Department of
Research and Evaluation
AUSTIN INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

High Dosage Tutoring Program Summary, 2011–2012

Background

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To improve students' achievement across 10 campuses in the Travis and Eastside Memorial vertical teams, Austin Independent School District's (AISD) Office of Turnaround Schools developed and implemented a high-dosage tutoring (HDT) program in the 2011–2012 school year. High-dosage tutoring is one of the five evidence-based tenets researched and recommended by the Harvard Education Innovation Laboratory. The HDT initiative is supported by a mix of district funds, Title I funds, and federal Texas Title I Priority Schools (TTIPS) improvement grants. The HDT program targets selected grade levels and subject areas (Table 1). The goal of the initiative is to provide regularly scheduled tutoring assistance to all students in targeted grade levels, to base tutoring on each student's academic needs, and to improve academic achievement in the targeted subject areas. With support from newly awarded federal TTIPS grants, Lanier High School and Burnet Middle School joined the initiative in November. The HDT initiative targeted all 3rd graders in reading, 6th graders in mathematics (math), and students taking Algebra I in high school.

Tutoring Program Overview

A combination of district-employed tutors and tutoring service providers offered services to the 10 campuses. A common goal of the initiative was to provide personalized, frequent tutoring in small group settings, with an average of at least 45 minutes of tutoring per student every day. District-employed tutors worked with 3rd graders on reading. At the middle schools, 6th graders were tutored in math through a combination of district tutors and an external service provider. At the three high schools, students (mostly 9th graders) were tutored in Algebra I through two service providers. Tutoring service providers for each school are shown in Table 1 and are discussed in further detail in the following sections.

Table 1. Summary of Campus High-Dosage Tutoring (HDT) Details, 2011–2012

Campus	Grade level and subject area	Provider	Total # served
Travis HS	9th grade/Algebra I	Sylvan Learning	340
Eastside Memorial HS	9th grade/Algebra I	Sylvan Learning	123
Lanier HS	9th grade/Algebra I	Catapult Learning	485
Burnet MS	6th grade/mathematics	Princeton Review	387
Martin MS	6th grade/mathematics	Princeton Review	218
Mendez MS	6th grade/mathematics	Catapult Learning	427
Allan Elementary	3rd grade/reading	District tutors	49
Govalle Elementary	3rd grade/reading	District tutors	62
Langford Elementary	3rd grade/reading	District tutors	142
Widen Elementary	3rd grade/reading	District tutors	133
		Total students	**2,366**

Source. District student enrollment records, 2011–2012

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Ralph J. Smith, M.Ed.

Assessments of Students' Progress

Various assessments were used to gauge students' progress during the course of the year, according to subject content, grade level, and campus tutoring provider. At Lanier, Catapult Systems used the Stanford Diagnostic Mathematics Test (SDMT-4) for Algebra I tutoring. At Travis and Eastside, Sylvan Learning used the California Achievement Test (CAT-A). AIMSweb math assessments were used in the middle schools for 6th grade math. At 3rd grade, staff used the Diagnostic Reading Assessment (DRA) and Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) as benchmarks and to assess and diagnose students' areas of need.

Teacher, Student, and Tutor Surveys

At the end of the 2011–2012 school year, teachers, students, and tutors at the HDT campuses were invited to complete surveys about their experiences and opinions of the program. Surveys were administered electronically. Forty-one teachers, 163 tutors, and 1,790 students completed surveys. Summaries of survey results are included in the respective campus sections of this report.

Data Limitations

A comparison of outcomes across schools, grade levels, and subject areas could not be completed in 2011–2012. Generally, students were tested several times throughout the school year using various assessments, according to content and grade level. Although the assessments differed, the middle and high schools did administer pre- and post-program assessments. At the elementary level, the campuses were to administer the DRA and DIBELS assessments. However, for both instruments, fall term (beginning-of-year, BOY) and spring term (end-of-year, EOY) data for a large number of 3rd grade students were incomplete, rendering difficult the assessment of reading outcomes. Assessment results for each campus are discussed in further detail in the following sections.

High School Summary

Eastside Memorial and Travis High School Overview

The 9th-grade Algebra I HDT program at Travis and Eastside Memorial High Schools was facilitated by Sylvan Learning staff. At Travis, Sylvan staff included 35 tutors, a site supervisor, and a program manager, serving 340 students. Sylvan implemented a program with a 2:1 or 3:1 student-tutor ratio, using a combination of push-in and pull-out approaches. At Eastside, 15 tutors and a site supervisor served 123 students. Tutors worked to identify and fill in learning gaps, according to each student's needs. Each tutor was required to possess at least a bachelor's degree. Sylvan staff began work at both campuses in the first week of classes and provided 150 days of service. On average, students received 45 minutes of tutoring services per day every school day and worked with their tutors in the school cafeteria during school hours. Travis students received an average 53 hours of tutoring support, according to Sylvan's attendance records, while Eastside students received an average 65 hours of tutoring during the school year.

Travis and Eastside Assessment Results

Sylvan staff administered the CAT-A to Travis and Eastside students before tutoring instruction began. The CAT consists of two subtests: *Computation* and *Concepts and Problems*. The computation section tests students' ability to do basic math operations. *Concepts and Problems* tests understanding of math concepts (e.g., signs and symbols, units of measurement, number systems place values, and algebra- and geometry-related concepts) and the ability to comprehend and answer word problems.

To gauge progress, Sylvan retested students using version B of the CAT in the spring (EOY) semester. Approximately 20% of students who took a pretest did not take the posttest. Those students may have transferred to another campus or may have been absent at the time the posttests were administered. Summary results are displayed in Table 2.

An analysis of pre- and posttests showed that most students had substantial academic improvement. At Travis, 85% of the students tested increased their scores by at least one grade level on the CAT assessment. At Eastside, 73% of the students tested increased their scores by at least one grade level on the CAT assessment.

Table 2. Algebra I Students Performing At Grade Level on the Beginning-of-Year (BOY) and End-of-Year (EOY) California Achievement Test (CAT)

CAT subtest	Travis High School		Eastside Memorial High School	
	BOY % at grade level (*n* = 295)	EOY % at grade level (*n* = 274)	BOY % at grade level (*n* = 115)	EOY % at grade level (*n* = 106)
Computation	22%	92%	26%	92%
Concepts/Applications	28%	45%	33%	52%
Overall	23%	77%	23%	48%

Source. CAT assessment records provided by Austin Sylvan Learning Center, 2011–2012
Note. Overall score is calculated as the average of the two subtests.

Travis and Eastside Survey Results

Travis High School

At Travis, all teachers responded to the survey, and their responses were generally positive. They agreed that the tutoring curriculum supported and reinforced classroom instruction. Sixty-seven percent of them agreed that tutoring seemed to help students better understand Algebra I. In open-ended comments, some teachers expressed concern that tutoring reduced the amount of classroom instructional time. Others stated that HDT was a good strategy for effectively reducing class size.

> *"I had a very great experience with my tutor. She helped me learn Algebra I better than I had understood. It was nice working with a tutor. I understand things better than when in class."*
> *-Ninth-grade student*

At Travis, 295 students (68%) responded to the survey. They responded most favorably to the statements "My tutor helped me to become better at Algebra I" and "I feel like my tutor cares about how I do in Algebra I." A diverse range of responses were given to the question "How many tutors have you worked with this year during your algebra tutoring time?" which may suggest higher-than-anticipated tutor turnover rates or reassignment of students to different tutors. Most students (62%) reported that the amount of time they spent with their tutors was "just about right." A small

group of respondents (15%) indicated they did not know. In open-ended comments, many students cited the personal, daily interactions with their tutors as important to them.

At Travis, 31 (89%) tutors responded to the survey. Overall, tutors' responses to items related to training and support were positive. Most tutors (90% to 95%) responded positively to items regarding program implementation. Nearly all respondents (96%) agreed that they were well supported in their tutoring work. All agreed they were trained to use effective instructional strategies, and 97% agreed they received useful feedback. A smaller proportion (71%) of the tutors agreed they had regular communication with teachers regarding their students' progress.

> *"It may be worth considering working out a curriculum or program that follows the teachers' lesson plans so that the tutoring program is more supplemental and reinforces ideas from class, instead of having the kids go through two different curricula that overlap at different times."*
>
> *-High school tutor*

Tutors' open-ended comments were generally positive. Several tutors said that seeing their students' learning progress through the school year was a source of professional satisfaction and that the low tutor-student ratio helped them focus on the needs of each of their students. Some tutors remarked that they did not feel integrated into Travis's instructional team and would have liked to see better communication between tutors and teachers. Several also recommended better alignment between the classroom and tutoring curriculum.

> *"The high dosage tutoring seemed to be more effective when paralleled with the math curriculum - the reinforcement of current work was great!"*
>
> *- Algebra I teacher*

Eastside Memorial High School

At Eastside, teachers' survey responses were generally, though not uniformly, positive. All respondents agreed that having students participate in HDT was an effective strategy; all teachers agreed that the amount of time tutors spent with their students was "just about right." Ratings were divided for certain items, indicating that communications between teachers and tutors and involvement of tutors in professional development opportunities are areas that should be examined further. Additionally, the open-ended comments from teachers indicated a need for alignment between the classroom and tutoring curricula.

> *"My tutor has helped me through a lot. I learned how to do things that I didn't expect to be doing. I thank them for helping me teach me Algebra 1."*
>
> *-High school student*

Seventy-four percent of students at Eastside responded to the survey. They responded most favorably to the statements "My tutor helped me to become better at Algebra I" and "I feel like my tutor cares about how I do in Algebra I." When asked "How many tutors have you worked with this year during your algebra tutoring time?" the largest group of students chose *4 or more*, possibly indicating higher-than-anticipated tutor turnover rates or reassignment of students to different tutors. Most students (69%) reported that the amount of time they spent with their tutors was "just about right." A small group of respondents (15%) indicated they did not know. Again, many students praised their individual tutors and remarked that the tutoring experience had been helpful to them.

Twenty Eastside tutors also responded to the survey. Overall, tutors' responses to items related to training and support were positive. However, 35% of respondents disagreed that they had been trained to effectively manage students' behaviors. Most tutors responded positively to items regarding program implementation and agreed they were trained to use effective instructional strategies. Tutors agreed less often that they had regular communication with teachers regarding their students' progress. In their open-ended comments, many tutors made positive remarks about the program, especially about the satisfaction they enjoyed in seeing their students' improvements. Several tutors remarked on the difficulties of following separate curricula. Some said they did not feel connected to the school, and also voiced that they felt not all teachers were "onboard" with HDT. Others remarked that they had seen improvement in the students with whom they worked, both academically and socially.

Lanier High School Overview

Following two days of orientation and training, Catapult Systems tutors began working with students on November 1, using 35 tutors, a site supervisor, and a program manager to implement a program with a 2:1 student-tutor ratio. All tutors were required to possess at least a bachelor's degree.

Students were pulled from elective classes for 40 minutes each day and worked with tutors in the school cafeteria. The program also used a "push in" model, whereby tutors worked with students within their geometry classes. Catapult provided 112 days of service during the 2011–2012 school year, serving 477 students during the school year. On average, students participated in 96 sessions of tutoring support, according to the vendor's attendance records.

Lanier Assessment Results

Catapult staff used the SDMT-4 as a pre- and post-measure to assess students' needs and progress and to assist with shaping tutoring lessons for each student. The SDMT-4 provides norm-referenced data for grade levels from kindergarten to the first semester of college. The SDMT's intended use is as a tool to diagnosis students' strengths and weaknesses in common math domains. Students were tested in early November and again late in the spring semester. (The publisher's recommended fall testing window is between September 19 and October 14; however, due to certain funding and contractual arrangements, Catapult did not begin work at Lanier until early November.)

Of 477 students served, 325 (68%) were tested in both periods (Table 3). Catapult's objective was to increase students' Normal Curve Equivalent Scores (NCE) scores by 5.0 points or more. Among students tested in both periods, average improvement was 3.92 points. As a group, students gained 4.84 percentile ranks (PR).

Table 3. Normal Curve Equivalent (NCE) and Percentile Rank (PR) Changes From Beginning-of-Year (BOY) to End-of-Year (EOY) Stanford Diagnostic Mathematics Test (SDMT-4) Scores at Lanier High School

2011–2012 Lanier Algebra I enrollment	Percentage tested BOY and EOY	NCE mean BOY	NCE mean EOY	PR mean BOY	PR mean EOY
485	68%	36.96	40.88	32.83	37.67

Source. SDMT-4 results provided by Catapult Learning, 2011–2012

Lanier Survey Results

At Lanier, teachers' survey responses were generally, though not uniformly, positive toward the HDT program. All respondents agreed that having students participate in HDT was an effective strategy and that tutoring had helped students understand algebra better; all teachers agreed that the amount of time tutors spent with their students was "just about right." Ratings were divided for certain items regarding interactions between teachers and tutors, indicating that communications between teachers and tutors and involvement of tutors in professional development opportunities are areas that should be examined further.

"I like being with the tutors because I feel like they actually pay attention to me. When I'm in the classroom, the teacher also pays attention to me but not as much as the tutors. Because, it's only me and my partner and when I'm in the classroom there's like 20 kids and one teacher, not enough attention for everybody."

"Well tutoring has helped me. But sometimes in class they teach me one way of doing things & the tutor teaches me another way & that confuses me sometimes. I think it would be better if they teach me the same way or some 'short cuts' instead of teaching me 2 different ways of working out a problem." _

-Lanier High School student

At Lanier, 83% of students responded to the survey. They responded most favorably to the statements "My tutor encourages me to work hard" and "I feel like my tutor cares about how I do in Algebra I." Most students (72%) reported working with three or more tutors during the school year. Further inquiry into why students worked with multiple tutors during the year is recommended to determine whether this was an intended feature of the program. Most students (66%) reported that the amount of time they spent with their tutors was "just about right." A small group of respondents (14%) indicated they did not know. In open-ended comments, many students voiced positive opinions about their tutors and the effectiveness of small-group work. Many remarked that the tutors had helped them do better in their algebra classes. However, while some students remarked that different instructional approaches used in their tutoring sessions were helpful, others described confusion caused by differing approaches to instruction in the classroom and tutoring settings.

"I feel, in general, the school does not do enough to address concerns about the students following the school's own policies, whether that be skipping tutoring, late to tutoring, not participating while in tutoring or being disrespectful towards tutors"

"It would work better if all of the teachers supported the tutors, treated them with respect, and didn't talk badly about the tutors in their classroom. This just confuses the students and slows down progress."

–Lanier tutor

Thirty-five Lanier tutors responded to the survey. Overall, tutors' responses to items related to training and support were highly positive. However, one-quarter of respondents disagreed that they had been trained to effectively manage students' behaviors. Most tutors responded positively to items regarding program implementation and also agreed they were trained to use effective instructional strategies. Tutors agreed less often that they had regular communication with teachers regarding their students' progress or that students were grouped appropriately by need.

In open-ended comments, tutors identified the management of students' behaviors, tutor turnover, and lack of teacher support as challenges. Others remarked that they had seen improvement in the students with whom they worked, both academically and socially. Several tutors cited lack of support from classroom teachers as a difficulty.

Middle School Summary

Middle School Overview

Through a request for proposal (RFP) process, Burnet administrators selected Princeton Review to provide math tutoring services for 6th graders. Following four days of orientation, training, and shadowing, Princeton tutors began working with students in early November, using 33 tutors, a site supervisor, and a program manager to implement a program with a 2:1 student-tutor ratio. Every tutor was required to possess at least a bachelor's degree. Princeton tutors combined pull-out and push-in approaches. On average, students received 45 minutes of tutoring services per day every school day and worked with their tutors in the school cafeteria during school hours. Princeton provided 120 days of service during the 2011–2012 school year and served 383 students. Students received an average 19 sessions of tutoring support, according to the vendor's attendance records.

Martin Middle School used 15 district tutors to implement the school's HDT program for 6th-grade math. Tutors were required to have earned at least a bachelor's degree, and received 3 days of training and an additional day of campus orientation before beginning their work with students. Tutors worked with small groups of students (in a 2:1 or 3:1 ratio) during the school day to provide guided instruction that reinforced classroom lesson plans, adjusting instruction for each student as appropriate. Tutors assisted teachers in development of lessons, discussed students' progress with teachers, and assisted with other instructional needs.

Mendez implemented an internal, pull-out model similar to the model employed by Martin, employing 26 in-house tutors. Training and orientation were the same as at Martin. Mendez tutors had similar roles and responsibilities, as well.

Sixth-Grade Math Assessment Overview

The three HDT middle schools used AIMSweb to assess students' math needs and academic progress throughout the school year. AIMSweb is a benchmark and progress monitoring system used in the district's Response to Intervention (RTI) initiative and assesses students in 13 math domains. RTI is a multi-tiered instructional model based on individualized interventions for struggling students; at Tier 1, considered the key component of tiered instruction, all students receive instruction within the classroom core program at grade-level expectation. Those students not meeting Tier 1 expectations are referred to Tier 2 or Tier 3 services, whereby they receive increasingly intensive support so they can make progress toward meeting grade-level expectations.

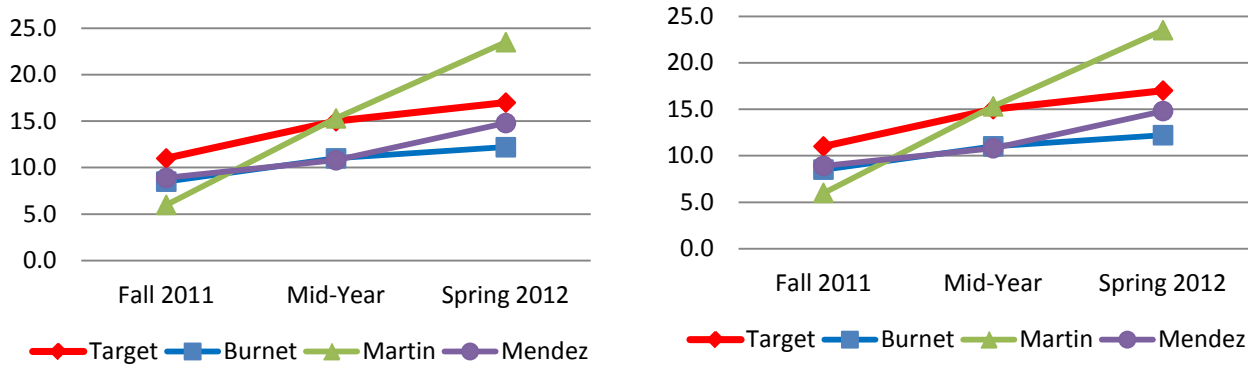
Students were tested in Concepts and Applications (M-CAP) and Computation (M-COMP) in the fall, winter, and spring. The M-CAP assesses general math problem-solving skills expected in Grades 2 through 8. The M-COMP assesses students' math computation skills. BOY, mid-year, and EOY target scores were based on national norms.

Assessment results on the M-CAP were mixed (Figure 1 and Table 4). At the beginning of the year, students from all schools scored below the fall Tier 1 criterion score (11.0). Martin experienced the

greatest change in percentage of students meeting criterion and in the average criterion score from the beginning to the end of the school year. Although Burnet had the lowest average EOY score, this school had a greater percentage of students meeting criterion at EOY than did the other schools. Students at Mendez experienced less change than did students at the other two schools.

A similar pattern was evident on the M-COMP (Figure 1 and Table 4). Average scores for all schools were below the fall criterion (16), and remained below the mid-year criterion (24). At the end of the year, Martin's average scores slightly exceeded EOY criterion (31), and Martin was the only school where the percentage of students meeting criterion at the end of the year increased. Average scores at Burnet and Mendez remained below criterion throughout the year, and Burnet and Mendez experienced a decrease in the percentage of students meeting criterion from the beginning to the middle of the year.

Figure 1. Changes in Campus M-CAP and M-COMP Average Scores, 2011-2012



Source. District AIMSweb reports, 2011–2012

Table 4. Sixth-Grade Math Students Meeting BOY and EOY Criteria

Campus	Concepts and Applications (M-CAP)					Computation (M-COMP)				
	BOY		EOY		Change	BOY		EOY		Change
	#	%	#	%		#	%	#	%	
Burnet	80	24%	133	40%	+16	153	46%	134	44%	-2
Martin	16	10%	60	38%	+28	60	37%	96	56%	+19
Mendez	83	30%	95	33%	+3	133	40%	110	31%	-9

Source. District AIMSweb system, 2011–2012

Middle School Survey Results

Burnet Middle School

All Burnet 6th-grade math teachers completed the survey, and their perceptions of the program were mixed. Most agreed the tutors were effectively trained, students and tutors were well matched, and students had positive experiences with their tutors. However, teachers also indicated they

- did not understand the roles and expectations of the HDT program,
- did not have effective guidance in using the tutoring program to support student instruction,
- did not think HDT was an effective instructional strategy, and
- thought students spent too much time in tutoring.

In their open-ended comments, most teachers were generally positive and stated that many students benefited from tutoring. However, several said that the program had been hastily implemented but showed promise.

At Burnet, 78% of students completed the tutoring survey. Students responded most favorably to the statements "My tutor helped me to become better at math" and "I feel like my tutor cares about how I do in math." A diverse range of responses was given to the question "How many tutors have you worked with this year during your math tutoring time?" which may suggest significant tutor turnover rates or reassignment of students to different tutors. Most students (69%) reported that the amount of time they spent with their tutors was "just about right." A small group of respondents (16%) indicated they did not know. Students responded least favorably to the statement that they liked math better because of their tutors.

Seventy-four percent of the Princeton Review tutors responded to the tutoring survey, and their responses were generally positive. Nearly all tutors agreed they had been trained effectively in instructional strategies, and they had received useful feedback from their supervisor. However, more than 40% of respondents disagreed that they had been trained effectively to manage students' behaviors. Nearly one-third of tutors reported their roles and responsibilities had not been explained clearly, and they had not been included in relevant training opportunities. In open-ended comments, tutors identified the management of students' behaviors, lack of teachers' buy in, and tutors' role clarity as obstacles to students' learning.

Martin Middle School

On the teacher survey, Martin 6th-grade teachers' responses were mixed for many items. Most teachers agreed that the student-to-tutor ratio and the amount of time students spent in tutoring were "just about right." Teachers' responses were evenly divided with respect to the effectiveness of tutoring instruction in supporting classroom instruction. However, 75% of teachers agreed that tutoring helped their students understand math. In open-ended comments, teachers identified the lack of program management and supervision of tutors as a problem at the school. One teacher suggested that tutors be given time each day to meet and plan with teachers.

Sixty-five percent of 6th-grade students responded to the survey. Overall, students' responses to questions about their tutoring experiences were positive. Students responded most favorably to the statements "My tutor helped me to become better at math" and "My tutor encourages me to work hard." A range of responses was given to the question "How many tutors have you worked with this year during your math tutoring time?" which may suggest significant tutor turnover rates or reassignment or rotation of students to different tutors. Most students (73%) reported that the amount of time they spent with their tutors was "just about right." A small group of respondents (16%) indicated they did not know. However, students responded least favorably to the statement that they liked math better because of their tutors.

In open-ended comments, many students cited positive relationships and personal interactions with their tutors as important factors in helping them succeed. Several students remarked that their tutors held them accountable for their work. One student explained, "I learn more because she shows me everything in Spanish, and I understand more in Spanish."

Seventy-three percent of the tutors at Martin responded to the survey. A majority of respondents agreed the instructional materials were appropriate for their students, were easy to understand and use, and met the needs of students. Respondents indicated they had not been trained effectively to manage students' behaviors or use effective instructional strategies, and they had not been included in relevant training opportunities at the school. They also disagreed that they were well supported or received helpful feedback from their supervisor. However, most tutors indicated their students were grouped appropriately according to academic need. In open-ended comments, tutors expressed frustration with students' behaviors and remarked they had not been made to feel a part of the campus team.

Mendez Middle School

On the teacher survey, Mendez 6th-grade teachers' responses were mixed for many items. Most teachers agreed that the student-to-tutor ratio and the amount of time that students spent in tutoring were "just about right." Teachers' responses were evenly divided with respect to the effectiveness of tutoring instruction in supporting classroom instruction. However, 75% of teachers agreed that tutoring helped their students understand math. In open-ended comments, teachers identified the lack of program management and supervision of tutors as a problem at the school. One teacher suggested that tutors be given time each day to meet and plan with teachers.

Elementary School Summary

Third-grade reading tutoring was implemented with two teams of in-house district tutors. Allan and Govalle shared six tutors, and Langford and Widen shared 22. Typically, tutors worked for three 45-minute blocks at one campus in the morning, then they moved to the second campus for three blocks in the afternoon. Tutoring training and orientation were initiated by staff from central office, including staff from the schools' office, curriculum and instruction office, and RTI office. In December, an instructional reading specialist was hired to manage tutoring work across all four sites.

Third-Grade Reading Assessment Results

DRA results were mixed among the HDT schools (Table 5). Overall, the same percentage of tested students scored at or above grade level at both the beginning and the end of the year. The greatest increase in the percentage of students meeting grade-level expectation in reading at the end of the year occurred at Govalle; however only 8% of participants were tested at Govalle at the end of the year.

Table 5: Summary of Diagnostic Reading Assessment (DRA) Results for Third-Grade Reading, 2011–2012

Campus	Grade 3 at beginning of year			Grade 3 at end of year			
	Fall 2011 enrollment	% tested	% on grade level	Spring 2012 enrollment	% tested	% on grade level	Change
Allan	50	92%	30%	43	0%	0%	NA
Govalle	64	86%	51%	48	8%	75%	+24
Langford	142	87%	39%	127	96%	34%	-5
Widen	134	94%	28%	124	23%	36%	-8
TOTAL	**390**	**90%**	**36%**	**342**	**45%**	**36%**	**0**

Source. District DRA results (PRADRAEDL), 2011–2012

DRA results should be considered with caution because the EOY scores may not represent all HDT participants in the 3rd grade. Because each administration of the DRA has a prescribed testing window,

students who were not in attendance at the time of the fall and/or spring administrations may not have been tested or scores may not have been recorded in the district's student data system. Of 390 students who were tested in the fall semester, only 132 had corresponding EOY assessment scores. Furthermore, most of the students tested at the end of the year attended Langford.

Elementary Survey Results

Thirteen 3rd-grade teachers and reading specialists responded to the survey. Although all agreed that students had positive tutoring experiences, ratings were divided for many other items. Seventy-seven percent of teachers agreed that the tutoring ratios were "just about right" and that students and tutors had been well matched. However, teachers' ratings were evenly divided with respect to whether HDT was an effective support for classroom instruction and whether tutors' training, roles, and assignments were effective.

Teachers' open-ended comments reflected the mixed results for the previously discussed survey items. Several teachers remarked on the lack of sufficient tutor training, which resulted in the need for additional support from teachers. One teacher observed that HDT was beneficial to students, but suggested it would be more effective at lower grade levels. Several comments touched on the lack of coordination and interaction between teachers and tutors and the need to include tutors more fully in instructional planning.

Across the four HDT elementary schools, 268 students completed surveys. When asked to rate aspects of their experience, nearly all students (90% or more) responded positively. Nearly all students (99%) agreed that their tutors had helped them become better readers, and 97% of students agreed that their tutors cared how they did in reading. Ninety-seven percent of students agreed that they tried their hardest when working with their tutors, and that they worked well with their tutors. Sixty-eight percent of students agreed that the amount of time spent with their tutors was "just about right."

Students' open-ended comments generally reflected positive tutoring experiences. Many students cited personal interactions with their tutors as helpful in improving their reading. Several students suggested lengthening their tutoring sessions. A few students also mentioned that their tutors helped challenge them to read and understand more difficult material.

Seventy-one percent of elementary-level tutors completed the survey. Among respondents, 60% agreed that they had been trained effectively in instructional strategies and 55% agreed that they had been trained effectively to manage students' behaviors. Eighty-five percent agreed that they had received useful feedback from their supervisors. Nearly all tutors agreed that the instructional materials were appropriate for and met the needs of their students and were easy to understand and use. However, slightly more than half (52%) of the tutors disagreed that their roles and responsibilities had been explained clearly to them. Most tutors reported favorable student outcomes, and 90% agreed that the HDT program had helped students make academic progress and developed student's academic confidence.

In open-ended comments, several tutors stated that they enjoyed their work and felt the program had good potential to raise students' reading levels. However, some stated the work was initially poorly organized and needed stronger management. One tutor observed that, although grouping of students by ability level had been a good initial strategy, as students progressed at different rates, no re-grouping had taken place.

PRINCIPAL FOCUS GROUP SUMMARY

In March, principals and other staff from the 10 HDT campuses were invited to participate in a focus group to discuss the first-year progress of the program. All campuses were represented in the conversation. The following information emerged from this conversation with principals and other school staff supporting HDT at their respective schools.

General Observations

- Many participants reported they needed dedicated leadership support at the district level to effectively implement the HDT tutoring program. This dedicated support would help them to hire staff, manage the program, and make consistent assessment decisions.
- Broad consensus emerged from the discussion that school staff, regardless of whether using an in-house or externally supported model, would prefer to have greater latitude in allocating HDT resources. For instance, staff from some elementary schools expressed a wish to redirect tutoring efforts to students in lower grade levels (kindergarten through 2nd grade), to provide tutoring to students according to levels of need, or to offer tutoring in other subject areas.
- Several principals expressed concern over a lack of communication between tutors and teachers, and over teachers' resistance to "surrendering" their students to uncertified teachers while shouldering accountability for students' performance.
- Administrators reported that directives regarding monitoring of students' progress were not made clear. School staff reported using a variety of assessments to monitor students' progress.
- Overall, school staff valued the HDT tutoring initiative and planned on continued development and improvement of the program.
- School staff believed the tutoring program provided students with mentorship opportunities and relationships with a caring adult, in addition to academic support needed by students.

> *"The HDT Program is an excellent program that had an enormous amount of changes in management and management styles. This means that while… we had instructional tools… to roll out the program, we did not have focused training nor focused supervision, which caused our jobs as HDTs to be exceptionally frustrating and stressful. I would, however, agree that in the long run, the program is very successful in assisting students [to] reach and surpass their reading goals; because of this I would highly recommend that other schools be considered for the implementation of this extraordinary program!" -Tutor*

In-House District Tutor Model

- School staff reported delays in hiring and training tutors due to campus and central office administrative changes. An in-house facilitator was hired midyear to assist with tutor hiring, training, deployment, and monitoring for elementary schools. AISD contracted at midyear with ESC XIII to provide similar services for Martin and Mendez. However, the ESC staffer assigned to AISD left the position within a few weeks and was not replaced.
- School staff were concerned that the district tutor position did not offer enough salary compensation or benefits to attract and retain highly qualified tutors.
- Staff from schools providing in-house tutoring programs expressed frustration at the administrative time and effort required to implement the in-house model. They reported problems with tutors' attendance, lack of buy in, and initiative, resulting in the need for ongoing training, daily scrambling to cover tutoring absences, and deleterious effects on student-tutor relationships.

External Tutor Model

- Staff from schools with externally supported models reported that they were highly satisfied with the services provided and believed their programs were running smoothly and effectively. Staff at those schools reported that having a turnkey program alleviated the amount of time the principal and other school staff would spend on implementation, staffing, and training.
- Staff from some schools identified alignment issues between classroom curriculum, and curriculum and materials used by external HDT providers.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on discussions with staff and on survey results, the HDT initiative appears popular with many teachers and campus administrators, as well as with students. Survey responses and comments from students attest to the importance of personalized instruction in supporting learning in the classroom. Many students cited the positive influences of and relationships with their tutors.

The effects of the program in raising academic achievement are less clear. With the advent of the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) in 2011–2012, valid district benchmark tests were unavailable, rendering identification of appropriate assessments somewhat difficult. None of the assessments used at the HDT campuses are aligned directly with the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) standards or to state assessments (TAKS/STAAR). The availability of pre- and posttest data varied considerably across the four elementary campuses. Campus staff may not have had clear directives about which assessments were to be employed, which students were to be tested, and when or whether to administer the assessments, or may have failed to enter data into the district's assessment data system.

Stakeholders identified several areas for improving the program, including:

- **Identify measurable outcomes for the HDT program**: A generally understood, but unarticulated, goal of the HDT program is to improve students' achievement in particular subject areas and grade levels. Goals and targets should be clearly defined for each grade level and content area at each campus.

- **Improve program management**: Teachers, tutors, and campus administrators identified deficiencies in program management as a cause for concern, particularly in the HDT elementary schools. Some principals and campus staff cited training and management of tutors as an additional administrative burden. In addition, measures should be taken to ensure that all students are assessed according to schedule, and that data are accessible through the district's assessment system.
- **Create flexibility to address campus tutoring needs**: Several principals asserted that they would like to have greater flexibility with their schools' tutoring programs, including the ability to assign tutors to students in lower grades, and to provide more intensive work for high-needs students.
- **Support teacher-tutor interaction**: Both teachers and tutors cited better opportunities for interaction and planning as an area of need. Respondents in both groups at some schools suggested reviewing the tutoring curriculum to ensure alignment with classroom instruction. Survey comments from both groups suggest that roles, responsibilities, and authority of tutors at some schools need further clarification.
- **Manage students' behaviors**: Tutors identified students' behaviors as one of the greatest challenges to their work. Program administrators and principals should consider ways to include tutoring staff in future training sessions with campus child study teams.
- **Sustain the program**: Currently, the HDT program is supported through a mix of local and grant funds. Tutoring at Lanier, Travis, Burnet, and Martin is supported by TTIPS grants, which will expire in 2013 at Travis and Burnet, and in 2014 at Lanier and Martin. If a decision is reached to continue the HDT program, sources of replacement funding need to be explored and identified before the end of those funding periods.