Afterschool Centers on Education
Cycle 7 AISD
Austin Independent School District

Brown Elementary School
Dobie Middle School
Eastside Memorial High School
Hart Elementary School
Langford Elementary School
Martin Middle School
Mendez Middle School
Pickle Elementary School
Rodriguez Elementary School
Widen Elementary School

Final Report 2013–2014

Austin Independent School District

Department of Program Evaluation

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This report was developed to meet TEA's reporting requirements of the Afterschool Centers on Education (ACE), as specified in the mandated report elements and outline provided by TEA in Appendix 31 of the PRIME Blueprint for Texas ACE.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Afterschool Centers on Education (ACE) is the program administered through the Texas Education Agency (TEA) for the federally funded 21st Century Community Learning Center (CCLC) grants authorized under Title IV, Part B of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), as amended by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB; Public Law 107-110). This report examines outcomes for Cycle 7, Austin Independent School District (AISD), which served 2,915 students during the 2013–2014 school year from a total of 10 AISD campuses: six elementary schools (Brown Elementary School, Hart Elementary School, Langford Elementary School, Pickle Elementary School, Rodriguez Elementary School, and Widen Elementary School); three middle schools (Dobie Middle School, Martin Middle School, and Mendez Middle School); and one high school (Eastside Memorial High School and its feeder school, International High School).

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overall results were mostly mixed on all three outcome goals for the Cycle 7 AISD campuses. None of the 10 Cycle 7 AISD campuses met all three outcome goals: increased academic achievement, decreased school-day absences, and decreased disciplinary referrals from year to year. Program participants (regular and non-regular) at Eastside met both academic and discipline goals (decreased mandatory and discretionary referrals over time).

Regular and non-regular program participants at all four secondary schools (Eastside, Dobie, Martin, and Mendez) met academic achievement goals (i.e., improved year-to-year GPA and course completion rates). Academic outcomes were mixed for all six Cycle 7 AISD elementary campuses. Regular program participants at four elementary campuses (Brown, Langford, Rodriguez, and Widen) met the attendance goal of decreased school-day absences from 2012–2013 to 2013–2014, while non-regular participants did not meet attendance goals at these campuses. Although program participants at all four secondary campuses met academic achievement goals, they all experienced an increase in school-day absences from 2012–2013 to 2013–2014. Discipline outcomes were mixed, with participants (regular and non-regular) from four of the 10 campuses meeting the goal of decreased mandatory and discretionary referrals.

Recommendation 1. Given the mixed results for ACE Austin participants related to GPA and course completion rates, it is recommended that academic-related afterschool programs implement changes to better align with program goals, particularly at elementary campuses where goals were not entirely met. In addition, identifying the specific programs and strategies used to address academic issues (i.e., specifically at the secondary campuses [Eastside, Dobie, Martin, and Mendez] where the goal was met for both academic outcomes) would be useful in understanding what may have contributed to this finding in order to influence the adoption of similar approaches at other campuses, as well.

Recommendation 2. To meet attendance outcome goals at these campuses, a closer examination of and modification to program activities and components designed to address attendance issues is warranted. The mean number of school days absent was reported as required by TEA in the *ACE Final Evaluator Report Guidelines*. It is noted, however, that the number of days absent does not take into account the number of days enrolled. Across AISD, it was found that in 2013–2014, there was a negative correlation between the number of days students were enrolled and their absenteeism rate ($r=-.29$, $p<.0001$), i.e., students who are enrolled fewer days of the school year are absent for a greater proportion of those days. An absence or attendance rate, which takes into account the days enrolled, would be a better measure of student engagement.

Recommendation 3. Refinement to components that are effective should be ongoing so they can continue to meet the needs of students at campuses where the discipline outcome goal was met. Disciplinary goals may not have been met at other campuses because students who already had a history of high disciplinary issues were specifically targeted, and therefore the program had difficulty demonstrating a significant reduction in referrals over the course of program participation. In these cases, the specific program goals need to be examined to better understand the desired outcomes for these students.

Based on the evaluators' recommendations and commentary provided by the site coordinators in the Cycle 7 AISD center-level reports, the following next steps are recommended to help the Cycle 7 AISD campuses further improve the ACE program to meet the needs of students and parents.

- **Training:** Sufficient training opportunities should be provided to afterschool program teachers throughout the course of the school year. In addition, opportunities should be provided for school-day teachers and afterschool teachers to train together and work collaboratively in providing effective afterschool services and activities.
- **Identifying needs and aligning program goals to these needs:** Overall program activities at each campus should be aligned with students' needs and interests. To accomplish this, site coordinators along with afterschool teachers at each campus should conduct a needs assessment at the beginning of the school year. In addition, focus groups should be conducted with afterschool teachers, parents, students, site coordinators, and program directors to help determine the appropriate services for students at each campus.
- **Program implementation fidelity:** To successfully meet the needs of students participating in the afterschool program and achieve outcome goals, it is crucial that appropriate curricula, activities, and services of the program are implemented consistently and accurately. Furthermore, program implementation fidelity should be monitored and measured at regular intervals by site coordinators, program directors, and the program evaluators and requisite modifications should be made if and when issues of fidelity are identified.

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INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE OF PROGRAM

The Afterschool Centers on Education (ACE) is the program administered through the Texas Education Agency (TEA) for the federally funded 21st Century Community Learning Center (CCLC) grants authorized under Title IV, Part B of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), as amended by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB; Public Law 107-110). The purpose of ACE programs is to support the creation of community learning centers to provide academic enrichment opportunities during non-school hours for children who attend high-poverty and low-performing schools. ACE Austin provides a comprehensive range of out-of-school-time academic assistance, enrichment, family and parental support, and college and workforce readiness activities. Building on its existing infrastructure of evidence-based out-of-school-time activities and partnerships, ACE Austin collaborates with a range of partners to provide a comprehensive menu of before-school, afterschool, and summer programming. Activities are offered at least 15 hours per week for 30 weeks during the academic year and for 30 hours per week for 4 weeks during the summer. All activities focus on the four 21st CCLC core component areas: academic assistance, enrichment, family engagement, and college and workforce readiness/awareness.

Academic assistance. ACE Austin offers a range of activities designed to improve students' achievement by providing extra academic assistance and support in the form of tutoring and homework help for students who are struggling in the core subjects, including science, math, reading, and social studies. All extended-day learning opportunities are aligned with the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) standards and with the school-day reading/writing, math, science, technology, and social studies curricula and use hands-on, experiential, and project-based teaching strategies to reinforce learning. Academic support activities incorporate the district-wide Curriculum Roadmap and link the afterschool program with school-day instruction to ensure consistency and continuity.

Family engagement. ACE Austin staff partner with the AISD Adult Education Department and each school's parent support specialist to provide family engagement activities that help connect families to schools and enable them to better support their children's academic achievement. Services include English language support for limited English proficient (LEP) students; technology classes; parent support classes that focus on college readiness, child development, positive behavior, and ways to support student academic achievement; and family fitness nights, offered in partnership with ACTIVE Life Movement, a national organization dedicated to healthy lifestyles for all.

Enrichment. ACE Austin offers a variety of skill-building enrichment activities to which some students would otherwise lack access, including fine arts, technology, games, health and fitness, outdoor and environmental education, and youth leadership and development. Enrichment activities are designed to extend, expand on, or otherwise enrich classroom learning by supporting students' physical, emotional, and social development.

College and workforce readiness/awareness. ACE Austin implemented the Get Ready for College program with 5th graders at selected campuses. Students were targeted based on teachers' recommendations. Participating students investigated careers, visited area colleges and universities, practiced public speaking skills, participated in service projects, and played lacrosse. All ACE Austin activities and classes integrate college and workforce readiness whenever feasible, including discussions about careers and educational attainment, presentations from guest speakers, and information about the importance of high school graduation and college attendance.

The main goals of the youth and family afterschool programs offered by ACE Austin are based on narrowing the achievement gap between economically disadvantaged students and students of more affluent families. Across activities and centers, the afterschool program focuses on three primary objectives:

- Decrease school-day absences
- Decrease discipline referrals
- Increase academic achievement through support and enrichment activities

This report examines outcomes for Cycle 7 Austin Independent School District (AISD), which served 2,915 students during the 2013–2014 school year from a total of 10 AISD campuses: six elementary schools (Brown Elementary School, Hart Elementary School, Langford Elementary School, Pickle Elementary School, Rodriguez Elementary School, and Widen Elementary School); three middle schools (Dobie Middle School, Martin Middle School, and Mendez Middle School); and one high school (Eastside Memorial High School and its feeder school, International High School).

EVALUATION STRATEGY

EXPECTATIONS

The Department of Research and Evaluation (DRE) evaluators and program staff, together, reviewed the grant requirements and developed an evaluation plan and timeline for the program, which were published online (http://www.austinisd.org/dre/about-us) as part of the DRE work plan. Throughout the duration of the grant program, evaluators worked closely with program staff to collect and submit identified data in a timely fashion and met regularly to monitor progress and make any needed adjustments.

The evaluation plan was used to ensure continuous improvement for (a) program management (monitoring program operations); (b) staying on track (ensuring that the program stayed focused on the goals, objectives, strategies, and outcomes); (c) efficiency (streamlining service delivery, which helps lower the cost of services); (d) accountability (producing evidence of program effects); and (e) sustainability (providing evidence or effectiveness to all stakeholders).

The ACE Afterschool program used TEA Security Environment (TEASE), the Texas ACE web-based tracking system, to track students' attendance and other program data needed for TEA reports. The DRE evaluator extracted students' records from AISD's data warehouse and assisted program staff with formatting and data entry into TEASE for accurate reporting to TEA.

MEASUREMENT

Program participation files and AISD student records provided demographic information and results for each of the school-related outcomes. Program participants' outcomes were compared for school years 2012–2013 and 2013–2014. Program participants were categorized based on the total number of days they participated in the afterschool program: regular participants were students who participated in a program for 30 or more days, and non-regular participants were students who participated in a program between 1 and 29 days. Analyses were conducted to compare school outcomes (e.g., school attendance, discipline removals, core subject grade point average [GPA]; reading, mathematics [math], science, and social studies) and course completion percentages.

School Attendance[1]

The average number of school days absent was calculated for both the regular participant and non-regular participant groups. Absent days were defined as the total number of days a student did not come to school, and included both excused and unexcused absences.

[1] The mean number of school days absent was reported as required by TEA in the *ACE Final Evaluator Report Guidelines*. It is noted, however, that the number of days absent does not take into account the number of days enrolled. Across AISD, it was found that in 2013–2014, there was a negative correlation between the number of days students were enrolled and their absenteeism rate ($r=-.29$, $p<.0001$), i.e., students who are enrolled fewer days of the school year are absent for a greater proportion of those days. An absence or attendance rate, which takes into account the days enrolled, would be a better measure of student engagement.

Discipline Removals

To examine the program's impact on discipline referrals, the percentage of students who were disciplined was calculated for both the regular and non-regular participant groups. Student discipline referrals were included for analysis when the resultant action was a suspension (i.e., in-school or out-of-school suspension) or placement in a disciplinary alternative education program (DAEP; e.g., the Alternative Learning Center). These removals from the regular education environment were divided into two categories for the purposes of analyses: those for which a removal was mandatory and those for which a removal was discretionary. All mandatory discipline offenses resulted in a removal from campus, as required by law. Discretionary removals were those offenses that did not require a removal by law, but for which a student was removed anyway. For example, mandatory removals included drug and alcohol violations, as well as assaults on other students or adults on campus; discretionary removals included behaviors such as persistent misbehavior or fights.

Academic Achievement

Academic achievement was measured using school-year GPA in reading, math, science, and social studies and course completion percentages. The mean GPAs were calculated for coursework completed during the year, and the percentage of students who passed courses was also calculated.

Table 1. Afterschool Program Objectives and Description of How They Were Measured

Program objective	Measurement	Data source
Decrease participants' school-day absences	Mean school-day absence	Program participation file, AISD student attendance records
Improve behavior	Percentage of mandatory or discretionary discipline removals	Program participation file, AISD student discipline records
Improve academic performance	Core grade point average (reading, math, science, social studies)	Program participation file, AISD student grades records
	Course completion	Program participation file, AISD student grades records

Source. AISD Afterschool Program records

PROGRAM DESIGN AND SUPPORT STRATEGY

PROGRAM DESIGN

High-quality out-of-school time (OST) programs are an integral part of the pipeline to graduation and college success. All the services and activities for this project were designed based on research about what works in OST programs—primarily research from the Department of Education's "What Works" Clearing House publication *Structuring Out-of-School Time to Improve Academic Achievement* (Beckett et al., 2009) and research about family engagement from the Harvard Family Research Project (Westmoreland, 2009). The program used an evidence-based assessment tool developed by the Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality (YPQ) and trained all afterschool staff members on best practices for activity development and implementation. In addition, all the project's family engagement activities were based on the national parent involvement standards established by the National Parent Teacher Association, including regular, two-way, meaningful communication between home and school; promotion and support of parenting skills; active parent participation in students' leaning; parents as welcome volunteer partners in schools; parents as full partners in school decisions that affect children and families; and outreach to community resources. ACE Austin and its partners took a coordinated approach to engaging families so those most in need would have multiple points of entry into the continuum of services available through this program.

During the spring and summer of 2013, a campus needs assessment was conducted. The program leadership analyzed indicators (e.g., students' socioeconomic status [SES], school disciplinary referrals, student and family mobility, school dropout and completion rates, and college readiness); reviewed each school's campus improvement plan; and conducted in-depth interviews with school administrators, staff, teachers, community members, partners, parents, and students to identify gaps in services on each campus and the surrounding neighborhoods. Common themes emerged indicative of the campus needs, which included opportunities for extended learning, youth development, health and fitness, school safety, family engagement, and neighborhood safety.

Data from TEA's Academic Performance Report (TARP) 2012–2013 indicated that the percentage of students who were low SES (i.e., qualify to receive free or reduced price lunch); considered at risk of dropping out of school; and classified as English language learners were above district and state averages for all 10 Cycle 7 AISD schools (Table 1).

Table 1. Description of Needs

School	Percentage low socioeconomic	Percentage at risk	Percentage limited English proficient
Brown Elementary School	97%	80%	69%
Dobie Middle School	95%	64%	39%
Eastside Memorial High School	91%	85%	18%
Hart Elementary School	98%	88%	75%
Langford Elementary School	97%	78%	64%
Martin Middle School	96%	65%	28%
Mendez Middle School	95%	63%	35%
Pickle Elementary School	97%	88%	78%
Rodriguez Elementary School	97%	71%	56%
Widen Elementary School	95%	71%	54%
AISD	63%	53%	27%
State	60%	45%	17%

Source. 2012–2013 Texas Education Agency's Academic Performance Reports

Programming was developed based on the needs of Cycle 7 AISD campuses. Upon implementation, project directors met with the site coordinator to set goals in the following areas: program operations, communication, curriculum alignment, quality of instruction, and program evaluation. Individual goals were reviewed mid-year, and adjustments were made. The project director, curriculum specialist, and quality coach visited all the sites and documented each visit. Recommendations for improvement were received by the site coordinator, who then met with the OST instructor. Observers looked for compliance in operational functions, program quality, and procedures. In addition, observers checked for fidelity to the project plan, including activity alignment; use of goals that were specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and timely (SMART); staff-to-student ratios; and student engagement strategies. ACE Austin participated in the community-wide YPQ initiative. Leadership team members and all site coordinators were trained to use the nationally validated Youth Program Quality Assessment (YPQA) tool. Each semester, the quality coach and each site coordinator conducted a minimum of two assessments using the YPQA tool, and the results of each assessment were used to guide the Center's quality improvement and professional development activity plan for instructors and vendor staff.

ACE Austin's training calendar was extensive. In addition to new employee orientations, and district and campus training sessions, staff attended webinars and regional training sessions provided by Edvance. All afterschool instructors participated in YPQ training sessions, which were offered throughout the year;

assessment tools and technique sessions; and instructional models sessions. To ensure that all TEA objectives were met, each objective had a professional development activity strategy for implementation. As part of the lesson planning training, afterschool staff learned how to assess learning styles, determine students' progress, and assess portfolios. Strategies for professional development activities included:

- Professional development activities for all afterschool instructors about Department of Education evidence-based practices in lesson planning, instruction, tutoring, and homework assistance
- Professional development activities for all afterschool instructors and staff about effective youth development practices and the development of high-interest, developmentally appropriate activities
- Recruitment and training of adult advocates and assignment of trained advocates to targeted students in order to provide tutoring and mentoring on a consistent basis
- Professional development activities for all afterschool instructors and staff about evidence-based Positive Behavior Support strategies

Marketing

Successful marketing and program promotion are essential, both to attracting participants and to securing community buy-in for and ownership of the program. ACE Austin marketing strategies focused on both marketing to attract participants and outreach to build and maintain community interest and support. Marketing materials emphasized both the community benefits of OST programs, student and family benefits of participation, and the cost benefits of providing quality programs. When community members have buy-in, they become advocates for the program and assist in marketing and outreach for the program. School staff also are important in efforts to attract participants to the program and helping to connect students and families in need of appropriate services and activities. An important aspect of marketing and outreach is ensuring that programs create engaging environments where children and parents can experience success together. Satisfied participants become strong advocates who also can assist in marketing the program. Successful programs benefit from word-of-mouth, as well, which increases demand as information about the program builds in the community.

Ongoing Monitoring

Ongoing monitoring of attendance patterns helped staff address issues that otherwise could have become barriers to regular attendance. ACE Austin staff took daily attendance and monitored absence patterns weekly. They worked with the family engagement specialist and the campus parent support specialist to notify parents of students' absences, and worked to address the causes of repeated absences. Direct parent participation in activities also increased students' participation levels.

LOGIC MODEL

Site coordinators at all 10 Cycle 7 AISD schools, in conjunction with the project directors, developed a logic model to guide the implementation of the ACE program at their campus. The model also served as a tool for documenting programmatic changes over time. The logic model of the ACE program at each Cycle 7 AISD campus included six components: resources, implementation practices, outputs-activities, outputs-participation, intermediate outcomes, and impact.

PROGRAM PARTICIPATION

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

Table 3. Number of Students, by Campus and Afterschool Centers on Education (ACE) Austin Participation Status, 2013–2014

Cycle 7, AISD campuses	Regular participants		Non-regular participants		Non-participants		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Brown	197	40%	26	5%	267	54%	490	100%
Dobie	137	18%	204	27%	409	55%	750	100%
Eastside	161	29%	200	36%	187	34%	548	100%
Hart	218	28%	40	5%	529	67%	787	100%
Langford	187	22%	21	2%	643	76%	851	100%
Martin	181	28%	185	29%	282	44%	648	100%
Mendez	175	18%	165	17%	639	65%	979	100%
Pickle	180	22%	57	7%	587	71%	824	100%
Rodriguez	202	21%	127	13%	632	66%	961	100%
Widen	180	25%	72	10%	477	65%	729	100%
Total Cycle 7 -AISD	**1,818**	**24%**	**1,097**	**15%**	**4,652**	**61%**	**7,567**	**100%**

Source. ACE Austin participant records for 2013–2014; AISD student records.

The majority of program participants were regular participants (i.e., attended the afterschool program for 30 or more days) at six of the 10 Cycle 7 AISD campuses: Brown, Hart, Langford, Pickle, Rodriguez, and Widen. Approximately the same percentage of regular and non-regular participants was served at Martin and Mendez campuses.

At Dobie Middle School and Eastside Memorial High School, where a larger percentage of program participants were non-regular (i.e., attended the program for less than 30 days), instructional quality was assessed and managed by the site coordinator through regular participation and observations of classes/activities. Afterschool program instructors were asked to keep track of the level of participation in their programs. When modifications were needed, the site coordinator discussed an action plan with the instructors (e.g., recruitment if attendance was low, curriculum adjustment if students seemed to be losing interest in the course).

Modifications were made throughout the school year. When a class had extremely low participation, the site coordinator worked with the teacher to make changes and bring in more students. New classes were added in the spring to prevent enrolled students from losing interest and to attract new students. New classes were selected based on programs that students requested or teachers suggested. Classes with no participants enrolled were canceled.

Table 4. Student Gender, by Campus and Afterschool Centers on Education (ACE) Austin Participation Status, 2013–2014

Cycle 7, AISD campuses and participation level		Gender		
		Regular participants (*n* = 1,818)	**Non-regular participants (*n* = 1,097)**	**Non-participants (*n* = 4,652)**
Brown	Female	50%	40%	50%
	Male	50%	60%	50%
Dobie	Female	45%	40%	50%
	Male	55%	60%	50%
Eastside	Female	53%	53%	40%
	Male	47%	47%	60%
Hart	Female	49%	50%	44%
	Male	51%	50%	56%
Langford	Female	54%	48%	48%
	Male	46%	52%	52%
Martin	Female	49%	53%	51%
	Male	51%	47%	49%
Mendez	Female	44%	51%	49%
	Male	56%	49%	51%
Pickle	Female	51%	45%	49%
	Male	49%	55%	51%
Rodriguez	Female	58%	65%	50%
	Male	42%	35%	50%
Widen	Female	43%	54%	49%
	Male	57%	46%	51%

Source. ACE Austin participant records for 2013–2014; AISD student records

Table 5. Student Ethnicity, by Campus and Afterschool Centers on Education (ACE) Austin Participation Status, 2013–2014

Cycle 7, AISD campuses and participation level		Ethnicity						
		American Indian or Alaska Native	Asian	Black or African American	Hispanic	Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	Two or more races	White
Brown	Regular participants	1%	0%	5%	93%	0%	1%	1%
	Non-regular participants	0%	0%	8%	76%	0%	0%	16%
	Non-participants	0%	1%	5%	88%	0%	3%	3%
Dobie	Regular participants	0%	2%	10%	82%	0%	1%	5%
	Non-regular participants	0%	2%	9%	87%	1%	0%	2%
	Non-participants	0%	3%	10%	83%	0%	1%	2%
Eastside	Regular participants	1%	1%	27%	66%	0%	1%	3%
	Non-regular participants	1%	1%	13%	82%	0%	1%	3%
	Non-participants	1%	2%	11%	84%	0%	0%	2%
Hart	Regular participants	0%	5%	10%	82%	0%	1%	2%
	Non-regular participants	0%	8%	16%	74%	0%	0%	3%
	Non-participants	0%	2%	8%	85%	0%	1%	4%
Langford	Regular participants	1%	0%	6%	89%	0%	1%	3%
	Non-regular participants	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%
	Non-participants	0%	0%	4%	91%	0%	1%	4%
Martin	Regular participants	0%	1%	17%	80%	0%	0%	2%
	Non-regular participants	0%	0%	9%	89%	0%	1%	2%
	Non-participants	0%	2%	11%	85%	0%	0%	3%
Mendez	Regular participants	0%	0%	8%	89%	0%	1%	2%
	Non-regular participants	0%	0%	7%	90%	0%	1%	2%
	Non-participants	0%	0%	5%	91%	0%	1%	2%
Pickle	Regular participants	1%	0%	6%	92%	0%	1%	1%

Cycle 7, AISD campuses and participation level		Ethnicity						
		American Indian or Alaska Native	Asian	Black or African American	Hispanic	Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	Two or more races	White
	Non-regular participants	0%	0%	7%	91%	0%	0%	2%
	Non-participants	0%	0%	8%	90%	0%	0%	1%
Rodriguez	Regular participants	0%	0%	6%	93%	0%	0%	1%
	Non-regular participants	1%	0%	13%	86%	0%	0%	0%
	Non-participants	0%	0%	6%	91%	0%	0%	2%
Widen	Regular participants	0%	0%	4%	93%	0%	0%	2%
	Non-regular participants	0%	0%	8%	89%	0%	2%	2%
	Non-participants	0%	0%	7%	90%	0%	1%	2%

Source. ACE Austin participant records for 2013–2014; AISD student records

Table 6. Student Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Status, by Campus and Afterschool Centers on Education (ACE) Austin Participation Status, 2013–2014

Cycle 7, AISD campuses and participation level		LEP status
Brown	Regular participants	70%
	Non-regular participants	52%
	Non-participants	64%
Dobie	Regular participants	32%
	Non-regular participants	32%
	Non-participants	39%
Eastside	Regular participants	5%
	Non-regular participants	19%
	Non-participants	29%
Hart	Regular participants	67%
	Non-regular participants	71%
	Non-participants	76%
Langford	Regular participants	50%
	Non-regular participants	52%
	Non-participants	61%
Martin	Regular participants	14%
	Non-regular participants	31%
	Non-participants	24%
Mendez	Regular participants	31%
	Non-regular participants	36%
	Non-participants	28%
Pickle	Regular participants	77%
	Non-regular participants	75%
	Non-participants	70%
Rodriguez	Regular participants	56%
	Non-regular participants	52%
	Non-participants	56%
Widen	Regular participants	53%
	Non-regular participants	43%
	Non-participants	51%

Source. ACE Austin participant records for 2013–2014; AISD student records

PROGRAM INTERMEDIATE OUTCOMES

ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OUTCOME

One of the program objectives was to improve students' academic achievement. Mean GPA in the core subject areas of reading, math, science, and social studies, and course completion percentages were compared for students with regular participation and students with non-regular participation in the ACE Austin program for the 2013–2014 and 2012–2013 school years. The goal was for program participants to experience an increase in mean GPA in all core subject areas as well as improved course completion rates in 2013–2014 when compared to 2012–2013.

Academic achievement outcomes (improved mean GPA and course completion rates) were mostly positive for both regular and non-regular program participants at Dobie, Eastside, Martin and Mendez campuses. Academic outcomes were mixed for all six Cycle 7 AISD elementary campuses. While regular and non-regular participants experienced a decrease in mean GPA in most of the core subject areas, they experienced an increase in course completion rates in 2013–2014 when compared to 2012–2013.

Table 7. Afterschool Center on Education (ACE) Participants' Core Grade Point Average (GPA), by School Year

Campus	Core subject GPA	Participation status					
		Regular participants		GPA change	Non-regular participants		GPA change
		2012–2013	2013–2014		2012–2013	2013–2014	
Brown	Reading	2.97	2.95	-0.01	3.21	2.68	-0.53
	Math	2.97	2.99	0.03	3.00	2.77	-0.23
	Science	3.15	3.13	-0.02	3.21	3.00	-0.21
	Social Studies	3.24	3.12	-0.12	3.42	3.05	-0.38
Dobie	Reading	2.66	3.13	0.46	2.66	2.88	0.22
	Math	2.55	3.12	0.57	2.58	2.87	0.29
	Science	2.52	3.10	0.57	2.40	2.91	0.50
	Social Studies	3.23	3.12	-0.11	2.86	3.40	0.54
Eastside	Reading	3.01	3.11	0.10	2.65	2.95	0.29
	Math	2.90	3.09	0.19	2.42	2.75	0.33
	Science	2.94	3.11	0.16	2.51	2.94	0.42
	Social Studies	2.87	3.57	0.70	2.42	2.57	0.15
Hart	Reading	2.27	2.09	-0.18	2.62	1.79	-0.83
	Math	2.37	2.40	0.03	2.65	2.00	-0.65
	Science	2.51	2.48	-0.02	2.78	2.47	-0.31
	Social Studies	2.92	2.85	-0.07	3.18	2.82	-0.36
Langford	Reading	2.34	2.26	-0.09	2.44	1.94	-0.50
	Math	2.49	2.41	-0.07	2.66	2.11	-0.55

Campus	Core subject GPA	Participation status					
		Regular participants		GPA change	Non-regular participants		GPA change
		2012–2013	2013–2014		2012–2013	2013–2014	
	Science	2.68	2.64	-0.04	2.55	2.83	0.27
	Social Studies	3.04	2.84	-0.20	3.11	3.11	0.00
Martin	Reading	2.88	3.14	0.25	2.61	2.84	0.23
	Math	3.04	3.21	0.16	2.87	2.95	0.07
	Science	2.75	3.16	0.41	2.57	3.03	0.46
	Social Studies	3.24	2.92	-0.10	2.84	2.89	0.04
Mendez	Reading	2.63	3.01	0.38	2.72	3.05	0.33
	Math	2.96	3.37	0.40	2.86	3.22	0.36
	Science	2.68	3.39	0.70	2.76	3.31	0.54
	Social Studies	3.07	3.30	0.23	3.03	3.31	0.27
Pickle	Reading	2.70	2.06	-0.63	2.26	2.35	0.09
	Math	2.65	2.09	-0.55	2.73	2.22	-0.51
	Science	3.07	2.86	-0.20	3.10	2.75	-0.35
	Social Studies	3.21	2.96	-0.24	3.04	3.05	0.01
Rodriguez	Reading	2.53	2.21	-0.32	2.24	2.11	-0.12
	Math	2.98	2.52	-0.45	2.53	2.21	-0.32
	Science	3.24	2.85	-0.39	2.87	2.44	-0.42
	Social Studies	3.39	3.42	0.02	3.12	3.26	0.14
Widen	Reading	2.71	2.35	-0.35	2.55	2.34	-0.20
	Math	2.73	2.55	-0.17	2.33	2.54	0.21
	Science	3.22	2.71	-0.50	3.15	2.63	-0.51
	Social Studies	3.28	3.05	-0.23	3.11	3.07	-0.03

Source. ACE Austin participant records for 2013–2014; AISD student records (TEAMS_GRDS)

Table 8. Afterschool Center on Education (ACE) Participants' Course Completion, by School Year

Campus	Course pass percentage					
	Regular participants		Course pass percentage point change	Non-regular participants		Course pass percentage point change
	2012–2013	2013–2014		2012–2013	2013–2014	
Brown	95.17%	97.25%	2.08%	96.06%	96.13%	0.07%
Dobie	95.89%	97.06%	1.17%	94.53%	95.10%	0.57%
Eastside	90.00%	92.56%	2.56%	80.15%	88.70%	8.55%
Hart	90.32%	93.49%	3.17%	91.97%	94.65%	2.68%
Langford	93.77%	96.68%	2.91%	95.86%	95.86%	0.00%
Martin	95.68%	96.84%	1.16%	94.33%	94.66%	0.33%
Mendez	96.09%	97.85%	1.76%	95.63%	98.46%	2.83%
Pickle	91.88%	94.62%	2.74%	93.19%	94.11%	0.92%
Rodriguez	94.65%	95.45%	0.80%	93.47%	94.35%	0.88%
Widen	93.65%	94.53%	0.88%	92.77%	95.63%	2.86%

Source. ACE Austin participant records for 2013–2014; AISD student records (TEAMS_GRDS)

ATTENDANCE OUTCOME

Average absent days of 2013–2014 ACE program participants at Cycle 7 AISD campuses were calculated in school years 2012–2013 and 2013–2014. Absent days were defined as the total number of days a student did not come to school and included both excused and unexcused absences.

Regular program participants experienced a decrease in school-day absences from one year to the next at Brown, Langford, Rodriguez, and Widen elementary campuses. School-day absences declined from year to year for non-regular participants only at Hart elementary campus. Program participants (regular and non-regular) experienced an increase in absences from year to year at all other Cycle 7 AISD campuses.

Table 9. Average Absent Days of Afterschool Center on Education (ACE) Participants, by School Year

Mean days absent	Participation status					
	Regular participants		Days absent change	Non-regular participants		Days absent change
Attendance	2012–2013	2013–2014		2012–2013	2013–2014	
Brown	4.13	3.90	-0.24	4.13	5.15	1.03
Dobie	5.27	6.37	1.10	7.15	10.64	3.49
Eastside	8.88	9.84	0.96	12.25	14.02	1.77
Hart	5.10	5.63	0.53	5.89	4.58	-1.32
Langford	6.06	5.74	-0.32	7.11	9.07	1.96
Martin	7.70	8.54	0.85	8.74	10.83	2.09
Mendez	5.66	7.09	1.43	6.94	10.32	3.38
Pickle	4.29	5.05	0.75	4.84	6.77	1.93
Rodriguez	4.99	4.90	-0.09	6.45	6.46	0.01
Widen	6.11	5.20	-0.91	6.06	7.06	0.99

Source. ACE Austin participant records for 2013–2014; AISD student attendance records.
Note. Attendance was calculated for students who were enrolled at ACE Austin campuses during the 2012–2013 and 2013–2014 school years.

DISCIPLINE OUTCOME

The percentages of students' mandatory and discretionary discipline removals were compared between school year 2012–2013 and 2013–2014. The percentages of regular participants and non-regular participants with mandatory removals in Brown Elementary School were unchanged from 2012–2013 to 2013–2014. However, the percentages of regular participants and non-regular participants with discretionary removals increased last year.

Discipline outcomes were mostly positive for Eastside, Hart, Pickle, and Widen campuses. No mandatory discipline referrals were found for either participant group at Brown and Rodriguez elementary schools for 2012–2013 and 2013–2014. However discretionary discipline referrals increased for these groups from 2012–2013 to 2013–2014. Discipline referrals (mandatory and discretionary) increased in

from 2012–2013 to 2013–2014 for regular and non-regular participants at Dobie, Langford, Martin, and Mendez.

Table 10. Mandatory and Discretionary Discipline Removals of Afterschool Center on Education (ACE) Austin Participants, by School Year

Campus	Type of Discipline removal	Regular participants		Discipline removal change	Non-regular participants		Discipline removal change
		2012–2013	2013–2014		2012–2013	2013–2014	
Brown	Mandatory	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	Discretionary	0.06	0.16	0.10	0.00	0.08	0.08
Dobie	Mandatory	0.01	0.03	0.02	0.02	0.09	0.07
	Discretionary	0.47	0.84	0.37	1.57	1.64	0.07
Eastside	Mandatory	0.05	0.05	0.00	0.09	0.09	0.00
	Discretionary	1.05	1.47	0.42	2.34	1.71	-0.63
Hart	Mandatory	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	Discretionary	0.07	0.06	-0.01	0.13	0.10	-0.03
Langford	Mandatory	0.00	0.01	0.01	0.00	0.10	0.10
	Discretionary	0.04	0.05	0.01	0.24	0.38	0.14
Martin	Mandatory	0.04	0.12	0.08	0.08	0.19	0.11
	Discretionary	0.95	0.97	0.02	1.54	1.60	0.06
Mendez	Mandatory	0.00	0.05	0.05	0.01	0.07	0.06
	Discretionary	0.56	0.74	0.18	1.37	0.77	-0.60
Pickle	Mandatory	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	Discretionary	0.02	0.01	-0.01	0.11	0.18	0.07
Rodriguez	Mandatory	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	Discretionary	0.07	0.11	0.04	0.18	0.76	0.58
Widen	Mandatory	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	Discretionary	0.11	0.31	0.20	0.99	0.92	-0.07

Source. ACE Austin participant records for 2013–2014; AISD student discipline records (ADIS)
Note. Discipline removals refer to only those discipline offenses for which the resulting disciplinary action was removal from the classroom (e.g., out-of-school suspension, placement in disciplinary alternative education program [DAEP]). All mandatory discipline offenses result in removal from campus. Discretionary removals are those offenses that do not require a removal by law.

PROGRAM IMPACTS

Overall results were mostly mixed on all three outcome goals for the Cycle 7 AISD campuses. None of the 10 Cycle 7 AISD campuses met all three outcome goals: increased academic achievement, decreased school-day absences, and decreased disciplinary referrals from year to year. Program participants (regular and non-regular) at Eastside met both academic and discipline goals (decreased mandatory and discretionary referrals over time).

Regular and non-regular program participants at all four secondary schools (Eastside, Dobie, Martin, and Mendez) met academic achievement goals (i.e., improved year-to-year GPA and course completion rates). Academic outcomes were mixed for all six Cycle 7 AISD elementary campuses.

Regular program participants at four elementary campuses (Brown, Langford, Rodriguez, and Widen) met the attendance goal of decreased school-day absences from 2012–2013 to 2013–2014, while non-regular participants did not meet attendance goals at these campuses. Although program participants at all four secondary campuses met academic achievement goals, they all experienced an increase in school-day absences from 2012–2013 to 2013–2014.

Discipline outcomes were mixed, with participants (regular and non-regular) from four of the 10 campuses meeting the goal of decreased mandatory and discretionary referrals.

At Eastside high school, academic classes were specifically designed to help students who were either low performing, or just wanted to do better on a test. College and career programs were specifically designed for students who wanted to pursue higher education or a career when they graduated. Aligning academic programs to student needs may have helped program participants at Eastside meet academic achievement goals.

EVALUATOR COMMENTARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Finding 1. Academic achievement outcomes (improved mean GPA and course completion rates) were mostly positive for both regular and non-regular program participants at Dobie, Eastside, Martin, and Mendez campuses. Academic outcomes were mixed for all six Cycle 7 AISD elementary campuses. Although regular and non-regular participants experienced a decrease in mean GPA in most of the core subject areas at these campuses, they experienced an increase in course completion rates from 2012–2013 to 2013–2014.

Recommendation 1. Given the mixed results for ACE Austin participants related to GPA and course completion rates, it is recommended that academic-related afterschool programs implement changes to better align with program goals, particularly at elementary campuses where goals were not entirely met. In addition, identifying the specific programs and strategies used to address academic issues (i.e., specifically at the secondary campuses [Eastside, Dobie, Martin, and Mendez] where the goal was met for both academic outcomes) would be useful in understanding what may have contributed to this finding in order to influence the adoption of similar approaches at other campuses, as well.

Finding 2. Attendance outcomes were mixed at Cycle 7 AISD campuses. Regular program participants experienced a decrease in school-day absences from one year to the next at Brown, Langford, Rodriguez, and Widen elementary campuses. Program participants (regular and non-regular) experienced an increase in absences from year to year at all other Cycle 7 AISD campuses.

Recommendation 2. To meet attendance outcome goals at these campuses, a closer examination of and modification to program activities and components designed to address attendance issues is warranted.

It is noted, however, that the number of days absent does not take into account the number of days enrolled. Across AISD, it was found that in 2013–2014, there was a negative correlation between the number of days students were enrolled and their absenteeism rate ($r=-.29$, $p<.0001$), i.e., students who are enrolled fewer days of the school year are absent for a greater proportion of those days. An absence or attendance rate, which takes into account the days enrolled, would be a better measure of student engagement.

Finding 3. Discipline outcomes were mixed for Cycle 7 AISD campuses. Discipline outcomes were mostly positive for Eastside, Hart, Pickle, and Widen campuses. No mandatory discipline referrals were made for either participant group at Brown and Rodriguez elementary schools in 2012–2013 and 2013–2014. However, discretionary discipline referrals increased for these groups from 2012–2013 to 2013–2014. Discipline referrals (mandatory and discretionary) increased from 2012–2013 to 2013–2014 for regular and non-regular participants at Dobie, Langford, Martin, and Mendez.

Recommendation 3. Based on this finding, refinement to components that are effective should be ongoing so they can continue to meet the needs of students at campuses where the discipline outcome

goal was met. Disciplinary goals may not have been met at other campuses because students who already had a history of high disciplinary issues were specifically targeted, and therefore the program had difficulty demonstrating a significant reduction in referrals over the course of program participation. In these cases, the specific program goals need to be examined to better understand the desired outcomes for these students.

NEXT STEPS

Based on the evaluator recommendations and commentary provided by the site coordinators in the Cycle 7 AISD center level reports, the following next steps are recommended to help support the Cycle 7 AISD campuses further improve the ACE program to meet the needs of students and parents.

- **Training:** Sufficient training opportunities should be provided to afterschool program teachers throughout the course of the school year. Trainings should focus on topics such as program implementation fidelity, developing logic models, and the Youth Program Quality Model (YPQ). In addition, opportunities should be provided for school-day teachers and afterschool teachers to train together and work collaboratively in providing effective afterschool services and activities.
- **Identifying needs and aligning program goals to these needs:** Overall program activities at each campus should be aligned to student's needs and interests. For example, applying Socio-Emotional Learning (SEL) curriculum to programs aimed at addressing discipline issues. This will help achieve better program specific outcomes and help increase program attendance.

  In order to accomplish this, site coordinators along with afterschool teachers at each campus should conduct a needs assessment at the beginning of the school year. In addition, feedback from parents and students should be solicited, and focus groups should be conducted with afterschool teachers, parents, students, site coordinators, and program directors to help determine the appropriate services for students at each campus.
- **Program implementation fidelity:** In order to successfully meet the needs of students participating in the afterschool program and achieve outcome goals, it is crucial that appropriate curriculum, activities and services of the program are implemented consistently and accurately as they are supposed to be. Further, program implementation fidelity should be monitored and measured at regular intervals by site coordinators, program directors and the program evaluator and requisite modifications should be made if and when issues with fidelity are identified.

EVALUATOR INFORMATION

Evaluation of the ACE Austin program at Cycle 7 schools served by AISD was conducted by a team of evaluators from the Research and Evaluation department at Austin Independent School District. The evaluators' scope of work is detailed below:

- Meet with the project director to review TEA's evaluation requirements and create an evaluation plan. Also, determine what additional data, if any, are going to be collected in addition to data collected through TX21st and state-level evaluation.
- Meet with the project director and site coordinators to develop the center logic models; review the minimum evaluation questions outlined in the *Texas ACE Independent Evaluation Guide 2013-2014*; and add additional evaluation questions as desired.
- Meet with program staff routinely Provide support to program staff for the two required interim reports based on the evaluation questions and other findings from ongoing internal monitoring processes.
- Help project directors and site coordinators use data to plan professional development, hire staff with different skills and interests, link personnel evaluation with internal monitoring results.
- Conduct unstructured or structured observations of program activities to assess fidelity of program implementation and recommend modifications when necessary.
- Assist centers in administering student, parent, and teacher surveys.
- Provide data for the fall, spring, and year end reports due to TEA.
- Collect program participation information, analyze data, and write the final annual evaluation reports (grant and center level). These reports will answer research questions stipulated in the grant proposals and link student outcomes to program objectives.

The total cost of evaluation allocated for the thirty centers served by AISD across three Cycles: 6, 7, & 8 in 2013-2014 was $44,824.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A. Parent Survey

A parent survey was administered to ACE program participants to obtain parents' feedback on program implementation and impact on students' academic achievement and behaviors. A total of 229 parents of students who participated in ACE Austin Cycle 7 programs responded to the survey. Results of the parent survey indicated that family nights/performances (48%) received most parental attendance in the past year, followed by Zumba (26%) and English as a second language (ESL; 22%) (Table 11). Respondents recommended the ACE program offer the following classes: ESL (23 and nights/performance (21%) again next year.

Table 11. Percentage of Parents Indicating That They Participated in Afterschool Centers on Education (ACE) Classes or Events, by Events/Activity Type

	%
Coffee with principal	20%
English as a second language	22%
Family nights/performances	48%
Literacy	6%
Love and logic	4%
Social and emotional learning	0%
Strengthening families	5%
Zumba	26%

Source. ACE Austin Parent Survey 2014.

When asked about the qualities of the ACE program that they considered important, parent respondents checked the following areas most often: safe environment (78%), opportunity to have fun (67%), and homework help (65%).

Table 12. Percentage of Parents Indicating That Individual Qualities of the Afterschool Centers on Education (ACE) Program Were Important

	%
My child is in a safe environment afterschool	78%
Classes that encourage creativity	63%
Participation in sports and other physical activity	60%
Opportunity to have fun	67%
It's free of charge	63%
Free summer camp	37%
Fieldtrips	37%
Homework help	65%

Source. ACE Austin Parent Survey 2014.

The majority (82% and 93%, respectively) of parent respondents indicated that the instructor cared about their individual progress and that they were more connected to the school community as a result of attending these classes. The majority (82%) of parent respondents reported that they knew whom to contact when they had questions about the ACE program. Parent survey respondents also reported that their children were doing better in school because of the afterschool program (98%). Almost all (99%) believed that their children enjoyed their time in the afterschool program.

Appendix B. Cycle 7 AISD Center Final Reports

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