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ABSTRACT

The Attendance Improvement Dropout Prevention (AIDP) program in New York City identifies and delivers services to middle school students who are excessively absent or otherwise at risk of dropping out. The AIDP program has the following components: (1) facilitation; (2) attendance; (3) guidance; (4) health; (5) school-level linkages; and (6) alternative education programs. Evaluation of the 1986-87 program revealed the following: (1) AIDP funds were allocated to 69 middle schools; (2) a total of 9,554 students participated in the program; (3) the program was more successfully implemented in 1986-87 than it had been in 1985-86: students received more services than they had in the previous year; (4) the program met the objectives set forth by the Chancellor: over 50 percent of AIDP students had better rates of attendance and passed more courses than they had in 1985-86; and (5) attendance rates and course pass rates tended to increase for those students who participated in the AIDP program for the entire school year and received a full range of services. This report presents the characteristics of the participating schools and students, as well as some aspects of the school context in which the programs operated. Recommendations based on evaluation findings are offered. Data are presented on 14 tables and figures. A list of references is included. (BJV)

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MIDDLE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE IMPROVEMENT DROPOUT PREVENTION (A.I.D.P.) PROGRAM 1986-87

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Evaluation Section Report
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MIDDLE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE IMPROVEMENT DROPOUT PREVENTION (A.I.D.P.) PROGRAM 1986-87

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SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

- The 1986-87 Attendance Improvement Dropout Prevention (A.I.D.P.) program was more successfully implemented in this program year than it had been in the previous year, with students receiving more services than they had received in 1985-86.

- The A.I.D.P. program met the objectives set forth by the Chancellor: Over 50 percent of A.I.D.P. students had better rates of attendance and passed more courses than they had in the previous program year. This represents an improvement over the previous year in which the program did not meet its objectives.

- Overall, attendance and course pass rates tended to increase for those students who participated in the A.I.D.P. program for the entire school year and received a full range of services.

PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

This report examines the 1986-87 A.I.D.P. program as it operated in the middle schools citywide. It presents the characteristics of the schools and students in the program and presents some aspects of the school context in which programs operated. It also examines program outcomes in terms of changes in attendance and course pass-rates of the student participants. Finally, it draws conclusions and makes recommendations based on these findings.

BACKGROUND

In 1986-87 the New York State Legislature provided approximately 23 million dollars to fund the A.I.D.P. program in its third year of operation. The program continued to identify and deliver services to students who were excessively absent or otherwise "at risk" of dropping out. Of this allocation, 12 million dollars were used to operate programs in the middle schools. The Chancellor's guidelines for the program remained essentially the same as in the previous year. Each middle school was required to have the following six components in place: facilitation, attendance, guidance, health, school-level linkage, and alternative education programs. Each A.I.D.P. student was to receive the services of all six components. In addition, the guidelines permitted a district-based program/staff development specialist position in districts serving four or more A.I.D.P. or Dropout Prevention Program (D.P.P.) schools.

Sixty-nine middle schools received A.I.D.P. funds in 1986-87. A total of 9,554 students participated in the program of which 77 percent were selected on the basis of excessive absences during 1985-86. Most of the A.I.D.P. middle-school students were eighth graders. As of June, 1986, 48 percent of the program participants had failed at least two courses. More than half of the A.I.D.P. students scored below the fiftieth percentile on the Degrees of Reading Power Test (D.R.P.) and more than half were overage for their grade.

FINDINGS

Generally, the data show that implementation of the program within the 69 schools was more complete than it had been in the previous year, with most of the staff in place and most of the components in operation by early fall, 1986. The majority of the 9,554 students participating in A.I.D.P. received the following services: attendance outreach; attendance incentives; guidance and counseling; and career education. Attendance outreach services were provided to almost all the program students, while fewer students received extended school-day services or school-level linkage. Seventy-six percent of the students received at least five out of seven services. On the average, students received more services than they had in 1985-86, especially in the areas of attendance outreach and guidance.

The Chancellor's office set the following attendance and academic performance objectives for the 1986-87 A.I.D.P. program:

- a minimum of 50 percent of the students provided with A.I.D.P. services will have better attendance in 1986-87 than in the previous year.

- a minimum of 50 percent of the students who failed one or more subjects in 1985-86 will pass at least one more subject in 1986-87.

The A.I.D.P. program met both of the Chancellor's objectives: more than 50 percent of all program students demonstrated improved attendance and academic performance in 1986-87. This represents an improvement over the previous year in which only forty-six percent of the students increased their attendance and only thirty-eight percent passed a higher percentage of courses. Fifty-two percent of the program students attended school more days in 1986-87 than they had in 1985-86. Among students who participated in the program for the entire school year and were the recipients of a more complete range of services, 66 percent showed improved attendance over the previous year. Of those students who failed at least one course in 1985-86, 57 percent passed at least one more course in 1986-87.

On average, the attendance rate of program students declined

slightly. However, those who were selected mainly on the basis of attendance criteria maintained their higher attendance rate in relation to the comparison group both years.

In order to examine program implementation and school context, O.E.A. examined a randomly selected sample of 15 schools in-depth. Four schools in the sample showed an increase in the attendance of program students. These schools had the following characteristics in common; a comparatively high school-wide attendance rate in 1985-86 and programs in which students received an average of seven or more services and tended to be participants for a full ten months. There appeared to be no other clear contextual or demographic trends explaining why these schools improved student attendance and others in the sample did not.

PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS EVALUATION OF THE PROGRAM

Program and school staff cited the following features as strengths of the A.I.D.P. program:

- o dedicated and caring A.I.D.P. staff;
- o ongoing communication and support from the district A.I.D.P. coordinators and O.S.P.;
- o the effectiveness of the attendance outreach component through which regular home contact generally resulted in parent response or the student's return to school.

Criticisms that staff expressed about the program focused on the following: the insufficient time allotted to the facilitator and guidance counselor; the inability of schools to acquire appropriate program materials in a timely fashion; the late scheduling of high school linkage activities; the need for academic support for A.I.D.P. students; the stigmatization and disruption created by the practice of pulling students out of mainstream programs for A.I.D.P. activities and the lack of involvement of the parents of program students.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on evaluation findings, the following recommendations are offered:

- o expand eligibility criteria to include at-risk students in the elementary-school grades;
- o create full-time positions for the facilitator and the guidance counselor or the coordinator of the guidance component;

- provide more comprehensive training to all program staff as well as to non-program staff who work directly with A.I.D.P. students;

- develop a means by which programs can order materials based on the needs of the individual schools and distribute them in a timely fashion

- improve coordination between middle and high schools, in order that students in the final grades of the middle school participate in linkage activities early in the year.

- provide students with academic and remedial support during the school day;

- improve the coordination and scheduling of A.I.D.P. activities within the framework of regular school activities.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report was the result of the efforts of many people. Sandra Horowitz designed and coordinated the evaluation. Sharon Pavlovich, Maybel Payne, and Eleanor Zak participated in the site visits and assisted in conceptualizing the report. Yossi Dahan assisted in the analysis and interpretation of data. Renee Schmerler, Joan Katz, and Dina McClellan assisted with data preparation. Milt Chaikin, Joan Katz, and Dina McClellan assisted with the writing and editing of the report. Pamela Jenkins-Polycarpe was responsible for typing the final report. Lucy Krolian assisted in the typing of its earlier drafts.

Thanks are due to the individuals involved in A.I.D.P., including Office of Student Progress personnel, A.I.D.P. district coordinators, staff, students, and school principals who gave generously of their time and ideas. We also wish to thank the Program and Computer Support Unit for their assistance in the preparation of data for analysis.

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I. INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

The New York State Legislature provided approximately 23 million dollars to fund the Attendance Improvement Dropout Prevention (A.I.D.P.) program in 1986-87, its third year of operation in the New York City public schools. The purpose of the program was to identify students who were excessively absent, tardy, or otherwise "at risk" and to provide these students with services that would improve their attendance and academic achievement and encourage them to stay in school. Of this allocation, 2 million dollars went to the Division of Special Education, and close to 9 million dollars went to the Division of High Schools. The remaining funds (12 million dollars) were used to operate programs in the junior high and intermediate schools (hereafter referred to as middle schools). This evaluation report is concerned with the middle-school A.I.D.P. programs.

The State Education Department (S.E.D.) first allocated funds for A.I.D.P. in 1984. Eligible schools were those having an average daily attendance rate at or below the citywide median of 87 percent. Each district developed and implemented individual A.I.D.P. programs, which provided services to students in both elementary and middle schools with varying degrees of success. In February, 1985 the Chancellor's office, with the assistance of the Office of Student Progress (O.S.P.) and the Office of High School Support Services, established

Project Connect, a pilot program using specific intervention strategies directed to students in the upper middle-school grades. The Office of Educational Assessment (O.E.A.) conducted evaluations of both Project Connect and A.I.D.P., presenting its findings in four reports.*

The 1985-86 middle-school A.I.D.P. program emphasized a comprehensive and uniform plan for all districts with services specifically directed to students in the middle schools. The Chancellor's office selected 68 middle schools that met the state-mandated attendance criterion and fed into A.I.D.P. high schools. The S.E.D. made a commitment to fund school-based programs for three years beginning in 1985-86. The Chancellor's office, in conjunction with O.S.P., established guidelines for A.I.D.P. in 1985-86 that served as the foundation of the program in 1985-86 and 1986-87. Each middle school was required to have the following six program components in place, with every participating student receiving services in all six components:

- o Facilitation: A teacher who served as the site facilitator for two periods a day in order to identify and track the progress of students, coordinate program activities, collect and report data, and coordinate the Pupil Personnel Committee.

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*The following are available from the Office of Educational Assessment:
Interim Report on Project Connect 1984-85
Final Report on Project Connect 1984-85
Interim Report of the 1984-85 Community School District Attendance Improvement/Dropout Prevention Program
Final Evaluation of the 1984-85 Community School District Attendance Improvement/Dropout Prevention Program

- o Attendance: Each school developed outreach strategies to follow up on the absences of targeted students. These services were to supplement, not replace, daily attendance services and to focus on improving parent awareness of the child's poor attendance and the educational consequences that could result therefrom.

- o Guidance: Licensed or certified school counselors, social workers, or Substance Abuse Prevention Intervention Services (SAPIS) workers were to provide appropriate counseling to every targeted student in order to address problems that might contribute to poor attendance.

- o Health: Schools were to work collaboratively with the New York City Health Department to provide diagnostic screening to all targeted students in physical, psychological, and educational areas that might affect attendance; to make referrals for follow-up services; and to ensure that these services were provided.

- o School-Level Linkage: High schools were to work collaboratively with feeder middle schools to develop strategies to ease the transition from one school level to the next.

- o Alternative Educational Programs: Schools were given a choice of providing career education classes to all A.I.D.P. students or providing small-group or individual academic attention in an extended-day program. These programs were to be funded only if all other components were already in place.

O.E.A. evaluated the 1985-86 A.I.D.P. programs and presented its findings on the middle schools in two reports.* These reports presented several recommendations for program improvements made by school-based personnel directly involved with A.I.D.P. Some of the recommendations were in line with

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*The Middle School Attendance Improvement/Dropout Prevention (A.I.D.P.) Program 1985-86 End-of-Year Report and the Model Practices in the 1985-86 Attendance Improvement and Dropout Prevention Program are available from the Office of Educational Assessment.

subsequent changes in the 1986-87 program guidelines. They are as follows:

- o Expanded Student Eligibility Criteria. These new criteria which added several at-risk factors to the original eligibility criterion of poor attendance were written into the guidelines for 1986-87. Also, provisions were made in the criteria for inclusion of some former A.I.D.P. students whose attendance had improved but was still marginal. (For a complete description of the eligibility criteria for 1986-87 see Section III of this report.)

- o Improved School-Level Linkage. High schools were to submit plans that included linkage to three middle schools in order to receive funding for this component.

In addition, some recommendations led to innovations and pilot programs specified in the Chancellor's guidelines. The following innovations were in operation in 1986-87:

- o Pilot Elementary School Model. In response to the recommendation that elementary school students should be included in the A.I.D.P. program, funding was provided for a pilot A.I.D.P. model in three elementary schools.*

- o District-Based Program/Staff Development Specialist. The need for increased support, training, and coordination by the district was addressed by the creation of a district-based program/staff development specialist in districts that served four or more A.I.D.P. or Dropout Prevention Program (D.P.P.) schools. This was to be a full-time position, with emphasis placed on staff orientation and training as well as coordination of services. A more complete discussion of this position can be found in Section V and Section VII of this report.

- o A program for hotel children.**

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*The Evaluation of the Pilot Elementary-School Attendance Improvement Dropout Prevention (A.I.D.P.) Program 1986-87 is available from the Office of Educational Assessment.

**The Hotel Children in the 1986-87 A.I.D.P. Program evaluation report is available from the Office of Educational Assessment.

Finally, a number of recommendations pertained to better implementation of existing program features rather than modification or innovation of the program itself. A discussion of these recommendations as well as ways in which they were implemented follows in Chapters V and VII of this report.

In summary, since many of the guidelines and staff roles for A.I.D.P. had been established and clarified the previous year, the focus of the program for 1986-87 was on smoother implementation of existing procedures and strategies.

EVALUATION OBJECTIVES

O.E.A. had four objectives for the evaluation of the citywide A.I.D.P. program in the middle schools:

- to evaluate whether the program met the Chancellor's objectives;
- to identify and describe students who received A.I.D.P. services;
- to examine the level of implementation of the A.I.D.P. program;
- to examine the school context in which the A.I.D.P. programs operated; and
- to examine the effects of the program on student participants as well as on A.I.D.P. and non-A.I.D.P. staff serving A.I.D.P. students.

EVALUATION PROCEDURES

O.E.A. gathered information for this report using five independent methods. First, O.E.A. evaluators distributed

student rosters to each of the 69* A.I.D.P. schools in fall, 1986 and again in May, 1987, requesting identifying information on all targeted students along with reasons for student selection, dates on which students were admitted and discharged from the program, number of courses passed and failed, and the number and types of services that were provided to each student.

Field staff from O.E.A. also conducted in-depth visits to 15 randomly selected schools in October or November and then twice more in May or June. Across the 15 schools, 600 students were randomly selected to complete student questionnaires before and after their participation in A.I.D.P. The instruments were designed to collect background information on the students as well as to report on their attitudes about school and themselves. During the first visit, evaluators administered questionnaires to as many (i.e. 475 of the 600 students) as were present at two regularly scheduled A.I.D.P. career-education classes. During the second visits, evaluators administered a follow-up student questionnaire to as many of these students (i.e. 215 of the 475) as were present at the same classes. While these 215 students provide the basis for all self-reported student data, it should be understood that they are, to a small extent, self selected by virtue of the fact that they were present both times. In addition, analysis of their responses to the pretest questionnaire suggests that they were somewhat more conscientious about

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*One school was added to the roster of the A.I.D.P. schools in 1986-87.

school responsibilities. During a third visit O.E.A. staff observed A.I.D.P. students as they participated in scheduled program activities and interviewed available A.I.D.P. staff, school principals, and language arts teachers serving A.I.D.P. students. A total of 55 school-based personnel were interviewed at 14 of the schools. (One school principal refused to allow his staff to be interviewed.) These included 13 principals; 14 language arts teachers (one at each school); and 27 A.I.D.P. staff members, including facilitators, career education teachers, guidance counselors, a full-time social worker, and a full-time SAPIS worker. District coordinators from the 15 sample school districts were also interviewed.

For the 15 selected schools, O.S.P. provided O.E.A. with additional implementation data which were collected on monthly summary-of-service forms (M.S.S.R's) filled out by facilitators and other A.I.D.P. school staff. Finally, an O.E.A. evaluator conducted an in-depth interview with a representative of O.S.P. The Office of Student Information Services (OSIS) provided data on individual student attendance and achievement test scores.

ORGANIZATION OF THE REPORT

Chapter II presents a review of literature describing student characteristics and school context variables that have an impact on student attendance. Chapter III describes the characteristics of the student participants in terms of the reasons for their selection, their previous academic achievement

as well as self- and staff-reported characteristics and attitudes. Chapter IV presents a description of the school context in which the A.I.D.P. program operated in a randomly selected sample of 15 schools. Chapter V describes the implementation of the program. Chapter VI assesses the impact of the A.I.D.P. program on attendance rates, number of courses passed, and amount of change in reading scores of the student participants. Chapter VII presents evaluations of the program by students and staff members in the random sample of schools. Chapter VIII presents conclusions and recommendations based on these findings.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The report prepared by the Office of Educational Assessment, entitled Model Practices in the 1985-86 Attendance Improvement and Dropout Prevention Program, presented a review of research from the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s emphasizing school-related and other student variables characteristic of potential high-school dropouts.

CHARACTERISTICS OF DROPOUTS

The review in this report as well as additional research by Morrow (1986) and Hammack (1986) revealed the following characteristics of dropouts: a history of previous grade retention; poor academic performance as measured by test scores and course grades; and behaviors associated with excessive absence, disciplinary problems, suspensions, and cutting class. Non-school-related characteristics of dropouts and potential dropouts include family situations in which there is an absence of one or both natural parents in the home, parents who have a relatively low level of educational achievement (especially as it affects the presence of reading material in the home), or parents who are unlikely to be interested in or to monitor the educational activities of their children. (Eckstrom, Goertz, Pollock and Rock, 1986; Rumberger, 1981).

National studies of high school dropouts have indicated that the background characteristic most closely identified with dropping out is low socioeconomic status. (Eckstrom, Goertz,

Pollock and Rock, 1986; Wehlage and Rutter, 1984, and Wagner, 1984.) This suggests that students may drop out of school in order to work or help care for their families in other ways. However, a nationwide longitudinal survey of dropouts by Dale Mann (1986) showed that the reasons students most frequently gave for leaving school were school-related (42 percent of the total number of dropouts surveyed) as opposed to work- or family-related (36 percent of the total number surveyed).

SCHOOL CONTEXT

While some studies have focused on the sociological reasons for the poor school-related attitudes and behavior of students, others have looked for contributing factors inherent in the school environment. A number of school characteristics have been studied. A strong bond between teacher and students has been found to influence student retention and academic achievement (Foley and Crull, 1984). Both Wehlage and Rutter (1986) and Foley and Crull (1984) have found that small class size and small program size enhances relationships between pupils and teachers by allowing teachers to give more personalized attention to students.

Other studies have focused on the evaluation and reward structures of schools, which typically involve grades, teacher approval, and tangible rewards. Eckstrom, Goertz, Pollock and Rock (1986) found that students who perceive the evaluation and reward structure of school as being illegitimate or unfair tend to dislike school and become apathetic and disengaged, as

evidenced by negative or rebellious activities and low effort.

Natriello (1984) found that disengagement of at-risk students occurred when they felt they were being judged and graded by contradictory demands, as in the case of students who were asked to meet the requirements of more than one staff member at one time; by unpredictable, unattainable, or uncontrollable evaluations, as in the case of teachers who did not make clear to students how they were expected to perform; when performance standards were too high; or when teachers gave poor evaluations to everyone in a group even though not all students were performing badly.

Slavin (1980) stated that the effect of the usual rewards on student performance depends on whether the evaluation and reward structure is competitive or cooperative. A competitive reward structure, as grading on a curve, is predicated on a comparison of one student's abilities with those of another, potentially resulting in resentment between students. On the other hand, a cooperative reward structure, which takes into account individual effort as well as proficiency, has been found to increase the cohesiveness of the group, leading to a liking of others, a feeling of being liked, and improved race relations. Not surprisingly, Slavin found that a cooperative learning structure also has a positive effect on academic achievement.

Another aspect of the school context that has been studied is task demands, which refers to the perceived level of difficulty of the educational activities that are required of

students and takes into account the differences in format of learning activities (i.e., lecture, class discussion, and individual or group assignments), as well as such considerations as teaching style.

Higher classroom achievement standards may impact on potential dropouts in a number of ways. A series of studies by Natriello and Dornbusch (1984) found that students in classrooms with very low standards were more likely to cut class than students in classrooms with more demanding standards. However, these studies also showed that high-demand classrooms often lose low-ability students, who try less hard when the pace is too fast. (Natriello, McDill, and Pallas 1985).

Vertiz, Fortune, and Hutson (1985) found that it was necessary to match the style of teaching to the level of maturity of the students. They found that the most effective leadership model for low-maturity students was high task structure with a high degree of teacher responsiveness. More mature students, they observed, could perform well in situations in which there was a low task structure together with a low degree of teacher responsiveness.

Student perceptions of teacher attitudes were studied by Wehlage and Rutter (1986) who stated that one of the primary determinants of dropping out is teachers' low expectations of the amount of schooling a student will attain and students' subsequent perceptions of teachers' lack of interest in them. Dale Mann (1986) found that, in successful school programs,

teachers had high expectations for their students, supported students' progress, and challenged students to succeed at feasible tasks.

Literature presents varied views of the effect of teaching style on student performance. Lunenberg (1985) found that humanistic school environments are associated with students' positive regard for themselves as learners as well as high student motivation. These environments are distinguished by the following characteristics: nonauthoritarian teaching styles in which teachers praise and encourage students, accept and clarify student ideas, ask more questions of students, and lecture less; classrooms in which teachers encourage cooperative interaction among students; classrooms in which teachers support the practice of student self-discipline; and democratic atmospheres with a high degree of communication between teachers and students.

A third aspect of school context is the authority system or the amount of control students have over their own activities. Systems can range from those in which there is a high degree of student autonomy to those in which there is a high degree of school-imposed structure.

Wehlage and Rutter (1986) found that at-risk students tend to feel powerless in their school environment. These students tend to believe the disciplinary system in their school to be neither fair nor effective in dealing with rule violators. Lunenberg (1985) found that an autocratic, custodial, pupil-control orientation is associated with student unrest,

alienation, absenteeism, and suspension.

In summary, while a student's background may predispose him or her to poor school-related behavior and the possibility of dropping out, studies have indicated that alterable factors inherent in the school environment have a significant bearing on student achievement and program success.

As part of this evaluation we looked at the school context of the A.I.D.P. program in a sample of fifteen sample schools. We reviewed demographic data supplied by O.S.I.S. and asked A.I.D.P. students in these schools for their feelings about the task demands, the evaluation and reward structure, and their sense of autonomy at school. A.I.D.P. and non-A.I.D.P. staff were asked questions about their perceptions of the students they served, their jobs and the general school environment.

III. PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

STUDENT SELECTION

Chancellor's Special Circular 25 set forth guidelines for selecting middle-school students for the A.I.D.P. program. These guidelines reflected the expanded criteria for at-risk students that had been developed the previous year.* These expanded criteria reflected the findings in the literature, including not only excessive absences in the prior academic year, but lateness, half-day absences, and poor academic functioning as manifested by course failures, low reading scores, and retention in grade. Furthermore, students who had been in the A.I.D.P. program in 1985-86 but had improved their attendance such that they no longer fit the eligibility criteria for A.I.D.P. would be allowed to continue in the program if there were space available after eligible students had been selected. This last criterion was devised in response to recommendations from staff in previous years that students who had improved their attendance by virtue of their participation in A.I.D.P. should not be dropped from the program the following year.

The guidelines contained in the Chancellor's memo for the 1986-87 program were modified slightly by O.S.P. to include additional criteria and to delineate special selection criteria for former A.I.D.P. students. The selection criteria used by

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*See Middle School Attendance Improvement/Dropout Prevention Program 1985-86 End-of-Year Report

the middle schools to target A.I.D.P. students can be found in Table 1. These criteria were to be used for students in the two upper grades of middle school in order of their presentation. That is, the second criterion could be used only when all students who fit the first criterion had been selected, and there was still space remaining in the program.

STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS

In the spring and fall of 1986, facilitators and other personnel at the A.I.D.P. middle schools selected a total of 9,554 students to participate in the program. Of those for whom selection criteria were available, 76.7 percent were selected on the basis of excessive absences during academic year 1985-86 (30 to 74 absences in 1985-86 or 15 absences in spring, 1986). Another 6.7 percent had fewer absences but demonstrated at least one other at-risk factor, such as poor academic performance or many half-day absences. Many students (9.3 percent) who came to school more often were selected for A.I.D.P. on the basis of two at-risk factors. The remaining 7.3 percent of the students were chosen using other criteria. Most of the students selected for the program were new to A.I.D.P.; only 27.4 percent had been in the program the previous year. Table 1 presents a more detailed analysis of the selection characteristics of the A.I.D.P. population citywide. It is important to keep in mind that the selection criteria were applied in order of presentation. Therefore, a student who failed three subjects and was absent 45 days in 1985-86 would be selected on the basis of poor attendance

Table 1

Number and Percent of A.I.D.P. Students
Selected by Criterion

Selection Criteria	n	Percent of Target Population (N = 9,554)[a]
30 to 74 Absences in 1985-86	5,474	57.8
15 or More Absences in Spring, 1986	1,794	18.9
25 to 29 Absences in 1985-86 and:		
a) Participant in 1985-86 A.I.D.P. or D.P.P. Program	155	1.6
b) 1986 D.R.P. Test Score at or Below the 35th Percentile	120	1.3
c) Failure in Two or More Major Subjects in June, 1986	134	1.4
d) 20 or More Days Late in 1985-86	140	1.5
e) Overage for Grade	44	0.5
f) LEP-Entitled	25	0.3
g) 20 or More Half-Day Absences in 1985-86	10	0.1
22 to 25 Absences in 1985-86 and: Participant in 1985-86 A.I.D.P. or D.P.P. Program	165	1.7
Student Does not Meet the Above Attendance Criteria but Exhibited Two or More of List Items b-f	882	9.3
L.T.A. in 1985-86 but Attended 10 or More Days Since 9/8/86	249	2.6
Absent 10 or More Days in September 1986 but not an L.T.A. in 1985-86	212	2.2
15-37 Absences Since 9/8/86	61	0.6
12-14 Absences in Fall 1986 and Two Major Subject Failures	7	0.1
	9,472	

[a] 82 students are not included in this table because the reason for their selection to the program was not indicated.

rather than subject failure.

Most students in the A.I.D.P. program were in the eighth grade (48.8 percent). Another 33.8 percent were in the seventh grade and 17.5 percent were in the ninth grade. The majority of students (95.6 percent) were in general education classes, 4.0 percent were in seventh-grade or eighth-grade promotional policy classes, and .4 percent were in special progress (accelerated) classes. There were almost the same number of boys and girls in the program; 49.0 percent of all A.I.D.P. participants were girls and 51.0 percent were boys.

As suggested by the research literature, many A.I.D.P. students have experienced problems or failures in school as manifested by course failures, low reading scores, and retention in grade. In June, 1986, the year before their participation in A.I.D.P., 48.0 percent of the program participants had failed at least two courses and 33 percent had failed at least half their course load. In 1986 over half the A.I.D.P. students (56 percent) scored below the 50th percentile for their grade on the Degrees of Reading Power Test (DRP), with over a third of the students scoring at or below the 35th percentile. A.I.D.P. students had even more difficulty with mathematics. Over three quarters of the program participants (79 percent) scored below the 50th percentile on the Metropolitan Achievement Test (MAT) and 63 percent had scores below the 35th percentile. Finally, 37.5 percent of the A.I.D.P. students were one year overage for their grade and 17.6 percent were two years overage, suggesting

that over half the program participants had been retained in grade at least once.

School personnel presented a picture of the A.I.D.P. students similar to that found in the literature. A.I.D.P. staff (facilitators, career education teachers, and guidance counselors) and non-A.I.D.P. staff (language arts teachers and principals) at the 15 randomly selected schools were interviewed about the program and about the students served. In keeping with findings in the literature citing the relationship between teacher expectations of students and program success, staff were asked to predict how their A.I.D.P. students would be living some twelve years hence. A majority of the A.I.D.P. staff possessed a very guarded optimism about the A.I.D.P. students despite the fact that they felt they were beset by personal problems. Most staff members felt that at least a portion of the students would be able to lead productive lives, mostly in blue- or pink-collar jobs. Only three out of the 13 st ff members predicted bleak futures for most of their students. Several of the staff members, however, felt that their students' futures depended heavily on how they fared in high school and whether the high schools continued to provide the support the students were receiving in the middle schools. A.I.D.P. staff cited lack of parental support, problems related to poverty, and learning problems as being the three factors in the students lives that most contributed to student absences.

Principals corroborated the perceptions of the staff, as

almost half felt that the students' failure in school, especially as manifested by retention in grade, was the primary factor contributing to poor attendance. Almost half the principals interviewed rated the parent involvement in their school as being "low" or "very low" and four of the 13 principals cited problems at home as being a major contributor to student absence. Finally, four principals noted that interpersonal problems with peers or faculty often kept students out of school.

Language arts teachers reported that the A.I.D.P. students in their classes differed little from their non-A.I.D.P. counterparts except that the majority of them felt that the A.I.D.P. students were not working up to their potential (some of these staff, however felt that none of their students were working up to their potential); thus, most of these teachers had the same academic expectations of their A.I.D.P. students that they had of their non-A.I.D.P. students. Noting that there was significant variation within the A.I.D.P. population, half of these teachers felt that, compared to non-A.I.D.P. students, A.I.D.P. students had the same ability to complete assignments and the same attitudes toward academic work. Teachers were evenly divided as to which services would help A.I.D.P. students achieve higher academic levels. They cited remedial education, career and vocational education, and guidance services.

Self-Reported Student Characteristics and Attitudes

The students themselves present a more complex picture of their backgrounds, their attitudes toward school, and their

futures. The following discussion is based on responses to the fall survey that O.E.A. evaluators administered to 215 students in the 15 randomly selected schools who also responded to a follow-up survey in the spring. As noted earlier these students may represent a slightly more conscientious group than the group of A.I.D.P. students as a whole, due to the fact that the former group of students was in school on both occasions.

Despite their absences and/or other academic problems, students showed considerable optimism toward school, contrary to findings in the literature. The majority of students (83.0 percent) claimed that they wanted to come to school most of the time and most planned to graduate from high school and college. However, despite their seemingly positive attitude toward school and learning, these students demonstrate poor attendance or other negative behaviors. This may be because students overestimate their abilities and motivation on a self-report basis. It is also possible that students who are at risk are externally oriented, thus attributing their failure in school to sources outside of themselves. The apparent contradiction between students' attitudes and behavior may also have to do with the way students handle the problems that occur during the school day, rather than their underlying attitudes toward school in general. Over half the students surveyed (51.8 percent) stated that "some classes" or "some teachers" were the aspects they disliked most about school. It may be that the academic and social problems that can occur in any school setting with any student have a more

powerful negative effect for these at-risk students than they do for the population at large. Interpersonal problems with teachers may also prevent students from obtaining the help they need when they encounter difficult classwork, thereby contributing to poor academic achievement.

Students presented a mixed assessment of their parents' involvement and attitudes toward school. In general, students reported that their parents feel that school is important and consider it a priority issue. Thirty-six percent reported that their parents had spoken to their teachers, at least on open school night. Many students (65.2 percent) stated that their parents think that studying is the most important activity their child can do after school. Even more students (76.2 percent) thought their parents wanted them to attend college rather than get a job after high school. Nevertheless, when asked what they did when they were absent from school, 16.2 percent of the students surveyed said that they helped around the house or babysat for younger siblings. This suggests that despite their attitudes about the importance of school, parents sometimes depend on older children to help out at home, even at the expense of the child's attendance at school. This may be related to the problems and pressures that exist within families. Over half (65.4 percent) the students said that they lived with a single parent. Furthermore, 60.4 percent of the parents of the surveyed students had between three and five children and 39.2 percent had more than five children.

Only 10.4 percent of the students responding to the questionnaire reported that they have jobs. Of these, over 80 percent reported that they worked fewer than five hours a week. This seems to indicate that, at least for middle school students, outside jobs do not cause excessive conflicts with school hours. Almost a quarter of the students reported that they watched T.V. or listened to the radio when they didn't come to school.

IV. CONTEXT OF A.I.D.P. PROGRAMS

SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS

This chapter presents a description of those middle schools in which A.I.D.P. programs were implemented. It is based on demographic information provided by OSIS, O.E.A. interviews conducted with program and school staff, and student surveys that O.E.A. staff administered to 215 randomly selected students at the 15 sample schools.

School Selection

Middle schools were chosen to receive A.I.D.P. funds for the 1985-86 school year based on the following criteria:

- an overall attendance rate in 1983-84 at or below the citywide median of 87.5 percent;
- a feeder rate of more than 18 percent to an A.I.D.P. high school; and
- an average daily register at or above 600, and average daily student absences at or above 90 in 1983-84.

The Chancellor's office, in conjunction with O.S.P. and the community superintendents, selected 68 middle schools that appeared to meet the criteria. The State Education Department (S.E.D.) made a commitment to fund these programs for three years, beginning in 1985-86. In 1986-87 one additional school was added to the original group, bringing the total number of A.I.D.P. middle schools to 69.

School Demographics

A profile of A.I.D.P. middle schools in 1986-87 can be inferred from an examination of the demographic information

collected by O.S.I.S. from the group of 15 schools selected at random for this study. (See Table 2.) Each of the five boroughs was represented. Two schools were located in Manhattan, four in the Bronx, six in Brooklyn, two in Queens, and one in Staten Island. Eight were junior high schools (grades seven to nine) and seven were intermediate schools (grades six to eight). The total student registers of these schools ranged from a low of 310 to a high of 1,519, with a mean of 1,023 students. There were slightly more males (7,833) than females (7,510) in this sample of schools, a condition that is generally true in middle schools citywide.

As might be anticipated from the findings in the research literature, the mean percent of low-income students served in the randomly selected schools (63.7 percent) was substantially higher than the June, 1987 citywide rate of 44.3 percent. In addition, 12 of the 15 schools in the sample were eligible for Chapter I funding. The ethnic breakdown in schools participating in A.I.D.P. reflects the pattern of minority populations generally found in low socioeconomic districts. In five schools, Black students represented the majority of the student population. In four of these schools more than eighty percent of the students on register were Black. In six schools, Hispanic students represented the majority. White students represent a majority (68 and 54 percent, respectively) in only two schools in this sample. Although the Chancellor's guidelines suggested that participating schools serve 150 A.I.D.P. students, the total

Table 2

Characteristics of Randomly Selected A.I.D.P. Schools, 1986-87[1]

School	Grades	Ethnicity					Sex		Average Daily Attendance 1985-86	Percent Low Income[2]	Number of A.I.D.P. Students[3]	Percent of A.I.D.P. Students	Total Register
		White	Black	Hispanic	Asian	Other	M	F					
A	7-9	7.1	34.5	57.2	1.2	.0	757	762	70.3	46.7	143	9.4	1,519
B	6-8	.1	36.3	62.8	.8	.0	491	455	73.4	114.9	170	18	946
C	6-8	.6	42.2	57.0	.2	.0	297	238	77.4	81.6	90	16.8	535
D	7-9	.3	33.1	65.6	1.3	.0	472	453	71.0	79.0	129	13.9	925
E	7-9	23.9	11.9	46.1	.1	.0	152	158	81.0	66.1	162	52.2	310
F	6-8	.8	15.8	81.4	2.0	.0	594	621	78.1	48.3	137	11.3	1,215
G	7-9	.4	85.7	13.2	.5	.1	353	375	71.1	60.0	102	14	728
H	7-9	4.2	3.9	90.6	1.3	.0	610	632	67.2	86.2	141	11.4	1,242
I	7-9	.0	82.7	17.2	.1	.0	389	386	73.4	71.4	157	20.2	775
J	6-8	1.6	84.8	8.1	5.4	.2	918	894	80.2	57.1	159	8.8	1,812
K	7-9	47.8	23.4	19.3	9.5	.1	624	517	78.3	41.8	158	13.8	1,141
L	6-8	.1	82.7	17.2	.0	.0	541	506	71.1	84.4	158	15.1	1,047
M	6-8	3.4	60.2	28.3	8.2	.0	656	639	80.5	51.1	149	11.5	1,295
N	7-9	68.6	8.0	18.2	4.9	.3	542	544	78.5	31.8	119	11.0	1,086
O	6-8	54.4	27.8	11.7	6.0	.1	437	330	83.3	35.9	151	19.7	767

[1] Table is based on annual school census data provided by O.S.I.S. for 1986-87.
[2] Percent low income is defined as the number of students receiving Aid for Dependant Children (A.F.D.C.). payments and the number of students eligible number for free lunch divided by the public school register. Percent may be more than 100 since some students were eligible for both.
[3] This number is based on the number of students on roster who actually received program services.

number of student participants reported in the individual schools who actually received services ranged from a low of 90 to a high of 170. The median proportion of A.I.D.P. students in the schools to the total student body was 13.9 percent.*

SOCIAL CONTEXT

Student and Staff Perceptions of the Environment

The principals, A.I.D.P. staff members, and language arts teachers interviewed in the 15 randomly selected schools were asked questions pertaining to the school context in which A.I.D.P. operated as well as the task demands, reward system, and authority structure in their schools. In addition, the 215 students who completed the student questionnaire in both fall, 1986 and spring, 1987 also answered questions concerning their perceptions of the school environment. As noted before, the responses of the 215 students suggest that they might be slightly more conscientious about their school performance than the A.I.D.P. population at large. However, in all other respects they appeared to be representative of the whole A.I.D.P. population.

Eleven of the 13 principals in the sample reported that A.I.D.P. students in their schools were mainstreamed with other students for homeroom and subject classes. Consequently, for the most part, in these schools students were pulled out of main-

*It should be noted, however, that for one school, there was a large discrepancy between the number of students on register, as reported to O.E.A. by the principal, and the and the number reported by O.S.I.S., which is the number presented in the table.

stream classes for A.I.D.P. activities. While this type of arrangement was likely to counteract "stigmatization" of A.I.D.P. students, scheduling conflicts sometimes arose. In two of the schools in the sample, A.I.D.P. students had homeroom and subject classes as a group, which made attendance tracking and follow-up and the scheduling of A.I.D.P. activities easier, but was more likely to isolate A.I.D.P. students. In one of the schools in the second group, a special language-arts class with a smaller class register (18 students) was created for A.I.D.P. students, all of whom were also in the seventh-grade Gates program. All principals reported that attendance was taken in every subject class.

When asked about the curriculum for A.I.D.P. students, principals cited a basic program of math, English, social studies, science, gym, and hygiene, which was the same for all other students. Additional enrichment classes such as vocational training, shop, talent class, music, and art were available in different schools, to a greater or lesser extent, depending on resources. Presumably, A.I.D.P. students had the same access to these classes as other students, although in some cases the scheduling of the A.I.D.P. career-education class precluded a student's participation in talent class.

Understandably, school personnel did not feel that the schools met every need of their students. A.I.D.P. staff, language-arts teachers, and principals felt that for many at-risk students, earlier intervention had not taken place at the

elementary-school level, thus leaving students in poor academic standing or overage for their grade. A.I.D.P. facilitators and principals cited a variety of remedial programs available in the school to the A.I.D.P. students, including resource rooms, after-school programs, and E.S.L. classes. However, the language-arts teachers gave mixed ratings to both remedial education services and to guidance services available to A.I.D.P. students in their schools. Many of the A.I.D.P. staff who were interviewed felt that their schools did not provide enough high-interest activities for their students. Most principals, on the other hand, asserted that their students were able to choose to participate in a variety of recreational and/or cultural activities, although some of these were extracurricular, falling under the rubric of A.I.D.P. enrichment activities. While most of the 215 students surveyed (70.5 percent) felt capable of doing the work assigned to them, some students (36.6 percent) reported that they would like school more if they had less work, easier work, or more help from teachers. Language-arts teachers were divided as to whether their A.I.D.P. students were as capable of performing tasks as their other students were; most teachers agreed that their A.I.D.P. students were not working up to their potential.

Most of the language arts teachers who were interviewed rated the A.I.D.P. students' need for rewards as greater than that of their non-A.I.D.P. counterparts. However, some staff also felt that the emphasis on "prizes" provided by A.I.D.P. as

incentives for good or improved attendance may deflect attention from other kinds of rewards, such as praise, and may even be at odds with some academic goals. Very few students stated that they would like school more if they got "prizes for good work", while 21.5 percent stated that they would like school more if they got "better grades" or had "more interesting classes" (few students reported that they found more than one of their subject classes interesting) and 57.9 percent stated that receiving good grades or compliments from their teachers made them feel proud. However, only 38 percent of the students surveyed stated that their teachers talk to them about their work "several" or "many" times per week, while the remaining 62 percent reported that teachers talk to them about their work either "once or twice a week", "not very often", or "never". These data suggest that a large portion of A.I.D.P. students feel that the level of attention given to their work by classroom teachers is insufficient. Language-arts teachers shed some light on this area, citing large class size and lack of appropriate in-service training as inhibiting their ability to work with students as effectively as they would like. Language-arts classes in the 15 randomly selected schools had registers averaging 31 students, ranging from 21 to 40 students. Notably, the language-arts teachers rated the support they received from the A.I.D.P. staff more highly than they rated the support and materials received from the school administration.

Students reported favorable responses to the greater

autonomy they experienced in middle school compared to elementary school. Eighty-seven percent of the students questioned reported that they preferred junior high school to elementary school. Of this number, 30 percent stated that they enjoyed the increased independence and respect accorded them in junior high school. Other related reasons for liking junior high school better than elementary school included departmentalization of classes and a more stimulating environment.

Most language-arts teachers reported that they allowed students some choice concerning classroom activities, although teachers differed as to how much autonomy they allowed. It should be noted, however, that it is difficult to know how accurately staff reports reflect this information. Seven out of 13 principals reported that their students had some responsibility for selecting some of the courses in their program (i.e., language class or talent class). While there are no data pertaining to the issue of student participation in the setting of rules in their schools, almost half the students surveyed (48 percent) asserted that the school rules were "fair" or "somewhat fair" and another quarter of the students felt that the rules were "neither fair nor unfair." It is difficult to know whether this indicates an active acceptance of the school rules or passive compliance in the face of what students perceive to be a "given."

V. IMPLEMENTATION

This chapter presents several aspects of the A.I.D.P. program as it was implemented in the New York City middle schools. It describes the program components as they were outlined in the Chancellor's memo and presents the frequency and range of services students actually received during the course of the year. It also presents information collected from interviews with school principals, language arts teachers, and A.I.D.P. staff at the 15 schools in the sample regarding the functioning of the program at their schools as well as O.E.A. observations of some program activities. Changes in A.I.D.P. implementation or guidelines for the current year are discussed in this section of the report.

DESCRIPTION OF SERVICES

The following six components were required of each funded dropout prevention program:

- o Facilitating services to students
- o Attendance outreach
- o Guidance and counseling
- o Health services
- o School-level linkage
- o Alternative educational programs

All students participating in the A.I.D.P. program were expected to receive services from each of the six required program components.

Based on the guidelines, attendance outreach, and alternative educational services could have been provided through contractual agreement between the community school district and community-based organizations.

Facilitation

Requirements: The facilitation component as outlined in the Chancellor's guidelines was essentially the same as it had been in 1985-86. It was to include two parts: the appointment of a facilitator to administer the program at the schools, and a pupil personnel committee (P.P.C.) to coordinate A.I.D.P. with other programs in the school. (For a complete description of the requirements of this component, see pp. 15-16 of the Middle School Attendance Improvement Dropout Prevention (A.I.D.P.) Program 1985-86 End-of-Year Report prepared by O.E.A.)

A licensed teacher was to serve as facilitator for a minimum of two periods per day. The duties of the facilitator were defined as follows: to identify and track the daily attendance of targeted students, to coordinate all program components, to collect and report data on services received by program students, and to facilitate the activities of the P.P.C.

Staff Description: The 14 facilitators interviewed by O.E.A. staff all confirmed that they performed these functions. However, although it was not stipulated in the guidelines, many

reported that they also used their facilitation time to provide other services as well. Half the facilitators reported providing counseling to students; six facilitators mentioned that they provided training and supervision to A.I.D.P. staff members.

As stated in the guidelines, the facilitator's .4 position could be combined with another position. Ten of the 14 facilitators in the sample also worked as A.I.D.P. career-education teachers at their schools and two worked as A.I.D.P. guidance counselors. One facilitator in the sample combined his A.I.D.P. function with his tax-levy position as attendance coordinator for the entire school.

All facilitators in the sample reported that the P.P.C. held regular meetings, although the frequency of the meetings varied somewhat. Facilitators and principals reported that meetings were used primarily for case conferences, problem-solving, and coordination of services. Of the principals who were interviewed, two reported that meetings were used to sensitize non-A.I.D.P. staff to issues of concern to A.I.D.P. students. The extent of the principal's involvement varied from school to school. Three of the 13 principals who were interviewed reported that they acted as chairperson of the P.P.C. or were responsible for setting the committee's agenda.

Attendance Outreach

Requirements: As in 1985-86, the attendance component of A.I.D.P. was to include two parts: attendance outreach services

and incentives for improved attendance.

Attendance record keeping was to consist of checking and documenting daily attendance and lateness, preparing both regular school-day and extended school-day monthly attendance forms, and initiating and monitoring home-visit requests. Timely parental notification of student absence was to be achieved by contacting the students' homes by mail, telephone, or automatic dialing machine. Home visits were to be made to investigate student absences, maintain regular contact with parents or guardians of high-risk students, provide assistance to the students' families in resolving attendance problems, and locate and retrieve long-term absentees in order to encourage their continued education. Schools could choose to fund either a part-time attendance teacher and one full-time family assistant or two full-time family assistants to fulfill the responsibilities of monitoring and outreach.

Attendance incentives were to include special activities and awards for students. In response to the observation made by program staff in previous years that incentives awarded only to A.I.D.P. students created bad feelings among other students, 20 percent of the A.I.D.P. funds allocated for incentive activities could be used to include non-A.I.D.P. students who exhibited exemplary attendance patterns.

Staff Description: Principals in the sample schools reported that to integrate the A.I.D.P. program into the overall attendance policy of the schools, A.I.D.P. program staff worked

cooperatively with regular school-attendance staff. It was not uncommon for A.I.D.P. family workers in the field to visit the homes of non-A.I.D.P. students upon the request of principals or attendance teachers. Similarly, non-A.I.D.P. attendance aides often made calls to the homes of students in the A.I.D.P. program.

The A.I.D.P. staff who were interviewed reported that facilitators and guidance staff as well as attendance teachers and family workers were involved with attendance outreach. Almost all on-site staff seemed to take responsibility for telephone calls to students' homes. Staff in the sample reported that approximately 75 percent of the time these calls resulted in a response from parents or the student's return to school.

In 1985-86 it had been recommended that attendance outreach efforts be increased in the early fall in order to establish desirable attendance patterns which could then be reinforced throughout the school year. Only one A.I.D.P. facilitator in the sample reported such an increase in effort; three reported that they felt a need for an increase in attendance outreach in the winter and spring. An examination of data collected from the M.S.S.R.'s revealed that outreach efforts were reactive rather than proactive, increasing as the academic year progressed in response to increases in the number of full and half days that students were absent.

Facilitators reported that incentives offered for good attendance most often included trips and parties in which both

A.I.D.P. and non-A.I.D.P. students participated. They also reported awarding individual prizes, praise, and other forms of acknowledgement.

Twelve of the 14 facilitators reported that they provided no special attendance outreach efforts to overage students, despite recommendations to that effect made in previous years. Two facilitators in the sample, however, maintained that they did provide overage students with additional attendance incentives.

Guidance and Counseling Services

Requirements: Requirements for the guidance component were essentially the same as in 1985-86. Appropriate counseling was to be provided to every targeted student in order to identify and address problems that contributed to poor attendance. Counseling could be provided by half-time licensed or certified guidance counselors, school social workers, psychologists and/or SAPIS workers.

In an effort to increase the involvement of the parents of A.I.D.P. students, guidelines stated that a minimum of four activities involving parents had to be conducted by A.I.D.P. guidance personnel or other appropriate staff. A parent orientation to the A.I.D.P. program; a discussion of high school choices and requirements; joint parent/student activities; and parent workshops focusing on adolescent development, conflict mediation, and parent-child communication were suggested as possible activities.

Staff Description: The guidance staff in the sample included a full-time social worker, a SAPIS worker, and nine guidance counselors of whom only one worked full-time on A.I.D.P. at one school. Two of the eight remaining guidance counselors were also facilitators at their schools. Five had full-time A.I.D.P. status but divided their time among two or more schools, and one divided her full-time hours at one school between the A.I.D.P. group and the student body as a whole.

When asked to describe the content of their jobs, the guidance staff in the sample cited student and family counseling as the primary focus. Guidance staff also reported that they selected awards and organized award ceremonies, scheduled and supervised trips, acted as a liaison with other faculty members, and made necessary referrals to outside agencies. The counselors in the sample also mentioned assisting with a lateness detention center, completing paperwork, and maintaining contact with the parents of students. One guidance staff member, a social worker, mentioned that because of high teacher absenteeism at his school he was often asked by his principal to fill in as a classroom teacher.

Some of the guidance staff who were interviewed appeared to bear full responsibility for counseling A.I.D.P. students while others had back-up from other A.I.D.P. staff and teacher-mentors. The full-time SAPIS worker in the sample reported being able to conduct ongoing counseling with about 15 students while having some sporadic contact with a group of 95. Other guidance

staff in the sample maintained caseloads of over 100 students and saw them "as needed." Those having responsiblity for more than one school reported caseloads averaging 300 students. The guidance counselor who also held tax levy responsibilities had the entire student body of her school on her caseload.

Guidance counselors in the sample reported that they referred an average of 16 students per year for outside services such as medical and counseling services, job placement, outside testing, and tutoring. Many cited referrals to the Bureau of Child Welfare and the Department of Social Services. Staff also reported that an average of 75 percent of those students referred actually received services.

Guidance staff who were interviewed reported that they conducted parent workshops on an average of three times during the school year. Parent attendance in almost all cases was poor. To improve parent attendance, most counselors offered parents incentives to become more involved. Half of the schools provided snacks or dinner to parents attending meetings, while other schools included parents on trips and other activities.

Topics most often discussed in parent workshops included the parent-child relationship, A.I.D.P. and the importance of attending school, health needs, suicide prevention, drug abuse prevention, and high school application procedures. Often the entire A.I.D.P. staff or some part of it was involved in running the workshops.

Health Services

Requirements: A health plan, which was to include review of health records, vision and hearing screening, physical examinations, referrals to appropriate health providers, and documentation of service delivery was required for each targeted student. As in 1985-86, the objective of the screening process was to identify particular remedial and counseling needs of students. Screening results were to be used to make referrals to appropriate physical and mental health services available in the school or through local agencies. With the exception of providing students with transportation to health referral providers, dropout prevention funds were not to be used for direct health services.

Given the part-time nature of the health-services coordinator position, O.E.A. interviews were not planned. However, student-contact data were collected on end-of-year turn-around rosters.

High School Linkage

Requirements: As in 1985-86 the high school linkage component was intended to help A.I.D.P. students form connections with high schools they planned to attend and was to include activities to encourage student engagement with these schools. These activities were intended to supplement the high-school orientation provided to all middle-school students. In an effort to improve the high school linkage component over the previous year, 1986-87 guidelines stated that every high school

receiving dropout prevention funds was to develop a plan and specific strategies for linking up with at least three eligible feeder middle schools. High-risk students in terminal grades at the middle school were to be the primary beneficiaries of the services provided by the linkage component. An addendum to the guidelines issued in December, 1986 specified that A.I.D.P. students in the highest middle-school grade were to participate in four linkage activities including preparing for high school, orientation to high school and two other enrichment or instructional activities. The latter included either a small-group or individual high school experience during the school day, or an after-school program, or both. Two of the four linkage activities were to occur at the high school. A.I.D.P. students in the penultimate grade were to receive at least three high school linkage activities including high school preparation, high school orientation, and one individual or small-group experience. Of the three activities, at least one was to occur at the high school.

Staff Description: All the facilitators in the sample reported that they were directly involved with the high school linkage component. Most of them had the assistance of the guidance counselor or some other A.I.D.P. member. All except one of the facilitators reported that their students received an orientation to high school as part of their school program. These orientations were described as visits to high schools, distribution of high school material to middle-school students,

presentations given by faculty and student representatives of high schools, and assistance given to students completing high-school applications. Other high school activities involving A.I.D.P. middle-school students included after-school recreation, group guidance activities, skills programs, and special courses. Shared events that were mentioned included a high-school fair, career day, and trips. However, not all of the facilitators in the sample reported that their A.I.D.P. students engaged in such shared activities with high schools. Also, for those who did, it was not clear whether the activities were a result of ongoing school policy or a specific feature of the A.I.D.P. program.

At the time the staff interviews took place in the spring, facilitators at eight of the sample schools reported that A.I.D.P. students had attended high school classes and five reported that their students had not. Three of the facilitators in the latter group stated that the reason their A.I.D.P. students had not attended classes was because high school staff was uncooperative, and one stated that it was "because the appropriate high school staff members were not in place." Facilitators at three of the sample schools reported that they gave their A.I.D.P. students choices regarding which high schools to visit, and ten indicated that they did not.

Alternative Educational Programs

Requirements: The purpose of the alternative educational component was to provide at-risk students with high-interest

educational experiences incorporating basic skills instruction and individualized attention. The alternative educational component was not to replace other required educational services but to supplement them. Funding for this component was dependent on the other five components being in place. Otherwise, other funding had to be used. Two alternative education models were outlined in the guidelines: career education and extended school day.

Career education, which was to operate during normal school hours, was intended to encourage better attendance through supplemental instruction and emphasize the connection between school and future work experiences. Each program student was to receive two periods per week of instruction. Program strategies were to involve a combination of classroom instruction and hands-on experiences such as business enterprise, job shadowing, and role-play. In response to concerns expressed by the career-education teachers in 1985-86 that they were not adequately prepared for teaching this subject, O.S.P. developed optional materials that they distributed to the A.I.D.P. staff across the 69 schools. These materials were made up of several units including "Planning for High School" and "Decision Making/Problem Solving". They emphasized student activity, including small-group discussions, pencil-and-paper tasks, and practical applications. The material contained both suggestions for teaching strategies and all necessary worksheets for students to use. The extended school-day program was optional. It could

operate before or after school hours and was to provide either supplemental instruction, counseling, or career-education experiences such as enterprise, work-study, or a combination of activities. Work-study was to involve four paid hours per week of on-site job experience and two non-paid hours per week of discussion after school with the work-study teacher. Student participation in the work-study activity was to be contingent upon regular school attendance.

Staff Description:

All of the facilitators in the sample reported providing career education to students during the school day. Four schools offered it once a week, five offered it twice, two offered it three times a week, and one offered it daily. In the majority of schools in the sample, A.I.P.P. students were pulled out of other classes to receive career education instruction. Classes they were pulled from included shop, computer instruction, or talent. Staff reported that in rare cases, the scheduling of career education conflicted with the scheduling of major subjects. They maintained that these conflicts arose because guidelines prohibited the provision of career-education instruction by anyone other than the career-education teacher, whose limited availability made scheduling difficult. Staff at some sites reported that the restriction on class size also made career-education instruction difficult to schedule. In four schools in the sample, however, career education was scheduled on a regular basis, as a minor subject.

The career-education staff in the sample included the career-education teachers who were also facilitators at their schools, one who also served as an after-school instructor, and two who worked on A.I.D.P. full-time but who divided their duties between two schools.

Most of the career-education staff in the sample stated that high school preparation, including discussion of high school choices and application procedures, was part of the career-education curriculum. Other topics that were covered included the relationship between school and work, decision-making, values clarification, job applications and job search, career information, self-awareness and deportment, and interest assessment. These topics, for the most part, correspond to those outlined in the optional career-education manual that O.S.P. developed. Slightly more than half of the career-education instructors who were inter-viewed reported that they used the O.S.P. materials frequently. Three quarters of the career-education staff said they modified the materials for instructional purposes.

Observations: O.E.A. staff observed career-education classes at eleven sample schools. The number of students present in the classes ranged from six to 25 (M=11.6, S.D.=12.8.) Class sessions consisted of discussions of careers, job-application procedures, and the impact of poor school attendance on future career plans. In one observed class, high-school visits were discussed and in another a filmstrip on careers was shown.

Students generally seemed interested in their career education class and were willing to listen to the teacher. (Observers gave the level of student participation a rating of 3.8 on a 5-point scale.) In the classes where a discussion format was followed, the students generally seemed attentive to their fellow classmates.

Observers thought that the career education lessons that most engaged the students' interest included a discussion of career expectations and two classes in which films were presented: one on teenage fathers; the other on the world of jobs.

O.E.A. staff observed enterprise activities at five schools. In three of the schools the enterprise activity took place solely during the school day; in the second, the enterprise took place after school; and in the third, it was conducted both during and after school hours. Enterprise activities that O.E.A. staff observed included a sewing project, a student-run store where snacks were made and sold, a plastics shop where personalized clipboards and key chains were made, an engraving shop, and a woodworking shop.

Enterprise staff reported that an assembly-line approach in which students were assigned to specific tasks on the same project engaged their interest more than individual assignments. O.E.A. observers noted that students appeared to be interested in hands-on tasks when they were able to perform them. In at least one instance, however, O.E.A. staff observed that there was only one engraving machine for several students and those who were not

working directly with it seemed bored and restless.

O.E.A. staff visited three work-study activities. At the time of the site visits, the programs had been in existence one month, four months, and six months, respectively; and the median number of students involved with the program at each school was 15. Students held part-time jobs in non-profit organizations, hospitals, and schools. The jobs included clerical work, tutoring and acting as peer counselors of elementary school students, and working as computer operators. At one site a school dean acted as the work-study director, and at the two other sites the facilitator/career-education teacher directed the activity.

O.E.A. interviews observed two work-study sessions. They noted that administrative issues (i.e. attendance and punctuality at work, conflicts with supervisors and co-workers, schedule conflicts between job and school) and job preparation issues (i.e. how to fill out a job application, how to construct a resume, and where to look for summer jobs) were discussed in both sessions. Observers found that job-related issues raised by the work-study teacher were discussed in both classrooms, but in only one classroom were job-related issues raised by the students discussed.

Students in both classes showed moderate interest in the ideas and issues raised by their teacher. O.E.A. staff observed that they seemed more interested in issues put forth by their classmates.

RANGE AND FREQUENCY OF PROGRAM SERVICES

O.E.A. staff obtained information regarding the range and frequency of A.I.D.P. services provided to students in 1986-87 from two sources: O.E.A. student rosters completed on the 9,554 students who received services, and the Monthly Summary of Service Reports (M.S.S.R.'s) completed for 2,491 students in the 15 randomly selected schools.

As stated in the A.I.D.P. guidelines, students were to receive services in all six components. With the exception of the facilitation component, which is administrative in nature, components were broken down into their respective services and reported as follows: attendance (which includes attendance outreach and attendance incentives); alternative education (which includes career education and extended school-day activity); guidance and counseling; health services; and high school linkage (which includes high school preparation, orientation, individual or small-group experience, and high school after-school program). According to information provided on the rosters, the majority of students received the following services: attendance outreach; attendance incentives; guidance and counseling; and career education. Attendance-outreach services were provided to almost all (94.5 percent) of the A.I.D.P. students, while fewer students received high school linkage or extended school-day activity services. The services provided to the largest numbers of students were, in descending order of prevalence: attendance outreach, guidance and counseling, career education, and

attendance incentives. (See Table 3.)

Of a possible seven categories of service, the largest number of students (41 percent of the total number of A.I.D.P. students) received services in six categories. (See Figure 1.) Thirty-six percent received between three and five services, whereas only six percent received two or fewer services. Seventeen percent of the students received services in all seven service areas.

The number of attendance and guidance contacts provided to A.I.D.P. students in the current year was compared to the number provided to students in 1985-86, using information obtained from all of the M.S.S.R.'s of students (n=2491) in the 15 randomly selected schools in 1986-87 as well as a small random sample of M.S.S.R.'s of students (n=130) in 15 different randomly selected schools during the previous school year. Given the extreme differences in sample size, these data should be regarded with caution. However, they do appear to reflect that overall, there was an increase in the average number of attendance and guidance contacts provided to students in 1986-87 above those provided in 1985-86. For attendance-outreach services (mail contact, telephone contact, autodialer contact, home visit, parent conference, and student conference), the data show that the average number of services received by A.I.D.P. students in the current year was substantially higher than it had been in 1985-86. The greatest increase in attendance-outreach services occurred in the areas of personal telephone calls (from an

Table 3

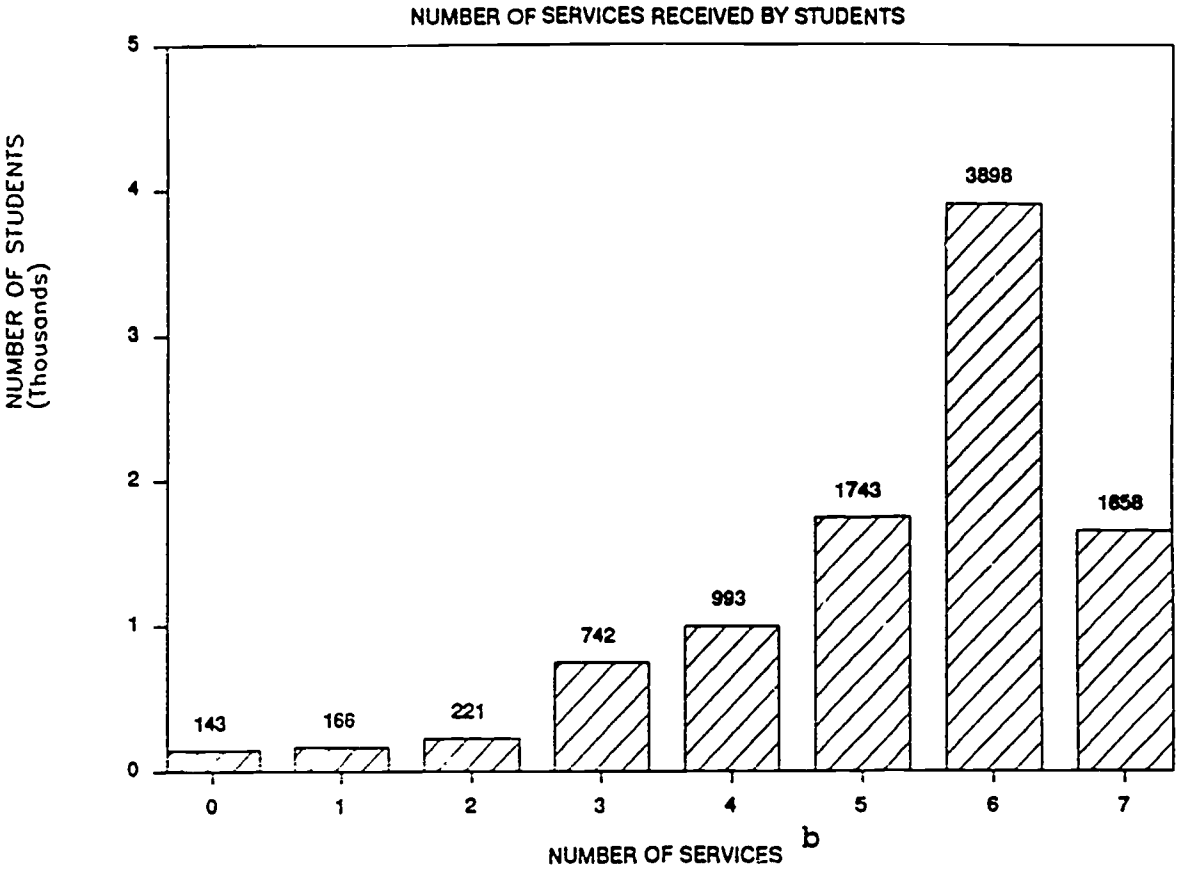
Services Received by A.I.D.P. Students from October, 1986 to May, 1987 (N = 9,554)

Services	Students Receiving Services	
	Number	Percent
Attendance Component	9,169[a]	96.0
Attendance Outreach	9,026	94.5
Attendance Incentives	7,393	77.4
Guidance & Counseling	8,415	88.1
Health	7,282	76.2
Alternative Education Component	8,451[a]	88.5
Career Education	8,146	85.3
Extended School Day Activity	2,946	30.8
High School Linkage Component	7,257[a]	75.9
Preparation	6,263	65.6
Orientation	5,822	60.9
Experience	4,927	45.0
After School Program	953	10.0

[a]Students could receive more than one service within each component.

- The vast majority of A.I.D.P. students received attendance, guidance, health, and career education services.

FIGURE 1 [a]



[a] The total number of A.I.D.P. students was 9,554.

[b] The services received included attendance outreach, attendance incentives, guidance and counseling, health, career education, extended school day activity, and high school linkage.

- Seventy-six percent of the students received five or more services.

average of 3.1 contacts per student in 1985-86 to an average of 7.3 contacts per student in 1986-87) and autodialer calls (from an average of 3.0 contacts per student in 1985-86 to an average of 5.9 contacts per student in 1986-87). All attendance outreach services reflected some increase in the average number of contacts each student received. The school-parent conference, however, was the least frequently provided service in this component (fewer than one conference a year) and reflected the smallest increase in frequency of service from the previous year. (See Table 4.)

For guidance and counseling services, which include individual and group sessions, there was a similar overall increase in the number of contacts provided to program students in the current year. The greatest increase occurred in the area of group guidance sessions. (See Table 5.)

The vast majority of A.I.D.P. students in the final grades (eighth grade in intermediate school; ninth grade in junior high school) received high school linkage services. Eighty-four percent of the eighth graders and 88 percent of the ninth graders received these services. (See Table 6.)

The average number of services received by A.I.D.P. students in relation to the number of days they were absent in 1986-87 was cross-tabulated using data obtained from the M.S.S.R.'s of the 15 randomly selected schools. The activities delineated represent the following three service areas: attendance outreach, guidance and counseling. According to the

Table 4

A Comparison between 1985-86 and 1986-87 Attendance Outreach Services Received by A.I.D.P. Students

Service	Number of Service Contacts Received by Students: 1985-86 (N = 130)[a]	1986-87 (N = 2,491)[b]
Mail Contact	2.0	3.8
Telephone Contact	3.1	7.3
Autodialer Contact	3.0	5.9
Home Visit	1.0	1.7
Parent Conference	0.4	0.5
Student Conference	0.8	2.2

[a]The data are based on the Monthly Summary of Service Reports of 130 randomly selected students from 15 schools in 1985-86.

[b]The data are based on the Monthly Summary of Service Reports of all students in 15 schools in 1986-87.

- The average number of attendance services received by students in 1986-87 was substantially higher than the number of services received by students in 1985-86.

- The greatest increase in attendance service in the current program year occurred in the area of telephone contacts.

Table 5

A Comparison between 1985-86 and 1986-87 Guidance and Counseling Services Received by A.I.D.P. Students

	Number of Service Contacts Received by Students	
	1985-86	1986-87
Service	(N = 130)[a]	(N = 2,491)[b]
Individual Sessions	2.5	3.5
Group Sessions	1.3	4.7

[a]The data are based on Monthly Summary of Service Reports of 130 randomly selected students from 15 schools in 1985-86.

[b]The data are based on the Monthly Summary of Service Reports of all students in 15 schools in 1986-87.

- Students in 1986-87 A.I.D.P. program received more guidance services than did students in 1985-86 program.

Table 6

High School Linkage Services Received By A.I.D.P. Middle School Students in Final Grades in 1986-87

	Final Grade Students	Services Received			
		Yes		No	
	N	n	%	n	%
Intermediate School (8th Grade)	2,292	1,924	83.9	368	16.1
Junior High School (9th Grade)	1,633	1,440	88.2	193	11.8

• A substantial proportion of final grade students received high school linkage services.

data provided in Table 7 as the number of days students were absent increased, the number of attendance activities they received increased. Within the guidance component, although the number of parent conferences increased with increased student absence, there was no similar increase in student conferences.

DATES OF IMPLEMENTATION

A major weakness cited by A.I.D.P. staff in 1985-86 was the late start-up of their school programs. In 1985-86 this problem was largely due to an inability to fill some staff positions until sometime after the beginning of the school year. Since in 1986-87, 68 of the 69 A.I.D.P. schools continued previous programs with many of the same staff, this problem was, for the most part, alleviated. All of the facilitators at the 15 random schools were in place in September, 1986. Of the 14 additional A.I.D.P. staff members who were interviewed, 12 began either in September, 1986 or had been working since the previous year. Only two reported starting after September, 1986, one in November and one in January.

Nonetheless, staff reported that there were delays in implementation of some components for reasons other than staffing. For example, staff reported that the high school linkage program got off to a late start in some schools because of the late arrival of program guidelines and the delayed placement of high school linkage staff. Delays in the full implementation of the enterprise and other career-education activities at some sites were attributed to difficulties in

Table 7

Average Number of Service Contacts Received By A.I.D.P. Students by Days Absent from October, 1986 to May, 1987 (N = 2,491)[a]

Service[b]	Number of Days Absent in 1986-87							Overall Mean Number of Contacts
	0 to 9	10 to 29	20 to 29	30 to 39	40 to 49	50 to 59	60 or more	
Attendance								
Mail Contact	0.6	1.9	2.6	3.6	4.9	5.8	9.0	3.8
Telephone Contact	1.2	4.2	6.2	10.8	10.0	11.3	11.8	7.3
Autodialer Contact	1.0	3.0	4.6	6.0	8.4	10.1	11.9	5.9
Home Visit	0.2	0.6	0.9	1.4	2.2	2.9	4.8	1.7
Parent Conference	0.2	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.6	0.9	1.3	0.5
Student Conference	0.8	1.9	2.6	2.4	2.6	2.8	2.8	2.2
Guidance and Counseling								
Individual Session	1.3	3.1	3.7	3.6	4.4	4.2	4.7	3.5
Group Session	3.5	5.3	6.1	4.8	4.9	3.9	3.4	4.7
Parent Session	0.2	0.5	0.6	0.8	0.9	0.9	1.1	0.7

[a]The number of students is based on the Monthly Summary of Service Reports of 15 randomly selected schools.

[b]The service categories delineated are based on the Monthly Summary of Service Report form.

- All attendance services tended to increase as absences increased.
- The number of parent guidance conferences tended to increase as the number of absences increased.

obtaining necessary equipment and materials.

STAFF ISSUES

District-Based Program/Staff Development Specialist

In both 1984-85 and 1985-86 all districts, with one exception, had to assign district-level responsibility for coordinating the A.I.D.P. program to a person funded with tax-levy money who had other major administrative and/or supervisory responsibilities. In 1986-87, in response to recommendations from program staff and O.S.P., the Chancellor gave districts with four or more A.I.D.P. or D.P.P. schools the opportunity to create a full-time district-based program/staff development position funded by A.I.D.P. In addition, several districts with three A.I.D.P. or D.P.P. schools requested and received part-time funding for district A.I.D.P. coordinators. In 1986-87 the full-time program/staff development specialist (also referred to as a full-time district coordinator) was expected to devote full attention to the A.I.D.P. programs in his or her district.

Requirements:

The program/staff development specialist was to perform the following functions, as outlined in the Chancellor's memo:

- o conduct staff development for facilitators, teachers, outreach workers and administrators, et al;
- o develop and implement linkage activities with high schools;
- o gather, analyze and report data pertaining to program implementation and effectiveness;
- o develop and implement multi-school recognition programs;

- o demonstrate effective processes, practices, and products to A.I.D.P., D.P.P., and other staff throughout the city;
- o infuse successful A.I.D.P. processes, practices, and products into non-participating schools in district;
- o regulate and monitor resource allocations to participating schools; and
- o represent district at city-wide dropout prevention workshops and conferences.

District coordinators with at least half their time specifically allocated to A.I.D.P. coordination (also referred to as part-time district coordinators) had similar responsibilities with fewer programs to coordinate.

Staff Description: Each of the district A.I.D.P. coordinators for the 15 randomly selected schools was interviewed by an O.E.A. staff member. In general, the more A.I.D.P. funds that were allocated for their position, the more responsibilities they reported. The most frequently reported areas of responsibility were staff training, visits to schools to monitor programs, acting as liaison to O.S.P., regulation and distribution of funds to the schools, and program development. Additional responsibilities cited by one or more full-time district coordinators included: record keeping; placing personnel; acting as high school linkage liaison and liaison to Community-Based Organizations (C.B.O.'s); acting as a resource for materials and ideas, program evaluation, and report writing; problem solving with school administration; public relations; clerical work (typing, photocopying, etc.); and attending pupil personnel

committee (P.P.C.) meetings.

The manner in which certain responsibilities were carried out appeared to reflect the particular strengths of the coordinator and the organization of the district rather than the amount of time funded for A.I.D.P. coordination. For example, almost all district coordinators in 1986-87 reported regulating funding to the schools. However, the amount of record keeping and paperwork associated with this activity varied with the division of responsibility within the district. While some coordinators dealt directly with merchants and completed all requisition forms, budget modifications, etc., others reviewed and recorded expenditures, leaving the clerical work to be handled by other non-A.I.D.P. district personnel.

Similarly, many coordinators reported providing training to school-based staff on a regular basis. However, some held meetings on a monthly or semi-monthly basis, while others held only occasional meetings or worked with the school staff on an as-needed basis. Some district coordinators supervised the training directly, while others arranged for consultants to meet with the school staff.

District coordinators reported having frequent contact with facilitators at each A.I.D.P. school in their district. Eleven of 15 district coordinators reported having contact with each of their schools at least two to four times per week. Many district coordinators described an ongoing process of helping facilitators and school administrators develop programs to meet the needs of

the particular school within budgetary guidelines.

Description of School-Level Program Staff

All of the 14 facilitators who were interviewed had worked in A.I.D.P. the previous year. Twelve had functioned as facilitators, one as a career education teacher, and one as a guidance counselor. Of those who were facilitators the prior year, six reported that there had been no change in their roles and five indicated that there was a change. The changes that facilitators mentioned included more extensive paperwork and documentation in 1986-87 and more direct contact with parents. One facilitator indicated that he had less paperwork than in the previous year because of the addition of a family worker to his staff.

Aside from having previous experience working on A.I.D.P., facilitators in the sample appeared to have other common attributes. Ten principals reported that they selected and assigned the A.I. .P. facilitator based on criteria that included an ability to relate well with staff, students, and parents. Four principals asserted that facilitators they selected had administrative backgrounds. In addition, principals mentioned that their facilitators demonstrated a history of commitment and initiative as well as guidance background and awareness of community resources.

When asked how they originally had been selected for A.I.D.P., eleven of the 13 other staff members who were interviewed said they had volunteered to participate in the

program. However, at least one staff member said that her full-time position at her school would have been discontinued if she had not taken on the additional responsibilities of the A.I.D.P. program. In addition to the A.I.D.P. facilitators, over half of the other A.I.D.P. staff had worked on A.I.D.P. during the previous year and almost all retained the same job title. All of the new staff members reported that they had extensive experience as teachers or counselors of at-risk students.

Nine of the 13 staff members who were interviewed reported that they spoke at least one language in addition to English. Six of these staff members reported that they spoke Spanish, two spoke Italian, and one Hebrew. When staff were asked how they communicate with A.I.D.P. students who speak an unfamiliar language, four staff members stated they made use of a bilingual A.I.D.P. staff member (i.e., family worker), six used a non-A.I.D.P. staff member, and one made use of students. Two of the A.I.D.P. staff reported that there was no one at their schools who could translate for them. It is difficult to know what percentage of the A.I.D.P. students at these schools were affected by this language gap.

Staff Orientation and Training

One concern voiced by program staff in 1985-86 was the need for adequate preparation for their program duties either in the form of a program orientation or ongoing training or both. Facilitators and principals also expressed the need for non-A.I.D.P. teaching staff to receive an orientation to the

program, ongoing training, or other support in order to better serve A.I.D.P. students in the classroom.

Nine of the 14 facilitators who were interviewed reported that they received an orientation given by the C.S.D. or O.S.P. at the beginning of the school year. Topics discussed at the orientation sessions included budget and financing, forms and paperwork, and review of program guidelines. Five facilitators did not receive a program orientation. This may be because they had served as facilitators in 1985-86 and were thought not to need it. Eight of the 13 additional A.I.D.P. staff members reported that they received an orientation given by the district, O.S.P., their facilitator, or principal. Five did not.

Ongoing staff training was handled in various ways in different districts. Some district coordinators reported that they chose to train facilitators or guidance counselors who then provided training to other members of the on-site staff, while others stated they provided training at the district level for all outreach personnel. The content of the staff development meetings, as described by the district coordinators, varied from district to district, though there were a number of topics common to all districts. Common topics included the following: clarification of program guidelines; orientation to record-keeping forms; proper procedures for procuring funds; and training in the use of career-education materials. Several districts held meetings to discuss additional strategies for specific program components such as the extended-day program and career education.

Additional topics discussed by some districts included: child abuse and neglect prevention; suicide prevention; teen pregnancy prevention; student discipline; orientation to community agencies; and strategies for parent outreach. It should be noted, however, that only half of the facilitators in the sample reported that their A.I.D.P. staff received ongoing training of any kind and only eight of the 13 additional staff members who were interviewed reported that they received ongoing training.

Orientation and training of non-A.I.D.P. staff and cooperation between A.I.D.P. staff and the regular school personnel appeared to improve over the previous year. Half the interviewed language arts teachers reported receiving an orientation to the A.I.D.P. program and three teachers maintained that they had received some training in working with the A.I.D.P. students; only one teacher, however, reported that this training was of a formal nature. Principals held that non-A.I.D.P. teachers were provided training and/or support, although their perception of training included both informal suggestions from the principal and standard teacher training of the sort that is not necessarily geared toward working with the A.I.D.P. student.

VI. PROGRAM EFFECTS

This chapter assesses the impact of the A.I.D.P. program on attendance rates (percent of days on register that a student has attended classes), number and percentage of courses passed, and amount of change in reading scores (as measured by standardized achievement tests). The changes in these rates and the ways in which they are related to student and program variables are examined. OSIS student databases and A.I.D.P. student rosters collected by O.E.A provided the data for this examination.

The following analyses are based on data from 69 schools. These data are presented for all the A.I.D.P. students listed on O.E.A. rosters (9,554) except those who were, according to A.I.D.P. staff reports, "not in the program" or "discharged from the program during September, 1986." The latter students were considered not to have been in the program or to have received too little service for their data to be of analytic value.

CHANGES IN A.I.D.P. STUDENTS' ATTENDANCE FROM 1985-86 TO 1986-87

Performance Objective

The Chancellor's Special Circular Number 25 established the following objective for student attendance for the 1986-87 A.I.D.P. program:

- A minimum of 50 percent of the students provided with dropout prevention services will have 1986-87 attendance that is better than in 1985-86.

Analyses of changes in the attendance rates for the 7,928 (83.0 percent of the total population) A.I.D.P. students for whom both 1985-86 and 1986-87 attendance data were available show that 51.8 percent of the students had attended more school days in 1986-87 than they had in 1985-86, thus meeting the program objective.* However, the overall average attendance rate of students targeted for A.I.D.P. decreased 1.4 percentage points from 78.0 percent in 1985-86 to 76.6 percent in 1986-87.** (See Table 8.) (This compares to a mean decline of 2.9 percent in the previous year's program.)

Comparison with Non-served Eligible Students

Comparison was made with the A.I.D.P. attendance outcome of a sample of students who were A.I.D.P.-eligible but did not participate in the program. (See Table 9.)

The comparison sample consisted of non-A.I.D.P. students in the sixth, seventh, eighth, and ninth grades citywide who were absent between 30 and 74 days in 1985-86 but did not participate in the 1986-87 A.I.D.P. program (N = 6,623).*** In order to

*In order to be included in this analysis, both 1985-86 and 1986-87 attendance data needed to be available for each student. Those students missing only 1985-86 attendance rates (12.9 percent), only 1986-87 attendance rates (2.4 percent), or both 1985-86 and 1986-87 attendance rates (1.7 percent) were excluded from this analysis.

**In practical terms, a decline in attendance of 1.4 percent translates to an average increase in absence of 2.5 days out of an expected 180-day school year.

***These data were obtained from the Office of Student Information Services centrally maintained attendance data files for the 1985-86 and 1986-87 school years.

TABLE 8

Overall Attendance Rate of A.I.D.P. Students in 1985-86 and 1986-87[a]

	Number of Students[b]	Mean	(SD)	Difference
1985-86		78.0	(13.2)	
	7,928			-1.4
1986-87		76.6	(18.0)	

[a]Attendance rate indicates the percent of days on register that a student attended class.

[b]This analysis includes only students for whom both 1985-86 and 1986-87 attendance data were available.

- The overall attendance rate of A.I.D.P. students decreased 1.4 percentage points from 1985-86 to 1986-87.

TABLE 9

Comparison of Attendance Rates for 1985-86 and 1986-87 Middle School Students[a]

	Number of Students	1985-86 Median	1986-87 Median	Difference
A.I.D.P. Students[b]	6,827	80.1	80.7	0.6
Comparison Group[c]	6,623	74.7	74.7	0.0

[a]Only students who had attendance data available for both 1985-86 and 1986-87 were included in this analysis.

[b]Only students who met A.I.D.P. attendance criteria in 1985-86 were included in this analysis.

[c]The comparison group consisted of students citywide who met the A.I.D.P. attendance criteria in 1985-86 but were not served by the program.

- A.I.D.P. students maintained their higher attendance rate in relation to the comparison group for both years.

make both groups more comparable, only A.I.D.P. students selected on the attendance criteria were included in this comparison. Students in the comparison sample had lower median attendance rates overall than A.I.D.P. students for both years, although neither group showed a substantial change in attendance from the previous year.

CHANGES IN A.I.D.P. STUDENTS' COURSE PASS RATE FROM 1985-86 TO 1986-87

Performance Objective

The Chancellor's Special Circular Number 25 established the following objective for courses passed for students in the 1986-87 A.I.D.P. program:

- o A minimum of 50 percent of the students provided with dropout prevention services will pass at least one more subject in 1986-87 than they did in 1985-86. (This applies only to participating students who failed one or more subjects during the previous year.)

Analysis of the number of courses passed shows that, of the 5,101 students (53.4 percent) who failed one or more subjects in the previous year and for whom both 1986 and 1987 course pass-fail information were available, 57.3 percent passed one more subject in 1986-87 than they did in 1985-86, thus meeting the program objective; 19.4 percent passed the same number of courses, and 23.3 percent passed fewer courses in 1986-87 than in 1985-86. The average number of courses taken both in 1985-86 and in 1986-87 was 5.5. Overall, the mean number of courses passed in 1985-86 was 2.8 (S.D.=2.0). In 1986-87 it was 3.7 (S.D.=2.4), an increase of one course. Although this is a substantial

improvement, program students on average still fell at least one course short of passing all five subject area courses.

Consideration should be given to the fact that the total number of courses taken by a single student may change from year to year. For this reason, the number of courses passed each year may be an inappropriate measure of student performance; the percentage of courses passed may provide a more appropriate method of assessing student pass-rates. Looking at the proportion of courses passed of those taken (pass rate) reveals that 62.0 percent of the students had a higher pass rate in 1986-87 than they did in 1985-86, and 14.0 percent passed the same proportion of courses. Thus the program also met its objective in relation to the pass rate. Furthermore, the mean pass rates for all A.I.D.P. students, regardless of previous courses passed, showed an increase of 4.3 percent from the previous year; the 1985-86 mean was 67.4 percent and the 1986-87 mean was 71.7 percent. (See Table 10.)

READING SCORES OF A.I.D.P. STUDENTS

Another outcome variable of interest is the reading performance of A.I.D.P. students as measured by the citywide tests administered each spring. The primary function of the Degrees of Reading Power (D.R.P.) tests administered throughout the city is to assess ability to read with comprehension and identify the level of text that the student can read independently and during classroom instruction. The D.R.P. mid-

TABLE 10

Mean Course Pass Rates
of A.I.D.P. Students in
1985-86 and 1986-87

	Number of Students[a]	Mean	(SD)	Difference
1985-86		67.4	(32.8)	
	7,790			4.3
1986-87		71.7	(33.6)	

[a]This number refers only to students for whom both 1985-86 and 1986-87 course pass rates were available.

•The overall course pass rates of A.I.D.P. students increased from 1985-86 to 1986-87 by 4.3 percentage points.

instructional score, used in some of the following analyses, provides an estimate of the level of reading materials a student will be able to understand with moderate assistance during classroom instruction. An increase of approximately four D.R.P. units is the expected annual gain for students in grades four through twelve. By this criterion, reading scores of A.I.D.P. students increased at least at the level of expected gain in each grade. Mean gains ranged from four to five mid-instructional D.R.P. units in each grade. (See Table 11.) These gains were similar to the average gains in the seventh, eighth, and ninth grades* which ranged from three to five mid-instructional D.R.P. units. Although reading scores for A.I.D.P. students in 1986 were slightly lower (on average by three mid-instructional D.R.P. units) than the scores of students citywide, the rate of their increase was comparable.

ATTENDANCE AND PASS RATES IN RELATION TO PROGRAM VARIABLES

Students' attendance and pass rates were related to the number of services they received. Preliminary analysis showed that only students who received ten months of services evidenced discernable relationships between program variables and, attendance and pass rates. A majority of the students (72.1 percent) were in the program for the full school year (ten months). Changes in both attendance rate and course pass rate

*These data were obtained from the Office of Educational Assessment, Degrees of Reading Power Report, Citywide Mean Score Summary by Grade for General Education, Spring 1986 and Spring 1987.

TABLE 11

Mean D.R.P. (Degree of Reading Power)
Mid-Instructional Level Scores
of A.I.D.P. Students by Grade for
1985-86 and 1986-87

Grade	Number of Students[a]	Mean	(SD)	Mean Gain
Seventh				
1985-86	2,266	50.1	(10.5)	4.8
1986-87		54.9	(10.2)	
Eighth				
1985-86	3,346	57.8	(9.9)	4.3
1986-87		62.1	(9.9)	
Ninth				
1985-86	1,232	62.5	(9.5)	5.0
1986-87		67.5	(11.6)	

[a]This number includes only students for whom both 1985-86 and 1986-87 D.R.P. test scores were available.

- The overall D.R.P tests' scores of A.I.D.P. students increased from 1985-86 to 1986-87 by 4.7 points.
- Middle school students citywide, in comparable grades, increased their D.R.P. tests' scores by 4.0 points.

for these students were positively related to the number of services received. The data in Figure 2 reveal that those students who were in the program for ten months and received six or more services showed positive changes in their attendance rates. In addition, students who received four or more services showed a positive change in course pass rate. (See Figure 3.) None of the other program variables was substantially related to attendance or pass rate as shown by regression analysis.

OUTCOMES BY SCHOOL LEVEL

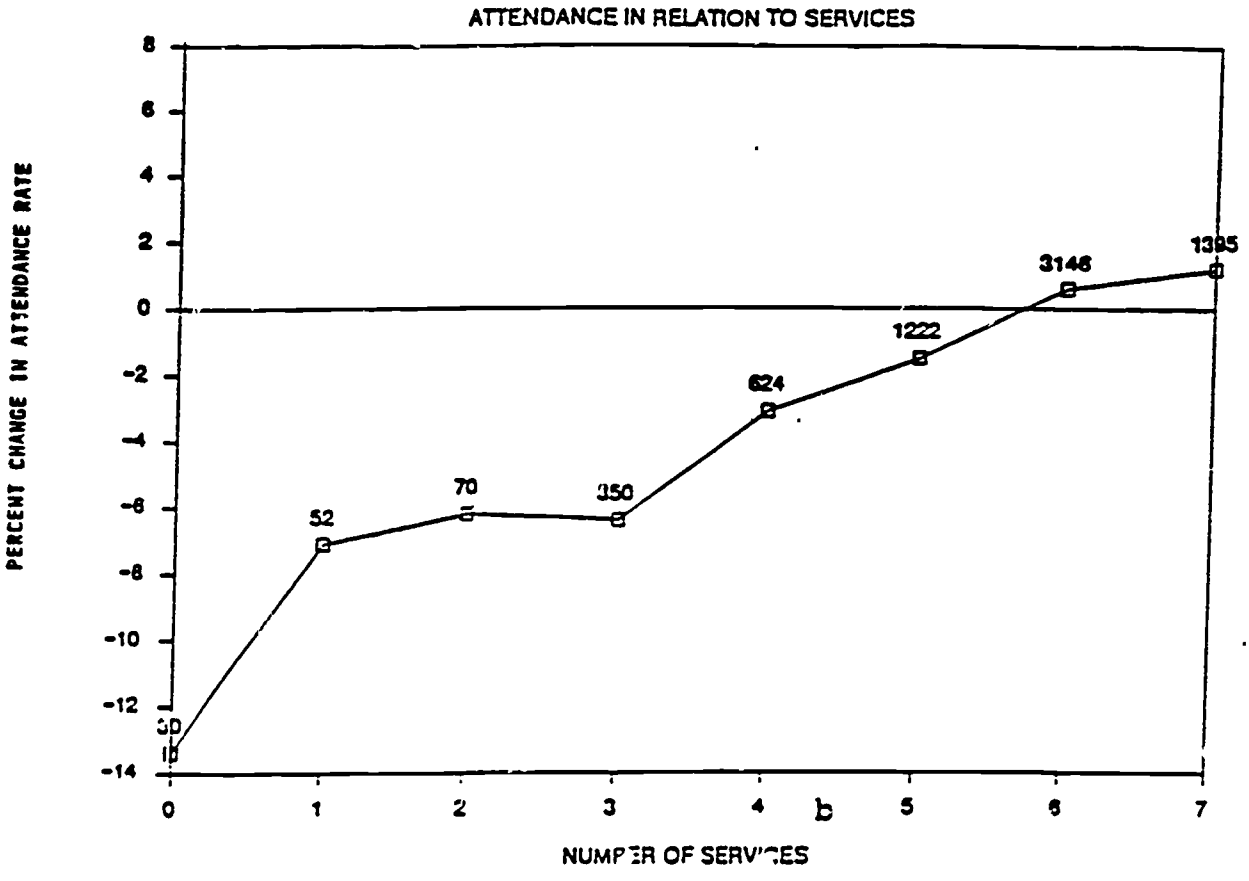
Although examination by individual school was not specifically intended in this report, it should be noted that a school analysis of attendance rate change revealed that overall, 21 schools improved, four schools remained the same, and 44 schools declined in attendance for their A.I.D.P. students.

O.S.P. had provided M.S.S.R. rosters for all students in the randomly drawn sample of 15 schools which had been the subject of more detailed examination, and the additional data in this sub-sample were analyzed in an effort to learn why some schools were more successful than others. Some limited data on school context variables and program implementation were also examined.

Outcomes in Sample Schools

Of the 15 schools in the O.E.A. sample of A.I.D.P. schools, four appeared to be more successful in that they increased attendance and increased course pass rates. O.E.A. examined the data from these schools more closely in an effort to determine

FIGURE 2 [a]

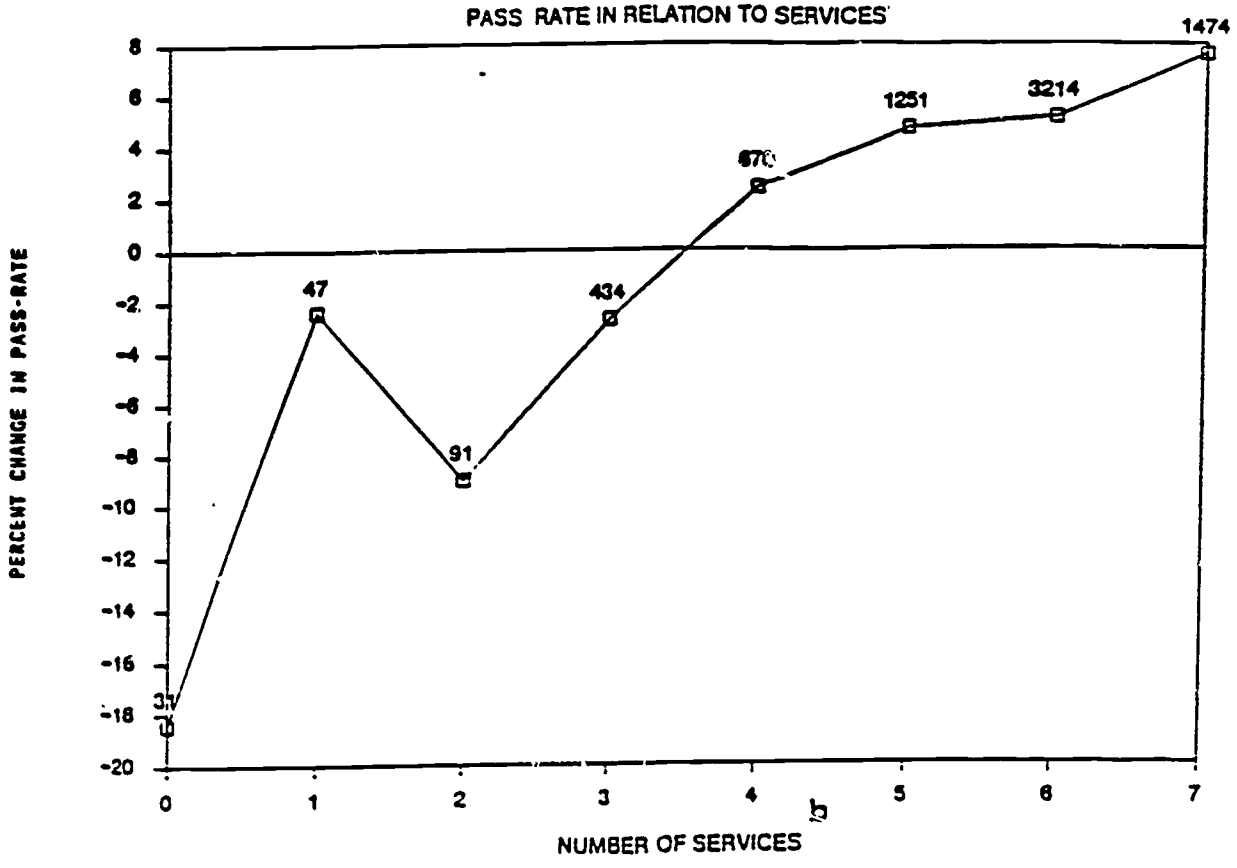


[a] This figure shows changes in attendance rates between 1985-86 and 1986-87 in relation to the number of services received in 1986-87 for students who completed ten months of the A.I.D.P. program (6,889 students, 70 percent of the 9,554 A.I.D.P.students).

[b] The number above the data points [] indicates the number of students (n) in each service category.

- For students who completed ten months in the A.I.D.P. program, attendance change was positively related to number of services received.
- Students who received at least six services showed small gains in mean attendance.

FIGURE 3 [a]



[a] This figure shows changes in the percent of courses passed in 1985-86 and 1986-87 in relation to the number of services received in 1986-87 for students who completed ten months of the A.I.D.P. program (7,212 students, 73.4 percent of the 9,554 A.I.D.P. students).

[b] The number above the data points [] indicates the number of students (n) in each service category.

- For students who completed the A.I.D.P. program, changes in the mean percentage of courses passed was positively related to number of services received.
- Students who received four services or more passed a larger percentage of courses in 1986-87 than in 1985-86.

what variables accounted for their success, looking at both school context and progr[illegible] implementation.

These four schools demonstrated no consistent pattern in terms of school context issues. The questionnaire responses of the students and staff from these four schools were similar to those from the eleven other schools in the sample. School level did not appear to determine program success, as two of the schools were intermediate schools (grades six to eight) and two were junior high schools (grades seven to nine). The schools varied in terms of size, although all four reported that they served more than 150 A.I.D.P. students. However, in spite of the high number of A.I.D.P. students, these schools had school-wide attendance rates of 78.3 to 81.0 in 1985-86, which were nearer to the high end of attendance rates for the randomly selected schools. (See Table 2, Chapter IV.) This may indicate that the A.I.D.P. programs in the four most successful schools function within a context of a school-wide emphasis on attendance.

The students in the four most successful A.I.D.P. programs received an average of seven or more services, slightly more than the average number of services received by students in the least successful of the sample schools (less than six). In analyzing the types of services received, however, no clear pattern emerged. Generally, the number and kinds of services delivered in these programs varied from school to school.

SUMMARY

Overall, the A.I.D.P. program met the Chancellor's objectives for attendance improvement and courses passed. A.I.D.P. students also made appropriate gains in reading. Although on average the attendance rate of program students declined slightly, their course pass rate increased. In addition, those who were selected mainly on the basis of attendance criteria maintained their higher attendance rate in relation to the comparison group both years. In addition, students who were in the program for a full ten months and received a full range of services were more likely to improve their attendance and academic performance than those who received fewer services over a briefer period.

VII. STAFF AND STUDENT EVALUATIONS OF PROGRAM

STAFF EVALUATIONS

During the in-depth site visits to the 15 sample schools, 15 A.I.D.P. district coordinators, 14 facilitators, 13 A.I.D.P. staff members and 14 language arts teachers were asked to evaluate the impact and effectiveness of the A.I.D.P. program as it was implemented in their schools. Of special interest were the new aspects of the program, which included such features as expanded eligibility criteria and the creation of the full- and part-time district-coordinator position. Of further interest were aspects of the program that they felt were particularly effective. In addition, school and district staff made suggestions for changes in the program for the following year.

Expanded Selection Criteria

School personnel generally felt that the expanded selection criteria allowed them to target those students most in need of service last year. Four principals reported that the criteria allowed them to serve more students. One principal stated that he found it particularly beneficial that students in the previous year's program continued to be served by A.I.D.P. Of those who were dissatisfied with the criteria, however, some felt that the program was "still not reaching the hardcore truant." Some felt that there were other at-risk students in their schools who were not covered by the criteria; still others felt that the criteria should also apply to students in the initial grades of the middle

schools.

District Coordinator Position

It was expected that the new funding for district coordinators would give them adequate time to perform program tasks. However, despite their full-time status, only two of the program/staff development specialists felt they had adequate time to carry out their responsibilities to their satisfaction. It should be noted that two of the four who did not feel they had enough time coordinated the program in six or more schools in their districts. Two of the three part-time coordinators felt they, too, had inadequate time for their A.I.D.P. responsibilities. These coordinators were responsible for four and five schools respectively in addition to their other district responsibilities. However, they worked in districts that chose not to use A.I.D.P. funding for a full-time district coordinator, despite eligibility. Not surprisingly, many, though not all, of the non-funded district coordinators also felt strapped for time. As in 1985-86, all had other significant district responsibilities. Two felt that there was little difference in the time and effort required to coordinat. the program in three schools or four schools and that having a minimum of three A.I.D.P. or D.P.P. schools in the district should serve as justification for the creation of a full-time district coordinator position. One reason even the funded district coordinators felt they needed more time to do their job may lie in their variable job expectations. (See p. 58-60 Chapter 5.)

Staff Training and Orientation

Though most district coordinators said that staff training was a major part of their job, many facilitators and staff members in the sample reported that they did not receive any staff training. (See Implementation Chapter.) This finding may be due either to the particular design of the questionnaire used or to the fact that different staff members employed various definitions of the term "staff training." There was a greater consensus of opinion, however, concerning program orientation, which was reported by nine of the 14 facilitators interviewed. Of these, five facilitators worked in districts in which coordinators were full-time, and three worked in districts in which coordinators were non-funded. Generally, facilitators felt that the district coordinators did a good job of orientation; the average rating was four out of a possible five points.

Ongoing District Support

It may be that the greatest service provided to the school A.I.D.P. staff by the district coordinator was ongoing communication and support. District coordinators were in frequent contact with their schools and made themselves generally available to staff. This support was highly valued by the school-based facilitators, who gave high ratings for communication and support to their district coordinators (4.6 on a five-point scale). In general, principals also felt supported by the district in terms of funding, guidance and technical support, and responses to specific requests.

Language arts teachers in the sample generally seemed to feel that the support from the A.I.D.P. staff was good; one teacher mentioned that A.I.D.P. made it possible for more information to be available on the individual students.

Administrative Support

Similarly, support for the A.I.D.P. program from school administrators was also in evidence. The majority of principals reported that they provided support staff and resources to the A.I.D.P. program beyond those that were funded by A.I.D.P. Additionally, principals took an active role in the pupil personnel committee (P.P.C.).

The Pupil Personnel Committee

The P.P.C. also appeared to be, in some cases, a successful link between the A.I.D.P. program and the regular school staff. Most facilitators stated that program administrators were kept well informed of A.I.D.P. activities and program needs by the P.P.C. Opinions were more divided with regard to the P.P.C.'s success in coordinating A.I.D.P. activities with other school and district activities. Nine facilitators reported that the P.P.C. achieved a good deal of success. However, three facilitators claimed that the P.P.C. met with only a fair amount of success and another three maintained that the P.P.C. was largely unsuccessful in coordinating activities within the school or district. Of the principals interviewed, half saw the P.P.C.'s most important contribution to the A.I.D.P. program as problem-solving on a case-conference basis. The remaining half

felt that the committee's strength was in aiding the coordination of A.I.D.P. services by providing a forum for student problem resolution. Two principals also mentioned that the committee served to sensitize non-A.I.D.P. staff to the A.I.D.P. population.

Attendance Outreach

Facilitators also gave a high rating to the attendance outreach component of the program. Most facilitators reported an 80 to 95 percent response rate to phone contacts with parents. (Responses included visits, notes, or return phone calls from the parents.) Similarly, most facilitators reported that phone calls to the student's home resulted in the student returning to school 80 to 95 percent of the time. Home visits were also cited by some facilitators as being very effective in improving student attendance, although hypotheses varied as to the cause. Some facilitators felt that home visits kept parents apprised of their child's attendance and behavior and that students were positively affected by this demonstration of staff concern. Other facilitators felt that home visits were experienced by some families as intrusive and threatening and that the beneficial effects of the visits were largely a reaction to the threat of further embarrassment to the family.

Career Education

Staff gave the new career-education materials mixed reviews. Over half the career-education teachers interviewed stated that they used the materials quite often or very often. Opinions were

divided as to whether the materials met student needs; 75 percent of the teachers reported that they modified the materials to meet the specific needs of their students, a suggestion made in the introduction to the curriculum. Comments that A.I.D.P. staff made about the new materials included the following: students were interested in the materials at first, then lost interest; the high school application unit arrived too late to be really useful; some units were too sophisticated for the students; and the materials didn't allow enough teaching flexibility.

Program Overall

Assessing the program as a whole, both A.I.D.P. and non-A.I.D.P. staff mentioned specific strengths and commented upon the changes they observed in the students they served. Program strengths cited by principals included the highly dedicated and competent A.I.D.P. staff members and the increased support they provided to the families of A.I.D.P. students. Facilitators mentioned the positive effect of the personal attention given to students by A.I.D.P. staff and, again, the high level of staff competence. Principals, facilitators, teachers, and work-study directors noted the increased self-esteem and motivation of the A.I.D.P. students, improved student-teacher relationships, and improved attitudes toward school. Career-education teachers and work-study directors also noted specific changes in the students' attitudes and behaviors as a result of the program. These reported changes varied from teacher to teacher but included such things as a new appreciation of the merits of punctuality; a

greater consideration of school, grades, and attendance; a realization of the need for self-motivation; an understanding of issues to be faced once they leave school; and more confidence in approaching job-related activities. Work-study teachers mentioned greater caring for others, improved peer relations, and greater ability to take leadership roles in addition to the above.

REVIEW OF STUDENT SURVEYS

Though more modest in scope, the students themselves noted some of the changes described by staff. Comparing the responses of the 215 students who responded to the student survey in both the fall and the spring, it appeared that some, albeit very few, attitudes had changed over the course of the year. In spring, 32 percent of the students who had originally said that they preferred elementary school to junior high school reversed their preference. In the fall, one third of the students claimed to be afraid to come to school, either because of fear of physical harm from other students or because of anxiety about their work, new teachers, or "getting in trouble." By spring, 69 percent of these students were no longer afraid to come to school. Finally, students appeared to have a better attitude about the upcoming year in the spring than they did in the fall, with 54 percent of the students reporting that they felt school would go well for them in 1987-88. While some staff felt that membership in the A.I.D.P. program was stigmatizing to students, most students (75 percent) reported that they were proud to be in A.I.D.P. Over a

third of the students claimed that most of their friends were also in the program. Eighty percent reported that that they were proud of their school. Half the students maintained that if they stayed out of school, their absence would be noted and they would be missed.

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS

Still, some problems existed within the program, leading to recommendations from the staff for changes in the program for the following year. Too little time, too much paperwork, and overly large caseloads continued to plague facilitators and guidance-counselors. District coordinators, principals, and facilitators suggested giving the facilitator and guidance counselor positions full-time status. Facilitators also mentioned the conflict of interest inherent in their roles as either guidance personnel or career-education instructors and attendance monitors of A.I.D.P. students. The one facilitator in the sample who also served as tax-levy attendance teacher for his school, however, reported this to be a complementary division of duties, because being stationed in the attendance office permitted him to be available for constant student and parent guidance needs.

All A.I.D.P. staff felt the need either for expanded or ongoing training, not only for facilitators but for family assistants, career-education teachers, and non-A.I.D.P. teachers. Some A.I.D.P. staff expressed a need for more support from their principals. This was particularly true of A.I.D.P.

guidance staff who were asked repeatedly to perform tax-levy duties.

Procuring materials and space continued to be a problem in some schools, and timely reimbursement for or delivery of equipment seemed to be a problem in almost every school. This particularly affected the enterprise programs, which often required major pieces of equipment that arrived very late in the year.

Pulling students out of classes for career education and incentive activities also continued to be a problem in many schools. The school-level linkage component was unsuccessfully implemented in some schools according to principals who complained that guidelines arrived late in the year and that high school personnel were uncooperative.

Other suggestions staff made for improvements included:

- Greater flexibility with regard to principals' or staff's utilization of funds and increased school-based control.
- More remedial instruction for A.I.D.P. students.
- Smaller class size and modified curriculum for A.I.D.P. students.
- Dropout prevention intervention in the elementary grades.
- More and better communication between the A.I.D.P. and non-A.I.D.P. staff.

- Greater integration of program components into the general curriculum including a more in-depth orientation to A.I.D.P. for non-A.I.D.P. staff.

- More effective means of enlisting parent involvement and support.

VIII. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this report is to assess the implementation and outcomes of the 1986-87 A.I.D.P. program and the school context in which the program operated. Generally, data show that implementation of school programs was more complete than in previous years, with most staff in place and most components in operation by early fall, 1986. On average, students received more A.I.D.P. services than they had in 1985-86, especially within the attendance and guidance components of the program. Full implementation of the school-level linkage and the career education components, however, was delayed in some schools.

Analyses of outcome data revealed that the program met the objectives set forth in the Chancellor's guidelines; over 50 percent of the A.I.D.P. students had better attendance and passed more courses in 1986-87 than they did in 1985-86. In addition, on average, these students demonstrated an increase in their reading scores. However, overall, A.I.D.P. students showed a slight decrease in their attendance from 1985-86 to 1986-87. The decrease was less than that observed for the previous year's program.

In four of the 15 sample schools A.I.D.P. students showed an increase in attendance and courses passed. Examination of the 15 sample schools revealed some differences in terms of their characteristics. Successful schools had two characteristics in common: their school-wide attendance rates were higher in 1985-

86 than those of the less successful schools, and their A.I.D.P. students tended to receive more A.I.D.P. services. However, in terms of either demographics or student-reported perceptions of task demands, rewards, and autonomy, there were no clear contextual trends that explained why some schools were successful in increasing student attendance and some were not.

PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are based on the findings in this report and the findings of the evaluation of the elementary school A.I.D.P. pilot program.*

Implement the program in the elementary grades. As stated previously, most staff felt that earlier intervention, before patterns of poor attendance were established, would increase the success of the middle-school program. Findings in the literature as well as the success of the elementary pilot program* also support this recommendation and suggest that implementation of the program in the elementary school grades would be appropriate.

Increase efforts to enlist parent involvement. Many students noted that when they are not in school, they are at home, generally with the knowledge of their parents. Yet, according to staff, parents responded to telephone calls to the home and home visits and these contacts generally resulted in the students' return to school. Parent participation in school and program events continued to be minimal.

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*The Elementary School Attendance Improvement/Dropout Prevention Program Evaluation is available from the Office of Educational Assessment.

The facilitator and the central staff member in the guidance component (guidance counselor or social worker) should be full-time positions. Many programs had strong staff who were overburdened by paperwork and very large case loads. The fragmenting of some staff positions led to scheduling difficulties and conflicts of interest that would be alleviated by making these positions full-time.

Provide additional staff training to all A.I.D.P. and non-A.I.D.P. staff members who have direct contact with students or parents. While facilitators and guidance personnel sometimes received ongoing staff training, many reported that they did not. Facilitators recommended training for family assistants who often make home visits and make the initial parent contact. Also, some degree of formal training should be provided for the regular teaching staff of the schools in which A.I.D.P. programs operate, as they are in contact with the A.I.D.P. students most frequently.

Develop a means by which programs can order materials and equipment based on the needs of the school and receive them in a timely fashion. The inability of programs to have access to the materials they needed was particularly detrimental to the implementation of the career-education component of the program, as necessary equipment arrived very late in the school year. This was both observed by O.E.A. evaluators and pointed out by school staff.

Coordinate efforts in the school-level linkage component and the career-education component so that students in the final grades of the middle schools receive linkage activities and high school selection materials in time to make appropriate decisions about high school. Facilitators complained that they were unable to schedule linkage activities early in the year and that high school selection materials prepared by O.S.P. did not arrive in time to help students make effective choices about high schools.

Provide students with academic support and remedial programs during the school day that will help them succeed in school, not merely attend school. Many students stated that they would like school more if they did better in school. While increasing attendance ought to improve academic achievement, it appears that improving academic achievement may improve attendance.

Improve the coordination and scheduling of A.I.D.P. classes, guidance sessions, and incentive activities within the framework of regular school activities. Staff felt that pulling students out of mainstream classes was disruptive and detrimental to students who, felt that conflicting claims were being made on their time. Also, staff felt that pulling students out of classes contributed to stigmatization of A.I.D.P. students.

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