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ABSTRACT

The 71st Texas Legislature established pilot programs in a variety of areas. These areas include prekindergarten for 3-year-olds, academic programs for students below grade level, examination for high school equivalency, elementary at-risk students, school-age pregnancy and parenting, parent involvement and parent education, and technology demonstration. The report concerns pilot site activities during the 1989-90 school year. A total of 82 pilot sites in 58 school districts and one service center across the state began operating during the spring semester of that school year. The report focuses primarily on program description and implementation rather than program effects. The review of each pilot program follows the same format. The amount appropriated, budgeted, and extended and the number of pilot sites are listed. A description of the pilot program that specifies its goals, participants, components, the settings and timeframes in which it operates, and the program's unique resource requirements is given. The second half of the review is an evaluation providing data on implementation, including information on the numbers and types of individuals who participated and participants' opinions on the program. Each review concludes with a discussion of the concerns and difficulties that arose and the solutions that were developed. (RR)

EXPANDING THE BOUNDARIES OF SCHOOL:

PILOT PROGRAMS ESTABLISHED BY THE 71ST TEXAS LEGISLATURE

Interim Report
from the State Board of Education

January 1991

Texas Education Agency
Austin, Texas

State Board Of Education

1701 North Congress Avenue
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January 1991

The Honorable Ann W. Richards,
Governor of Texas
The Honorable Bob Bullock,
Lieutenant Governor of Texas
The Honorable Gibson D. Lewis,
Speaker of the House
Members of the 72nd Legislature:

The Texas Education Agency has completed an interim report on the pilot programs established by Senate Bill 417, Senate Bill 650, and House Bill 1292 of the 71st Legislature. This report presents a set of legislative recommendations derived from the evaluation of pilot program activities during the 1989-90 school year.

The enabling legislation required reports to the 72nd Legislature on the School-Age Pregnancy and Parenting Program and the Program for Elementary At-Risk Students. This report also incorporates evaluations of the Prekindergarten Program for Three-Year-Olds, the Academic Programs for Children Below Grade Level, the High School Equivalency Examination Program, the Parent Education and Parent Involvement Program, and the Technology Demonstration Program.

This interim report will be followed in the fall of 1991 by a comprehensive report on pilot program activities during the 1990-91 school year.

The State Board of Education hereby submits this report.

Respectfully submitted,

Carolyn Honea Crawford

Carolyn Honea Crawford, Chairman
State Board of Education

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The Texas Education Agency appreciates the significant efforts of the many local school district personnel who participated in the pilot programs and reported the data used in this document.

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Expanding the Boundaries of School:
Pilot Programs Established by the 71st Texas Legislature

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 71st Texas Legislature, Regular Session, established pilot programs in a variety of areas. These areas included Prekindergarten for Three-Year-Olds, Academic Programs for Students Below Grade Level, High School Equivalency Examination, Elementary At-Risk Students, School-Age Pregnancy and Parenting, Parent Involvement and Parent Education, and Technology Demonstration. Support for these programs combined newly appropriated funds with funds earmarked from the Compensatory Education Allotment of the Foundation School Program.

The legislative acts establishing these pilot programs had as common goals improving the academic performance of and reducing the dropout rate among public school students. This legislation asked educators to examine the current limits of age, parental involvement, technology and teaching - an expansion of traditional educational boundaries involving new ideas and new programs for new populations of students. Finally, the legislation implied that the results of these pilot programs should be considered in determining both the advisability and the costs of implementing similar programs on a statewide basis.

In administering the pilot programs the Texas Education Agency's primary goal has been to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the individual program sites. This emphasis on program evaluation should help to identify the types of programs that are effective solutions to improving academic performance and reducing the dropout rate among students in the public schools of Texas.

The following report concerns pilot site activities during the 1989-1990 school year. A total of 82 pilot sites in 58 school districts and one service center across the state began operation during the spring semester of that school year. Given the late start-up date of many programs, the report focuses primarily on program description and implementation rather than program effects. A subsequent report scheduled for completion in September 1991, will include more substantial evaluation information.

Despite the difficulties inherent in starting at mid-year, pilot programs reported that more than 7,000 individuals participated in various program activities during the spring and summer of 1990. These participants included enrolled students, parents of enrolled students, children of enrolled students, and parents of tomorrow's students. Program activities ranged from educationally and technologically innovative instructional strategies to the provision of child care to literacy, parenting, and child development classes for parents to case management from social workers. The districts that successfully competed for the award of pilot funds clearly expanded the boundaries of school.

The report offers preliminary recommendations derived from the review of pilot program activities in fiscal year 1990. Two general recommendations are offered. The first is that pilot programs begin to operate at the start of the school year, with funding provided for planning activities leading up to the beginning of program operations. The second general recommendation is that pilot funds be advanced on a grant basis when a program's initial year of operation straddles a fiscal year boundary.

Concerning programs for pregnant and parenting students, it is recommended that parenting as well as pregnant students be identified as qualifying for remedial and support programs funded through the compensatory education allotment; that the provision of child care be recognized as a reasonable component of such support programs; and that a district's transportation allotment be adjusted to fund expanded transport services for pregnant and parenting students as well as the offspring of student parents. With regard to programs preparing students for a high school equivalency examination, it is recommended that the criteria currently used to determine which districts are to offer such programs be modified to increase the number of prospective dropouts served by those programs. Concerning prekindergarten programs for three-year-olds, it is recommended that districts consider not only school-based programs but also programs that are home- or community-based as well as those that combine school, home, and community components. A final recommendation is that districts and campuses consider using at-risk and other funds to add social workers to the district staff serving at-risk students and their families.

Expanding the Boundaries of School: Pilot Programs Established by the 71st Texas Legislature Interim Report

INTRODUCTION

Statutory Background

A number of bills enacted by the 71st Texas Legislature established pilot programs with the ultimate goals of improving the academic performance of and reducing the dropout rate among public school students. Funding for the implementation of these programs combined newly appropriated funds with funds from the Compensatory Education Allotment of the Foundation School Program and exceeded $13 million for fiscal year 1990. Table 1 (page 6) identifies the authorizing legislation, the corresponding Texas Education Code reference, and source and amount of funding for fiscal year 1990 for each of the seven pilot program areas reviewed in this report.

Relationship to Educational Goals

The establishment of the pilot programs by the Legislature complemented the establishment of educational goals by the State Board of Education in its *Long-Range Plan for Public School Education (1986-1990)*. The seven pilot programs that began in the spring of 1990 address several of the goals identified in that plan.

The first of those goals - that all students meet or exceed educational performance standards - is directly addressed by three pilot programs. Prekindergarten Programs for Three-Year-Olds aim to help develop the foundations on which subsequent academic success depends. Academic Programs for Children Below Grade Level use innovative instructional methods to improve the academic performance of underachieving first through third grade students. Finally, High School Equivalency Examination Programs help credit-deficient but capable students to obtain a valid high school credential.

The *Long-Range Plan* envisions programs through which all students realize their learning potential and prepare for productive lives. A depressing set of social and economic factors impair the ability of many students to take advantage of educational opportunities. Programs for Elementary At-Risk Students target such non-academic impediments to school performance by establishing teams of school counselors and social workers to work with at-risk elementary students and their families. Another group of students whose educational potential often remains unrealized are those whose educational careers end because of early parenthood. A School-Age Pregnancy and Parenting Program provides instructional and support services that allow student parents to remain or return to school to finish their high school education.

Recognizing that the schools cannot be expected to succeed without the support of the families and communities that they serve, the Long-Range Plan also calls for the involvement of parents in the improvement of schools. This goal is addressed by Parent Education and Parent Involvement Programs that enlist parents as the school's active partners in children's education.

In establishing the goal of continually improving instructional programs through the use of effective innovations, the Long-Range Plan draws attention to the educational potential of new technologies. Various means of realizing this potential are being explored in Technology Demonstration Programs that apply emerging technologies to instructional delivery and classroom management.

Pilot Programs and Public Education

The legislation creating the pilot programs asked educators to examine the current limits of age, parental involvement, technology, and teaching. Hence, the pilots are part of an expansion of the boundaries of public education - an expansion involving new ideas and new programs for new populations of students.

The expansion begins with the boundary that marks the content and form of teaching, expanding the traditional image of attentive pupils arrayed before teachers to include the new images associated with cooperative learning, peer tutoring, and individualized learning. The boundaries marking the age ranges of those served by school are extended into early childhood by prekindergarten for three-year-olds and into adulthood by parent education efforts. The pilot programs expand the boundary of the physical locations where schooling occurs - with programs for parenting students extending it beyond the classroom into the child care facility, programs that utilize social workers and involve parents moving it beyond the campus and into the home, and programs that provide telecommunications-based learning opportunities expanding that boundary beyond the geographic borders of the school district.

Administration of Pilot Programs

In administering the pilot programs, the Texas Education Agency's (TEA) goal has been to provide program support while conducting ongoing and comprehensive program evaluation. While the agency must insure that the expenditure of pilot funds complies with statutory and administrative guidelines, its primary concern has been to identify rather than design effective programs. Instead of prescribing solutions to the problems encountered by pilot sites, the agency has followed sites as they confront and devise answers to the difficulties facing their programs. While agency staff can provide technical advice or clarify regulatory issues, the responsibility for deciding how a program should operate rests with the staff at each pilot site.

This emphasis on districts conducting their own programs while the agency monitors and evaluates effectiveness is consistent with recent movements away from central regulation toward local control over the details of providing educational

opportunities. Moreover, it is in accord with increasing calls for the agency to act as a clearinghouse for and disseminator of information on effective programs. Such a role requires not the promulgation of rules for programs but rather the application of systems such as PEIMS and TI-IN to facilitate the flow of program information from districts to the agency and then back to educators across the state and around the nation.

This approach to program administration expects that some programs will be more effective than others. Such diversity is essential because the purpose of program evaluation is to identify and explain differences among programs. A state as varied as Texas would be ill-served by the claim that a particular type of program is best for all settings. Program evaluation will help to determine why a given program achieves its goal in one district better than in another. Hence, diversity among programs should assist in providing answers to the question of what types of programs are effective solutions to the educational challenges confronting the public schools of Texas.

Legislative Reporting Cycle

In administering the pilot programs, the agency committed itself to a two-stage reporting process to the 72nd Legislature - this interim report and a second, more substantial report scheduled for completion in September 1991. In addition, the enabling legislation for several pilot programs contains reporting requirements to the 73rd Session of the Legislature.

This report draws on various types of information to describe the pilot programs and their activities during the 1989-1990 school year. Given that many pilot sites were just getting started in the spring of that year, the information available for this report primarily concerns the description and implementation rather than the effects of programs. The second legislative report on pilots will have available outcome data from program operations during the 1990-1991 school year to allow a more substantive evaluation that combines literature and program surveys with information on program effects and cost.

Report Format

This introduction is followed by reviews of each of the seven pilot programs that were established beginning in the spring of 1990. Each review describes the pilot program, evaluates its activities through the end of fiscal year 1990, and discusses the concerns and difficulties encountered by the pilot program during its initial year. Summary observations of the first year of pilot program activities are then presented, followed by a set of general and program-specific recommendations. Appendix A identifies the sites at which pilot programs were established.

Appendix B provides information on the numbers of students, parents, and offspring of students participating in the pilot programs during the fall semester of the 1990-91 school year.

Table 1

Statutory and Funding Bases of Pilot Programs Established During Fiscal Year 1990

Program	Bill Citation	TEC Citation	Funding Source and FY 90 Amount
Prekindergarten for Three-Year-Olds	[1] SB 417, p. 26, Sec. 2.14	§21.136	$1,000,000
Academic Programs for Children Below Grade Level	SB 417, p. 2, Sec. 1.03	§11.191	$500,000 from Compensatory Education Allotment; Amount set by Commissioner
High School Equivalency Examination	SB 417, p. 86, Sec. 6.01	§11.35	No specifically designated state funds.
Elementary At-Risk	SB 417, p. 14, Sec. 2.01	§11.2052	$500,000 from Compensatory Education Allotment
School-Age Pregnancy and Parenting	[2] SB 417, p. 28, Sec. 2.15	§21.114	$10,000,000 from Compensatory Education Allotment
Parent Education and Parent Involvement	HB 1292, p. 1, Sec. 1	§21.929	$1,000,000
Technology Demonstration	SB 650, p. 6, Sec. 1	§14.045	Funded from the $6 million for implementing the Technology Plan

[1] Amended by SB 1 (71st Legislature, Sixth Called Session) to continue through the 1990-1991 school year only.

[2] Also provided for in SB 151, p. 1, Sec. 1 (71st Legislature, Regular Session).

PROGRAM REVIEWS

This section of the report reviews pilot program activities during fiscal year 1990. Its purposes are to describe the programs and to present information on their implementation. Although the programs differ, the reviews of programs draw on similar data and follow identical formats.

Data Used in Reviews

Districts awarded pilot program funds during 1990 cooperated with the TEA by responding to a number of data collection efforts. A Progress Report Form sent to districts in March 1990, provided the earliest information on both the numbers of parents, students, and offspring of students participating in the pilot programs and the problems that the programs were encountering. Eighty-four percent of sites responded to this form.

A Snapshot Report Form was forwarded to pilot sites in April 1990. This instrument was designed to obtain demographic information on students participating in the programs along with comparative data on non-participating students. Seventy-nine percent of sites completed this form.

Opinion surveys were sent to selected pilot programs at the end of the spring 1990 semester. These surveys were intended to sample participants' opinions of the programs with which they had been involved. While response rates to the student opinion surveys were acceptable (73% for students in the school-age pregnancy and parenting programs and 92% of those in the GED programs), response rates to parent opinion surveys were low (48% for parents of children in the prekindergarten pilots and 30% for those in the parent education and parent involvement pilots).

A draft form of the Final Evaluation Report Form was sent to pilot sites in March 1990. After revision based on sites' response to the draft, the final version was mailed to districts in June 1990. This form was designed to obtain detailed information on the implementation and effects of the pilot programs. The response rate to this year-end evaluation was 78%, although only 50% of the technology demonstration and 55% of the GED pilots returned this evaluation form.

Because the large majority of sites combined pilot funds with other resources, reports to the TEA on the expenditure of pilot funds did not capture the true costs of these programs. Accordingly, the evaluation plan for the pilot programs included the collection of cost data from each pilot site. These data were to provide estimates of the startup and annual operating costs of the pilot programs and, when

combined with outcome data, would allow cost effectiveness comparisons among programs.

Cost surveys of all pilot sites were planned for fiscal year 1991, with survey data going into the report of that year's pilot activities. However, because portions of Senate Bill 1 (Sixth Called Session, 71st Legislature) brought both prekindergarten for three-year-olds and programs for pregnant and parenting students closer to statewide implementation, cost survey data for those programs have been included in this report. As required by the enabling legislation, similar data have been included for the elementary at-risk program.

Additional data available for these program reviews were gathered during visits by agency staff to pilot sites. Agency staff visited all sites at least once and most sites were visited more frequently during fiscal year 1990.

Format of Reviews

The review of each pilot program follows the same format. The amounts appropriated, budgeted, and expended during fiscal year 1990 and the number of pilot sites established during that year are listed beneath the pilot program's title. There follows a description of the pilot program that specifies its goals, describes its participants, examines its components, identifies the settings and time frames in which it operates, and notes the program's unique resource requirements.

The second half of the review is an evaluation of the program's activities during fiscal year 1990. This evaluation provides data on implementation, including information on the numbers and types of individuals that participated in various program activities, participants' opinions of the program (where available), and the effects of the program. Analyses of estimated startup and annual operating costs are then presented for the prekindergarten, elementary at-risk, and school-age pregnancy and parenting pilots. Each review concludes with a discussion of the concerns and difficulties that arose and the solutions that were developed during the pilot program's first year of operation.

Prekindergarten Programs for Three-Year-Olds

Sites Established: 9

FY90 Appropriated:	$1,000,000
FY90 Budgeted:	$910,505
FY90 Expended:	$563,961

DESCRIPTION

Goals

These programs are intended to provide three-year-olds with experiences that contribute to subsequent success in school. As part of their attempt to leave children better able to succeed in school, these programs also try to help parents become more effective partners in the education of their children.

The significance of these programs was increased by the passage of Senate Bill 1 (71st Legislature, Sixth Called Session), which, beginning in the 1991-92 school year, allows districts to apply to the Commissioner of Education for state funding to support prekindergarten for three-year-olds.

Participants

As required by statute, these programs enroll three-year-olds from low income families and/or families whose first language is other than English.

In addition to the statutory prerequisites, local requirements for enrollment applied by various pilot sites usually include documented completion of immunization and can include such things as access to private transportation and the completion of toilet training.

While all pilot sites try to involve parents in program activities, three sites require parental attendance at such activities as a condition for the child's enrollment.

Components

The first component common to all programs is the delivery of a prekindergarten curriculum. In three instances this curriculum is a modified version of an existing curriculum designed for older students, while the remaining six programs developed a curriculum specifically for the pilot three-year-old program.

The curricula of these programs also differ in the extent to which they emphasize traditional academic performance as a regular feature of the prekindergarten class. A minority of programs make liberal use of teacher-directed, structured drill and repetition activities in an attempt to foster concept and vocabulary development. The balance of programs used less formal and more child-directed activities intended to foster the development of linguistic and social skills.

Pilot sites use various assessment tools both to establish a child's developmental status upon entering the program and to monitor the child's progress during the program. These assessments range from items drawn from standardized tests to regular observations of child activity using preset checklists to inventories of children's work and videotapes of their activity.

Three programs make a systematic effort to integrate their parental education component into their prekindergarten curriculum. This integration takes various forms - in one instance it appears as a formal schedule of paired learning activities, in another instance the lessons of parent training are applied as parents act as volunteer aides in the prekindergarten, and in a third case parents attend the prekindergarten to observe their children.

Regardless of the extent to which parent education is part of its formal prekindergarten curriculum, each program also includes some form of recurrent contact with the parents of the three-year-old. In four sites this contact occurs during visits to the child's home by program staff who act as parent educators to demonstrate the use of materials to teach the children developmentally appropriate skills. Most of the programs also regularly schedule parent group meetings whose activities range from viewing videotapes on topics in parenting and child development to the construction of toys to field trips. One site operates an English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) class for the parents of children in the prekindergarten program while another schedules its parents' meetings to make it easy for parents to attend a district-sponsored ESL class in the same facility. A few sites also produce and circulate a newsletter among parents with children in prekindergarten.

Individual programs incorporate a variety of other components such as a drop-in family resource room operated by program staff and open one day a week, day care upon completion of the half-day prekindergarten, child care during parents' meetings, program-sponsored dental screening, and, in one instance, case management by a social worker.

These programs also help their three-year-olds register and prepare for district-operated prekindergarten for four-year-olds. This assistance included curricular linkages to the regular prekindergarten programs as well as coordinated activities between the pilot and regular classes.

Whether school-, community-, or home-based, these programs do not provide transportation.

Settings

These programs operate in school, home, and community settings. In four sites, all program activities take place in the school building while two other sites operate entirely outside of the school during the academic year, limiting

in-school activities to summer programs that help prepare children for the transition into school-based programs for four-year-olds. In another site, a formal prekindergarten curriculum is presented to groups of mothers and children who assemble at houses located at strategic points throughout the community.

Time Frame

One school-based site operates a full day program while at another site a half-day prekindergarten takes place within a full day "educational" day care. Program activities for three-year-olds at the remaining pilot sites are of a half-days' duration or less. The prekindergarten programs meet from once a week to daily during the school year but generally less frequently during the summer months.

Those programs that include a home visit component generally conduct such visits at least once and usually twice a month. Parents' meetings are typically held once a month.

Resources

These programs rely on a diverse set of resources. Requisite personnel include teachers certified in early childhood education, prekindergarten, or kindergarten, parent educators, day care providers, social workers, and curriculum writers. Non-personnel resources can include substantial educational supplies and materials, personal computers with specialized software, vans to provide mobile resource centers, and renovations and furnishings to accommodate children as young as 36 months of age.

In six of the nine pilot programs, the ratio of pupils to teachers was lower than 10 to one.

EVALUATION

Implementation

The nine pilot sites in this program provided prekindergarten for a total of 383 three-year-olds during the spring and summer of 1990. Program staff estimated that this number accounted for between a fifth and a tenth of eligible three-year-olds in their districts. Besides receiving an average 17 hours per week of instruction from various prekindergarten curricula, just under half of these children were the focus of program-sponsored case management or service coordination activities.

A total of 484 parents and significant others participated in activities sponsored by the prekindergarten pilots. A total of 465 parents borrowed educational materials (e.g., books, toys) from the resource collections maintained at many pilot sites. In excess of 300 parents participated in structured learning and developmental activities with their three-year-olds as

a result of participating in the pilot programs while 325 attended training classes sponsored by the programs.

Their level of involvement with the prekindergarten programs suggested that parents regarded those programs in a positive light. Additional evidence of their regard came from opinion surveys which found that parents who responded to the survey felt the programs worthy of their time and effort (98%), helped to meet their children's learning needs (98%), kept them informed of their children's developmental progress (97%), and introduced them to teachers and principals who were enthusiastic about the programs (93%).

In contrast to such evidence of the programs' popularity were the observations of an attendance rate of 78% among children in the pilot prekindergarten program (the lowest such rate among any participant group in the pilot programs) and a withdrawal rate of almost one in six.

Teachers staffing pilot prekindergarten programs had an average 10.5 years in the classroom. The comparable figure for other teachers on early childhood campuses in the pilot districts was 3.3 years. Apparently, the pilot programs attracted the more experienced early childhood teachers in the selected districts.

Cost Surveys

Cost surveys were completed on seven of the nine prekindergarten pilots during the fall of 1990. These surveys placed the median annual operating cost of this program at $2,670 per pupil, with individual sites ranging from a low of $1,433 per pupil to a high of $3,983 per pupil.

This program also incurred an estimated median startup cost of $522 per pupil, with estimates for individual sites ranging from $346 to $865 per pupil.

Analyses of costs by program component found that an average 54% of annual operating costs were incurred in the direct delivery of these programs' instructional components. An average of 16% of these programs estimated annual costs was incurred in planning activities while another 12% was expended on administration. These relatively high non-instructional costs presumably reflected the combined expense of devising curricula for three-year-olds and coordinating the activities of programs that generally operate beyond the school setting.

Similar analyses of the estimated startup costs of these programs found that an average 78% of such costs went to support the typical program's instructional component.

As one would expect, these programs devoted an average 79% of their estimated annual expenditures to personnel costs. In only two instances did a non-personnel object of expenditure account for more than 10% of a

program's estimated annual cost - the combined prekindergarten-child care program's contract for staff to provide child-care services (30%) and the community-based program's rental of homes for class sites (27%).

An average 90% of the startup costs of such programs went to either consumable supplies (43%) or equipment (47%). The only exception to this general pattern was provided by two school-based programs who expended a quarter to a third of their startup monies on the renovation of classroom facilities.

Concerns

The problems encountered by all pilot programs in recruiting qualified staff at mid-year were particularly intense in the prekindergarten programs because few available teachers both held early childhood (or comparable) certification and were also either bilingually certified or at least bilingual. A limited number of programs also found some qualified teachers disinclined to take charge of classes that included youngsters not yet toilet trained. (A related complication arose in classrooms situated at some distance from toilet facilities.)

Among the problems common to many sites was dissatisfaction with the more traditional academic components (e.g., drills in tracing abstract shapes, recognizing and naming letters, etc.) that survived the translation for three-year-olds of curricula designed for older children. The teachers who delivered the modified or "downloaded" curricula were among those who strongly urged less traditional and less structured "developmentally appropriate" programs for the three-year-olds.

Staff of several sites were also dissatisfied with the tests selected for screening and monitoring their young pupils. This dissatisfaction centered around a collection of issues (e.g., tests overly difficult, time-consuming, and/or not normed for three-year-olds) that undermined staff's confidence in the validity of test results. Sites that relied less on standard educational or developmental assessments and more on observational checklists, analysis of children's work, and the like generally reported fewer difficulties with and greater confidence in their tests.

Mention has been made of the favorable pupil-teacher ratio at several of the pilot sites. By way of contrast, staff at sites with ratios at or above about 15:1 were universal in citing staffing as a primary problem area in their programs. This staffing concern interacted with the issue of academically traditional versus developmentally appropriate curricula in that teachers at these sites found it difficult to administer the child-centered, multiple-activity center, and high-activity form of prekindergarten that they believed appropriate for their pupils. The effect on staff morale of this interaction between staffing and curriculum was predictable.

The need for more careful coordination between regular and pilot prekindergarten programs became increasingly evident as programs began to implement measures to smooth their pupil's transition into the more academically oriented programs for four-year-olds. Concerns were expressed over how to insure an appropriate match between the skills, tasks, and behaviors valued in traditional early childhood education settings and those reinforced in the less traditional settings that characterized many of the pilot programs.

The parent education and involvement components of these programs reported relatively few problems. Those reported included difficulties in obtaining non-English materials for parenting classes, scheduling classes at times when parents could attend, providing child care for the three-year-olds (and siblings thereof) whom parents often brought to program meetings, and insuring that the program's resource stock contained adequate amounts of the books, toys, and videos that parents looked to borrow.

A final note should be made of the somewhat unexpected problem encountered in recruiting sufficient numbers of three-year-olds for these pilot prekindergarten programs. Several sites were required to expand their service areas beyond their original plan in order to recruit their full sample. This apparent dearth of pupils could have been attributed partly to the reluctance of many parents to have children as young as three "start school" and partly to the difficulties of transporting children to and from the prekindergarten sites. Either or both of these factors may have contributed to the relatively high leaving and low attendance rates found in these programs. The full year's data that will be available at the end of the 1991 school year should help to clarify these issues.

Academic Programs for Children Below Grade Level

Sites Established: 13

FY90 Appropriated:	**$500,000**
FY90 Budgeted:	**$484,814**
FY90 Expended:	**$375,505**

DESCRIPTION

Goals

These programs are designed to improve the academic performance of first, second, and third grade students who are performing below grade level. Two programs target performance in mathematics while the remainder focus on performance in language arts.

Participants

When fully implemented, these programs will operate in classrooms selected to include underperforming students. Paired with these classrooms are contrast classrooms of students matching those in the program classrooms. Depending on the pilot site, these classrooms can be on Chapter I campuses or campuses where the vast majority of students meet state at-risk criteria.

Components

This collection of programs uses diverse curricular and instructional strategies to improve the academic performance of targeted students. Three sites employ the intensive, one-on-one approach of Reading Recovery to raise the performance of students with severe reading difficulties. Several of the programs adopt a whole language approach that seeks to forge links between listening, speaking, reading, and writing in instructional contexts that are meaningful to students. Five programs incorporate into their reading instruction a phonics-based strategy that uses repetitive activities to build associations between the sounds and symbols of language. A subset of programs feature cooperative learning, cross-age tutoring, and classroom activity areas while two pilot sites tailor instruction to fit students' individual learning styles. Seven of these pilots include a systematic parent education and involvement component that attempts to enlist parents as home-based supports for and extensions of classroom activities. One program utilizes community volunteers as tutors.

Despite their diversity, these programs share certain features. They target the motivational bases of the learning process by engaging students in meaningful tasks utilizing high interest materials. Through intensive intervention and consistent feedback, these programs provide students used to failure with evidence of success and competence. In general, then, these programs seek to foster in students both the belief that they can perform in the academic setting and the skills that such performance requires.

Settings

For the most part, these programs operate in the classroom. Exceptions to this general pattern include those sites that augment classroom activities with pull out sessions, including Reading Recovery programs, those that use the instructional specialists available on Chapter I campuses, and those whose parental involvement component extends program activities into the home.

Time Frame

These programs generally operate within the normal class day during the typical two semester school year. Exceptions include programs that organize evening parent training workshops, those that offer limited summer enrollment opportunities for students as part of their staff training activities, and the program that uses trained community volunteers to tutor students outside of the regular classroom and/or classroom hours.

Resources

With the exception of one program that depends on highly trained paraprofessionals, these programs use certified teachers to deliver their innovative instructional services. The programs' major resource requirement is extensive and ongoing training that first orients teachers to the strategies and then helps those teachers maintain and enhance their skills through refresher sessions. In some instances, this training is provided by district staff previously trained in the strategy while in other instances program staff are trained by contract consultants, at service centers, and/or at institutions of higher education. In addition to these training requirements, many of these programs also have moderate to substantial supplies and materials requirements. An example would be the integrated language curriculum that requires specialized texts, manipulatives, and other instructional aids.

EVALUATION

Implementation

The substantial training requirements of these programs necessarily limited the number of students that the programs served during their initial semester. With five sites using the spring 1990 semester for staff training and another three implementing programs in only a subset of program classrooms, these pilots served 389 students during the 1989-90 school year.

No differences between program and contrast classrooms were observed on any standardized measure of academic performance. Given that programs were partially implemented for at most a portion of a semester, this observation was hardly surprising. However, data from the 1990-91 school year should provide interesting contrasts such as that between phonics-based and alternative strategies for teaching children to read.

Anecdotal reports from teaching staff indicated that children were beginning to respond to the program's innovations with heightened interest and higher

levels of productivity. Students at one site were reported to have attended school more and completed more class assignments than contrast group students while those at another pilot site selected more books to read and read at a higher level than their peers in contrast classrooms.

The subset of programs that contained a parental education and involvement component worked with a total of 275 parents, two thirds of whom were females. The effectiveness of this effort was reflected in the finding of reliably higher levels of parental involvement in program than in contrast classrooms. While meeting with their child's teacher was the typical form of parental involvement, more than half of the parents checked out educational materials (e.g., story books) from the school for use at home, a third participated in a program-sponsored, structured educational activity with their child, and a quarter attended formal training sessions offered by the program.

The extensive staff development required by these programs was evident in the almost 1,100 hours of training received during the spring and summer of 1990 by the 81 teachers, instructional aides, curriculum specialists, and administrators involved in the pilot program. Although it might be supposed that the least experienced teaching staff are assigned the academically most marginal students, the classroom experience of pilot program teachers (16.1 years) exceeded that of other teachers on the same campuses (12.0 years).

Concerns

The training requirements of these programs gave rise to a variety of problems. Delay in the start of the pilot program caused some sites to condense training schedules to the point that staff could neither assimilate nor apply the training. Since most staff undergoing training for the pilot programs were classroom teachers, the demands of that training complicated the operation of those classrooms. Evidence that such problems were serious came at two sites where pilot program teachers withdrew citing the pressure and disruption arising from the training schedule.

Additional concerns about these programs centered around the establishment of program and contrast classrooms on the same campus. Both the parents whose children attended and the teachers who taught in the contrast classrooms questioned and on occasion objected to not "participating" in the program. Caught in the middle of these concerns was the campus principal who dealt not only with parents worried that their children were being denied services but also with teachers whose morale was hardly improved when their classrooms were designated as control or contrast. Moreover, the understandable exchange of information between program and contrast teachers on the same campus also threatened to compromise the validity of the evaluation design.

Responses to these implementation problems included a relaxation of the training regime, often featuring expansion of training into the summer

months, stipends for teachers to attend training outside their contract period, and formal postponement of classroom implementation until the 1990-91 school year. While some degree of tension is inevitable on a campus where certain classrooms have been singled out for special treatment, pilot sites have attempted to reduce that tension through staff conferences emphasizing the value for all concerned of carrying through objective evaluations of innovative programs. Several sites have identified improved campus coordination and staff preparation as priorities for the 1990-91 school year.

While by no means unsuccessful in attempts to enlist parents' support in these classroom-based programs, pilot sites expressed the need to improve and extend their parental involvement activities. Hence, even the most academically focused of the pilot programs discussed in this report believe it is important to incorporate parents into the educational process.

High School Equivalency Examination Programs

Sites Established: 11

FY90 Appropriated:	**n/a**
FY90 Budgeted:	**n/a**
FY90 Expended:	**n/a**

DESCRIPTION

Goals

These pilot programs are the first phase of a mandated effort involving all districts with dropout rates in the top 25 percent statewide. The 11 sites in this phase volunteered to begin their programs in the spring of 1990 to provide information that could be used by other districts required to implement their programs in the 1990-91 school year.

The goal of these programs is to provide students who have no reasonable chance of earning a high school diploma with an alternative to leaving high school with no credential. Hence, these programs have as their primary goal preparing students to earn a high school equivalency certificate through successful completion of the General Educational Development (GED) examination. The pilot program is not intended as an alternative to regular high school graduation where graduation is feasible. Instead, it provides an alternative for those students whose only other alternative is no secondary credential at all.

Recognizing the many non-academic factors that make high school completion problematic for some students, these programs further aim to provide training and counseling in employment-related areas as well as life management skills.

Participants

Two groups participate in these programs. The first consists of enrolled students whose academic credits are insufficient to allow them a reasonable chance to graduate with their age or grade peers but who are not skill-deficient. The second group of participants is made up of dropouts under 22 years of age who are credit- but not skill-deficient. Hence, these programs involve both dropout prevention and dropout recovery.

A handful of sites limit program enrollment in some way (e.g., pregnant or parenting females, currently enrolled students, credit-deficient freshmen and sophomores).

Components

All programs provide instruction covering the five subject areas addressed by the equivalency examination - writing skills, science, social studies, mathematics, and literature and the arts. Individualized and small group

instruction enable these programs to offer participants flexible preparation for the examination. In several programs, instruction is partially delivered through commercial computer-assisted instruction (CAI) systems developed for GED preparation.

Because of the rigor of the GED, the condensed time frame available for remediation (i.e., as little as four to six weeks), and the need to individualize each student's course plan, these programs use various assessment instruments to document an adequate level of reading ability and identify specific subject areas in need of remediation. Such assessments are performed as screens for program admission and during the course of instruction. Combined with the feedback provided by CAI preparation, these ongoing assessments enable the student's readiness for the GED to be closely monitored.

Several programs also provide some form of occupational interest assessment, pre-employment counseling, and/or job training. Because some participating students are also parents, three programs provide child care services for the offspring of participating students.

Settings

These programs generally operate on high school campuses, although a few use alternative settings for their GED preparation component. Whether on a traditional campus or an alternative site, students participating in these programs typically receive a significant portion of their instruction outside of the usual classroom setting (e.g., in self-paced, CAI laboratories).

Time Frame

Most programs operate during normal school hours on weekdays. In some instances, program participants attend a full, six-period class day composed specifically for the pilot while in other instances pilot program offerings are repeated in three- or four-hourly morning and afternoon sessions to accommodate employed and/or parenting students. In addition to these school day-weekday arrangements, several programs offer evening hours while one program plans a Saturday program.

Program duration ranges from a minimum of four weeks of five days per week preparation to six-hour sessions on 13 successive Saturdays. Five programs operate during some portion of the summer on either a planned or as needed basis.

Resources

Because no state funds were directly appropriated for the GED pilot program, these pilot sites draw funds and/or in-kind support from a variety of resources. Funding sources include state compensatory education allotment funds, Jobs Training Partnership Act (JTPA) and Carl Perkins Vocational Education funds, and other local accounts. Programs borrow liberally from Adult Basic Education for their GED preparation curriculum

and staff training. In several instances, a local curriculum has been modified so that the GED curriculum relates directly to the essential elements required for the award of course credit. School counselors, district staff involved in at-risk efforts, teachers supported by the JTPA, state social services and employment staff, and individuals from the private sector and the community coordinate efforts through these programs.

EVALUATION

Implementation

Because these programs operated for less than half of the spring semester, they reached relatively few students. However, of the 71 who were reported to have participated in these programs, 37 (52%) passed the GED test by mid-summer and the progress of another 11 (15%) was on schedule for completion of their GED preparation. Hence, two thirds of those participating in these programs either completed or could be expected to complete an equivalent to the high school diploma. Although based on a small sample from districts that volunteered to provide these programs, this success rate becomes impressive when it is recalled that students participating in these programs had no reasonable expectation of completing their high school education on time, if at all.

Forty-four percent of program participants had dropped out of school prior to the programs' inception while only two of the 71 who entered the programs subsequently dropped out of school. It seems reasonable to infer that the individualized, self-paced, and flexible scheduling of these programs was an effective antidote to the boredom, failure, and poor attendance that program participants typically cited as reasons for dropping out.

The positive regard and high motivation implied by these statistics were reflected in the findings that 97% of those responding to the opinion survey regarded the program as helpful while 99% thought that the program should continue.

In contrast to other pilot programs, these programs served more males than females (63% versus 27%). The facts that 38% of program participants were employed, 13% were heads of households, and 8% were adjudicated youth underscored the need for these programs to accommodate non-traditional students. More than a quarter of those entering these programs intended to use the GED certificate to pursue a college degree.

Concerns:

One difficulty confronting these programs was the low regard in which the GED certificate is sometimes held by public school administrators, teachers, parents, and students. Those having this low regard for the GED may not be aware that, nationally, about a fourth to a third of the graduating seniors on whom the examination is normed are not able to pass the battery. In Texas, most postsecondary educational institutions accept the equivalency

certificate as a direct admissions credential. Additionally, attainment of a high school equivalency certificate does not preclude a student from eventually earning a diploma.

Despite these facts, the negative perception of the certificate as a viable alternative to a diploma still complicated the incorporation of the GED program into the district's at-risk effort and hindered recruitment of students who stood to benefit from the pilot.

Although these programs built review-by-committee and pretesting into their admission screens, most reported some degree of dissatisfaction with the manner in which students were considered for enrollment. Specific recommendations centered on the more active participation of grade-level counselors in the review and selection process.

As would be expected of programs deriving support from a diverse collection of sources, problems were encountered in the area of coordination. While differing in their details, these problems centered around the coordination of JTPA funds with other funds, differing eligibility criteria of students, and differences in program goals.

Additional concerns were voiced regarding the need for particular types of support for those enrolled in these programs, including child care, transportation, employment counseling, and case management. At least one site concluded that its six-week program would be more effective if extended to 12 weeks. Although many programs voiced early concerns over the potential problem of the student who completed a GED before his or her peers completed their final spring semester, only one site actually faced this problem. In accordance with procedures established by the district in planning the pilot program, the student was required to remain in school.

Elementary At-Risk Programs

Sites Established: 5

FY90 Appropriated:	**$500,000**
FY90 Budgeted:	**$469,122**
FY90 Expended:	**$369,586**

DESCRIPTION

Goals

Statute requires these programs to establish teams of school counselors and social workers whose coordinated activities provide support for at-risk students and their families. These programs are designed to address the academic and non-academic factors that, by contributing to poor academic performance, are linked to the student's eventual dropping out of school. As their program title indicates, these pilots operate on elementary campuses.

Participants

The students served by these programs meet at least the state at-risk criteria and, usually, additional local indices of risk. Given the frequent association between school problems and dysfunction in the home, family members receiving the services of these programs include not only immediate relatives but the extended family members and significant others found in homes of at-risk students.

Components

Because districts are required to operate at-risk programs, these pilot efforts coordinate with and extend a basic set of services already operating on behalf of at-risk students. Those basic services typically include identification procedures, referral mechanisms, review committees, and counseling, guidance, and remedial activities that operate at the campus level. Campus-level services are augmented by district-wide services such as referrals for social work, special education assessments, and counseling. It is these basic campus- and district-level services that the pilot program extends.

The extension often starts with an enlarged set of criteria for identifying a student as at-risk, criteria that often incorporate information derived from the social workers' familiarity with the student's home situation. These programs review and revise the referral mechanisms through which at-risk students come to the attention of service providers. A key aspect of this revision is ensuring that the classroom teacher, who often initiates the referral, is kept abreast of the findings and interventions arising from that referral. The campus committees that review and plan services for at-risk students take advantage of both the better information and enhanced services available from the counselor-social worker teams.

In all instances, the availability of a social worker who gets off of the campus and into the home on a regular basis provides the campus staff with feedback

on the need for and effect of campus-initiated interventions. Social workers provide schools with a capacity for needs-based case management far beyond the ad hoc arrangements made possible by over-extended principals, counselors, and teachers. As necessary and appropriate, social workers at most sites incorporate some amount of family therapy into their case management.

The primary guidance and counseling activities of these programs take place on the campus and are generally delivered by the school counselors. Programs differ in terms of how guidance and counseling units are coordinated with the academic curriculum. In some sites, counselors give scheduled presentations during class periods. In other programs, counseling staff coordinate with classroom teachers who incorporate guidance units throughout the academic curriculum. In still other instances, students are pulled from their classrooms to participate in individual or small group counseling sessions. Whatever the site-specific details, these programs provide at-risk students with systematic counseling and guidance on topics ranging from study skills and test-taking through self-esteem and decision-making to survival strategies for coping with family stress.

All programs seek to inform and educate parents beyond the district's statutory responsibilities to inform parents that their child is considered at-risk and that the district operates a program for such children. Whether in the form of program-staffed seminars, presentations by invited speakers, a formal parent education curriculum, experience-gaining field trips, or individual counseling, these programs reach out to the parents of at-risk students both to both enlist them in the support of their children as well as to help them cope with the stresses they are experiencing.

After-school and/or summer programs operate at each pilot site. Although the ultimate goals of such programs include improved academic performance, they are typically neither academic in character nor credit-earning. Instead, these programs try to improve the motivational and affective bases of school performance by providing experiences designed to enhance self-esteem and self-confidence. While they may also include activities such as tutoring and study skills, these program components take an essentially non-academic route to improving the academic performance of the at-risk child.

Although they share each of the components already discussed, the five programs differ on other substantive features. One extends its affective and self-esteem counseling efforts to include teachers. Two sites make extensive use of incentive-based contracts through which at-risk students are induced to regulate their behavior in the classroom. Another site maintains funds, food, and clothing to meet the unexpected needs of at-risk families. One site trains high school students to act as tutors and mentors for at-risk elementary students while another makes extensive use of social work interns in its case management activities. In some programs, a social worker is assigned to, if

not based at, an individual campus while in others the social worker is a member of a student assistance staff that serves several campuses.

Settings

The activities of these programs take place on and off the campus. Guidance and counseling components may be offered in the classroom, in pull-out sessions, and/or in individual meetings in the counselor's office. Activities for parents take place both on campus and in the community. Of course, social workers routinely conduct visits to the homes of at-risk students and, through case management, bring those students and their families into contact with service providers who operate in various settings.

Time Frame

These programs include components that operate within the scheduled school day, before and after classes, on nights and weekends, and during summer months. Program-sponsored summer sessions range from 12 days to eight weeks while case management and service coordination activities continue throughout the summer. (These programs do not require that the at-risk child participate in program-sponsored summer activities in order to benefit from their case management services.)

Resources

The staffs of these programs include masters-level social workers. The programs also utilize personnel and non-personnel resources available to the at-risk program of any district. Of course, these programs may organize such resources in administrative and service structures that may not be a part of the at-risk program of the typical school district.

EVALUATION

Implementation

Approximately 2,000 elementary students identified as at-risk received some form of service from these programs during the 1989-90 school year. More than half participated in group counseling sessions operated by program staff, over 750 were involved in personalized, individual counseling with program staff, and almost 400 underwent diagnostic assessment arranged through the pilot program. Social workers visited the homes and families of 478 students while counseling sessions were provided to 365 families of at-risk students. Through such home visits, counseling sessions, and parent meetings, these programs were in contact with over 1,250 members of the families of at-risk students. Through the case management provided by program social workers, at-risk students and their families received services from medical clinics, counseling centers, the State Department of Human Services, and family advocacy centers. Although these programs encountered implementation delays comparable to those reported in other pilot program areas, they managed to serve an appreciable number of students and families.

An indication of the challenge confronting these programs was the performance of the third and fifth grade at-risk students on the Texas Educational Assessment of Minimum Skills (TEAMS). While passing rates among third and fifth grade comparison students on the same campuses were 89 and 88 percent, the rates among those served by these programs were 37 and 18 percent. Since poor academic performance is an at-risk criterion, such differences are to be expected. Nevertheless, these TEAMS results give a good sense of the seriousness of the problems addressed by programs for at-risk students.

Anecdotes from pilot staff attributed a number of interesting effects to these programs. One principal reported a marked decrease in the vandalism of school premises with a concomitant reduction in the cost of maintaining those premises. Reports also referred to a perceived reduction in the frequency of disciplinary referrals, perhaps indicating that guidance units in self-esteem and conflict resolution were beginning to take effect. Program staff were in general agreement that at-risk students and their families were coming to hold a more positive view of school. Even the casual observer noted the enthusiasm of the students participating in the programs' after-school and summer programs, making it reasonable to believe the claims of program providers that such students were, for the first time, actually eager to come to school.

An intriguing and unexpected observation concerned the teachers involved in the summer programs. With their lowered student-staff ratio, high interest activities, and generally relaxed environment, these summer programs invited teachers to abandon standard ways of interacting with at-risk students in favor of novel approaches that could be applied in a low stakes setting. Many teachers reported not only experiencing surprising energy and excitement after two long semesters but also discovering new ways of accomplishing instructional goals that they intended to take back to their classrooms in the regular school year.

Cost Surveys

Cost surveys conducted in the summer and fall of 1990 provided estimates of the initial and annual costs of these programs. Estimated non-recurring costs amounted to less than five percent of these programs' aggregate first year expenditures. This relatively low startup cost is largely attributable to the fact that these programs built onto districts' at-risk programs and so could take advantage of existing items such as training arrangements and guidance units.

Because the social workers used by this pilot program could potentially serve all at-risk students on a campus while providing direct case management services to a subset of those at-risk students, estimates of operating costs were computed in terms of all at-risk students on pilot campuses as well as in terms of at-risk students receiving case management from social workers.

Thus, the median estimated annual costs of operating these programs were $107 per at-risk student for all at-risk pupils on campuses served by social workers (range $65 to $308) and $522 per at-risk student receiving case management services from social workers (range $308 to $1267).

The distribution of estimated costs across program components shows that some 16% of costs are incurred in planning, training, and/or administrative activities with the balance incurred in the direct delivery of services to at-risk students and their families. Slightly more than half of that balance supports instructional, guidance, and counseling activities that take place on campus while the remainder is incurred in the case management activities through which these programs extend beyond the school setting.

As would be expected of programs primarily involving the addition of staff to the district's at-risk efforts, almost three-quarters of their estimated annual cost is expended on personnel (i.e., salaries and wages) with the balance expended on consumable supplies and materials and contracted services.

Measures of the cost effectiveness of these programs, such as gain in academic performance, attendance, or social service contact per dollar of program expenditure, await the results of the evaluation of these programs at the end of fiscal year 1991 - their first full year of operation.

Concerns

The most frequently encountered problem in implementing these programs was difficulty in identifying and then attracting qualified social workers. Some sites had to amend the job specifications and salary of the social worker as it became clear that a qualified social worker could earn an attractive income practicing outside of public education. All sites eventually hired qualified staff but the delay complicated the integration of social workers into the campus- and district-level at-risk efforts.

Problems also occurred in coordinating the activities of school staff and social workers. Examples included failure to make information on at-risk students' histories and assessment results available to social workers and case management initiatives emanating from individuals other than social workers. Generally, these problems resolved as time and experience allowed school staff to appreciate the unique capabilities of social workers and social workers to appreciate the perspective of those who had previously been the sole resources for the at-risk student.

Most sites identified better communication with and offerings for parents of at-risk students as priorities for the following school year. In a similar vein, programs noted the need for better guidelines with which to assess the severity of risk in order to focus limited resources on the most marginal families. Several sites called for better record-keeping and service-tracking to more effectively execute their case management efforts.

Finally, all sites noted that communities consisting largely of at-risk families needed time to build trust among the families that make up a neighborhood and between that neighborhood and the school that serves it.

School-Age Pregnancy and Parenting Programs

Sites Established: 26

FY90 Appropriated:	$10,000,000
FY90 Budgeted:	$4,952,233
FY90 Expended:	not final

DESCRIPTION

Goals

The goals of these programs are (1) to insure that students who are pregnant or parenting remain in school to earn the credits required for graduation from high school and (2) to encourage former students who dropped out because of pregnancy or parenthood to return to school and continue their education.

The statute that created these programs requires each to provide a set of components that includes enrollment in academic courses, training in parenting and child development, pre-employment activities, counseling support, child care, transportation, and coordination with agencies and organizations that offer support to pregnant and parenting students.

The Request for Application under which these programs were reviewed and funded also prohibited programs that operated as stand-alone classes for pregnant and parenting students. Accordingly, another goal of these programs is to integrate their students into home campuses or alternative campuses attended by the district's other students.

The significance of this pilot program increased with the passage of Senate Bill 1 (71st Legislature, Sixth Called Session) which, beginning with the 1991-92 school year, moved the funding of instructional arrangements for pregnant students out of special education and into the compensatory education allotment. (Although the bill's language limits the use of compensatory education funds to the support of pregnant students, legislative debate clearly indicated an intent to apply compensatory education funds to the support of both pregnant and parenting students.) Since special education arrangements for pregnant students are self-contained, passage of this statute implied that support for such students was to be incorporated into the regular school program. Because it served pregnant and parenting students on regular campuses, this pilot program anticipated the new approach embodied in Senate Bill 1 to educating such students.

Participants

These programs enroll male and female students who attend elementary, middle, and/or high schools and attempt to re-enroll school-aged dropouts. Students enrolled in these programs are parents or are pregnant.

Since these programs are required to provide child care, the list of program participants includes the offspring of students enrolled in the programs.

A subset of these programs also coordinates with pilot Parent Involvement and Parent Education programs to include in their counseling and parent education activities members of the student parent's household.

Components

As noted earlier, each of these programs contains a set of required components, the first of which is the provision of credit-earning academic courses. Nineteen of the 26 programs meet this requirement by enrolling their students in the regularly scheduled courses offered at the students' home campuses. Of the remaining programs, three enroll students in continuous-progress courses operating at their districts' alternative learning centers, two augment regular courses on the home campus with credit-earning courses staffed by teachers paid by the programs, and one gives students the choice between regular courses at the home campus and enrollment at an alternative learning center. The remaining high school-based program operates a schedule-within-a-schedule of regular academic courses staffed by selected teachers who receive a stipend to extend their work day from six to seven periods.

Regardless of the site-specific details of their academic component, these programs engage in extensive academic planning, careful placement, and regular reviews to chart and monitor their students' progress toward graduation.

Where available, these programs make use of computer-assisted learning facilities for either credit, review, or remediation. A small number of programs offer their students tutoring, program-sponsored study halls, or opportunities to enroll in adult, community, evening, or advanced placement courses. One program offers GED preparation for its overage, credit-deficient students, most of whom returned to school after an extended dropout period.

Approximately a third of the programs rely upon the regularly scheduled comprehensive home economics courses offered on the home campus to meet the requirement for instruction in parenting and child development. Another third of the programs arrange for the same courses to be offered at off-campus sites such as an alternative learning center or a child care facility. The remaining third offer some combination of standard and experimental parenting-child development courses outside of the regularly scheduled school day of the home campus. Particularly among those offering experimental courses, these programs supplement their parenting courses with presentations by non-educators (e.g., health-care providers, adult parents, staff of human services, legal, and employment agencies). A few sites also build into their courses relevant field activities such as block appointments to social or health service providers.

In general, these programs meet the pre-employment requirement by using whatever pre-employment, co-operative, vocational, or comparable program operates on the home or alternative campus. Such programs can be extensive, involving a vocational education plan covering all four years of high school and formal coordination between the program and prospective employers.

Fewer than a quarter of the programs offer or operate any vocational- or employment-related activities specifically for program participants. Among those that do, these activities include employment at the program's child care facility and adoption of program participants by private sector apprentice-mentor organizations. As part of their transportation component, some programs also provide travel for participants to and from work as well as home, child care, and school.

All programs depend upon district-provided counselors to provide some portion of the academic, personal, and crisis counseling needed by pregnant and parenting students. Nine programs extend this basic coverage by employing counselors or social workers to provide counseling and case management exclusively for program participants while another three programs contract with non-profit or public social service agencies for counseling services. The remaining 14 programs augment school-based counseling support with ad hoc counseling from program and non-school personnel. (It should be noted that many staff of these 14 programs have counseling or special education backgrounds.) Many programs adopt course schedules that bring participating students together on a regular basis for peer support activities. Through these diverse arrangements, students participating in these programs receive counseling support in individual as well as group settings.

Fourteen of the 26 sites operate child care facilities where program participants attend school. Some of these sites can accommodate all offspring of program participants between infancy and three years of age. Those sites whose child care facilities cannot serve all participants' offspring join the 12 remaining sites in contracting for child care in community-based centers or homes. Some programs function as clearinghouses or brokers for child care placement, others negotiate favorable terms for a block of slots at community facilities, and others simply provide vouchers or reimbursement for child care arrangements made by the student parent.

Eight programs rely upon a combination of scheduled district buses, public transport services, and private transportation to meet the transportation needs of their participants. The remaining 18 programs rely upon bus services operating exclusively for program participants. The majority of these 18 sites purchased buses that are maintained and operated as part of their districts' bus fleets while the others contract with a private operator to provide scheduled routes for program participants. Program-operated

transportation services typically convey students and offspring over routes that connect home, school, child care, and work sites. Programs operating in urban settings typically furnish students with vouchers or discount passes for public transit while a program in a rural district reimburses participants on a mileage basis for their private transport.

These programs coordinate with agencies and organizations that offer assistance to student parents. This coordination generally takes two forms. First, program participants receive assistance as a result of program activities. Hence, a counseling provided by the program helps to identify students' needs, the program's case management efforts put students in contact with agencies capable of meeting those needs, and its transportation conveys students and their children to the locations where services are delivered. The services made available to students range from medical and social services to job placement, housing, and legal counsel.

The second form of inter-agency coordination is the inclusion of service agency and community representatives on the advisory councils that oversee these programs. The coordination made possible by such arrangements results in program-sponsored activities such as block appointments for program participants and the delivery of services on campus. This coordination also enables programs to operate as clearinghouses for community-based assistance, both helping to shape that assistance into forms that correspond to the needs of student parents and providing conduits through which that assistance is made available to students. An example is the church-owned housing made available to student parents after the representative of the local ministerial alliance learned of students' emergency housing needs through serving on a program's advisory council.

Settings

These programs operate in numerous settings, including home campuses and alternative campuses, school- and community-based child care facilities, the work sites and homes of student parents and their families, and facilities operated by service agencies and community organizations.

Time Frame

Although some programs offer services only while students are enrolled in classes, most provide services both during and between periods of active enrollment. Hence, a student parent may utilize a program's child care, parenting education, and transportation services while working during the summer as well as while enrolled in school during the regular academic year.

Resources

Substantial resources are required to establish and operate these programs. Typical personnel resources can include certified teachers, parent educators, counselors, nurses, social workers, child care providers, and bus drivers. Non-personnel requirements can include buses equipped to transport parents, infants, and children, facilities equipped and supplied for child care,

and computer-equipped, competency-based learning laboratories. Not surprisingly, the large majority of programs draw on local, state, and federal sources of funding.

EVALUATION

Implementation

A total of 1,254 student parents participated in these programs from February through August of 1990. Eight percent of these students were male, 12% were married, 22% were expecting a first child, 52% were parenting a first child, 4% were expecting an additional child, and 7% were parenting at least two children. While over 90 percent of program participants were high school students, these programs also served student parents enrolled at middle and junior high school campuses.

Beyond the instructional activities in which all students participated, over 1,000 of those enrolled in these programs received program-sponsored counseling and case management, more than 600 received tutorial or supplementary instruction, and almost half took advantage of program-provided transportation services.

Of the 1,088 offspring of student parents who received some kind of service through these programs, 91% were under two years of age. Fifty-eight percent received child care as a result of their parents' participation in these programs, with the average child in care for approximately 30 hours per week. In addition, 68% of the offspring of parent students obtained access to health services through the programs' efforts.

Although incomplete, available data suggested that these programs did help student parents obtain access to varied forms of assistance. With the advent of these programs, student participation in work-related training nearly tripled, job placement increased more than three-fold, and more than twice as many student parents received supplements through Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) while the number receiving assistance from the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program increased by more than half. There was also a five-fold increase in the number of student parents receiving the assistance of the attorney general's office in securing child support. Finally, the number of offspring of student parents receiving regular health care increased by nearly half as a result of these programs.

Evidence of coordination between these programs and the agencies and organizations serving student parents came in the involvement of 245 separate agencies and organizations with the programs. Those most frequently involved included agencies and organizations providing health, counseling, social, and advisory services. Additional outcomes of inter-agency coordination included the donation of materials and labor for the construction or renovation of program facilities, the provision of specialized

assessment services to participants and their offspring, and community awards of child care or academic scholarships to program participants.

As with other pilot programs, only limited outcome data were available on the students who participated in these programs. Their attendance rates hovered in the upper seventies to mid-eighties compared to rates in the lower to mid-nineties among non-parenting students. Seven percent of participating students dropped out of school after entering these programs while six percent of non-parenting students dropped out during the same period.

Averaged across all grade levels, 64% of the students entering these programs were judged by local standards to be making satisfactory progress in school compared to 70% of non-parenting students. Grade-level classroom averages indicated particularly marginal performance among students who became parents before or upon entering high school. Similarly, when compared to non-parenting students, students entering these programs were less likely to have passed TEAMS at seventh and ninth grade but were as likely to have passed the exit-level TEAMS.

Although less than half of the students who participated in these programs were able to complete an opinion survey, their assessments of the programs were revealing. Asked to identify the reasons why they did or might have to drop out of school, these student parents named the need to care for children, the need to work enough to pay for child care, and the attendance problems that arose from trying to meet those needs. Hence, these students expressed the near-universal opinion that the provision of child care and transportation were keys to their returning to and remaining in school. However, they and program staff continued to identify difficulties in meeting attendance requirements, especially when confronted by ill health of the mother during pregnancy or, subsequently, of the child.

Cost Surveys

Cost surveys were completed on 22 of the 26 pilot sites established during the 1990 fiscal year. Based upon these surveys, the median estimated annual cost of this program was $2,664 for each participating student. The surveys also estimated the median startup cost of the program to be $1,909 for each participating student.

The analysis of startup costs by program component showed that 29% of such costs went into child care, 25% into instruction, 22% into transportation, and 17% into administration. These averages hide a wide range of variation, however, because programs that opted for on-site child care and/or program-sponsored transportation could expend from half to three quarters of startup costs on those components. By way of contrast, a program opting to contract for child care and transportation could devote as much as 99% of its startup costs to instruction.

Analysis of startup costs by object of expenditure indicated that, on average, 57% of such costs went to equipment (including buses, furnishings and appliances for child care facilities, and computers for competency-based instruction), 28% went to facilities (primarily child care facilities), and 13% went to consumable supplies and materials.

The startup costs of these programs are not only substantial but are also expended on program components at which traditional educators and administrators might initially balk.

Turning to analyses of these programs' annual operating costs, the typical program incurred a third of those costs in the provision of child care. In this respect it mattered little whether a program's child care was provided on-site or in the community. The remainder of annual costs were divided between instruction (20%), counseling and case management (17%), transportation (11%), and administration (11%).

Although the average program expended 55% of its annual operating funds on personnel, a substantial portion of the 35% of operating funds that programs spent for contracted services also went to personnel, typically those contracted to operate child care or provide transportation on behalf of the program.

As with startup costs, the annual costs of operating these programs are not only substantial but are also more likely to be devoted to services that enable student parents to receive instruction and earn credit than to the direct delivery of that instruction.

Concerns

An obvious concern about the initial year of these programs was the limited number of males who participated. In those instances when continued contact with the infant's father contributes to the teen mother's difficulties, program staff are not inclined to encourage the father's participation. However, programs reported difficulty in enrolling males even when father and mother were in a stable, supportive relationship.

The reasons for males' minimal participation in these programs included fear of being assigned child support payments by the courts, attitudinal bias against being involved in the care of infants, and a disinclination to be the first and only male to participate in program activities.

Program staff sensitive to such factors attempted in various ways to make it easier for males to participate. Some sought to make their programs more accessible to males by enlisting male teachers, counselors, and coaches as "recruiters" for student fathers. Others used the one or few males in their program as the nucleus around which other males would slowly form. Programs sought speakers, enlisted mentors, and planned activities specifically for student fathers. The evaluation of the current year's

operations will reveal the extent to which such strategies are successful at enlisting student fathers into programs that in their first year operated almost exclusively with student mothers.

Program sites encountered some problems in enrolling student parents in regularly scheduled classes on the students' home campuses. Such classes are generally structured for students who enroll at the start of the semester, attend class regularly throughout the semester, and receive credit for work done during and at the end of the semester. A pregnancy's timing and complications, as well as the health of the child resulting from that pregnancy, made it difficult for some student parents to earn credit in such classes. Keeping students in those classes (and in school) required flexibility in both the application of attendance rules and the provision of makeup opportunities. Of course, such problems were less frequent where programs provided students access to competency-based, self-paced opportunities to earn academic credit.

Instructional efforts were in some instances complicated by the statutory requirements surrounding these programs. For instance, many sites interpreted the need to provide instruction in parenting and child development as a requirement for credit-earning courses on those topics. Parenting seniors scheduled to graduate with their class found that to enroll in such courses they would have to drop a class necessary for graduation. As another example, the need to provide pre-employment services was occasionally read as a requirement for enrollment in formal vocational education classes. Such an interpretation made little sense in the case of a student parent scheduled to take a literature, science, or mathematics class in anticipation of attending college. Those responsible for these programs generally resolved such complications by assigning greater importance to the graduation needs and post-graduation plans of the individual student parent than to the statutory requirements of the program.

Most programs made extensive use of the sequence of parenting and child development courses available in the regular curriculum. However, some found it necessary to supplement or replace those courses with classes more attuned to the needs of students who were already parents. An additional problem with meeting these programs' parenting education requirement arose in providing appropriate classes to student parents attending middle or junior high school campuses where such courses were not offered. These cases were typically resolved by either arranging for some type of parenting instruction to be offered on the students' home campuses or transporting those students to campuses or child care centers where such instruction was offered.

The counseling and case management efforts of these programs focused on addressing the needs of student parents in ways that enabled them to function as parents while progressing as students. Attendance was early and regularly identified as a problem that called for a range of solutions. Those

solutions included vigilant monitoring of attendance to detect and defuse attendance problems, establishing attendance contracts, scheduling block appointments as parenting class field trips, and insuring that attendance committees were aware of the circumstances surrounding a student parent's absences. Counselors and service providers generally stressed the desirability of avoiding further pregnancies and found the student parent's school problems more than doubled by a repeat pregnancy.

Since adequate child care is a problem of national scale, it was not surprising that these programs encountered various problems in their attempts to arrange care for the offspring of student parents. For those planning on-site child care, these problems included delays in the construction or renovation of facilities as well as a demand for spaces that exceeded the number planned. Programs seeking to place children in community facilities encountered their own difficulties, including locating child care arrangements near students' homes and/or schools and identifying facilities prepared to serve young infants. In settings where programs sought temporary child care coverage (i.e., while awaiting completion of an on-site facility that would effectively compete with private-sector providers), programs occasionally encountered an understandable lack of cooperation on the part of such providers.

Citing the benefits of on-site child care (e.g., proximity to school activities, opportunities for parenting education, ability to monitor offspring's health and welfare), programs intending to develop on-site facilities stuck to that intention. To do so typically required an ad hoc arrangement for community-based child care that often resulted in slower-than-anticipated growth in program enrollment. (Sites that planned to use community-based child care usually had adequate child care slots.) Relationships with community-based providers were in some instances improved, if not cemented, by arrangements such as guaranteeing that a number of child care slots would be filled by the program at an agreed price, limiting on-site child care to infants while leaving community centers to provide coverage for toddlers and older children, and contracting with community providers to staff and operate on-site child care facilities.

The transportation plans of some sites ran afoul of district interpretation of transport rules that denied student parents and their offspring places on scheduled bus routes. In other instances, a district's transportation service literally went out of its way to accommodate the students and their children. Programs that purchased or operated their own transport learned much about the space and equipment requirements of a parent traveling with an infant - many such programs soon found it necessary to obtain a second (or third) 17-seat bus. Items such as reflecting roofs, tinted windows, air conditioning, and radios came to be recognized as necessities rather than luxuries in buses intended for the transport of parents and infants. In addition, the advance of summer brought temperatures that convinced

programs of the need to design bus routes and schedules to keep travel times to a minimum.

These programs for school-aged parents addressed a difficult situation with activities and services novel for school-based efforts. As the preceding discussion indicates, the problems that these programs encountered were in some instances related to the programs' sheer scale, in others to the types of services that they attempted to provide, and in still others to the academic, familial, and personal needs of parent students.

It should be noted that these programs operated in settings that were sometimes less than fully supportive of the programs and their goals. Some of the initial difficulties confronting these programs could be traced to a lack of enthusiasm for the programs on the part of certain members of the community, school board, district administration, and school staff. In the large majority of such cases, however, pilot staff were able to report broader and deeper enthusiasm as programs began to operate and students who would normally have dropped out with the birth of their child remained in school.

Parent Involvement and Parent Education Programs

Sites Established: 10

FY90 Appropriated:	$1,000,000
FY90 Budgeted:	$916,381
FY90 Expended:	$688,202

DESCRIPTION

Goals

As their title implies, these programs seek to educate parents and involve them in their children's education. All programs take measures to increase parents' knowledge of child development, parenting skills, and learning. Some extend their educational offerings to include topics such as pregnancy counseling, health promotion, adult literacy, accessing support services, and establishing community networks. On the supposition that a person who has more fully realized his or her potential is a more effective parent, some programs tailor their educational offerings to foster t' ; development of parents as individuals.

There is a natural link between parent education and parent involvement in that education that informs parents of their role in the child's development necessarily helps to involve parents in the child's education. Beyond that natural link, however, these programs seek to involve parents at an early date and in a direct and enduring manner in their children's schooling. Although their approaches differ, all programs intend to foster in parents an understanding that the child's education is a collaboration between parents and teachers.

Participants

The typical parents targeted by these programs are low-income and/or minority individuals attempting to raise their infants, toddlers, and young children in marginal, stressful environments. Many head single-parent households and not a few are students themselves. (In fact, three of the programs provide services to student parents who are also enrolled in the pilot School-Age Pregnancy and Parenting Program.) Six of the 10 sites limit enrollment to parents with children less than three years of age. One program extends enrollment to include those expecting their first child while another expands enrollment to include parents of teen parents.

Components

Five pilots use the Parents as Teachers program as their primary educational component, two employ the Practical Parenting program developed by the Texas Association of School Boards, two utilize locally-devised offerings in parenting and child development, and one involves its parents in the district's character education program. All the Parents as Teachers sites include a family resource center with checkout materials and developmental screening with referral. The Practical Parenting sites offer their participants workshops

on network and coalition building. Other services of these pilots include transportation of parents and children to program, school, social service, and/or health appointments (3 sites), formal case management and counseling (2 sites), literacy training (2 sites), peer support groups and tutors (2 sites), and an employment and social services clearinghouse (1 site). One site also maintains supplies to meet families' emergency needs for basic necessities like food and clothing. Where appropriate, programs also help enroll children in school.

Settings

School facilities are used in all programs for family resource centers and activities such as developmental screening, parent education and literacy classes, and parents' group meetings. Five programs also make use of facilities in the community for program activities. These community sites include housing projects and churches. Seven of the ten programs also conduct regularly scheduled home visits.

Time Frame

These programs provide some level of services throughout the calendar year. To accommodate parents' schedules, most sites schedule program activities after school and work hours and/or on weekends. Home visits and group meetings are generally scheduled monthly although programs offering case management services report that delivery of such services requires more frequent, even daily, contacts.

Resources

Programs that use Parents as Teachers or Practical Parenting require trained parent educators. These parent educators are usually certified teachers. Additional campus-level staff involved in these programs include classroom teachers, guidance counselors, and social workers. The resource requirements of these programs include materials for use by parents in and following structured activities on parenting and child development as well as materials and equipment for literacy training.

EVALUATION

Implementation

The 10 pilot sites established during the spring of 1990 served a total of 1,129 mothers and 225 fathers through August 31, 1990. As was true of other pilot programs in the area of early childhood education, women participated in these programs far more than did men. Program providers estimated that the parents who participated in these programs represented approximately a quarter of the parents that met the programs' enrollment criteria.

Most contacts between parents and the pilot program were educational in nature - training in parenting and child development based upon a standard or locally-developed curriculum and complemented by structured activities

that extended the training beyond program sessions and into the home. Training sessions took place both in group meetings and during home visits. As would be expected, program providers took pains to integrate the educational content of group meeting with that of individual home visits. An illustrative strategy would be to hold a group meeting during which parents viewed and discussed a video on stimulation and learning in child development, lead parents in the construction of a manipulative during the "make 'n take" portion of the group meeting, and then incorporate the manipulative in the adult-child interactions modelled by the parent educator during subsequent home visits. A total of 339 hours of such training was provided to enrolled student parents while non-enrolled parents received 754 hours of such training.

Despite the difficulties noted below in the recruitment and attendance of parents, once having entered a program, parents were quite likely to remain in it - only 11 parents were reported to have left these pilots. This indication of the positive regard in which parents viewed these programs was echoed in parents' responses to an opinion survey completed at the end of the spring 1990 semester. Ninety-seven percent of parents responding to the survey found the program helpful, 99% thought that the district should continue the program, and 97% believed that other school districts should have a similar program.

Concerns

Aside from the ubiquitous difficulty of initiating their programs in the middle of the school year, these sites also reported initial difficulties in recruiting parents into and maintaining their attendance at program activities. The recruitment difficulties were in part a function of initially unrealistic recruitment goals, as programs discovered that parents with young children were not only difficult to contact but, when contacted, could also be somewhat wary of certain program features, particularly home visits. Moreover, parents whose own educational experiences had been less-than-optimal, and whose recent contact with school personnel often involved problems with their enrolled children, exhibited an understandable reluctance to attend meetings on school premises. This last factor helped to explain the initially poor attendance at group meetings, as did the child care and transportation difficulties facing parents wishing to attend such meetings.

Programs responded to these recruitment and attendance problems in a number of ways. These solutions included expansion of service areas and contact with more parents to fill program rosters, providing incentives for parents to join the programs, scheduling home visits only after parents had participated in program activities in less intimate settings, arranging for transportation to and from program activities, and providing child care at such activities. Group meetings were scheduled at various times to accommodate both employed and at-home parents. Certain meetings were tailored for particular groups (e.g., single parents, monolingual parents, working parents). Programs also scaled back both the caseloads and

instructional (but not visit) schedules of parent educators to foster a more relaxed and confident relationship between parent and program.

Several pilot sites also encountered difficulties in locating parent educational materials in languages other than English. While awaiting the appearance of such materials in the educational marketplace, program providers displayed impressive ingenuity in both modifying commercial materials and producing local materials to support their educational efforts with parents with no or limited English.

As programs earned the trust of parents and began delivery of their educational services, the basic human service needs of certain families became evident. To some extent and in some sites, these needs were not particularly well addressed within the training curriculum and schedule of contacts planned for the program. As one program director suggested, a parent's interest in techniques of child management was hard to hold when the parent was wondering how to find shoes for the growing child while a monthly home visit hardly sufficed when a family was daily concerned with how to feed its children. Hence, programs whose ultimate focus was parent education acquired the additional goal of doing what they could to address the acute needs facing these families with young children.

Technology Demonstration Programs

Sites Established: 8

FY90 Appropriated:	$625,000
FY90 Budgeted:	$599,378
FY90 Expended:	not final

DESCRIPTION

Goals

These programs were established to explore the application of technology to student learning, instructional delivery, and classroom management. While one site is investigating the effect of technology on teacher productivity, the remaining sites are integrating a variety of computer and other technologies into the instructional process. The incorporation of technology is curriculum-wide in one program, supports the teaching of science in four programs, focuses on reading or writing in three programs, and targets mathematics at two sites. Various applications of telecommunications are under examination at four sites.

In one program the technology supports the initial phase in a campus-wide restructuring of an elementary school, another program is a cooperative venture between a school district and an institution of higher learning, and a third program is a collaborative effort between a district, a university, and a computer manufacturer.

Participants

Students, teachers, and parents participate in these programs. Since programs are located on early childhood, elementary, middle, and high school campuses, student participants range from prekindergarten students to graduating seniors.

Components

Programs offering computer-assisted instruction generally rely upon commercial products configured as stand-alone units or networked into systems. Instruction is typically paced by the student's mastery and keyed to approved essential elements. Because they are mastery-based, these products provide students, teachers, and parents rapid feedback regarding progress and the need for remediation. In one site, feedback on high school students' compositions comes from graduate education majors who interact at a distance over a network. Portable computers with instructional and/or communications software that students check out for use at home are another application of telecommunications to learning. In programs that use take-home computers, computer-literacy training provides parents a means of becoming involved in their children's educational activities.

Systems used in instructional delivery range in sophistication from commercial units incorporating laser videodiscs designed for the classroom

to basic word processing and graphics applications that teachers must adapt and apply to their standard course offerings.

Settings

On school campuses, these programs operate in classrooms, in multi-unit computer "laboratories" adjacent to classrooms, and at single-unit sites dispersed throughout the school (e.g., libraries, science laboratories, faculty lounges and offices). Portable computers and modem links extend the operation of some programs beyond the school campus to homes and distant higher education campuses.

Time Frame

The activities made possible by the introduction of technology occur both during and outside of regular classroom periods. For the most part, these technology demonstration programs operate during the regular school year only.

Resources

The three main resource requirements of these programs are equipment, including computer hardware and software as well as sophisticated display systems, staff training that is practical and ongoing, and support of both the technical and curricular variety. These resources have to be deployed in a time frame that accommodates the long lead times associated with the acquisition of new technology, the assimilation of that technology by classroom teachers, and the development of administrative structures to support the technology.

EVALUATION

Implementation

As noted earlier, participants in the technology demonstration pilots included students, teachers, and parents. During the 1989-90 academic year, 1,069 students, 54 educators, and 130 parents participated in classes, training, or other organized activities as part of the technology demonstration pilots.

Computers were used in cocurricular and telecommunications applications at each of the sites that had planned such applications. For instance, students used computers for instructional or tutorial purposes outside of classroom hours for from one to five hours a week - with one site reporting eager students clamoring for access to the computer lab both before school and on weekends.

Although districts were not required to focus their technology demonstration efforts on any particular groups of students, pilot sites were asked to report on the number of students involved in those efforts who were making satisfactory progress according to local criteria. Satisfactory progress was noted in 72% of students entering participating classrooms at the start of

program implementation, compared to a figure of 97% among students in other classrooms. While only limited information exists on program outcomes, these data suggest that students involved in the technology demonstration pilots had much to gain academically from any improvement brought about by the incorporation of technology into their education. If pilot staff's perceptions of increased student attendance, interest, and productivity associated with the new technology are valid, one might reasonably expect improvement in the academic performance of participating students as the demonstration programs mature to full implementation.

With regard to parental involvement, it should be noted that the planned computer literacy training for parents was delivered to less than a third of the parents involved in these programs. As is discussed below, this lower-than-expected level of parental training may be one consequence of the unexpectedly long period that teachers reported they needed for the assimilation of the new technologies.

Concerns

The problems encountered by these programs occurred in a predictable sequence. First came delays in the delivery and installation of equipment that are familiar to all technology users in and outside of the educational setting. Within that setting, of course, such delays cannot be allowed to jeopardize students' progress. As a result, even when the technology became available in the classroom, the semester's curriculum was often so far advanced that full introduction of the planned demonstration program would have been disruptive.

A second set of problems emerged in the area of staff training. Some of the formal courses offered by vendors or higher education staff needed modification for classroom teachers who were interested not so much in how computers worked as in how computers could work in their classrooms. Program directors and teachers routinely reported that more than the planned time was required to effectively assimilate the technologies into instructional plans. Staff also reported that training would have to be ongoing if they were to exploit their emerging technological competence, one teacher commenting that it took time to know even what questions to ask. The difficulties encountered by teaching staff in training on the new technology presumably help to explain why so few parents received planned training in the use of computers.

As the equipment and training problems were resolved, teachers encountered an issue that arises whenever the innovative is incorporated into the traditional: At what point does the traditional become an impediment to fully exploiting the innovative? In other words, as they became more fluent in the technology, teachers began to realize that technology challenged as well as complemented their instructional strategies and skills. In the absence of formal guidelines (and probably to the long-term profit of both teachers

and students), teachers began a trial and error search for new ways of doing what they thought they already knew how to do. Sensing the time-consuming nature of that search, teachers expressed the need for not only sufficient planning time but also for appropriate support, understanding, and technical assistance from their districts.

Hence, complications in the procurement of equipment, the appropriateness of training, and incorporation of innovative technology combined to throw most of the technology demonstration programs behind schedule. This observation probably says more about the optimism of the original time frame for implementation than it does about the ultimate effectiveness of that implementation.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

Despite the difficulty of beginning operations in the middle of the school year, these pilot programs achieved admirable successes in their first year. In their diverse and innovative ways, the programs did serve substantial numbers of students, parents of students, and children of students. While it is true that time allowed only limited effects to emerge during the 1989-1990 school year, it is also true that the progress made during that year is the foundation from which effects can be expected to emerge during subsequent years.

Much has been learned by examining the difficulties faced and solutions devised by the seven pilot programs during their initial year. However, there operated during that same period another pilot offering insights no less valuable than those of the programs already reviewed. That pilot was the effort to conduct a comprehensive, organized examination of pilot programs. The first year of the pilot programs provided insights to all of the institutions involved in that effort - the Legislature that created the pilots, the Agency that administered them, and the districts that designed and implemented them.

A pilot program depends upon administrative coordination within a district. Central office and campus should harmonize their activities from the earliest steps in planning a program. While such coordination could be observed in most sites, such was not always the case among these pilots. In some instances, the central office composed a competitive application, pilot funds were awarded to the district, and only then was the campus on which the pilot was to operate informed of its selection. In other instances, a proposal generated at the campus level received pro forma treatment in district offices, so the program created by that proposal became an orphan within the district.

It is probably not important whether program awards are to districts, as in the pilot programs reviewed here, or to campuses, as in the innovative programs created by Senate Bill 1. It is certainly important that such programs have the coordinated support of the district's central office and the administration and staff of the campus on which they operate.

Pilot programs were generally intended to accommodate only a portion of those students in a district who stood to gain from participating in them. This mismatch between resources and needs created a tension between the agency, which wanted to evaluate the effects of planned programs, and pilot staff, who understandably wanted to serve as many students as they could. Besides inflating budget requests, the tendency to extend programs beyond their planned capacity threatened to dilute resources and jeopardize effectiveness. This would have consequences beyond the boundaries of the district because a program that could not be shown to be effective

would be an unlikely candidate for statewide implementation. Accordingly, such extensions were approved only in the few instances where pilot staff could verify that the planned level and quality of services would continue to be available to all participants.

Districts that chose to operate pilot programs learned that the very function of those programs required districts to track and report on a wider range of detailed questions than would be the case for regular, formula-funded programs. Not a few districts viewed the resources invested in meeting the reporting requirements of pilot programs as diversions that reduced the number of students served by those programs rather than as necessary costs incurred in the conduct of those special programs.

As the districts that operated pilot programs discovered the unique features of operating such programs, so the agency that administered the pilots found it necessary to make accommodations to the special circumstances of those programs. Because it places program expertise, fiscal oversight, and evaluation responsibility in different departments, the agency's organization complicated its administration of the pilot programs. While those departments achieved a measure of coordination in administering the pilot programs, there remained considerable room for improvement. Coordination between evaluation and program support efforts needed to provide pilot sites the technical assistance that they sought while insuring that programs remained local in design and diverse in form rather than centrally prescribed and homogenized. Procedures for the establishment and revision of pilot site budgets needed to give as much weight to program as to fiscal considerations. Above all, the interval between the selection of pilot sites and the issuance of contracts to those sites needed to be shorter.

Thus, the pilots challenged the agency to devise an approach that enabled it to communicate with those programs, if not through a single voice, then at least in a coordinated fashion. Given such coordination, the agency enhances pilot programs. Without that coordination, the agency becomes an obstacle to those programs.

The initial year of these programs offered insights germane to the Legislature that created the pilots and mandated this report. A first insight is evident throughout this report - the reporting deadlines imposed on pilot programs must be realistic if they are to be meaningful. Among these pilots, for instance, is a program for at-risk children whose true effects and accurate costs are to be reported less than three semesters after the effective date of the statute that created the program. Besides placing a premium on implementation that is rapid above all else, such a deadline invites inappropriate interpretations of preliminary, fragmented results. The commitment to consider pilot results in the formulation of policy on public education brings with it the necessity of granting pilot programs a reasonable opportunity to demonstrate their effectiveness.

A second insight derived from the initial year of the pilot programs is that statute and rule should be used to nurture programs, not specify their content. When statute or rule create a particular type of program, it becomes impossible to

examine other, potentially cost-effective alternatives. Hence, the elementary at-risk pilots will yield information on the effectiveness of having master's level social workers operate with school counselors. Because the enabling legislation allowed only master's level social workers, however, no information will come from that pilot on the effectiveness of individuals with other types of social work credentials.

In addition to precluding the consideration of alternative approaches, overly-specific statutes and rules that appear logical and in the best interests of programs and those that participate in them may actually hinder programs and ill-serve participants. For example, the statute creating the pilot School-Age Pregnancy and Parenting Program required all pilots to provide certain components, including job readiness training and instruction in parenting and child development. Such components were appropriate for many but by no means all of the students enrolled in the pilot. Even so obvious a required component as the provision of child care complicated programs in communities where infant care by non-relatives ran counter to local custom and tradition.

Pilot sites thus voiced their support of legislative initiatives that insure access to necessary resources while allowing local control over the design and implementation of programs to improve public education.

PRELIMINARY RECOMMENDATIONS

The pilot programs were awarded funds in January 1990, and spent most of the remainder of that school year establishing themselves. Accordingly, the reviews of those programs contained much more information on implementation than on outcome. The lack of information on outcomes limits the following recommendations to issues concerning implementation of pilot programs. Further recommendations will be offered with the comprehensive report on pilot programs scheduled for completion in the summer of 1991.

Recommendations that apply across program areas appear under the heading "General." Those relevant to specific types of programs are then presented.

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Problem**: Experience with these pilot sites provides ample evidence that programs awarded funding after the start of the school year have little chance of establishing effective operations during that school year. Qualified staff are already under contract and not available, campus-level curricula, class rosters, and teaching assignments have already been set, and facilities and resources are already dedicated. Time and resources would be better applied in planning programs and acquiring resources in preparation for implementing the pilot program at the start of the next school year.

   Solution: Pilot programs should begin to operate at the start of the school year except where such timing is clearly inappropriate (e.g., summer programs). In order to accomplish this, pilot funds should be made available for program development and planning activities and the acquisition of program resources that take place prior to the school year in which a program is scheduled to begin operations.

2. **Problem**: It is very difficult for a program funded on a fiscal year basis to begin operations when its planning and implementation phases straddle a fiscal year boundary. For instance, staff for educational programs are typically signed to contracts in the spring or summer prior to the school year. However, district business managers will often not allow professional staff needed by the program to sign district contracts unless there already exists a contract obligating the TEA to fund the program in the next fiscal year. This difficulty would be eased if the funds for such contracts were available to the district prior to the beginning of the fiscal year.

Solution: Funds sufficient for program expenditures during both the fiscal year in which the program receives approval and the following fiscal year should be disbursed in the form of a grant awarded at the time that the program is approved. Reimbursement for expenditures could be used in subsequent years of multi-year programs.

PROGRAM-SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

Programs for Pregnant and Parenting Students

1. **Problem**: Current statute identifies pregnant students as eligible for remedial and support programs funded through the compensatory education allotment. Cost surveys of the pilot School-Age Pregnancy and Parenting Programs indicate that the major expenses of keeping students in school are incurred after rather than during pregnancy.

   Solution: Students who are pregnant or parenting should be identified as qualifying for remedial and support programs funded through the compensatory education allotment.

2. **Problem**: Data from the pilot programs clearly show that, along with transportation, the provision of child care is crucial to keeping parenting students in school. Districts currently using compensatory education funds for instructional programs may not consider expending those funds for non-instructional support services such as child care.

   Solution: The provision of child care should be recognized as a reasonable component of support programs for pregnant and parenting students funded through the compensatory education allotment.

3. **Problem**: Cost data from the pilot program show that districts would incur substantial expenses in transporting parenting students and their offspring. The pilot program also demonstrates that the provision of transportation is crucial to keeping such students in school.

   Solution: A district's transportation allotment should be adjusted to compensate the district for the increased cost of transporting parenting students and their offspring.

High School Equivalency Examination

1. **Problem**: Current statute requires districts with dropout rates in the top 25% of the state to participate in the expanded GED pilot program. This criterion oversamples small districts, from which relatively few students drop out, while it undersamples larger districts, whose size

means that even a modest dropout rate represents an appreciable number of students.

Solution: Two adjustments should be made to the criterion used to identify districts that are required to provide GED programs for enrolled students. The first should require the participation of any district from which more than a set number of students dropped out in the previous year - regardless of the statewide ranking of the district's dropout rate for that year. This adjustment protects against undersampling large districts. The second adjustment should require the participation of any district with a dropout rate in the top 25% of statewide rates if more than a set minimum number of students are reflected in that district's dropout rate. This adjustment protects against oversampling small districts.

Prekindergarten for Three-Year-Olds

1. Problem: Because kindergarten and most prekindergarten programs for four-year-olds operate in schools, districts planning to implement prekindergarten for three-year-olds may tend to consider only school-based programs. Data from the pilot programs suggest that both home- and community-based programs are viable alternatives or additions to school-based programs.

   Solution: Districts planning to establish prekindergarten programs for three-year-olds should be urged to consider not only school-based programs but also programs that are home-based, community-based, or combine school, community, and home components.

Programs for Elementary At-Risk Students

1. Problem: Data from the pilot programs, as well as the experience of other states (e.g., Illinois) indicate that social workers make valuable and distinctive contributions to schools' efforts with at-risk students. Districts in this state may not be aware that compensatory allotment and other funds can be used to obtain the services of social workers.

   Solution: Districts should be urged to consider combining the funding sources for at-risk programs with other appropriate funds to obtain the services of certified social kers to join other district staff in serving at-risk students and their families.

APPENDIX A

Pilot Program Sites Established During Fiscal Year 1990

DISTRICT	PRE-K (3 YR. OLDS)	ELEMENTARY AT RISK	ACADEMIC BELOW GRD LVL.	SCHOOL-AGE PREGNANCY	PARENT INVOLVEMENT	TECHNOLOGY DEMONSTRATION	GED
1 Abilene ISD				X			
2 Amarillo ISD				X	X		
3 Arlington ISD	X	X					
4 Austin ISD				X			
5 Bastrop ISD				X			
6 Beaumont ISD				X			
7 Brazosport ISD	X						
8 Brownsville ISD	X						X
9 Brownwood ISD							X
10 Bryan IDS				X	X		
11 Cleburne ISD		X					
12 Clint ISD	X						
13 Corpus Christi ISD				X			
14 Dallas ISD	X			X			
15 Deer Park ISD							X
16 Del Valle ISD				X	X		
17 Dickinson ISD			X				
18 Dimmitt ISD			X				
19 Ector County ISD	X			X			
20 Edgewood ISD	X						
21 Fort Worth ISD			X	X	X		X
22 Frenship ISD				X			
23 Galena Park ISD				X			
24 Galveston ISD				X			
25 Garland ISD			X				
26 Harlandale ISD				X			
27 Harlingen ISD					X	X	
28 Houston ISD		X			X		
29 Hubbard ISD	X		X				
30 Hurst-Euless-Bedford ISD						X	
31 Kerrville ISD			X				
32 Lamar ISD							X
33 Lancaster ISD			X				
34 Longview ISD			X	X			
35 Lubbock ISD				X			X
36 McAllen ISD			X			X	
37 Mesquite ISD						X	
38 Morton ISD					X		
39 Nacogdoches ISD				X			
40 Northside ISD				X			
41 Plainview ISD							X
42 Pottsboro ISD						X	
43 Region XIX				X			
44 Sabinal ISD			X				
45 San Marcos ISD				X			
46 Seguin ISD				X			
47 Socorro ISD	X		X				
48 Somerset ISD						X	
49 Spring ISD		X					
50 Spring Branch ISD			X	X			
51 Temple ISD				X		X	
52 Terrell ISD				X	X		
53 Tuloso-Midway ISD							
54 Tyler ISD					X		
55 Waco ISD			X				
56 Weslaco ISD							
57 West ISD						X	
58 Wichita Falls ISD				X			
59 Ysleta ISD		X			X		
TOTAL	9	5	13	26	10	8	11

Expanding the Boundaries of School:
Pilot Programs Established by the 71st Legislature
Interim Report

Participation in Programs - Fall 1990

Program	Sites Operating	Sites Reporting	Fall 1990 Participants
High School Equivalency Examination	11	9	178 students 45 parents
Academic Programs for Children Below Grade Level	13	11	599 students 435 parents
Programs for Elementary At-Risk Students	5	5	3035 students 844 parents
Parent Involvement and Parent Education	10	10	1067 students 1291 parents
Prekindergarten for Three-Year-Olds	9	8	327 students 360 parents
Technology Demonstration	8	8	1580 students 27 parents
School-Age Pregnancy and Parenting	52*	41	2399 students 1387 infants/children 900 parents

* The 26 sites established in September 1990 were not required to file progress reports in the fall of 1990.