

**Exhibit B-9**  
**Campus Response Rate to Student-Level Database by Data Collection Period**

Data Collection Period	Number of Campuses in Database (with Access Permission)	Number of Campuses NOT Responding	Number of Campuses Reporting Campus level Interventions	Number of Campuses Reporting Student level Interventions
Fall 2005	156	17	113 (72%)	103 (66%)
Spring 2006	154	19	114 (74%)	102 (66%)

*Source: 2005 & 2006 Site-Visit Summaries, Gibson Consulting Group & Southwest Educational Development Laboratory*

*Statistical Analysis*

A series of statistical analyses were conducted to determine any relationships between THSCS program interventions and student achievement. The analysis contained in this final report focuses on the impact of campus-level interventions, as well as possible relationships between student-level interventions and other outcomes such as credits earned, attendance rates, graduation rates, and dropout rates.

Because the THSCS Grant program was not established as an experimental or quasi-experimental design, it cannot be determined whether the interventions directly caused an increase in student performance. However, it is possible in some cases to show that participation in the program is statistically associated with certain student outcomes.

As with any study of education programs and impact, there are certain limitations that must be accepted. PEIMS data are generally reliable; however, the information must be entered into the system at the campus. Various errors are possible, including misinterpretation of information and errors in data entry. Inappropriate data (such as TAKS scores for certain students receiving special education services who might be assessed more appropriately with SDAA II) may be included. Errors have been noted for multiple students with the same identification number.

The THSCS, Cycle 2 Grant program was in place for a limited period of time. The degree of implementation varied, as did the administrative and instructional staff support. In the long-term, some schools may choose to leave certain aspects in place while replacing, modifying or completely removing others.

Another limiting factor of the statistical analysis is the multiplicity of support programs that are implemented in many schools. Activities that might be duplicative of THSCS interventions may occur; other activities might even work against THSCS goals. This limitation cannot be addressed through analytical approaches without more detailed information that cannot be reasonably obtained in this study.



### **Cost Analysis**

A cost analysis was not a required element in TEA's scope of work, but it was believed that this information might support meaningful findings related to the cost effectiveness of the program and individual interventions.

A cost analysis was conducted for the THSCS Cycle 2 Grant program intervention services. For the interim report, higher level expenditure data was analyzed to determine relationships between spending patterns and program effectiveness. Budgeted and actual expenditure data was obtained through the TEA Notice of Grant Awards (NOGA) and expenditure data received directly from school systems.

The cost-effectiveness of THSCS Grant program interventions could not be assessed based on available data. School districts and charter schools were not required to track expenditures at the intervention level. Accordingly, intervention costs were reconstructed for a separate sample of grantees. In 2007, five site visits were conducted to collect additional data to reconstruct and allocate costs to specific interventions.

## C. Student Impact

This section presents profiles of student and campus participation in the Texas High School Completion and Success (THSCS), Cycle 2 Grant program and evaluates the impact of the program on several student outcomes. It is organized into the following sub-sections:

- **Characteristics of Campuses and Students Participating in the Program** - describes the characteristics of campuses that received THSCS, Cycle 2 Grants as well as their student populations, and provides participation results for student-level interventions.
- **Interim Findings on Student Achievement** – presents descriptive statistics that compare Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) performance trends over three years for students at THSCS campuses who participated in interventions and those who did not receive targeted interventions.
- **Impact on Student Achievement** - Presents a series of statistical analyses of program impact on student achievement. Although the THSCS evaluation was not originally designed as an experimental or quasi-experimental study, statistical methods have been used to create comparison groups that support causal inferences about program effects.

### Characteristics of Campuses and Students Receiving Grants

Campus data from 2004-05 Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) reports show that THSCS, Cycle 2 Grant recipients are a diverse group (see **Exhibit C-1**). While the majority of grantee campuses were secondary schools (primarily serving grades 9 through 12), many campuses had atypical grade-level configurations (such as, grades 6-12 or kindergarten-12). A small number of charter schools (about 7 percent) received grants. Schools also differed in their Texas accountability system classification. Most of the campuses received standard accountability ratings in 2005 (81.1 percent), but a notable proportion (18.9 percent) was rated as alternative education accountability (AEA) campuses.

**Exhibit C-1**  
**Characteristics of Campuses Receiving THSCS, Cycle 2 Grants**

Characteristic	Percent of Campuses
School level	
Elementary/middle	1.2%
Secondary	84.2%
Other	13.5%
Charter school	7.0%
Accountability procedures	
Alternative Education (AEA)	18.9%
Standard	81.1%

*Source: AEIS campus-level reports, Texas Education Agency*

*\*Statistics based on 169 of 172 funded campuses with 2005 AEIS data.*

Grantees, as expected given funding guidelines, enrolled primarily economically disadvantaged students (56.2 percent). Hispanic students comprised the greatest proportion of the grantee population (45.5 percent), followed by White students (36.2 percent), and African American students (16.7 percent). For

the most part, similar kinds of students attended campuses rated under either AEA or standard accountability procedures, except that students at AEA campuses were highly mobile. AEA campuses had a 70.1 percent student mobility rate compared to 23.9 percent for standard campuses (see **Exhibit C-2**).

**Exhibit C-2  
Characteristics of THSCS, Cycle 2 Students**

Student Characteristic	State Accountability Procedures		Total Mean
	AEA Campus Mean	Standard Campus Mean	
Economically disadvantaged	57.9%	55.9%	56.2%
Ethnicity			
Hispanic	48.8%	44.7%	45.5%
White	35.9%	36.3%	36.2%
African American	14.4%	17.3%	16.7%
Special Education	14.8%	14.1%	14.2%
Limited English proficient	7.7%	7.6%	7.7%
Mobility	70.1%	23.9%	25.1%
Average enrollment	149	1,274	1,061
Total enrollment	4,761	174,590	179,351

*Source: AEIS campus-level reports, Texas Education Agency  
\*Statistics based on 169 of 172 funded campuses with 2005 AEIS data.*

Below are the categories of student-level interventions that were defined at the beginning of this evaluation. Based on intervention definitions, campuses were asked to indicate which students participated in which intervention categories, and to estimate the number of contact hours for these students. Descriptions of these interventions are provided in *Appendix D*.

- *Tutoring*
- *Accelerated instruction in Mathematics*
- *Early interventions*
- *Credit accrual in Mathematics*
- *Programs for academically at-risk students*
- *Mentoring*
- *Accelerated ELA instruction*
- *Other interventions*
- *Accelerated instruction in Science*
- *Advanced placement/ IB*
- *Credit accrual in ELA*
- *Accelerated instruction in Social Studies*
- *Credit accrual in Social Studies*
- *Credit accrual in Science*
- *Dual credit*
- *Test preparation (PSAT, SAT, ACT)*
- *Child care*
- *Work study*

Of the 173 campuses participating in the THSCS program, 102 campuses, or approximately 60 percent, submitted this student participation data. A total of 17,884 students participated in 29,359 THSCS Grant program interventions at these 102 campuses during the 2005-06 school year. Participating students represented approximately 14 percent of the total enrollment at the 102 campuses reporting.<sup>1</sup>

**Exhibit C-3** shows that approximately 63 percent of students participated in one type of intervention. Twenty-four percent participated in two, and 13 percent participated in three or more types of interventions funded through the THSCS Grant program.

**Exhibit C-3**  
**Frequency of Student Participation in Interventions**

Number of Interventions	Number of Students	Percent of Students
1	11,204	62.6%
2	4,282	23.9%
3	1,229	6.9%
4	531	3.0%
5	390	2.2%
6	118	0.7%
7 or more	130	0.7%
Total	17,884	100%

*Source: Analysis of student-level interventions reported by campuses through SEDL database*

**Exhibit C-4** presents the distribution of student-level interventions offered by schools. The percentage of students in each intervention was calculated by dividing the number of students served by the total unduplicated count of students receiving direct services by the program. The number of students served may reflect students served by other interventions as well. The contact hours represent the average amount of time students participated in each type of intervention during the spring 2006 semester.

<sup>1</sup> Other students likely benefited from THSCS campus-level interventions, such as additional guidance counselors; however, only those students who participated in student-level interventions and were submitted in the student participation database are discussed as “program participants.”

**Exhibit C-4**  
**Percentage of Students Served by Intervention**

Intervention	Percentage of Students*	Number of Students Served (duplicated count)	Average Contact Hours per Semester
<i>Tutoring</i>	31.1%	5,555	7.2
<i>Accelerated instruction in Mathematics</i>	21.6%	3,861	27.8
<i>Early interventions</i>	15.1%	2,704	5.8
<i>Credit accrual in Mathematics</i>	13.0%	2,321	32.3
<i>Programs for academically at-risk students</i>	12.1%	2,172	16.5
<i>Mentoring</i>	12.0%	2,147	12.7
<i>Accelerated ELA instruction</i>	11.0%	1,976	24.7
<i>Other interventions</i>	10.6%	1,892	3.0
<i>Accelerated instruction in Science</i>	7.9%	1,420	27.9
<i>Advanced Placement /International Baccalaureate (IB)</i>	6.8%	1,213	64.5
<i>Credit accrual in ELA</i>	5.8%	1,032	27.8
<i>Accelerated instruction in Social Studies</i>	5.8%	984	15.2
<i>Credit accrual in Social Studies</i>	4.4%	790	15.2
<i>Credit accrual in Science</i>	3.6%	641	27.9
<i>Dual credit</i>	2.1%	380	62.0
<i>Test preparation (PSAT, SAT, ACT)</i>	1.5%	271	27.8
<i>Child care</i>	0.0%	0	0.0
<i>Work study</i>	0.0%	0	0.0

Source: Analysis of student-level interventions reported by campuses through SEDL database

Notes: See intervention descriptions in Appendix D; Students can participate in more than one intervention.

\* Unduplicated student count applied to calculate percentages = 17,884

In terms of the number of students served, *tutoring* (31.1 percent), *accelerated instruction in mathematics* (21.6 percent), and *early interventions* (15.1 percent) reached the largest numbers of students. When contact hours are considered, *Advanced Placement/IB*, *dual credit*, *credit accrual (mathematics, science, ELA)*, and *accelerated instruction (mathematics, science, ELA)* engaged students for the longest duration.<sup>2</sup>

*Tutoring* represented the most frequently used intervention by students, but the average contact hours per student for tutoring (7.2 hours) were less than the average of most other interventions. *College-entry test preparation* and *dual credit* interventions represented the most infrequently used interventions. Of the 18 possible student-level interventions, there was no student participation recorded for two of the interventions - *child care* and *work study*.

The student-level intervention data above illustrates an emphasis by schools on mathematics. *Accelerated instruction in mathematics* was provided to almost 22 percent of the students reported by THSCS campuses (compared to 11 percent for *accelerated instruction in ELA*). A total of 13 percent of the students participated in *credit accrual in mathematics* programs compared to 5.8 percent for *credit*

<sup>2</sup> Average hours for specific interventions appear reasonable based on the relative intensity of the intervention.

accrual in English Language Arts (ELA). TAKS passing rates in mathematics are generally lower than reading scores, which may explain the emphasis on interventions relating specifically to mathematics.

Campus use of interventions was also analyzed by grade level. **Exhibit C-5** presents the number of students served by intervention (duplicated count), and percentage distribution by grade level.

With the exception of Grade 12, overall participation in student-level interventions was evenly distributed across grade levels. Grade 9 and Grade 11 showed the highest participation levels at 29.9 percent and 28.5 percent, respectively. Participation at grade 12 was the lowest among all grade levels at 17.6 percent. For some interventions, such as *programs for academically at-risk students*, there was relatively little difference across grade levels. For other interventions, such as *credit accrual in ELA* and *dual credit*, there was a much greater emphasis in grades 11 and 12, as dual credit was generally targeted towards students in upper grade levels. For *early interventions*, the largest percentage of participants, as expected, were ninth graders. These results reinforce the accuracy of data reported by campuses.

**Exhibit C-5**  
**Spring 2006 Student Level Interventions**

Intervention*	Students Participating (duplicated count)	Percentage Distribution by Grade Level			
		9th	10th	11th	12th
<i>Credit accrual in ELA</i>	1,032	14.4%	16.2%	23.7%	45.7%
<i>Credit accrual in Mathematics</i>	2,321	32.1%	22.7%	29.0%	16.2%
<i>Credit accrual in Science</i>	641	19.0%	31.4%	25.0%	24.6%
<i>Credit accrual in Social studies</i>	790	14.4%	16.2%	22.9%	46.5%
<i>Accelerated ELA instruction</i>	1,976	15.8%	20.4%	42.4%	21.4%
<i>Accelerated instruction in Mathematics</i>	3,861	26.0%	24.0%	36.9%	13.1%
<i>Accelerated instruction in Science</i>	1,420	12.5%	24.9%	37.8%	24.8%
<i>Accelerated instruction in Social studies</i>	984	16.3%	18.9%	44.9%	19.9%
<i>Mentoring</i>	2,147	30.7%	25.6%	24.5%	19.2%
<i>Tutoring</i>	5,555	30.0%	37.3%	22.3%	10.4%
<i>Other interventions</i>	1,892	38.6%	32.2%	26.3%	2.9%
<i>Early interventions</i>	2,704	74.6%	9.4%	10.1%	5.9%
<i>Programs for academically at-risk students</i>	2,172	24.2%	21.9%	30.2%	23.7%
<i>Test preparation (PSAT, SAT, ACT)</i>	271	0.0%	31.4%	46.5%	22.1%
<i>Advanced placement/ IB</i>	1,213	33.8%	3.8%	32.8%	29.6%
<i>Dual credit</i>	380	0.3%	8.2%	39.7%	51.8%
<i>Work study programs</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Child care</i>	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
<b>Total duplicated count / Average Percentage</b>	<b>29,359</b>	<b>29.9%</b>	<b>24.0%</b>	<b>28.5%</b>	<b>17.6%</b>

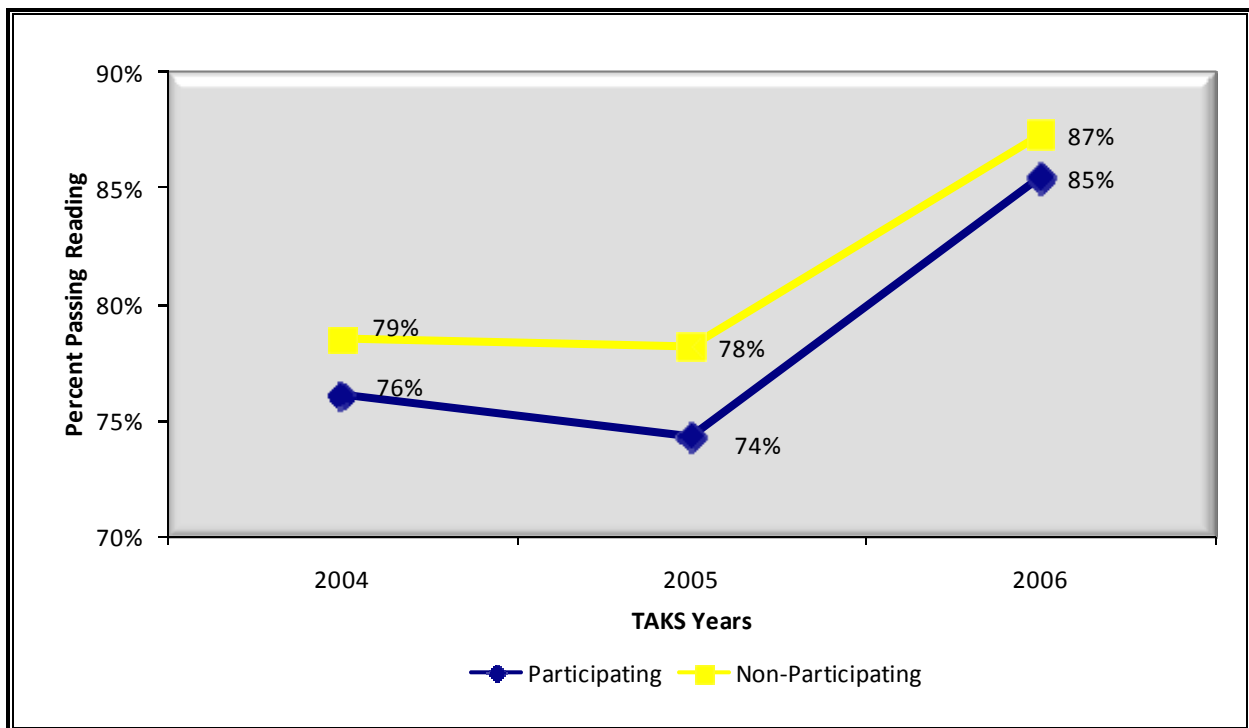
Source: Analysis of student-level interventions reported by campuses through SEDL database

\* See descriptions of interventions located in Appendix D

**Interim Findings on Student Achievement**

The interim report (February 2007) presented academic performance trends across three years for students at THSCS campuses who participated in the interventions described above (n = 8,996) and those who did not (n = 84,469). The analysis suggested there might be an association between program participation and student outcomes. Highlights of analyses presented in **Exhibit C-6** show the change in TAKS Reading performance between 2004 and 2006 for students at THSCS campuses who participated in or did not participate in interventions. Since THSCS, Cycle 2 program implementation began in fall of the 2004-05 school year, TAKS scores for 2004, 2005, and 2006, respectively, represent the baseline, first program year, and second program year. Only students who had valid TAKS scores in each of the three years were included in that analysis.

**Exhibit C-6**  
**TAKS Reading Performance over Three Years**



Source: SEDL database (participation), TEA Student Assessment

\*Note: N for participants = 8,996

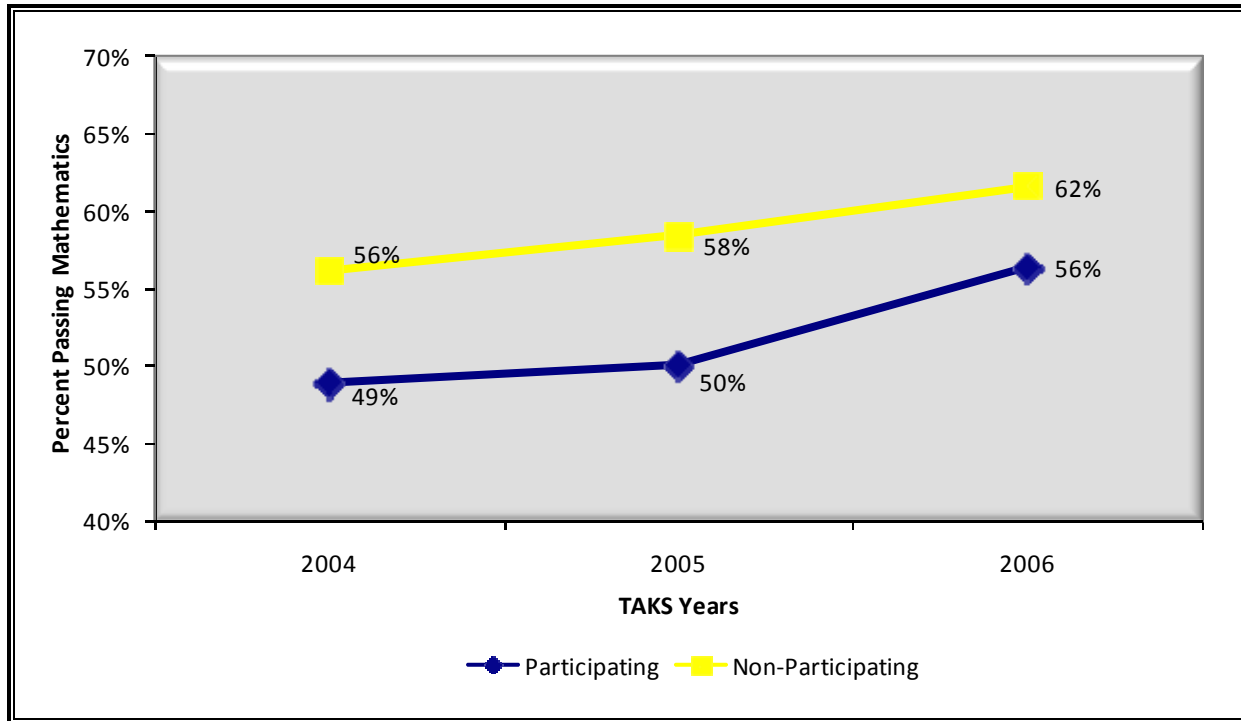
\*Note: N for non-participants = 84,469

Those students who participated in THSCS Grant program interventions initially had a 3-percentage point lower TAKS Reading passing rate compared to non-participating students at their schools in 2004. The deficit increased to 4-percentage points in 2005. In 2006, the second year of THSCS implementation, the TAKS passing rate gap between groups decreased slightly (2-percentage points). Although passing rates for participants did not reach the level of non-participants, the small gain suggested that participation in the THSCS program might affect TAKS performance.

**Exhibit C-7** shows a similar trend for TAKS Mathematics passing rates of participating and non-participating THSCS students. THSCS Grant program intervention participants initially had a 2004 TAKS Mathematics passing rate that was approximately 7-percentage points below non-participating

students. This increased to an 8-percentage point deficit in 2005. In 2006, the deficit decreased to 6-percentage points, a one percentage point decline over two years. Although the performance gap was not closed to the extent seen in reading, the results revealed a positive trajectory for both THSCS and non-THSCS students' performance in mathematics.

**Exhibit C-7**  
**TAKS Mathematics Performance over Three Years**



Source: SEDL database (participation), TEA Student Assessment

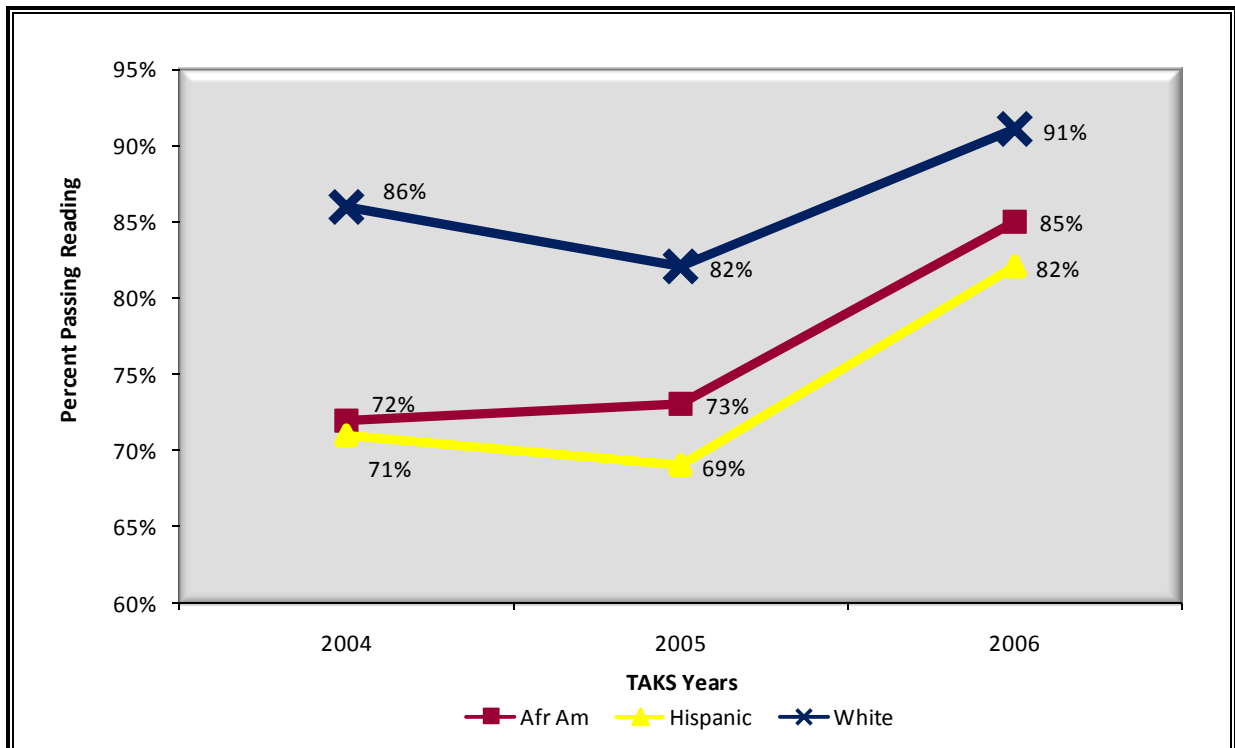
\*Note: N for participants = 8,913

\*Note: N for non-participants = 83,469

TAKS performance was also analyzed by the ethnicity of students who participated in THSCS Grant program interventions. **Exhibit C-8** shows TAKS Reading passing rates for African-American, Hispanic, and White students from 2004 through 2006.



**Exhibit C-8**  
**TAKS Reading Performance by Ethnicity for Three Years**



Source: SEDL database (participation), TEA Student Assessment

\*Note: Number of participants = 8,996

These results showed a narrowing of the gap among ethnic groups. In 2004, the TAKS Reading passing rates for White students (86 percent) was 14-percentage points higher than African-American students (72 percent), and 15-percentage points higher than Hispanic students (71 percent). By 2006, the gap had narrowed to 6-percentage points for African American students and 9-percentage points for Hispanic students. White students participating in the THSCS program also showed gains in 2006. Unlike TAKS Reading, there was no discernable closing of performance gaps among student ethnic groups for TAKS Mathematics passing rates.

While these interim performance trends for THSCS students were encouraging, estimating the impact of a program intervention requires comparisons between program participants and a comparable group of non-served students. Accordingly, the following sections present more statistically rigorous analyses of the impact of the THSCS program on students.

### **Impact on Student Achievement**

Evaluators conducted both campus- and student-level analyses to assess the impact of the THSCS program on student achievement. Campus-level analyses assumed that all students enrolled at a THSCS-funded campus might have benefited from grant funds through the provision of campus-wide resources such as additional guidance counselors or teacher professional development, even though all students at a campus did not receive directly targeted grant services. Data for campus-level analyses came from school statistics reported through the AEIS.

Student-level analyses focused on a particular subset of under-performing students at campuses that received THSCS-funded support services, such as credit recovery courses, tutoring, or mentoring. THSCS grantees reported which students received targeted services and the types of services they received through an online submission process. Additional data for student-level analyses came from requests to the TEA for individual student demographic, enrollment, and attendance data, and TAKS scores.

The effect of THSCS participation was determined by comparing grantee campuses and students with well-matched comparison groups. Comparison groups were selected by matching the participating THSCS schools and students with schools and students having similar characteristics, but that did not receive THSCS Grants (although these schools/students may have had similar types of services through other funding sources). A propensity score matching process allowed the creation of closely matched comparison groups that simulated an experimental design with treatment (THSCS, Cycle 2) and control groups. Propensity score matching employs a predicted probability of treatment or control group membership based on observed predictors obtained from logistic regression. These scores are then used to create a matched comparison group. Sections below describe methodological procedures and outcomes for campus- and student-level analyses.

### ***Campus-Level Analysis of Program Impact***

Data for campus-level analyses were available for 171 campuses that received THSCS, Cycle 2 funding across two school years (2004-05 and 2005-06). This number included 137 campuses rated under Texas standard accountability procedures, 32 rated with alternative education procedures, and 2 unrated campuses. Comparison schools were drawn from TEA-created peer groups for THSCS schools. The TEA constructs these peer groups for a campus each year by selecting demographically similar schools (e.g., student ethnicity and economic disadvantage) to form a peer group of 40 campuses. A total of 832 schools rated under standard accountability procedures provided the pool from which to draw campuses for comparison purposes.

For both THSCS and peer-comparison campuses, databases were generated including data elements from AEIS reports for three school years: 2003-04 (baseline) and 2004-05 and 2005-06 (THSCS, Cycle 2 program years). Data elements included demographic characteristics of students (percentages of students by ethnicity, economic disadvantage status, limited English proficiency (LEP) status, and Special Education program status, school size (total enrollment), and percentage of *all* students at the campus passing TAKS Reading/English language arts, Mathematics, and all tests taken.

Because no AEA campuses are included in TEA-created peer groups, the 37 AEA campuses were deleted from the THSCS group as the first step in analyses. Additionally, two unrated campuses were deleted and eight campuses that received standard accountability “X” ratings (not-rated). These campuses had “masked” data due to small numbers of students served. The elimination of more than a quarter of THSCS campuses is a study limitation. However, as noted earlier, many of the AEA-rated schools are small and serve highly mobile populations. Thus, complete campus data sets from AEIS reports may not have been available for matching comparison schools.

Propensity scores were then generated across the two groups (129 THSCS schools and 832 comparison schools) using logistic regression to find campuses within the peer groups that most closely matched the grantee group. The predictor variables used for matching included the 2004 student attendance rate, 2004 percentage of students passing all TAKS tests, 2005 total school enrollment, and student demographic characteristics for 2005 (percentages of limited English proficient, economically

disadvantaged, White, and Hispanic students). Cases were then matched on the propensity scores. The matches were extremely close for all but one or two schools<sup>3</sup>. This procedure produced 129 pairs of matched treatment (THSCS) and control schools. Paired t-tests were then computed on each of the three outcome variables. The matching (paired t-tests) affords extremely high statistical power to detect differences on outcome variables.

Findings reported in **Exhibit C-9** show that there were no statistically significant differences between THSCS schools and well-matched comparison-group schools for students’ 2006 TAKS Reading and Mathematics passing rates (all students tested) and school attendance rates. On the TAKS Reading/ELA outcome, the THSCS-group mean passing rate was 84.26 percent while the comparison-group passing rate mean was 84.70 percent. For TAKS Mathematics, the mean passing rates across both groups of schools were substantially lower and more varied than for Reading/ELA. The THSCS-group passing rate mean for mathematics was 58.47 percent while the comparison-group passing rate mean was 57.85 percent. Mean student attendance rates were nearly identical across school groups. The THSCS-group mean was 93.54 percent and the comparison-group mean was 93.51.

**Exhibit C-9**  
**2005-06 Student Achievement Outcomes for THSCS, Cycle 2**  
**and Matched Comparison Schools**

Measure	THSCS N=129		Comparison N=129		t value	p	Effect Size
	M	SD	M	SD			
TAKS Reading/ELA	84.26	7.50	84.70	7.16	-0.590	0.556	-0.06
TAKS Mathematics	58.47	13.05	57.85	13.03	0.503	0.616	0.05
Attendance	93.54	1.93	93.51	2.30	0.131	0.896	0.01

*Source: Outcome data are from AEIS campus-level reports for 2006, Texas Education Agency*  
*Note. Measures include the percentages of all students at the campus passing 2006 TAKS Mathematics and Reading/English language arts tests and the 2006 campus attendance rate. Effect size is Cohen’s d. The general interpretation is that an effect size greater than 0.5 is large, 0.5-0.3 is moderate, 0.3-0.1 is small, and anything smaller than 0.1 is trivial.*

**Student-Level Analysis of Program Impact**

Students involved in THSCS Grant program interventions represented approximately 11 percent of the total enrollment of the 102 reporting campuses (N = 156,280). As noted earlier in the report, campuses used grant funds most frequently for tutoring, credit accrual, accelerated instruction, early intervention, and programs for students academically at risk. More students participated in math-focused interventions than English language arts-related interventions.

Analyses of student-level outcomes focused on two student cohorts (see **Exhibit C-10**). Cohort 1 included ninth graders who were enrolled in THSCS schools and participated in THSCS Grant program interventions during the 2004-05 school year and were continuously enrolled at THSCS campuses during the following school year (2005-06). Thus, these students received two full years of program services. Cohort 1 included a combination of first-time ninth graders and students who were repeating ninth grade in 2004-05. Cohort 2 included only first-time ninth graders who participated in THSCS Grant program interventions during the 2005-06 school year.

<sup>3</sup> Mean difference between pairs in the propensity scores = 0.00154; SD = 0.00059

**Exhibit C-10**  
**Student Cohorts Included in Analyses**

	THSCS, Cycle 2		
	2003 04 Baseline	2004 05 First Year	2005 06 Second Year
<b>Cohort 1</b>			
First-time 9th	Baseline (8th)	Grade 9	Grade 9/10
Repeating 9th	Baseline (9th)	Grade 9	Grade 9/10
<b>Cohort 2</b>			
First-time 9th	--	Baseline (8th)	Grade 9

*Source: Student-level data obtained from the Texas Education Agency*

Estimating an intervention’s impact requires measurement of student outcomes after program implementation and comparisons with outcomes students would have achieved in the absence of the treatment. Thus, a comparable group of students representing, “What would have happened to those who, in fact, did receive the treatment, if they had not received treatment, or the converse?” was needed (Guo, Barth, & Gibbons, 2004).

Similar to the campus-level approach, propensity score matching was used as the statistical strategy for forming comparison groups for both THSCS Cohorts 1 and 2. The comparison cohorts paralleled the grade-level configurations reported in **Exhibit C-10**. Students eligible for inclusion in the comparison group for Cohort 1 were ninth graders who were enrolled at one of the 832 TEA-created peer campuses in 2004-05 and continued at the campus during the 2005-06 school year. Students eligible for the Cohort 2 comparison group were first-time ninth graders in 2005-06.

For Cohort 1, propensity scores were generated using logistic regression (estimations of the probability of group membership) for 3,559 THSCS students and a pool of 125,306 comparison students. Similarly, for Cohort 2, propensity scores were generated for 3,692 THSCS students and a pool of 146,611 comparison students. The predictor variables used for matching for Cohort 1 included 2004 student attendance rate, a mean 2004 TAKS scale score for reading and mathematics, as well as dummy variables for gender (female = 1), ethnicity (Hispanic = 1, White = 1, African American = 1), limited English proficiency (1), and economic disadvantage (1). Predictor variables for Cohort 2 included the 2005 student attendance rate and mean 2005 TAKS scale score for reading and mathematics as well as the same dummy variables for gender, ethnicity, limited English proficiency, and economic disadvantaged status.

Cases then were matched on the propensity scores. This procedure produced 3,559 pairs of matched THSCS and comparison-group students for Cohort 1 and 3,692 pairs of matched THSCS and comparison-group students for Cohort 2. As illustrated in **Exhibit C-11**, the matches were extremely close, with no statistically significant overall multivariate mean differences at baseline between comparison groups.

**Exhibit C-11**  
**Characteristics of Students Included in Estimations of THSCS Program Impact**

Variable	Cohort 1		Cohort 2	
	THSCS N 3,559	Comparison N 3,559	THSCS N 3,692	Comparison N 3,692
	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)
Gender	0.52 (0.50)	0.52 (0.50)	0.53 (0.50)	0.53 (0.50)
Limited English proficient	0.05 (0.22)	0.05 (0.22)	0.45 (0.21)	0.44 (0.20)
White	0.27 (0.44)	0.27 (0.44)	0.34 (0.47)	0.33 (0.47)
Hispanic	0.45 (0.50)	0.46 (0.50)	0.46 (0.50)	0.46 (0.50)
African American	0.24 (0.42)	0.23 (0.42)	0.17 (0.38)	0.17 (0.38)
Economically disadv.	0.57 (0.50)	0.58 (0.49)	0.55 (0.50)	0.55 (0.50)
Attendance	96.27 (4.01)	96.37 (4.09)	96.39 (3.89)	96.48 (3.98)
TAKS scale score <sup>a</sup>	2155.03 (160.02)	2151.68 (159.57)	2203.17 (173.87)	2202.60 (177.32)

Source: 2005 AEIS data, Texas Education Agency

Note. Wilks' Lambda multivariate test of difference between groups: Cohort 2 ( $F = 0.34, p = 0.950$ ) and Cohort 2 ( $F = 0.56, p = 0.813$ ).

<sup>a</sup> Mean score for TAKS Reading and Mathematics.

Sections to follow present outcomes for tests of mean differences between THSCS and comparison students' 2006 TAKS scores in reading/English language arts and mathematics (scale scores and passing rates), 2006 attendance rates, and for Cohort 1, measures of students' promotion rates and progress toward on-track high school completion. The use of multiple student demographic and performance variables as part of the propensity score matching strategy makes it unnecessary to control for students' prior performance or demographic characteristics in analyzing program effects. Accordingly, independent *t*-tests were computed on each of the outcome variables to investigate the basic question of whether or not differences existed between groups.

**TAKS Achievement**

**Exhibit C-12** shows the TAKS Reading/ELA and Mathematics scale scores and passing rates for THSCS and comparison-group students for the 2004, 2005, and 2006 school years. Mean reading and math scale scores for Cohort 1 (2004) and Cohort 2 (2005) were used in propensity score matching. TAKS scores for 2006 were used in analyzing outcomes. Propensity score matching assumes that students with similar "latent" academic aptitude have been selected for comparison purposes.

**Exhibit C-12**  
**TAKS Reading/ELA and Mathematics Mean Scale Scores and Passing Rates**  
**By THSCS and Comparison-Group Students**

	2004		2005		2006	
	THSCS	Comparison Group	THSCS	Comparison Group	THSCS	Comparison Group
<b>Cohort 1 (n=3,559)</b>						
TAKS Reading/ELA	2212.1	2203.0	2209.6	2205.7	2210.6	2212.6
	79.0%	85.0%	81.6%	82.1%	84.2%	83.6%
TAKS Math	2098.0	2100.3	2100.0	2119.9	2111.8	2114.2
	47.8%	58.6%	48.1%	53.0%	51.5%	51.5%
<b>Cohort 2 (n=3,692)</b>						
TAKS Reading/ELA	--	--	2272.5	2264.8	2249.4	2249.1
	--	--	82.4%	81.3%	89.5%	89.8%
TAKS Math	--	--	2133.8	2140.4	2125.4	2138.7
	--	--	55.2%	57.1%	54.8%	57.0%

Source. Student-level data obtained from the Texas Education Agency.

Findings reported in **Exhibit C-13** for Cohort 1 show that there were no statistically significant differences between THSCS students and matched comparison-group students' 2006 TAKS Reading and Mathematics scale scores or percent passing. For Cohort 2, comparison students had TAKS Mathematics scale scores that exceeded THSCS students by a statistically significant margin, and similarly, TAKS Mathematics passing rates differences approached statistical significance. On the other hand, Cohort 2 students' TAKS Reading scores were nearly identical.

**Exhibit C-13**  
**2005-06 TAKS Achievement for THSCS and Comparison-Group Students**

Measure	THSCS		Comparison		t value	p	Effect Size
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD			
<b>Cohort 1 (n = 3,559)</b>							
TAKS Reading scale score	2210.61	122.76	2212.59	126.76	-0.665	0.506	-0.02
TAKS Math scale score	2111.83	161.57	2114.17	166.67	-0.592	0.554	-0.01
TAKS Reading (% pass)	84.24	36.44	83.62	37.02	0.710	0.478	0.02
TAKS Math (% pass)	51.47	49.98	51.53	49.98	-0.048	0.962	0.00
<b>Cohort 2 (n = 3,692)</b>							
TAKS Reading scale score	2249.37	151.87	2249.14	151.20	0.065	0.948	0.00
TAKS Math scale score	2125.43	195.50	2138.73	205.28	-2.852	0.004**	-0.07
TAKS Reading (% pass)	89.49	30.67	89.84	30.21	-0.497	0.619	-0.01
TAKS Math (% pass)	54.77	49.78	56.96	49.52	-1.899	0.058	-0.04

Source. Student-level data obtained from the Texas Education Agency.

Note. Measures include 2006 TAKS Mathematics and reading/English language arts tests.

\*\*Statistically significant at the .01 level. Effect size is Cohen's d. The general interpretation is that an effect size greater than 0.5 is large, 0.5-0.3 is moderate, 0.3-0.1 is small, and anything smaller than 0.1 is trivial.

In summary, analyses of differences between mean 2006 TAKS Reading and Mathematics scores for THSCS and comparison-group students revealed no significantly positive effect of the THSCS program on students' TAKS scores.

**School Attendance**

**Exhibit C-14** shows the 2005-06 school attendance rates for comparison groups. Cohort 1 comparison-group students attended school at a significantly higher rate (95.03 percent) than THSCS students (94.43 percent). Attendance rates for Cohort 2 also favored comparison students rather than THSC students, but not by a statistically significant margin (95.96 percent versus 95.86 percent).

**Exhibit C-14  
2005-06 TAKS Attendance Rates for THSCS and  
Comparison Students**

Measure	THSCS		Comparison		t value	p	Effect Size
	Mean %	SD	Mean %	SD			
<b>Cohort 1 (n = 3,559)</b>							
Attendance 2005-06	94.43	6.48	95.03	5.90	-4.120	0.000***	-0.10
<b>Cohort 2 (n = 3,692)</b>							
Attendance 2005-06	95.86	4.78	95.96	4.80	-0.909	0.363	-0.02

*Source. Student-level data obtained from the Texas Education Agency.  
Note. \*\*\*Statistically significant at the .001 level. Effect size is Cohen's d.*

**Grade-Level Advancement**

Data available for Cohort 1 students allowed the calculation of grade-level promotion rates. Findings reported in **Exhibit C-15** show that students participating in THSCS Grant program interventions had slightly higher grade-level promotion rates for the 2005-06 school year than comparison-group students. And, THSCS students were nearly equally as likely as control-group students to be on-track for graduation within four years. About 88 percent of THSCS and comparison students had advanced three grade levels between 2004-05 and 2006-07.

**Exhibit C-15  
Grade-Level Promotion Outcomes for THSCS and  
Comparison Students (Cohort 1)**

Measure	THSCS		Comparison		t value	p	Effect Size
	Mean %	SD	Mean %	SD			
Promoted in 2005-06	93.38	24.86	92.31	26.65	1.691	0.091	0.04
On-track to graduate in 4 years	88.24	32.21	87.93	32.59	0.387	0.699	0.01

*Source. Student-level data obtained from the Texas Education Agency.  
Note. Effect size is Cohen's d.*

**Conclusions**

A primary limitation of the evaluation of the THSCS program is data quality. Only about 60 percent of funded campuses (102) submitted participation data for funded campuses—thus, findings on student outcomes reflect that subgroup of THSCS students. Still, demographic characteristics of the student participants appear to generally mirror the overall characteristics of students enrolled at THSCS, Cycle 2 campuses. Thus, THSCS student cohorts and their matched comparison groups appear to be fairly representative of the THSCS program as a whole. In addition to data quality, it is possible that other

school-level variables may at least partially explain differences or a lack of differences in student performance. Time limitations for the study precluded the possibility of using additional predictors as part of propensity score matching to adjust for important factors such as school size and the school poverty and achievement context.

Despite these limitations, it appears that propensity score matching was a valuable tool for creating comparison groups when it was impossible to have a true experimental or quasi-experimental design.

In this context, there are four major conclusions of the statistical analyses:

- There were no statistically significant differences between THSCS schools and comparison-group schools for students' 2006 TAKS Reading and Mathematics passing rates (all students tested) and school attendance rates.
- For student-level analyses, there were no statistically significant differences between the THSCS and comparison-group students' average in 2006 TAKS Reading scores for either Cohort 1 or Cohort 2. One statistically significant difference between groups emerged for 2006 TAKS Mathematics scores. Cohort 2 comparison-group students had a slightly higher average TAKS Mathematics scale score.
- Comparison-group students, in both Cohorts 1 and 2, had slightly higher 2005-06 school attendance rates than THSCS students. For Cohort 1, the 0.60 percentage-point higher attendance rate for comparison-group students was statistically significant. Such a small difference, however, may be practically unimportant.
- Perhaps the most positive finding for THSCS students related to grade-level advancement. THSCS students had a slightly higher 2005-06 promotion rate than comparison-group students (93.4 percent versus 92.3 percent). Approximately 88 percent of both THSCS- and comparison-group students were on-track to graduate from high school within four years.



## D. Implementation

This section presents an assessment of the Texas High School Completion and Success (THSCS) Grant, Cycle 2 implementation, and an overview of promising practices applied by schools in connection with the implementation of effective programs.

To evaluate the effectiveness of THSCS, Cycle 2 Grant programs, the evaluation team examined the conditions under which interventions were successfully implemented. The approach included:

- Identifying the types of interventions that were designed and implemented by the grantees to meet the goals of the grant initiative;
- Understanding the degree and quality to which grant interventions were implemented during the grant period;
- Understanding the factors that influenced the quality, intensity, and duration of the intervention; and
- Identifying the degree to which implementation of the grant interventions was perceived to be associated with improvements in school environment/culture and student outcomes.

As a result, this section is organized by the following evaluation questions:

- How were grant funds used by Cycle 2 grantees and what types of interventions were implemented?
- To what degree and quality were grant interventions implemented during the grant period?
- What factors contributed to or hindered implementation of various interventions at THSCS, Cycle 2 campuses?
- To what degree was the implementation of THSCS, Cycle 2 interventions perceived to be associated with improved school environment/culture and student outcomes?
- To what degree do strategies identified align with the literature on dropout prevention and high school completion?
- Of the Cycle 2 schools identified as having higher than average increases in student achievement and graduation rates, what features were reported as essential in changing schools?

There were several major findings from the interim report, all of which were reinforced based on additional work conducted since then. A 2006 survey administration was conducted to identify implementation trends and changes at the campus level since the 2005 survey. Based on the responses of the earlier survey administration, some questions and answer options were changed to provide more useful results. Additional site visits were conducted in fall 2006 to four THSCS, Cycle 2 grantee campuses selected to represent sites exhibiting intervention characteristics and features associated with effective school change. The four sites were selected based on several factors:

- The number of students who received services from THSCS;
- Schools with better than average performance gains in reading and math Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) test scores on from 2005 to 2006;
- Average daily attendance (ADA);

- Demographic considerations (e.g., diversity and geographic distribution); and
- Schools that were still implementing the program in fall 2006. Schools were then rank-ordered based on these factors, and the top four were selected for site visits.

The remainder of this section examines new information regarding the types of interventions most commonly seen in grantee schools, the extent and quality of implementation, factors contributing to and hindering implementation, and perceptions of improvements in school environments and student outcomes due to the interventions. These findings were gathered through surveys and site visit interviews. The final segment of this chapter identifies promising practices based on the characteristics and features of the four selected sites. The practices applied in the implementation of this program at these sites and the degree to which practices were aligned with current literature on at-risk high school students were noted by the evaluation team.

### Types of Interventions

The evaluation team examined how the THSCS, Cycle 2 Grant funds were used by the grantee schools, which included looking at the consistency of grant leadership in grantee schools, the types of interventions they implemented, and the funding sources that have contributed to the continuation of grant interventions during the course of program implementation. These data were collected through surveys to grantee campus administrators and program directors/coordinators, and site visits to a selected sample of campuses. Site visits included interviews and focus groups conducted in a sample of 20 of the grant-funded sites.

The sample was identified as follows:

- From the Cycle 2 awardees' grant applications, the evaluation team selected a stratified sample of 45 Cycle 2 schools representing a variety of program interventions, geographic areas, and student demographics.
- The list of sample schools was then submitted to TEA for review and approval, after which letters (*Appendix E*) and postcards (*Appendix F*) were mailed to the principals of the 45 schools soliciting their participation in the evaluation study. Of those who responded (n=34), site visits were arranged with 25 of the Cycle 2 schools.
- Some Cycle 2 high schools within a district partnered with each other in implementing their THSCS Grant interventions. Schools in Abilene, Burnet, Mesquite, and Midland ISDs requested that their sites be combined. In cases like this, one site-visit summary was prepared for multiple schools involved in the partnership. A total of 20 site-visit summaries were written.

With regard to the goals and objectives of the grant program, the sample of 20 Cycle 2 site visit grantees was interviewed to determine the types of program interventions that grantees initiated to target services to students in need of assistance in meeting course requirements for grade promotion or graduation. Site visit evaluators employed a checklist to record and describe the various programs that were implemented at the schools they visited. **Exhibit D-1** displays the types of interventions most frequently reported at these schools, the number of schools that reported implementing those interventions, and brief descriptions of each of those interventions.

**Exhibit D-1  
Types of Grant-Supported Interventions Identified at the Sites**

Types of THSCS Grant Program Interventions	Descriptions of the Interventions	Number of Sites N=20
<i>Credit Accrual</i>	Credit recovery courses in English language arts, mathematics, science, and/or social studies to assist students who are behind in credits stay on track for graduation. These may include after school activities, summer courses, online courses and computer software programs (i.e., Plato, NovaNet, ELLIS, ASKME), designed to allow for flexible entry or exit from courses, and supplemental activities.	20
<i>Tutoring</i>	Programs that provide high quality tutoring services to students. Tutoring services may include individualized instruction of specific subjects by highly qualified teachers, peers, community volunteers, parents, etc.	9
<i>Accelerated Instruction</i>	Structured academic enrichment learning programs that assist students who do not pass or are at risk of failing TAKS and/or other types of assessments. Programs may include remedial courses, credit accrual, TAKS tutoring, and out-of-school activities.	7
<i>Early Interventions</i>	Programs targeting freshmen or sophomore level students such as transitional programs, summer orientations, freshmen seminars, and four-year planning.	7
<i>Mentoring</i>	Programs that provide trained mentors to at-risk students (students who have been truant, suspended, or expelled, students identified as academically at-risk, limited English proficient students, students with disabilities, and migrant students) to support them socially and academically in order to succeed in school. Programs may include mentors from business and community organizations.	4
<i>Test Preparation</i>	Programs designed to prepare students to take college entrance exams for admission, placement, and scholarships into post-secondary institutions.	3
<i>Dual Credit</i>	Programs that provide students opportunities to earn college credit while in high school through articulated agreements with post-secondary institutions.	2
<i>AP/IB</i>	Programs that prepare students to successfully pass Advance Placement and/or International Baccalaureate exams.	1

Source: THSCS, Cycle 2 Site Visits Summaries 2006.

Intervention data from the survey were well aligned with site visit data, with a majority of respondents of both the 2005 and 2006 surveys indicating that the most frequent types of THSCS Grant program interventions were *tutoring*, *credit accrual activities*, and *accelerated instruction*. A majority of 2005 survey respondents also indicated that programs for academically at-risk students were a relatively strong part of their THSCS Grant initiative. However, site visit interviewees did not specifically mention at-risk programs as interventions they were implementing. These types of programs may have been viewed as occurring as part of other interventions such as tutoring or credit accrual activities, and therefore, not considered as separate grant program interventions.

Approximately 60 percent of the 173 campuses participating in the THSCS Grant program submitted student participation data reflecting the participation of 17,884 students during the 2005-06 school year. Analysis of student-level intervention records revealed that THSCS Grant funds were used most

frequently for tutoring, credit accrual, accelerated instruction, early interventions, and programs for the academically at-risk. These data also indicated how many hours the student spent in any given activity.

As a result of the interview data, questions on the 2006 survey administration addressed those interventions that were discussed by interviewees as having some impact on their students. Intervention activities that were not included on the 2006 survey were *teacher professional development, parental involvement, work study, and child care interventions*, as well as *programs for academically at-risk students*. Intervention activities that were reported by the survey respondents as occurring less frequently were the implementation of college-readiness activities such as *test preparation, dual credit, and Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate courses*. **Exhibit D-2** shows the types of interventions funded as reported by survey respondents, and indicates an increase in the percent of respondents reporting those interventions from 2005 to 2006.

**Exhibit D-2**  
**Respondents Reporting Grant Funded Interventions**

Intervention	2005		2006	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Tutoring	99	61%	68	79%
Programs for Academically At-Risk Students (e.g., LEP, Migrant)**	82	55%		
Credit Accrual Activities	71	55%	60	70%
Accelerated Instruction	69	53%	54	63%
Teacher Professional Development**	59	45%		
Mentoring	50	45%	45	52%
Early Interventions (e.g., 9th Grade Transition)	44	34%	45	52%
Parental Involvement**	50	39%		
Test Preparation (e.g., PSAT, SAT, ACT)	46	35%	44	51%
Dual Credit	29	22%	35	41%
Advanced Placement/International Baccalaureate	23	18%	38	44%
Work Study**	18	14%		
Child Care**	18	14%		

Source: Survey of THSCS, Cycle 2 Grantees.

\* Survey respondents had the option to mark more than one intervention. N – 2005 = 130; N – 2006 = 86.

\*\* Not included on 2006 survey.

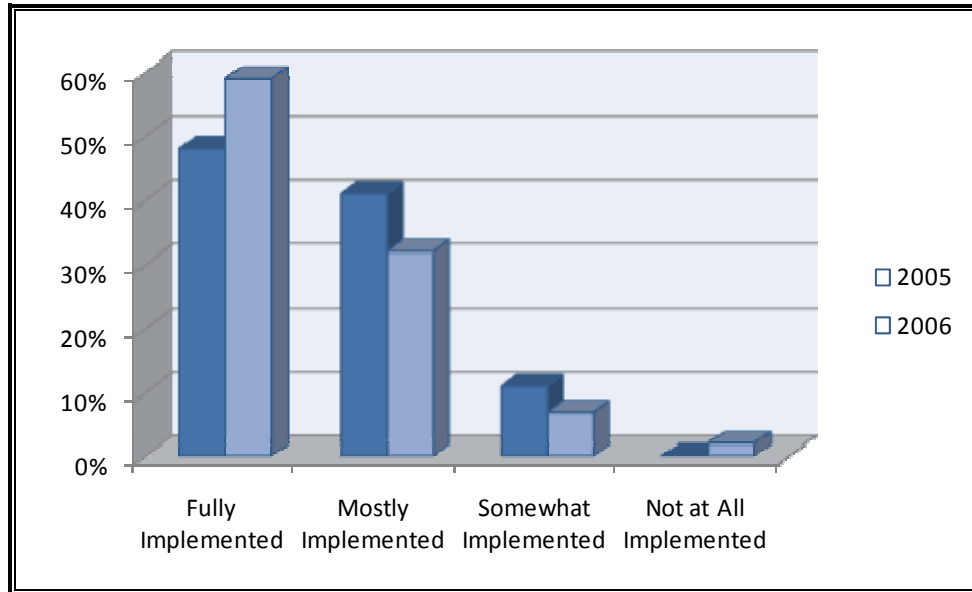
### Program Implementation

This section presents findings related to the degree to which the THSCS, Cycle 2 interventions were implemented. This was assessed using data collected through the 2005 and 2006 Cycle 2 surveys as well as interviews and focus groups that were conducted during site visits to a sample of 20 grant-funded schools. Survey respondents, interviewees, and focus group participants were asked to provide perceptions about the extent to which the interventions were fully implemented and how well they were implemented. The findings are presented below.

In an overall analysis of survey respondent perceptions, findings indicated that respondents perceived that their interventions were either mostly or fully implemented. Slightly more respondents on the 2006 survey (59 percent in 2006 versus 48 percent in 2005) reported campus interventions as fully

implemented, however, no significant mean differences were found in comparing the 2005 and 2006 survey responses. **Exhibit D-3** shows these findings.

**Exhibit D-3**  
**Degree of Intervention Implementation**



Source: Survey of THSCS, Cycle 2 Grantees.  
 \*N – 2005 = 130; N – 2006 = 86.

The site visit summaries completed by the evaluation team, which include interviews, focus groups, and observational data, contained ratings by site evaluators as to the stage of implementation achieved by each site. As **Exhibit D-4** illustrates, all of the sites initiated at least some aspects of their planned interventions, and with the exception of one site, all of the grantees began implementing at least some of their proposed grant interventions. One of the 20 sites began initiating the proposed grant intervention without sufficient resources and never reached the stage of active implementation. According to the evaluation team’s assessment, at the time of the 2006 site visits, five grantees had reached full implementation of all grant activities and the majority of the others were well on their way to institutionalizing the grant-supported interventions. These data coincide with the survey respondents’ ratings of the degree of implementation of their campus grant interventions.

**Exhibit D-4  
Stages of Implementation at Sites in 2006**

Stage of Implementation	Indicators			
			Partially (Some Interventions)	Entirely (All Interventions)
Initialization/ Mobilization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Started the process</li> <li>▪ Assessing needs</li> <li>▪ Developing commitments</li> <li>▪ Setting intended outcomes</li> <li>▪ Designing action plans</li> </ul>	0	11	9
Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Implementing plans</li> <li>▪ Training staff</li> <li>▪ Incorporating routines</li> <li>▪ Evaluating</li> </ul>	1	11	8
Institutionalization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Making organizational changes</li> <li>▪ Tracking student outcomes</li> <li>▪ Planning for sustainability</li> </ul>	4	11	5

Source: THSCS, Cycle 2 – Site Visits Summaries 2006.

Survey ratings as to how well campus interventions were implemented indicated similar perspectives, with average ratings ranging between “fairly well” to “well”. *Credit accrual, tutoring, and accelerated instruction* were among those more highly rated. In a comparison of ratings between 2005 and 2006, a significant mean difference was found only for early interventions, with 2006 (2.21) ratings indicating perceptions of early interventions as not being as well implemented as they were in 2005 (2.48). **Exhibit D-5** shows these results.

**Exhibit D-5  
Implementation of the THSCS Grant Interventions**

Intervention	Implementation 2005		Implementation 2006	
	Mean	N	Mean	N
<i>Credit Accrual Activities</i>	2.64	86	2.70	60
<i>Tutoring</i>	2.61	99	2.56	66
<i>Dual Credit</i>	2.35	43	2.54	35
<i>Accelerated Instruction</i>	2.63	88	2.52	50
<i>Advanced Placement/International Baccalaureate</i>	2.33	36	2.52	50
<i>Test Preparation (e.g., PSAT, SAT, ACT)</i>	2.46	65	2.26	42
<i>Early Interventions (e.g., 9th Grade Transition)*</i>	2.48	60	2.21	42
<i>Mentoring</i>	2.20	74	2.16	45

Source: Survey of THSCS, Cycle 2 Grantees.

Note: Scale options – Implementation: 1 = Poor, 2 = Fairly Well, 3 = Well.

\*Significant mean difference between 2005 and 2006 responses ( $t = 2.227; p < .05$ ).

\*Survey respondents had the option to mark more than one intervention.  $N - 2005 = 130; N - 2006 = 86$ .

**Full and Partial Implementation**

At several sites, some interventions were abandoned based on difficulties associated with implementing them. In perhaps the most extreme case, one alternative school discontinued attempts to implement a

newly designed online mathematics curriculum intended to provide self-paced, accelerated instruction to students. Poor technological infrastructure and an insufficient number of computers at the school prevented the online course from being well-implemented. In addition, school staff reported that the reading level of the online course was not appropriate for the students at the school. Students who attempted to complete the course required significant teacher assistance to navigate the system and complete the required assignments. In the first grant year, only eight students completed the course. By the second site visit in spring 2006, the course was discontinued as an intervention at the school. The school staff viewed the attempts to implement the online course as a pilot test for the curriculum developers who were receptive to modifying the course. At another site, a credit recovery software program was discontinued and replaced with human instruction. Reasons given for the shift in this program included perceptions that the program did not align closely with TEKS Mathematics objectives and that students were not getting the instruction they needed for them to succeed in mathematics.

The grantees that were successful in implementing all of their planned interventions were notably different from the other sites visited in that they proposed relatively small and manageable scopes of work directed at addressing existing needs of the schools. These sites were also characterized by strong leadership and coordination between the district and the staff responsible for implementing the interventions. The majority of grantees were only successful in implementing a portion of what they intended to do with the THSCS Grant. Of the planned interventions that were never implemented, the majority were designed to address the *mentoring* and *dual credit* components of the grant. Insufficient staffing and lack of time were frequently reported as reasons for failing to implement these programs. Grantees also reported that they found *dual credit* programs to be challenging to put into practice because of the lengthy processes required to initiate and solidify partnerships with institutions of higher education.

Some sites that experienced implementation difficulty had problems related to staff turnover. Surveys administered in both 2005 and 2006 asked about the extent that the campus principals and grant directors/coordinators maintained their positions over the course of the grant program. Survey responses from 2005 to 2006 indicated that there was a slightly less than a 20 percent turnover in staff at THSCS Cycle 2 campuses during that time. At those campuses where turnover occurred, staff interviewed during site visits stated that the turnover generally resulted in significant delays or elimination of certain intervention programs, and the newly-hired administrators stated that they were unaware of the grant initiative and the planned interventions at the school. As shown in **Exhibit D-6**, 84 percent of respondents (n=109) on the 2005 survey indicated that the campus principal who originally put the THSCS grant program in place is still employed in the school. In 2006, 66 percent (n=57) indicated similarly.

**Exhibit D-6**  
**Percent of Staff Still at Campus Since Grant Program Began**

Position	2005			2006		
	Number	Percent	Total N	Number	Percent	Total N
Campus Principal	109	84%	130	57	66%	86
Project Director/Grant Coordinator	107	82%	130	56	65%	86

Source: Survey of THSCS, Cycle 2 Grantees.

\*Survey respondents had the option to mark more than one intervention. N – 2005 = 130; N – 2006 = 86.

## Factors Affecting Implementation

Surveys, interviews and focus groups were used to identify factors that were perceived to facilitate or hinder the implementation of the campus’ grant. Survey respondents were provided with a list of factors and asked to provide their perceptions about how those factors affected their program interventions since they received their grant awards in October 2004.

### Facilitating Factors

As seen in **Exhibit D-7**, survey respondents reported that several factors contributing to a successful intervention implementation included district support, school leadership, and school staff support and buy-in. Similarly, staff interviewed at the sample of sites visited perceived these same factors as important facilitators to successful program implementation. Skillful leadership was prominent among many successful programs and included dedicated grant administrators, principals, and assistant principals that organized the different grant activities and resources in ways that addressed specific needs of the school. Direction was also provided by key staff that focused the efforts of the grant initiative in meaningful ways. For example, several grantees hired counselors who made sure students targeted by the grant did not “fall through the cracks.” Many grantees achieved strong staff buy-in by involving key staff in the planning and writing of the grant proposal. This resulted in a clear vision, ambitious learning goals, and clearly defined roles that were agreed upon by all of the participating staff. The commitment to implementing the grant interventions was often sustained by holding regular meetings between staff to discuss issues related to the interventions and the grant program. Over half of the survey respondents also identified the alignment of programs with other school activities as a factor.

**Exhibit D-7**  
**Respondents’ Mean ratings of Factors Facilitating Intervention Implementation**

Facilitating Factor	2005		2006	
	Mean	N	Mean	N
District Support	3.62	127	3.67	81
School Leadership	3.80	127	3.87	83
School Staff Support and Buy-in	3.53	127	3.57	84
Community/Parent Involvement	2.78	121	2.85	78
Partner Commitments	2.52	117	2.72	79
Program Aligned with School Activities	3.51	124	3.43	82
Defined Goals and Program Roles			3.56	84
Collaboration and Communication			3.57	83

Source: Survey of Cycle 2 THSCS Grantees.

Note: Scale options: 1 =Not at All, 2 =A Little, 3 = Somewhat, 4 = A Great Deal.

\*Survey respondents had the option to mark more than one intervention. N – 2005 = 130; N – 2006 = 86.

For the 2006 survey, two additional facilitating factors (*defined goals and program roles* and *collaboration and communication*) were added based on interview and focus group comments. *Defined goals and program roles* and *collaboration and communication* received high ratings on the survey, which is consistent with information obtained during site visits. The table shows that factors facilitating the implementation of program interventions at the schools were fairly stable over the course of the year (e.g., strong district and school support and leadership). While not significantly different statistically, respondent ratings indicated a slight increase in *partner commitments* to the program interventions and *community/parent involvement* in students’ education.



**Hindering Factors**

The survey and interview respondents were asked about factors that tended to hinder the implementation of program interventions. The factor survey respondents rated as the one they perceived as most hindering to program implementation was lack of time. Over 47 percent of 2005 survey respondents rated lack of time as a hindering factor. In comparison, 29 percent of 2006 survey respondents saw this as hindering implementation. A comparison between responses to the 2005 survey and the 2006 survey also showed a significant decrease in the number of respondents who perceived that program implementation was hindered by a lack of evidence of intervention effects. In 2005, 25 percent of the respondents reported lack of evidence of effects as a hindering factor. In contrast, 8 percent of respondents in 2006 perceived this as a hindering factor. In contrast, 37 percent of respondents in 2006 perceived that this was a hindering factor. This finding suggests that once respondents saw positive effects possibly associated with program interventions, they were more motivated toward ensuring their implementation.

An additional hindering factor that emerged from interviews at grantee campuses was inadequate program or intervention training for staff. Survey respondents rating 3 or 4 indicated that inadequate staff training was a hindering factor “somewhat” or “a great deal.” **Exhibit D-8** shows that most of the survey respondents saw no major hindrances to the implementation of their programs, and generally perceived lack of buy-in from campus leadership and school staff, inadequate project management and poor planning as slight barriers.

**Exhibit D-8**  
**Respondents’ Mean Ratings of Factors Hindering Intervention Implementation**

Hindering Factor	2005		2006	
	Mean	N	Mean	N
Lack of Time*	2.4	124	2.0	72
Lack of Evidence of Effects*	1.9	123	1.5	70
Poor Planning	1.5	126	1.5	73
Lack of Buy-In from Campus Leadership	1.2	126	1.3	73
Inadequate Project Management	1.4	51	1.4	72
Lack of Buy-in from School Staff	1.4	126	1.6	73
Insufficient Resources	1.7	124	1.7	71
Limited Space	1.7	124	1.6	72
Misalignment with Other School Priorities	1.7	125		
Inadequate Development/Training			1.7	73

Source: Survey of Cycle 2 THSCS Grantees.

Note: Scale options: 1 =Not at All, 2 =A Little, 3 = Somewhat, 4 = A Great Deal.

\*Significant mean differences between 2005 and 2006 responses on Lack of Time ( $t = 2.914$ ;  $p < .01$ ) and Lack of Evidence of Effects ( $t = 3.463$ ;  $p = .001$ ).

\*Survey respondents had the option to mark more than one intervention. N – 2005 = 130; N – 2006 = 86.

At sites where implementation problems arose frequently, campus staff commented on the failure to plan grant interventions well. In many cases, school staff interviewees reported that the proposed plans were developed by outside grant writers without school staff input and that these plans committed the schools to implementing too many activities. Consequently at these schools, staff buy-in was perceived to be low. This was also exacerbated by staff turnover during the grant period which required additional

time to familiarize new staff with the grant goals and proposed work before implementation could proceed.

A number of the grantees reported that they did not anticipate the full costs and resources needed to successfully implement certain aspects of their grant program. For example, some of the sites reported a need for more hardware and technology support to adequately implement new credit recovery software at the campuses. Several interviewees and focus group participants at the sites reported a need for more staff development and training to implement the software related interventions successfully. This was a particular concern related to implementation of new credit recovery software. Without adequate training to use the software, teachers were less able to use the software as an intervention tool.

These hindering factors can and should instruct future grantee planning activities; however, the overall impact in hindering campus grant implementation according to the larger survey group was small.

### **Perceived Outcomes**

The evaluation team examined the degree to which the THSCS, Cycle 2 interventions were perceived to improve school environment/culture and student outcomes. This was assessed using data collected through the Cycle 2 survey, interviews and focus groups conducted during site visits to the 20 sample grant-funded schools. Survey respondents, interviewees, and focus group participants were asked to provide perceptions about the effectiveness of their interventions, and school and student outcomes that occurred as a result of implementing the grant interventions. The findings from these data sources are presented below.

#### ***Intervention Quality***

One measure of the quality of an intervention is the extent that it is effective in producing the desired results. Survey respondents were asked to rate the extent that they perceived their campus interventions as effective. Ratings were on a 3-point scale (1 = not effective, 2 = somewhat effective, 3 = very effective). All of the ratings ranged between somewhat effective and very effective with highest ratings in 2006 for *credit accrual* activities (2.78), *accelerated instruction* (2.60), *dual credit* (2.51) interventions, and *tutoring* (2.46) programs. In a comparison of ratings from the 2005 and 2006 surveys, the only significant difference over time was for increase in perceived effectiveness of *credit accrual* activities. **Exhibit D-9** shows these findings.

**Exhibit D-9  
Effectiveness of the THSCS Grant Interventions**

Intervention	Perceived Effectiveness 2005		Perceived Effectiveness 2006	
	Mean	N	Mean	N
<i>Credit Accrual Activities*</i>	2.58	84	2.78	60
<i>Accelerated Instruction</i>	2.54	84	2.60	53
<i>Dual Credit</i>	2.21	42	2.51	35
<i>Tutoring</i>	2.57	97	2.46	67
<i>Advanced Placement/International Baccalaureate</i>	2.24	37	2.24	37
<i>Test Preparation (e.g., PSAT, SAT, ACT)</i>	2.34	65	2.23	43
<i>Early Interventions (e.g., 9th Grade Transition)</i>	2.36	58	2.19	43
<i>Mentoring</i>	2.11	73	2.11	46

*Source: Survey of Cycle 2 THSCS Grantees.*

*Note: Scale options – Effectiveness: 1 =Not Effective, 2 = Somewhat Effective, 3 = Very Effective.*

*\*Significant mean difference between 2005 and 2006 responses on Credit Accrual Activities (t = 2.351; p < .02).*

*\*Survey respondents had the option to mark more than one intervention. N – 2005 = 130; N – 2006 = 86.*

**School Environment/Culture**

To examine changes in the school environment and culture that may have occurred due to the implementation of the THSCS, Cycle 2 interventions, the 2006 survey respondents rated a number of statements representing desired school outcomes associated with the program. As shown in **Exhibit D-10**, over 80 percent of the respondents indicated that change occurred due to the program assessing student weaknesses and targeting instruction toward those areas. Further, changes in providing student services were indicated, as well as in the extent that teacher/staff collaboration was reported to have occurred due to the program interventions.

**Exhibit D-10**  
**Percent of Respondents Reporting Change or No Change in**  
**School Outcomes as a Result of the Program**

Item:	Change Occurred Due to Program	No Change Occurred Due to Program	Change Occurred but Not Because of Grant	Do Not Know	Mean*	N
Assessing Student Weaknesses	81%	5%	9%	5%	3.1	73
Targeted Student Instruction	92%	2%	2%	4%	3.4	81
Use of Individual Graduation Plans for Students	73%	8%	11%	8%	3.1	70
Student Support Services	88%	4%	7%	1%	3.4	78
Parent/Community Involvement	74%	14%	4%	8%	2.4	76
Teacher/Staff Collaboration	85%	5%	8%	2%	3.2	77
Teacher Professional Development	79%	11%	12%	8%	2.9	68

Source: 2006 Survey of THSCS, Cycle 2 Grantees.

Note: Scale options: Not at all=1, A little=2, Moderately=3, To a great extent=4, Change occurred but not because of grant=6, No opinion=0. Scale ratings of 2 through 4 were combined to reflect change occurring due to program. Scale rating 1 (Not at all) is reflected above as "No change occurred due to program."

\*Mean score based on rating options 1-4. Total N = 86.

Site visit interview and focus group participants were consistent with the survey results. The most frequently identified school outcome reported by interviewees was an increased ability to identify and assess students' weaknesses and provide targeted instruction. They explained that this was due to the successful implementation of the credit recovery software programs implemented, as well as increased use of Individualized Graduation Plans (IGPs), targeted counseling services, and early interventions.

Interviewees and focus group participants frequently reported an increase in teacher and staff collaboration. In many cases, staff commented that they met regularly to discuss the grant-supported interventions and plan for future work. In other cases, teachers reported an increase in collaborative approaches between teachers, and in some cases between teachers and counselors. Teachers said that this collaboration helped them to more easily handle student discipline problems, as well as work together to help the at-risk students. These findings are consistent with the survey results reported in **Exhibit D-10**.

### **Student Outcomes**

Respondents of the 2006 survey were also asked about student outcomes that may have resulted from their program interventions. **Exhibit D-11** indicates that over 80 percent of the respondents perceived the highest degree of change attributable to their campus interventions increased student motivation, TAKS performance, course credit accrual or recovery, and graduation rates.

**Exhibit D-11**  
**Percent of Respondents Reporting Change or No Change in**  
**Student Outcomes as a Result of the Program**

Item:	Change Occurred Due to Program	No Change Occurred Due to Program	Change Occurred but Not Because of Grant	Do Not Know	Mean*	N
Course credit accrual or recovery	85%	4%	6%	5%	3.5	76
Improved attendance	71%	8%	11%	10%	2.7	68
Increased student motivation	91%	0%	4%	5%	3.1	78
Improved student performance on TAKS	87%	2%	5%	6%	3.1	77
Completing advanced level courses	54%	26%	7%	13%	2.4	68
College readiness	77%	6%	7%	10%	2.8	71
Increased graduation rates	82%	4%	5%	9%	3.1	73
College attendance	63%	8%	7%	22%	2.5	61

Source: 2006 Survey of THSCS, Cycle 2 Grantees.

Note: Scale options: Not at all=1, A little=2, Moderately=3, To a great extent=4, Change occurred but not because of grant=6, No opinion=0. Scale ratings of 2 through 4 were combined to reflect change occurring due to program. Scale rating 1 (Not at all) is reflected above as "No change occurred due to program."

\*Mean score based on rating options 1-4. Total N = 86.

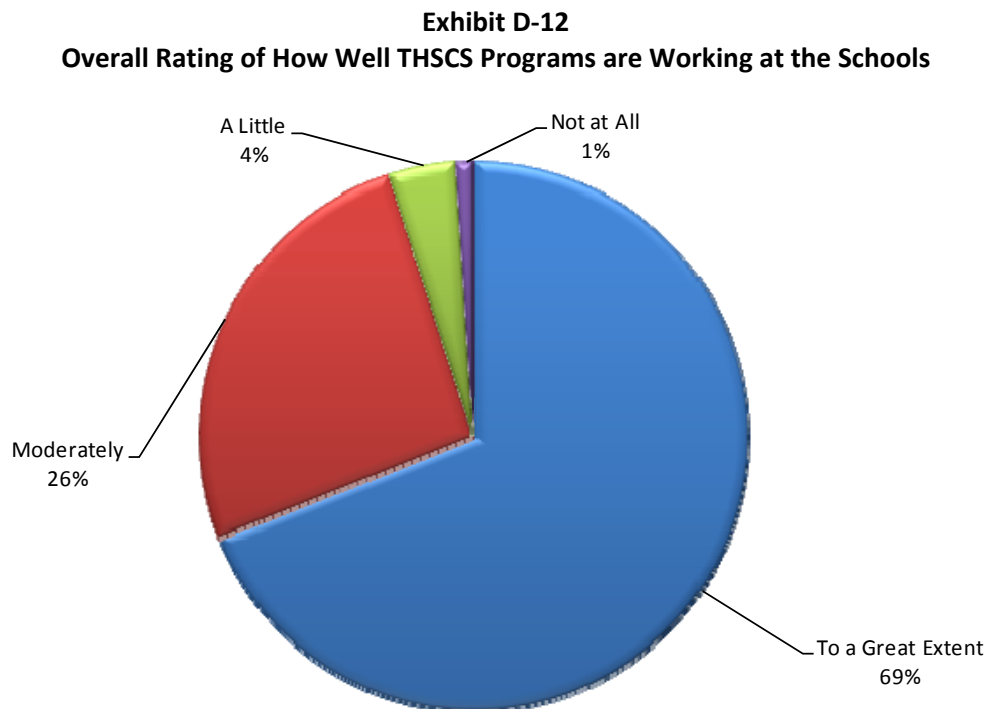
Interview data indicated findings similar to the survey ratings. For example, interview and focus group participants identified student-level outcomes that resulted from the THSCS, Cycle 2 Grant initiative that included increased numbers of students recovering or accruing course credits, improved attendance, increased graduation rates, and improved performance on TAKS. In addition, students in focus group sessions frequently reported increased motivation to complete high school and greater self-esteem after participating in the grant supported interventions. Because many of the students targeted with these interventions had a history of academic problems, their exposure to and use of the credit recovery software programs was viewed as one of their first opportunities to have a successful academic experience. Many students who participated in the software program reported an appreciation for the self-paced nature of the software and said they gained a sense of empowerment, confidence, and competency that frequently transferred back to the classroom. Students also reported that when they recovered credit, they felt less intimidated by TAKS and more confident about going to college.

Students who participated in *early intervention* programs were described as being better prepared for the high school environment. At one school, teachers of freshman mathematics and English classes said that incoming freshmen who participated in the grant-supported summer orientations were more prepared to start the semester with academic instruction. The high school students who participated in *mentoring* and *college readiness* programs reported similar increases in confidence and the majority of the students interviewed were confident they would graduate and described plans to go to college in the future.

Student focus group participants frequently described an appreciation for the one-on-one attention they received as a result of the grant-funded interventions. This was achieved through the self-paced

*credit recovery*, targeted counseling services, individualized *tutoring*, *mentoring*, and/or small teacher/student ratios that were implemented through the grant program.

When asked to provide an overall rating of how well they perceived their interventions as working at their schools, an overwhelming number of survey respondents reported their interventions were working moderately well (26 percent) or to a great extent (69 percent). **Exhibit D-12** shows these results.



Source: 2006 Survey of Cycle 2 THSCS Grantees.

The above findings lend support to information presented in the following section on promising practices. Observations and interview data from the four “promising practice” sites indicate similar characteristics and practices related to successful THSCS grant interventions.

The following represent major findings related to the implementation of the THSCS program:

- With respect to intervention outcomes, grantees reported more targeted instruction associated with an increased use of assessments of student weaknesses. Further, they indicated that grant activities led to improved teacher/staff collaboration in providing services to at-risk students. Student outcomes perceived to be most associated with grant interventions were increased student motivation, improved TAKS performance, credit accrual/recovery, and increases in graduation rates. Overall, more than two-thirds of grantees indicated that their interventions were making a significant difference in their schools.
- The most common intervention was associated with assisting students who were behind in credits to stay on track for graduation by providing credit recovery programs. Approximately

half of the grantees also used funds to implement tutoring services in specific subjects led by qualified teachers, peers, and/or community volunteers.

- Grantee schools reported implementing their interventions either mostly or fully. Only one of the 20 sites visited reported that they never reached the stage of active implementation of their interventions. As to the quality of the grantees' interventions, they reported *credit accrual*, *accelerated instruction*, *tutoring*, and *dual credit* programs as being most effective.
- Factors that facilitated successful intervention implementation included having district support, strong school leadership, school staff buy-in and collaboration, and an alignment of interventions with other school activities and priorities. Lack of time continued to be a hindering factor mentioned by grantees, but was reported as less of a factor in the second administration of the survey.

### Promising Practices

Over the course of this study, the evaluation team analyzed student performance progress and program implementation strategies in THSCS, Cycle 2 schools. The future direction of the THSCS program, including funding, program implementation, and program sustainability, depend in part on identifying new or existing characteristics and replicable practices that appear successful or show promise in meeting the goals set forth by this grant. This section identifies promising practices identified in THSCS, Cycle 2 schools. The discussion focuses on attempting to understand the particular characteristics and practices of successful THSCS Grant interventions and using this understanding as a basis for improving future interventions for struggling students. Two questions guided this discussion:

- To what degree do strategies identified align with the literature on dropout prevention and high school completion?
- Of the Cycle 2 schools identified as having higher than average increases in student achievement and graduation rates, what intervention features were reported as essential in changing schools?

To answer these questions, the evaluation team first set forth to determine which of the implementation strategies originally proposed by program grantees were actually implemented, and to what degree they were implemented. Information was gathered through site visits to 20 campuses in the spring and summer 2006 and through a survey to all 172 campuses participating in the grant initiative. In fall 2006, four school campuses were selected in an effort to identify promising practices. These campuses were selected based on their TAKS performance gains, school demographics, and the number of program interventions reported as being implemented. Because these schools showed better than average performance gains on TAKS, it was assumed that these schools were implementing successful programs.

Site visits to these schools helped evaluators identify interventions implemented, the factors that contributed to or hindered implementation, and the degree to which intervention implementation affected student performance and the school environment. A key area of inquiry was to understand the practices and strategies, or combinations of practices and strategies, that were perceived by site visit participants to have had a positive impact on student achievement outcomes. Central to this was understanding the range and diversity of interventions at the sites visited and identifying practices and interventions that support high school retention and graduation.

### ***Alignment Between Literature and Practice***

As noted in Section B, Background and Approach of this report, strategies identified in the literature (e.g., Lehr, Hansen, Sinclair, & Christenson, 2003; Rumberger, 2001) that aid in the prevention of students from dropping out of school and optimize the probability of high school completion include:

- Creating small schools with smaller class sizes and more personalized environments.
- Allowing teachers to know students better (e.g., building relationships, enhanced communication).
- Monitoring risk behaviors (e.g., collecting data; measure effects of timely interventions).
- Providing early interventions (e.g., family involvement, early childhood education, intensive instruction).
- Using community relationships for dropout prevention (e.g., career education, school-to-work programs, conflict resolution and violence prevention, effective personal skills programs).
- Providing individual assistance (academic and behavioral).
- Helping students address personal and family issues (e.g., counseling, social services, on-site health care, child care).
- Assisting students to obtain General Educational Development (GED) certificates.
- Recognizing the importance of families in their children's achievement and school completion.
- Providing opportunities for success in schoolwork (e.g., intensive reading instruction in early grades, tutoring, and curriculum modification to increase relevance).
- Creating supportive environments (e.g., mentoring, organizing extracurricular environments).

While a number of the strategies identified by these authors are addressed in the THSCS, Cycle 2 interventions, the evaluation team found that the most commonly implemented interventions were designed to address the more immediate student needs related to high school retention and graduation. In general, intervention practices in the four school campuses visited in fall 2006 mirror many of the strategies listed above. For example, many of the programs observed addressed individual student needs, assisted students in obtaining GED certificates, provided tutoring, credit accrual activities, curriculum modifications, and monitoring of data and risk behaviors. Programs aimed at college readiness, while perceived by grantees as important, were generally not viewed as central to the immediate needs of these schools. Further, only a few grantees were able to successfully engage community support or parental involvement in these processes.

Success refers to program elements and strategies that participants at the four selected sites perceived as meeting the specific needs of their students and campuses. These included:

- Increased summer school enrollment
- Increased positive feedback from parents
- Fewer freshmen students failing
- Decreased absenteeism in freshmen classes
- Increased freshmen knowledge of high school, graduation requirements, and scheduling
- Increased number of students recovering course credit
- Increase in the number of students in English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction passing TAKS
- Improved relationships with the local universities and community organizations



- Improved attendance
- Increased graduation rates
- Increased interest in attending college
- Increased exposure to college-level courses through the dual credit program
- Increased college awareness (visits from college staff, assistance with college application process)
- Improved student self esteem and self-image
- Shift in student culture from apathy toward success

While the four selected sites showed higher gains in the stated selection criteria, similar reflections from the 20 sites visited in the spring and summer 2006 occurred, providing support for the delineation of promising practices found from the fall site visits. The promising practices recounted in this discussion reflect a notion of “success” broadened beyond graduation rates or TAKS scores, and reflecting more so the participants’ perception of success in accordance to their capacities and needs.

### ***Effective School-Level Practices***

This section discusses both common characteristics of schools that facilitated the implementation of the THSCS Grant program interventions as well as practices that were viewed as instrumental in attaining successful school outcomes.

Certain characteristics of a school’s organizational structure can facilitate and/or support successful implementation of school improvement interventions. During interviews, participants referred to specific characteristics of their schools and districts which supported implementation in terms such as: strong leadership, principal involvement, clear goals and staff roles, and good flow of communication between teachers and counselors. These reflect the facilitating factors most often identified in the survey: *school buy-in, school leadership, district support, and program alignment with other school activities*. The evaluation team found these characteristics to be present in the four schools targeted for fall 2006 site visits. These are discussed below.

#### *1. Mutual communication and information flow between school and district staff.*

District initiatives that encouraged campus ownership of programs through school involvement in grant writing or through involvement in the planning processes resulted in an overall higher degree of integration of new programs with other school efforts and initiatives already in place. Effective integration frequently leads to program success, in turn resulting in a higher probability of program institutionalization. Administrators in these schools solicited school staff input in selecting THSCS Grant program activities and strategies which increased school buy-in and helped identify grant components that would be aligned with successful practices already in place at the campuses. In two of these schools, interviewees reported that, through engagement in these communication processes, school culture changes resulted that helped structure how they approached future grant initiatives.

Three of the four schools were in small districts. Each of these three districts had only one high school.<sup>1</sup> The evaluation team found that in these situations, campus staff shared a close working

<sup>1</sup> The fourth site was in a large school district and in this case the THSCS was coordinated with a national foundation (Schools for a New Society, SNS) which serves more than one high school.

relationship with district-level staff. These tight knit relationships promoted program support, buy-in, and coordination with other existing school or district-level programs. Participation by school staff in the early phases created ownership of the program which led to effective implementation of selected program interventions.

2. *Site-based practical knowledge.*

Similar to the above point, the four fall site visit schools showed that programs are more successful when they originate at the school level, or at a minimum when school staff are active partners in the grant process. Other site visits conducted through the evaluation process showed that less successful programs were based on district directives with little or no school-level input. During interviews at the fall site visit schools, campus staff explained that they were in the best position to know what their students need and to assess the overall impact of various programs and interventions.

3. *Leadership and collaboration.*

Effective leaders play a key role in successful program implementation. Likewise, the degree to which people collaborate is equally important to ensure that a program is effectively implemented. THSCS programs that were supported by strong leadership, and where staff collaborated effectively, typically had promising results. Effective leadership was listed previously as a characteristic that facilitates program implementation. Leadership and collaboration are the foundation for any program. These factors promote program buy-in, stability, and growth. Strong leadership can lead to improved teacher morale and to an overall positive school climate.

The four schools visited allocated a *Grant Coordinator* position to ensure that grant activities would be effectively implemented. This practice differed from schools where grant implementation became the responsibility of staff that already had full-time duties. In these cases, the grant activities became more dissipated. In schools where a part- or full-time grant coordinator existed, grant activities were more closely monitored and followed. The funding of this position provided a critical resource that contributed to the grant's success. Professional and personal attributes of the grant coordinator are also important to developing strong collaborations with district and school staff, students, parents, and teachers. At these campuses, some of the coordinators were previously teachers or principals and were highly qualified to coordinate grant activities.

Examples of effective leadership and collaborative practices found from the four fall site visits include:

- Program staff with discrete roles and clear responsibilities.
- Team coordination among district, campus administration, and teachers.
- Regular communication flow among administrators, teachers, and program staff to discuss student issues and school plans related to the grant.
- Early planning between district administrators and school staff (including grant writing).
- Experienced program coordinator position to manage the grant. This position will have adequate time to manage all grant related activities.

- Integrated evaluation and documentation of the grant process.
- Collaboration between and among teachers and counselors on IGPs to support the needs of each student and guide them to meeting their goals.
- Staff clarity of program vision and expectations on collaboration of different program components like counseling and teachers getting data for the student IGPs so fewer students “fall through the cracks”.
- Teacher/tutor collaboration to assess students’ progress and identify potential behavioral problems/academic issues

3. *Continuity, sustainability, and alignment to programs and practices in place.*

Successful THSCS programs assessed initiatives and activities that were already in place, did not necessarily try to “re-invent the wheel,” and incorporated new programs by seeking grants that would enhance, improve, and/or expand already successful practices. For example, one of the sites THSCS program was linked to previous initiatives created in 2002 to support students having difficulties passing the TAKS; the school sought grants to implement programs to improve performance on TAKS for 9<sup>th</sup> graders. Continuity in grant-seeking efforts is valuable, especially because school, state and national student performance goals may often extend beyond grant funding timelines.

4. *School culture, expectations*

The culture, or environment, at a school has a large impact on all school activities. School culture influences how staff feels about each other as well as how they treat each other and students. It can impact whether staff feels appreciated and whether they are an integral part of the educational process. Ultimately, the degree to which staff engages positively in school initiatives is impacted by the school culture, as are the messages and expectations they deliver to students.

THSCS programs with positive school cultures created a sense of community about the grant, and ensured that common goals and defined student expectations permeated the school. Within this promising school culture, staff reported that more students viewed graduation as a “real” option. Teachers indicated that their relationship with students improved and students, in turn, noted that teachers were sympathetic with and understanding of their needs. Schools with a positive culture had clear goals, open communication, and an excitement and motivation about the school and its programs. Characteristics of positive school cultures include:

- Encouragement of open and honest communication and evidence of humor and trust.
- School recognition programs for all school and program staff, and students.
- High expectations for students’ academic success, college readiness, and career development through coordinated program services.

6. *Data driven decision making and shared, integrated evaluation information is shared and integrated.*

Successful programs are data driven; that is, they use available data to make important evaluation and management decisions. Data are used to ensure curriculum alignment and make decisions regarding individual student needs and program direction. The use of various student-level data monitoring systems that include information such as personal graduation plans and student class progress has created more goal-oriented and student focused programs. Monitoring the extent to which the program activities are achieving expected outcomes allows for adjustments if needed and maximizes the potential gains for students. Examples of data used in successful schools include:

- Diagnostics to target students' instructional needs that are based on specifically-identified areas of weakness.
- Identification of student-level weaknesses by TEKS' objectives with results integrated into class instructional designs.
- Ongoing monitoring of students at the individual level.
- Grant coordinator classroom "walkthroughs" and ongoing conversations with teachers about student progress.

A grant coordinator at one of the sites mentioned the change at her school since they have been tracking student progress. For their school, the ongoing knowledge tracking of student progress through TEKS objectives provided them a systematic way for addressing the curriculum and student performance. At another site, the grant coordinator mentioned the use of the Cambridge Knowledge System (CKS)<sup>2</sup> as being an important tool for managing and monitoring their campus programs. The database information was used by teachers to better address their students' needs, and by the counselor to develop personal graduation plans for students. Staff at this school indicated that they collected and shared program and student information, as well as that related to TEKS alignment, and that doing so allowed them to focus their teaching in a more targeted way.

### ***Effective Intervention-Level Practices***

There were a number of program interventions described by site visit staff as working well in their schools and for their student populations. Among them were *course recovery*, *credit accrual*, *tutoring*, *mentoring*, *accelerated instruction*, *early interventions*, and *dual credit*. These interventions were described by program staff as influential in moving toward positive school and student outcomes. However, each school and student population is unique and the success of their interventions is relative to the degree that the interventions were effectively implemented. The program elements discussed in

<sup>2</sup> "Cambridge Knowledge Systems has developed a web-based Personal Graduation Planner (PGP) system. This program supports the community of practice model and is designed for all stakeholders (counselor, teacher, student and parents) to be able to access up-to-date information on each student. With the Personal Graduation Planner, district & school administrators can: Identify educational goals for the student; access diagnostic information (including prior year's TAKS, SDAA, RPTE, PSAT, SAT scores); record appropriate monitoring, intervention, and other evaluation strategies; address participation of a student's parent or guardian, including consideration of parent/guardian's education expectations for the student; and compare a student's individual graduation plan to various state and district graduation plans and immediately see where credit or course gaps exist." Source: <http://www.cksc.com/>

this section are not discrete in that they overlap or may pertain to multiple program activities. A specific feature of the program intervention might be implemented in a credit accrual course, a tutorial, and mentoring sessions. For example, the use of technological tools or individualized attention might be a feature of all three. It is important to remember that the categorization of these elements is fluid; that is, the common elements reported in the four site visits are related to many other factors that were also identified in a number of the 2006 sites visits, such as positive collaboration and leadership qualities, as well as other school culture characteristics.

Several common elements emerged through site visit observations and interviews with campus staff in the four sites visited in the fall of 2006. Among these were flexible activity options; individualized attention; technological learning tools; summer bridge programs; and exposure to college environments.

### 1. *Flexible Activity Options*

Successful programs provided a variety of student services in a flexible manner. For example, a student may enroll in *credit recovery* courses or attend *tutoring* sessions during the regular school day, in the evening, or during the summer based on their and their family schedules, thereby accommodating transportation problems, after-school work schedules, or other issues that might prevent their attendance. Successful programs allowed students multiple options for meeting their needs. As such, many students with full class loads were able to recover credits in a timely manner. Examples seen in site visit campuses include:

- Providing an elective class during the regular school day for students to enroll in *course accrual, credit recovery, or tutoring* sessions.
- Providing multiple times for students to access the computer or tutoring labs.
- Providing TAKS tutoring in the 10<sup>th</sup> grade prior to the exit-level test, in addition to after the student has been tested in their senior year.

### 2. *Individualized Attention*

Promising programs ensured that teachers were provided with tools that helped them focus on individual student needs. This practice enabled students to focus on their own performance and see their own possibilities instead of being left behind in classes. Examples of such practices are:

- Small teacher/student ratios that allow for one-on-one attention during program intervention activities (e.g., tutoring, credit recovery).
- Reducing counselor ratio and class size for the students who need most attention (with both academic difficulties and personal issues).
- Providing a freshman transition counselor who completes IGPs for every incoming freshman.
- Providing after school and summer school programs that allow staff to tailor instruction and provide individualized assistance to students.

### 3. *Technological Learning Tools*

Promising programs make new and emerging technology available to assist students and provide more options for them to complete courses and graduate. Instructional technology

tools also allow teachers to use different instructional approaches to meet the different learning styles of their students. Many programs that take advantage of new technology are easily accessible, allowing homebound students and/or students transitioning into the school from another school or from an alternative campus to meet the academic requirements of the school. Examples of technology tools used in promising programs include:

- Computer assisted instructional programs that are well-produced, engaging to the students, that provide teacher guides, student tutorials, and are aligned to the TEKS;
- Computer laptop lending programs to strengthen parent awareness and involvement in their child's education and school;
- An updated and frequently available school computer lab for the students.

#### 4. *Summer Bridge and Summer Programs*

Summer bridge programs assist entering freshmen to become familiar with high school life—policies, schedules, expectations, etc. Students become more familiar with the campus, develop a relationship with an adult at the school, and understand what is expected of them as they prepare to enter high school. Sites visited that used this strategy as part of their grant intervention programs reported more well-adjusted freshmen with better attendance records and more focus on their academics. Elements of these summer sessions include:

- Building of relationships between 9<sup>th</sup> graders and adult school staff to help the students feel comfortable in the transition into the high school environment.
- An orientation to high school culture and expectations.
- A two session program: two weeks on, two weeks off, and then students return for two weeks. Students receive a break, and are better able to retain what they learned for their upcoming freshman year (allowing for the summer session to end closer to when the new school year will begin).

#### 5. *Exposure to College Environments*

Programs that provided student exposure to college environments had students that were more motivated to attend college. A combination of grant program services focused on college readiness was shown to allow students a more realistic view of college opportunities and expectations. From this perspective, students can consider their capacities in relation to their future career goals. In programs that integrated this strategy, features often included:

- Field trips to local colleges and universities.
- Dual credit courses.
- Career guidance.
- Job placement components (to provide financial aid, career exposure).
- Preparation for taking college entrance exams (e.g., SAT/ACT)
- Tutors and/or mentors from local colleges and universities.

### ***Summary of Promising Practice Site Findings***

The THSCS program practices identified at these sites were aligned with the literature on dropout prevention and high school completion. Most frequently seen were practices addressing individual student needs to enable on-time graduation. Fewer sites, however, were seen to emphasize college

readiness activities and community and parent engagement. *Tutoring, credit recovery/credit accrual, early intervention, and accelerated instruction* activities were offered on a flexible basis to accommodate students and their families, provided one-on-one and self-paced instruction, and employed technology both for student activities and program monitoring purposes. These activities proved most effective when combined with several school culture characteristics including a mutual flow of information between district and school staff in grant writing and planning processes, the appointment of staff to oversee and manage program activities, alignment of activities with existing school improvement initiatives, and data driven program monitoring and decision-making. Effective leadership, along with a school culture that shares a respect and high expectations for its students can combine to produce desired changes based in selected interventions.

**Exhibit D-13** shows examples of the best practice literature components and some of those characteristics and elements of the THSCS Grant program interventions that correspond:

**Exhibit D-13  
Best Practice Characteristics**

Promising Practices Literature	THSCS Promising Practice Schools
Creating small schools with smaller class sizes and more personalized environments	Addressed primarily through mentoring approaches and lab study time – more time with particular subject of difficulty, more one-on-one time.
Allowing teachers to know students better (e.g., building relationships, enhanced communication)	The implementation of student data monitoring to identify areas of weakness resulted in targeting student instructional needs. Programs such as mentoring and lab study time allowed teachers and students to build stronger relationships. Programs using counselors also provided the establishment of student/adult staff relationships and communication.
Monitoring risk behaviors; Providing individual assistance	Facilitated by knowledgeable staff with clarity of expectations that supported staff collaboration focused on student success (e.g., teacher and counselor collaboration on students’ individual graduation plans to stay informed of student academic needs).
Assisting students to obtain GED certificates	Important aspect of these THSCS Grant program interventions, but more focused on recovery programs to graduate students with diplomas.
Providing opportunities for success in schoolwork; creating supportive environments	These were specifically addressed through mentoring, credit recovery, and tutoring programs.

Source: Martin, Tobin, & Sugai, 2002; Rumberger, 2001; Lehr, Hansen, Sinclair, & Christenson, 2003

### **Highlighting Program Successes**

The following two case studies are presented to show how program characteristics and elements combine in ways that lead to effective implementation and changes in school-level practices and performance. These examples are from two of the four fall site visits.

#### **Campus A:**

The grant coordinator of the THSCS Grant was experienced in grant writing, administration of grants, and, as a former principal, managing school initiatives. This was a small district, and district- and campus-level staff reported close relationships between the two entities. These characteristics manifested themselves in good communication between the campus and the central office during the THSCS Grant writing and planning stages. As such, campus staff reported a strong sense of ownership in the THSCS program because they felt their input about what they and their students needed was heard.

The grant coordinator's leadership ability translated into a participatory and collaborative atmosphere from the beginning of the grant writing process. This proved to be critical in securing staff buy-in, which was present from the outset. To target student needs, the district used grant funds to purchase technology tools for the diagnostic and monitoring processes needed for assessing student weaknesses and tracking program and student progress toward program goals. School counselors worked with students to track and follow up on their progress toward graduation goals as specified in their personal graduation plans – developed between the student and counselor, and reviewed and signed by the student's parents.

Depending upon student needs, a number of programs are offered. Among them are *drop-out prevention*, *course recovery*, and *TAKS tutorials*. All are offered on a flexible schedule, both as individual and computer self-paced instruction, numerous times throughout the school day as well as before and after school. They are also offered as summer courses and in a lab setting. Student progress is monitored through a combined effort of the grant coordinator and teachers. Observations of students in program activities and classrooms are conducted by the grant coordinator who also has ongoing conversations with teachers as to students' progress. The system of monitoring includes forms that are a regular part of documenting the progress of students receiving THSCS services, and the information on the forms includes students' status with respect to meeting the TEKS. In this school, teachers, administrators, and the grant coordinator collaborate and share information that includes students' perceptions of their own progress.

The capacity of leadership and collaboration at this site appear to have set the stage for the successful implementation of the THSCS initiative. However, certain practices such as flexibility in program services, one-on-one as well as self-paced instruction, and continual documentation and monitoring of student progress have combined to move this site's students toward successful outcomes aligned with the goals of the grant program.



**Campus B:**

Prior to the implementation of the THSCS program, teachers worked in relative isolation with little collaboration that focused on student achievement needs. As an extremely disadvantaged population, educational attainment was not primary in the minds of students' families, which for many students is a motivator in continuing on to higher education. School staff frequently mirrored these sentiments. In receiving THSCS Grant funding, and as a requirement for obtaining those funds, the district and school staff collaborated on a plan to target their many at-risk students. From the planning and subsequent implementation of their plans, the staff began to alter their perceptions of the at-risk students. Instead of seeing the negative aspects of these students, they began looking to finding their potential. A systemic change in their school culture occurred.

Instrumental in this shift was the grant coordinator. Her ability to work collaboratively with staff and campus administration to bring the important issues to the forefront led to an understanding of the cultural factors at play in the student population of their school. In focus groups, both teachers and students attested to the grant coordinator's ability to listen and hear what each had to say. This created a participatory and collaborative environment in which to deal with student performance difficulties.

Individual remediation plans and graduation plans were developed for each of the at-risk students, and teachers' curricula began to address student weaknesses. The program funded lab time for *tutoring* sessions, TAKS preparation, and *credit recovery* activities that were offered both before and after school to accommodate students and their families' schedules. Summer classes for student remediation were also offered through the THSCS Grant. Two labs housed additional computers and software programs purchased through the grant.

An additional aspect of this school's THSCS Grant program involved college readiness and workforce support. As many of these students are the first generation in their families to attend college, this part of the program helped them and their families see value in the options a college education could provide, and it helped them to develop and focus on new goals for their lives. In collaboration with the area's junior college, dual credit courses were offered at the high school, and interest and enrollment in these classes has increased. Further, the program offers a job placement service to help students and their families with the financial aspects associated with continuing education.

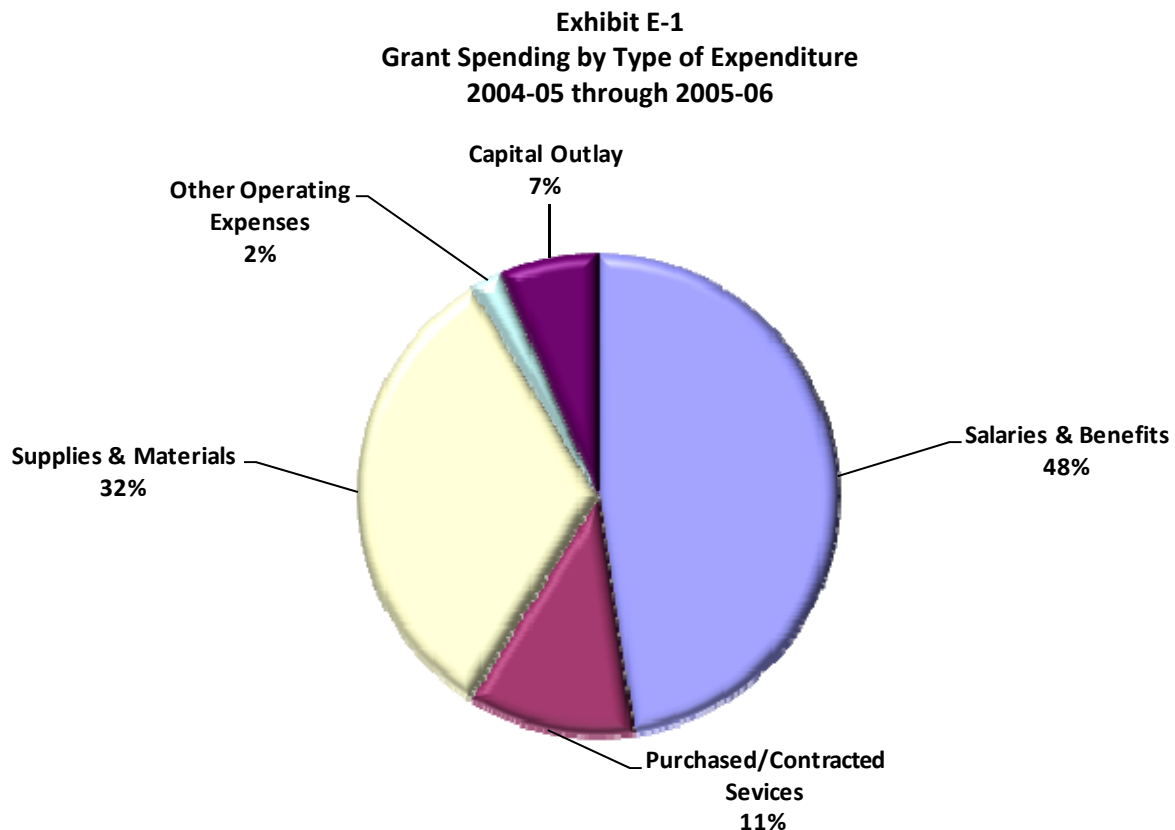
Finally, as in many of the sites visited, emphasis has been placed on managing and using data to support program efforts. At this campus, the grant coordinator disaggregates data by hand, providing feedback to her teachers. Since this is a time consuming process, she noted that the school is going to invest in a data management software program that will be more efficient in examining and disseminating information to teachers and staff.

## E. Cost Analysis

This section presents an updated cost analysis of the Texas High School Completion and Success Grant (THSCS), Cycle 2. While not requested in the Texas Education Agency’s (TEA) original scope of work for this project, it was believed that this analysis would add value to TEA’s efforts in designing and implementing cost effective programs. HB 1 of the special legislative session in 2006, indicated an interest by the Texas Legislature in determining how school systems use financial data to support the evaluation of cost-effectiveness of instructional programs. The intent of this section is to provide TEA with suggestions for improved tracking of grant expenditure data going forward so that cost-effectiveness can be more easily evaluated.

### Major Cost Analysis Findings

The February 2007 THSCS, Cycle 2 interim report found that there were no discernible relationships between the major types or level of expenditures - such as personnel costs, contracted services, supplies and equipment - and effective programs. Schools reported similar levels of perceived effectiveness regardless of their spending patterns. As shown in **Exhibit E-1**, most of the grant expenditures related to personnel (48 percent) and supplies (32 percent).



*Source: Grantee School Districts Financial Budget and Actual Expenditures by Fund, Function, Object, Program, and Organization.*

The THSCS, Cycle 2 Interim Report presented several data issues at the state and district level. In order to provide schools with maximum flexibility in using these funds to support program objectives, no intervention names or standards were developed by TEA at the beginning of the Cycle 2 program. As a result, intervention-level expenditure data was not available because it was not tracked. Detailed expenditure analysis at the program level was also limited because schools could report multiple grants under a single account code. District-level data issues included the use of different accounting systems, different applications of accounting codes, different fiscal years, and the varying degree of use of other funds to support activities funded by the THSCS, Cycle 2 Grant.

Because of these data limitations, the evaluation team worked with financial officers and program staff from a sample of five schools to conduct additional research regarding grant expenditures. Selection of the schools was based on the participating students shown to have the highest student performance improvement in TAKS Reading and TAKS Mathematics. Site visits were conducted in January, April, and May 2007. The two objectives of this site work were to better understand the types of program expenditures and to reconstruct expenditures at the intervention level.

During these site visits, the evaluation team interviewed the business managers to gain a better understanding of how grant funds were expended. Program staff provided additional information on programs and services that were funded through the Cycle 2 grant program. Each school provided detailed accounting information to the evaluation team, more than what was required by TEA through its grant reporting and more than that provided through the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS). Examples of data provided included general ledgers and transaction journals that provided more descriptive information regarding program expenditures. Finance and program staff also provided verbal descriptions clarifying how funds were spent.

**Exhibit E-2** presents grant spending at the five schools combined based on detailed type of expenditure. The expenditure data is not available for all grantees for two reasons: (1) grant reports provided to TEA do not require specific line items of expenditure – only summary categories such as personnel, supplies and contracted services; and (2) financial data reported through PEIMS may not reflect expenditures related only to this grant, but other funding sources as well. Expenditures charged against this grant were coded in the accounting system to a “fund code,” but this fund code was also used to report similar, non-THSCS grant expenditures. For example, fund 409 – Basic Skills Programs for High School Students – is used both for the THSCS grant expenditures as well as other grants/programs with similar purposes.

The expenditure types in **Exhibit E-2** represent an “object” code of expenditure based on TEA prescribed data standards. An object code describes the expenditure in terms of how the resource was used. Most of the grant expenditures occurred in the 61xx accounts, or those relating to personnel costs. The 62xx accounts relate to contracted services, the 63xx to supplies, and 64xx to other operating. The amounts represent expenditures incurred from the inception of the program through the end of February 2007, the extended date for spending allowed by TEA.

Some of expenditures types have the same code but different descriptions. Code 6118, for example, is defined as Teacher Pay at some schools and Extra Duty Pay (supplemental after school or summer school pay) at others. This occurs because Code 6118 is not a defined code in the PEIMS Data Standards. School districts may assign their own definitions to locally defined codes for certain account numbers. This complicates the analysis since the account codes may mean different things at different school districts and charter schools.

The largest expenditures among these schools were for teacher/professional pay, substitute pay, school supplies and instructional software. Most of the teacher pay related to after-school or summer school supplemental pay. In other instances, teachers were paid through the grant for a regular day class that was developed through the THSCS grant program. Instructional software represented licensing fees, and the software was generally used to support individualized instruction in a *credit accrual* or *accelerated instruction* intervention. "Other Payroll Payments" represents pay for additional counselors, a campus-based intervention. "Contracted Services" represented consultant or trainer fees. Teacher/consultants in some instances taught classes, and in other instances provided supplemental training to school teachers.

In this sample of five grantees, expenditures for personnel related items (61xx codes) represented 58 percent of the total, higher than the 48 percent reported for all grantees.

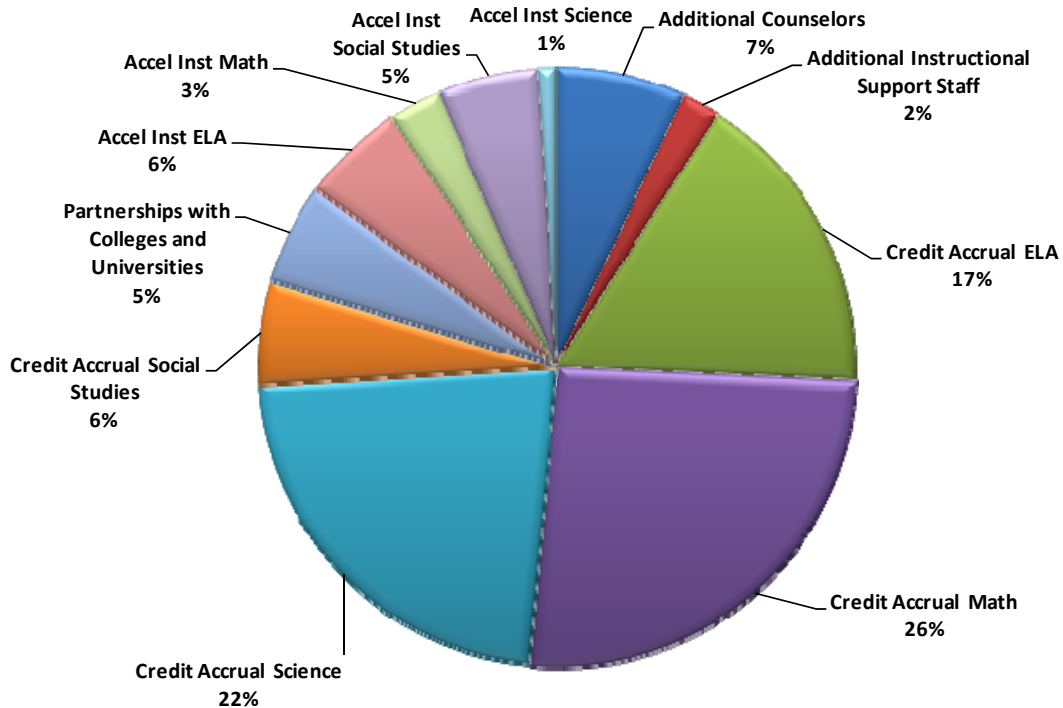
**Exhibit E-2**  
**Selected Schools Detailed Types of Grant Expenditures**

Expenditure Type	Amount
<b>6100: Payroll Costs</b>	
6117 Other Payroll Payments	\$ 35,680
6118 Extra Duty Pay - Professional	\$ 80,001
6118 Teacher & Other Professionals	\$ 37,105
6119 Teacher & Other Professionals	\$ 41,148
6121 Extra Duty Pay/Overtime-Support Personnel	\$ 11,997
6127 Subs - Support Personnel	\$ 77,256
6129 Support Personnel	\$ 31
6141 Social Security/Medicare	\$ 4,024
6142 Group Health and Life Insurance	\$ 194
6143 Workers' Compensation	\$ 2,815
6144 TRS on - Behalf Benefit	\$ 4,566
6145 Unemployment Compensation	\$ 103
6146 Teacher Retirement/TRS Care	\$ 2,023
<b>6100 Subtotal</b>	<b>\$ 296,943</b>
<b>6200: Professional and Contracted Services</b>	
6219 Professional Services	\$ 35,190
6257 Utilities	\$ 2,500
6295 Printing	\$ 13,444
<b>6200 Subtotal</b>	<b>\$ 51,134</b>
<b>6300: Supplies and Materials</b>	
6321 Textbooks	\$ 5,576
6329 Reading Materials	\$ 943
6339 Testing Materials	\$ 2,933
6395 Computer Software	\$ 60,000
6396 Furniture & Equip <\$5000	\$ 32,010
6399 General Supplies	\$ 67,755
<b>6300 Subtotal</b>	<b>\$ 169,217</b>
<b>6400: Other Operating Costs</b>	
6412 Travel & Subsistence-Students	\$ 3,517
6494 Transportation	\$ 1,000
6499 Miscellaneous Operating Costs	\$ 2,378
<b>6400 Subtotal</b>	<b>\$ 6,895</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 524,189</b>

*Source: 2007 school site visits*

Based on the review of detailed accounting information and interviews with program and financial staff at the five schools, expenditures were allocated to specific interventions. For purposes of this analysis it was assumed that the expenditures at the intervention level were mutually exclusive. **Exhibit E-3** shows the breakdown of the estimated costs by intervention for the five schools combined. The majority of the grant funds, 71 percent, were used for *credit accrual* interventions in one or more subject areas. Fifteen percent of the grant funds were spent on *accelerated instruction* and 7 percent for *counselors*. Approximately 5 percent was spent for *partnerships with colleges and universities* and 2 percent for *Additional Instructional Support Staff*.

**Exhibit E-3**  
**Selected Schools' Expenditures by Interventions**  
**2004-05 and 2005-06**



Source: Grantee School Districts Financial Budget and Actual Expenditures by Fund, Function, Object, Program, and Organization, 2004-05, 2005-06, and 2006-07 (as of February 28, 2007).

The estimated costs at the intervention level were compared to campus and student level interventions reported as being used by the same schools through separate data collections of this study. However, significant differences between what was reported as being “spent on interventions” versus “interventions used” undermined the reliability of the intervention level cost estimates. Measures of expenditures per student or per student full-time equivalent (FTE) at the intervention level are not meaningful because of these data limitations. Other site visit findings raised concerns about data quality:

- At one school, program staff described (and reported student participation in) an intervention as a *tutorial*, but the intervention more closely resembled a *credit accrual* intervention or other classroom setting based on the intervention description and expenditure data.
- At another school, the number of students reported in 2005-06 included students served by the same tutorial program as 2004-05, even though grant funds were not used to support it that year. Other grants, not THSCS, were used to continue this program in 2005-06.
- At several schools, it was difficult for administrators to explain expenditure data based on insufficient codes, data, or descriptions in the accounting system.

Based on interviews with fiscal and program staff, insufficient planning time to determine how to optimize the use of grants funds may have contributed to the inconsistencies noted above.

### Recommendations for Tracking Grant Expenditures

This report provides several recommendations for improving the ability of TEA to better understand THSCS program expenditures and evaluate and compare the cost-effectiveness of specific program interventions. These suggestions may also benefit other TEA grant programs.

1. **Develop a standardized cost reporting framework within the existing state accounting code structure to provide more meaningful, consistent, and complete program cost information at the program and intervention level.** The existing account code structure for Texas school districts does not support an adequate collection or analysis of program/service costs and student participation at the school level. Because there has been such limited research conducted to evaluate the cost-effectiveness of programs and services, it is difficult to tie investments to outcomes. With the assistance and feedback of school districts, TEA should conduct a cost analysis to identify evaluation elements that should be tracked to evaluate the cost effectiveness of programs and services. As the state undertakes additional educational initiatives, a formal costing model would allow the state to more effectively allocate funding to programs that have the most positive impact on student performance and that are cost-effective.

In developing the cost framework for programs, the state/TEA should identify what cost elements to include in the analysis. All associated program costs, regardless of the funding source should be collected to derive accurate cost estimates. Any duplicate costs should be highlighted and coordinated efforts should be developed to ensure that all funds, from all sources, are being spent effectively.

2. **Define intervention or other lower level categories to differentiate services at the inception of the grant program.** TEA should define intervention services or categories at the beginning of the program and require expenditure data to be tracked at this level. Setting the criteria at this time gives schools districts time to properly set up their accounts to report at the intervention level. Asking schools to provide this information during the middle of the grant or after the grant has expired cannot be expected to yield reliable or meaningful results. Consideration should be given to intervention names and categories of similar grant programs, as some grants allow multiple funding sources to support the same or similar programs. From the school district's standpoint, it would be useful to view what is spent on a particular program or intervention regardless of the funding source.
3. **Establish detailed budgets at the grant intervention level.** Schools are required to submit a Program Budget when applying for grants with expenditures shown by object code. Requesting that the schools establish their budgets at the grant intervention level during the application process will ensure that schools have aligned their projected expenditures to the interventions that they propose to offer with the grant funds. This recommendation will require staff to charge or allocate their time to specific interventions so that related expenditures can be tracked.

4. **Require a unique account code for each grant and develop account coding alternatives for schools to track lower level expenditures.** By assigning grants a unique account code, grant expenditures can be reviewed in isolation. Because of different accounting systems used by school districts, TEA should provide guidance on how intervention level expenditures should be tracked in school district account code structures. An adequate coding system will ensure that grant funds between interventions can be differentiated throughout the life of the grant.
5. **Track student participation headcount and FTE for each student-level intervention.** An analysis of expenditures per student headcount is useful, but it does not reflect the intensity of the intervention or the level of resources required. Some interventions, such as *tutorials*, can range from an hour a day to an hour every month. Other interventions, such as a *credit accrual* class, may represent an identical time commitment as a regular class. Cost per participating student may not be as meaningful unless headcount data is converted to FTE through the collection of participating student hours.
6. **Analyze expenditures throughout the program life cycle.** It would be preferable for the grantees to report their cost and participation data electronically on a quarterly basis. Grantees should also be required to report to TEA their budget versus actual reports and performance measures results at the intervention level on a quarterly basis. Schools districts visited by the evaluation team stated that these types of reports would help them, and the state, determine if they are on target with their grant spending.

By clearly establishing more detailed accounting and reporting requirements at the beginning of the grant program, schools can implement the necessary coding mechanisms to track program expenditures at the intervention level. This will ensure that the necessary management information is available to perform cost-effectiveness analyses at the school, district, and state levels.

The THSCS program cost analysis was effective in identifying how grantees used resources to support interventions, and provided insights as to how more useful expenditure data can be obtained by TEA going forward. In summary:

- The top three detailed expenditure categories for program spending were teacher pay, supplemental teacher pay, and teacher substitute costs, and the level of spending in these three areas was similar. The types of personnel expenditures varied based on the types of interventions provided by the participating schools. The most significant non-personnel expenditures were general supplies (workbooks, instructional materials) and software. Schools used instructional software to support *credit accrual* as well as other interventions.
- Reconstruction of costs at the intervention level did not produce reliable results at any of the school districts visited. The types of interventions “funded,” as expressed through expenditure descriptions, did not align with those reported in student participation data.
- Based on interviews with fiscal and program staff, school districts indicated that there was insufficient planning time to determine how to optimize the use of grant funds. As a result, programs and related expenditures were delayed at some schools.
- School systems are willing and generally able to track expenditures at lower and more useful levels of detail if they are provided instructions to do so before the program is implemented.



# **APPENDIX A**

# Evaluation of the Texas High School Completion and Success (THSCS) Grant Initiative, Cycle 2

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. The primary purpose of this survey is to identify the status of the high school programs that are currently receiving THSCS, Cycle 2 funds. THSCS programs refer to any activities, interventions, or strategies implemented or put into place with funds from the THSCS grant since October 2004 when grant funds were awarded. We specifically want to know the nature and status of the program at your school and how it is working. For more information or clarification regarding this survey please contact Melissa Dodson, SEDL Evaluation Associate, [mdodson@sedl.org](mailto:mdodson@sedl.org), (800) 476-6861 or Jessica Sievert, TEA, [Jessica.Sievert@tea.state.tx.us](mailto:Jessica.Sievert@tea.state.tx.us), (512) 463-7814.

## Background Information

---

1. What is your **current position** at your school? (Mark all that apply)

- 1 Project Director/Grant Coordinator
  - 1 Campus Principal/Asst. Principal
  - 1 Teacher
  - 1 Counselor
  - 1 Other? (Please specify)
- 

4. What **funding sources pay for your role** in the THSCS program? (Mark all that apply)

- 1 THSCS grant funds
  - 1 Local funds
  - 1 State funds
  - 1 Federal funds
  - 1 Other funds (Please specify)
- 

2. What is your **role in the THSCS grant funded program** at your school? (Mark all that apply)

- 1 Project Director/Grant Coordinator
  - 1 Administrator
  - 1 Teacher
  - 1 Counselor
  - 1 Tutor
  - 1 Mentor
  - 1 Instructional Aide
  - 1 Other? (Please specify)
- 

5. Is the **campus principal who originally put the THSCS grant program in place** still employed in this school or district? (Mark one response only)

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- Don't know

3. What **percentage of your time** is currently dedicated to the THSCS grant program? (Mark one response only)

- 1 0-25%
- 2 26-50%
- 3 51-75%
- 4 76-100%

6. Is the **project director who originally put the THSCS grant program in place** still employed in this school or district? (Mark one response only)

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- Don't know

7. Please respond to the following items. (Please mark one oval on each line)

a. Prior to receiving the grant awards, to what extent were you involved with planning the THSCS program strategies for your school?	Not at all	A little	Moderately	Extensively	Not Sure
	1	2	3	4	0
b. Currently, to what extent are you involved in the daily operation of the THSCS program strategies at your school?	Not at all	A little	Moderately	Extensively	Not Sure
	1	2	3	4	0
c. At this point in time, to what degree would you say the THSCS program has been implemented at your school?	Not at all implemented	Somewhat implemented	Mostly Implemented	Fully implemented	Not Sure
	1	2	3	4	0
d. How similar would you say the program has been implemented as it was originally planned and proposed in the application?	Not at all similar	Slightly similar	Moderately similar	Exactly as planned	Not Sure
	1	2	3	4	0

## Barriers to Implementation

8. Please indicate below which program activities/strategies were originally planned, *but did not get implemented?* (Mark all that apply)

1	a. Accelerated instruction
1	b. Advanced Placement/International Baccalaureate
1	c. Credit accrual activities
1	d. Dual credit
1	e. Early interventions (9th grade transition)
1	f. Mentoring programs
1	g. Test preparation (PSAT, SAT, ACT)
1	h. Tutoring
1	i. Other (please specify):

9. Please rate to what extent the following factors *hindered* implementation of THSCS funded activities at your school *from October 2004 until today*.

(Please mark one oval on each line)

	Not at all	A little	Somewhat	A great deal	Don't know
a. Insufficient time/Over-commitment	1	2	3	4	0
b. Lack of evidence of desired effects	1	2	3	4	0
c. Poor planning	1	2	3	4	0
d. Lack of buy-in from campus leadership	1	2	3	4	0
e. Inadequate project management	1	2	3	4	0
f. Lack of school staff support/buy-in	1	2	3	4	0
g. Insufficient resources	1	2	3	4	0
h. Inadequate staff development/training	1	2	3	4	0
i. Limited space	1	2	3	4	0
j. Other? (Please specify):	1	2	3	4	0

## Current THSCS Program Activities at Your School

10. Which of the following THSCS grant-funded program activities *currently exist at your school*? (Mark to the left all that apply and for those marked, respond to the items to the right.)

Current (2006-07) THSCS Grant-Funded Program Activities at your school	a. How well was each marked program <i>planned</i> to meet the needs of the students in your school?			b. How well was each marked program <i>implemented</i> or put into place at your school?			c. To date, <i>how effective</i> has the program been in producing the desired results?		
	Poor	Fairly well	Well	Poor	Fairly well	Well	Not effective	Somewhat effective	Very effective
1 a. Accelerated instruction	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
1 b. Advanced Placement /International Baccalaureate	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
1 c. Credit accrual activities	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
1 d. Dual credit	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
1 e. Early interventions (9th grade transition)	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
1 f. Mentoring programs	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
1 g. Test preparation (PSAT, SAT, ACT)	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
1 h. Tutoring	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
1 i. Other (please specify):	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3

## Factors that Facilitate Implementation of THSCS Programs

11. From October 2004 until today, to what extent did the following factors *facilitate* implementation of THSCS programs at your school.

(Please mark one oval on each line)	Not at all	A little	Somewhat	A great deal	Don't Know
a. District support	1	2	3	4	0
b. School leadership	1	2	3	4	0
c. School staff support and buy-in	1	2	3	4	0
d. Community/parent involvement	1	2	3	4	0
e. Commitments by partnering schools, higher education, or community/ parent organizations	1	2	3	4	0
f. Alignment of programs with school activities	1	2	3	4	0
g. Clearly defined program goals and staff roles	1	2	3	4	0
h. Regular collaboration/ communication between program staff and administrators	1	2	3	4	0
i. Other? (Please specify):	1	2	3	4	0

12. Since October 2004 when grant funds were awarded, *were THSCS funds used to pay for additional staff* at your school?

- 1 Yes                      2 No (If “no” – skip to Question 13)

If “yes,” please mark which positions were funded and whether they were part-time or full-time positions **during the grant contract period:**

THSCS, Cycle 2 grant-supported school staff positions	Which positions were funded?	Part-time	How many?	Full-time	How many?
Project Director/Grant Coordinator	1	1		1	
Teacher	1	1		1	
Instructional Aide	1	1		1	
Tutor	1	1		1	
Mentor	1	1		1	
Counselor	1	1		1	
Other? (Please specify)	1	1		1	

**Outcomes of THSCS, Cycle 2 Grant Program Activities**

13. At this point in time, please provide your opinion as to the extent that the THSCS program activities have influenced *changes in your school*. If you believe change has occurred, but not related to the grant program, please mark the oval in the column labeled “*Change occurred but not because of grant,*” and move to the next item.

Influenced school changes related to:	Change occurred but not because of grant	Not at all	A little	Moderately	To a great extent	No Opinion
a. Assessing student weaknesses	6	1	2	3	4	0
b. Providing targeted student instruction	6	1	2	3	4	0
c. Use of individual graduation plans (IGPs) for students	6	1	2	3	4	0
d. Student support services (e.g., targeted counseling sessions, early interventions, tutoring, mentoring)	6	1	2	3	4	0
e. Parental/community involvement	6	1	2	3	4	0
f. Teacher and staff collaboration	6	1	2	3	4	0
g. Teacher professional development	6	1	2	3	4	0

Please provide any comments or clarification of your responses to Question #16: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

14. At this point in time, please provide your opinion as to the extent that the THSCS program activities have influenced **changes related to student outcomes**. If you believe change occurred, but not related to the grant program, please mark the oval in the column labeled “*Change occurred but not because of grant,*” and move to the next item.

Influenced student changes related to:	Change occurred but not because of grant	Not at all	A little	Moderately	To a great extent	No Opinion
a. Course credit accrual or recovery	6	1	2	3	4	0
b. Improved attendance	6	1	2	3	4	0
c. Increased student motivation	6	1	2	3	4	0
d. Improved student performance on TAKS	6	1	2	3	4	0
e. Completing advanced level courses	6	1	2	3	4	0
f. College readiness	6	1	2	3	4	0
g. Increased graduation rates	6	1	2	3	4	0
h. College attendance	6	1	2	3	4	0

Please provide any comments or clarification of your responses to Question #17: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

15. Overall, do you think that the THSCS grant program is working well for your school?

Not at all	A little	Moderately	To a great extent	No Opinion
1	2	3	4	0

# Evaluation of the Texas High School Completion and Success (THSCS) Grant Initiative, Cycle 2

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. The primary purpose of this survey is to identify the status of the high school programs that are currently receiving THSCS, Cycle 2 funds. THSCS programs refer to any activities, interventions, or strategies implemented or put into place with funds from the THSCS grant since October 2004 when grant funds were awarded. We specifically want to know the nature and status of the program at your school and how it is working. For more information or clarification regarding this survey please contact Melissa Dodson, SEDL Evaluation Associate, [mdodson@sedl.org](mailto:mdodson@sedl.org), (800) 476-6861 or Jessica Sievert, TEA, [Jessica.Sievert@tea.state.tx.us](mailto:Jessica.Sievert@tea.state.tx.us), (512) 463-7814.

## Background Information

---

1. What is your **current position** at your school? (Mark all that apply)

- 1 Project Director/Grant Coordinator
  - 1 Campus Principal/Asst. Principal
  - 1 Teacher
  - 1 Counselor
  - 1 Other? (Please specify)
- 

4. What **funding sources pay for your role** in the THSCS program? (Mark all that apply)

- 1 THSCS grant funds
  - 1 Local funds
  - 1 State funds
  - 1 Federal funds
  - 1 Other funds (Please specify)
- 

2. What is your **role in the THSCS grant funded program** at your school? (Mark all that apply)

- 1 Project Director/Grant Coordinator
  - 1 Administrator
  - 1 Teacher
  - 1 Counselor
  - 1 Tutor
  - 1 Mentor
  - 1 Instructional Aide
  - 1 Other? (Please specify)
- 

5. Is the **campus principal who originally put the THSCS grant program in place** still employed in this school or district? (Mark one response only)

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- Don't know

3. What **percentage of your time** is currently dedicated to the THSCS grant program? (Mark one response only)

- 1 0-25%
- 2 26-50%
- 3 51-75%
- 4 76-100%

6. Is the **project director who originally put the THSCS grant program in place** still employed in this school or district? (Mark one response only)

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- Don't know

7. Please respond to the following items. (Please mark one oval on each line)

a. Prior to receiving the grant awards, to what extent were you involved with planning the THSCS program strategies for your school?	Not at all	A little	Moderately	Extensively	Not Sure
	1	2	3	4	0
b. Currently, to what extent are you involved in the daily operation of the THSCS program strategies at your school?	Not at all	A little	Moderately	Extensively	Not Sure
	1	2	3	4	0
c. At this point in time, to what degree would you say the THSCS program has been implemented at your school?	Not at all implemented	Somewhat implemented	Mostly Implemented	Fully implemented	Not Sure
	1	2	3	4	0
d. How similar would you say the program has been implemented as it was originally planned and proposed in the application?	Not at all similar	Slightly similar	Moderately similar	Exactly as planned	Not Sure
	1	2	3	4	0

## Barriers to Implementation

8. Please indicate below which program activities/strategies were originally planned, *but did not get implemented?* (Mark all that apply)

1	a. Accelerated instruction
1	b. Advanced Placement/International Baccalaureate
1	c. Credit accrual activities
1	d. Dual credit
1	e. Early interventions (9th grade transition)
1	f. Mentoring programs
1	g. Test preparation (PSAT, SAT, ACT)
1	h. Tutoring
1	i. Other (please specify):

9. Please rate to what extent the following factors *hindered* implementation of THSCS funded activities at your school *from October 2004 until today*.

(Please mark one oval on each line)

	Not at all	A little	Somewhat	A great deal	Don't know
a. Insufficient time/Over-commitment	1	2	3	4	0
b. Lack of evidence of desired effects	1	2	3	4	0
c. Poor planning	1	2	3	4	0
d. Lack of buy-in from campus leadership	1	2	3	4	0
e. Inadequate project management	1	2	3	4	0
f. Lack of school staff support/buy-in	1	2	3	4	0
g. Insufficient resources	1	2	3	4	0
h. Inadequate staff development/training	1	2	3	4	0
i. Limited space	1	2	3	4	0
j. Other? (Please specify):	1	2	3	4	0



## Current THSCS Program Activities at Your School

10. Which of the following THSCS grant-funded program activities *currently exist at your school*? (Mark to the left all that apply and for those marked, respond to the items to the right.)

Current (2006-07) THSCS Grant-Funded Program Activities at your school	a. How well was each marked program <i>planned</i> to meet the needs of the students in your school?			b. How well was each marked program <i>implemented</i> or put into place at your school?			c. To date, <i>how effective</i> has the program been in producing the desired results?		
	Poor	Fairly well	Well	Poor	Fairly well	Well	Not effective	Somewhat effective	Very effective
1 a. Accelerated instruction	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
1 b. Advanced Placement /International Baccalaureate	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
1 c. Credit accrual activities	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
1 d. Dual credit	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
1 e. Early interventions (9th grade transition)	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
1 f. Mentoring programs	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
1 g. Test preparation (PSAT, SAT, ACT)	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
1 h. Tutoring	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
1 i. Other (please specify):	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3

## Factors that Facilitate Implementation of THSCS Programs

11. From October 2004 until today, to what extent did the following factors *facilitate* implementation of THSCS programs at your school.

(Please mark one oval on each line)	Not at all	A little	Somewhat	A great deal	Don't Know
a. District support	1	2	3	4	0
b. School leadership	1	2	3	4	0
c. School staff support and buy-in	1	2	3	4	0
d. Community/parent involvement	1	2	3	4	0
e. Commitments by partnering schools, higher education, or community/ parent organizations	1	2	3	4	0
f. Alignment of programs with school activities	1	2	3	4	0
g. Clearly defined program goals and staff roles	1	2	3	4	0
h. Regular collaboration/ communication between program staff and administrators	1	2	3	4	0
i. Other? (Please specify):	1	2	3	4	0

12. Since October 2004 when grant funds were awarded, *were THSCS funds used to pay for additional staff* at your school?

- 1 Yes                      2 No (If “no” – skip to Question 13)

If “yes,” please mark which positions were funded and whether they were part-time or full-time positions **during the grant contract period:**

THSCS, Cycle 2 grant-supported school staff positions	Which positions were funded?	Part-time	How many?	Full-time	How many?
Project Director/Grant Coordinator	1	1		1	
Teacher	1	1		1	
Instructional Aide	1	1		1	
Tutor	1	1		1	
Mentor	1	1		1	
Counselor	1	1		1	
Other? (Please specify)	1	1		1	

**Outcomes of THSCS, Cycle 2 Grant Program Activities**

13. At this point in time, please provide your opinion as to the extent that the THSCS program activities have influenced *changes in your school*. If you believe change has occurred, but not related to the grant program, please mark the oval in the column labeled “*Change occurred but not because of grant,*” and move to the next item.

Influenced school changes related to:	Change occurred but not because of grant	Not at all	A little	Moderately	To a great extent	No Opinion
a. Assessing student weaknesses	6	1	2	3	4	0
b. Providing targeted student instruction	6	1	2	3	4	0
c. Use of individual graduation plans (IGPs) for students	6	1	2	3	4	0
d. Student support services (e.g., targeted counseling sessions, early interventions, tutoring, mentoring)	6	1	2	3	4	0
e. Parental/community involvement	6	1	2	3	4	0
f. Teacher and staff collaboration	6	1	2	3	4	0
g. Teacher professional development	6	1	2	3	4	0

Please provide any comments or clarification of your responses to Question #16: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

14. At this point in time, please provide your opinion as to the extent that the THSCS program activities have influenced **changes related to student outcomes**. If you believe change occurred, but not related to the grant program, please mark the oval in the column labeled “*Change occurred but not because of grant,*” and move to the next item.

Influenced student changes related to:	Change occurred but not because of grant	Not at all	A little	Moderately	To a great extent	No Opinion
a. Course credit accrual or recovery	6	1	2	3	4	0
b. Improved attendance	6	1	2	3	4	0
c. Increased student motivation	6	1	2	3	4	0
d. Improved student performance on TAKS	6	1	2	3	4	0
e. Completing advanced level courses	6	1	2	3	4	0
f. College readiness	6	1	2	3	4	0
g. Increased graduation rates	6	1	2	3	4	0
h. College attendance	6	1	2	3	4	0

Please provide any comments or clarification of your responses to Question #17: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

15. Overall, do you think that the THSCS grant program is working well for your school?

Not at all	A little	Moderately	To a great extent	No Opinion
1	2	3	4	0

# **APPENDIX B**

<TEA Letterhead>

To the Campus Principal Addressed:

Thank you for your continued leadership and support for the Texas High School Completion and Success (THSCS), Cycle 2 grant program in which your school is currently receiving funding. In order to examine the impact of activities funded through this grant program, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) has contracted with a highly-experienced external evaluator, Gibson Consulting Group and Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (Gibson/SEDL), to conduct a third-party evaluation of this grant program. The Gibson/SEDL team are administering surveys to all THSCS, Cycle 2 grant recipients to gather information from the schools about their THSCS grant-funded programs and how they are working. As the Campus Principal, we ask that you complete the survey and distribute the remaining surveys to campus staff that work closely with the THSCS grant-funded program at your school.

**For every Cycle 2 campus, surveys should be completed by the Campus Principal and 3-5 campus staff that serve the THSCS grant-funded program.**

Appropriate school staff to complete the survey include *staff working directly with the grant program and/or implementing grant-funded interventions*. These may include:

- Campus Principal (required completion)
- Assistant Principal
- Project Director/ Grant Coordinator
- Teachers
- Counselors
- Tutors

Please distribute the surveys to the appropriate staff no later than **December 6, 2005**. Please do not distribute the surveys to others who do not meet the above criteria. As you distribute the survey packets, please stress to your staff the importance of returning the surveys by **December 13, 2005**. A self-addressed, pre-paid reply envelope is provided for your convenience. If you prefer, the survey may be accessed online by going to the following Website: <http://www.sedl.org/es/thscs>.

For those who choose to complete the survey on-line, a code must be entered to access the Web site. These codes can be found on the cover sheet to the survey and in the upper left-hand corner of the paper survey. Your campus principal code is: **cag51m1234**.

The entire survey should take about 10-15 minutes to complete. Please read each item carefully and answer all of the questions. Your identity and responses to this survey are confidential and we appreciate candid responses.

For more information or clarification regarding this survey please contact Melissa Dodson, SEDL Evaluation Associate, [mdodson@sedl.org](mailto:mdodson@sedl.org), (800) 476-6861 or Sonia Castaneda, TEA, [Sonia.Castaneda@tea.state.tx.us](mailto:Sonia.Castaneda@tea.state.tx.us), (512) 936-2282. Thank you for your continued dedication, leadership, and support for Texas students.

Sincerely,



Nora Ibáñez Hancock, Ed.D.  
Associate Commissioner  
Office for Planning, Grants and Evaluation

<TEA Letterhead>

To the Survey Recipient:

Your school is currently receiving TEA funds under the Texas High School Completion and Success (THSCS), Cycle 2 grant program. In order to examine the impact of activities funded through this grant program, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) has contracted with experienced external evaluators from Gibson Consulting Group and Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (Gibson/SEDL) to conduct a third-party evaluation of this grant program.

The Gibson/SEDL team are administering surveys to all THSCS, Cycle 2 grant recipients to gather information from Cycle 2 schools about their THSCS grant-funded programs, their status, and how they are working.

**For every Cycle 2 campus, surveys should be completed by the Campus Principal and 3-5 campus staff that serve the THSCS grant-funded program.**

Appropriate school staff to complete the survey include *staff working directly with the grant program and/or implementing grant-funded interventions*. These may include:

- Campus Principal (required completion)
- Assistant Principal
- Project Director/ Grant Coordinator
- Teachers
- Counselors
- Tutors

The Campus Principal at your school has identified you as among the appropriate school staff to complete the survey. The entire survey should take about 10-15 minutes to complete. Please read each item carefully and answer all of the questions. Your identity and responses to this survey are confidential and we appreciate candid responses.

If you prefer, you may access and complete the survey on-line by going to the following Website:

<http://www.sedl.org/es/thscs> The on-line survey will require a survey ID #.

**Please use the following code to enter the Online Survey:**

**[INSERT ID# HERE cag51m1234]**

If you choose to complete the paper survey, please return it to the address listed below using the pre-paid return envelope by **December 13, 2005**. We ask that online surveys be completed by **December 13, 2005**, as well. For more information or clarification regarding this survey please contact Melissa Dodson, SEDL Evaluation Associate, [mdodson@sedl.org](mailto:mdodson@sedl.org), (800) 476-6861 or Sonia Castaneda, TEA, [Sonia.Castaneda@tea.state.tx.us](mailto:Sonia.Castaneda@tea.state.tx.us), (512) 936-2282. Thank you for your continued dedication, leadership, and support for Texas students. Thank you for your continued dedication and support for Texas students.

Sincerely,



Nora Ibáñez Hancock, Ed.D.  
Associate Commissioner  
Office for Planning, Grants and Evaluation

**Return Surveys to: SEDL Evaluation Services, 211 East 7<sup>th</sup> Street, Austin, TX 78701  
DUE: DECEMBER 7, 2005**

# **APPENDIX C**

# TEXAS EDUCATION AGENCY'S TEXAS HIGH SCHOOL COMPLETION AND SUCCESS GRANT CYCLE 2

## Student Participation Database Entry Guidelines

Spring 2006 Cycle 2 Programs Data Collection Period:  
May 15- June 16, 2006

Welcome to the Texas High School Completion and Success (THSCS) Grant Cycle 2 student participation database, an online data entry tool for identifying and logging contact hours for students participating in grant funded interventions at your campus. Data entry will occur via a secure SEDL Web site (shown below). Every Cycle 2 campus will be expected to enter data during the specified data collection period. Data should be reported for students who participated in grant funded interventions the previous semester.

### This document includes information on:

- Overview and Preparing for Data Entry
- Getting Started
- Navigating the THSCS Student Database
- Identifying Grant Funded Programs at Your Campus
- Identifying Participating Students
- Reports and Submitting Data
- Reporting Problems

### Overview and Preparing for Data Entry

This database will collect two types of data:

1. Campus level information regarding the number and types of THSCS-supported interventions at a Cycle 2 school.

School staff will report whether certain campus-level interventions exist at their schools by checking "yes" or "no" from a list of possible grant-supported activities.

2. Student-level information regarding the extent to which populations of students have participated in interventions.

School staff will report whether certain student-level interventions exist at their schools by checking "yes" or "no" from a list of possible grant-supported activities. For those interventions that do exist, students who have participated in them will be identified and the number of contact hours they participated will be entered. School staff responsible for data entry log into the database that already contains a list of students by grade level for the campus. In order to complete these records, staff can search by student name, grade level, and/or social security and add records of students as needed.

The person responsible for entering the data will need the following kinds of records:

- List of grant supported programs at the campus.
- Participation records for each grant program. These may include tutoring sign-in sheets, counseling records, and/or technology lab attendance records.



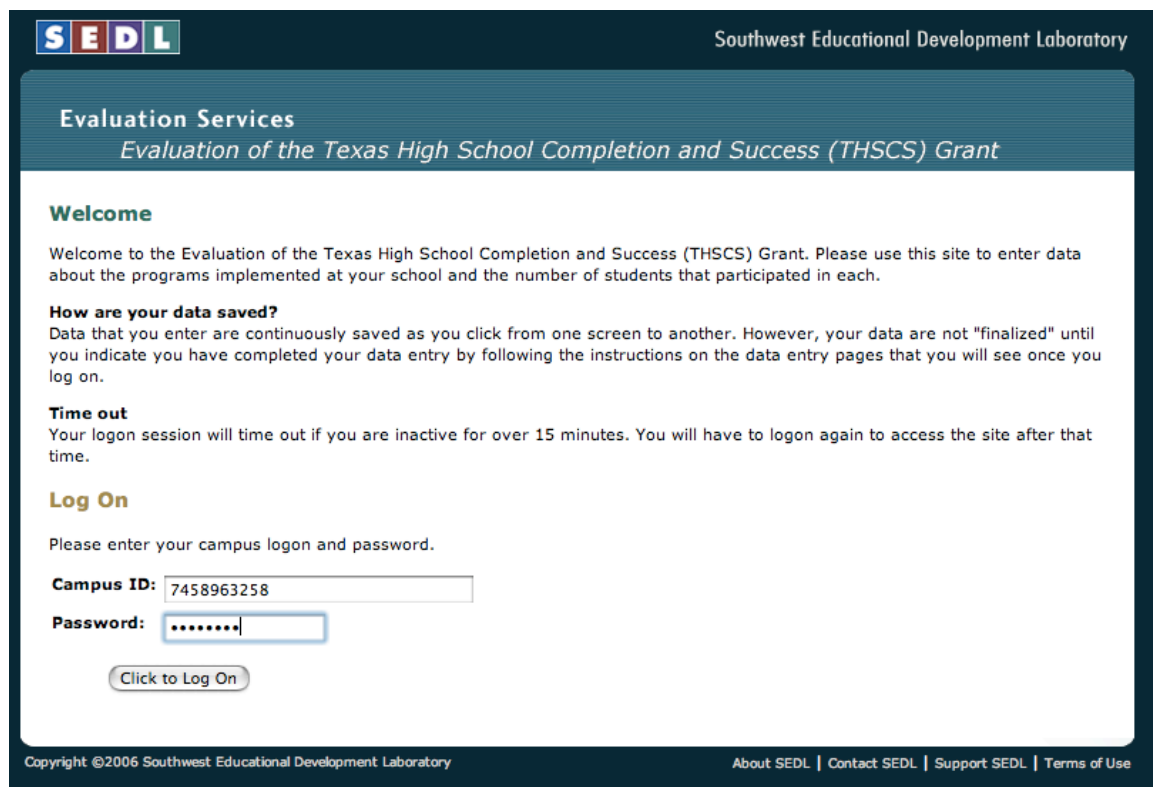
## Getting Started

### *Security Passwords*

The THSCS database contains confidential, personal information on students at your campus including names, grade level, and the last four digits of their social security numbers. This information was obtained from the PEIMS 05 fall snapshot and pre-populated into the database to assist with data entry. PLEASE NOTE: Students manually added for the Fall 2005 data entry period are also included in the Spring 06 database. Because of the secure nature of the data, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) directs that each individual authorized to enter the student-level data for their grant-funded campus have a unique password to access the secure database. Superintendents of the Cycle 2 grant recipients will provide SEDL with the names of the employees authorized by the district to access the information on the SEDL Web site. Each person on the list will be assigned a user-ID and password. User-IDs and passwords will be provided via letters and email from SEDL.

### *Logging-In to the Database*

1. GO TO: <http://www.sedl.org/es/texas>



The screenshot shows the SEDL (Southwest Educational Development Laboratory) website. The page title is "Evaluation Services" and the subtitle is "Evaluation of the Texas High School Completion and Success (THSCS) Grant". The page is divided into several sections: "Welcome", "How are your data saved?", "Time out", and "Log On". The "Log On" section contains a form with two input fields: "Campus ID" and "Password". The "Campus ID" field contains the value "7458963258" and the "Password" field contains "\*\*\*\*\*". Below the form is a button labeled "Click to Log On". The footer of the page contains the copyright information "Copyright ©2006 Southwest Educational Development Laboratory" and links for "About SEDL", "Contact SEDL", "Support SEDL", and "Terms of Use".

2. ENTER CAMPUS ID: Each Cycle 2 campus has a 9-digit Campus District Code (CDC) number that serves as their user-id.
3. ENTER PASSWORD: Each authorized data entry person has been assigned a password that consists of random numbers and letters.
4. CLICK TO LOG ON: Click the button at the bottom of the screen to log on to the database and begin entering data.

## Navigating the THSCS Student Database

Once you are logged on to the SEDL Web site, you can navigate to all areas of the website using the navigation options listed at the top of each screen.

There are four steps of data entry. To move from one step to the next, simply select the next step from the options listed. You may return to a previous screen and edit your data at any time during the data collection period.



The screenshot shows the SEDL (Southwest Educational Development Laboratory) website interface. At the top, the SEDL logo is on the left and the full name is on the right. Below this is a header for "Evaluation Services" with a subtitle "Evaluation of the Texas High School Completion and Success (THSCS) Grant". The main content area is divided into two columns. The left column, titled "Navigation Options", lists four steps: Step 1 (Identify the THSCS Grant-Supported Programs that Affect the Whole School) is marked "COMPLETE" in green; Step 2 (Identify the THSCS Grant-Supported Programs at Your School that are Participated in by Targeted Groups of Students) is marked "COMPLETE" in green; Step 3 (Identify Students and Number of Participating Hours) is marked "INCOMPLETE" in red; and Step 4 (Indicate that You Have Completed Data Entry for this Data Collection Period) is marked "INCOMPLETE" in red. The right column, titled "Your Logon", shows the user is logged on as school ID: 071902008, with a link to "log out".

Each step is considered **INCOMPLETE** until data have been saved using the "save edits" button at the bottom of the page. Once a step has been saved, the database will show the step as **COMPLETE** in the navigation options. Step 3 will be marked complete only after you have pressed the submit button in Step 4 to indicate that data entry is complete.

**Saving data.** Data that you enter are continuously saved as you click from one screen to another by clicking the "save edits" button at the bottom of the page.

[Click to save your edits to this page](#)

Data entry can take place over any amount of time during the data collection period. You can logout at any time and return to log into the database. Saved data entered previously will still remain in the database. After re-entry into the database, you can continue entering data, adding to the saved data. When you are done with your data entry, you will be asked to submit your data. This indicates that data entry is complete. Prior to submitting data for your school, please check with all authorized data entry staff to be certain data entry is complete.

**Time out.** Your logon session will time out if you are inactive for 15 minutes. You will have to logon again to access the site after that time. You may logout at any time using the logout link in the top right-hand corner.

## Identifying Grant Funded Programs at Your Campus

**Step 1:** The first step is to indicate which THSCS grant-supported programs that affect the entire student population have been implemented *during the specified time period* (i.e., fall 2005 or spring 2006). For proposed interventions that were planned but not implemented or for interventions that were implemented in previous semesters but dropped for the current time frame, please check "no."

The screen shows a list of possible grant-supported programs with descriptions. You will need to indicate yes or no that such programs are implemented at your school.

Click the "save edits" button to save your responses.

### Step 1 of 4 - Identify the THSCS Grant-Supported Programs that Affect the Whole School

**Directions:**

The first step is to indicate which THSCS grant-supported programs that affect the entire student population have been implemented since grant funds were awarded. **Please indicate "yes" or "no" for each of the items listed below, then click the "Save your edits to this page" button at the bottom of the page.** For proposed programs that have been planned but not implemented to date, please mark "no."

PROGRAMS THAT AFFECT THE WHOLE SCHOOL		
Implemented in My School?		Program Name
<input checked="" type="radio"/> yes <input type="radio"/> no		<b>Additional counselors</b> Additional counseling services to assist students in the development of their individualized plans. Counseling services may include academic, awareness of advanced-level courses, post-secondary, personal and crisis intervention, career, and advocacy programs.
<input checked="" type="radio"/> yes <input type="radio"/> no		<b>Additional instructional support staff</b> Part-time or full-time school staff who are supported by grant funds such as instructional aides and/or lab technicians.
<input type="radio"/> yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> no		<b>Highly qualified teachers</b> Additional qualified teachers to teach specialized core areas, accelerated instruction, advanced courses, college preparation.
<input checked="" type="radio"/> yes <input type="radio"/> no		<b>Parental involvement</b> May include programs that provide parent or guardian volunteers and mentors and/or training for parents.
<input checked="" type="radio"/> yes <input type="radio"/> no		<b>Partnerships with colleges and universities</b> May include partnerships that provide dual credit, college visits, software or online courses, and/or college mentors and tutors for core curriculum, advanced courses, and/or ACT/SAT preparation.
<input type="radio"/> yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> no		<b>Partnerships with feeder schools or other school districts</b> May include partnerships that align curriculum, provide mentors and tutors, share special purpose teachers, purchase materials and/or equipment.
<input type="radio"/> yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> no		<b>Partnerships with local businesses and/or community relations</b> May include partnerships that provide business and community mentors, equipment and supplies, training and work study, donations, and/or sponsored events.
<input type="radio"/> yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> no		<b>Teacher professional development</b> May include professional development programs from district trainers, Education Service Centers, private providers, and/or online courses.

Click to save your edits to this page

**Step 2:** The second step is to report whether certain student-level interventions existed at your school for the specified time period (i.e., fall 2005 or spring 2006) by checking "yes" or "no" from a list of possible grant-supported activities.

Click the "save edits" button to save your responses.

**Step 2 of 4 - Identify the THSCS Grant-Supported Programs at Your School that are Participated in by Targeted Groups of Students**

**Directions for Step 2:**  
The second step is to indicate which THSCS grant-supported programs have been implemented since grant funds were awarded that are participated in by only targeted groups of students. **Please indicate "yes" or "no" for each of the items listed below, then click the "Save your edits to this page" at the bottom of the page.** For proposed programs that have been planned but not implemented to date, please mark "no."

PROGRAMS THAT AFFECT ONLY CERTAIN STUDENTS IN THE SCHOOL	
Implemented in My School?	Program Name
<input type="radio"/> yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> no	<b>Accelerated instruction in English language arts</b> Structured academic enrichment learning programs that assist students who do not pass TAKS. Programs may include remedial courses, tutoring, and/or out-of-school activities.
<input type="radio"/> yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> no	<b>Accelerated instruction in Mathematics</b> Structured academic enrichment learning programs that assist students who do not pass TAKS. Programs may include remedial courses, tutoring, and/or out-of-school activities.
<input type="radio"/> yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> no	<b>Accelerated instruction in Science</b> Structured academic enrichment learning programs that assist students who do not pass TAKS. Programs may include remedial courses, tutoring, and/or out-of-school activities.
<input type="radio"/> yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> no	<b>Accelerated instruction in Social studies</b> Structured academic enrichment learning programs that assist students who do not pass TAKS. Programs may include remedial courses, tutoring, and/or out-of-school activities.
<input type="radio"/> yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> no	<b>Advanced placement/ International bacheloreate</b> Programs that prepare students to successfully pass Advance Placement and/or International Baccalaureate exams.
<input type="radio"/> yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> no	<b>Child care</b> Programs that provide on-site licensed child care facilities and/or financial support for students to have licensed professional care to supervise their children while they complete high school courses.
<input checked="" type="radio"/> yes <input type="radio"/> no	<b>Credit accrual activities in English language arts (credit recovery, online courses, flexible entry or exit courses)</b> Credit recovery courses in <b>English language arts</b> to assist students who are behind in credits to stay on track for graduation. These may include after school activities, summer courses, online courses and software (i.e., Plato, NovaNet, ELLIS, ASKME), programs designed to allow for flexible entry or exit from courses, and/or supplemental activities.
<input checked="" type="radio"/> yes <input type="radio"/> no	<b>Credit accrual activities in Mathematics (credit recovery, online courses, flexible entry or exit courses)</b> Credit recovery courses in <b>Mathematics</b> to assist students who are behind in credits to stay on track for graduation. These may include after school activities, summer courses, online courses and software (i.e., Plato, NovaNet, ELLIS, ASKME), programs designed to allow for flexible entry or exit from courses, and/or supplemental activities.
<input type="radio"/> yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> no	<b>Credit accrual activities in Science (credit recovery, online courses, flexible entry or exit courses)</b> Credit recovery courses in <b>Science</b> to assist students who are behind in credits to stay on track for graduation. These may include after school activities, summer courses, online courses and software (i.e., Plato, NovaNet, ELLIS, ASKME), programs designed to allow for flexible entry or exit from courses, and/or supplemental activities.
<input type="radio"/> yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> no	<b>Credit accrual activities in Social studies (credit recovery, online courses, flexible entry or exit courses)</b> Credit recovery courses in <b>Social studies</b> to assist students who are behind in credits to stay on track for graduation. These may include after school activities, summer courses, online courses and software (i.e., Plato, NovaNet, ELLIS, ASKME), programs designed to allow for flexible entry or exit from courses, and/or supplemental activities.
<input checked="" type="radio"/> yes <input type="radio"/> no	<b>Dual credit</b> Programs that provide students opportunities to earn college credit while in high school through articulated agreements with post-secondary institutions.
<input type="radio"/> yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> no	<b>Early interventions</b> Programs targeting at-risk students such as eighth grade transitional programs, summer orientations, freshmen seminars, and four year planning.
<input checked="" type="radio"/> yes <input type="radio"/> no	<b>Mentoring</b> Programs that provide trained mentors to at-risk students (students who have been truant, suspended, or expelled, academically at-risk students, limited English proficient students, students with disabilities, and migrant students) to support them socially and academically to succeed in school. Programs may include mentors from business and community organizations.
<input type="radio"/> yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> no	<b>Programs for academically at-risk students</b> Programs designed for academically at-risk students such as students who have been truant, suspended, or expelled, migrant students, limited English proficient, and/or economically disadvantaged students.

## Identifying Participating Students

**Step 3:** The third step is to identify students that have participated in the student-level interventions for the specified time period (i.e., fall 2005 or spring 2006) and report the number of contact hours they participated.

Navigation Options		Your Logon
<b>Step 1:</b> <a href="#">Identify the THSCS Grant-Supported Programs that Affect the Whole School</a> COMPLETE <b>Step 2:</b> <a href="#">Identify the THSCS Grant-Supported Programs at Your School that are Participated in by Targeted Groups of Students</a> COMPLETE <b>Step 3:</b> <b>Identify Students and Number of Participating Hours</b> COMPLETE <b>Step 4:</b> <a href="#">Indicate that You Have Completed Data Entry for this Data Collection Period</a> (period ends 2/28/2006) COMPLETE		You are logged on as school ID: 007901001. Click here to <a href="#">log out</a>
<h3>Step 3 of 4 - Identify Students and Number of Participating Hours</h3> <p>Click here to <a href="#">show instructions</a> for using this page.</p> <p>Note: Only you will know when you have completed <b>Step 3</b> by Identifying Students and Participating Hours. To indicate you are have completed <b>Step 3</b>, simply click the option for <b>Step 4</b>, which will notify SEDL that your data is ready to be reported to TEA on the last day of the period. You can still make modifications to your data set until the final day of the data collection period.</p>		
Implemented in My School?	Program Name	Use the form in this column to locate and indicate the students receiving these services during this time period.
Yes	<b>Credit accrual activities in English language arts (credit recovery, online courses, flexible entry or exit courses)</b> Credit recovery courses in <b>English language arts</b> to assist students who are behind in credits to stay on track for graduation. These may include after school activities, summer courses, online courses and software (i.e., Plato, NovaNet, ELLIS, ASKME), programs designed to allow for flexible entry or exit from courses, and/or supplemental activities.	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p><b>Running total of students you have marked so far:</b> <span style="float: right; font-weight: bold;">4</span>  <a href="#">Click for a printable list</a></p> <p><b>Search for Participating Students:</b>            Search by grade:  <input type="text" value="(any grade)"/> <input type="button" value="↓↑"/>            and/or            Search by student name or SSN:  <input type="text"/>  <input type="button" value="List students"/></p> </div>
Yes	<b>Credit accrual activities in Mathematics (credit recovery, online courses, flexible entry or exit courses)</b> Credit recovery courses in <b>Mathematics</b> to assist students who are behind in credits to stay on track for graduation. These may include after school activities, summer courses, online courses and software (i.e., Plato, NovaNet, ELLIS, ASKME), programs designed to allow for flexible entry or exit from courses, and/or supplemental activities.	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p><b>Running total of students you have marked so far:</b> <span style="float: right; font-weight: bold;">0</span>  <a href="#">Click for a printable list</a></p> <p><b>Search for Participating Students:</b>            Search by grade:  <input type="text" value="(any grade)"/> <input type="button" value="↓↑"/>            and/or            Search by student name or SSN:  <input type="text"/>  <input type="button" value="List students"/></p> </div>

### *Searching for students.*

To facilitate your data entry, the THSCS student database has been pre-populated with searchable student data. This student information comes from the 2004 fall PEIMS snap shot collected and released by TEA and includes, when available, grade 8 students from feeder schools who may now be in your school as ninth graders.

For each program, use the search tool to list or search for students in your school to indicate they have participated in the program. There are a variety of ways to search for a student.

- **Browse all students:** You can list all students in the school by simply clicking the "List Students" button.

**Note: grade-level information provided in this database are from 2004 fall PEIMS.**

- **Search by grade level:** You may list all students from a specific grade by selecting a grade level and then clicking the "List students" button. This comes in handy when a particular grant funded program targets a group of students in a particular grade such as 10th grade career planning. To list all students who are currently in grade 10, search the records for grade 9.
- **Search by name:** You can search for a student by name by typing in the whole name or part of that name in the box provided. For instance, searching for "Mel" will find students whose first or last name contains the letters "mel" (such as Mel, Melanie, Melon, Hormel, or Rommel.)
- **Search by SSN:** You can search by social security number by entering the last four-digits of a students ID#.

### *Adding students.*

It is possible that some students will not be found in the pre-populated dataset from PEIMS. When a student cannot be located by the different search options described above, data will need to be added to the database using the add student feature. Note: Use the full nine-digit social security number or, if not available, the state provided identification number.

#### **Add Student**

**CANCEL:** If you do not wish to add a student at this time, click here to return to [your most recent list of students](#) or the [list of programs](#) for your school.

**Student ID:**

**First name:**

**Middle Initial:**

**Last Name:**

**Grade:**

*Reporting contact hours.*

For each student identified, the duration that the student participated in the grant-funded program during the time period specified (i.e., fall 2005 or spring 2006) needs to be entered. Indicate the number of contact hours in the field next to the student's name. Your entries will be rounded to the nearest 1/10 hour.

**NOTE:** In some cases, best estimates of the number of contact hours will need to be made. For example, for students who receive email exchanges from mentors, exact contact hours are not known. To adequately understand the potential of such interactions however, an average estimated time would need to be entered. When it is not possible to estimate time, enter 999 to indicate that exact contact hours is unknown.

**Mark Students Who Participated in the program:**  
**Mentoring**

Found 34 students matching your school and search criteria.

**Need to add a student not found in the database?**  
Click here to [add a new student](#) to this campus.

**Running total for this program**  
Click here to view a running total of [students marked as participating in this program](#).

**List Students for a different program:** Click here to return to the [list of programs](#) for your school

**Search again for students participating in this program:**

Search by grade:

and/or

Search by student name or SSN:

#	Grade	Student Name	Indicate the number of contact hours this student participated. This total is cumulative across the semester. Click the "Update Students" button at the bottom of the page to save your data. <i>NOTE: Entries will be rounded to the nearest tenth of an hour.</i>
1	10	AYALA, GABRIELA , L.	Duration: <input type="text" value="0.0"/> Hours
2	10	BALLESTEROS, KATHERINE , B.	Duration: <input type="text" value="0.0"/> Hours
3	10	CARSON, MONICA , A.	Duration: <input type="text" value="0.0"/> Hours
4	10	CONTRERAS, AMY , R.	Duration: <input type="text" value="0.0"/> Hours
5	10	CRUZ, DONALD , A.	Duration: <input type="text" value="0.0"/> Hours
6	10	DIAZ, FABIAN , J.	Duration: <input type="text" value="0.0"/> Hours
7	10	ESCAMILLA, CRYSTAL , A.	Duration: <input type="text" value="0.0"/> Hours
8	10	ESPINOZA, NICOLAS , R.	Duration: <input type="text" value="0.0"/> Hours
9	10	GALLEGOS, LESLIE , G.	Duration: <input type="text" value="0.0"/> Hours
10	10	GALVAN, MARY , A.	Duration: <input type="text" value="0.0"/> Hours
11	10	GARZA, HILDA , M.	Duration: <input type="text" value="0.0"/> Hours
12	10	GARZA, SAMANTHA , R.	Duration: <input type="text" value="0.0"/> Hours
13	10	GLORIA, PETE	Duration: <input type="text" value="0.0"/> Hours
14	10	GUERRERO, ROXANE , B.	Duration: <input type="text" value="0.0"/> Hours
15	10	LONGORIA, PAUL , A.	Duration: <input type="text" value="0.0"/> Hours
16	10	LOPEZ, JESUS , F.	Duration: <input type="text" value="0.0"/> Hours
17	10	LUNA, HANNAH , L.	Duration: <input type="text" value="0.0"/> Hours
18	10	MARTINEZ, BRITTANY , R.	Duration: <input type="text" value="0.0"/> Hours
19	10	MARTINEZ, JACQUIE , A.	Duration: <input type="text" value="0.0"/> Hours
20	10	MARTINEZ, JUSTIN	Duration: <input type="text" value="0.0"/> Hours
21	10	PEREZ, JOSE , R.	Duration: <input type="text" value="0.0"/> Hours
22	10	RICO, MATTHEW , D.	Duration: <input type="text" value="0.0"/> Hours
23	10	RIGGS, BRECK , A.	Duration: <input type="text" value="0.0"/> Hours
24	10	RODRIGUEZ, CARLOS , R.	Duration: <input type="text" value="0.0"/> Hours
25	10	RODRIGUEZ, KARINA , D.	Duration: <input type="text" value="0.0"/> Hours

Click here to [search again](#) for different students or to search for students related to a different Program.

Repeat this process until all data are entered. To help you keep track of data entry in progress, a running total of students marked as participating is shown for each program, displaying the total number of students you have marked as participants for the program so far.

<b>Running total of students you have marked so far:</b>	<b>4</b> Click for a printable list
--	--

## Reports and Submitting Data

After you have begun entering student data, you can access a list of students you have indicated in a particular program by pressing the "click for a printable list" button on the screen. These reports are to assist you in tracking your data entry across the data collection period.

**School: 007901001**  
**Students Participating in: *Mentoring***

This list is a running total of all the students you have indicated participated in this program. If you have made additional changes since you first viewed this list, you may need to click the "Reload" button in your browser to refresh the list of students.

#	Grade	Student Name	Number of hours this student participated.
1	11	CASTILLO, BRIGITTA	15.0 Hours
2	11	GONZALES, LINDY , M.	12.0 Hours
3	11	MALDONADO, MICHAEL	16.0 Hours
4	11	PIEDRA, PAUL	24.0 Hours
5	11	ROBY, ZACHARY , L.	19.5 Hours
6	11	VALLEJO, MENCHO , M.	17.5 Hours

Step 4: Once all of your data have been entered, Step 4 asks you to submit your data to indicate that your data entry is complete. Prior to submitting data for your school, please check with all authorized data entry staff to be certain data entry is complete. If you do not submit your data, members of the evaluation team may contact you to determine the status of your data entry. Please note: you may return to any screen during the data collection period should you need to make edits.

### Step 4 of 4 - Indicate that You Have Completed Data Entry for this Data Collection Period

Use the form below to indicate you are complete with Options 1-3. By indicating you are through with data entry, you are notifying SEDL that your data is ready to be reported to TEA on the last day of the period.

SEDL uses this as a check to ensure that each campus has indicated that the data set is complete. If necessary, you can still make modifications to your data set until the final day of the data collection period, because your data will not be tallied until that time.

Select this checkbox, then click the button below to confirm that your data entry is complete.

My Data Entry is Complete

## Reporting Problems

To report problems or seek clarification, please contact:

Melissa Dodson, SEDL Program Associate  
 1-800-476-6861 mdodson@sedl.org



## Full-Page Views

The screenshot shows the SEDL (Southwest Educational Development Laboratory) website. The header includes the SEDL logo and the text "Southwest Educational Development Laboratory". The main content area is titled "Evaluation Services" and "Evaluation of the Texas High School Completion and Success (THSCS) Grant". A green message states "You have successfully logged out." Below this is a "Welcome" section with instructions on how to use the site. A "How is your data saved?" section explains that data is saved continuously but not finalized until the user indicates completion. A "Time out" section states that the session will time out after 1 hour of inactivity. The "Log On" section contains a login form with fields for "Campus ID" and "Password", and a "Click to Log On" button. The footer includes copyright information for 2006 and links for "About SEDL", "Contact SEDL", "Support SEDL", and "Terms of Use".

**SEDL** Southwest Educational Development Laboratory

### Evaluation Services

*Evaluation of the Texas High School Completion and Success (THSCS) Grant*

You have successfully logged out.

#### Welcome

Welcome to the Evaluation of the Texas High School Completion and Success (THSCS) Grant. Please use this site to enter data about the programs implemented at your school and the number of students that participated in each.

#### How is your data saved?

Data that you enter is continuously saved as you click from one screen to another. However, your data is not "finalized" until you indicate you have completed your data entry by following the instructions on the data entry pages that you will see once you log on.

#### Time out

Your logon session will time out if you are inactive for over 1 hour. You will have to logon again to access the site after that time.

#### Log On

Please enter your campus logon and password.

**Campus ID:**

**Password:**

[Click to Log On](#)

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## Navigation Options

- Step 1: Identify the THSCS Grant-Supported Programs that Affect the Whole School** COMPLETE
- Step 2: Identify the THSCS Grant-Supported Programs at Your School that are Participated in by Targeted Groups of Students** COMPLETE
- Step 3: Identify Students and Number of Participating Hours** COMPLETE
- Step 4: Indicate that You Have Completed Data Entry for this Data Collection Period** (period ends 2/28/2006) COMPLETE

## Your Logon

You are logged on as school ID: 007901001. Click here to [log out](#)

### Step 1 of 4 - Identify the THSCS Grant-Supported Programs that Affect the Whole School

#### Directions:

The first step is to indicate which THSCS grant-supported programs that affect the entire student population have been implemented since grant funds were awarded. **Please indicate "yes" or "no" for each of the items listed below, then click the "Save your edits to this page" button at the bottom of the page.** For proposed programs that have been planned but not implemented to date, please mark "no."

PROGRAMS THAT AFFECT THE WHOLE SCHOOL		Program Name
Implemented in My School?		
<input checked="" type="radio"/> yes <input type="radio"/> no		<b>Additional counselors</b> Additional counseling services to assist students in the development of their individualized plans. Counseling services may include academic, awareness of advanced-level courses, post-secondary, personal and crisis intervention, career, and advocacy programs.
<input checked="" type="radio"/> yes <input type="radio"/> no		<b>Additional instructional support staff</b> Part-time or full-time school staff who are supported by grant funds such as instructional aides and/or lab technicians.
<input type="radio"/> yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> no		<b>Highly qualified teachers</b> Additional qualified teachers to teach specialized core areas, accelerated instruction, advanced courses, college preparation.
<input checked="" type="radio"/> yes <input type="radio"/> no		<b>Parental involvement</b> May include programs that provide parent or guardian volunteers and mentors and/or training for parents.
<input type="radio"/> yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> no		<b>Partnerships with colleges and universities</b> May include partnerships that provide dual credit, college visits, software or online courses, and/or college mentors and tutors for core curriculum, advanced courses, and/or ACT/SAT preparation.
<input type="radio"/> yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> no		<b>Partnerships with feeder schools or other school districts</b> May include partnerships that align curriculum, provide mentors and tutors, share special purpose teachers, purchase materials and/or equipment.
<input checked="" type="radio"/> yes <input type="radio"/> no		<b>Partnerships with local businesses and/or community relations</b> May include partnerships that provide business and community mentors, equipment and supplies, training and work study, donations, and/or sponsored events.
<input type="radio"/> yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> no		<b>Teacher professional development</b> May include professional development programs from district trainers, Education Service Centers, private providers, and/or online courses.

[Click to save your edits to this page](#)

## Navigation Options

- Step 1:** [Identify the THSCS Grant-Supported Programs that Affect the Whole School](#) COMPLETE
- Step 2:** [Identify the THSCS Grant-Supported Programs at Your School that are Participated in by Targeted Groups of Students](#) COMPLETE
- Step 3:** [Identify Students and Number of Participating Hours](#) COMPLETE
- Step 4:** [Indicate that You Have Completed Data Entry for this Data Collection Period](#) (period ends 2/28/2006) COMPLETE

## Your Logon

You are logged on as school ID: 007901001. Click here to [log out](#)

## Step 2 of 4 - Identify the THSCS Grant-Supported Programs at Your School that are Participated in by Targeted Groups of Students

### Directions for Step 2:

The second step is to indicate which THSCS grant-supported programs have been implemented since grant funds were awarded that are participated in by only targeted groups of students. **Please indicate "yes" or "no" for each of the items listed below, then click the "Save your edits to this page" at the bottom of the page.** For proposed programs that have been planned but not implemented to date, please mark "no."

PROGRAMS THAT AFFECT ONLY CERTAIN STUDENTS IN THE SCHOOL	
Implemented in My School?	Program Name
<input type="radio"/> yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> no	<b>Accelerated instruction in English language arts</b> Structured academic enrichment learning programs that assist students who do not pass TAKS. Programs may include remedial courses, tutoring, and/or out-of-school activities.
<input type="radio"/> yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> no	<b>Accelerated instruction in Mathematics</b> Structured academic enrichment learning programs that assist students who do not pass TAKS. Programs may include remedial courses, tutoring, and/or out-of-school activities.
<input type="radio"/> yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> no	<b>Accelerated instruction in Science</b> Structured academic enrichment learning programs that assist students who do not pass TAKS. Programs may include remedial courses, tutoring, and/or out-of-school activities.
<input type="radio"/> yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> no	<b>Accelerated instruction in Social studies</b> Structured academic enrichment learning programs that assist students who do not pass TAKS. Programs may include remedial courses, tutoring, and/or out-of-school activities.
<input type="radio"/> yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> no	<b>Advanced placement/ International bacheloreate</b> Programs that prepare students to successfully pass Advance Placement and/or International Baccalaureate exams.
<input type="radio"/> yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> no	<b>Child care</b> Programs that provide on-site licensed child care facilities and/or financial support for students to have licensed professional care to supervise their children while they complete high school courses.
<input checked="" type="radio"/> yes <input type="radio"/> no	<b>Credit accrual activities in English language arts (credit recovery, online courses, flexible entry or exit courses)</b> Credit recovery courses in <b>English language arts</b> to assist students who are behind in credits to stay on track for graduation. These may include after school activities, summer courses, online courses and software (i.e., Plato, NovaNet, ELLIS, ASKME), programs designed to allow for flexible entry or exit from courses, and/or supplemental activities.

### Navigation Options

- Step 1:** [Identify the THSCS Grant-Supported Programs that Affect the Whole School](#) COMPLETE
- Step 2:** [Identify the THSCS Grant-Supported Programs at Your School that are Participated in by Targeted Groups of Students](#) COMPLETE
- Step 3:** **Identify Students and Number of Participating Hours** COMPLETE
- Step 4:** [Indicate that You Have Completed Data Entry for this Data Collection Period](#) (period ends 2/28/2006) COMPLETE

### Your Logon

You are logged on as school ID: 007901001. Click here to [log out](#)

### Step 3 of 4 - Identify Students and Number of Participating Hours

Click here to [show instructions](#) for using this page.

Note: Only you will know when you have completed **Step 3** by Identifying Students and Participating Hours. To indicate you are have completed **Step 3**, simply click the option for **Step 4**, which will notify SEDL that your data is ready to be reported to TEA on the last day of the period. You can still make modifications to your data set until the final day of the data collection period.

Implemented in My School?	Program Name	Use the form in this column to locate and indicate the students receiving these services during this time period.
Yes	<p><b>Credit accrual activities in English language arts (credit recovery, online courses, flexible entry or exit courses)</b>            Credit recovery courses in <b>English language arts</b> to assist students who are behind in credits to stay on track for graduation. These may include after school activities, summer courses, online courses and software (i.e., Plato, NovaNet, ELLIS, ASKME), programs designed to allow for flexible entry or exit from courses, and/or supplemental activities.</p>	<p><b>Running total of students you have marked so far:</b> <span style="float: right;"><b>4</b> <small>Click for a printable list</small></span></p> <p><b>Search for Participating Students:</b>            Search by grade: <input type="text" value="(any grade)"/> <input type="button" value="v"/>            and/or            Search by student name or SSN: <input type="text"/>  <input type="button" value="List students"/></p>
Yes	<p><b>Credit accrual activities in Mathematics (credit recovery, online courses, flexible entry or exit courses)</b>            Credit recovery courses in <b>Mathematics</b> to assist students who are behind in credits to stay on track for graduation. These may include after school activities, summer courses, online courses and software (i.e., Plato, NovaNet, ELLIS, ASKME), programs designed to allow for flexible entry or exit from courses, and/or supplemental activities.</p>	<p><b>Running total of students you have marked so far:</b> <span style="float: right;"><b>0</b> <small>Click for a printable list</small></span></p> <p><b>Search for Participating Students:</b>            Search by grade: <input type="text" value="(any grade)"/> <input type="button" value="v"/>            and/or            Search by student name or SSN: <input type="text"/>  <input type="button" value="List students"/></p>

## Navigation Options

- Step 1:** [Identify the THSCS Grant-Supported Programs that Affect the Whole School](#) COMPLETE
- Step 2:** [Identify the THSCS Grant-Supported Programs at Your School that are Participated in by Targeted Groups of Students](#) COMPLETE
- Step 3:** [Identify Students and Number of Participating Hours](#) COMPLETE
- Step 4:** [Indicate that You Have Completed Data Entry for this Data Collection Period](#) (period ends 2/28/2006) COMPLETE

## Your Logon

You are logged on as school ID: 007901001. Click here to [log out](#)

### Mark Students Who Participated in the program:

#### Credit accrual activities in English language arts (credit recovery, online courses, flexible entry or exit courses)

Found 39 students matching your school and search criteria.

#### Need to add a student not found in the database?

Click here to [add a new student](#) to this campus.

#### Running total for this program

Click here to view a running total of [students marked as participating in this program](#).

**List Students for a different program:** Click here to return to the [list of programs](#) for your school

#### Search again for students participating in this program:

Search by grade:

and/or

Search by student name or SSN:

#	Grade	Student Name	Indicate the number of contact hours this student participated. This total is cumulative across the semester. Click the "Update Students" button at the bottom of the page to save your data. <b>NOTE: Entries will be rounded to the nearest tenth of an hour.</b>
1	9	BARRERA, TIOFILO	Duration: <input type="text" value="0.0"/> Hours
2	9	BEASLEY, NIKKI , J.	Duration: <input type="text" value="0.0"/> Hours
3	9	CALVILLO, RICARDO , H.	Duration: <input type="text" value="0.0"/> Hours
4	9	CAMERON, CAMERON , W.	Duration: <input type="text" value="0.0"/> Hours
5	9	CANO, SAMANTHA , I.	Duration: <input type="text" value="0.0"/> Hours
6	9	CASTANEDA, NORMA	Duration: <input type="text" value="0.0"/> Hours
7	9	CHILDS, KATRINA , M.	Duration: <input type="text" value="0.0"/> Hours
8	9	CONTRERAS, ADAM	Duration: <input type="text" value="0.0"/> Hours
9	9	CORONA, VANESSA	Duration: <input type="text" value="0.0"/> Hours
10	9	CORONADO, STEPHANIE , N.	Duration: <input type="text" value="0.0"/> Hours
11	9	CORTEZ, JOHNNY , R.	Duration: <input type="text" value="0.0"/> Hours
12	9	DAVILA, LUIS , A.	Duration: <input type="text" value="0.0"/> Hours
13	9	DELEON, ROBERTA , A.	Duration: <input type="text" value="0.0"/> Hours
14	9	DUNN, JASON , A.	Duration: <input type="text" value="0.0"/> Hours

## Evaluation Services

### Evaluation of the Texas High School Completion and Success (THSCS) Grant

#### Navigation Options

- Step 1:** [Identify the THSCS Grant-Supported Programs that Affect the Whole School](#) COMPLETE
- Step 2:** [Identify the THSCS Grant-Supported Programs at Your School that are Participated in by Targeted Groups of Students](#) COMPLETE
- Step 3:** [Identify Students and Number of Participating Hours](#) COMPLETE
- Step 4:** [Indicate that You Have Completed Data Entry for this Data Collection Period](#) (period ends 2/28/2006) COMPLETE

#### Your Logon

You are logged on as school ID: 007901001. Click here to [log out](#)

#### Add Student

**CANCEL:** If you do not wish to add a student at this time, click here to return to [your most recent list of students](#) or the [list of programs](#) for your school.

Student ID:

First name:

Middle Initial:

Last Name:

Grade:

[Click to Add this Student](#)

[Clear the Form](#)

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### School: 007901001

#### Students Participating in: Credit accrual activities in English language arts (credit recovery, online courses, flexible entry or exit courses)

This list is a running total of all the students you have indicated participated in this program. If you have made additional changes since you first viewed this list, you may need to click the "Reload" button in your browser to refresh the list of students.

#	Grade	Student Name	Number of hours this student participated.
1	10	CARSON, MONICA , A.	125.0 Hours
2	10	DIAZ, FABIAN , J.	22.0 Hours
3	10	ESPINOZA, NICOLAS , R.	13.0 Hours
4	10	GLORIA, PETE	4.0 Hours

## Evaluation Services

### Evaluation of the Texas High School Completion and Success (THSCS) Grant

#### Navigation Options

- Step 1:** [Identify the THSCS Grant-Supported Programs that Affect the Whole School](#) COMPLETE
- Step 2:** [Identify the THSCS Grant-Supported Programs at Your School that are Participated in by Targeted Groups of Students](#) COMPLETE
- Step 3:** [Identify Students and Number of Participating Hours](#) INCOMPLETE
- Step 4:** [Indicate that You Have Completed Data Entry for this Data Collection Period \(period ends 2/28/2006\)](#) INCOMPLETE

#### Your Logon

You are logged on as school ID: 071902008. Click here to [log out](#)

#### Step 4 of 4 - Indicate that You Have Completed Data Entry for this Data Collection Period

Use the form below to indicate you are complete with Options 1-3. By indicating you are through with data entry, you are notifying SEDL that your data is ready to be reported to TEA on the last day of the period.

SEDL uses this as a check to ensure that each campus has indicated that the data set is complete. If necessary, you can still make modifications to your data set until the final day of the data collection period, because your data will not be tallied until that time.

- Select this checkbox, then click the button below to confirm that your data entry is complete.

My Data Entry is Complete

## Evaluation Services

### Evaluation of the Texas High School Completion and Success (THSCS) Grant

#### Navigation Options

- Step 1:** [Identify the THSCS Grant-Supported Programs that Affect the Whole School](#) COMPLETE
- Step 2:** [Identify the THSCS Grant-Supported Programs at Your School that are Participated in by Targeted Groups of Students](#) COMPLETE
- Step 3:** [Identify Students and Number of Participating Hours](#) COMPLETE
- Step 4:** [Indicate that You Have Completed Data Entry for this Data Collection Period \(period ends 2/28/2006\)](#) COMPLETE

#### Your Logon

You are logged on as school ID: 007901001. Click here to [log out](#)

#### Step 4 of 4 - Indicate that You Have Completed Data Entry for this Data Collection Period

##### Data Entry Status

You have indicated that you have completed the data entry for your campus for this data collection period.

##### Reports

For your records, you may want to return to **Step 3** to print a list of students that you have marked as participating in each THSCS Grant-Supported Programs at Your School.

# **APPENDIX D**



## Appendix D

### THSCS Intervention Descriptions

#### THSCS grant-supported programs that affect the whole school

1. **Additional counselors**  
Additional counseling services to assist students in the development of their individualized plan. Counseling services may include academic, awareness of advance-level courses, post-secondary, personal and crisis intervention, career, and advocacy programs.
2. **Additional instructional support staff**  
Part-time or full-time school staffs that are supported by grant funds such as instructional aides and/or lab technicians.
3. **Highly qualified teachers**  
Additional qualified teachers to teach specialized core areas, accelerated instruction, advanced courses, and college preparation.
4. **Parental involvement**  
May include programs that provide parent or guardian volunteers and mentors and/or training for parents.
5. **Partnerships with colleges and universities**  
May include partnerships that provide dual credit, college visits, software or online courses, and/or college mentors and tutors for core curriculum, advanced courses, and ACT/SAT preparation.
6. **Partnerships with feeder schools and other school districts**  
May include partnerships that align curriculum, provide mentors and tutors, share special-purpose teachers, and purchase materials and/or equipment.
7. **Partnerships with local businesses and/or community relations**  
May include partnerships that provide business and community mentors, equipment and supplies, training and work study, donations, and sponsored events.
8. **Teacher professional development**  
May include professional development programs through district trainers, Education Service Centers, private providers, and online courses.

## Programs that affect targeted students in the school

9. **Accelerated instruction in English language arts**  
Structured academic enrichment learning programs that assist students who do not pass TAKS English. Programs may include remedial courses, tutoring, and out-of-school activities.
10. **Accelerated instruction in Mathematics**  
Structured academic enrichment learning programs that assist students who do not pass TAKS Mathematics. Programs may include remedial courses, tutoring, and out-of-school activities.
11. **Accelerated instruction in Science**  
Structured academic enrichment learning programs that assist students who do not pass TAKS Science. Programs may include remedial courses, tutoring, and out-of-school activities.
12. **Accelerated instruction in Social Studies**  
Structured academic enrichment learning programs that assist students who do not pass TAKS Social Studies. Programs may include remedial courses, tutoring, and out-of-school activities.
13. **Advanced Placement/ International Baccalaureate**  
Programs that prepare students to pass Advance Placement and/or International Baccalaureate exams.
14. **Child care**  
Programs that provide on-site licensed child-care facilities and/or financial support for students to have licensed professional care and supervision of their children while they complete high school courses.
15. **Credit accrual activities in English language arts (credit recovery, online courses and software, flexible entry or exit courses)**  
Credit recovery courses in English language arts to assist students who are behind in credits to stay on track for graduation. These may include after-school activities, summer courses, online courses and software (i.e., Plato, NovaNet, ELLIS, ASKME), programs designed to allow for flexible entry or exit from courses, and supplemental activities.
16. **Credit accrual activities in Mathematics (credit recovery, online courses and software, flexible entry or exit courses)**  
Credit recovery courses in mathematics to assist students who are behind in credits to stay on track for graduation. These may include after-school activities, summer courses, online courses and software (i.e., Plato, NovaNet, ELLIS, ASKME), programs designed to allow for flexible entry or exit from courses, and supplemental activities.
17. **Credit accrual activities in Science (credit recovery, online courses and software, flexible entry or exit courses)**  
Credit recovery courses in science to assist students who are behind in credits to stay on track for graduation. These may include after-school activities, summer courses, online courses and software (i.e., Plato, NovaNet, ELLIS, ASKME), programs designed to allow for flexible entry or exit from courses, and supplemental activities.

**18. Credit accrual activities in Social Studies (credit recovery, online courses and software, flexible entry or exit courses)**

Credit recovery courses in social studies to assist students who are behind in credits to stay on track for graduation. These may include after-school activities, summer courses, online courses and software (i.e., Plato, NovaNet, ELLIS, ASKME), programs designed to allow for flexible entry or exit from courses, and supplemental activities.

**19. Dual credit**

Programs that provide students opportunities to earn college credit while in high school through articulated agreements with post-secondary institutions.

**20. Early interventions**

Programs targeting at-risk students such as eighth-grade transitional programs, summer orientations, freshmen seminars, and four-year planning.

**21. Mentoring**

Programs that provide trained mentors to at-risk students (students who have been truant, suspended, or expelled, students identified as academically at-risk, limited English-proficient students, students with disabilities, and migrant students) to support them socially and academically to succeed in school. Programs may include mentors from business and community organizations.

**22. Programs for academically at-risk students**

Programs designed for students identified as academically at-risk such as students who have been truant, suspended, or expelled, migrant students, limited English-proficient, and/or economically disadvantaged students.

**23. Test preparation (PSAT, SAT, ACT)**

Programs designed to prepare students to take college entrance exams for admission, placement, and scholarships into post-secondary education.

**24. Tutoring**

Programs that provide high-quality tutoring services to students. Tutoring services may include individualized instruction of specific subjects by highly qualified teachers, peers, community volunteers, and parents.

**25. Work study programs**

Programs that enable students to gain work experience and earn income while continuing their studies. May also include internships and career path courses.

**26. Other interventions**

Other THSCS grant-supported programs not listed above. Schools that mark this option will receive follow-up calls for clarification about other THSCS programs.

# **APPENDIX E**

<TEA Letterhead>

To the Superintendent Addressed:

Thank you for your continued leadership and support for the Texas High School Completion and Success (THSCS), Cycle 2 grant program in which your district is currently receiving funding. In order to examine the impact of activities funded through this grant program, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) has contracted with a highly-experienced external evaluator, Gibson Consulting Group and Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (Gibson/SEDL), to conduct a third-party evaluation of this grant program.

As part of the evaluation design, the Gibson/SEDL team will be administering surveys to all THSCS, Cycle 2 grant recipients. In addition, the evaluation team will be collecting student-level data regarding the individual student's participation in various THSCS, Cycle 2 program activities. Site visits to a sample of campuses will also be necessary for a qualitative analysis during Summer or Fall, 2005 with a repeat visit in Spring or Summer, 2006. The visits are not part of TEA's grant monitoring activities; rather, Gibson/SEDL researchers will gather information to be used as part of an overall evaluation of the THSCS, Cycle 2 grant activities.

We ask for your cooperation with the various evaluation activities as the Gibson/SEDL team will need to begin coordinating the site visits, student participation record collection, and the administration and of surveys starting in Summer 2005. Should you require additional information regarding these activities, please do not hesitate to contact Tammy Kreuz at TEA, (512) 936-6060 or Greg Gibson at Gibson Consulting Group, (512) 328-0885. Thank you for your continued dedication, leadership, and support for Texas students.

Sincerely,



Nora Ibáñez Hancock, Ed.D.  
Associate Commissioner  
Office for Planning, Grants and Evaluation

<TEA Letterhead>

To the Campus Principal Addressed:

Thank you for your continued leadership and support for the Texas High School Completion and Success (THSCS), Cycle 2 grant program in which your school is currently receiving funding. In order to examine the impact of activities funded through this grant program, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) has contracted with a highly-experienced external evaluator, Gibson Consulting Group and Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (Gibson/SEDL), to conduct a third-party evaluation of this grant program.

As part of the evaluation design, the Gibson/SEDL team will be administering surveys to all THSCS, Cycle 2 grant recipients. In addition, the evaluation team will be collecting student-level data regarding the individual student's participation in various THSCS, Cycle 2 program activities. Site visits to a sample of campuses will also be necessary for a qualitative analysis during Fall or Summer 2005 with a repeat visit in Spring or Summer 2006. The visits are not part of TEA's grant monitoring activities; rather, Gibson/SEDL researchers will gather information to be used as part of an overall evaluation of the THSCS, Cycle 2 grant activities.

Your school has been selected as one of a sample of schools that may receive a visit this summer or fall and again in Spring 2006. Selection of sites was made to obtain a representation of program activities, geographic areas, and student demographics. These visits will take place on a single day to only selected campuses. Depending on the size and complexity of the campus grant program, one or two Gibson/SEDL staff will be assigned to visit your campus. If your program is a paired program (e.g., a regular high school working with an alternative school), both campuses will receive a site visit from the researchers.

During the site visits, Gibson/SEDL staff will interview selected administrators and teachers, and conduct a focus group with a small number of students being served with THSCS, Cycle 2 grant funds (Please see attached information sheet for a possible site visit schedule). Campus principals will be provided with interview protocols prior to the site visit.

Gibson/SEDL staff will conduct the summer site visits to schools implementing summer programs funded by Cycle 2 grants during the month of June 2005. Fall site visits will occur in September 2005 for the remaining schools. We understand the many obligations that you and your staff have at this time of the year; however, the information obtained in these visits will be critical for policymakers as future decisions are made on developing and sustaining funding for grant programs like THSCS.

Please respond to the attached postcard regarding your preference for summer or fall site visits and your preferred week for visits to your campus. Gibson/SEDL's evaluation staff will contact you in the near future to arrange for these site visits. The primary and secondary contacts for the THSCS Cycle 2 grant will also be notified by copy of this letter. We ask for your cooperation in the scheduling of these visits as the Gibson/SEDL team will need to coordinate regional visits across the state under certain time limitations. Should you require additional information regarding these site visits, please do not hesitate to contact Tammy Kreuz at TEA, (512) 936-6060 or Melissa Dodson at SEDL, (512) 476-6861. Thank you for your continued dedication, leadership, and support for Texas students.

Sincerely,



Nora Ibáñez Hancock, Ed.D.  
Associate Commissioner  
Office for Planning, Grants and Evaluation

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) has contracted with Gibson Consulting Group and Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (Gibson/SEDL) to examine the implementation and impact of the THSCS grant programs. An important element of the evaluation design is to collect data from on-site visits to a sample of THSCS Cycle 2 campuses. These visits are intended to capture a rich understanding of the implementation of the THSCS programs, perceptions regarding the changes in student outcomes, and the factors that contribute or detract from the implementation of various THSCS grant interventions. This is not an evaluation of your specific program. It is part of the overall evaluation effort.

### **Evaluation Site Visits Information**

The following school may receive a one-day site visit by TEA staff and Gibson/SEDL evaluators in Summer 2005 or Fall 2005 with follow-up visits in Spring 2006 or Summer 2006:

School District  
Campus  
CDC#  
Campus Addr

Principal

### **Site Visits Dates**

One-day site visits to Cycle 2 campuses are scheduled to occur during:

- June 2005 for schools with summer programs supported by THSCS grant funds, or
- September 2005 for remaining selected schools.

Please respond to the attached postcard regarding your preference for summer or fall site visits and your preferred week for visits to your campus. The Gibson/SEDL evaluation staff will contact each campus principal to arrange the specific dates and details for the site visits.

### **Site Visits Activities**

Site visits activities include:

- Interviews with district and campus administrators responsible for the THSCS school programs to help determine whether proposed activities, processes, and structures are occurring as planned and their relationship to the district's goals.
- Focus groups with teachers, ancillary staff, parents, and involved community members concerning their role in the program and identification of implementation issues.
- Focus groups with a sample of students participating in the THSCS school program.

### **Tentative Schedule for the Site Visits**

Schedules for site visits will vary depending on the type of THSCS programs at the campus. Exact schedules will be negotiated when evaluation staff contact the schools to arrange the visits. Below is an example of a schedule for programs that include after school activities.

1:00 – 2:00	Interviews (45 minutes)- Campus Principal, Coordinator, other appropriate staff
2:15 – 3:15	Focus Group (1 hour)- Key program staff, teachers, tutors, counselors, parents, involved community members
3:30 – 5:30	Focus Group (30-45 minutes)- Students participating in after school program Observation (1 hour) of after school activities

# **APPENDIX F**



### THSCS Cycle 2 Study

Name of School \_\_\_\_\_

Please check one of the site visit options. Please check all that apply.

- THSCS grant summer program.
- Week of June 6<sup>th</sup>       Week of June 13<sup>th</sup>  
 Week of June 20<sup>th</sup>       Week of June 27<sup>th</sup>

- THSCS grant regular school year program.
- Week of Sept 5<sup>th</sup>       Week of Sept 12<sup>th</sup>  
 Week of Sept 19<sup>th</sup>       Week of Sept 26<sup>th</sup>

Study Contact Name \_\_\_\_\_

Position \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

**PLEASE RETURN POSTCARD BY MAY 27, 2005**

### THSCS Cycle 2 Study

Name of School \_\_\_\_\_

Please check one of the site visit options. Please check all that apply.

- THSCS grant summer program.
- Week of June 6<sup>th</sup>       Week of June 13<sup>th</sup>  
 Week of June 20<sup>th</sup>       Week of June 27<sup>th</sup>

- THSCS grant regular school year program.
- Week of Sept 5<sup>th</sup>       Week of Sept 12<sup>th</sup>  
 Week of Sept 19<sup>th</sup>       Week of Sept 26<sup>th</sup>

Study Contact Name \_\_\_\_\_

Position \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

**PLEASE RETURN POSTCARD BY MAY 27, 2005**

Name of School \_\_\_\_\_

Please check one of the site visit options. Please check all that apply.

- THSCS grant summer program.
- Week of June 6<sup>th</sup>       Week of June 13<sup>th</sup>  
 Week of June 20<sup>th</sup>       Week of June 27<sup>th</sup>

- THSCS grant regular school year program.
- Week of Sept 5<sup>th</sup>       Week of Sept 12<sup>th</sup>  
 Week of Sept 19<sup>th</sup>       Week of Sept 26<sup>th</sup>

Study Contact Name \_\_\_\_\_

Position \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

**PLEASE RETURN POSTCARD BY MAY 27, 2005**

### THSCS Cycle 2 Study

Name of School \_\_\_\_\_

Please check one of the site visit options. Please check all that apply.

- THSCS grant summer program.
- Week of June 6<sup>th</sup>       Week of June 13<sup>th</sup>  
 Week of June 20<sup>th</sup>       Week of June 27<sup>th</sup>

- THSCS grant regular school year program.
- Week of Sept 5<sup>th</sup>       Week of Sept 12<sup>th</sup>  
 Week of Sept 19<sup>th</sup>       Week of Sept 26<sup>th</sup>

Study Contact Name \_\_\_\_\_

Position \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

**PLEASE RETURN POSTCARD BY MAY 27, 2005**