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ABSTRACT

In 1985-86 two major attendance improvement/dropout prevention programs were initiated in selected New York City middle and high schools with attendance rates below the citywide median. The following year, a limited number of elementary schools were added to the program making a total of 36 high schools, 98 middle schools, and 5 elementary schools. In the first 4 years of the program over 150,000 students were served. The programs were evaluated each year. The evaluations revealed that the programs failed to meet their goals of improved attendance and academic achievement by a majority of participants. The evaluation indicated: (1) less than 40% of the high school students improved their attendance each year; (2) in the middle schools less than half of the students improved their attendance each year in the Dropout Prevention Program and in 2 out of 3 years in the Attendance Improvement Dropout Prevention program; (3) in the high schools, less than 45% of the students increased the number of courses they passed; and (4) elementary school programs were more effective than the middle or high school programs. Among the recommendations of the evaluation were: restructure the school experience for at-risk students; encourage the schools to use school-based planning/shared decision-making in developing dropout prevention plans; and provide professional development training to teachers and from other staff members who are unaccustomed to working with at-risk students. (ABL)

NEW YORK CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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DROPOUT PREVENTION INITIATIVES FY 1986 to 1990

LESSONS FROM THE RESEARCH

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This material is a synthesis of the work of many individuals who did the research and prepared the numerous evaluation reports on which this summary is based. The Teachers College evaluation team, under the direction of Joseph Grannis, conducted an exhaustive and illuminating study and analysis of the Dropout Prevention Program. Project coordination was under the auspices of Carolyn Riehl.

The evaluation of the A.I.D.P. program at all three school levels conducted by the Board of Education's Office of Research, Evaluation, and Assessment (OREA) also provided invaluable information about the strengths and weaknesses of this initial attendance improvement effort. Principal leadership in this effort was provided by Evaluation Section Unit managers Lori Mei and Hank Solomon. Principal author of this summary was Carol Meyer.

DROPOUT PREVENTION INITIATIVES FY 1986 to 1990

LESSONS FROM THE RESEARCH

OVERVIEW

In 1985-86, two major attendance improvement/dropout prevention programs were initiated in selected middle and high schools with attendance rates below the citywide median. The following year, a limited number of elementary schools were added to the program, making a total of 36 high schools, 98 middle schools, and five elementary schools participating in the program, now fully funded with state categorical funds for Attendance Improvement Dropout Prevention. Over the first four years of the program, approximately $120 million was spent and over 150,000 students were served.

The two attendance improvement/dropout prevention programs were extensively evaluated each year by the Board of Education's Office of Research, Evaluation, and Assessment (OREA) and by Teacher's College (T.C.). (Summaries of these evaluations are attached.) The evaluations revealed that the programs failed to meet their goals of improved attendance and academic achievement by a majority of participants.

GENERAL FINDINGS

- In the high schools, less than 40 percent of the students in either program improved their attendance each year.
- In the middle schools, less than half of the students improved their attendance each year in the Dropout Prevention Program and in two out of three years in the Attendance Improvement Dropout Prevention program.
- On average, participants in the middle schools had attendance rates below 75 percent, while in the high schools, average attendance ranged between 57 and 65 percent. Program participation did not stem the pattern of declining attendance from year to year.
- In the high schools, less than 45 percent of the students increased the number of courses they passed.
- Overall, participating students were not earning credits at a rate that would enable them to earn a diploma in four or even five years.
- Between 25 and 30 percent of targeted high school students were promoted each year.

- By the end of 1987-88, more than half (50.7 percent) of the first group of high school students had dropped out. Although this was a high-risk group, this rate is still more than double the citywide average.

- Elementary school programs were more effective than the middle or high school programs.

- Overall, students who received services from both C.B.O. and school staff had better outcomes than those receiving services from either C.B.O. or school staff alone. In some cases, however, a lack of coordination between C.B.O. support services and the school's general instructional program resulted in lower attendance and academic outcomes.

The programs were redesigned and combined into the Dropout Prevention Initiative (D.P.I.) for the 1988-89 school year. The redesigned program provided greater flexibility in funding and in student eligibility criteria, and strengthened the use of school-based planning in the development of each school's building plan for D.P.I. However, continued experience with the program, and preliminary findings from the on-going program evaluations, indicate that further redesign of the program is needed. This redesign will build on the findings and recommendations of the OREA and T.C. evaluations, which identified a number of key issues addressed in the following recommendations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Restructure the school experience for at-risk students.** Evaluation findings indicate that at-risk students have needs that cannot be met solely through special support services "added-on" to the basic academic program. The structure of the school experience should therefore be changed to meet the needs of at-risk students. This redesign should provide flexibility in class selection, class scheduling, and rate of course completion; should increase students' opportunities to take responsibility for the design and implementation of their academic program; and should be as relevant to these students' lives and circumstances as possible.

- **Encourage the schools to use school-based planning/shared decision-making (SBM/SDM) in developing their dropout prevention plans.** Each school is serving a different population of at-risk students, and needs to develop a program that meets the needs of its particular constituency. SBM/SDM should be used by schools at all grade levels, and the training and technical assistance necessary for successful utilization of this management technique should be provided.

- Require schools to establish short-term goals for their dropout prevention efforts. In order to meet the Chancellor's Minimum Standards for average daily attendance, semester attendance, long term absentees, dropout rates, and credit accumulation, individual schools need to set specific short-term goals for their D.P.I. students. Such goals should be as concrete as possible, and tailored to apply to designated sub-groups of students whenever possible. These short-term goals will allow the school to establish benchmarks by which to measure their progress in various areas, give them opportunities to experience success often, and provide necessary information for staff to refine less effective services in a timely way.

- **Help the schools obtain and interpret the data needed to determine student needs and student progress.** Some schools have computerized systems containing much of the data needed to determine students needs and measure student progress. However, other schools lack such equipment, and most schools need guidance in formatting, disaggregating, and interpreting these data in order to plan and monitor appropriate interventions for at-risk students. This equipment and assistance should be supplied.

- **Closely assess and monitor the implementation of D.P.I. efforts in the schools.** While schools and districts are often capable of developing a promising program plan, they are not as successful in implementing the proposal. Evaluators and monitors should check frequently to make sure that activities are taking place as planned and are producing the desired results. Particular attention should be given to the prompt and appropriate use of program funds.

- **Provide professional development training to teachers and other staff members who are unaccustomed to working with at-risk students.** Some D.P.I. staff members may lack the experience or training needed to work most effectively with at-risk students and their parents. Cultural sensitivity training, conflict resolution techniques, effective teaching techniques in a small class setting, and other relevant training should be provided to new staff members.

- **Support school efforts to involve parents in school activities.** Parents of at-risk children are often reluctant to become involved with the school because of language or cultural barriers, negative attitudes toward or experiences with school, and/or limited time to devote to involvement with their child's education. Aggressive outreach and extensive information is necessary to engage parents in school programs. Schools should also develop programs that offer opportunities of direct value to the parents, such as G.E.D. training, so that the parents become familiar with

the school and are more open to efforts to involve them in their child's progress in school.

- **Integrate contract services within the broader school program.** Collaborations with community-based organizations (C.B.O.) can provide additional services without affecting instructional outcomes unless these programs are coordinated with the rest of the school program. School planning teams must work voluntarily in concert with C.B.O. staff to develop an effective plan.

- **Expand the links between the school and the community.** Alliances with businesses, social service agencies, and other C.B.O.s provide students with additional role models, expand their opportunities for part-time jobs and internships, and help them make the connection between school and the outside world. Schools should actively seek out and develop such linkages.

- **Provide each student with at least one caring adult who will act as a mentor and guide throughout his or her career at a particular school, beginning at the middle school level.** Both research and experience indicate that students profit from having an on-going one-to-one relationship with a caring adult in the school. All middle and high schools serving at-risk students should assign responsibility for each individual student to a specific school staff member, C.B.O. staff member, or other responsible adult associated with the school. The "house model," creating smaller, discrete units of students and staff in the high schools, is one model for these support services.

- **Improve the health services and education being provided to at-risk students.** At-risk students typically have a higher incidence of health problems than mainstream students, yet the provision of health services to these students continues to be inadequate at most schools. The Board of Education should collaborate with city and state health agencies to expand available services, including health education, on-site health clinics, and linkages with other providers.

- **Improve the articulation of students between school levels.** The transition of students between school levels continues to be problematic--particularly the articulation between middle and high schools. Additional emphasis needs to be placed on helping middle school students successfully make the transition to high school with consistent services.

- **Give priority to early intervention for at-risk students.** Program evaluations indicated that interventions were most successful with students in the lower grades. Where possible, funding should be dedicated to such early

intervention efforts. One promising technique for younger children with chronic academic difficulties is to place them in an ungraded class in order to receive intensive remediation and guidance services without the stigma and frustration that face holdovers.

A restructured Dropout Prevention Initiative based on these elements should provide a strong foundation for school improvement and student success in the coming years.

ATTENDANCE IMPROVEMENT DROPOUT PREVENTION AND DROPOUT PREVENTION PROGRAMS FROM 1985-86 TO 1987-88

PROGRAM DESIGN

The Attendance Improvement Dropout Prevention (A.I.D.P.) and Dropout Prevention Program (D.P.P.) initiatives in operation in the schools from 1985-86 to 1987-88 had many features in common. Both of them included six basic types or "components" of service, including program facilitation, attendance outreach and incentives, guidance and counseling services, health services, school-level linkages, and alternative educational services. In addition, the D.P.P. programs included a security component.

In the A.I.D.P. high schools, which were under the direction of a central A.I.D.P. office at the Board of Education, the six components could be provided in three different "models": Project Soar, in which small groups (20 to 25) of students were block-programmed for the majority of their classes; Operation Success, a work readiness and training program developed cooperatively by the Board of Education and Federation Employment and Guidance Services (FEGS), a community-based organization (C.B.O.); or strategies, in which schools could develop an attendance improvement program around a theme, selecting specific intervention strategies from a "menu" of choices provided by the program office and utilizing a C.B.O. to deliver some of these services if desired. The A.I.D.P. middle and elementary schools, which were under the direction of the Board of Education's Office of Student Progress (O.S.P.) did not utilize these three models in their programs.

Each A.I.D.P. middle and high school program was to serve 150 students at risk of dropping out of school because of excessive absences, although a limited number of students could also be served on the basis of other at-risk factors, such as a high rate of course failures. Special education and LEP students were to be included in the targeted population. In addition, the high schools using the Operation Success model were to provide FEGS services to the A.I.D.P. students plus an additional number

of youngsters, as specified in a contract with the Board of Education. The elementary school program served 75 students per school.

The D.P.P. high schools, by contrast, attempted to institute schoolwide attendance improvement efforts. These schools were under the direction of a special Office for Dropout Prevention at the Board of Education, and the programs were evaluated by Teachers College. The high schools were originally classified as either systemic, case-management, modified systemic, or modified case-management, based on the degree of case-management services being provided by a C.B.O. However, because all of the schools unexpectedly utilized at least one C.B.O., these classifications were subsequently changed to modified systemic, which included six high schools with a limited scale of C.B.O. services, and modified C.B.O., which included four schools with major funding for C.B.O. services. The evaluation study also included the three A.I.D.P. Operation Success schools, which were referred to as A.I.D.P.-with-C.B.O schools.

The 29 middle schools in D.P.P. were divided into two classifications: the 14 schools utilizing a C.B.O. to provide dropout prevention services were called C.B.O. schools, and the 15 schools providing the seven components of dropout prevention service without the assistance of a C.B.O. were referred to as Project Connect schools.

Each year, minor modifications in the design of the A.I.D.P. and D.P.P. programs were made. However, the basic structure of the programs basically remained the same for the first three years of full implementation.

EVALUATION FINDINGS

As already noted, the D.P.P. program was evaluated by Teachers College (T.C.). The A.I.D.P. high school, middle school, and elementary school programs were evaluated by the Office of Research, Evaluation, and Assessment (OREA).

Implementation

Basically, both evaluation groups had similar findings. They found that the students served generally had poor attendance records, and tended to be at risk because of high course failure rates as well. Males usually had a slightly lower courses passed rate than females. Most students were considerably overage for their grade. The high school programs served primarily ninth and tenth graders, the middle school programs served mainly seventh and eight graders, and the elementary school program focused on fourth and fifth graders; that is, the programs concentrated primarily on students near school-level transition points. However, both evaluations noted that the number of eligible

students in a school not served by the programs sometimes considerably exceeded the number who were served. The T.C. evaluations also repeatedly noted that there were wide variations between schools in the types of students served, with some schools apparently opting to serve highly at-risk students, and others serving less at-risk students who perhaps had a better chance for succeeding in school.

Furthermore, evaluators found that a high level of attendance and guidance services were provided to the students at all levels, although again there was some variation between schools. The health services and linkages components were generally weak and ineffective, although they became slightly more effective each year. Attendance incentives tended to be very effective, particularly with those students less seriously at-risk because of poor attendance, but also had the potential for creating resentment among non-served students.

The kinds of alternative educational services provided varied considerably from school to school. In the Project Soar high schools, A.I.D.P. students were block-programmed for most of the day. In the other programs, alternative education tended to be add-ons to the basic academic program, either in the form of enrichment activities, such as career guidance or jobs training, or in the form of Chapter 1-funded remediation. In addition, many schools had an after-school program or P.M. school. At the upper grade levels, part-time jobs programs seemed particularly effective in motivating students.

C.B.O.'s focused most of their attention on providing guidance and counseling services, although a number also provided various kinds of job training services. In the D.P.P. schools, one C.B.O. provided wilderness survival training, and one provided a conflict resolution program (S.M.A.R.T.) which utilized students as mediators, and which seemed to be particularly effective. Evaluators found that, in general, C.B.O.'s that were locally-based were regarded more positively by both school staff and students than those that were not indigenous to the area. The efforts of the school principal to help coordinate school and C.B.O. activities were also important in acceptance of C.B.O.'s. Evaluators also noted that parent involvement efforts were generally not very successful.

Teacher's College also documented the continuity of services for students over time:

- Only 31.4 percent of the 4,330 middle school students and 22.1 percent of the 6,898* high school students in the first cohort (1985-86 program year) received program services in the second or third year of the program. However, being targeted for services in more than one year did not seem to reduce students' attendance losses compared to students who received services for only one year.

- About one-half of the students in a middle school terminal grade matriculated the next year in a D.P.I. high school, and less than one-tenth received D.P.I. services. However, the proportions varied greatly by middle school and district (e.g., 10.7 percent of the D.P.I. students in one middle school and 80.6 percent in another matriculated in a D.P.I. high school. Similarly, few terminal middle school students in District 9 entered a D.P.I. high school, but many in District 14 did.)

- There was wide variation in the exchange of information (linkage visits, list notices, etc.) between the middle and high schools.

Outcomes

Table 1 summarizes the number of schools and number of students served in the various programs, and presents various types of outcome data. Note that:

- The extent of data collected and reported each year varied somewhat. For example, D.P.P. did not report mean attendance or courses passed data in 1985-86. The elementary school program did not begin until 1986-87, and the report produced by OREA that year did not specify courses passed information.

- The totals for the D.P.P. high schools include the three A.I.D.P. Operation Success high schools, which served about 1,400 students per year. When this sum is subtracted from the totals shown for students served in D.P. P. high schools, the result is about 3,400 students in ten high schools. The A.I.D.P. high school totals also include the three high schools with the Operation Success program model.

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*This total is artificially high because it included many students on rosters for budget purposes who did not actually receive services. The total of students actually receiving services was probably similar to the total receiving services the next two years (e.g., around 4,800 students).

TABLE 1

Summary of Outcomes for Dropout Prevention Programs from 1985-86 to 1987-88

	AIDP			DPP	
	Elem	Middle	High	Middle	High
1985 - 86					
schools		68	26 *	29 **	13 *
Students served		11,765	5,835	4,336	6,068
% Stud. w/Imp. Attend.		46.0%	39.0%	---	---
Average Attendance		74.9%	57.0%	---	---
Mean Attendance +/-		-2.9%	-8.0%	-4.0%	-9.1%
% Stu. w/Increased # of Courses Passed		38.0%	43.0%	---	---
Average Courses Passed		68.1%	32.0%	---	---
Mean Course Pass +/-		+3.6%	+2.0%	+1.5%	-4.8%
Promotion Rate		91.0%			
1986 - 87					
schools		69	26	29	13
Students served	203	9,554	5,254	3,922	4,854
% Stud. w/Imp. Attend.	---	51.8%	40.0%	49.5%	35.0%
Average Attendance	83%	76.6%	64.0%***	76.7%	64.0%
Mean Attendance +/-	+6%	-1.4%	---	-2.2%	-7.0%
% Stu. w/Increased # of Courses Passed	---	57.3%	45.0%	59.4%	43.0%
Average Courses Passed	---	71.7%	38.0%***	70.1%	42.0%
Mean Course Pass +/-	---	+4.3%	---	+5.4%	-3.0%
Promotion Rate	---		25.0%		
1987 - 88					
schools	5	69	27	29	13
Students served	415	11,765	5,124	4,752	4,781
% Stud. w/Imp. Attend.	69.3%	47.7%	39.0%	47.0%	39.0%
Average Attendance	85.1%	76.9%	65.5%	74.0%	64.0%
Mean Attendance +/-	+3.3%	-2.1%	-6.2%	-3.4%	-5.0%
% Stu. w/Increased # of Courses Passed	27.6%	65.6%	42.0%	63.0%	42.0%
Average Courses Passed	70.0%	71.2%	42.6%	73.0%	42.0%
Mean Course Pass +/-	+3.3%	+0.8%	+0.2%	+3.0%	-4.0%
Promotion Rate	93.0%	91.7%			

* The 26 high schools included three Operation Success schools which TC included in its reports for comparison purposes.

** Of the 29 schools, 14 were CBO schools and 15 were not.

*** This figure represents a median for attendance-eligible students.

Overall, the outcomes were as follows:

- One program objective was that 50 percent of the served students would increase their attendance as a result of program participation. As Table 1 indicates, elementary school students easily met the objective and middle school students came close to meeting it each year, but high school students did not meet it in any year.

- Average attendance rates mirrored these results. While elementary school students attended school about 84 percent of the time, and middle school students attended school about three-fourths of the time, high school students attended school only about two-thirds of the time. Participating students in middle school and high school had attendance declines, on average, of 2.1 percent to 9.1 percent from the previous year.

- Another program objective stipulated that 50 percent of the students who had failed a course the previous year would have a better courses-passed rate as a result of program participation. As Table 1 shows, middle school students usually met the goal, while high school students did not.

  Data for the courses-passed objective was not reported during the first year of the pilot elementary school program. During the second year, only 28 percent of the 165 elementary school students who had failed one or more subjects the previous year improved their courses-passed rate, suggesting that this particular group of at-risk students may need intensive remediation if they are to attain academic success.

- The courses-passed rates shown on Table 1 include all students who failed at least one course the previous year. This rate tended to drop by school level. Elementary school students as a whole passed about 70 percent of their courses. Middle school students passed slightly less than three-fourths of their courses. High school students who had failed at least one course previously passed only about 40 percent of their courses. High school students did not earn credits at a sufficient rate to earn a diploma within four or even five years.

  The data suggest that many high school students were held over as a result of course failures--a supposition that is supported in the evaluation reports. The D.P.P. report commented that students tended to "pile up" in the ninth and tenth grades, and that students in these grades had great difficulty in earning enough credits to be promoted. Both the D.P.P. and A.I.D.P. high school studies reported that high school students were earning an average of 5.1

credits per year, but that the promotion rate was about 25 percent. By contrast, the promotion rates for both elementary and middle schools were over 90 percent. This further suggests that the lower grade levels were passing their problem students along to the upper grades, and that it was not until these students reached high school that the extent of the problem became apparent.

Longitudinal Findings

Teachers College conducted a longitudinal study of students who participated in the middle and high school D.P.P. program in its first three years of operation. Findings included the following:

Attendance

- The attendance of the first cohort of middle school students (those served during the 1985-86 program) declined during the program year (from 76.8 to 73.2) and the two subsequent years, although the decline during the program year (-3.7 percent) was slightly less than that during 1986-87 (-7.7 percent) or 1987-88 (-8.3 percent). However, the attendance of students who were still in school after three years was better than that of the first cohort as a whole. In both cases, there were considerable variations from school to school, which probably had to do both with factors in the sending middle school and the receiving high school. The patterns for the second and third cohorts appeared to be similar.

- High school students started at lower average attendance levels than middle school students, but the patterns of decline were similar. Patterns varied among schools. Teachers College particularly commented on one school with large losses in attendance and large numbers of students participating in a G.E.D. program. T.C. evaluators also noted that some changes in attendance figures were due to changes in attendance accounting procedures.

Promotion

Inconsistency in grade level information made it difficult to determine exactly how many students had been promoted from one year to the next. Nonetheless, T.C. estimated that:

- Between 25 and 30 percent of targeted high school students are promoted in a given year.

- High school students not promoted one year are likely to be held over again the following year.

- By the end of 1987-88, 14.8 percent of the first cohort of high school students had graduated from high school or received a G.E.D., another 12.4 percent were still in school or were enrolled in a G.E.D. program, and 50.7 percent had been discharged as dropouts. Again, however, there were substantial variations by school.

- Middle school targeted students were promoted at a much higher rate than high school students in their initial program year, but rates declined substantially in subsequent years, and attendance trends suggest that the eventual school completion rates will be as low for these students as they are for high school students.

Conclusions

As implementation of these programs proceeded and data began to accumulate, it became apparent that the programs at the upper school levels were not having the impact that program planners had hoped for.

Elementary schools. **The program seemed quite successful at the elementary school level.** Evaluators noted that three-fourths of the students served were selected on the basis of excessive absences, and many were also reading below grade level. The schools were particularly successful in making contact with student's parents, which indicates that the parents were frequently at home and had therefore decided to keep their child at home as well. Family assistants felt they needed additional training in the areas of parent guidance and techniques for working with resistant parents. Attendance incentives were widely used and popular. Guidance, health, and linkages services varied from school to school, although 75 percent of the A.I.D.P. students received at least one guidance service by the end of the year. All five schools had an extended school day program three days a week, but only the facilitators at the schools that had been in the program for two years felt it was effective in improving A.I.D.P. participants attendance and achievement.

On the whole, students made good progress with their reading and mathematics skills, with most at or above grade level by the end of the year. Most of the students who had failed one or more subjects the previous year were in the fourth or fifth grade, and had lower D.R.P. and MAT scores that the students as a whole; nearly one-quarter were also limited English proficient (LEP). Interestingly, the attendance of the "failers" was slightly higher than that of A.I.D.P. students as a whole, which indicates that attendance improvement alone does not guarantee improved academic performance.

Finally, A.I.D.P. staff members felt that they were making an important difference in the lives of the children they were serving, and recommended that the program be placed in more elementary schools. Evaluators recommended funding for an additional family assistant position, so that f.a.s could work in pairs in dangerous sections of the city; funding for a full-time facilitator and full-time guidance counselor; more flexible eligibility criteria, to include at-risk children who have not yet developed poor attendance; and additional training for staff working with parents. They also reported the suggestion of one facilitator that parent education be made a separate component.

D.P.P. middle schools. In 1987-88, the D.P.P. program was operating in 29 middle schools, 11 of which were receiving services from at least one C.B.O.. Roughly 16 percent of each schools' students were enrolled in D.P.P., with about 129 students per C.B.O. school and 1985 in the "school-alone" model. About one-half were overage, and a slight majority were served on the basis of prior year attendance only. Eight percent were LEP, and thus entitled to special language services, while another 14 percent were identified as having marginal English proficiency (MEP) and yet too advanced for mandated services. Again, however, there were large differences between schools in the students' "level of risk" on the attendance and achievement criteria.

Most services were delivered in the form of attendance outreach, while health services was the most weakly implemented component. Although the Office of Student Progress (O.S.P.) had planned a strong enrichment program, the state imposed a P.C.E.N.-funded remediation program, which took some time to implement and essentially displaced the enrichment programs. However, evaluators noted that "there is no evidence that the P.C.E.N. or enrichment classes themselves had any effect on attendance or courses passed," and stated that the "central curriculum issue" still needs to be addressed. They suggested that instructional programs be modified to accommodate students' perceptions of the instruction that they find most helpful to them in learning, including a combination of direct instruction and hands-on activity. They further noted that **LEP students had a slight decline in attendance but a fairly substantial increase in courses passed, while MEP students declined in both areas, and attributed the LEP academic success to special language instruction services.**

Evaluators noted that the attendance of every group of students was highest in September and declined regularly until February, when it picked up somewhat with the start of a new semester. However, they also observed that **attendance patterns established at the start of the year tended to be the best predictors for later attendance and courses passed rates, and that for program students overall, neither direct nor indirect**

services appeared to have any impact on students' attendance patterns. They suggested that schools should be ready to welcome students with an engaging program and supportive services from the beginning of the school year.

Additionally, Teachers College noted that although program budgets were much higher while target populations were smaller in schools using C.B.O.s, overall, these agencies did not make either a positive or negative contribution to dropout prevention efforts, and recommended that schools collaborating with C.B.O.S should review their enrollment and service delivery goals. In general, **"the non-C.B.O. approach resulted in higher levels of student attendance and academic outcomes, when compared to either C.B.O. approach. This is perhaps explained by the fact that attendance and academic student performance is heavily influenced by factors related to the classroom environment. The D.P.P. as structured did not address mainstream curriculum or instruction issues."**

Other areas needing additional review include linkages, health services, and counseling. Evaluators also noted the "strong differences in expectations and performances" by students' sex, with males consistently doing less well.

D.P.P. evaluators identified a few schools with good results, and identified important features in their programs, including a strong incentives program, block programming, a strong career-education program, close tracking of students' attendance during the day, active parent involvement and positive communications between school staff and families, and a strong, continuing relationship between teachers and D.P.P. staff.

Finally, Teachers College **evaluators concluded that a "comprehensive restructuring of students' school experiences" is needed.** They recommended that Board of Education personnel share expertise and decision-making with local school personnel, help them set long-range and short-range goals, and assist them in developing information about student performance that can be used in reaching dropout prevention goals.

A.I.D.P. middle schools. The 1987-88 A.I.D.P. study focused strongly on school climate issues. OREA's findings indicated that strong administrative support was very important to the success of A.I.D.P. and to the school climate overall, in terms of success in implementing new practices and integrating A.I.D.P. into the larger school context.

OREA also found that consistent and repeated family outreach appeared to have a positive effect on individual attendance and achievement, although students without telephones and students in highly mobile families were very difficult to maintain contact with. Group guidance also had a positive impact on student

outcomes, and extended day activities seemed to have a positive effect on student achievement.

Evaluators recommended that schools:

- avoid targeting a separate group for incentives or special activities;
- reduce student/staff ratios as much as possible, with one adult taking responsibility for daily contact with a student;
- begin intervention as early as possible;
- improve articulation between school levels;
- conduct needs and progress assessments, planning, and goal-setting throughout the year rather than just at the end, so that adjustments can be made as they are needed.

D.P.P. high schools. In 1987-88, school and C.B.O. staff indicated that they provided D.P.P. services to 3,493 students in six modified systemic and four modified C.B.O. schools (an average of nearly 350 students per school), plus 1,318 students in the three A.I.D.P. schools (an average of nearly 430 students per school). However, T.C. noted that "the 31,713 other students enrolled in the 10 D.P.P. schools which implemented schoolwide improvements were also potentially affected by the program in greater or lesser degree." T.C. randomly selected approximately 150 students per school as a sample for evaluation purposes; most of its analyses are based on this sample.

As in the evaluations conducted in previous years, **many students were "stuck" in the ninth and tenth grades, becoming increasingly overage for grade and experiencing mounting failure.** Sixteen percent of the program students were entering ninth or tenth graders, and **over 60 percent had not been promoted to a higher grade at the end of the 1986-87 school year. Eighty percent of the ninth graders in the program were holdovers, and 66 percent were two or more years overage.** Both special education (6 percent) and LEP students (11 percent) were underrepresented in the D.P.I. population. An additional five percent could be considered marginally English proficient, although T.C. commented that "it is likely that many more high school students have marginal English proficiency than can be identified from current Board of Education data." While 10 percent of the students had passed all of their courses the previous year, over two-thirds had failed more than 40 percent of their prior year courses; repeat ninth graders had passed only 25 percent of their prior year courses. However, T.C. noted that "the 13 schools were targeting services to very different cohorts of students," with average prior year attendance ranging from 58

percent to 78 percent; however, the average prior year rate of courses passed was "quite low in all schools," ranging from 31 percent in one school to 56 percent in another.

Coordination between D.P.P. and the attendance office was not formalized in most schools, and "student information systems were especially underdeveloped, with a great deal of attendance outreach time devoted to resolving list-notice cases in the fall and clarifying L.T.A. cases throughout the year. However, T.C. also noted that at every grade level, attendance-eligible targeted students were discharged as dropouts at a somewhat lower rate than comparable not-targeted students. Twenty percent of the students participated in an "affiliation" activity designed to promote increased connection to the school, but participation in such activities "declined dramatically as students became more overage."

Individual and group guidance were the most frequently recorded services provided by C B.O.'s. Both school and C.B.O. counseling staff were "extensively involved in crisis intervention, with many counselors perceived as "having case loads and paperwork that were too heavy for them to be effective." **Project SMART's conflict resolution program (implemented by the Victim Services Agency) continued to contribute to lower rates of suspensions for aggressions against other students**, but school security staff were widely criticized by program staff and students for "arbitrary and confrontational approaches to security problems."

Although "engaging high school linkage and orientation activities were identified in some schools," T.C. found that only **about one-third of the targeted students who were in their terminal year in middle school in 1986-87 were enrolled in the linked high school, and that less than one-third of <u>these</u> students were targeted for services in the high school.**

Program staff described the students as having "extraordinary health needs," yet with the exception of two schools with private foundation grants, health services were "limited or very inadequate for the health needs of students in the schools."

Thirty-eight percent of the students participated in a special academic program, including many holdovers, and 32 percent received some form of instructional enrichment. Schools experimented with a variety of alternative education arrangements. In one P.M. school, students were allowed to select their after-school courses in face-to-face registration with the teachers. Some academic courses were adapted to individual students' ability levels and attendance patterns, but T.C. noted that "some alternative education programs only diluted course content and requirements." **About eight percent of the**

students participated in part-time jobs programs provided by C.B.O.s, and while these students had relatively high attendance and courses passed outcomes, even they were passing only about half of their courses. The evaluation suggested that career education and educational planning are particularly important for Hispanic students.

T.C. also noted that "programming targeted students together in their classes had both positive and negative potentials," in that it facilitates identifying students for service, but also runs the risk of low expectations and morale associated with homogeneous grouping." Only 18 percent of the targeted students earned 10 or more credits in 1987-88, although as many as 41 percent of the students may have been promoted. Out of the total program population of 4,811 students, 125 earned New York State Equivalency Diplomas (G.E.D.s), with fully one-half earned in the one school with its own N.Y. State-approved G.E.D. program.

The high schools varied in whether they concentrated on specifically targeted students or took a more general, systemic approach to dropout prevention, and also in the extent to which they relied on C.B.O. staff to carry out the program. All high schools had at least some C.B.O. involvement. However, the effectiveness of C.B.O.s, as of virtually all dropout prevention activities, varied as a function of the students they were serving, the school context in which they operated, and their own organization, including site management and staff stability or turnover. **Students who were served by a combination of school and C.B.O. staff tended to have better performance than those served by just one.**

In general, T.C. stated, "the environments of virtually all of the schools limited the results that could be obtained by a special program within the schools," because of variations in "leadership, faculty attitude toward the program and its students, and program staff resourcefulness and stability. **The size of the high schools and the numbers of students for whom, almost by definition, conventional schooling was not working seemed to foster a culture of conflict, alienation, and failure in the schools."**

T.C. evaluators declared that "students received only a fraction of the kinds of services which the program rationale and the Chancellor's regulations implied should be packaged together," and noted that across all of the models, there was a trend for more favorable changes if students received more rather than fewer services. T.C. ascribed the reasons for these "scattered services" to the "loose coupling of units that characterizes the typical large high school organization," the "political necessity of spreading services over large numbers of students in order to justify program budget," and the fact that "the several Board of Education offices involved held the

programs in the schools more accountable for implementing discrete services than for the student attendance and courses passed outcomes that might result from, and require, combining services to provide comprehensive support for individual students."

However, they also noted that "some program units did appear to have integrated services more fully and to have begun to achieve commensurate outcomes," and mentioned three schools where this seemed to be the case, including one with "a teacher-developed mini-school that had better outcomes for students than other, less well-integrated program activities in the host school," and another which developed a career-oriented that included classes for their targeted students in a nearby vocational school. "Targeted students in this school," T.C. said, "had the best combined attendance and courses passed outcomes of all the schools, while comparable students in the same school who were not targeted had disastrous outcomes."

Finally, T.C. noted that although outcomes were disappointing, "the D.P.I. should also be viewed as having implemented processes of school improvement--dropout prevention teams, the collection of data on students at risk, the creation of alternatives like P.M. schools, collaboration with C.B.O.s--that might benefit future cohorts of students if the Board of Education builds upon what has been learned in the dropout prevention effort so far." They also noted that the high school program has been redesigned for 1988-89 to incorporate many of the recommendations that T.C. made in a preliminary report and repeated in the final report. They included:

- Goals for student improvement need to figure more centrally in program planning, monitoring, and accountability. School-based planning is essential for this process.
- Houses or alternative schools need to be created for all students.
- Information systems to profile data on students and programs need to be developed in each school.
- Adults from many spheres of work and life should be involved as mentors, tutors, and coaches for high school youths.
- A dropout prevention program needs to begin in the early grades, but to be followed by continuous supports for students throughout their middle and high school years.

- The responsibility for developing programs for at-risk students should be shared by all of the city's high schools. Schools might work together in partnerships so that schools with greater or fewer numbers of students at risk could be mutually supportive.

A.I.D.P. high schools. OREA's findings for the 26 A.I.D.P. schools (which included the three Operation Success schools that T.C. also included in its reports) were very similar to those of Teachers College evaluators. Evaluators noted that there was considerable diversity in the characteristics of the students served from school to school, and also in program outcomes.

They noted that in the A.I.D.P. program, all schools block programmed students in major classes, and that this produced some scheduling difficulties. They reiterated a recommendation made the previous year that the strengths of students be determined on an individual basis, and that program services be tailored to that individual's needs. They further suggested that an alternative course of study be devised for students with little chance of earning a high school diploma within a reasonable period of time, that firmer guidelines be established for linkages between school levels, and that service quotas be adjusted for schools with a small proportion of eligible students.

OVERALL CONCLUSIONS

The Teachers College evaluators made the following overall conclusions:

- For most students, D.P.I. was a limited encounter that did not stem the erosion of their attendance or increase their prospects for completing school.

- The G.E.D. has so far been more efficient than the regular high school route for highly at-risk students to complete their education at the secondary level.

- The Board of Education should develop the capacity within each school to generate profiles for students, grade levels, programs, and activities, so that planning teams can set short- and long-range goals for increasing student retention and school completion that are both challenging and attainable.

ATTENDANCE IMPROVEMENT DROPOUT PREVENTION AND DROPOUT PREVENTION PROGRAM REDESIGN IN 1988-89 AND 1989-90

The original three-year funding cycle for these programs came to an end in the 1987-88 school year. At that point, the programs were redesigned to incorporate the results of three years of experience, evaluation, and reports from the field.

HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAMS

1988-89

Although the 1988-89 Dropout Prevention Program (D.P.P.) was under the general direction of the central Attendance Improvement Dropout Prevention (A.I.D.P.) program office, it was not formally evaluated during this program year. The following discussion therefore refers only to the A.I.D.P. program.

Program design. The high school A.I.D.P. program was redesigned in 1988-89 to serve a larger population of at-risk students and to permit and encourage more school-based planning. Eligibility criteria for services were extended to include such additional at-risk categories as "cutters" and students with "sporadic" poor attendance or truancy, and schools were allowed to "integrate" the A.I.D.P. funds with other funding streams to that the program could be better connected to the overall school organization. Program outcomes were to be measured using the Chancellor's minimum standards.

In terms of program design, the A.I.D.P. high schools were asked to use a "cross-section of school personnel" to develop a comprehensive plan utilizing "holistic" solutions that would provide better coordination of school services to meet individual students' needs. Program planners listed a number of possible strategies that schools might wish to include in their plan. Some of these strategies were designed to allow students to accumulate credits through non-traditional routes. One such possibility was "concurrent options" such as shared instruction (in which students obtain credit by attending another high school for vocational training) and independent study. Other alternative credit-accumulation options included school/community internships, a New York State Equivalency Diploma (G.E.D.) program, and work-study programs.

Other possible attendance improvement strategies suggested by program designers included the use of community-based organizations (C.B.O.s) to provide various types of services, re-entry classes for long-term absentees (L.T.A.s), mentoring and tutorial programs, increased support for ninth and tenth year

houses, career-oriented vocational training programs, and the use of the SOAR mini-school model to offer block programming and intensive guidance and outreach services.

Evaluation findings. The Office of Research, Evaluation, and Assessment's (OREA's) evaluation of this program indicates that all participating A.I.D.P. schools provided attendance outreach, individual and group counseling, P.M. schools, and independent study programs, while 70 to 80 percent of the schools implemented ninth and tenth grade houses, block programming, part-time jobs programs, work-study, and vocational training. Most staff members strongly supported the concept of school-based planning, but reported that their participation in the planning stages varied widely. Many also noted that the broadening of eligibility criteria produced major coordination problems with other school programs. Facilitators reported problems in finding qualified teachers for block-programmed classes of at-risk student. Most counselors felt that they had to spend too much time on academic programming and administrative chores, and did not have enough time to work one-to-one with students. Both staff and students said that high interest classes relevant to career goals and flexible ways of earning credits were strongly positive features of the program.

Complete student data are currently available only for average daily attendance and long-term absentees. The Chancellor's Minimum Standards for the whole school were applied to the ninth and tenth grades because they were the target population for the attendance improvement dropout prevention program. Sixty-three percent of the A.I.D.P. schools met the average daily attendance objective in their ninth grade, and 53 percent met the objective in tenth grade. Fifty percent reduced their percentage of L.T.A.s to meet the objective in their ninth grade, and 63 percent met the objective in their tenth grade. Outcomes for the remaining three objectives--semester attendance, dropout rates, and credit accumulation--will be reported as soon as they are available.

OREA evaluators recommended increased input of A.I.D.P. staff in program planning, improved coordination between A.I.D.P. and other services for at-risk students, a full-time facilitator for each A.I.D.P. program, the addition of a clinically trained staff person in the guidance department of all A.I.D.P. schools, strengthened supportive services for teachers of block-programmed classes, and the expansion and strengthening of successful program elements such as alternative ways to earn credit.

1989-90

Program design. In 1989-90, the A.I.D.P. and D.P.P. programs were formally combined into one program designed to incorporate the most successful features of the two previous programs. Varying funding levels were made available to the 43 high schools included in the Dropout Prevention program, depending on the range and extent of planned activities and services, the school's commitment to fundamental change, and the degree of integration of school resources. Each school was to receive P.C.E.N. funding, plus the following:

- Level 1 = a "basic" allocation of $150,000 for planned "discrete" activities.
- Level 2 = approximately $250,000 to implement a broad range of activities contributing to a more comprehensive change process.
- Level 3 = approximately $400,000 for a comprehensive change process, including a unified approach to resource allocation, a broad range of programs available to all students, involvement of parents and students in planning, a commitment to strengthen and expand the "house" concept, and the existence of a fully-functioning school-based planning team.

Guidelines suggested that a Level 1 school should have a .6 coordinator/facilitator, a Level 2 should have a .6 to .8, and a Level 3 should have a .8 to 1.0. In addition, a school could obtain a "special incentive grant" if it chose to participate in designated special activities, including a "Services Linkage Project for Parenting Adolescents," an articulation program, and/or the development of a school-based planning team. Finally, funds for the services of community-based organizations were provided through a separate allocation earmarked specifically for this purpose.

Guidelines emphasized the importance of school-based planning in developing and implementing each school's plan, and requested specific kinds of information in the plan, including:

- a description of the population to be served;
- both short- and long-term program goals;
- a timetable for the plan's development and implementation;
- a description of the ways in which D.P.P. funding would be "leveraged" with other funding sources; and

- a description of the process to be used in collecting and analyzing data within the school to measure student performance and progress toward achievement of program goals.

They further suggested that school plans emphasize four priority areas:

- the reduction of student anonymity, through such techniques as a teacher "Adopt-a-Student" plan, peer mentoring programs, and a mini-school model;

- challenging, interesting, and alternative learning situations, such as independent study and/or G.E.D. preparatory classes for over-age students, part-time job/work study programs and community internships linked to classroom experiences, new curriculum approaches such as team teaching, P.M. schools, etc.;

- an active support system, via such methods as individual and group counseling, parent outreach, and a Resource Center for limited English proficient (LEP) and marginally English proficient (MEP) students; and

- professional staff development, including such features as a common prep period for a core group of teachers, peer coaches, and staff development retreats.

Guidelines further advised schools to focus on such issues as how to deal with the overt and subtle forms of cultural misunderstanding and mistrust that alienate students and staff from one another, how to counteract the effects of students having been retained one or more grade levels, and how to work with male students whose success rate in high school is poorer than females with comparable abilities.

Program implementation. The 1989-90 high school D.P.P. program has not been formally evaluated as yet. However, the Chief Administrator of the program has provided some preliminary information about implementation.

The determination of the funding level for each school was made by the Administrator in cooperation with borough superintendents. Twenty-two high schools received Level 1 funding ($150,000), 17 received Level 2 funding ($250,000), and four received Level 3 funding ($400,000). All boroughs except Queens had one Level 3 school, and all had at least three Level 1 schools. All former D.P.P. high schools got tax-levy funding because they were "accustomed to" a relatively high funding level, and this source of funding provides coverage for fringe costs, while reimbursable funding does not; they also could receive additional P.C.E.N. units to compensate for the loss of

other services such as C.B.O.'s. If a school was designated as a "Chancellor's School" it also received additional funding. The Administrator advised the schools to "hold back" a certain portion of their funding at the beginning of the year, so that if a promising new program or some other type of opportunity came up during the year, the school would be able to take advantage of it.

Of the 43 programs, 39 included a coordinator for the houses program, an independent study program, and/or an optional articulation program; 38 included a family assistant or school neighborhood worker; 36 utilized a C.B.O.; 35 had school-based planning teams; 33 had tutoring or student aides; 32 had a P.M. school; 31 had a guidance counselor; 28 participated in a parenting adolescents program; 24 had re-entry classes for L.T.A.s; 22 had multicultural programs; 20 had a cultural program and/or a G.E.D. program; 21 had an internship program; 19 had a parental involvement component; 13 had a minischool; and six participated in an intergenerational program.

The four Level 3 schools (three of which were former D.P.P. schools) had 16 or 17 of the 18 options, Level 2 schools had between seven and 15 of the options, and Level 1 schools could have as few as four and as many as 15. However, there were also many variations in regard to the use of tax-levy versus reimbursable funds, the size of the P.C.E.N. allocation, and the community-based organization(s) providing services to the schools. For example, the most heavily funded school, Theodore Roosevelt High School, was allocated $400,000 in tax-levy funds and 4.0 P.C.E.N. units, was receiving services from two C.B.O.s, and was utilizing 17 of the 18 program options. Another Level 3 school, Erasmus Hall, was allocated $400,000 in reimbursable funds, received no P.C.E.N. funding, was served by Federation Employment and Guidance Services (FEGS) and one other C.B.O., and utilized 16 of the 18 program options. By contrast, Evander Childs, a Level 1 school, received $150,000 in tax-levy funds, 1.0 in P.C.E.N. monies, was served by one C.B.O. (Jobs for Youth), and utilized nine of the 18 possible options.

The Chief Administrator commented that allowing schools to combine funds from different sources avoids the fragmentation of services that results when the services are provided by each of these different sources. He also commented that successful efforts take time and that in order for a program to be successful, it needs a strong advocate at the school. Each program is now required to have a supervisor in addition to a coordinator/facilitator.

COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT PROGRAMS

1988-89

Program design. The community school district programs continued under the overall direction of the Office of Student Progress, now designated as the Office of Technical Assistance and Support. Like the guidelines for the high school program, the guidelines promulgated by the Chancellor's office for the district programs indicated a movement away from centralized planning and toward school-based planning. They also expanded the eligibility criteria for services, and allowed districts to use funds in a "flexible and maximally cost-effective manner." Chancellor's minimum standards were to be used in determining program outcomes.

The guidelines presented a quartile analysis of the average daily attendance for middle and elementary schools by 1987-88 A.I.D.P. status. The ranges for middle schools included 93.8 to 89.2 percent (first quartile), 89.1 to 86.6 percent (second quartile), 86.5 to 82.7 percent (third quartile), and 82.6 to 63.7 percent (fourth quartile). Only the third (89.2 to 86.7 percent) and fourth (86.6 to 77.4 percent) quartiles were shown for elementary schools, because of the large number of schools involved. This data was then utilized in program funding. Middle schools which participated in the 1987-88 program and with an attendance rate below the citywide middle school median of 86.6 percent (e.g., any schools in the third or fourth quartile) received $200,000 in A.I.D.P. funds plus a P.C.E.N. allocation determined by a per capita formula. Previously participating middle schools with a rate above the median but below 89.2 percent (e.g., in the second quartile) were designated as "maintenance" schools and received $200,000 but no additional P.C.E.N. funds.

Elementary school allocations were based on the number of middle schools participating in 1987-88, so that for every three such schools in a district, $50,000 was allocated for an elementary school program. However, the guidelines also indicated that any elementary school with an attendance rate below 89.3 percent and any middle school with a rate below 86.6 percent in 1987-88 (third and fourth quartile for both school levels) was eligible for program participation.

Schools were asked to continue to address the six program components--facilitating services, attendance outreach, guidance services, health services, school-level linkages, and alternative educational strategies--in their plan. However, they were also exhorted to meet individual student's needs through holistic solutions that integrate A.I.D.P. services with the basic educational program of the school, and to coordinate these services with state and federal compensatory education

instruction received by targeted students, and with on-going building-wide improvement efforts such as the Comprehensive School Improvement Plan (C-SIP). Any district serving four or more schools was allowed to add a full-time A.I.D.P./D.P.P. coordinator.

The guidelines included comprehensive elementary and middle school program models and estimated budgets, and sample attendance improvement and dropout prevention program activities and services from various sources which the State Education Department considered to be allowable or recommended, including four currently in operation in New York City: Learning to Read Through the Arts, a reading communication arts program for elementary school children, and Reading Improvement Through the Arts (RITA).

Evaluation findings. A complete evaluation report for the community school district programs is not available as yet. However, in general, schools did not make major changes in their programs. Some middle schools added more attendance outreach staff, and some schools added an after-school program for students who maintained an acceptable attendance rate.

An informal conversation with a representative from the Office of Technical Assistance and Support revealed that more than one-half of the districts were funded partially or totally for a district coordinator. In general, the schools continued to utilize the six program components, and "a few" experimented with innovative techniques such as a P.M. school. The representative also commented that "pull out" programs in the middle schools present formidable obstacles in terms of scheduling, and that more emphasis should be given to elementary school programs.

1989-90 program

Program guidelines. In the community school districts, the number of students to be served per school remained at 150 in the middle schools and 75 in elementary schools. However, the eligibility criteria for program services was expanded to include many other categories of at-risk students, such as students with "sporadic" attendance and recent course failures, returning L.T.A.s, students in temporary housing, pregnant or parenting students, and non-native speakers of English enrolled for less than five years in New York City schools. In addition, funding mechanisms were changed to allow greater flexibility so that more district schools could become eligible as program participants. Suggested program models were provided, but districts and schools were urged to design innovative strategies and practices and school-based planning in developing building-level plans designed to integrate A.I.D.P. services with the school's basic educational plan. Services being provided by community-based organizations to competitively selected schools within districts

were to be integrated into the overall A.I.D.P. building plan submitted by participating districts. The Chancellor's Minimum Standards were to be used in establishing performance objectives for attendance and major subject pass rates.

Middle school programs. A total of 98 middle schools currently have an A.I.D.P. program serving 150 students per school. These schools were selected for participation by the districts on the basis of quartile rankings of average attendance, as follows:

- Middle schools with an attendance level in the third (86.4 to 83.1) or fourth (83.0 to 71.4) quartile could receive "basic" program funding of $210,000, plus $68,569 in P.C.E.N. funds. Seventy-seven middle schools received such funding.

- Schools that were in A.I.D.P. last year and raised their average attendance rate from the third quartile to the second (between 89.3 and 86.5) during the year could receive "first year maintenance" funding of $210,000, but had to fund their school-day A.I.D.P. instructional component from alternate sources. Five schools received such funding.

- Schools that had second quartile attendance in 1987-88 and stayed within this quartile during 1988-89 while participating in the program were eligible for "second year maintenance" funding of $90,000. This sum was to be matched by other appropriate supplemental district and school funds to ensure an ongoing comprehensive program. Sixteen schools received this level of funding.

- In addition, program planners hoped to have a number of schools in the third or fourth quartile with "a demonstrated history of effective A.I.D.P. program implementation" prepare a plan for the schoolwide coordination and integration of services to meet the attendance, health, guidance and special academic needs of the entire student population, The usual funding would be provided ($200,000 plus $70,000 from P.C.E.N.). However, none of the schools elected to participate in this program option.

Program funds were distributed to the schools by the district. The exact structure of the program varied slightly from school to school. However, a typical "basic" program would include a full-time facilitator; a full-time guidance counselor or social worker; an attendance teacher or some other type of attendance worker(s); about $6,000 for Pupil Personnel Committee (P.P.C.) meetings (unless the P.P.C. meets during the school day); roughly $8,000 in attendance incentives; small amounts of money for health plan and linkages activities; and $40,000 or

$50,000 for an extended school day program, if the school chooses to have one. The P.C.E.N. money is used for the alternative education program, which is usually remediation in regularly scheduled (not "pull-out") reduced-size classes, which may include the use of special equipment such as computers. A review of some A.I.D.P. budgets made available to OREA indicated that the total available allocation per school is not always used, although it is unclear what happens to the additional funds.

Elementary school programs. At the elementary school level, which serves 75 students per school, the $70,000 allocation basically pays for a program facilitator, who also provides intensive individual and group guidance and conducts orientations and workshops for students' parents; one family assistant, who is primarily responsible for contacting students' parents; about $3,700 for attendance incentives; a part-time school aide who does most of the program paperwork; 30 per-session hours each for five members of the Pupil Personnel Committee, which meets regularly to discuss the services being provided to targeted students; small amounts of money for developing a health plan and a linkages plan; and per session hours for two or three teachers for a two- or three-day a week extended school day program. A.I.D.P. students are usually scattered among the various classes in the school.

CONCLUSION

There are a number of differences between the redesigned program and the original efforts. The primary difference is that there is a greater emphasis placed on school-based planning and shared decision-making in the design and implementation of the dropout prevention program, and a greater sensitivity to the impact of school environment on both staff and student attitudes. There is also much greater flexibility in the types of programming options available to the schools, in the levels of funding available to the schools, and in the ways in which these funds can be utilized by the schools. Finally, the program eligibility criteria have been broadened to serve a wider range of at-risk students, including students in temporary housing. At the high school level, services are available to all ninth and tenth graders.