Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention (TNGTI) Grant Program: January 2011 Evaluation Report

Submitted to: Texas Education Agency
January 2011

LEARNING POINT Associates®
An Affiliate of American Institutes for Research

CREDITS

Learning Point Associates, an affiliate of American Institutes for Research

20 North Wacker Drive, Suite 1231
Chicago, IL 60606-2901
800-356-2735 • 312-288-7600
www.learningpt.org

Gibson Consulting Group, Inc.

1221 South MOPAC Expressway, Suite 355
Austin, TX 78746
512-328-0884
www.gibsonconsult.com

Contributing Authors

Learning Point Associates, an affiliate of American Institutes for Research
Lisa Hoogstra, Ph.D.
Brenna O'Brien, Ph.D.
Megan Brown
Kelly Hallberg
Andrew Swanlund

Gibson Consulting Group, Inc.
Amie Rapaport, Ph.D.
Joseph Shields

Submitted to

Texas Education Agency
1701 North Congress Avenue
Austin, Texas 78701-1494
Phone: 512-463-9734

This report is available online at the Texas Education Agency's website:
http://www.tea.state.tx.us/index2.aspx?id=2898&menu_id=949

Table of Contents

Appendixes

Table of Figures

Page

Executive Summary

The Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention (TNGTI) grant program is a statewide initiative designed to reach ninth graders identified as at risk for dropping out of school and prepare them for academic and behavioral success in high school. TNGTI grants provide funding for districts to implement three types of support for identified students: (1) a summer transition program to introduce incoming ninth graders to high school culture and to develop their academic, social, and study skills; (2) an early warning data system to monitor program participants throughout the school year; and (3) fall and spring interventions to provide additional support to struggling students identified through the early warning data system. In 2009–10, 23 districts and 63 campuses participated in the program, beginning with a summer transition program in summer 2009.

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) contracted with Learning Point Associates, an affiliate of American Institutes for Research (AIR), and its partner, Gibson Consulting Group, Inc., to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the initial year of the TNGTI grant program. The evaluation began in June 2009. The objectives of the evaluation were to:

1. Describe and evaluate the implementation of program strategies.
2. Evaluate the impact of the program on student outcomes.
3. Evaluate the impact of the program on teacher and staff effectiveness.
4. Determine the cost effectiveness and sustainability of the program.

The focus of the January 2011 report is to describe and evaluate the implementation of the three major components of the TNGTI program throughout the course of the 2009–10 school year. Descriptive information also is provided on the perceived impact of the program on students and on teachers and staff. An analysis of impact of the program on student outcomes, specifically scores on the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS), also was conducted, and a summary of results is included in this report. Finally, the cost effectiveness and financial sustainability of the TNGTI program at participating campuses are discussed.

Data and Methods

This report is based on data collected from participating districts and campuses during the fall 2009 and spring 2010 semesters. The evaluation relies on a range of quantitative, qualitative, and extant data triangulated to create a full picture of the planning and implementation of the TNGTI program. Findings are based on information from six main data sources: a January 2010 student data collection; January and April 2010 campus progress reports; interviews with district and program staff conducted in February and March 2010; and a spring staff survey administered in March 2010.[1] Additional data on participating campuses were obtained from the TNGTI grant applications, district and campus administrative data, and from TEA.

[1] Findings from a fall 2009 campus progress report and student data collection and from summer 2009 interviews and observations are included in the *Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention (TNGTI) Grant Program: Interim Evaluation Report* (Hoogstra et al., 2010).

A descriptive analysis was conducted on the quantitative data collected from the campus progress reports, staff surveys, and other available data to inform the evaluation of program implementation. The quotes and examples provided are based on the qualitative data collected from site visits conducted at a sample of nine participating campuses. Descriptions of impact analyses and financial analyses are provided in separate chapters.

Overall Findings

The overall findings focus on three topics: implementation of the TNGTI program components (summer transition program, early warning data system, and intervention services), the perceived and actual impact of the program on students and teachers, and the financial analysis of the program. Summaries of each topic area are presented below, along with highlighted findings and recommendations for improvement based on feedback from participating campuses.

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION	
SUMMARY: ***Implementation of Early Warning Data System.*** Per program requirements, most campuses were using a system to track the progress of TNGTI students (85%). Of the campuses that reported an early warning data system was in place, the majority indicated that the system had been installed, data had been populated, and that the system currently was being used to identify struggling students. Nine campuses reported that they did not have an early warning data system in place or that the existing early warning data system currently was not being used. ***Changes to Early Warning Data System.*** The most frequent differences reported by campuses between this year and last year were that more data were being collected to monitor students, there was one central location for all student data, and the three components of academics, attendance, and behavior were being looked at together. The majority of campuses (88%) indicated that the current system was more effective or much more effective in identifying students compared to last year. ***Early Warning Data System Barriers.*** More than two thirds of campuses identified challenges to implementing the early warning data system (72%). The reported barriers included the amount of time it took to enter and update student data, difficulty in understanding the system, the incompatibility of the early warning data system with current school systems, and technical problems.	**FINDINGS:** ***The early warning data system improved the student monitoring processes at most TNGTI campuses.*** More than three fourths of campuses reported that implementing an early warning data system was more effective in identifying struggling students compared to the processes from the previous school year. The early warning data system was timelier in identifying struggling students and identified at least some students who may not have been identified otherwise. ***Behavior and attendance interventions were not needed as much as expected.*** The majority of program staff indicated there were fewer behavior and attendance interventions needed for TNGTI students than expected. Program staff were split on the need for academic interventions; half indicated that more services

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION, CONTINUED

Implementation of Interventions for TNGTI Students. Two thirds of program staff indicated that the interventions provided at the campus were appropriate for struggling students and that students in need of interventions were receiving them. Students identified for the TNGTI program most often received academic interventions (67%), followed by attendance interventions (41%) and behavior interventions (36%) during the fall 2009 semester.

Differences in Interventions for TNGTI Students. Close to 77% of campuses indicated there were different interventions for TNGTI students compared to those available for students who did not participate in the program. Campuses most often reported that the frequency or intensity of the interventions was different for TNGTI students, or that the timing of the intervention services was different for this group of students. When asked to identify any additional supports provided to the TNGTI students that were not broadly available to other ninth-grade students, campuses noted that TNGTI students were usually monitored more closely than other students using the early warning data system or other means.

Barriers to Intervention Services. Just under half of campuses identified challenges to providing intervention services to TNGTI students. The most frequently reported barrier was finding the time to provide extra services and activities to this group of struggling students. Other respondents stated that they faced challenges with low student participation in the offered activities and lack of parent support for intervention activities. were needed and half indicated that fewer services were needed than expected for TNGTI students.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Make the early warning data system compatible with other school data programs. Campus staff reported that the early warning data system's lack of compatibility with other data programs resulted in a lot of time being spent on data entry. If the system was more compatible with other data systems, program staff could synchronize the systems and enter relevant data faster and more efficiently.

Increase collaboration with feeder middle schools. In planning for implementation for the next year, the majority of program staff reported that there should be more collaboration with middle schools in identifying and recruiting students for program participation.

IMPACT OF TNGTI PROGRAM

SUMMARY:

The majority of program staff indicated that the TNGTI program components had at least a moderate impact on participating students. Program staff reported that TNGTI students began the 2009–10 school year with increased confidence (93%), received fewer office referrals than expected (82%), and exceeded their expectations in academic performance (82%). Program staff also reported that TNGTI students are interacting well with other students (82%), are likely to stay in school rather than dropping out (81%), are engaged in school (80%), and are regularly attending school (80%). Teachers who had TNGTI students in class indicated that participating students had higher attendance rates than other ninth-grade students (78%) and were more likely to ask questions in class than other students (72%). Overall, program staff believed that there was a positive impact on the lives of students who participated in the TNGTI program.

The majority of program staff reported the TNGTI program had a positive impact on teachers. Over two thirds of teachers involved in the TNGTI program felt they had improved their own teaching abilities, had more positive energy at the start of the school year, and that the TNGTI program provided opportunities to collaborate with other teachers. The majority of respondents also indicated the program improved their work with students; teachers were able to meet incoming ninth-grade students, develop positive relationships with them, and better evaluate their academic background and skills.

TNGTI had a positive and significant impact on the TAKS scores of participating students. Ninth-grade students who participated in the TNGTI summer program scored **14.3 points higher on the TAKS-Reading** and **10.8 points higher on the TAKS-Math** compared to students who did not participate. Both effects were **significant at the 0.05 level**, meaning that it is highly unlikely that this difference is a result of chance.

TNGTI did not have a significant effect on the percentage of participating students who met or exceeded TAKS standards on the TAKS-Math or TAKS-Reading.

FINDINGS:

TNGTI program benefits students. Program staff reported that the summer transition program was an effective intervention offered to incoming students who had struggled in eighth grade. The majority of campuses reported the TNGTI grant allowed for the schools to implement transition and intervention activities that had not previously been offered or to supplement some activities.

TNGTI had a positive and significant impact on students' TAKS-Reading performance. A significant difference was found between the TAKS-Reading scores of students who participated in the TNGTI program and those who had not participated ($p < .05$).

TNGTI had a positive and significant impact on students' TAKS-Math performance. A significant difference was found between the TAKS-Math scores of students who participated in the TNGTI program and those who had not participated ($p < .05$).

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Strengthen program interventions and supports for students who are struggling academically so that they are better prepared to succeed in high school and are college and career ready.

FINANCIAL ANALYSIS OF TNGTI PROGRAM

SUMMARY:

Grant Budgets. Most campuses expended grant money closely in line with their proposed budget. Grantees tended to spend the largest proportion of grant money on payroll/staffing, followed by supplies and maintenance. On average, grantees spent approximately half of their grant budgets on the summer transition program and half of their budgets on student interventions. It was not common for schools to spend large proportions of their budgets on the early warning data system.

Supplemental Funding. Of school districts that reported supplementing the TNGTI grant program with other funds, 75% indicated they supported the TNGTI program with federal funds, 67% reported use of other state funds, 21% reported use of local funds, and 13% reported use of private or other funds. Federal funding for Title I campuses was most commonly used by TNGTI grantee campuses to support the program, followed by American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds.

Per-Pupil Costs. Based on data reported on summer program student attendance and program expenditures, per-student costs varied substantially across campuses. These costs ranged from $25 to $11,680 with a median of $781 per student. The majority of grantees had calculated per-student costs of $1,000 or less based on the number of students attending the summer program (60%).

Cost Effectiveness. An analysis of the relationship between program costs and program impact on student TAKS scores revealed that programs that spent a greater portion of their TNGTI funds on the summer transition program than on other aspects of the intervention had the largest impact on student TAKS performance.

FINDINGS:

Campus TNGTI budgets varied significantly across participating districts. Per-pupil costs ranged from $25 to $11,680 with a median of $781 per student.

Campuses spent most of their funds on the summer programs and intervention services. Grantees typically spent about half of their grant budgets on their summer transition program. The other half mostly covered intervention services, with some leftover funds for the early warning data system.

Programs that spent a greater portion of their TNGTI funds on their summer programs had the largest impact on student TAKS performance.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Provide additional funding and support. Encourage campuses to offer strong summer transition programs, supported by the TNGTI grant and available funds from other federal, state, local, and private sources.

Next Steps

Additional data were collected during the summer and fall of 2010 at eight campuses that chose to continue their participation in the TNGTI program for a second year. Case studies of the eight campuses selected for site visits in July–October 2010 were completed based on interviews, observations, focus groups, and extant data collection. The case studies will be included in a supplementary chapter to this report that will be delivered to TEA in January 2011.

I. Introduction

This January 2011 report on the evaluation of the Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention (TNGTI) grant program provides a description of implementation strategies employed by districts and campuses participating in the program during the first full year of TNGTI, the 2009–10 school year. [2] Analyses also were conducted to evaluate the program impact on two specific student outcomes: 2010 TAKS scores and dropout rates of ninth-grade students. Findings for this report are based primarily on data collected in spring 2010 from the following sources: (1) a midyear campus progress report completed by TNGTI campuses; (2) an end-of-year campus progress report completed by TNGTI campuses; (3) data on students participating in the program provided by participating districts and campuses; (4) interviews with district and campus program staff at a sample of nine sites; and (5) a survey completed by program staff at all sites. Administrative data for students participating in the program and data from TNGTI grant applications also were used to provide additional information about campus programs and the impact on student participants. Preliminary findings based on data collected in summer and fall 2009 were reported in an earlier interim report (Hoogstra et al., 2010).

An overview of the legislation authorizing the grant program is first presented, followed by a review of the literature on ninth-grade dropout and retention and a description of the TNGTI grant program. Information also is presented about the school districts participating in the 2009–10 grant year.

Legislative Background and History

The TNGTI grant program is funded through the General Appropriations Act, Article III, Rider 53(b) (80th Texas Legislature, 2007), which allocated $25 million per year for fiscal years 2008 and 2009 for programs targeting students at risk of dropping out of high school, and through General Appropriations Act, Article III, Rider 51(c) (81st Texas Legislature, 2009), which provided funding for fiscal year 2010. The program is supported by the High School Completion and Success Initiative Council (Council), which was established in 2007 with the passage of House Bill 2237 (HB 2237, 80th Texas Legislature, 2007). HB 2237 charged the Council with developing a strategic plan "to improve effectiveness, coordination, and alignment of high school completion and college and workforce readiness efforts" (HB 2237 §39.352(a) and §39.357(a)).

Adopted in March 2008, the Council's strategic plan was designed to: (1) reduce high school dropout rates; (2) improve postsecondary success; and (3) close achievement gaps among students from different racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic groups. Objectives for achieving these goals include support for interventions that: "provide structured and purposeful extracurricular, after school, summer, and related programs aimed at increasing student engagement with, and participation in, the school community for students at risk for dropping out"; "provide students with appropriate academic and social support to address issues related to the risk of dropping out"; and "provide opportunities to

[2] TNGTI is being evaluated per Rider 69, 81st Texas Legislature, General Appropriations Act, Article III. A final evaluation report for this program is due to the Texas Legislature in January 2013.

increase student and parental awareness of rigorous high school and college standards and of college preparation programs and activities" (Texas Education Agency, 2008, pp. 15–17). The plan places a priority on serving economically disadvantaged students and students with academic deficiencies who are at risk of dropping out of high school. The TNGTI program is one of several programs implemented under the Council's strategic plan.

As background for the development of this grant, Texas Education Agency (TEA) reported a four-year graduation rate of 79.1% for students in the class of 2008 (Texas Education Agency, 2009b). Research has shown that in the majority of states, including Texas, students are more likely to drop out of school in ninth grade than in later grades (EPE Research Center, 2006; Kennelly & Monrad, 2007). The TNGTI program is an ambitious effort to improve high school graduation rates and the college and workforce readiness of high school graduates in the state, with a particular focus on ninth-grade retention.

Overview of the Literature on Ninth-Grade Retention and Dropout

Recent research on dropout prevention indicates that the ninth grade is considered the "make or break year" for students to be on track to graduate (Allensworth & Easton, 2007; Herlihy, 2007; Kennelly & Monrad, 2007). More students fail ninth grade than any other grade in high school, and a disproportionate number of students who are held back in ninth grade subsequently drop out (Herlihy, 2007). The transition into a larger school system with a different structure, new teachers and peers, and more challenging coursework often is associated with poor grades in core subjects, declines in student achievement, failure to be promoted to the next grade, student disengagement in the classroom, behavioral problems, and declines in student motivation (Alspaugh, 1998; Herlihy, 2007; Isakson & Jarvis, 1999; Kennelly & Monrad, 2007).

In addition to the academic demands of high school, students report facing a variety of new nonacademic challenges upon their arrival in high school. Researchers Barber and Olsen (2004) found that ninth graders perceive less support and monitoring from teachers and principals and generally like school less than they did in middle school. In another study, middle school students identified academic ability as especially important to their success in secondary school; however, after they entered high school, students identified additional components essential to success in school, including time management, ability to stay on task, social skills, and behavior (Zeedyk et al., 2003). In this same study, students reported that social concerns, such as bullying and establishing high school peer relationships, often overshadowed concerns about academics. Similarly, Akos and Galassi (2004) found that students' greatest concerns about starting high school revolved around the amount of homework, class difficulty, and organizational issues (e.g., getting lost).

Allensworth and Easton's (2007) study, *What Matters for Staying On-Track and Graduating in Chicago Public High Schools,* found that ninth-grade course performance is more predictive of high school graduation rates than student background characteristics or prior achievement. The most important predictor of passing the ninth-grade year was students' experiences and behaviors in high school, even

more so than demographic characteristics or eighth-grade test scores.[3] These findings reveal just how critical school-level factors are in determining who does and does not stay in school. Although more research is needed to identify which specific dropout-prevention strategies and interventions make a positive difference, programs that address individual student needs and that work in tandem with schoolwide interventions to meet grade-level needs hold promise as an effective combination for combating the nation's dropout problem. In addition, a few studies show that school districts with explicit middle school to high school transition programs have seen a lower dropout rate than districts without such programs (Morgan & Hertzog, 2001; Reents, 2002; Smith, 1997).

Some common characteristics of successful transition programs include the following:

- Collaboration between eighth- and ninth-grade buildings/personnel (Mizelle, 1999).
- Opportunities for students to reflect on—and to experience—the complexities and nuances of the distinctive features of high school (Mizelle & Irvin, 2000).
- Integration of a rigorous and coherent core of courses that are challenging for students and create a culture of high expectations (Cooney & Bottoms, n.d.).
- A supportive climate and a sense of community to address issues of disconnection and isolation by providing students and families with information (Mizelle & Irvin, 2000).

Perhaps the most important element of successful dropout prevention efforts is the identification of students at highest risk for dropping out, who can then be targeted with the appropriate resources to keep them in school. An early warning system that uses indicators based on readily accessible data can predict, during students' first year in high school, whether the students are on the right path toward eventual graduation (Heppen & Bowles Therriault, 2008).

Successful early warning systems identify, track, and analyze basic data on which students are showing signs of dropping out. Some research-based recommendations for an early warning system for ninth-grade students include the following:

- Track ninth-grade students' attendance, and pay particular attention to those who miss 10 days or more of school in the first 30 days (Allensworth & Easton, 2007; Neild & Balfanz, 2006).
- Monitor first-quarter freshman grades, paying particular attention to failures in core academic subjects, so that schools can offer immediate academic supports (Allensworth & Easton, 2005).
- Monitor end-of-year grades, which provide further information about failure rates and reveal grade point averages. In general, grades tend to be a more accurate predictor of dropout than test scores (Allensworth & Easton, 2007).

[3] Allenworth and Easton (2007) found that students' background characteristics explained only 7% of the variance in freshman course failures, and eighth-grade test scores explained an additional 5% of the variance. In contrast, absences and study behaviors explained 61% of the variance in course failures beyond test scores and demographic characteristics. Freshman course performance in turn explained 39% of the variance in high school graduation rates, while all other factors—including eighth-grade test scores and student demographic characteristics—explained only 12% of the variance in graduation rates. The authors observe that, "Once we know how students performed in their classes in their freshman year, additional information about their backgrounds does little to improve our prediction of whether they will graduate" (p. 8).

- Track students who have failed too many core subjects or missed too many days of school to be promoted to 10th grade. This provides perhaps the most critical information about which students should receive specialized attention and support (Alexander, Entwistle, & Horsey, 1997; Fernandez & Velez, 1989).

Schools interested in using data for optimal impact need an electronic data system that includes individual student-level data that can track students over time and also allow risk factors to be assessed (Jerald, 2006). In addition, regularly updated data must be shared frequently with dropout-prevention team members, including teachers, who have been trained in the use of these data.

After students at risk for retention or dropout are identified, it is critical to match students appropriately with targeted interventions to address the challenges associated with the transition to high school and to promote academic recovery by failing students (Finkelstein & Fong, 2008; Kennelly & Monrad, 2007; Roderick & Camburn, 1999). School supports also are important in helping students at risk for retention. Promising programs have included the following types of social support: providing an orientation to facilities, providing students and families with information, promoting parental involvement, creating a supportive environment and ensuring knowledge of safety and disciplinary policies, and providing mentoring to middle school students by secondary school students (Falbo, Lein, & Amador, 2001; MacIver, 1990; Mizelle, 1999; Zeedyk et al., 2003). Although research on the effectiveness of such programs is sparse and more longitudinal studies are needed, Dedmond, Brown, and LaFauci (2006) suggest that programs focus on specific interventions that relate directly to the issues adolescents have regarding self-identity, motivation, and competence.

The TNGTI Grant Program

The TNGTI grant program incorporates several of the characteristics of successful ninth-grade transition and intervention programs. The purpose of the program, as noted in the program guidelines, "is to support eligible campuses in the development and implementation of effective, research-based summer transition and intervention programs aimed at increasing the successful transition of middle school students to the high school environment" (Texas Education Agency, 2009a, p. 3). The program targets ninth graders at risk for dropping out of school.

Program goals include the following:

- Increasing the number of ninth-grade students promoted to the 10th grade on time.
- Increasing coordination between high schools and middle schools in planning for successful high school transitions and the alignment of efforts to reduce ninth-grade failure or dropout.
- Increasing student readiness during the summer for participation in high school coursework in mathematics, science, and English language arts.
- Increasing student and parent awareness of rigorous high school standards, available programs and activities, and high school structures, policies, and procedures.
- Increasing parent involvement in planning for the transition to high school.
- Increasing student planning and preparation for postsecondary study and career opportunities.

- Reducing or removing learning, school, or social barriers that may decrease chances of student academic success.
- Increasing student attachment to, and engagement with, the high school environment, staff, and fellow students in order to reduce student alienation, withdrawal, and dropping out.
- Reducing the number of ninth-grade students dropping out of school or being retained by monitoring their progress with a ninth-grade early warning data system.
- Providing effective fall and spring interventions to ninth-grade students to reduce the number of students who drop out of school or are retained (Texas Education Agency, 2009a, pp. 3–4).

Eligibility

In 2009, school districts and open-enrollment charter schools were eligible to apply for the TNGTI grant if they met all of the following criteria: (1) served 75% or more economically disadvantaged students in each of the 2006–07, 2007–08, and 2008–09 school years, (2) had a population of at least 25 eighth graders in 2007–08, and (3) had a ninth-grade retention rate for 2007–08 that placed them in the highest three school districts or open-enrollment charter schools within a comparable size category. A total of 27 districts or open-enrollment charter schools met these criteria and were eligible for grants ranging from $37,472 to $425,000 depending on district or charter school size.

Districts are responsible for deciding which schools participate in the program and how funding is allocated across campuses; however, campuses selected for participation must have served at least 50% at-risk students in the 2007–2008 school year (Texas Education Code §29.081(d), 2007). Campus programs are required to serve a minimum number of students, ranging from 10 to 100 students per campus depending on the size of the district or charter school.

Program Components

All grantees are required to implement the following program components: a summer transition program, an early warning data system to identify student program participants at risk of retention or dropout, and fall and spring interventions for students identified through the early warning data system. Requirements for each of these components are described below.

Summer Transition Programs. Campuses funded through the TNGTI grant program were required to develop a summer transition program for entering ninth graders who have been identified as at risk for dropping out of school. Grantees could use any of the following indicators specified in the Texas Education Code (TEC) §29.081(d) to identify at-risk students: (1) low attendance in middle school; (2) course failures, particularly in core subject areas; (3) failing to meet standard scores on the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS); (4) behavior or disciplinary problems; or (5) other risk factors identified by local program staff.

According to the program guidelines, summer transition programs were required to:[4]

- Meet for at least 10 consecutive business days.
- Include a minimum of two hours of program time per day.
- Include research-based components and strategies that have been identified as effective in the creation of a summer transition program.
- Offer activities that are designed to:
  - Reinforce or accelerate core academic knowledge and skills.
  - Develop academic and social strategies to increase resilience and persistence at the high school level.
  - Provide information and training for both students and parents on the transition to high school and planning for success in high school and beyond.

Program guidelines also specify that summer transition programs must be developed by a collaborative team of high school and middle school staff that includes, but is not limited to, teachers, administrators, and counselors.

Ninth-Grade Early Warning Data Systems. Districts or open-enrollment charter schools funded by the TNGTI grant program are required to monitor student participants' progress during the ninth-grade year using a computer-based system of early warning indicators. Students who are identified as being at risk for retention or dropout based on these indicators are to receive intervention services.

Grantees are responsible for selecting a minimum of three indicators and defining a minimum of two measures for each indicator. Possible indicators and measures in the program guidelines include the following:

- Attendance
  - Absent two days or more during the first 20 days of high school.
  - Absent more than 20% of the days enrolled in high school during the fall semester.
- Behavior
  - Student exhibits poor classroom conduct in two or more classes.
  - Student receives two or more referrals to the school disciplinarian in a given month.
  - Student receives one or more suspensions.
- Course Failure/Grades
  - Student fails three or more tests in core subject areas.
  - Student fails to receive course credit in one or more courses.

[4] In July 2009, an amendment was introduced by TEA to allow for flexibility in some of the program requirements. If a campus could document a good-faith attempt to recruit the minimum number of students for its summer transition program but was unable to serve that number, the grantee could offer transition activities in the fall for those targeted students who were unable to attend the summer transition program. If the campus was unable to meet the minimum time requirement during the summer transition program for the targeted students, planned supplemental activities were required during the first week of school for these students.

TEA provided grantees with access to the Early Warning System Tool developed by the National High School Center (NHSC) and modified by the Texas Comprehensive Center (TXCC) at the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL).[5] The indicators used in the Early Warning System Tool included attendance, academic performance based on grade point average, and frequency of behavioral referrals.[6] Grantees could use this tool as their ninth-grade early warning data system or use it as a guide in developing their own data system. The most recent version of the Early Warning System Tool software can be downloaded from the TXCC website at http://txcc.sedl.org/orc/ews.

Staff from TEA, NHSC, and TXCC conducted three regional training sessions in summer 2009 to train staff from grantee districts on how to access the tool, input and manipulate data, and develop effective intervention strategies. Two follow-up webinars have been conducted to provide continuing technical assistance. TXCC staff also have developed an online teaching assistant tool that includes video tutorials and frequently asked questions. TXCC staff are available through phone and e-mail to provide additional support for districts and campuses using the Early Warning System Tool. More information about training and webinars is available at http://txcc.sedl.org/resources/ewst.

Fall and Spring Interventions. Fall and spring intervention services must be provided to program participants who are identified as being at risk for retention or dropout. Grantees are required to identify a minimum of three interventions to be used for each indicator and establish methods for delivering intervention services and determining if these services are achieving the desired outcomes.

Program Resources

The TNGTI program provided participating districts with several online resources to assist them in planning and implementing their transition and intervention programs. Below is a list of these resources.

- The TNGTI program guidelines provide a detailed program description and information on program requirements. The guidelines are available at: http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/opge/disc/calendar/421-09/Guidelines.pdf.
- The TNGTI program blueprint is part of the program guidelines and provides a list of requirements for each program component and suggested milestones and evidence for assessing the progress of planning and implementation. The blueprint is available at: http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/opge/disc/calendar/421-09/Blueprint.pdf.

[5] The original template is available at: http://www.betterhighschools.org/pubs/documents/EWStool_001.xls.

[6] The NHSC developed an Early Warning System Tool prototype in Microsoft Excel based on extensive research on early indicators and risk factors that contribute to students dropping out of school. This research found that at-risk students could be identified early in ninth grade based on (a) attendance; (b) credit accrual in the core subject areas; and (c) overall grade point average. Based on these data, an "on-track/off-track" indicator can be used to flag students considered to be at risk for dropping out. Once a student has been flagged, districts and campuses work to identify and target specific interventions to help these students get back on track. TXCC modified this original program into a FileMaker Pro system that is tailored for Texas schools and includes behavior referral indicators, modifiable reporting, and other requested features.

- A list of possible transition activities, developed by the Texas Comprehensive Center, provides a resource for program planning. The list is available at: http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/opge/disc/calendar/421-09/Activities.pdf.
- A list of additional resources summarizes research on high school dropout, early warning data systems, and exemplary dropout prevention programs. The list is available at: http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/opge/disc/calendar/421-09/Resources.pdf.

The requirements, milestones, and evidence presented in the TNGTI program blueprint served as the foundation for instrument development, data collection, and analysis planning for the present evaluation. The TNGTI program guidelines also provided a framework for the evaluation plan. Information related to critical success factors identified by TEA program staff also was incorporated into the evaluation process when appropriate. TEA has developed a critical success measures document that may be used in future program evaluations to monitor the progress of grantees.

Summary of Participating Campuses

At the time of the initial application, school enrollment across all participating campuses ranged from 133 students to 3,125 students, with an average of 1,386 students; 27% of participating campuses had student enrollments higher than 2,000.[7] The economically disadvantaged population at grantee campuses ranged from 54% to 100%, with an average of 80%. Most participating schools had met or exceeded standard TAKS rates that were substantially higher in reading than in mathematics, with an average met standard rate of 78% in TAKS-Reading and 50% in TAKS-Math across all grantee campuses. Across all 23 participating districts, grant amounts per campus ranged from $10,683 to $100,000 and were targeted to serve between 10 and 420 students.

Summary of Participating Districts

Of the 27 districts or open-enrollment charter schools that were eligible to apply for the 2009–10 TNGTI program grants, 24 applied for and were awarded grants beginning in July 2009. One district withdrew from the program after grants were awarded; two schools from other districts also withdrew from the program. A total of 63 campuses from 23 districts participated in the TNGTI grant program in 2009–10. Eight districts (35%) had more than one campus participating, while the remaining 15 districts (65%) had only one campus participating (most only had one high school in their district). Of the 23 grantee districts, four were charter schools. The Houston Independent School District (HISD) accounted for 36% of the grantee population, with 23 participating campuses.

Table 1 lists the district grantees and charter schools participating in the program. The number of campuses participating, the number of students to be served as reported in grant applications, and the total budget per grantee listed on the Notice of Grant Awards (NOGAs) also are presented.

[7] Based on 2008–09 data available at the time of initial grant application.

Table 1. 2009–10 TNGTI Grant Program District Participants

Districts	Number of Campuses	Number of Students to Be Served	Total Budget
Fort Hancock ISD	1	10	$ 35,742
Chilton ISD	1	20	$ 35,742
Democratic Schools Research Inc.	1	20	$ 35,742
Tejano Center for Community Concerns	1	30	$ 42,500
Assoc. for the Development of Academic Excellence	1	50	$ 42,500
Bloomington ISD	1	50	$ 42,500
Brooks County ISD	1	50	$ 50,000
Faith Family Kids Inc.	1	50	$ 50,000
La Vega ISD	1	50	$ 65,000
Natalia ISD	1	67	$ 50,000
Valley View ISD	1	75	$ 75,000
Del Valle ISD	1	75	$ 100,000
Robstown ISD	1	100	$ 75,000
Rio Grande City ISD	1	100	$ 100,000
Carrizo Springs ISD	1	150	$65,000
Mission ISD	2	200	$ 200,000
Weslaco ISD	2	288	$ 200,000
Edinburg ISD	3	300	$ 250,000
Pharr San Juan Alamo ISD	3	300	$ 250,000
Aldine ISD	5	575	$ 425,000
Brownsville ISD	5	600	$ 250,000
Dallas ISD	5	1,170	$ 425,000
Houston ISD	23	2,300	$ 425,000

Sources: Texas Ninth Grade Transition Program Grant Applications and NOGAs (Texas Education Agency, 2009)

II. Evaluation of the TNGTI Grant Program

TEA contracted with Learning Point Associates, an affiliate of American Institutes for Research (AIR), and its partner, Gibson Consulting Group, Inc., to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the initial year of the TNGTI grant program. The evaluation began in June 2009. Additional data were collected on a sample of participating campuses in summer 2010; analyses of these data will be presented in a supplementary chapter to this report. The objectives of the evaluation are to:

1. Describe and evaluate the implementation of program strategies.
2. Evaluate the impact of the program on student outcomes.
3. Evaluate the impact of the program on teacher/staff effectiveness.
4. Determine the cost effectiveness and sustainability of the program.

Districts and open-enrollment charter schools that are awarded TNGTI grants are required to assist the evaluators in obtaining data needed to achieve these objectives. Data collection and analysis efforts included the following:

- Site visits to nine participating campuses to interview school and district program staff and conduct observations of program activities (summer 2009 and spring 2010).
- Campus-level progress report forms that requested information on planning and implementation of program components and activities (September 2009, January 2010, April 2010).
- Extant student-level data collections from participating districts and campuses that included information on student participation hours, attendance counts, behavioral issues, and intervention activities received (September 2009, January 2010).[8]
- Student-level TAKS scores from all participating districts provided by TEA (June 2010).
- Surveys of school staff involved with the program (March 2010).
- Expenditure reporting requests that inquired about specific expenditure information in relation to the TNGTI program (May 2010).

This report describes and evaluates the implementation of the three major components of the TNGTI program throughout the course of the 2009–10 school year: the 2009 summer transition program, the early warning data system, and intervention services provided to identified students (evaluation objective 1). Descriptive information also is provided on the perceived impact and actual impact of the program on students (evaluation objective 2) and on teachers and staff (evaluation objective 3).[9] The evaluation relies on a range of quantitative, qualitative, and extant data triangulated to create a full picture of the planning and implementation of programs, the extent to which school staff are engaged in the program as intended, and whether staff perceive the program to be effective. The report also

[8] Districts provided TEA with data on students participating in the program. These data were shared with the evaluators after data files were deidentified.

[9] Implementation of the 2009 summer transition program is not described in detail in this report because a detailed description was provided in an earlier report (Hoogstra et al., 2010).

includes analyses of the impact of the program on student outcomes (evaluation objective 2) and the cost effectiveness and financial sustainability of the TNGTI program at participating campuses (evaluation objective 4).

TEA Critical Success Factors

For the TNGTI grant program, TEA program staff created eight critical success factors that one would expect to see at campuses with a high level of program implementation. These success factors include information related to the program components, staff collaboration, and parent involvement. The TNGTI critical success factors are used by program staff to monitor implementation but were not used to determine overall program effectiveness for the purposes of this evaluation.

The eight critical success factors identified by TEA for the TNGTI grant program are as follows:

1. Implementation of an eighth- to ninth-grade summer transition program to address student academic deficiencies and prepare students for high school.
2. Implementation of an early warning data system to monitor students for signs of falling behind in the ninth-grade year.
3. Provision of intervention services for students who show signs of falling behind based on the early warning data system.
4. Collaboration between middle school and high school staff in planning and implementing a summer transition program.
5. Collaboration between middle school and high school staff in the recruitment of students attending the summer transition program.
6. Providing an orientation for parents of entering ninth-grade students regarding high school policies and procedures.
7. Providing opportunities for parents to get involved in students' learning.
8. Administrator advocacy and support of parent involvement.

III. Data and Methods

The findings on program implementation and impact presented in the January 2011 report are based on the following sources of data: (1) a student-level data collection completed by district and campus grant coordinators in January 2010; (2) campus progress reports completed by campus grant administrators in January 2010 and April 2010; (3) interviews with campus and district program staff at selected sites conducted in February and March 2010; and (4) an online survey completed by teachers and staff who work with ninth-grade students at participating campuses in March 2010. The first interim report (Hoogstra et al., 2010) presented findings from a September 2009 student-level data collection, a September 2009 progress report, and site visit interviews conducted with campus and district program staff in August and September 2009.[10]

Data sources and analysis methods used in preparing this report are described below. (*Note*: Detailed descriptions of the methods used in these analyses are provided in the program impact findings and financial analysis findings chapters.)

January 2010 Student Data Collection

Grantees were required to provide data on students participating in the program through student data collections. For the January 2010 student data collection, explicit instructions were provided to districts with the variables being requested for this evaluation. The full instructions for completing this student data collection and a complete list of student-level variables are included in Appendix A.

For the January 2010 student data collection, information about the fall 2009 core subject grades, absences and tardies, disciplinary incidents, and intervention services was requested for all TNGTI-identified students. Although the majority of campuses provided information on student grades in core subjects and intervention services received by students, only a few campuses provided data on absences, tardies, and disciplinary incidents. Information on students' course grades was analyzed descriptively to assess how TNGTI students were performing in their core courses at the end of their first semester in ninth grade. The percentage of students receiving different types of intervention services (academic, attendance, and behavioral) also was examined. Because of problems with missing data, descriptive analyses were not conducted of attendance and disciplinary incidents. A total of 5,070 students were included in the January 2010 student data collection. There was a 90% overall completion rate for this data collection activity, based on at least partial data provided for 57 out of 63 campuses. [11]

[10] See *Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention (TNGTI) Grant Program: Interim Evaluation Report* at http://www.tea.state.tx.us/index4.aspx?id=2898&menu_id=949.

[11] Student data were collected from the campuses by TEA. The data were provided to the evaluation team for analysis without identifying information to ensure confidentiality.

January and April 2010 Campus Progress Reports

Each campus that participated in the TNGTI program in 2009–10 was required to complete three campus progress reports on program implementation. The reports were developed by the evaluation team in consultation with TEA evaluation and program staff. The structure and focus of progress report questions were based on the TNGTI program blueprint components, with specific references to the requirements and milestones that campuses were expected to meet during the year. Guidance for the campus progress report also was provided by the TNGTI critical success factors developed by TEA program staff.

The January 2010 campus progress report form was disseminated electronically to participating campuses and focused primarily on the implementation of the early warning data system and interventions provided to identified struggling ninth-grade students. Respondents also were asked to provide a preliminary assessment of the program impact on students up to that point. There was a 95% completion rate for this data collection activity, with 60 out of 63 campuses submitting the January 2010 campus progress report.

The April 2010 progress report form also was disseminated electronically to participating campuses. This shorter progress report asked questions about the organization of teachers and students into small learning communities, teacher collaboration, and overall assessment of program impact on students by the end of the school year. There was a 97% completion rate for this data collection activity, with 61 out of 63 campuses submitting the April 2010 campus progress report.

On the campus progress reports, respondents also provided written feedback on barriers and facilitators to program implementation and suggestions for modifying the program. A complete list of questions contained in the January and April 2010 campus progress reports can be found in Appendixes B and C.

February/March 2010 Site Visit Interviews

Site visits were conducted in February and March 2010 at nine schools participating in the TNGTI program. These sites were selected to reflect differences in size, program focus, student population, and location. A purposive sample was chosen to provide a mixture of small, rural high schools as well as large, urban high schools involved in the program. Interviews were collected in addition to a staff survey (described in the next section) to provide the individual perspectives of a small sample of staff familiar with the program.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with district administrators, grant coordinators, and high school staff who were involved in planning and implementing the TNGTI program at the selected campuses. The primary purpose of the interviews with program staff was to obtain qualitative information about the implementation of the early warning data system and student interventions provided to participating students. Interviewees also were asked to reflect on the perceived impact of the program on ninth-grade students. Questions related to the critical success factors created by TEA

also were included to obtain feedback on any challenges grantees faced to successful program implementation.

The open-ended nature of the interview questions allowed respondents to go into detail and provide examples of activities and processes as evidence of successful program implementation. Quotes and experiences of program staff are included throughout this report to illustrate the findings from other data sources. A complete list of campus interview questions is included in Appendix D, and the district interview questions are included in Appendix E.

Ninety interviews were conducted across the nine sites during the February and March 2010 site visits. Each interview was approximately 30–45 minutes in length. Table 2 presents a summary of the number of interviews conducted with district staff, administrators, teachers, and other program staff at the high school level. No middle school staff were interviewed during the February and March 2010 site visits.

Table 2. Number of Staff Interviews Conducted During Spring Site Visits (*N*=90)

Position of Person Interviewed	Number of Interviewees
District staff	10
Administrator	15
Teacher	37
Other staff (e.g., counselor, interventionist)	28
Total	**90**

Source: Interview data collected for the Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention Program evaluation (Texas Education Agency, 2010)

March 2010 Staff Survey

To obtain perceptions of the program from a wide range of campus staff, a staff survey was distributed in March 2010 at all grantee campuses. This electronic survey was distributed to all TNGTI campus coordinators and principals with instructions to send the survey to all teachers and staff in the building who work with ninth-grade students. Questions on the staff survey focused primarily on details about the campuses' summer transition programs, early warning data systems, intervention services offered to ninth-grade students, and the perceived overall program impacts on students and teachers.[12]

There was a 92% campus completion rate for this data collection, based upon receipt of at least one staff survey from 58 out of 63 campuses. A complete list of questions contained in the staff survey can be found in Appendix F. A total of 696 staff surveys were collected from participating campuses. The

[12] Because the staff survey was administered electronically, skip logic was used to display certain survey questions to different respondents based on their previous responses. This resulted in a variation in the total number of respondents for different survey questions, as presented throughout the report.

majority of survey respondents were teachers in a core subject area (49%) or an elective subject area (23%). A complete description of the positions of survey respondents is presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Position of Staff Survey Respondents (*N*=696)

Position	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Teacher in a core subject area (e.g., mathematics, ELA, science, social studies)	340	48.9%
Teacher in an elective subject area	157	22.6%
Special education teacher	50	7.2%
Counselor	36	5.2%
Interventionist (e.g., at-risk specialist, academic coach)	23	3.3%
Administrator (i.e., principal, assistant principal)	27	3.9%
ELL teacher or specialist	18	2.6%
TNGTI grant or program coordinator	13	1.9%
Other (e.g., case worker, librarian, teacher's aide)	32	4.6%

Source: Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention Program Staff Survey (Texas Education Agency, 2010)

Of those survey respondents who indicated that they taught a core subject area or an elective subject, the most frequently taught subject areas were mathematics (23%), English language arts (20%) and science (16%). Teachers were allowed to indicate that they taught more than one subject area. A complete description of the subject areas taught by responding teachers is presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Subject Areas Taught by Core and Elective Teachers From Staff Survey (*N*=497)

Subject Areas	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Mathematics	112	22.5%
English language arts	100	20.1%
Science	81	16.3%
Social studies	72	14.5%
Career and technology education (CTE)	53	10.7%
Foreign language	28	5.6%
Physical education	28	5.6%
Other (e.g., fine arts, health, JROTC)	77	15.5%

Source: Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention Program Staff Survey (Texas Education Agency, 2010)
Note: Respondents were asked to "Check all that apply." Percentages, therefore, do not sum to 100%.

Administrative Data

Additional background data on districts and campuses participating in the program were obtained from the 2009 TNGTI grant applications (e.g., purpose of the TNGTI program, proposed summer program schedule, types of activities to be offered). Data on characteristics of campuses (e.g., percentage economically disadvantaged, percentage of students by racial/ethnic category) and characteristics of students participating in the program were obtained from TEA (e.g., eighth-grade and ninth-grade TAKS scores, absences and disciplinary incidents in 2008–09), including data from the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS). This information provided the context for the TNGTI programs reviewed for this evaluation. These data will be presented in later chapters of the report.

IV. Program Implementation Findings

In the present report, findings on the implementation of the TNGTI program in Year 1 (2009–10) are organized into chapters on the following topics: the facilitators and barriers to overall program implementation, an overview of information collected after the completion of the summer transition program, an overview of the early warning data system and implementation details, and an overview of the intervention services and implementation details about the report also includes chapters on parent involvement in program activities, the impact of the TNGTI program on students and teachers, a financial analysis of the use of program funds, the likelihood of campuses continuing the program, and suggested program modifications.

Overall Perceptions of TNGTI Program

To give an overview of the perceptions of the TNGTI grant program, program staff were asked to rate the extent to which they believed the TNGTI components were beneficial to participating students. The majority of respondents on the April 2010 campus progress report felt each of these components benefited students at least moderately. The availability of funds for supplies or incentives received the highest ratings, with 87% of respondents rating this component as a moderate to a great benefit to students. The majority of respondents felt similarly about the summer transition program (85%) and the ability to flag students for interventions (80%). Most respondents also indicated that the early warning data system (77%) and targeted interventions (74%) were beneficial to TNGTI students (See Table 5).

Table 5. TNGTI Staff Perceptions of Program Components' Benefits to Students (*N*=61)

	Not at All	To a Minimal Extent	To a Moderate Extent	To a Great Extent
Funds to purchase supplies/incentives for students	1.6%	11.5%	19.7%	67.2%
The summer transition program	4.9%	9.8%	31.1%	54.1%
The specification of indicators that would “flag” a student as needing an intervention	8.2%	11.5%	50.8%	29.5%
The early warning data system	13.1%	9.8%	49.2%	27.9%
The specification of targeted interventions	8.2%	18.0%	45.9%	27.9%

Source: Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention Program April 2010 Campus Progress Report (Texas Education Agency, 2010)

Facilitators of Program Implementation

Questions on the January 2010 and April 2010 campus progress reports, staff survey, and spring interviews asked respondents to provide details about the facilitators that helped them during the implementation of the TNGTI program, including funding, planning, and contextual issues.

On the staff survey, respondents answered an open-ended question asking what helped the implementation of the TNGTI program at their schools. Of the 259 respondents who identified

facilitators at their campuses, the most frequently mentioned success factor was the importance of having teachers and staff dedicated to the goals of the TNGTI program (40%). One respondent stated that the success of the program relied entirely on:

Program Highlights:

The great energy and capacity that all participating teachers put in to welcome the students and help them have a smooth transition to high school. At the same time, how the people involved in the process help the students achieve their goals throughout the regular school year.

Additional facilitators included having frequent teacher collaboration in grade-level teams or small learning community meetings (18%), strong support from the principal and other administrators (18%), and the range of intervention services available to students (12%). One respondent made a comment about the importance of teachers collaborating as a team to bring about program success:

Strategy Spotlights:

The teachers for the summer transition program were selected for their ability to work with at-risk students. We planned together, visited classrooms to watch each other teach, and cooperated in presenting cross-curricular units.

Table 6 presents a summary of all facilitators that survey respondents said contributed to the implementation of the TNGTI program during the 2009–10 school year.

Table 6. Overall Facilitators of the Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention Program (*N*=270)

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Dedication of staff, buy-in (program coordinator, teachers, etc.)	107	39.6%
Team collaboration, SLC team	50	18.5%
Supportive administration (e.g., principal, assistant principal)	48	17.8%
Intervention services	33	12.2%
Planning and organization	29	10.7%
Parent support	28	10.4%
The summer transition program	26	9.6%
The early warning data system	25	9.3%
Consistent communication and implementation	16	5.9%
Positive outcomes for students	16	5.9%
Mentor programs	12	4.4%
Student identification	12	4.4%
Middle school	8	3.0%
Student participation	8	3.0%
Other (e.g., external support, funding, training)	15	5.6%

Source: Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention Program Staff Survey (Texas Education Agency, 2010)
Note: Respondents wrote in multiple responses on the survey. Percentages, therefore, do not sum to 100%.

The facilitators mentioned by program staff interviewed during spring site visits directly mirrored the survey responses. The most frequently mentioned facilitators of program implementation were the enthusiasm and dedication of the staff, the collaboration that occurred among teacher teams, and the support of the school administrators. One principal had high praise for the teachers and staff involved in the TNGTI program at the school: "It is critical to hire personnel that truly have a passion for working with at-risk kids." Related to hiring strong teachers and staff to plan and implement the TNGTI program, respondents stated that success hinged on the team working together effectively. At some schools, this could be arranged in small learning communities, common planning periods, or other team structures. One teacher emphasized the importance of teachers working together in a supportive atmosphere:

Program Highlights:

We have a common planning period. We are all for the support from the counseling department and administration…. And I think overall we make a good team. There is no animosity between any of us. We get along great. And if there ever is an issue, we will bring it up. We won't stay quiet about it.

Barriers to Program Implementation

Questions on the January 2010 and April 2010 campus progress reports, staff survey, and spring interviews asked respondents to provide details about the challenges they encountered during the implementation of the TNGTI program, including funding, planning, and contextual issues.

On the staff survey, respondents answered an open-ended question asking what challenges they faced while implementing the TNGTI program at their schools. Of the 263 teachers and staff who wrote in a response, the most frequently mentioned challenge related to student participation and interest in the program (33%). Some campuses had difficulty convincing students to participate in TNGTI activities or attend intervention services regularly. One respondent noted that the biggest challenge was:

Challenges Faced:

Keeping the students focused and on task and believing in themselves. At times the students lack the desire to succeed, and getting them to agree that they can succeed if they put their minds to it can be difficult. Some have already given up on themselves, and trying to get them to have the self-esteem to succeed is half the battle.

Additional barriers included lack of parent support (18%), scheduling conflicts or not having time for extra services/activities (15%), and difficulties identifying and recruiting students before the summer transition program and throughout the year (13%). One respondent made a comment about the struggle for parent support in certain communities:

Challenges Faced:

There are cultural traits that sometimes, sadly, prevent parents in our community from becoming aware of alternatives for succeeding academically outside of the traditional school year…. This is a major hurdle in properly implementing intervention programs.

Table 7 presents a summary of all challenges that survey respondents reported they faced during the 2009–10 implementation year of the TNGTI program.

Table 7. Overall Challenges With the Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention Program (*N*=263)

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Lack of student participation, interest, attendance	86	32.7%
Lack of parental support	46	17.5%
No time for extra activities, scheduling conflicts	40	15.2%
Difficulties with identification and recruitment	34	12.9%
Lack of staff involvement or availability, high staff turnover	26	9.9%
Struggles with funding issues, resources	23	8.7%
Poor communication from TEA, unclear expectations	22	8.4%
Poor planning, organization, inconsistent implementation	19	7.2%
Problems with early warning data system	17	6.5%
Lack of communication/collaboration with middle schools	15	5.7%
Challenging student population (i.e., socioeconomic, ELL, special education)	12	4.6%
Inadequate support from school administrators	10	3.8%
Inadequate training, professional development	9	3.4%
Needed more activities, incentives	7	2.7%
Other challenges (e.g., transportation, facilities)	4	1.5%
None, no challenges to program implementation	7	2.7%

Source: Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention Program Staff Survey (Texas Education Agency, 2010)
Note: Respondents gave multiple responses. Percentages, therefore, do not sum to 100%.

The challenges most frequently mentioned during spring interviews with program staff related to problems with the early warning data system, time constraints and conflicts with other programs, as well as the turnover of key staff members during the year. One teacher expressed frustration by saying, "There are just too many things to juggle at the same time." One of the principals stated that the biggest challenge was:

> ***Challenges Faced:***
>
> ***Time. The time to follow up. You get so caught up in the year and the starting [of school] and I get busy with seniors and the counseling department gets busy with seniors and so finding and prioritizing your time so that you can continue to keep the freshmen on track…time is a big one.***

Detailed information on the implementation of the TNGTI program components is presented in the following chapters, providing insight into how some of the campuses dealt with these sorts of challenges.

V. Summer Transition Program Findings

The majority of TNGTI campuses conducted summer transition program activities during the summer of 2009. Program staff provided information regarding these activities in the first campus progress report (submitted in the fall of 2009), and specific details of the summer activities were provided in the *Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention (TNGTI) Grant Program: Interim Evaluation Report* (Hoogstra et al., 2010).

Overview of Summer Transition Program

A few items regarding the summer transition program were included in the January 2010 campus progress report and the March 2010 staff survey. These items dealt with the following topics: challenges recruiting students, effectiveness of teacher and staff professional development before the summer program, activities offered in the summer program, experiences of participating students during the school year, and the overall effectiveness of the summer transition program component of the TNGTI grant.

Challenges Recruiting Students

As was noted in the first TNGTI interim evaluation report, many campuses experienced problems recruiting students for the summer transition program. According to the January 2010 campus progress report, 41 of the 60 responding campuses (68%) reported such challenges. In open-ended responses, the most common challenge mentioned was dealing with competing programs, such as summer school classes that targeted the same student population and were conducted at the same time as the transition program. Another major challenge was the lack of incentives to motivate students to attend school activities and give up their summer vacation. To meet these challenges, campuses reported planning to recruit earlier in the year for the next summer program, using multiple recruitment methods (such as phone calls home and formal presentations at the middle school), collaborating with middle school staff to identify and recruit students, and coordinating with other programs by scheduling around them or combining services with them, such as offering summer school in the morning and the transition program in the afternoon.

Matching TNGTI Students to Summer Teachers

On the January 2010 campus progress report, campuses were asked whether they assigned students who attended the summer transition program to one or more of their summer teachers at the beginning of ninth grade. Because the students and teachers would already know each other, such assignments might further facilitate the transition to high school. Of the 58 campuses that indicated students attended summer transition program activities, the majority (66%) of campuses made a good-faith effort to assign program participants to one of their summer teachers for their ninth-grade year, and 29% of campuses reported that they were successful for all students (see Table 8).

Table 8. Matching Summer Transition Students With Their Summer Program Teachers for the Ninth-Grade Year (*N*=58)

	Number of Campuses	Percentage of Campuses
Students were purposefully and successfully assigned to their summer teacher for one of their core subject classes	17	29.3%
Every effort was made to accomplish this, but some students could not be assigned to their summer teacher	21	36.2%
The effort was made, but it was minimally possible to execute	12	20.7%
No attempt was made to match students to summer teachers	8	13.8%

Source: Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention Program January 2010 Campus Progress Report (Texas Education Agency, 2010)

Approximately one third of campuses reported the students were purposefully and successfully assigned to their summer teacher for one of their core subject classes (29%). Eight campuses (14%) did not attempt to assign summer transition program students to one of their summer teachers for their ninth-grade year. The most common reasons for not doing this were that it was too complex to arrange with the master schedule or that not enough ninth-grade teachers participated in the summer program to allow for successful matching of students to teachers.

Summer Transition Program Activities Offered and Ratings of Effectiveness

The survey asked respondents to indicate what activities were offered as part of the summer transition program and to rate the effectiveness of these activities in preparing students for their ninth-grade year. Only teachers who had taught in the summer transition program and also had TNGTI students in their classroom during the school year were presented with this survey question. As reported in Table 9, top activities offered to students included opportunities to meet with high school staff (92%), academic instruction (86%), orientation activities (84%), team-building activities (84%), and training in study skills (82%). The top 10 activities offered also were rated as very effective by at least half of respondents. The activities with the highest effectiveness rating were the orientation activities (67%) and field trips (59%).

Table 9. Top 10 Summer Transition Activities Offered and Percentage Rated as "Very Effective" (*N*=118)

Summer Transition Activities	Offered Activities		Very Effective	
	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Opportunities for students to meet and interact with high school staff	109	92.4%	61	56.0%
Academic instruction in core subjects	101	85.6%	56	55.4%
Orientation activities to familiarize students with high school facilities and procedures	99	83.9%	66	66.7%
Team-building activities	99	83.9%	55	55.6%
Training in study skills (e.g., note taking, time management)	97	82.2%	52	53.6%
Mentoring (peer or teacher)	80	67.8%	43	53.8%
Social skills development (e.g., conflict resolution, anger management)	76	64.4%	41	53.9%
Opportunities for students to meet/interact with older students	70	59.3%	39	55.7%
Other field trips (e.g., educational or career-related field trips)	69	58.5%	41	59.4%
Parent activities (e.g., information sessions, workshops, conferences)	67	56.8%	37	55.2%

Source: Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention Program Staff Survey (Texas Education Agency, 2010)
Note: Respondents were asked to "Check all activities offered." Percentages, therefore, do not sum to 100%.

Experiences of Summer Transition Program Students Starting the School Year

On the staff survey, teachers with TNGTI students in their classes were asked to share the ways these students were different from other ninth-grade students at the beginning of the fall 2009 semester. Over one quarter reported program participants were more motivated, focused, confident, and involved than their peers (28%), and a similar percentage reported the program participants already knew the expectations and school guidelines compared to nonparticipants (24%). Notably, there were some teachers (6%) who indicated that TNGTI students needed extra attention and continued to struggle upon entering high school. Approximately 15% of survey respondents reported there were no differences between TNGTI program participants and other ninth-grade students (see Table 10).

Table 10. Reported Differences Between TNGTI Participating Students and Other Ninth-Grade Students at the Beginning of the Fall 2009 Semester (*N*=203)

TNGTI Students Compared to Other Ninth-Grade Students	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
More motivated, focused, confident, and involved in high school	56	27.6%
Better knowledge of expectations and school guidelines	49	24.1%
Improved academic skills, better prepared for class	36	17.7%
Appear more comfortable, less afraid of high school	32	15.8%
Met teachers during summer, have a personal bond with teachers	30	14.8%
TNGTI students need extra attention compared to other students	13	6.4%
TNGTI students continue to struggle, have problems with high school	12	5.9%
Improved grades, earned high school credits	8	3.9%
Made friends during summer, positive peer relationships	6	3.0%
Better behavior, fewer disciplinary issues, better attendance	6	3.0%
Unsure if there are any differences	5	2.5%
No differences between TNGTI and other students	30	14.8%

Source: Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention Program Staff Survey (Texas Education Agency, 2010)
Note: Respondents wrote in responses and might have mentioned multiple differences. Percentages, therefore, do not sum to 100%.

During the spring site visits, many interview respondents echoed that they observed a difference between TNGTI participating students and other ninth-grade students. During site visit interviews, one teacher noted that the students appeared to be more involved in high school and have more confidence in class:

> ***Program Highlights:***
>
> ***I did notice the difference in the students that participated. They seemed a little bit more active in class. They were the first to want to volunteer to actually do something in class, in contrast to the other students who were not quick to answer questions or demonstrate or model anything. They are a little bit more sociable.***

Perceived Effectiveness of the Summer Transition Program

Finally, survey respondents rated the overall effectiveness of their school's summer transition program in preparing incoming ninth-grade students for high school and beyond. Approximately 82% of teachers with TNGTI students in their classrooms indicated that they thought the overall summer transition program was moderately to very effective (35% and 47%, respectively). Table 11 provides details about the perceived overall effectiveness of the summer transition program.

Table 11. Perceived Overall Effectiveness of Summer Transition Program (*N*=243)

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Very effective	114	46.9%
Moderately effective	84	34.6%
Minimally effective	21	8.6%
Not at all effective	1	0.4%
Don't know	23	9.5%

Source: Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention Program Staff Survey (Texas Education Agency, 2010)

During the spring site visits, the majority of interview respondents indicated that the summer transition program had been a success and had a positive effect on participating students. One assistant principal summarized the effectiveness of the program:

Program Highlights:

The [summer program] was very good in helping the eighth graders to transition from middle school to high school. It was a very positive climate and as a whole I think our kids are better adjusted than what we have had in the past.

VI. Early Warning Data System Findings

Following the implementation of the summer transition program, campuses are required to monitor the progress of program participants based on specific criteria. The early warning data system is one of the three major components of the TNGTI grant, as specified in the TNGTI program guidelines and blueprint. District or campus use of an early warning data system to monitor students for signs of falling behind during their ninth-grade year was identified as a critical success factor by TEA program staff. The data collected from the January 2010 and April 2010 campus progress reports, staff surveys, and spring site visit interviews provided information about the current status of the system, the barriers and facilitators to successful implementation, and the perceived effectiveness of the early warning data system.

Overview of Early Warning Data System

On the January 2010 campus progress report, campuses indicated the type of tool they were currently using to track student progress. The most frequently used system was the National High School Center Early Warning System Tool (37%). More than one third of campuses reported that they used a district data system already in place (15%) or modified the district system to meet the needs of the program (23%). Several campuses chose to purchase custom-designed systems for the TNGTI program (13%), and five campuses were relying primarily on manual paper tracking systems (8%). Of the campuses that completed this report, only two campuses (3%) indicated that they did not currently have an early warning data system in place at their school. Table 12 shows the different types of early warning data systems used as of January 2010 to monitor and identify struggling ninth-grade students.

Table 12. Type of Early Warning Data System Used by Participating Campuses (*N*=60)

Type of Early Warning Data System	Number of Campuses	Percentage of Campuses
The National High School Center Early Warning System Tool	22	36.7%
District data system(s) that were in place prior to the TNGTI program with modifications made to meet the needs of this particular program	14	23.3%
District data system(s) that were in place prior to the TNGTI program	9	15.0%
A custom-designed system developed either by the district, school, or a contractor uniquely for the purposes of the TNGTI program	8	13.3%
Manual paper tracking system(s)	5	8.3%
Nothing—no system has yet been selected or implemented to date	2	3.3%

Source: Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention Program January 2010 Campus Progress Report (Texas Education Agency, 2010)

Of the 58 campuses that reported an early warning data system was in place, the majority indicated that the system had been installed, data had been populated, and the system currently was being used to identify struggling students (59%). An additional 29% reported that student progress was being tracked using the established district or campus systems focused on academic, attendance, and behavioral indicators. Seven campuses indicated the early warning data system currently was not being used due to

a variety of factors (12%). Table 13 shows the status of early warning data systems used by participating campuses as of January 2010.

Table 13. Status of Early Warning Data System (*N*=58)

Status of Early Warning Data System	Number of Campuses	Percentage of Campuses
The system has been installed, data have been populated, and the system currently is being used to identify students struggling with academic, attendance, and/or behavioral issues	34	58.6%
The district/campus already had a system in place prior to the grant, and it currently is being used to track the progress of students based on academic, attendance, and/or behavioral indicators	17	29.3%
The system has been installed and data have been populated, but the system is not actively in use	3	5.2%
The system has been chosen, but it either is still under development or has not yet been installed	3	5.2%
The system has been installed, but no data have been populated	1	1.7%

Source: Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention Program January 2010 Campus Progress Report (Texas Education Agency, 2010)

Barriers to Implementing the Early Warning Data System

Although 51 out of 60 participating campuses (85%) had installed an early warning data system by January 2010, some campuses still faced challenges to successful implementation. For example, one TNGTI coordinator said the early warning data system was beneficial, but the process they were using at the time of the interview was very time consuming for the teachers and staff:

> ***Challenges Faced:***
>
> ***[The early warning data system] is effective but it is labor intensive. I know that the [staff] would be grateful to have something that was click, click and away we go and let us look at this instead of wasting their time on manual entry, pulling out, sorting things which is so labor intensive .***[13]

The January 2010 campus progress report asked several questions related to specific challenges staff faced in implementing the early warning data system. Of the campuses that responded, 28% indiciated that there had been no barriers to using the early warning data system. When campuses did mention problems, the most frequently reported barrier was the amount of time it took to enter and update student data (18%). Other respondents stated that the system itself was difficult to understand (15%), the early warning data program was incompatable with current school systems (10%), or there were

[13] According to TEA program staff, improvements in the early warning data system have been made in response to feedback and suggestions received from program practitioners. Specifically, compatibility with existing data systems and user friendliness have been improved.

problems with the technology, either software or hardware (8%). Another challenge was having too few students participating in the TNGTI program for the early warning data system to be useful (12%). Table 14 presents a summary of the barriers that campuses reported they faced to successful implementation of the early warning data system.

Table 14. Barriers to Implementing Early Warning Data System (*N*=60)

	Number of Campuses	Percentage of Campuses
Data entry, time consuming	11	18.3%
Difficult to use or understand, not user friendly	9	15.0%
Low student participation	7	11.7%
Not compatible with current data systems	6	10.0%
Difficulties with technology (i.e., software, hardware)	5	8.3%
Poor communication	3	5.0%
Lack of teacher/staff buy-in	3	5.0%
Low parent support	2	3.3%
Need more training	2	3.3%
Changes to early warning data system	2	3.3%
Other (e.g., funding, conflicts with other programs)	5	8.3%
None	17	28.3%

Source: Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention Program January 2010 Campus Progress Report (Texas Education Agency, 2010)
Note: Respondents gave multiple responses. Percentages, therefore, do not sum to 100%.

To follow up on these issues, the April 2010 campus progress report asked respondents to indicate the extent to which the early warning data system was perceived to be burdensome. Some schools indicated that the current system was not a burden at all (15%), but most campuses faced at least some difficulty with the early warning data system during the 2009–10 school year. Close to 25% of campuses indicated the current system was a minimal burden, but 54% of campuses reported the system was at least a moderate (31%) to a great burden (23%). Table 15 shows the perceived burden of the early warning data system on participating campuses.

Table 15. Extent the Early Warning Data System Was Perceived to Be Burdensome (*N*=61)

	Number of Campuses	Percentage of Campuses
To a great extent	14	23.0%
To a moderate extent	19	31.1%
To a minimal extent	15	24.6%
Not at all	9	14.8%
Our school did not implement an early warning data system	4	6.6%

Source: Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention Program April 2010 Campus Progress Report (Texas Education Agency, 2010)

These feelings also were expressed during spring interviews; program staff mentioned similar challenges they faced while implementing the early warning data system. The most frequently mentioned problems related to not understanding how to integrate the early warning data tool with their current data systems and the amount of time spent on data entry. One high school teacher expressed frustration at not being able to make the different programs work together. It was reported that the task of entering and monitoring data often came down to one or two people, most often the TNGTI coordinator. Several interviewees expressed frustration about the excessive amount of time spent entering student data, and one school reported that they had to enter everything manually to track the TNGTI students.

Facilitators of the Early Warning Data System

Despite some of the challenges to installing the early warning data system, many campuses were able to identify facilitating factors that made the implementation of the system go smoothly during the school year. Of the campuses that responded to the January 2010 campus progress report, the most frequently reported success factors were the dedication of the teachers and staff (30%), importance of team collaboration (10%), and support from school administrators (8%) and district administrators (8%). Approximately 33% of campuses indicated that there were no specific facilitators related to using the early warning data system. Table 16 presents a summary of facilitators specific to the implementation of the early warning data system.

Table 16. Facilitators of the Early Warning Data System Implementation (*N*=60)

	Number of Campuses	Percentage of Campuses
Dedication of staff, buy-in (program coordinator, teachers, etc.)	18	30.0%
Team collaboration, small learning community team	6	10.0%
Supportive administration (e.g., principal, assistant principal)	5	8.3%
District support	5	8.3%
Mentor system	3	5.0%
Parent support	2	3.3%
The summer transition program	2	3.3%
The early warning data system itself	2	3.3%
Other (e.g., middle school support, training, external support)	7	11.7%
None	20	33.3%

Source: Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention Program January 2010 Campus Progress Report (Texas Education Agency, 2010)
Note: Respondents gave multiple responses. Percentages, therefore, do not sum to 100%.

The facilitators specific to the early warning data system mentioned by spring interview respondents were the same as the facilitators mentioned on the campus progress report. The important factor for the success of the early warning data system was having a dedicated staff member who was in charge of entering and managing the student data. Support for the early warning data system also was needed from teacher teams and from the school and district administrators for it to run smoothly. One interventionist described the amount of work put into collecting and reporting student data every week for teachers and other staff members:

> ***Program Highlights:***
>
> ***I am the keeper of the information. I compile everybody's logs at the end of every week. I get the reports that they need as far as discipline reports, absence reports, so I am the "Report Queen." I get all the reports for them and then that way they can see which kid they need to target during the week.***

Perceived Effectiveness of Early Warning Data System

The perceived effectiveness of the early warning data system was determined from multiple types of data sources based on the opinions and experiences of teachers and staff who worked with ninth-grade students during the 2009–10 school year. The campus progress reports and staff survey allowed respondents to give their own rating of effectiveness for different aspects of the early warning data system, and the spring site visits offered quotes and examples to support these perceptions.

On the staff survey, respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed with different statements related to the effect of the early warning data system on their campus. Survey respondents

most often agreed that the measures in the early warning data system were appropriate (61%), and the system was an effective mechanism for identifying struggling students (57%) to a moderate or a great extent. Most respondents also agreed that struggling students were identified in a timely manner through the system (55%) to at least a moderate extent. Table 17 shows the survey responses related to the perceived effects of the early warning data system at participating campuses.

Table 17. Perceived Effectiveness of Different Aspects of the Early Warning Data System (*N*=518)

Extent to which…	Don't Know	Not at All	To a Minimal Extent	To a Moderate Extent	To a Great Extent
The system measures are appropriate for identifying struggling students	28.4%	3.9%	7.1%	28.6%	32.0%
The current system is an effective mechanism for identifying struggling students	28.6%	4.8%	9.3%	31.3%	26.1%
Struggling students are identified in a timely manner through the system	29.5%	3.7%	11.8%	33.8%	21.2%

Source: Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention Program Staff Survey (Texas Education Agency, 2010)

On the January 2010 campus progress report, respondents were asked to indicate how effective the early warning data system was for identifying students for interventions in a timely manner. Of the campuses that were using an early warning data system, the majority of campuses (94%) indicated that the current system was moderately to very effective in identifying students in a timely manner. Table 18 shows the rating of overall perceived effectiveness of the early warning data system at participating campuses for the 2009–10 school year.

Table 18. Perceived Overall Effectiveness of the Early Warning Data System (*N*=51)

	Number of Campuses	Percentage of Campuses
Very effective	15	29.4%
Moderately effective	33	64.7%
Minimally effective	2	3.9%
Not at all effective	1	2.0%

Source: Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention Program January 2010 Campus Progress Report (Texas Education Agency, 2010)

Effectiveness of Early Warning Data System Compared to Previous Methods. On the January 2010 campus progress report, respondents were asked an open-ended question about what ways the early warning data system was being used differently to monitor students compared to previous methods. Of the 51 campuses that used an early warning data system, the most frequent differences between this year and last year were that more data were being collected to monitor students (28%) and there was one central location for all student data (24%). Eight campuses (16%) reported that there were no differences between the current system compared to previous methods. Table 19 shows the differences

between the early warning data system used during the 2009–10 school year compared to previous years.

Table 19. How Early Warning Data System Is Different Compared to Previous Methods (*N*=51)

	Number of Campuses	Percentage of Campuses
Collecting and monitoring more student data	14	27.5%
Have one central location of all data compared to multiple locations	12	23.5%
Looking at all three components (academic, attendance, behavior)	11	21.6%
More discussion of data at campus	7	13.7%
Looking at student data more frequently	6	11.8%
Focused on monitoring TNGTI student data	6	11.8%
More timely identification of students for interventions	6	11.8%
Have flags for warning signs	5	9.8%
Share more data with parents	5	9.8%
Other (e.g., cluster students for interventions, better sorting of data)	2	3.9%
No difference, monitoring data is the same as previous methods	8	15.7%

Source: Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention Program January 2010 Campus Progress Report (Texas Education Agency, 2010)
Note: Respondents gave multiple responses. Percentages, therefore, do not sum to 100%.

On the January 2010 campus progress report, respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which the early warning data system affected their ability to identify students for interventions in a timely manner compared to the previous school year. The majority of campuses (88%) indicated that the current system was more effective to much more effective in identifying students compared to last year. Six campuses reported that the current system did not have an effect on the timeliness in which students were identified (12%). Table 20 shows the perceived effectiveness of the early warning data system at participating campuses compared to last year.

Table 20. Perceived Effectiveness of the Early Warning Data System Compared to the Previous Year (*N*=51)

	Number of Campuses	Percentage of Campuses
We are much more effective than last year	8	15.7%
We are more effective than last year	37	72.5%
There has been no change	6	11.8%
We are less effective than last year	0	0.0%
We are much less effective than last year	0	0.0%

Source: Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention Program January 2010 Campus Progress Report (Texas Education Agency, 2010)

On the January 2010 campus progress report, respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which the early warning data system impacted the timing of identification of students for interventions

compared to the previous school year. The majority of campuses (73%) indicated that the current system was timelier or much timelier in identifying students compared to last year. Several campuses reported that the current system did not have an impact on the timeliness with which students were identified (24%). Two campuses indicated that the early warning data system was actually less timely to much less timely compared to last year (4%). Table 21 shows the perceived impact of the early warning data system on the timelines of identifying students for interventions at participating campuses compared to last year.

Table 21. Perceived Impact of the Early Warning Data System on Timelines of Identification (*N*=51)

	Number of Campuses	Percentage of Campuses
Much timelier	4	7.8%
Timelier	33	64.7%
No impact	12	23.5%
Less timely	1	2.0%
Much less timely	1	2.0%

Source: Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention Program January 2010 Campus Progress Report (Texas Education Agency, 2010)

On the January 2010 campus progress report, respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which the early warning data system impacted which students were identified for interventions compared to the previous school year. The majority of campuses (74%) indicated that the current system identified at least some students who may not have been identified compared to last year. Thirteen campuses reported that the current system did not have an effect on which students were identified for intervention services (26%). Table 22 shows the perceived impact of the early warning data system on which students were identified for interventions at participating campuses compared to last year.

Table 22. Perceived Impact of the Early Warning Data System on Which Students Were Identified for Intervention Services (*N*=51)

	Number of Campuses	Percentage of Campuses
Identified **many** students who may not have been identified	6	11.8%
Identified **some** students who may not have been identified	32	62.7%
No impact on the amount of students identified	13	25.5%
Failed to identify **some** students who would have been identified before	0	0.0%
Failed to identify **many** students who would have been identified before	0	0.0%

Source: Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention Program January 2010 Campus Progress Report (Texas Education Agency, 2010)

During the spring site visits, the majority of interview respondents said that the implementation of the early warning data system had been effective in identifying and monitoring students who were at risk

for dropping out of high school. Even when the process was very time consuming for some campuses, the end results provided teachers and staff with more information and sooner in the school year than before. One teacher said that patterns of student behaviors emerged once all of the data were in one system that could be accessed by all the staff:

> ***Program Highlights:***
>
> ***The database makes it so much easier to identify [struggling students], as far as looking at the patterns. Before we all kept our documentation individually, you did not see each other's documentation. It was all done in team meetings verbally. But now we have a system we can literally go in and see. It has been a tremendous help.***

The principal at another campus said that having the early warning data system had changed the entire process of how at-risk students were identified for interventions from being reactive to proactive:

> ***Strategy Spotlights:***
>
> ***We are trying to be proactive. We know in general that our ninth-grade students can be at risk. And we had kind of waited to provide the services until after we saw a student struggling.... With this system, from day one they are getting the kids that are at risk because of academics, attendance, or whatever reason.***

Having all of the evidence collected in the early warning data helped to provide answers to questions that program staff would have about certain students. The data coordinator at one campus stated:

> ***Strategy Spotlights:***
>
> ***We do not have to wait the normal four to six weeks to collect work samples to see how the student performs in class, or just hear what the student does to watch their behavior. We can pull in the data to give us an idea, and then we can monitor according to what we see on the data.… Just collecting the data makes it a lot easier for us to evaluate.***

Implementation of Early Warning Data System

Detailed information about the implementation of the early warning data system was collected from the January 2010 and April 2010 campus progress reports, staff survey, and spring site visit interviews. These data provided insight into the various aspects related to implementing the early warning data system at campuses participating in the TNGTI program, including indicators in the system, the use of the system for progress monitoring, the staff responsible for the system, the ways that teachers use the system throughout the year, and the training that staff received on how to enter and interpret early warning data on students.

Early Warning Data System Indicators

At the campuses that implemented an early warning data system, respondents were asked to indicate the approximate number of students who were flagged during fall 2009 using different indicators. The indicator used most frequently related to academic concerns, and 23 campuses indicated that academic indicators were used for half to almost all of their identified students (45%). Following that, schools most often used a combination of indicators, with 21 campuses indicating that they used a combination of factors for half to almost all of their identified students (41%). Table 23 shows the proportion of students identified for intervention services based on the different early warning system indicators.

Table 23. Percentage of Campuses That Used Indicators to Identify Students for Interventions (*N*=51)

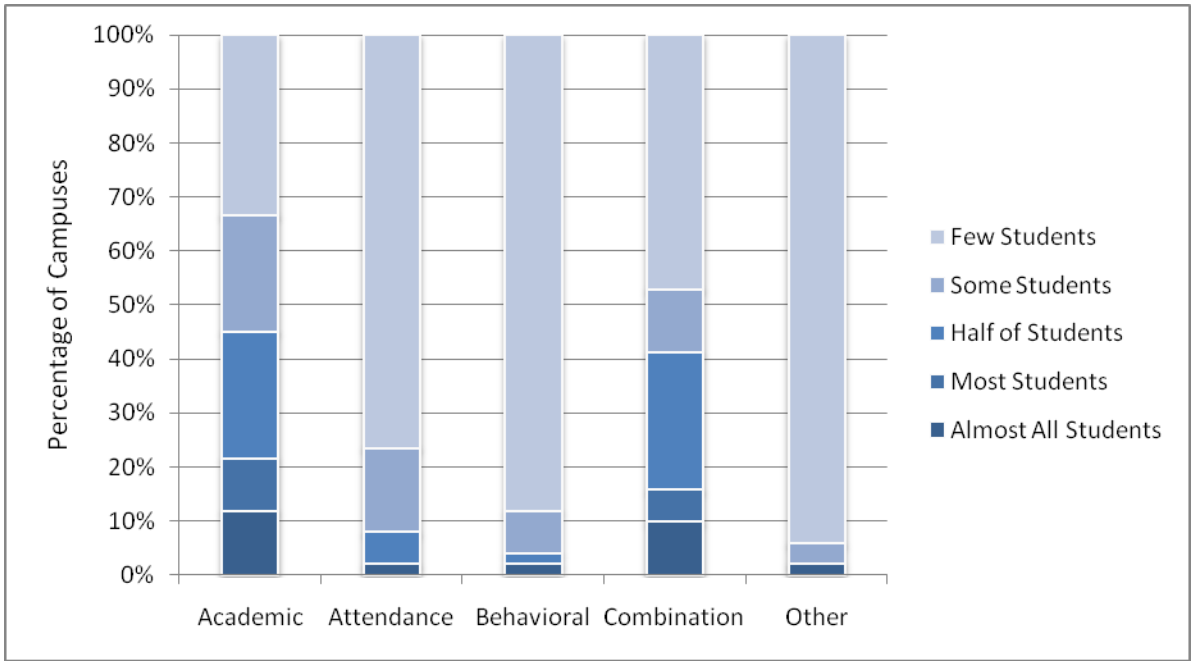
Indicators	Proportion of Students[14]				
	Few	Some	Half	Most	Almost All
Academic	33.3%	21.6%	23.5%	9.8%	11.8%
Attendance	76.5%	15.7%	5.9%	0.0%	2.0%
Behavioral	88.2%	7.8%	2.0%	0.0%	2.0%
Combination	47.1%	11.8%	25.5%	5.9%	9.8%
Other	94.1%	3.9%	0.0%	0.0%	2.0%

Source: Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention Program January 2010 Campus Progress Report (Texas Education Agency, 2010)

To illustrate further, Figure 1 contains a stacked bar chart showing the percentage of campuses that had an early warning data system related to the proportion of students identified for intervention services, broken down by the different indicator types. Clearly, more campuses identified the majority of their students for interventions during the fall 2009 semester using academic indicators or a combination of indicators. Fewer campuses indicated they primarly used attendance, behavioral, or other indicators to identify the majority of their students.

[14] On the January 2010 campus progress report, the proportion of students was defined as follows: Few (0–20%), Some (21–40%), Half (41-60%), Most (61–80%), and Almost All (81–100%).

Figure 1. Percentage of Campuses That Used Different Indicators to Identify Struggling Students for Intervention Services (*N*=51)



Source: Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention Program January 2010 Campus Progress Report (Texas Education Agency, 2010)

The spring site visit interviews asked program staff what indicators were looked at most often in the early warning data system. Most often, respondents said that a combination of all three indicators was monitored for the students in the system. One program coordinator described how the indicators worked together:

Strategy Spotlights:

[We look at] Grades and attendance much more so than discipline, per se. Although, to be perfectly honest, it is pretty rare that you have a student with a lot of discipline problems that was not already falling into those other two.

A teacher from another visited site explained how academic indicators were looked at weekly in the early warning data system to identify students for interventions:

Strategy Spotlights:

A lot of times we use failure reports. We take a list of all the kids that are failing and what they are failing. If they are failing Mr. A's class, Miss B's class, and my class, we will see their name three times. We do that each week, and that is usually how we pull kids.

Campuses also had systems that tracked the attendance of TNGTI students. Different systems provided varying levels of detail; one assistant principal offered details about the types of available attendance

data: “It shows me all the absences, what day, what period, excused, unexcused, tardy, in school suspension, all that. It also tells me any court cases or any truancy actions that have been filed.” For behavior, one teacher described how certain flags could be used in the system so that staff could see what behavior issues were occurring in what classrooms:

> ***Strategy Spotlights:***
>
> ***If I have a kid that is being a holy terror in my class but they are great for Miss A, I might ask her who else is in that class.… That can stand as a flag for something going on since I am having all these issues but she is not. So what is the environment in her class that is causing that child to do what they need to do in there and not in mine? In those terms we do use it that way.***

Uses of the Early Warning Data System

On the April 2010 campus progress report, respondents indicated how the early warning data system had been used during the 2009–10 school year. Of the 57 campuses that indicated they had an early warning data system, the majority of them indicated that the system was primarily used to monitor at-risk students (88%), review student progress (84%), and identify at-risk students (83%). Approximately two thirds of campuses (68%) reported that they used this system to document interventions with the students. Table 24 shows the overall purposes of the early warning data systems used by participating campuses.

Table 24. How the Early Warning Data System Was Used for the 2009–10 School Year (*N*=57)

	Number of Campuses	Percentage of Campuses
Monitoring at-risk students	50	87.7%
Reviewing student progress	48	84.2%
Identifying at-risk students in need of intervention	47	82.5%
Documenting interventions with students	39	68.4%

Source: Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention Program April 2010 Campus Progress Report (Texas Education Agency, 2010)
Note: Respondents were asked to “Check all that apply.” Percentages, therefore, do not sum to 100%.

Frequency of Progress Monitoring With Early Warning Data System. The January 2010 campus progress report asked campuses that were implementing an early warning data system to indicate how frequently data were reviewed to identify students for interventions and to monitor the progress of students receiving interventions. The review period most frequently indicated for review of data was every three weeks for identification (41%) and progress monitoring (39%). Table 25 shows the different time periods participating campuses indicated for identifying students for interventions and monitoring the progress of students in those interventions.

Table 25. Frequency of Use of Early Warning Data System for Identification and Monitoring Student Progress (*N*=51)

Time Period	Identifying Students for Interventions		Monitoring Student Progress in Interventions	
	Number of Campuses	Percentage of Campuses	Number of Campuses	Percentage of Campuses
Daily	1	2.0%	0	0%
Weekly	11	21.6%	14	27.5%
Every three week progress period	21	41.2%	20	39.2%
Every six week grading period	13	25.5%	11	21.6%
Every nine week grading period	0	0.0%	2	3.9%
Other	5	9.8%	4	7.8%

Source: Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention Program January 2010 Campus Progress Report (Texas Education Agency, 2010)

Looking across the first semester of ninth grade, one third of participating campuses (33%) indicated that most to almost all of the TNGTI students were identified for interventions by the end of the fall 2009 semester (16% and 18%, respectively). On the flip side, 12 campuses reported that few to none of the TNGTI students were identified for interventions during the fall semester (24%). This could indicate that a campus did not have an effective early warning data system in place at the beginning of the year or that the TNGTI students were maintaining appropriate grades, attendance, and behavior and did not require intervention services during the fall semester. Table 26 shows the the approximate percentage of TNGTI students who were identified for interventions for the fall 2009 semester.

Table 26. Percentage of TNGTI Students Identified for Interventions by the End of Fall 2009 Semester (*N*=51)

Percentage of TNGTI Students	Number of Campuses	Percentage of Campuses
Almost all (81–100%)	9	17.6%
Most (61–80%)	8	15.7%
Half (41–60%)	12	23.5%
Some (21–40%)	10	19.6%
Few (0–20%)	12	23.5%

Source: Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention Program January 2010 Campus Progress Report (Texas Education Agency, 2010)

The campuses that implemented an early warning data system were asked to indicated when during the school year students were identified for intervention services. Students were most often identified at the six- week grading period, as 16 campuses indicated that half to almost all of students were identified

at this time point (31%). Several campuses indicated that half to almost all of students were identified at the three-week grading period (24%). There were also several campuses that indicated students were not identified until sometime after the nine-week grading period (24%) (see Table 27).

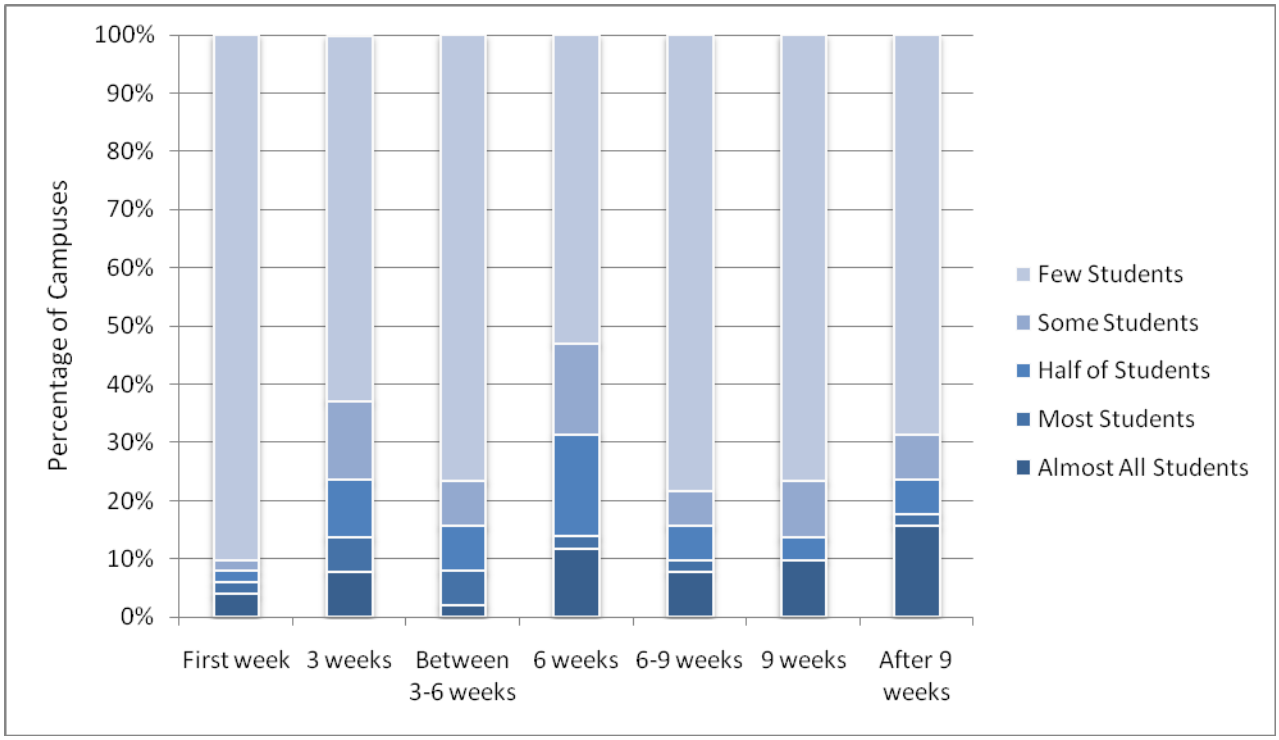
Table 27. Percentage of Campuses That Identified Students for Interventions During the Semester (*N*=51)

When Students Identified for Interventions	Proportion of Students				
	Few	Some	Half	Most	Almost All
Within the first week of the fall semester	90.2%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	3.9%
At the three-week grading period	62.7%	13.7%	9.8%	5.9%	7.8%
Between three- and six-week grading period	76.5%	7.8%	7.8%	5.9%	2.0%
At the six-week grading period	52.9%	15.7%	17.6%	2.0%	11.8%
Between six- and nine-week grading period	78.4%	5.9%	5.9%	2.0%	7.8%
At the nine-week grading period	76.5%	9.8%	3.9%	0.0%	9.8%
After the nine-week grading period	68.6%	7.8%	5.9%	2.0%	15.7%

Source: Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention Program January 2010 Campus Progress Report (Texas Education Agency, 2010)

To illustrate further, Figure 2 contains a stacked bar chart showing the percentage of campuses that had an early warning data system related to the proportion of students identified for intervention services, broken down by the different time points during the fall 2009 semester. It appears that more campuses identified the majority of their students by the usual grading periods of six weeks, three weeks, and after nine weeks. It should be noted that five campuses indicated that they identified the majority of their students within the first week of school.

Figure 2. Percentage of Campuses That Identified Struggling Students at Different Times During the Fall 2009 Semester (*N*=51)



Source: Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention Program January 2010 Campus Progress Report (Texas Education Agency, 2010)

Based on the January 2010 campus progress report data displayed in Figure 2, it was more likely that data were periodically shared with teachers and administrators every three weeks, every six weeks, or after nine weeks to correspond with the progress report and grading periods. The data coordinator at one campus said that reports for the TNGTI students were pulled at the three-week mark to monitor their progress:

Strategy Spotlights:

We do progress reports every three weeks here. So when we pull the progress reports and we see the student is struggling and that matches up with what we saw in the summer, we will pull the teacher and tell them maybe we need to work on this intervention.

Program staff at the spring site visit campuses had a range of responses about how often the early warning data system was accessed and updated. One interventionist stated that reports were run weekly to monitor students and identify areas of need:

Strategy Spotlights:

Every week I run two reports. One is an attendance report and one is grades. On Monday morning I come in and pull every kid one at a time and look at GradeSpeed. And I look at every grade they have.… I try to prioritize who gets called in by who is doing the poorest or who has not been called in for a week or so. I try to prioritize according to where they are and their needs.

Student Groups. On the January 2010 campus progress report, respondents were asked about which groups of students were being tracked in the early warning data system. Almost half of campuses that had a working early warning data system indicated that only information on the TNGTI students was being tracked (47%). The other most frequent response was that all students in the ninth grade were being tracked in the system (39%). Table 28 displays the different groups being monitored with the early warning data system, as reported on the January 2010 campus progress report.

Approximately half of survey respondents indicated that they were aware of which students were being tracked through the early warning data system on their campus (51%), while the other half of respondents were unaware of which students were being tracked in the early warning data system (49%). Of those survey respondents who knew about the students in the early warning data system, 41% indicated that all ninth-grade students were being tracked in the database. Table 28 also shows the different student groups being monitored with the early warning data system, as reported on the March 2010 staff survey. The differences between the two data sources may be a result of the difference in time period or a difference in knowledge about the program.

Table 28. Student Groups Monitored in the Early Warning Data System

Student Groups	Percentage of Campuses (*N*=51)	Percentage of Survey Respondents (*N*=266)
Only students who participated in the TNGTI program	47.1%	23.3%
All ninth-grade students	39.2%	41.4%
All at-risk ninth-grade students	2.0%	11.3%
All students in the school	11.8%	21.8%
Other (e.g., ninth- and 10th-grade at-risk students)	0%	2.2%

Sources: Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention Program January 2010 Campus Progress Report and Staff Survey (Texas Education Agency, 2010)

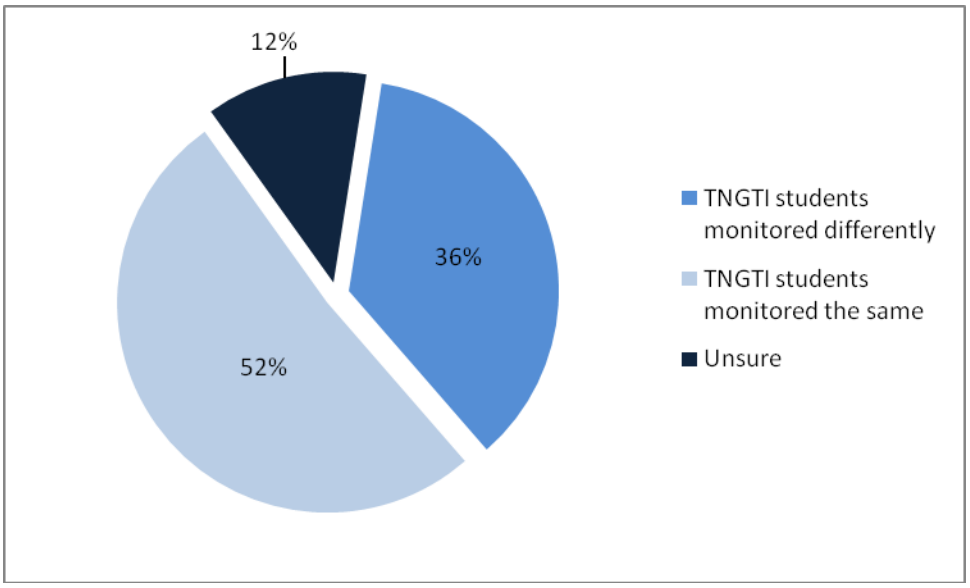
A smaller group of respondents (23%) reported that only the students in the TNGTI program were being tracked. The principal at one site visit school thought that the system worked because it was only the smaller group of TNGTI students being tracked: "If I could replicate it I wish I could.… But the beauty of this is that we have a limit of the number of kids we can put in there. And to me that is a key to its success." The student databases at other schools were a combination of the TNGTI students and other groups or grade levels. A teacher at one spring site visit campus stated:

Strategy Spotlights:

[The early warning data system] is for all students. We have a ninth-grade database where we are keeping track of ninth graders. After we started the ninth-grade database, the campus decided they liked it so much that they started one for grades 10 through 12. But they are kept as two separate databases at this point.

Differences in Monitoring TNGTI Students. On the staff survey, respondents who indicated that they knew which students were tracked in the early warning data system on their campus were asked if TNGTI students were monitored differently than other students. Approximately 36% of respondents indicated that there was a difference in the process of monitoring the academic performance, attendance, and behavioral data of TNGTI students compared to other ninth-grade students. Close to half of respondents (52%) indicated that TNGTI students were monitored the same as other students, and the other 12% were unsure if there was a difference (see Figure 3).

Figure 3. How TNGTI Students are Monitored in the Early Warning Data System Compared to Other Students (*N*=266)



Source: Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention Program Staff Survey (Texas Education Agency, 2010)

On the staff survey, respondents were asked an open-ended question about how data were monitored differently for the TNGTI students compared with other students. Of the 88 respondents to the survey who wrote in a response, the most frequently cited difference was that there were more interventions and more documentation of services related to the TNGTI students (32%). In addition, some respondents indicated that it was specifically the TNGTI students who were having their academic performance, attendance, and behavior tracked in the system (26%) or that there were separate flags for those students in the data system (24%). Table 29 displays all of the differences mentioned by survey respondents related to monitoring the progress of TNGTI students compared to other students.

Table 29. Differences Between How TNGTI Students Are Monitored Compared to Other Students (*N*=88)

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
More interventions, documentation	28	31.8%
Academic, behavior, attendance data	23	26.1%
TNGTI students identified and tagged in system	21	23.9%
All ninth graders monitored, at-risk students	13	14.8%
Periodic monitoring (e.g., weekly, biweekly, etc.)	12	13.6%
Unsure	10	11.4%

Source: Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention Program Staff Survey (Texas Education Agency, 2010)

Staff Responsible for Early Warning Data System

On the campus progress report, a greater percentage of campuses indicated that the TNGTI grant coordinator or program manager was responsible for managing the data in the the early warning data system and using that data to identify struggling students based on academic, attendance, and behavioral issues (67%) than the percentage of campuses indicating any other staff member was responsible for this. Counselors also were reported to be responsible for managing and using the student data in the early warning data system (37%). Respondents usually indicated that the same number of people who managed data also used the data for identification, except that assistant principals less often were reported as involved with managing the data system (33%) and more often reported as involved with using the data to identify students for interventions (47%). Table 30 shows the number and percentage of campuses reporting specific staff members as responsible for managing the early warning data system and using that data to identify struggling students at participating campuses.

Table 30. Staff Members Responsible for Early Warning Data System (*N*=51)

Staff Members	Managing Data System		Identifying Students	
	Number of Campuses	Percentage of Campuses	Number of Campuses	Percentage of Campuses
Grant coordinator/program manager	34	66.7%	34	66.7%
Counselor(s)	19	37.3%	19	37.3%
Assistant principal(s)	17	33.3%	24	47.1%
Information technology staff	12	23.5%	N/A	N/A
Interventionist (including at-risk specialist)	9	17.6%	9	17.6%
District-level administrator	8	15.7%	8	15.7%
Core or elective teacher(s)	7	13.7%	7	13.7%
Administrative staff in the main office	5	9.8%	5	9.8%
Other (e.g., mentor, college advocate)	11	21.6%	10	19.6%

Source: Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention Program January 2010 Campus Progress Report (Texas Education Agency, 2010)
Note: Respondents were asked to "Check all that apply." Percentages, therefore, do not sum to 100%.

On the staff survey, respondents were asked to indicate what role they personally played in accessing and using the early warning data system at their campus. Approximately 28% of respondents indicated that they had direct access to the system and used the data to monitor student progress, while 24% received student progress reports from the staff member responsible for the data system. Some respondents also provided data for another staff member to enter into the system (21%) and/or entered the student data into the early warning data system themselves (21%). Of campuses that had an early warning data system, 27% of respondents had no role associated with the system or indicated that they did not know their role in relation to accessing and monitoring student data (22%). Table 31 shows the percentages of respondents indicating they played the different roles related to the early warning data system at participating campuses.

Table 31. Different Roles Related to Using the Early Warning Data System (*N*=518)

Role of Staff Member in the Use of the Early Warning Data System	Percentage of Respondents
Access the system directly to monitor student progress in key areas (e.g., academics, attendance, behavior)	28.4%
Receive reports of feedback from system administrator regarding student progress	24.1%
Provide student data to another staff member who enters it into the system	21.4%
Enter student data directly into the system	21.2%
I have no role associated with the early warning data system	26.8%
I don't know what my role is related to using the system	22.2%

Source: Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention Program Staff Survey (Texas Education Agency, 2010)
Note: Respondents were asked to "Check all that apply." Percentages, therefore, do not sum to 100%.

On the staff survey, respondents were asked to indicate if they knew who was responsible for monitoring the early warning data system at their campus. Of those that had a system at their school, 60% indicated that they were aware of who was responsible for monitoring students with the early warning data system. Only 47% of respondents indicated that they had consulted with someone responsible for monitoring the early warning data system about the performance of their students during the 2009–10 school year.

During the spring site visits, some interview respondents said that there was one person responsible for entering data into the early warning data system and maintaining student progress reports. At one campus, this task was assigned to the academic coach who would compile the data and share it with teachers. One teacher said:

Program Highlights:

[The program coordinator] is the one that has tracked all of the information. I really had no idea about it until he sat down and showed me the spreadsheet and this huge chart…. He has done a fantastic job. Seeing that information kind of opens your eyes to the situation.

At another campus, the associate principal stated that the responsibility of maintaining the early warning data system was split among the different teacher teams in the building. One person per team was designated as the data collector and would maintain the records for that team's designated students:

> ***Strategy Spotlights:***
>
> ***It is kept electronically on spreadsheets but everyone just keeps their own Excel file and updates it as they go. Usually one person on the team, one teacher is responsible for maintaining it and brings a laptop or a computer and they will type in as they go.***

Teacher and Staff Use of Early Warning Data System

The staff survey asked respondents if they were aware of the school using an early warning data system for the TNGTI program to identify struggling ninth-grade students. The majority of survey respondents indicated that they were aware of the existence of such a system on their campus (74%). However, there were fewer respondents who knew details about the system measures, the identification process, or how to use the early warning data system, as indicated below. Of those who knew of the system, approximately half were at least moderately aware of the measures used to identify struggling students (53%). A similar number of people knew the process used to determine if students needed intervention services to at least a moderate extent (50%).

When asked if they personally used the early warning data system at their campuses, 44% of survey respondents indicated that they used the system to a moderate or a great extent. On the opposite end, 42% of respondents did not use the early warning data system at all on their campus. Table 32 displays the range of responses related to level of experience with the early warning data system.

Table 32. Percentage of Respondents With Experience Using the Early Warning Data System (*N*=518)

Extent to which…	Not at All	To a Minimal Extent	To a Moderate Extent	To a Great Extent
Personally aware of the system measures used for identifying struggling students	27.0%	20.3%	28.0%	24.7%
Personally know the process of using the system measures to determine if a student is in need of intervention services	31.4%	18.7%	29.3%	20.5%
Personally use the early warning data system	42.1%	13.7%	24.3%	19.9%

Source: Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention Program Staff Survey (Texas Education Agency, 2010)

Teacher Access to Early Warning Data System. Of the campuses that had an early warning data system, 38% of survey respondents indicated that the system was accessible to teachers, while 14% indicated that the system was not accessible to teachers. The greatest proportion of respondents indicated that they did not know one way or the other if the early warning data system was available to teachers (48%). Table 33 shows the distribution of survey responses related to teacher access to the early warning data system.

Table 33. Teacher Access to the Early Warning Data System (*N*=518)

	Percentage of Respondents
Teachers have access to the early warning data system	38.0%
Teachers do **not** have access to the early warning data system	14.3%
Unaware if teachers have access to the system	47.7%

Source: Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention Program Staff Survey (Texas Education Agency, 2010)

At the campuses involved in the spring site visits, most respondents said that theoretically teachers could access the early warning data system whenever they wanted. However, the ease with which these data could be accessed varied from campus to campus. At some campuses, teachers had direct access to the student information and could see the progress of students from classroom to classroom. A teacher at one of these campuses described how useful this access was for monitoring:

Strategy Spotlights:

Most of the time when we are having concerns with the students, the teachers will put that in the database. So if I just say something is up with them today, I will go on the database to look and see if there is anything, just checking it out. It is a source of information.

At another campus, the information that teachers could directly access was more limited. Teachers could only access individual data about the students in their own classrooms. One teacher said that more information could be obtained about their students, but that it required more effort and going through a gatekeeper:

Challenges Faced:

Well I just do not know if that data is something that we should have had access to all the time. It might have been helpful to me to know not only how many times a student has been absent in my class but also in other classes. Is it just my class that they are skipping? I do not know if I have access to that information. As far as I know, right now we do not unless we physically go ask their counselor or attendance clerk.

Use of Early Warning Data System During Teacher Meetings. In the April 2010 campus progress report, respondents were asked to indicate how the early warning data system is used by teachers during team meetings or small learning community meetings. Respondents indicated that at 45% of campuses, the teachers used the early warning data system in addition to other data sources to discuss student progress during team meetings. However, another 45% of campuses indicated that teachers did not use information from the early warning data system because it replicated other data sources, was not timely enough to be useful, or for other reasons. Table 34 shows the different ways teachers used the early warning data system during team meetings at participating campuses.

Table 34. Teacher Use of the Early Warning Data System During Team Meetings (*N*=51)

	Number of Campuses	Percentage of Campuses
During team meetings, teachers use the early warning data system as the single source of student data	0	0.0%
During team meetings, teachers use the early warning data system in addition to other sources of data (e.g., gradebooks, attendance reports, failure reports, etc.)	23	45.1%
During team meetings, teachers do **not** use the early warning data system because the data replicates other sources of data and/or is not timely enough to be useful	13	25.5%
Teachers do **not** use the early warning data system during team meetings for other reasons	10	19.6%
Other (e.g., use paper copies of early warning data system reports)	5	9.8%

Source: Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention Program April 2010 Campus Progress Report (Texas Education Agency, 2010)

At the spring site visit to campuses, interview respondents said they often would discuss student data during team meetings. The sources of these student data varied from campus to campus, with some teachers using the early warning data system directly, while others relied more on teacher grade books and other data. One teacher said the system is used in team meetings to flag students in need of assistance:

Strategy Spotlights:

[Identifying students] happens more with using the early warning data system within team meetings. We take information from failure reports. We all come together. A lot of the case kids came from the summer. We bring in information. We are flagging those kids that way.

The interventionist at another campus described how the team used the early warning data system every week to prioritize students who needed the most immediate attention for intervention services:

Strategy Spotlights:

We pretty much identify our students at our team meetings. We meet twice a week. Every teacher brings at least three students that they are concerned about on Tuesdays. And the students that are higher at risk we start with them and work down.

Training on the Early Warning Data System

In the January 2010 campus progress report, respondents were asked to indicate the number of hours of early warning data system training received by different staff members on the campus. On campuses that had a working system, the person who received the most training was the TNGTI grant coordinator or program manager, with 78% receiving more than two hours of training. The majority of assistant principals and counselors also participated in some training, with 45% of assistant principals and 39% of

counselors receiving more than two hours of training. Teachers and office administrative staff were less likely to have participated in early warning data system training, with 45% of teachers and 47% of office staff receiving no training. Table 35 shows the amount of training provided to different staff members at participating campuses.

Table 35. Amount of Early Warning Data System Training Provided to Campus Staff Members (*N*=51)

	None	Less Than Two Hours	Two to Four Hours	Four to Six Hours	More Than Six Hours
TNGTI grant coordinator or program manager	7.8%	13.7%	23.5%	23.5%	31.4%
Assistant principal	39.2%	15.7%	13.7%	15.7%	15.7%
Counselors	39.2%	21.6%	13.7%	11.8%	13.7%
Teachers	45.1%	23.5%	15.7%	9.8%	5.9%
Office administrative staff	47.1%	21.6%	9.8%	11.8%	9.8%

Source: Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention Program January 2010 Campus Progress Report (Texas Education Agency, 2010)

In the January 2010 campus progress report, respondents were asked to indicate who had provided training on the early warning data system to building-level staff. Respondents could select multiple providers in the campus progress report. Campuses indicated that district staff (37%), campus staff (37%), TEA staff (33%), and other education service center staff (33%) had provided training on the early warning data system to campus staff. At two campuses, respondents indicated there was an early warning data system in place, but that no training had been provided to staff on how to use it at the time of the this progress report (see Table 36).

Table 36. Staff Who Provided Early Warning Data System Training to Campus Staff (*N*=51)

	Number of Campuses	Percentage of Campuses
District staff	19	37.3%
Campus staff	19	37.3%
TEA staff	17	33.3%
Education service center staff	17	33.3%
External consultant	3	5.9%
No training was provided	2	3.9%
Other	1	2.0%

Source: Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention Program January 2010 Campus Progress Report (Texas Education Agency, 2010)
Note: Respondents were asked to "Check all that apply." Percentages, therefore, do not sum to 100%.

On the staff survey, respondents were asked the question, "To what extent have you been adequately trained in the use of the early warning data system?" Of those who knew about the existence of the system, 37% of respondents indicated that they had been adequately trained to a moderate or a great extent. It was notable that close to half of respondents (48%) indicated that they did not receive adequate training on the early warning data system or that it was only minimally adequate (28% and 20%, respectively). Table 37 shows the range of survey responses related to the extent to which staff received adequate training on the early warning data system.

Table 37. Extent to Which Staff Received Adequate Training on Use of the Early Warning Data System (*N*=518)

	Percentage of Respondents
To a great extent	12.2%
To a moderate extent	24.5%
To a minimal extent	19.9%
Not at all	28.0%
Don't know	15.4%

Source: Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention Program Staff Survey (Texas Education Agency, 2010)

The staff at the spring site visit schools had a range of training on the early warning data system. Some campuses relied solely on the coordinator or administrator in the building to go to the training session and share that information with the rest of the staff. Other campuses involved all of the ninth-grade teachers and invested time in multiple professional development sessions. The principal at one campus described the benefit of involving all of the ninth-grade teachers:

Strategy Spotlights:

In a sense, part of what the grant has been able to afford us is a day to bring the ninth-grade teachers to training on the database. They were super excited to have a forum. And it has evolved just based on their recognition.

At campuses with fewer opportunities for training, some program staff members said they felt like they were on their own and had to learn the system through trial and error. One teacher stated:

Strategy Spotlights:

It all comes down to how much you are willing to get in there and poke around and figure it out. If you are not someone that is willing to basically teach yourself after they show you how to do it one time, then you do not know how to do it.

VII. Intervention Services Findings

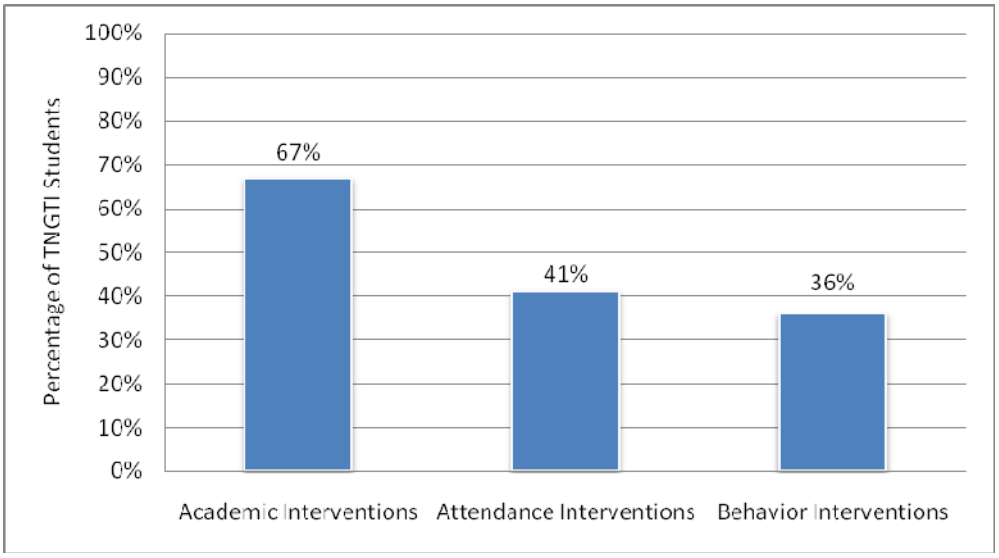
The third major component of the TNGTI grant program requires participating campuses to provide to struggling students intervention services that target their specific academic, attendance, or behavioral needs. The data collected from the January 2010 and April 2010 campus progress reports, staff survey, and interviews conducted during spring site visits provided information about the different interventions provided at TNGTI campuses. Respondents also were asked about the barriers and facilitators to successful implementation and to provide their opinion on how effective the intervention services had been in assisting TNGTI students. Student-level data also were analyzed to determine participation rates in intervention services during the fall 2010 semester.

Overview of Intervention Services

Interventions for TNGTI Students

Campuses offered a variety of intervention services to struggling students in ninth grade during the 2009–10 school year. The January 2010 student data collection examined the types of intervention services being received by students who originally had been identified for the TNGTI program, regardless of whether they ended up participating. The student data showed that 67% of students identified for the TNGTI program received academic interventions, 41% received attendance interventions, and 36% received behavior interventions during the fall 2009 semester (See Figure 4).

Figure 4. Percentage of TNGTI Identified Students Who Received Intervention Services in Fall 2009 (*N*=5,070)



Source: Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention Program January 2010 Student Data Collection (Texas Education Agency, 2010)
Note: Students could be identified for multiple types of interventions. Percentages, therefore, do not sum to 100%.

Differences in Intervention Services for TNGTI Students. All schools offered interventions of some sort to struggling students, but some campuses differed on the services they offered to TNGTI students and non-TNGTI students. On the staff survey, respondents were asked if there were different interventions provided to students who participated in the summer transition program compared to other students at the school. The most frequently noted differences were the assignment of a mentor to the TNGTI students and the development of a personal bond between students and staff members (31%). Additional field trips and incentives also were offered to TNGTI students as positive reinforcement (17%), and more intervention services reportedly were provided to this group (16%).

The January 2010 campus progress report specifically asked how the intervention services offered to TNGTI students were different compared to services offered to other students on the campus. Almost 77% of campuses indicated that intervention services were different for TNGTI students in some way. Respondents most often reported that the frequency or intensity of the interventions was different for TNGTI students (55%), or that the timing of the intervention services was different for this group of students, most often offered earlier (45%). In addition, the staff members providing the interventions were different for 33% of participating campuses, and the type of interventions differed at 23% of campuses. Similar to the staff survey results, 23% of campuses reported that there were no differences in the intervention services offered to TNGTI students (see Table 38).

Table 38. Campuses Reporting Differences Between Intervention Services Provided to TNGTI Students Compared to Other Students (*N*=60)

	Number of Campuses	Percentage of Campuses
Frequency or intensity/duration of interventions differ	33	55.0%
Timing of intervention services differ (e.g., earlier in the year)	27	45.0%
Staff providing the intervention differs	20	33.3%
Type of intervention offered differs	14	23.3%
The intervention services do not differ	14	23.3%
Other (e.g., mentors, incentives, one-on-one conferences)	3	5.0%

Source: Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention Program January 2010 Campus Progress Report (Texas Education Agency, 2010)
Note: Respondents were asked to "Check all that apply." Percentages, therefore, do not sum to 100%.

Additional Intervention Services. In the April 2010 campus progress report, respondents were asked to report on what additional supports were provided to the TNGTI students that were not broadly available to other ninth-grade students. The most common difference reported was that the TNGTI students were monitored more closely than other students, using the early warning data system or other means (67%). As seen in Table 39, respondents also stated that the summer program was different for TNGTI students, either by being solely offered to them (64%) or by being more intensive than the regular summer program (52%). When additional intervention services were offered to TNGTI students, they were most likely to be academic (46%), followed by behavioral (36%) and attendance (34%) interventions.

Table 39. Additional Intervention Services Provided to TNGTI Students That Were Not Broadly Available to Other Ninth-Grade Students (*N*=61)

	Number of Campuses	Percentage of Campuses
The progress of TNGTI students was monitored more closely than the progress of other ninth-grade students	41	67.2%
TNGTI students participated in a summer transition program while other ninth-grade students did not	39	63.9%
TNGTI students participated in a more intensive summer transition program than other ninth-grade students	32	52.5%
TNGTI students received additional **academic** intervention services	28	45.9%
TNGTI students received additional **behavioral** intervention services	22	36.1%
TNGTI students received additional **attendance** intervention services	21	34.4%
The supports provided to TNGTI students did **not** differ from those broadly available to all ninth-grade students	16	26.2%

Source: Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention Program April 2010 Campus Progress Report (Texas Education Agency, 2010)
Note: Respondents were asked to "Check all that apply." Percentages, therefore, do not sum to 100%.

The interviews during the spring site visits asked program staff if there were differences between the supports available to the TNGTI students compared to other struggling students. Responses ranged from interventions being very focused on only the participating students to the TNGTI students receiving services just like any other student in the school. The coordinator at one campus described how the program was self-contained and had certain activities and meetings just for the ninth-grade students who participated in the summer transition program. Even when other students would sometimes receive extra help, the main focus was on the TNGTI students:

Strategy Spotlights:

When they meet with the interventionist, they will not turn a student away. But their main primary focus is on those [TNGTI] ninth graders. We want to see about expanding the program. So we need to really focus on them so we will know if expanding the program will be as beneficial as we think it will be.

The district administrator at a different site stated that the interventions provided to TNGTI students were the same as for other students, but that progress monitoring was only conducted for TNGTI participating students. Therefore, two struggling students might both receive tutoring, but the TNGTI student would have more documentation collected on the effects and outcomes of that intervention:

Strategy Spotlights:

The continuum of services for our grant students and those that are not participating in the grant are very similar.... They do mix together. There is no differentiation between our grant students and our non-grant students, other than the fact that we document how the grant students are being served.

One last example from a high school counselor described the campus environment where no distinction is made between the intervention services for participating students and other struggling learners. All ninth-grade students are served equally, regardless of their TNGTI status:

> ***Strategy Spotlights:***
>
> ***I know names of these kids, but I do not really treat them any differently than I do any other ninth grader.… We look at the ninth graders as a whole and we do the same things for every one of them to try to help them be successful and move on to the next grade level.***

Barriers to Implementing Intervention Services

The January 2010 campus progress report asked several questions about challenges campuses might have faced related to implementing the intervention services. More than 53% of campuses indiciated there were no barriers to effective implementation of the intervention services. When problems were mentioned, the most frequently reported barrier was finding the time to provide extra services and activities to struggling students (15%). Other respondents stated that they faced challenges with low student participation (13%) and lack of parent support (12%) for intervention activities. Another challenge at some campuses was a lack of teacher support or buy-in to the TNGTI program services and activities (8%). Table 40 presents a summary of the barriers that campuses reported they faced specific to the implementation of the intervention services.

Table 40. Barriers to Implementing TNGTI Intervention Services (*N*=60)

	Number of Campuses	Percentage of Campuses
Time for intervention services	9	15.0%
Low student participation	8	13.3%
Low parent support	7	11.7%
Lack of teacher/staff buy-in	5	8.3%
Poor communication	2	3.3%
Difficult to use early warning data system to track interventions	2	3.3%
Funding, resources	1	1.7%
Poor planning	1	1.7%
None	32	53.3%

Source: Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention Program January 2010 Campus Progress Report (Texas Education Agency, 2010)
Note: Respondents gave multiple responses. Percentages therefore do not sum to 100%.

There were few challenges specifically related to intervention services mentioned during spring interviews. There were some general barriers related to finding time for interventions as well as convincing students to participate in offered services. One campus offered before- and after-school tutoring with the core subject teachers, but one teacher found it challenging to get the students who

needed it the most to participate. This teacher stated that the biggest challenge to the success of the interventions was the following:

> ***Challenges Faced:***
>
> ***Apathy, honestly. They can't come before school because they just can't get here that early. Well, I can't do after school. So if you want to make the effort, you are going to have to come to me when I have the time. And if the kids do not care, they just do not care. And I think that has definitely been one of the biggest struggles for me, trying to make these kids care. And you can't. There is nothing that you can do to change some of these kids' minds about school.***

At one school, there was some tension between staff members and the at-risk interventionists about roles and responsibilities. Issues related to workload and time spent working with students caused some conflict, said one district administrator:

> ***Challenges Faced:***
>
> ***We still have some counselors that have resentment asking, "Why is it that I am in my office doing all the schedule changes, doing all of this paperwork and you have these [at-risk] counselors just talking to kids?".... It is not paper intensive like a regular academic counselor because they are providing supplemental resources, which is what they are being paid to do, just to focus on these kids. It has been a little tense at some of the campuses.***

Facilitators of Intervention Services

In the January 2010 campus progress report, respondents indicated several facilitators that were helpful for the successful implementation of the TNGTI intervention services. One quarter (25%) of campuses indicated there were no specific facilitators of implementation of intervention services at their building. Of those who offered details about facilitators, the most frequently reported success factors were the dedication of the teachers and staff (30%), the actual intervention services offered to students (18%), team collaboration (10%), and support from school administrators (10%) and external agencies and universities (10%). Table 41 presents a summary of the facilitators specific to implementation of intervention services.

Table 41. Facilitators of Intervention Services Implementation (*N*=60)

	Number of Campuses	Percentage of Campuses
Dedication of staff, buy-in (program coordinator, teachers, etc.)	18	30.0%
The intervention services offered	11	18.3%
Team collaboration, small learning community team	6	10.0%
Supportive administration (e.g., principal, assistant principal)	6	10.0%
External support (e.g., FACS, university programs)	6	10.0%
The early warning data system	3	5.0%
The summer transition program	3	5.0%
Parent support	2	3.3%
Other (e.g., mentor system, positive climate)	6	10.0%
None	15	25.0%

Source: Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention Program January 2010 Campus Progress Report (Texas Education Agency, 2010)
Note: Respondents gave multiple responses. Percentages, therefore, do not sum to 100%.

The facilitators of intervention services named by respondents during the spring interviews were similar to the survey responses. The dedication of interventionists and at-risk specialists was identified as a critical factor to the intervention services for struggling ninth-grade students being effective on a campus. In addition, all teachers and staff supporting the student monitoring and intervention process as a team was important to getting services to the students who most need them. A district administrator commented on the success of this process at the participating campuses:

> ***Program Highlights:***
>
> ***The buy-in from the schools is very good. The team understands the value of the interventions and how positive and strong they are to ensure the overall goal of trying to reduce our dropout and increase our graduation rate for this particular group of students.***

Perceived Effectiveness of Intervention Services

The perceived effectiveness of the intervention services related to the TNGTI program was determined from multiple types of data sources based on the opinions and experiences of teachers and staff who worked with ninth-grade students during the 2009–10 school year. The campus progress reports and staff surveys allowed respondents to give their own rating of effectiveness for different aspects of the intervention services used, and interviews conducted during the spring site visits offered quotes and examples to support these perceptions.

In the January 2010 campus progress report, respondents indicated their level of agreement with statements related to the types of interventions needed for TNGTI students. Respondents most frequently agreed or strongly agreed that there were fewer behavior interventions needed for TNGTI

students (67%). Respondents also agreed that the need for attendance interventions had been lower than expected for TNGTI students (55%). For academic interventions, half of respondents indicated that more services were needed than expected, and the other half indicated that fewer services were needed for TNGTI students (50%). Table 42 shows the distribution of responses across the types of interventions needed.

Table 42. Types of Intervention Services Needed for TNGTI Students (*N*=60)

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
The need for **behavior** interventions with TNGTI students has been lower than expected.	3.3%	30.0%	61.7%	5.0%
The need for **attendance** interventions with TNGTI students has been lower than expected.	3.3%	41.7%	50.0%	5.0%
The need for **academic** interventions with TNGTI students has been lower than expected.	11.7%	38.3%	43.3%	6.7%

Source: Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention Program January 2010 Campus Progress Report (Texas Education Agency, 2010)

The staff survey asked respondents if they were personally involved in providing intervention services to students, and 76% of respondents indicated that they provided interventions in some capacity. Respondents also were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed with different statements related to the effect of the intervention services on their campus. Survey respondents most often agreed that there was a process in place to inform students and parents when students were identified for services (72%) and that there was a clear method for delivering intervention services to them (70%). Most respondents also agreed that the interventions were appropriate for struggling students (67%) and that students in need of interventions were receiving them (66%). Table 43 shows all survey responses related to the perceived effects of the intervention services at participating campuses.

Table 43. Perceived Effectiveness of Intervention Services Offered by TNGTI Program (*N*=696)

	Don't Know	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
A process is in place to appropriately inform **students and parents** when a student has been identified to receive intervention services.	22.0%	2.6%	3.4%	47.3%	24.7%
There is a clear method for delivering intervention services to struggling students.	18.8%	2.7%	8.3%	47.8%	22.3%
The intervention services are **appropriate** for addressing the needs of struggling students.	24.4%	2.2%	6.8%	44.7%	22.0%
Struggling students in need of intervention services are receiving them.	22.0%	2.3%	9.2%	47.0%	19.5%
The available intervention services are **effective** in addressing the needs of struggling students.	26.6%	3.2%	7.9%	44.0%	18.4%
A sufficient number of staff were assigned to deliver intervention services to students.	25.0%	3.0%	12.4%	39.5%	20.1%
There is a clear method for monitoring the outcomes of intervention services provided to summer transition program students.	37.5%	3.6%	8.2%	34.8%	15.9%

Source: Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention Program Staff Survey (Texas Education Agency, 2010)

The majority of interview respondents at the spring site visit schools felt that the intervention services provided to struggling students were appropriate and effective. A program coordinator at one campus described how struggling students received a variety of intervention services to help them succeed:

Strategy Spotlights:

I think students have become more aware that the school is focusing on them. I think that is changing attitudes. The school does not want students to fail. If one intervention does not work, let us try two or three.

Respondents stated that the different components of the TNGTI program allowed for more intervention services to be offered and be more effective than before. One teacher said, "The interventions have been in place on campus prior. But I think they are being used more effectively and in a more consistent fashion with the use of the [early warning] database." The principal at another spring site visit school predicted that the intervention services offered to struggling students would be beneficial because a number of staff members were keeping an eye on the TNGTI group:

Strategy Spotlights:

I feel that our students are going to benefit greatly academically. When they are falling and stumbling, there are going to be services to them immediately. There are many different safety nets afforded to them.… Because they are being so closely monitored, if it is not the teacher, it is going to be the counselor. Someone is going to pick that up. These kids need that first aid in whatever areas.

Implementation of Intervention Services

Detailed information about the implementation of the intervention services was collected from the January 2010 and April 2010 campus progress reports, the staff survey, and spring site visit interviews. These data provided insight into the various aspects related to implementing the intervention services at campuses participating in the TNGTI program, including the status of interventions available to students, as well as the specific academic, attendance, and behavior interventions offered. Student-level data also were analyzed to determine participation rates in different intervention services during the fall 2010 semester. Some campuses also had new or existing small learning community (SLC) structures in place that helped teachers and program staff implement these intervention services more effectively with struggling ninth graders.

Status of Intervention Services

On the staff survey, respondents were asked to indicate what intervention services were in place at the campus to assist struggling students. It should be noted that some survey respondents were unfamiliar with the TNGTI program, and so staff were responding to all types of interventions available on the campus, not just those specific to the program. The most frequent intervention services available were contact with parents (97%), tutoring (94%), credit recovery programs (92%), and conferences with students and parents (90%). Table 44 shows the top interventions available to struggling students, as reported on the staff survey.

Table 44. Intervention Services Offered to Assist Struggling Students (*N*=696)

Intervention Services Offered	Percentage of Respondents
Contacting parents (phone call, letter home)	97.0%
Tutoring (before/after school, peer)	93.7%
Credit recovery program	92.1%
Participating in conferences (student, parent, teacher)	90.1%
Addressing attendance through legal system (e.g., truancy officer)	89.7%
Student contracts (academic/behavior/attendance)	76.4%
Saturday school	71.3%
Mentor programs	65.8%
Referral to student support/intervention team	62.6%

Source: Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention Program Staff Survey (Texas Education Agency, 2010)
Note: Respondents were asked to "Check all that apply." Percentages, therefore, do not sum to 100%.

During the spring site visit interviews, respondents discussed many types of interventions available to TNGTI students at their campuses. Often, these interventions would address multiple issues at once, and many respondents did not compartmentalize interventions into academics, attendance, and behavior. This comment by one program coordinator is typical of how most school staff looked at all interventions in combination:

Strategy Spotlights:

I believe in addressing the total child. Not only do you have to address the academics, you have to address the social and the emotional component of the child. So I think it is a factor of many things, as far as being successful. I cannot pinpoint it to one. I would say that is the magic component. It is a combination of addressing the total child.

Even with the holistic approach taken by many campuses to help struggling students, there were still certain types of interventions that could specifically address the three focus areas of the TNGTI program. A detailed breakdown of intervention services by academic, behavioral, and attendance focus is presented below. An emphasis is placed on new or modified interventions that went beyond the same interventions offered in prior years.

Academic Interventions Offered

The January 2010 campus progress report asked respondents to report which academic-related intervention services were used with the TNGTI students on the campus during the 2009–10 school year. Respondents also were asked to indicate which of these academic interventions were the same as prior years, had been modified for TNGTI students, or were new interventions developed as part of the TNGTI program.

The most frequently offered academic interventions at TNGTI campuses include tutoring (98%), sending grades and progress reports to parents (98%), conferences with parents, students, and teachers (97%), and personal education or graduation plans (95%). These academic interventions also were the ones that almost all schools had previously offered to students before the TNGTI program. Some campuses reported that these interventions had been modified for participating students, but the majority were offering the same services that had been previously established at that campus.[15]

There were several academic interventions that a number of campuses reported were new or modified for the TNGTI program. Of the 45 campuses that offered mentoring programs as an academic intervention, 60% of respondents indicated that this was a new or modified program for the participating students. Close to half of the respondents also indicated that the pull-out programs (50%) and referrals to the student support or intervention team (48%) were new or modified for TNGTI students. Table 45 shows the distribution of academic interventions used for TNGTI students and whether they were the same as last year, modified, or new.

[15] Information from the January 2010 student data collection provided similar results. The participating TNGTI students who received academic interventions most commonly had a grade or progress report sent to parents (41%), had a conference with parents/teachers (16%), and/or attended Saturday school or an afterschool program (8%).

Table 45. Academic Intervention Services Offered to Assist TNGTI Students (*N*=60)

Academic Interventions	*N*	Used	Same, modified, or new?			
			N	Same	Modified	New
Tutoring (before/after school, peer)	59	98.3%	57	66.7%	31.6%	1.8%
Grades or progress reports sent to parents	59	98.3%	57	86.0%	14.0%	0.0%
Conferences (parent, student, teacher)	58	96.7%	55	65.5%	32.7%	1.8%
Personal education/graduation plans	57	95.0%	55	78.2%	21.8%	0.0%
Credit recovery programs	51	85.0%	48	54.2%	33.3%	12.5%
Saturday school	45	75.0%	43	67.4%	20.9%	11.6%
Mentoring programs	45	75.0%	43	39.5%	27.9%	32.6%
Referral to support/intervention team	44	73.3%	42	52.4%	26.2%	21.4%
Referral to other intervention program	38	63.3%	37	59.5%	24.3%	16.2%
Academic contract	33	55.0%	32	53.1%	28.1%	18.8%
Pull-out programs	32	53.3%	32	50.0%	28.1%	21.9%

Source: Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention Program January 2010 Campus Progress Report (Texas Education Agency, 2010)
Note: Respondents were asked to "Check all that apply." Percentages, therefore, do not sum to 100%.

The most frequently used academic interventions were tutoring (63%), conferences with students, parents, and teachers (48%), and sending grades and progress reports to parents (48%). When asked to indicate which academic interventions had the most impact on student outcomes, respondents' most common responses were again tutoring (82%) and conferences (76%) as well as referrals to a student support/intervention team and credit recovery programs (69% and 68%, respectively). Table 46 shows the distribution of the frequency and impact of all academic interventions.

Table 46. Most Frequently Used and Most Effective Academic Intervention Services (*N*=60)

Academic Interventions	Most Frequently Used		Most Effective	
	Number of Campuses	Percentage of Campuses	Number of Campuses	Percentage of Campuses
Tutoring (before/after school, peer)	38	63.3%	31	81.6%
Conferences (parent, student, teacher)	29	48.3%	22	75.9%
Grades or progress reports sent to parents	29	48.3%	17	58.6%
Credit recovery programs	19	31.7%	13	68.4%
Saturday school	17	28.3%	9	52.9%
Referral to support/intervention team	13	21.7%	9	69.2%
Mentoring programs	11	18.3%	6	54.5%
Personal education/graduation plans	9	15.0%	2	22.2%
Pull-out programs	8	13.3%	4	50.0%
Academic contract	7	11.7%	3	42.9%
Referral to other intervention program	6	10.0%	1	16.7%

Source: Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention Program January 2010 Campus Progress Report (Texas Education Agency, 2010)
Note: Respondents were asked to "Check the top three interventions." Percentages, therefore, do not sum to 100%.

Tutoring also was the academic intervention service most frequently mentioned by respondents during spring site visit interviews. Different types of tutoring were offered to TNGTI students, from before and after school to Saturdays and during school. At one school, students were regularly scheduled for tutoring if they met certain criteria. One teacher described the tutoring system and the benefits of it:

Program Highlights:

Some students that you think might need a little bit of extra help get extra tutorials during the day. They are pulled out twice a week during their elective class. And a lot of the students are telling me that they needed it and they are enjoying it. They are learning. They might be getting a little tired because it is repetitive, but they needed the help. They are quite appreciative when they get the opportunity.

Another important academic intervention mentioned by interview respondents was holding conferences with students, parents, and teachers. Staff now had more time to meet individually with students who were struggling to discuss their progress and what they could do to succeed. The coordinator at one high school said:

Strategy Spotlights:

By having these conversations with the students, the parents, and the teachers, our students feel that there is hope, there is a light at the end of the tunnel. They are not turned off in the ninth grade. They say this is what they need to do, this is what they need to do to get there. We do obtainable goals with them that are realistic and reachable. And we just try to make sure they stay on the right path.

Attendance Interventions Offered

The January 2010 campus progress report asked respondents to report which attendance-related intervention services were used with the TNGTI students on the campus during the 2009–10 school year. Respondents also were asked to indicate which of these attendance interventions were the same as prior years, had been modified for TNGTI students, or were new interventions developed as part of the TNGTI program.[16]

The most frequently offered attendance interventions at TNGTI campuses included contacting parents or guardians by phone or letter (98%), conferences with parents, students, and teachers (97%), and referral to the district truancy officer (92%). These attendance interventions were among the services that almost all schools had previously offered to students before the TNGTI program. Some campuses reported that these interventions had been modified for participating students, but the majority were offering the same services that had been previously established at that campus.

[16] According to the January 2010 student data collection, 41% of the students identified for the TNGTI program received some kind of attendance intervention in the first half of their freshman year. The participating TNGTI students who received attendance interventions most commonly had a conference with parents or teachers (23%), increased progress monitoring (20%), and/or had a parent contacted about the attendance issue (17%).

There were several attendance interventions that a number of campuses reported were new or modified for the TNGTI program. Of the 46 campuses that offered mentoring programs as an attendance intervention, 58% of respondents indicated that this was a new or modified program for the participating students. Approximately 55% of the respondents indicated that incentives or rewards for attendance constituted a new or modified program, and 50% of respondents indicated that attendance contracts were new or modified. Table 47 shows the distribution of attendance interventions used for TNGTI students and whether they were the same as last year, modified, or new.

Table 47. Attendance Intervention Services Offered to Assist TNGTI Students (*N*=60)

Attendance Interventions	*N*	Used	Same, modified, or new?			
			N	Same	Modified	New
Contact parents/guardians (phone calls, letters)	59	98.3%	56	69.6%	26.8%	3.6%
Conferences (parent, student, teacher)	58	96.7%	56	69.6%	30.4%	0.0%
Referral to district truancy officer or legal system	55	91.7%	53	79.2%	17.0%	3.8%
Tutoring (before/after school, peer)	52	86.7%	48	70.8%	27.1%	2.1%
Referral to counselor or support team	51	85.0%	47	66.0%	31.9%	2.1%
Incentives/rewards for attendance	46	76.7%	42	45.2%	33.3%	21.4%
Mentoring program	46	76.7%	43	41.9%	25.6%	32.6%
Saturday school	43	71.7%	42	59.5%	31.0%	9.5%
Family services intervention	40	66.7%	37	65.9%	22.7%	11.4%
Home visits	39	65.0%	38	55.3%	39.5%	5.3%
Attendance contracts	34	56.7%	32	50.0%	37.5%	12.5%

Source: Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention Program January 2010 Campus Progress Report (Texas Education Agency, 2010)

The most frequently used attendance interventions were conferences with students, parents, and teachers (58%), contacting parents through phone calls or letters (53%), and referral to a truancy officer (42%). When asked to indicate which attendance interventions had the most impact on student outcomes, Saturday school (79%), mentoring programs (78%), and family services interventions (75%) were mentioned most frequently. Table 48 shows the distribution of the frequency and impact of all attendance interventions.

Table 48. Most Frequently Used and Most Effective Attendance Intervention Services (*N*=60)

Attendance Interventions	Most Frequently Used		Most Effective	
	Number of Campuses	Percentage of Campuses	Number of Campuses	Percentage of Campuses
Conferences (parent, student, teacher)	35	58.3%	25	71.4%
Contact parents (phone calls, letters)	32	53.3%	23	71.9%
Referral to truancy officer or legal system	25	41.7%	17	68.0%
Tutoring (before/after school, peer)	17	28.3%	10	58.8%
Referral to counselor or support team	16	26.7%	8	50.0%
Saturday school	14	23.3%	11	78.6%
Incentives/rewards for attendance	13	21.7%	8	61.5%
Attendance contracts	12	20.0%	5	41.7%
Mentoring program	9	15.0%	7	77.8%
Home visits	7	11.7%	5	71.4%
Family services intervention	4	6.7%	3	75.0%

Source: Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention Program January 2010 Campus Progress Report (Texas Education Agency, 2010)
Note: Respondents were asked to "Check the top three interventions." Percentages, therefore, do not sum to 100%.

Contacting parents about attendance issues was the intervention service most frequently mentioned by respondents during spring site visit interviews. Many schools had a system set up to track absences and notify the parent or guardian when a student missed a class. One administrator described how attendance issues were handled at the campus:

Strategy Spotlights:

When a student is absent the attendance clerk calls and asks the parents why the students are absent. It makes their parents aware. Some of them may not know their child is not at school. We also let the children know that tardies add up to one absence. Unfortunately we have truancy and teachers are required to call parents.

Another attendance intervention mentioned by interview respondents was holding student and parent conferences with an administrator or attendance committee. In these conferences, the school staff would try to get to the root of the attendance problem and find a solution to the problem. One counselor at a participating school described how important these conferences are for identifying the real attendance issues:

Strategy Spotlights:

We have an attendance committee that meets once a week. And they take a look at the number of absences students have. And they pull students in who have attendance issues and talk to them about what is happening and what they need to do…. Whatever issue is preventing that child [from coming to school] or causing the absences, they take a look at all of that.

Behavior Interventions Offered

The January 2010 campus progress report asked respondents to report which behavior-related intervention services were used with the TNGTI students on the campus during the 2009–10 school year. Respondents also were asked to indicate which of these behavioral interventions were the same as prior years, had been modified for TNGTI students, or were new interventions developed as part of the TNGTI program.

The most frequently offered behavioral interventions at TNGTI campuses included conferences with parents, students, and teachers (100%), personal education or graduation plans (83%), detention (82%), and suspension (80%). These behavioral interventions were among the services that almost all schools had previously offered to students before the TNGTI program. Some campuses reported that these interventions had been modified for participating students, but the majority were offering the same services that had been previously established at that campus.

The two behavioral interventions that the majority of campuses reported were new or modified for the TNGTI program were mentoring programs (62%) and social skills/anger management programs (47%). The behavioral interventions were more likely to have been the same as before the TNGTI program; however, some campuses also had new or modified behavioral contracts (35%) and family services (33%) for the TNGTI students. Table 49 shows the distribution of behavioral interventions used for TNGTI students and whether they were the same as last year, modified, or new.

Table 49. Behavioral Intervention Services Offered to Assist TNGTI Students (*N*=60)

Behavioral Interventions	N	Used	Same, modified, or new?			
			N	Same	Modified	New
Conferences (parent, student, teacher)	60	100%	57	80.7%	19.3%	0.0%
Personal education/graduation plans	50	83.3%	49	75.5%	20.4%	4.1%
Detention	49	81.7%	45	73.3%	26.7%	0.0%
Suspension	48	80.0%	44	86.4%	13.6%	0.0%
Mentoring program	42	70.0%	40	37.5%	35.0%	27.5%
Referral to district truancy officer	40	66.7%	37	89.2%	8.1%	2.7%
Referral to another intervention program	38	63.3%	36	69.4%	25.0%	5.6%
Behavioral contracts	36	60.0%	34	64.7%	26.5%	8.8%
Social skills/anger management program	36	60.0%	34	52.9%	29.4%	17.6%
Family services intervention	32	53.3%	30	66.7%	26.7%	6.7%
Referral to juvenile justice system	29	48.3%	26	80.8%	11.5%	7.7%
Community service	24	40.0%	22	77.3%	18.2%	4.5%

Source: Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention Program January 2010 Campus Progress Report (Texas Education Agency, 2010)

The most frequently used behavioral interventions were conferences with students, parents, and teachers (87%), suspensions (40%), detentions (40%), and behavioral contracts (38%). When asked which behavioral interventions had the most impact on student outcomes, conferences (88%) and mentoring programs (88%) were mentioned most frequently, followed by social skills/anger management programs (78%) and referrals to the district truancy officer (75%) or juvenile justice system (75%). Table 50 shows the distribution of the frequency and impact of all behavioral interventions.

Table 50. Most Frequently Used and Most Effective Behavioral Intervention Services (*N*=60)

Behavioral Interventions	Most Frequently Used		Most Effective	
	Number of Campuses	Percentage of Campuses	Number of Campuses	Percentage of Campuses
Conferences (parent, student, teacher)	52	86.7%	46	88.5%
Suspension	24	40.0%	13	54.2%
Detention	24	40.0%	14	58.3%
Behavioral contracts	23	38.3%	17	73.9%
Mentoring program	17	28.3%	15	88.2%
Personal education/graduation plans	13	21.7%	7	53.8%
Social skills/anger management program	9	15.0%	7	77.8%
Referral to district truancy officer	8	13.3%	6	75.0%
Referral to another intervention program	8	13.3%	3	37.5%
Referral to juvenile justice system	4	6.7%	3	75.0%
Family services intervention	3	5.0%	2	66.7%
Community service	3	5.0%	1	33.3%

Source: Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention Program January 2010 Campus Progress Report (Texas Education Agency, 2010)
Note: Respondents were asked to "Check the top 3 interventions." Percentages, therefore, do not sum to 100%.

During the spring site visits, respondents mentioned the traditional behavior interventions such as contacting parents, having student conferences, and assigning detentions or suspensions, but the mentor programs were identified as having the most impact on behavior during the interviews. At the majority of campuses visited, there were staff members specifically assigned to follow up with the TNGTI students and act as role models and mentors during the school year. One teacher was very active as a mentor on the campus and would often speak with students about making appropriate choices in life:

Program Highlights:

I tell them a lot about life. It is easy to get into trouble but it is hard to get out. We even use examples in math with that. Statistically, how easy is it to get in? 100%. How hard is it to get out? Depends on what you do.… They will look up how much bonds cost to get out of jail and how much lawyer fees are if you get in trouble. And the ones who are not walking a straight line, you can tell when you are getting their attention. They are sitting there doing the work, but they are also evaluating their lives and mistakes they are making.... I had a couple kids tell me that kind of woke them up.

At some campuses, the mentor programs went beyond just teachers and staff and involved upperclassmen as role models for the TNGTI students. The campuses that involved older students in the summer transition program found this experience to be very rewarding for the incoming freshmen as well as the student mentors. A teacher at one school described how that initial bond between the students carried into the school year:

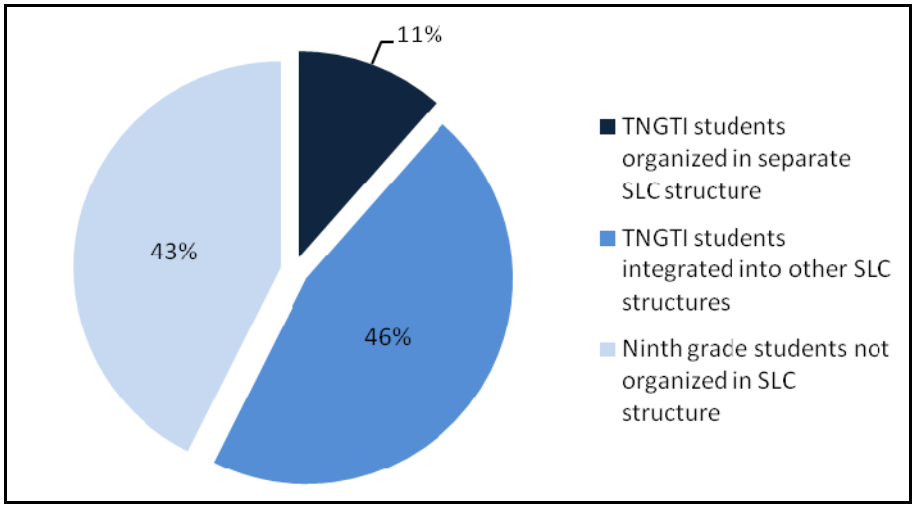
> ***Program Highlights:***
>
> ***We had five freshmen per group of three mentors who they basically spent those two weeks with [during the summer transition program].... Those juniors and seniors really watched out for those freshmen who they mentored in the summer program. And I think that was a bigger impact than the adults who were here supervising.***

Small Learning Communities

Beyond specific intervention services offered to struggling students at participating campuses, many schools (57%) also had a small learning community (SLC) structure in their building. One of the tenets of the small learning community philosophy is that students have a stronger connection with their teachers and their peers when they are structured into smaller groups instead of the traditional high school structure. The SLC structure can be particularly beneficial in large high schools where struggling students might slip through the cracks more easily. With a smaller community of students and teachers, it could be harder for at-risk students to go unnoticed, and they can receive more individualized attention (Cotton, 2001). The purpose of the TNGTI program—to bring students together and build strong relationships—fits nicely within the SLC model, and the integration of these two structures at some campuses is described below.

Several questions on the April 2010 campus progress report explored the possible impact of an SLC high school structure on the implementation of the TNGTI program. Respondents indicated that 57% of campuses had ninth-grade students organized into some sort of SLC structure: 46% of campuses indicated that TNGTI students were integrated with other students, and 11% had a separate SLC specifically for TNGTI students (see Figure 5).

Figure 5. How TNGTI Students Were Organized Within a Small Learning Community Structure (*N*=61)



Source: Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention Program April 2010 Campus Progress Report (Texas Education Agency, 2010)

To determine if the SLC structure had been preexisting at participating campuses or was a new initiative at the time of the TNGTI grant, respondents were asked to indicate what year the SLC was established. Of the 35 campuses that had an SLC structure, 31% indicated that the 2009–10 school year was the first year that ninth graders were organized into SLCs. Table 51 shows when the campuses established SLC structures at their buildings.

Table 51. Time Period When Small Learning Community Structure Started at Participating Campuses (*N*=35)

	Number of Campuses	Percentage of Campuses
2009–10	11	31.4%
2008–09	6	17.1%
2007–08	9	25.7%
Prior to 2007–08	9	25.7%

Source: Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention Program April 2010 Campus Progress Report (Texas Education Agency, 2010)

Respondents also indicated the degree to which they felt that the TNGTI grant was facilitated by having ninth graders organized in an SLC structure. Of the campuses that had an SLC structure, the majority of respondents (66%) reported that the SLCs facilitated the TNGTI program from a moderate to a great extent (46% and 20%, respectively). Table 52 shows the range of responses related to the integration of the TNGTI grant into an SLC structure at participating campuses.

Table 52. Extent to Which TNGTI Program Was Facilitated by Small Learning Community Structure on Campus (*N*=35)

	Number of Campuses	Percentage of Campuses
To a great extent	7	20.0%
To a moderate extent	16	45.7%
To a minimal extent	5	14.3%
Not at all	6	17.1%

Source: Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention Program April 2010 Campus Progress Report (Texas Education Agency, 2010)

During the spring site visits, the program staff at campuses that had small learning communities felt this structure was beneficial to the implementation of the TNGTI program activities. Having SLC teams or houses allowed for more collaboration and sharing of student data between the teachers. These smaller groups also created a community where the students could have a closer relationship with their teachers and peers. One of the teachers described how the SLC structure created a consistent classroom management model for all students within the ninth-grade house:

Strategy Spotlights:

Our administrators mandated that we come up with some consistencies across the house. These rules are nonnegotiable. And in my house we have our rules, consequences, and our rewards across the board. So when one of us decides to do something, we will bring it up at the house and all four of [the teachers] will come in and do the same thing. So the kids know. And I think it is easier for them to remember.

One coordinator described how the structure of the houses for the 2009–10 school year was influenced in part by the TNGTI grant guidelines: "Last year we had a ninth-grade house, 10th- grade, 11th-grade, 12th-grade house, but it was not nested learning communities like we have this year…. Part of that thinking I would attribute it to the ninth-grade transition grant and our high school redesign." The program coordinator at another campus indicated that the integration between the TNGTI program and the SLC structure was seamless at that building, and it was hard to isolate the effects of one without the other:

Strategy Spotlights:

I think that our SLC structure is helpful. That school-within-a-school piece is good for trying to monitor kids. We are not thinking about it in terms of a mass of 600 freshmen. I have groups of people thinking in terms of their 100 freshmen…. That is a place I have a difficult time distinguishing what we are doing in our redesign with our small learning communities piece from the ninth grade transition grant activities. But they tie together very closely.

One site visit school had organized the SLC teams to have all of the TNGTI students together with the same group of teachers. The teachers were able to focus on each of these students and work as a team to monitor student progress and provide interventions tailored to the students' needs. However, this kind of structure was not without its disadvantages. The interventionist at this campus described how the TNGTI students were quick to realize that they had been separated from the other ninth-grade students based on their at-risk factors:

Program Highlights:

In the beginning they were a little reluctant.… One of the teachers mentioned that in the beginning the kids were like, "OK, we are the slow group." They kind of looked around and they saw the kids that they know struggle.… Now they see it as something positive, but in the beginning it was kind of like, "Why are we here?" Now they see that they have an advantage.

In this instance, the students were very aware of the social stigma of being in a group made up entirely of other struggling learners. Respondents at this school said that for next year they planned to mix the student groups up a little bit so that the differences would not be as noticeable for the ninth graders.

VIII. Parent Involvement Findings

One of the goals of the TNGTI program is to increase parent awareness of high school policies and requirements for high school graduation and to prepare students for college. TEA program staff developed two critical success factors that align with this program goal: (1) providing an orientation for parents of entering ninth graders about high school policies and procedures and (2) creating opportunities for parents to get involved in students' learning. Another related critical success factor is school administrators' advocacy and support of parent involvement. Questions regarding communication with parents, the types of parent activities offered, and administrator support of parent involvement were included on the January 2010 campus progress report, staff survey, and interviews with program staff.

Communication With Parents

The majority of survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed that a process was in place to appropriately inform students and parents when a student had been identified to receive intervention services (62%). In an interview, one counselor explained:

> ***Strategy Spotlights:***
>
> ***When we have a student that is at risk, we are contacting the parent and the parent is in continuous conversation with us by phone, e-mail, or coming up here for parent conferences. We schedule parent conferences in this office daily.***

In the January 2010 campus progress report, responses indicated that at the highest percentage of campuses, the TNGTI grant coordinator or program manager (63%) was a staff member who was responsible for informing students and parents regarding identification for intervention services. The assistant principal (41%), core or elective teachers (37%), counselors (37%), and interventionists (33%) were involved in parent communication on at least one third of campuses. Notably, three schools indicated that no one was designated to communicate to students and parents (4%) or that parents are not notified when a student is identified through the early warning data system (2%). Table 53 shows all staff members responsible for communicating to parents and students about identification for intervention services at schools that had established an early warning data system.

Table 53. Staff Members Responsible for Communicating Identification Status to Students and Parents (*N*=51)

Staff Members	Number of Campuses	Percentage of Campuses
The TNGTI grant coordinator/program manager	32	62.7%
Assistant principal	21	41.2%
Core or elective teacher(s)	19	37.3%
Counselor	19	37.3%
Interventionist (including at-risk specialist)	17	33.3%
Administrative staff in the main office	13	25.5%
Mentor teacher	3	5.9%
Truancy officer	2	3.9%
No one has been designated to do this	2	3.9%
Parents are not notified when a student is identified through the early warning data system	1	2.0%
Other (e.g., house leader, college advocate)	5	9.8%

Source: Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention Program January 2010 Campus Progress Report (Texas Education Agency, 2010)
Note: Respondents were asked to "Check all that apply." Percentages, therefore, do not sum to 100%.

As can be noted in Table 53, several campuses have multiple persons responsible for communicating with students and their parents. One principal described this multilevel communication and its benefit to students and parents:

Program Highlights:

There is more communication with the teachers. The counselors are communicating with the parents. The CIS [critical intervention services specialist] will be contacting the parents…. The dropout prevention specialist will immediately counsel the student and talk to the parent. These are the services, this is what we can do. There are so many safety nets in place that it is just a constant with the parents.

Parents Activities Offered

In the January 2010 campus progress report, respondents were asked to report TNGTI program activities and practices that provided parents with the opportunity to be more involved in their child's education. The most frequent activities reported were parent-teacher conferences (68%) and regular communication regarding the student's progress (56%). Some campuses also indicated that parents were invited to visit the school during the summer transition program (47%). While most campuses did offer parent involvement activities, five campuses indicated that the TNGTI program in their building did not provide such opportunities for parents (8%). It was not clear from the campus progress reports why this occurred. Table 54 shows the specific opportunities provided by the TNGTI program for parent involvement.

Table 54. Opportunities Provided by the TNGTI Program for Parent Involvement (*N*=60)

Parent Opportunities	Number of Campuses	Percentage of Campuses
Parent-teacher conferences	46	76.7%
Regular discussions with teachers or school staff regarding students' progress	38	63.3%
Visits to the school for summer transition program activities	32	53.3%
Parent contracts with school	23	38.3%
Home visits from school staff to keep parents informed and involved	19	31.7%
Family services interventions	14	23.3%
The TNGTI program does not provide opportunities for parents to be more involved	5	8.3%
Other	10	16.7%

Source: Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention Program January 2010 Campus Progress Report (Texas Education Agency, 2010)
Note: Respondents were asked to "Check all that apply." Percentages, therefore, do not sum to 100%.

In implementing these activities and practices, campuses are able to support the collaboration of the parents and the students in thinking about and preparing for the high school experience. Some of these activities may have been offered through the summer transition program, as one data coordinator described:

Program Highlights:

For the summer program, the parents were invited out to an orientation…. They helped with the class scheduling, parents were informed about the credits the child would receive. Also, in the transition program the parents were told what our purpose was. We were trying to transition them from eighth grade to ninth grade and we were there to work on team building. We were there to work on science skills and all different types of skills so they can just have a better feeling for going on to high school.

At some campuses, parent involvement activities continue throughout the school year. One program coordinator described a student-led conference for the Family Advocate System (FAS) offered through their small learning communities:

Strategy Spotlights:

The student-led conference is usually an hour, and the teachers do some work with the student [beforehand]. The student is actually leading the discussion, talking to their parents about their strengths, what they are struggling with, what they want to do after high school, etc. But it is also the time when the parent meets the advocate face-to-face to realize that this is the person who is their contact at the high school.

Administrator Support of Parent Involvement

On the staff survey, respondents indicated the degree to which they felt administrators at their school advocated and supported parent involvement in the TNGTI program activities. The majority of survey respondents (71%) reported that their administrator advocated parent involvement in the TNGTI program to a moderate extent or great extent (23% and 48%, respectively). Table 55 shows the range of responses related to administrators advocating parental involvement.

Table 55. Degree to Which Administrators Advocated for Parental Involvement in TNGTI Activities (*N*=696)

	Percentage of Respondents
To a great extent	47.7%
To a moderate extent	23.0%
To a minimal extent	10.3%
Not at all	2.6%
Don't know	16.4%

Source: Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention Program Staff Survey (Texas Education Agency, 2010)

At two site visit schools, the teachers said they did not know what the administrator did to support parent involvement in school activities. However, staff at other site visit schools described the administrators as being active when it came to parent communication. Some administrators are facilitating parent involvement by requiring specific parent communications by program staff. One teacher said that the principal required all teachers to contact parents weekly and maintain a contact log:

Strategy Spotlights:

We have to make parent contact once a week. We have a contact log, and it has to say in detail what it is about, like problems with proportions or decimals or objectives. We have to turn those in once a week.... If we have not, [the principal] will pull us in and ask us why we have not talked to them. Then we are in hot water.

Another counselor described the administrator's emphasis on parent involvement through consistent communication about the topic, which keeps the issue on the forefront of the minds of staff members:

Program Highlights:

I think just in general, we hear all the time from the administrators that we need to continue to improve on parental involvement on the campus. We hear that all the time, even at our meetings at the beginning of the year, what can we do different to bring more parents in, to get more parents involved. I think even just the chatter about it is helpful to us to continue to try to look at new and inventive ways to keep the parents involved and we hear that all the time from administration.

IX. Program Impact Findings

The TNGTI program is intended to reduce the ninth-grade retention rate and prepare at-risk students for success in high school and beyond. This chapter provides information on the perceived impact of the program as well as the statistical effect of program participation on several student outcomes. Questions regarding the perceived impact on students and teachers were included on the staff survey and the January 2010 and April 2010 campus progress reports. Program staff also shared their thoughts on perceived impact during site visit interviews. Details about the data and methods used in the statistical analyses are described in this chapter, and effectiveness scales are presented for the student outcome variables that could be calculated with available data.

Perceived Impact of TNGTI Program

Perceived Impact on Student Participants

In the January 2010 campus progress report, respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with different student impact statements related to the TNGTI program. The statements that respondents most frequently agreed or strongly agreed with included that TNGTI students began the 2009–10 school year with increased confidence (93%), had received fewer office referrals than expected (82%), and that academic performance of participants had exceeded expectations (82%). Respondents also indicated that TNGTI students had higher attendance rates than typical (78%) and were more apt to ask questions in class than other students (72%). Table 56 shows the level of agreement with all student impact statements on the January 2010 campus progress report.

Table 56. Level of Agreement With Student Impact Statements (*N*=60)

TNGTI Participants…	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Began the 2009–10 school year with increased confidence.	0.0%	6.7%	61.7%	31.7%
Have fewer **behavior** referrals than expected.	0.0%	18.3%	65.0%	16.7%
Have **academic** performance higher than expected.	0.0%	18.3%	68.3%	13.3%
Have **attendance** rates higher than expected.	1.7%	20.0%	70.0%	8.3%
Are more apt to ask questions in class than other students.	1.7%	26.7%	63.3%	8.3%

Source: Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention Program January 2010 Campus Progress Report (Texas Education Agency, January 2010)

During interviews, one respondent described the increased confidence of TNGTI participants:

> ***Program Highlights:***
>
> ***They got the level of comfort in what is traditionally an awkward time in their lives in every way. Going into a huge school as the low man on the totem pole. They had a very high level of comfort and investment. And I think that is very important. I think for kids who are at risk, to have someone show care and concern…. They just think this is normal. So I think that they would say they feel cared about and comfortable.***

As noted above, many campuses noted that behavior referrals have decreased. During spring site visits, one teacher noted the connection between the summer program and improved student behavior:

> ***Program Highlights:***
>
> ***Behavior problems actually went down, which is a plus that I see with [a summer] program, because they knew what to expect going into the year as opposed to being totally unprepared.***

To gain insight into the perceptions of teachers who worked directly with TNGTI students in the classroom, the staff survey asked respondents to indicate their level of agreement with different student impact statements. The statements that respondents most frequently agreed or strongly agreed with indicate that TNGTI students are interacting well with other students (82%), are likely to stay in school rather than drop out (81%), are engaged in school (80%), and are regularly attending school (80%). Table 57 shows the level of agreement with all student impact statements on the staff survey.

Table 57. Level of Agreement With Student Impact Statements (*N*=212)

TNGTI Participants…	Don't Know	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Are interacting well with other students.	13.7%	0.9%	2.8%	62.7%	19.8%
Are likely to stay in school rather than drop out.	15.6%	0.5%	3.3%	59.4%	21.2%
Are engaged in school.	11.8%	0.9%	7.1%	64.2%	16.0%
Are regularly attending school.	16.5%	0.9%	2.8%	60.4%	19.3%
Are interacting well with teachers and staff.	14.2%	0.9%	5.7%	59.9%	19.3%
Are engaged with their coursework.	12.3%	1.4%	8.5%	59.9%	17.9%
Are likely to advance to 10th grade next year.	17.9%	0.9%	4.2%	57.1%	19.8%
Are prepared for the demands of high school.	14.6%	1.9%	12.3%	55.7%	15.6%
Are behaving well at school.	14.6%	1.9%	13.2%	55.7%	14.6%
Are engaged in planning for the future.	19.8%	1.9%	9.9%	50.5%	17.9%
Are maintaining passing grades in their courses.	26.4%	0.9%	11.3%	50.9%	10.4%

Source: Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention Program Staff Survey (Texas Education Agency, 2010)

During the spring site visit interviews, program staff echoed the sentiments shared through the survey and the campus progress reports: The TNGTI program is impacting students in a positive manner. The most frequently mentioned impact of the program was the establishment of a personal bond with teachers and staff. This bond was present even when teachers did not consider themselves to be official "mentors." One teacher explained how having a positive relationship may help keep a student in school:

> ***Program Highlights:***
>
> ***In the past it was every man for himself. And these kids that are not able to do for themselves were falling through the cracks in bigger numbers. We are not saying we have solved that problem, but we see in the group that we have this year and the group we had last year, they do respond to the fact that they feel someone is watching over them.***

Other commonly mentioned impacts included improved student attitudes, improved academic performance, student enjoyment and engagement in TNGTI activities, and reduced behavior problems and absenteeism. One district staff person described the far-reaching impact of the program:

> ***Program Highlights:***
>
> ***The organization of this particular [TNGTI] group of students is invaluable. These kids—we are talking about their lives. I think it is invaluable for them…. [The students] might not see it now, but I hope that when we are part of that graduation ceremony they will see we helped them when they needed the help.***

In addition, the majority of teachers and program staff described a noticeable difference between TNGTI students and other students. Some schools actually keep their own comparison between TNGTI group and other "control" group students, as one interventionist described:

> ***Program Highlights:***
>
> ***We actually have a group of kids that we call the control group. [The counselor] has a group of about 45 to 50 kids that are not TNGTI grant kids but they are at risk and so she meets with them also. We just compare the absences, grades, etc., and...there is a substantial difference between their grades, their absences, their tardies.***

Perceived Impact on Program Staff and Teachers

On the staff survey, teachers who worked directly with TNGTI students in the classroom were asked to indicate their level of agreement with different teacher impact statements related to the TNGTI program. The statements that respondents most frequently agreed or strongly agreed with indicate that teachers felt they had improved their own teaching abilities (76%), were able to better direct students toward their goals (74%), had more positive energy at the start of the 2009–10 school year (73%), and were able to meet incoming students and develop positive relationships with them (73%). Table 58 shows the level of agreement with all teacher impact statements on the staff survey.

Table 58. Level of Agreement With Teacher Impact Statements (*N*=212)

	Don't Know	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I have improved my own teaching abilities.	14.2%	1.4%	8.0%	49.1%	27.4%
I was able to better direct students toward their goals (i.e., high school and beyond).	15.1%	0.9%	10.4%	46.7%	26.9%
I had more positive energy at the start of the new school year.	18.9%	0.5%	7.5%	43.9%	29.2%
I was able to meet incoming students and develop positive relationships with them.	16.5%	1.9%	9.0%	38.7%	34.0%
I was able to better evaluate participating students' academic background and skills.	17.0%	2.4%	9.4%	44.3%	26.9%
I have had more opportunities to collaborate with other teachers.	14.2%	3.3%	15.6%	41.5%	25.5%
I was able to have more meaningful interaction with the parents of my struggling students.	17.0%	2.8%	17.0%	44.8%	18.4%
I was able to provide parents with more opportunities to become involved in their child's education.	18.4%	2.8%	17.9%	43.9%	17.0%

Source: Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention Program Staff Survey (Texas Education Agency, 2010)

As noted previously, teachers and program staff reported a stronger bond between teachers and students, which is a benefit to students in helping them succeed. However, this bond is also something that can benefit teachers, which was the most frequently mentioned teacher benefit during spring site visit interviews. One teacher stated:

Program Highlights:

I will see kids that I do not have at all this year but I had them during summer camp and they want me to come to their basketball game. Or they are having trouble with a class and they want to come to me for tutoring. Being able to ask somebody [for help] really built their confidence.

The second most frequently mentioned benefit to staff was collaborating with colleagues to plan and coordinate TNGTI program activities. One coordinator stated:

Strategy Spotlights:

You learn a lot from your colleagues. There are a lot of things you take for granted. You can find methods that seem more efficient. And a lot of the ideas ended up being a mixture of several individuals, making that lesson even more powerful.

Finally, program staff indicated the program also provides opportunities for personal growth and professional development. One principal stated:

> ***Program Highlights:***
>
> ***I did notice that the teachers were very apprehensive at the beginning…. But at the end of the program they were looking forward to doing those kinds of things. So the growth that they experienced as a faculty I think is what is really benefiting the majority of our freshmen, not just the ones that went through the program.***

Impact on Teacher Collaboration. Teacher collaboration also was a theme seen in the staff survey; the majority of respondents (67%) mentioned that the TNGTI program provided more opportunities to collaborate with other teachers. To explore this further, the April 2010 campus progress report asked several questions related to how often teachers would meet to discuss student progress. A distinction was drawn between the schools that had established small learning communities compared to those that had a more traditional grade structure in the building.

Overall, it was reported that teachers met more frequently to discuss student progress if involved in a small learning community (see Table 59). Within the small learning communities, teachers most often met at least twice a week (34%) or at least once a week (23%). Where there were no small learning communities, the most frequent response was that teacher teams did not have formal meetings (38%), followed by some schools that held weekly team meetings (31%).

Table 59. Frequency That Teacher Teams Meet Formally to Discuss Student Progress

Formal team meetings	Schools With Small Learning Communities (*N*=35)		Schools With Traditional Grade Structure (*N*=26)	
	Number of Campuses	Percentage of Campuses	Number of Campuses	Percentage of Campuses
Daily	3	8.6%	3	11.5%
At least twice per week	12	34.3%	2	7.7%
At least once per week	8	22.9%	8	30.8%
At least once every two weeks	2	5.7%	0	0.0%
At least once every three weeks	0	0.0%	1	3.8%
At least once per month	4	11.4%	2	7.7%
Teachers do not have formal meetings	4	11.4%	10	38.5%
Other (e.g., as often as needed)	2	5.7%	0	0.0%

Source: Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention Program April 2010 Campus Progress Report (Texas Education Agency, 2010)

Respondents also were asked to indicate which staff members were usually present during the team meetings. The most frequently reported staff members who attended the team meetings were the ninth-grade core subject teachers, as reported in 97% of small learning communities and 88% of team meetings at schools with a traditional structure. Other staff members sometimes also attended team

meetings, such as the assistant principal, ninth-grade elective teachers, and counselors. See Table 60 for details about the types of staff members present at team meetings, separated by those in small learning communities versus those with a traditional grade structure.

Table 60. Staff Members Involved in Formal Team Meetings to Discuss Student Progress

Staff Members Present at Team Meetings	Schools With Small Learning Communities (*N*=35)		Schools With Traditional Grade Structure (*N*=16)	
	Number of Campuses	Percentage of Campuses	Number of Campuses	Percentage of Campuses
Ninth-grade core subject teachers	34	97.1%	14	87.5%
Assistant principal	19	54.3%	6	37.5%
Ninth-grade elective teachers	17	48.6%	5	31.2%
Counselor	16	45.7%	6	37.5%
Interventionist (including at-risk specialist)	8	22.9%	6	37.5%
Other (e.g., principal, mentor, coordinator)	9	25.7%	4	25.0%

Source: Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention Program April 2010 Campus Progress Report (Texas Education Agency, 2010)
Note: Respondents were asked to "Check all that apply." Percentages, therefore, do not sum to 100%.

During spring site visits, teachers and staff shared their appreciation of the opportunities to collaborate through the TNGTI program. One teacher explained:

Strategy Spotlights:

I loved the fact that when we were conducting the summer camp that we were able to team teach. We had sessions where some of the teachers would meet up and go over certain lessons, it was actually very well planned…. We actually communicated and implemented what we discussed in the meetings.

The benefit of collaboration was also noted by a district administrator, who stated:

Strategy Spotlights:

It was a plus because the [teachers] were working with each other, one department and another. The other good thing is the high school teachers really got connected with the junior high teachers. So you had the vertical dialogue going on there…. You had the eighth grade talking to high school and you had one department talking to another department.

Analysis of Program Impact on Student Outcomes

Two approaches were used to analyze the effect of participation in the TNGTI program on student academic outcomes. Descriptive analyses were conducted of TNGTI students' fall 2009 grades in core subject to assess how these students were performing academically at the end of their first semester in ninth grade.[17] These data were obtained from TNGTI campuses in the January 2010 student collection. In addition to these descriptive analyses, a propensity score stratification approach was used to assess the impact of the TNGTI program on students' performance on the spring 2010 TAKS-Reading and TAKS-Math assessments as well as their likelihood of taking the assessments (a proxy for remaining in school rather than dropping out). This approach allowed us to compare the performance of students who participated in the program to the performance of students who were similar in all observable ways except program attendance.

This section first presents findings from the descriptive analyses of students' grades in fall 2009 and then presents a brief overview of the analytic approach employed and data sources used in assessing the impact of the TNGTI program on students' spring 2010 TAKS participation and performance. We then summarize the effect of the program on these student outcomes and examine the extent to which these effects vary by school characteristics.

Descriptive Analyses of TNGTI Student Grades in Fall 2009

According to data submitted by TNGTI campuses for the January 2010 student data collection, 5,070 students were identified for participation in the TNGTI program as of January 2010.[18] Based on final grades for the fall 2009 semester, the majority of students identified for the TNGTI program had passing grades of a C or above in the core subjects of English language arts (ELA) (81%), mathematics (76%), science (79%), and social studies (84%; see Table 61).

[17] Data also were requested from TNGTI campuses on student grades in ninth-grade courses, absences, tardies, and in-school and out-of school suspensions for the spring 2010 semester for all ninth-grade students (both those participating in the TNGTI program and those who were not). Because of poor quality of the data received in response to this request, these data were excluded from analyses.

[18] Data on student participation in the 2009 summer transition program that was submitted by campuses in September 2009 indicate that 4,806 students were identified for participation in the summer program. Thus, there were an additional 264 students who were identified during the first half of the school year to participate in the TNGTI program. These 264 students were identified as a part of the TNGTI program after the beginning of the school year and thus did not participate in the summer transition program but were eligible for tracking using the early warning data system and for interventions throughout the course of their freshman year.

Table 61. Fall 2009 Semester Grades of TNGTI Participating Students

Fall 2009 Semester Grades	ELA (*N*=4,782)		Mathematics (*N*=4,721)		Science (*N*=4,688)		Social Studies (*N*=4,697)	
	N	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
A (90–100)	736	15.4%	442	9.4%	410	8.7%	704	15.0%
B (80–89)	1,599	33.4%	1,237	26.2%	1,324	28.2%	1,633	34.8%
C (70–79)	1,543	32.3%	1,926	40.8%	1,973	42.1%	1,631	34.7%
D (60–69)	414	8.7%	634	13.4%	589	12.6%	458	9.8%
F (Less than 60)	490	10.2%	482	10.2%	392	8.4%	271	5.8%

Source: Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention Program January 2010 Student Data Collection (Texas Education Agency, 2010)

These findings indicate that most students who were participating in the TNGTI program were passing their courses at the end of the fall 2009 semester and were on track to be promoted to 10th grade in spring 2010. Although these findings are suggestive, they do not tell us whether students who were participating in the program performed better than comparable students who were not participating in the program. To address this question, additional analyses were conducted to compare the performance of ninth-grade students who did and did not participate in the program on the spring 2010 TAKS assessments.

Data and Methods

In any evaluation of a program where participants are not randomly assigned to participate or not participate in the program, the problem of selection is paramount. We know that students who participate in the TNGTI program are different from those who do not attend above and beyond differences that result in participation in the program. This is both because the program targets certain types of students for participation (primarily at-risk students) and because certain kinds of students are more likely to accept the offer to participate (students who think for one reason or another that they are likely to benefit from the program). These differences can bias estimates of program effectiveness because they make it difficult to disentangle preexisting differences between students who attended the program and those who did not from the effect of attending the program. Propensity score matching was used to address this problem, detailed in Appendix G. Propensity score stratification is a statistical technique that allows us to compare the outcomes of students who participated in the TNGTI program to those who did not that are similar on all available baseline characteristics, including past academic performance since the fourth grade. Assuming that we have data on all of the characteristic of students that are related both to their decision to participate in the program and their outcomes, this quasi-experimental design allows us to estimate the causal effect of participating in the TNGTI program.

Data on baseline characteristics of students who attended the TNGTI program and those who did not attend came from the TEA Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) data system. The analysis examined the effect of participating in the program on ninth-grade dropout rates and ninth-

grade TAKS scores. Students' TAKS-Reading and TAKS-Math scores were provided by TEA for inclusion in the analysis. TAKS-Reading scores were available for 96% of the students, and TAKS-Math scores were available for 95% of students. Still being in school to take the TAKS in the spring of freshman year was used as a rough proxy of ninth-grade retention.

It should be noted that data from site visits and campus progress reports indicated that once the school year started, many schools did not clearly distinguish between TNGTI students and non-TNGTI students. All ninth graders who demonstrated need often were tracked in the early warning data system and received interventions. For this reason, the impact analysis focused solely on the effect of attending the summer transition program, the one program component where participating students can be compared to nonparticipating students.

Exploratory Analysis of the Relationship Between Implementation and Outcomes

Expecting some variation in the effect of attending the TNGTI program across campuses, several exploratory analyses were conducted to examine what characteristics were associated with greater program effects. We examined whether the effect of the TNGTI program was associated with several school-level characteristics, including:

- Percentage LEP.
- Percentage special education.
- Percentage economically disadvantaged.
- Number of students.
- High school completion rate.

In addition, using data from the staff survey, scale scores were created using the Rasch model for ordered categories to measure each staff member's underlying attitude about a variety of constructs related to program implementation, including the quality of the early warning data system implementation, the quality of the intervention implementation, the perceived impact of the TNGTI program on students, or the perceived impact of TNGTI on teachers. These scale scores, made up of multiple items that fit together from a theoretical perspective, provide a quantitative measure of frequency and intensity of an individual's responses. The scale score units are constructed in a way that makes them suitable for use in statistical analyses (Andrich, 1978; Wright & Masters, 1982). Like the school-level characteristics, these data were used to examine the relationship between quality of program implementation and the effects of participation in the TNGTI summer program.

To examine the relationship between these characteristics and the effect of participation in the summer program, multilevel modeling was used to account for the nested structure of the data. The model formulation was identical to the second stage models in the impact analysis described in Appendix G, but interactions were added to the model to examine whether the program effect was moderated by either school characteristics or quality of implementation.

These analyses are descriptive and exploratory in nature. It is not possible to determine whether these relationships are causal. Such relationships might be explained by characteristics of TNGTI campuses

that were not included in the model. Despite this limitation, these analyses provide important insights into when TNGTI summer program attendance is most likely to positively affect student outcomes.

Program Effect on Dropout Rates and TAKS Scores

This section presents findings on the effect of participating in the TNGTI summer program on ninth-grade dropout rates and on ninth-grade TAKS-Reading and TAKS-Math scores. We also examine descriptively the relationship between school characteristics, implementation quality, and these effects.

Effect of TNGTI Summer Program on Ninth-Grade Dropout Rates

One of the primary goals of the TNGTI program is to reduce high school dropout rates. While data on whether TNGTI students and their matched counterparts dropped out of school in their freshman year was not available at the time of analysis, whether the student sat for the administration of the TAKS-Math in April 2010 was used as a proxy for not dropping out of school. That is, if April 2010 TAKS data is available for a student, we know the student was still in school as of that date. Using the propensity score stratification approach described above and hierarchical linear modeling, the analysis found that participating in the TNGTI summer program was associated with a slight increase (0.1%) in the chances that students were in school to take the TAKS-Math in April 2010. That is, controlling for differences between TNGTI and non-TNGTI students, TNGTI students had a 0.1% higher chance of still being in school in April 2010. This difference was statistically significant at the 0.01 level. However, because the vast majority of students were in schools to take the TAKS-Math (93.8%), it is unclear whether this difference reflects a substantive program effect.

Effect of TNGTI Summer Program Participation on TAKS-Reading and TAKS-Math Scores

Using propensity score matching and hierarchical linear modeling to examine the effect of the TNGTI program on students' ninth-grade TAKS scores, we found that participating in the TNGTI summer program had a positive and significant effect on both ninth-grade TAKS-Reading and TAKS-Math scores. Students who participated in the TNGTI summer program scored 14.3 points higher on the ninth-grade TAKS-Reading and 10.8 points higher on the ninth-grade TAKS-Math than similar students who did not participate. Both effects were significant at the 0.05 level, meaning that it is highly unlikely that this difference is a result of chance (see Table 62).

Table 62. Effect of TNGTI Summer Program Participation on TAKS-Reading and TAKS-Math Scores

Model	*N*	Effect on TAKS Points
TAKS-Reading	24,714	14.3**
TAKS-Math	24,347	10.8*

Source: Data from Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) (Texas Education Agency, 2010)
Note: * denotes statistical significance at the 0.05 level; ** denotes statistical significant at the 0.01 level.

Program Effect on TAKS Met Standard Rates

In addition to increasing aggregate performance on the TAKS, educators are interested in learning whether participating in the TNGTI summer program increases student chances of meeting TAKS standards on the ninth-grade TAKS-Reading and TAKS-Math. Overall, 82.8% of ninth graders in TNGTI schools that took the ninth-grade TAKS-Reading met TAKS standards. By comparison, of the TNGTI students that took the ninth-grade TAKS-Reading, 85.7% met TAKS standards. However, when propensity score stratification and hierarchical linear modeling were employed to examine the effect of attending the summer program on a student's chances of meeting standards on ninth-grade TAKS-Reading compared to similar students who did not attend the summer program, we found that the program did not have a statistically significant effect on the met standard rates.

A similar pattern can be seen in the rates of met standard scores on the ninth-grade TAKS-Math. In aggregate, TNGTI summer program participants met standards on the ninth-grade TAKS-Math at higher levels (63.2%) than all ninth-grade students in TNGTI schools (61.9%). However, when propensity score stratification and hierarchical linear modeling were employed to examine the effect of attending the summer program on a student's chances of meeting standards on the ninth-grade TAKS-Math compared to similar students who did not attend the summer program, we again found that the program did not have a statistically significant effect on the met standard rates.

Program Effect on TAKS Commended Rates

In addition to determining whether students meet basic proficiency standards, Texas determines whether students' scores on TAKS indicate that they are on the path to college readiness when they graduate from high school. These students, who score above a certain cut point on TAKS, are denoted as commended on the TAKS. Roughly 18.4% of students in TNGTI schools are commended on the ninth-grade TAKS-Reading assessment. By comparison, 16.9% of students who participated in the TNGTI summer program received this distinction. Statistical analyses that compared students who participated in the summer program to similar students who did not found that program participation did not improve students' chances of being categorized as commended.

Similarly, 14.9% of students in TNGTI schools were commended on the ninth-grade TAKS-Math, while 14.7% of students who participated in the summer program received this distinction. Again, statistical analyses that compared students who participated in the summer program to similar students who did not found that program participation does not improve students' chances of being categorized as commended.

School-Level Predictors of TNGTI Effects

There was substantial variability in the effect of participating in the summer program across TNGTI campuses. To examine this variability, we modeled the relationship between several campus characteristics and program effectiveness. Based on the impact analysis, the effect of participating in the summer program was not significantly related to the percentage of low-income-family students at a

campus, campus size, average campus graduation rates, the percentage of LEP students at a campus, or the percentage of students identified for special education services.

Relationship Between Program Implementation Quality and TNGTI Effects

As described above, staff involved with the TNGTI program were asked to rate various aspects of program implementation, including the quality of the implementation of the early warning data system, the quality of the implementation of the TNGTI interventions, the perceived effect of the TNGTI program on students, and the perceived impact of the TNGTI program on teachers. None of these ratings were significantly associated with the effects of participating in the TNGTI summer program being higher or lower. While these statistical analyses reveal no consistent predictors of program effectiveness, the research team will delve more deeply into what explains differences in program effectiveness in a case study to be published in spring 2011 as an addendum to this report. This study is collecting in-depth qualitative data from the programs that showed the biggest effect on student achievement in Year 1. These data will provide additional insights into the kinds of practices that are associated with effective TNGTI programming.

X. Financial Analysis Findings

This section of the report aims to analyze school-level financial data in a way that provides meaningful information to TEA about how TNGTI grant funds were actually used, how sustainable this program is from a fiscal perspective, and to assess the cost effectiveness of the program (i.e., the benefits that were attained at the level of costs incurred). First, school-level grant budgets are analyzed and compared to total grant funds spent on the program, expenditure data are described and presented by program component, and a discussion of supplemental funding sources used to support the program is presented. Then, the issue of program sustainability is explored, followed by an analysis of cost per student by campus, in coordination with the strengths and weaknesses of the implemented programs.

Because the school district or charter school management organization typically serves as the fiscal agent for the grant and is therefore only responsible for reporting on grant expenditures at the aggregate level, how funds are budgeted, managed, and expended at the campus level is typically not reported. Thus, to shed light on important questions about program costs, sustainability, and cost effectiveness, additional financial data were requested of participating districts, disaggregated for each participating campus. This included detailed budget and expenditure data, both by expenditure code (i.e., payroll, professional and contracted services, supplies and maintenance, other operating costs, and capital outlay) and by program component (i.e., summer program component, early warning data system, and interventions).

When interpreting financial data, it is important to keep in mind that 36% of the population of campuses included in the analyses are from one large, urban district (Houston). This is an important contextual factor when interpreting results because there is a tendency for data from Houston to drive, or skew, resulting distributions. Various measures were taken to adjust for this whenever possible, and results are reported in such a way as to remind the reader of this caveat.

Data and Methods

Excel spreadsheets were sent to each participating district, requesting budget and expenditure data disaggregated for each participating campus (districts also were asked to report any central office grant expenditures separately from those incurred by the schools). Because the tool was composed of multiple worksheets, some districts submitted data properly in all worksheets, while others submitted data for only one or two of the three worksheets, resulting in large amounts of missing data for those schools. Despite multiple attempts by the research team, and by TEA, it was not possible to obtain all data from all participating schools. Thus, following is a summary of the data available for analyses:

- TNGTI grant budget data were submitted for 61 of the 63 participating campuses (97%) across 21 of the 23 districts (91%).
- TNGTI grant expenditure data were submitted for 60 of the 63 participating campuses (95%).
- Both budget and expenditure data were complete for 59 campuses (94%).
- Twenty-four campuses (38%) submitted data on supplemental funds used to support the TNGTI program on their campuses.

- Thirty campuses (48%) submitted financial data regarding start-up versus recurring costs.
- Data were available on both students served and grant expenditures for 57 of the 63 participating campuses (91%).

Although districts were asked to submit separately any grant expenditures that occurred at the central office level, only four districts did so. Of these, two reported zero expenditures, one reported less than $500 in expenditures, and one submitted expenditures that equaled the total amount of expenditures across their participating campuses. Thus, these data were not included or considered in the analyses or reporting of results.

Use of Program Funds

Average Campus-Level TNGTI Budget Data by District

Of the 21 districts reporting budget data, 13 reported data for one funded campus (accounting for 13 TNGTI schools), while the remaining eight districts were running TNGTI programs across multiple campuses (accounting for 48 campuses). Those eight districts were: Houston ISD (23 campuses), Aldine ISD (5 campuses), Brownsville ISD (5 campuses), Dallas ISD (5 campuses), Edinburg ISD (3 campuses), Pharr-San Juan Alamo ISD (3 campuses), Mission ISD (2 campuses), and Weslaco ISD (2 campuses). Table 63 illustrates that the vast majority of districts (81%) reported campus TNGTI budgets that averaged more than $40,000 per campus, and 52% of districts had campus budgets averaging $60,000 or more. Only one district, Houston ISD, had an average campus budget below $20,000, which may be a function of having a high number of participating campuses in their district.

Table 63. Average Campus-Level Budget Amounts by District (*N*=21)

Budget Total Per Campus	Number of Districts	Percentage of Districts
$20,000 or Less	1	5%
$20,001–$40,000	3	14%
$40,001–$60,000	6	29%
$60,001–$80,000	3	14%
$80,001–$100,000	8	38%

Source: Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention Program 2009–10 Supplementary Financial Data

Campus-Level TNGTI Budget and Expenditure Data

Campus-level grant budgets ranged widely across the spectrum of allowable grant amounts (up to $100,000 per campus), with 23% of campus budgets totaling $20,000 or less and 30% of campuses allocating $80,000 to $100,000 (see Table 64). Most of the 26 campuses with budgets between $20,000 and $40,000 were in Houston, where individual campus-level grant amounts were small due to the large number of participating schools. The median budget across all 61 schools was $49,342. For districts with multiple campuses, it was common for campus-level project budgets to be allocated evenly across participating schools. Five of the eight districts with multiple campuses funded through the TNGTI grant established identical budgets for each participating campus.

Table 64. Total Budget Amount Per Campus (*N*=61)

Budget Total Per Campus	Number of Campuses	Percentage of Campuses
$20,000 or Less	14	23%
$20,001–$40,000	12	20%
$40,001–$60,000	10	16%
$60,001–$80,000	7	11%
$80,001–$10,000	18	30%

Source: Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention Program 2009–10 Supplementary Financial Data

The extent to which these TNGTI grant funds were actually spent by the time of reporting (May 31, 2010) also varied by campus (see Table 65). Total expenditures reported ranged from $1,409 to $100,000, with median expenditures being $34,078. Schools were allowed to use grant funds throughout the summer of 2010, so these expenditure amounts are not intended to be final. However, expenditure levels do represent payments for the bulk of activities likely to have impacted students during the 2009–10 school year.

Table 65. Total Expenditures at Time of Reporting (*N*=60)

Total Expenditures	Number of Campuses	Percentage of Campuses
$10,000 or less	9	15%
$10,001–$20,000	12	20%
$20,001–$30,000	5	8%
$30,001–$40,000	9	15%
$40,001–$50,000	7	12%
$50,001–$60,000	7	12%
$60,001–$70,000	3	5%
$70,001–$80,000	1	2%
$80,001–$90,000	4	7%
$90,001–$100,000	3	5%

Source: Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention Program 2009–10 Supplementary Financial Data

Because campus TNGTI grant budgets varied substantially in size, it is expected that the range of expenditures would also vary in the same direction, as is illustrated above. A more interesting question, then, is to what extent schools had remaining grant balances at the time of reporting. As can be seen in Table 66, 44% of campuses had less than 20% of their budget remaining at the end of the 2009–10 school year. Eleven campuses had between 20% and 40% of their budget remaining, and 22 campuses had more than 40% of their budget remaining at the end of May 2010. The median remaining balance proportion across all campuses was 28%.

Table 66. Remaining Budget as a Proportion of Total Budget (*N*=59)

Remaining Budget	Number of Campuses	Percentage of Campuses
0–20%	26	44%
20.1–40%	11	19%
40.1–60%	12	20%
60.1–80%	8	14%
80.0%–100%	2	3%

Source: Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention Program 2009–10 Supplementary Financial Data

Further analyses examined whether there was a tendency for campuses with larger budgets to show larger remaining balances. Were these campuses more likely to be unable to expend their funds by the end of the 2009–10 school year? To explore this idea, the proportion of unspent grant funds was examined as a function of the size of the campus' budget (i.e., $20,000 or less, $20,001–$40,000, $40,001–$60,000, etc.). Table 67 presents the median proportion of unspent budget at the end of the 2009–10 school year by total size of the grant. There was no discernible pattern or association between the size of the grant budget and the proportion of budget remaining at the end of the school year. Schools with small budgets (e.g., $20,000 or less) had comparable median budget amounts remaining compared to schools with larger budgets (e.g., $80,000 or more).

Table 67. Proportion of Budget Remaining by Size of Budget (*N*=59)

Total Campus Budget	Number of Campuses	Median Proportion of Budget Remaining
$20,000 or less	12	25%
$20,001–$40,000	12	34%
$40,001–$60,000	10	4%
$60,001–$80,000	7	41%
$80,001–$100,000	18	26%

Source: Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention Program 2009–10 Supplementary Financial Data

Analysis of Budget Variance

Districts report budgets and expenditures to TEA by class/object code, meaning that expenses are allocated to different expense categories. For the TNGTI grant, these categories included payroll, professional and contracted services, supplies and maintenance, other operating costs, and capital outlay. Thus, it is possible to compare how schools planned to spend funds across these categories with how they actually spent funds across these categories. When interpreting the following results, it is important to remember that final expenditures had not yet been entered at the time of reporting, and that all but seven schools had yet to expend their entire grant amounts. In addition, a budget amendment must be approved by TEA for the grantee to increase or decrease the amount approved in any class/object code by more than 25% of the approved budget. Thus, it is unlikely to see budgeted and actual expenditures varying widely for a given school.

A comparison of school-level budgets with school-level expenditures by class/object code is presented in Table 68. Most campuses expended grant money closely in line with their proposed budget. No more than 17% of campuses ever spent more than was allowed in any budget category, and the median difference between budgets and actual expenditures never exceeded $4,078. The vast majority of campuses spent less per category at the time of reporting than was budgeted, and a substantial proportion of campuses had spent exactly what they had budgeted for a given category.

Table 68. Budgeted Amounts Compared to Actual Expenditure Amounts, by Class/Object Code (*N*=59)

Expenditure Code	Campuses Over-Spending	Campuses Under-Spending	Campuses Spending Exact Amount Budgeted	Median Difference: Budget vs. Expenditures
Payroll	7 (12%)	46 (78%)	6 (10%)	$4,078
Professional and contract services	4 (7%)	32 (55%)	22 (38%)	$0
Supplies and maintenance	10 (17%)	35 (59%)	14 (24%)	$328
Other operating costs	6 (10%)	38 (64%)	15 (25%)	$1,800
Capital outlay	2 (3%)	2 (3%)	55 (93%)	$0

Source: Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention Program 2009–10 Supplementary Financial Data

How Funds Were Used

Another way to examine expenditure data is to identify how grant money was being used. In other words, how did grantees vary in the extent to which they spent grant funds across different expenditure categories? Table 69 presents the minimum, maximum, mean, and median expenditure percentages across all schools for each expenditure category. In other words, Table 69 shows the proportion of a grantee's expenditures that were coded to each expenditure code. As can be seen, grantees tended to spend the largest proportion of grant money in the payroll category, followed by supplies and maintenance. Very few grantees spent any TNGTI grant funds in the area of capital outlay.

Table 69. Proportion of Grant Expenditures by Expenditure Code (*N*=60)

Expenditure Code	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Median
Payroll	0%	100%	52%	52%
Professional and contracted services	0%	58%	11%	0%
Supplies and maintenance	0%	93%	23%	16%
Other operating costs	0%	100%	14%	9%
Capital outlay	0%	2%	0%	0%

Source: Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention Program 2009–10 Supplementary Financial Data

Table 70 provides the distribution for each of the class/object codes, showing the number of schools spending varying proportions of their total grant funding in any given area. These data provide further

insight into the extent to which campuses tended to spend grant funds across these different areas of expenses.

Table 70. Distribution of Grant Expenditures by Expenditure Code (*N*=60)

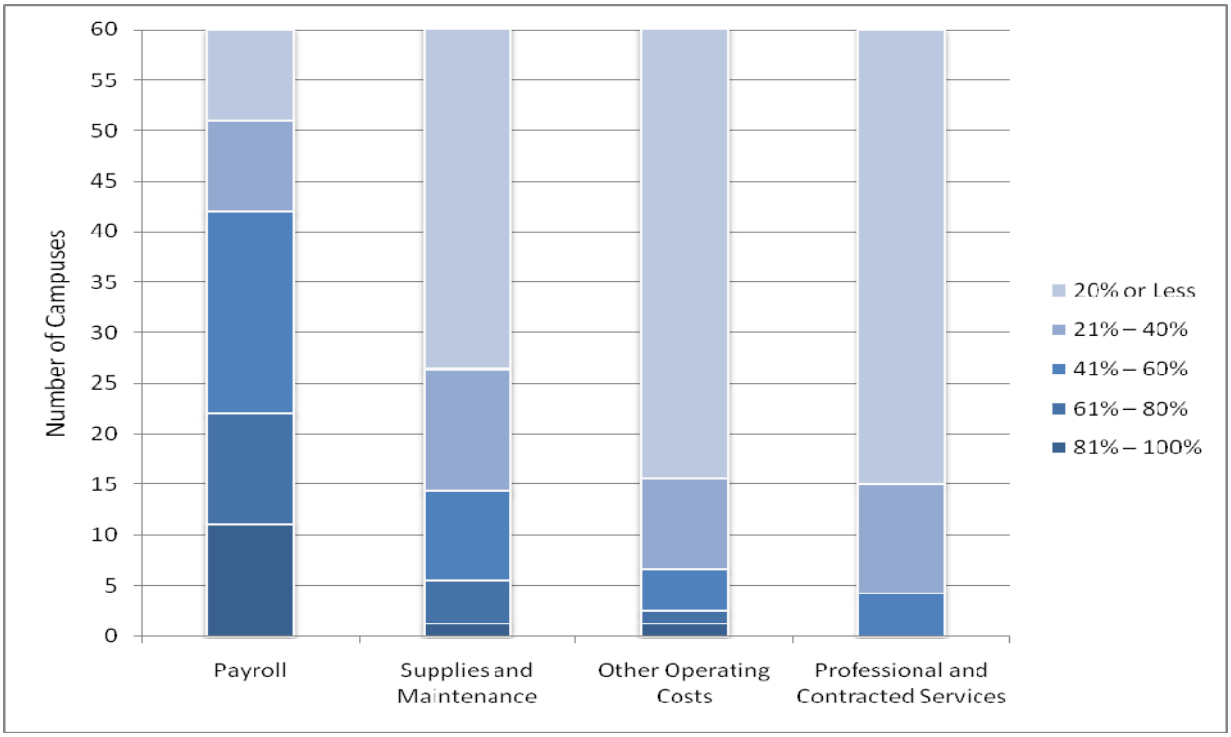
Percentage of Expenditures	Number of Campuses	Percentage of Campuses
Payroll		
20% or Less	9	15%
21%–40%	9	15%
41%–60%	20	33%
61%–80%	11	18%
81%–100%	11	18%
Supplies and Maintenance		
20% or Less	34	57%
21%–40%	12	20%
41%–60%	9	15%
61%–80%	4	7%
81%–100%	1	2%
Other Operating Costs		
20% or Less	45	75%
21%–40%	9	15%
41%–60%	4	7%
61%–80%	1	2%
81%–100%	1	2%
Professional and Contracted Services		
20% or Less	45	75%
21%–40%	11	18%
41%–60%	4	7%
61%–80%	--	--
81%–100%	--	--
Capital Outlay		
20% or Less	60	100%
21%–40%	--	--
41%–60%	--	--
61%–80%	--	--
81%–100%	--	--

Source: Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention Program 2009–10 Supplementary Financial Data

It is clear from these distributions that the categories of (1) payroll and (2) supplies and maintenance were the most utilized expenditure categories. For example, Figure 6 shows that 22 campuses (36%)

spent the majority of their funds (61–100%) on payroll for staff involved with program implementation. The graph displays the distribution of grant spending across the four main expenditure codes.[19]

Figure 6. Distribution of Grant Expenditures by Expenditure Code Across Campuses (*N*=60)



Source: Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention Program 2009–10 Supplementary Financial Data

While a description of expenses by category is informative, these categories do not illustrate what part of the program the funds are actually supporting. For example, while a certain proportion of funds may be allocated to payroll, it is not clear how these funds are spread across the three primary grant components: (1) summer transition program, (2) early warning data system, and (3) student interventions. Data reported to TEA, however, are not structured in a way to enable such analyses. Thus, grantee districts were asked to provide supplemental financial data related to grant expenditures by program component for each campus funded through the TNGTI grant.

Table 71 displays the minimum, maximum, mean, and median proportion of grant funds spent across each of the three program components. On average, grantees spent approximately half of their grant budgets on the summer transition program and half of their budgets on student interventions. It was not common for schools to spend large proportions of their budgets on the early warning data system, although one school did spend 66% of their grant in this area.

[19] Capital outlay was not included because all schools spent 20% or less on this expenditure category.

Table 71. Proportion of Grant Expenditures by Program Component (*N*=60)

Expenditure Code	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Median
Summer transition program	0%	100%	45%	42%
Early warning data system	0%	66%	7%	0%
Student interventions	0%	100%	45%	45%

Source: Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention Program 2009–10 Supplementary Financial Data

The percentage of grant funds spent on each component area, and the frequency with which percentage ranges were present across all grantees, are presented in Table 72. Although there was great variability across the participating campuses in the extent to which grantees spent money on the summer program and on interventions, only eight campuses spent more than 20% of their budget on the early warning data system. This is not surprising, as progress report data presented earlier illustrated that 37% of grantees utilized the National High School Center's Early Warning System Tool free of charge, and another 38% of campuses used a district system that was already in place. Thus, costs of the program were more focused within the summer program and intervention components of the overall program.

Table 72. Distribution of Grant Expenditures by Program Component (*N*=60)

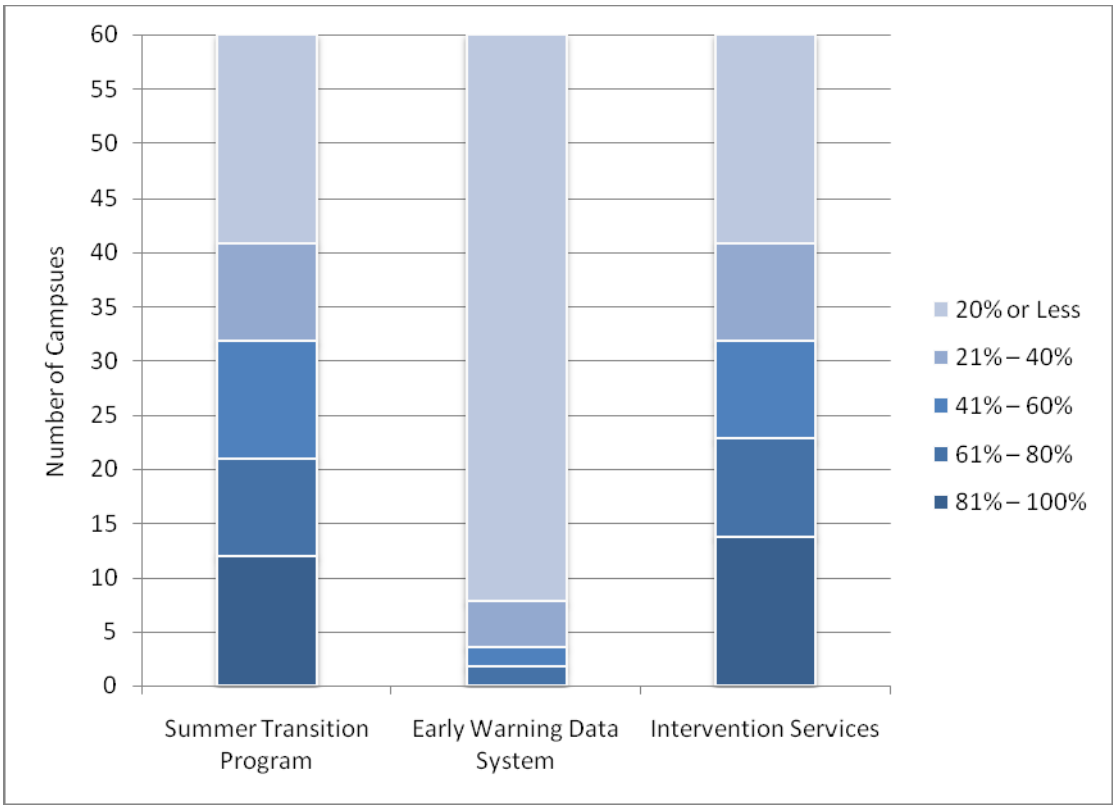
Percentage of Expenditures	Number of Campuses	Percentage of Campuses
Summer Transition Program Component		
20% or Less	19	32%
21%–40%	9	15%
41%–60%	11	18%
61%–80%	9	15%
81%–100%	12	20%
Early Warning Data System Component		
20% or Less	52	87%
21%–40%	4	7%
41%–60%	2	3%
61%–80%	2	3%
81%–100%	--	--
Intervention Services Component		
20% or Less	19	32%
21%–40%	9	15%
41%–60%	9	15%
61%–80%	9	15%
81%–100%	14	23%

Source: Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention Program 2009–10 Supplementary Financial Data

When comparing the grant expenditures across the summer transition program, early warning data system, and intervention services, it is clear that most districts invested their funds in the summer program activities and the interventions offered to struggling students during the year. Figure 7 shows

that campuses spent the majority of their funds (61–100%) on the summer program and intervention services (35% and 38%, respectively). The graph displays the distribution of grant expenditures across all three TNGTI program components.

Figure 7. Distribution of Grant Expenditures by Program Component Across Campuses (*N*=60)



Source: Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention Program 2009–10 Supplementary Financial Data

Supplemental Funds Used to Support the Program

Understanding that grant programs typically do not operate in isolation from other initiatives in place at high school campuses, and that school districts often support grant programs with other funds, the supplemental data collection sought to identify the "total" cost of implementing the TNGTI program (i.e., TNGTI grant funds plus other supplemental funds used to help operate the program). Thus, school districts were asked to identify the amounts and sources of other federal, state, and local funds used to support the TNGTI program.

Unfortunately, these data were reported for only 24 grantee campuses (38%), and the quality of the data entered was questionable. For example, while some districts submitted sums of money that seemed reasonable in as the context of supporting an existing grant program on a campus, others submitted the total amount of funding their district receives from other funding sources. Thus, the combination of low response rates and questionable dollar amounts led the research team to decide not to calculate the "total" costs of program implementation. However, the data that were submitted do

shed light on the types of supplemental funding sources used to support the TNGTI program and the importance of pooling resources to help support critical initiatives.

Of those grantees who submitted data on supplemental funds used, 75% indicated they supported the TNGTI program with federal funds, 67% reported use of other state funds, 21% reported use of local funds, and 13% reported supplementing the program with private or other funds.

NCLB funding for Title I campuses was most commonly used by TNGTI grantee campuses to support the program, followed by American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds. Campuses reported using the following types of federal funds to supplement TNGTI grant funds:

- Title 1 program funds (18 of 24 campuses—75%).
- ARRA program funds (9 of 24 campuses—38%).
- Bilingual education program funds (4 of 24 campuses—17%).
- Migrant education program funds (2 of 24 campuses—8%).

The most commonly reported source of additional state funding used to support the TNGTI program was State Compensatory Education (SCE) program funds. The purpose of the SCE program is to provide programs and activities that enhance and improve the regular education program to increase academic achievement and reduce the dropout rate of at-risk students in Texas; thus, it is not surprising that these funds often were used. High School Allotment funds also were used by a large proportion of reporting grantee campuses to supplement TNGTI funding. The following types of state funds were used to support or expand program activities:

- SCE program funds (14 of 24 campuses—58%).
- High School Allotment funds (10 of 24 campuses—42%).
- Accelerated Reading and Math Instruction funds (3 of 24 campuses—13%).
- Optional Extended Year Program funds (1 of 24 campuses—4%).

Among the few who reported using private or other funds, grantees indicated those sources were a Principal's Fund, a donation for a field trip, and fundraising for incentives and hot meals for students.

Cost Effectiveness of the Program

To determine the cost effectiveness of the TNGTI program, it is necessary first to identify the costs of the program on a per-student basis and then identify the impacts of the program (both positive and potentially negative). Finally, the per-student costs compared with campus-level program effects were used to determine the cost effectiveness of the program.

Students Served

The number of students served at each campus was identified in two ways: first, through the districts' submission of student-level data identifying students who participated in the summer transition program (termed "students attended") and, second, through the districts' submission of student-level

data identifying students who were being tracked through the early warning data system and served with interventions through the academic year (termed "students identified").

Across all campuses, the number of students identified for intervention services ranged from 0 to 167. On average, 71 students were identified for intervention services at each participating campus. The number of students attending the summer program ranged from 0 to 163, with an average of 49 students per campus. Only six campuses (10%) reported having more than 100 students who attended the summer transition program. It is clear that schools were better able to serve students throughout the year, as 16 campuses (26%) reported that they identified over 100 students for academic, behavioral, or attendance intervention services throughout the 2009–10 school year.

Cost Per Student

The research team calculated a cost-per-student measure for each campus participating in the grant program. This measure was calculated in two ways:

1. **Cost Per Student Identified for Program Participation**: total grant expenditures divided by the total number of students identified in the early warning data system for intervention services during the school year.

2. **Cost Per Student in Summer Transition Program**: total grant expenditures divided by the total number of students who attended the summer transition program.

The cost-per-student calculations presented in this report cannot be interpreted in isolation because there are many factors that impact these ratios. For example, *cost per student identified for program participation* can be high when a school intentionally targets a small group of at-risk students with intensive services. In contrast, *cost per student in the summer transition program* may be relatively high for summer 2009 because of difficulties recruiting students to attend the summer program. With low attendance numbers, total expenditures are divided by a relatively low number of participating students, although program activities *could have* supported substantially higher numbers of students. These are two examples of where a high cost ratio is indicative of two very different programmatic contexts. The various factors contributing to cost-per-student ratios should be taken into consideration when interpreting cost-per-student data.

The cost per student overall was examined through the sum total of the expenditures across 57 grantees that provided data for both identified students and attended students. Across all grantees, the cost per student overall was $511 per identified student and $732 per attended student. Alternatively, the average campus-level costs were $959 per identified student and $1,327 per attended student. The breakdown of the two student groups is described below.

Cost Per Student Identified for Program Participation

Cost per student identified for program participation calculations were based on data reported on students identified for intervention services through the early warning data system and on grant

expenditure data. The cost per student identified for program participation varied substantially across grantee campuses, from $25 to $11,680. The median per-student cost was $431. Using the cost per student identified for program participation calculation, a higher percentage of campuses had per-student costs of $500 or less (58%) and $1,000 or less (70%) than found for cost per student attended. Based on the number of students identified for program participation, a relatively small proportion (11%) of campuses reported per-student costs of more than $2,000 (see Table 73).

Table 73. Cost Per Student Identified for Program Participation (*N*=57)

Cost Per Student	Range of Students	Number of Campuses	% of Campuses
$0 to $250	33–133	15	26%
$251–$500	38–167	18	32%
$501–$750	38–91	4	7%
$751–$1,000	92–98	3	5%
$1,001–$1,250	30–90	6	11%
$1,251–$1,500	25–38	3	5%
$1,501–$1,750	22–45	2	4%
$1,751–$2,000	--	--	--
$2,001–$2,250	17–21	2	4%
$2,251–$2,500	--	--	--
$2,501–$2,750	--	--	--
$2,751–$3,000	12	1	2%
More than $3,000	3–15	3	5%

Source: Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention Program 2009–10 Supplementary Financial Data

Cost Per Student in the Summer Transition Program

Based on data reported on summer program student attendance and program expenditures, *cost per student in the summer transition program* varied substantially across grantee campuses. Per-student costs ranged from $25 to $11,680, with a median of $781 per student. Despite the high end of this range, more than one third (35%) of the campuses reported per-students costs of $500 or less, and the majority (60%) of grantees had calculated per-student costs of $1,000 or less based on the number of students attending the summer program. Only 20% of the campuses reported data resulting in a per-student cost of $2,000 or more (see Table 74).

Table 74. Cost Per Student Attending Summer Transition Program (*N*=57)

Cost Per Student	Range of Students	Number of Campuses	% of Campuses
$250 or less	33–104	9	16%
$251–$500	17–163	11	19%
$501–$750	15–104	8	14%
$751–$1,000	26–98	6	11%
$1,001–$1,250	14–90	6	11%
$1,251–$1,500	18–38	3	5%
$1,501–$1,750	22–53	2	4%
$1,751–$2,000	25	1	2%
$2,001–$2,250	17–40	3	5%
$2,251–$2,500	14	1	2%
$2,501–$2,750	--	--	--
$2,751–$3,000	12–26	2	4%
More than $3,000	2–12	5	9%

Source: Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention Program 2009–10 Supplementary Financial Data

Cost Effectiveness of the Program

Two aspects of the cost effectiveness of the TNGTI program were explored: (1) the percentage of funds spent on each of the three program components and (2) the cost-per-student ratio for students who attended the summer transition program. Those students who participated in the summer program were considered the group of interest for the statistical model analyses, instead of the students who were identified for the program but did not attend the summer program.

How campuses allocated grant funds across program components may be related to how effective their program is for students who attended the summer transition program. As can be seen in Table 75, campuses that spent a greater portion of their TNGTI funds on their summer programs had a larger effect score related to student TAKS performance. To provide an example of how to interpret the effect score as a proportion, a one point increase in the portion of funding spent on the summer transition program was associated with a 0.34 increase in the effect of participation in the summer program on a student's TAKS-Reading scores and a 0.51 increase in the effect of participation in the summer program on a student's TAKS-Math scores. Both relationships approached statistical significance but did not reach the $p < .05$ level ($p = 0.11$ and $p = 0.08$, respectively).

Table 75. Relationship Between TNGTI Spending and TNGTI Effects

Model	TAKS-Reading (*N*=24,714)			TAKS-Math (*N*=24,347)		
	Effect	T-value	Significance	Effect	T-value	Significance
Summer Program x Percentage of Funds on Summer Program	34.10	1.24	0.11	50.61	1.45	0.08
Summer Program x Percentage of Funds on Data Systems	-25.31	-0.40	0.35	48.77	0.60	0.28
Summer Program x Percentage of Funds on Interventions	-16.35	-0.62	0.27	-36.11	-1.08	0.14

Source: Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention Program 2009–10 Supplementary Financial Data and data from Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) (Texas Education Agency, 2010)

To examine how a school's cost-per-student ratio relates to student outcomes, schools' cost-per-student ratios (per-student-attended) were used in statistical models predicting program success. These analyses sought to identify whether cost-per-student ratios were systematically related to student outcomes in any way. In other words, were schools with higher cost-per-student ratios more likely to impact participating students? Analyses revealed that per-pupil spending on summer program attendees turned out to be negatively associated with the effect of the TNGTI program on TAKS-Math and TAKS-Reading scores (see Table 76).

Table 76. Relationship Between Per-Pupil Spending on Summer Program Attendees and TNGTI Program Effects

Model	TAKS-Reading (*N*=24,714)			TAKS-Math (*N*=24, 347)		
	Effect	T-value	Significance	Effect	T-value	Significance
Summer Program x Per Pupil Spending on Summer Program Attendees	-0.01	-2.04	0.02	-0.02	-3.02	0.002

Source: Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention Program 2009–10 Supplementary Financial Data and data from Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) (Texas Education Agency, 2010)

The results of this analysis may be explained in part by the fact that per-pupil spending in some campuses was high because summer program attendance was very low. These findings on per-pupil spending should not be interpreted in isolation because the spending on program components analysis indicated that those schools that spent proportionally more of their funding on the summer transition component of the TNGTI program demonstrated better outcomes on TAKS-Math and TAKS-Reading scores. The results obtained through statistical modeling may also have been affected by the missing student data and missing financial data from certain campuses and districts. Because of the extreme variation in per-pupil spending from campus to campus, these effect scores cannot be accurately interpreted in terms of cost effectiveness of the program.

XI. Program Sustainability Findings

In an effort to assess the issue of program sustainability, a number of different data sources were utilized. Campus staff members were asked a series of questions about program continuation and sustainability on the January 2010 and April 2010 campus progress reports, staff survey, and in interviews conducted during spring site visits.[20] Respondents also provided suggestions for modifications for the future and what assistance they would like from TEA to help with program implementation.

Program Sustainability

Survey and progress report data suggested that there is strong support for the continuation of the TNGTI program at the district and campus levels. In the April 2010 campus progress report, campus staff were asked to indicate if they knew if their district had applied for the TNGTI continuation grant for the 2010–11 school year. The majority of campuses indicated that their districts had applied for further funds (77%), and a smaller percentage was unsure at the time of data collection (15%). Table 77 shows the range of responses related to the campus staff's knowledge of whether their districts would be applying for continuation grant funds.

Table 77. Campuses That Applied for a TNGTI Continuation Grant for 2010–11 School Year (*N*=61)

	Number of Campuses	Percentage of Campuses
District has applied for 2010–11 grant funds	48	78.7%
District has **not** applied for 2010–11 grant funds	4	6.6%
Don't know	9	14.8%

Source: Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention Program April 2010 Campus Progress Report (Texas Education Agency, 2010)

There were four campuses that responded that they did not plan to apply for TNGTI continuation funds for the next year (7%). Some of the reasons given by the campuses as to why they were not reapplying were (1) the funding was insufficient for their needs, (2) the amount of time needed for completing reports was excessive, (3) lack of parental support for the program, and (4) they faced challenges dealing with other adequate yearly progress (AYP) requirements.

On the staff survey, respondents were asked if state funding were not available for the TNGTI program whether it would still be beneficial for the district to continue a similar ninth-grade transition and intervention program through other funding sources. Of those who had been involved in planning and implementing of the program, 82% indicated that they would like to continue a similar program on their

[20] A supplemental financial data collection form also was sent to all grantees, requesting data related to program start-up costs versus recurring program costs. Unfortunately, data submitted by districts regarding start-up versus recurring costs at the campus level were both low in number and of poor quality. Thus, because a majority of these data were missing or incorrectly labeled, no financial analyses could be conducted regarding sustainability.

campus for incoming freshmen. Approximately 5% of survey respondents indicated that they did not think the district should continue a similar program if there were no funds available. The other 13% were unsure if they wanted to continue.

Finally, in the April 2010 campus progress report, respondents were asked which of the TNGTI grant components they would choose if given the option to custom-design their program. Almost all of the campuses indicated that they would implement the summer transition program (92%), and the majority would implement student monitoring and interventions (80%). When it came to the early warning data system, however, only 51% of campuses indicated that they would implement this component of the TNGTI grant (see Table 78).

Table 78. Choice of TNGTI Components for Funding If Allowed the Option (*N*=61)

	Number of Campuses	Percentage of Campuses
The summer transition component	56	91.8%
The student monitoring and intervention component	49	80.3%
The early warning data system tool component	31	50.8%

Source: The Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention Program April 2010 Campus Progress Report (Texas Education Agency)
Note: Respondents were asked to 'Check all that apply.' Percentages therefore do not sum to 100%.

During spring site visit interviews, almost all respondents indicated that they would continue to offer summer transition programs for incoming ninth-grade students, whether or not funding was available. One teacher stated strongly, "With or without the grant, we are doing it anyway." The principal at another campus stated:

Program Highlights:

We are definitely going to continue the program if we receive the grant or not. It was very, very beneficial for our staff and for our students.… We have already decided if we do not [get the TNGTI grant] that we are going to still use what we used this year because it worked for us.

The central office administrator at one district wanted to continue the summer transition program but acknowledged that it would be difficult without additional funds if it was to be solely district funded.

Challenges Faced:

Because of the way things are right now, the tax collections and the house foreclosures are really going to impact the district. From the financial standpoint, the financial setbacks that our district may have…. I do not think I could [offer the summer program without funding].

Planning Activities for Next Year

On the staff survey, respondents were asked if the level of collaboration between middle schools and high schools needed to change for next year. Of those respondents who indicated that planning activities had already begun, the majority responded that more collaboration was needed (70%). For some campuses, the amount of collaboration with the middle schools last year was appropriate and would continue for next year (13%). For a few respondents, less collaboration would be acceptable because the groundwork laid for the TNGTI program during the first year was sufficient (2%). Table 79 shows the range of responses the survey item concerning the level of collaboration needed between the middle schools and high schools for next year.

Table 79. Level of Collaboration Needed Between High Schools and Middle Schools for Next Year (*N*=240)

	Percentage of Respondents
Yes, more collaboration is needed	70.0%
No, the amount we collaborated last year was appropriate	12.9%
We can collaborate less next year because the work we did last year was sufficient	1.7%
I am unaware of how high school and middle school staff collaborated last year	15.4%

Source: Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention Program Staff Survey (Texas Education Agency, 2010)

Those same survey respondents were asked about the types of collaborative activities that the middle school and high school staff should begin for next year. The most frequent type of activity suggested was working collaboratively to recruit students for the TNGTI program (80%), discussing strategies for recruiting and enrolling students (79%) as well as determining criteria for student participation in the program (74%). Other activities viewed as somewhat less important were working collaboratively on the goals and timeline of the program (69%) and on implementing program activities (68%). Table 80 shows the range of responses related to the types of collaborative activities that the middle schools and high schools should carry out for next year.

Table 80. Ways in Which High School and Middle School Staff Should Plan for Next Year (*N*=240)

	Percentage of Respondents
Work collaboratively in the recruitment of students for the program	80.0%
Discuss strategies for recruiting and enrolling students in the program	78.8%
Discuss strategies for determining criteria for student participation in the program	73.8%
Work collaboratively on the goals and timelines of the program	69.2%
Work collaboratively in implementing program activities	67.9%

Source: Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention Program Staff Survey (Texas Education Agency, 2010)
Note: Respondents were asked to "Check all that apply." Percentages, therefore, do not sum to 100%.

During the spring site visits, all of the interview respondents mentioned the importance of having the feeder middle schools involved in the TNGTI planning process and student recruitment stage of the

program. One district administrator stated that all eighth-grade teachers would be involved in the program next year:

> ***Strategy Spotlights:***
>
> ***We have got folks coming in soon to start discussing the [TNGTI program] because all the eighth-grade teachers are going to be part of the transition program. We have included most of the other core area [teachers] as well, so we are going to sit down to start planning soon.***

The majority of interview respondents indicated that there would be more collaboration with middle schools for the next year because they had more time to hold planning meetings. One teacher stated that more collaboration was needed with the middle schools compared to last year:

> ***Strategy Spotlights:***
>
> ***I want us to be able to work more closely with the middle schools this year than last year…. I really want to be able to work more closely with the middle schools to get information about kids that we should be specifically targeting.***

In the April 2010 campus progress report, campuses indicated what planning activities already had begun for the summer 2010 transition program. Of those campuses that were planning to continue the TNGTI program, the majority had informed teachers and staff of the program (75%) and begun collaboration with the feeder middle schools (70%). At the time of the completion of the April 2010 campus progress report, approximately half of campuses had begun communicating to the eighth-grade students about the summer program (51%). Fewer campuses had scheduled campus planning meetings (46%), communicated to parents about the summer program (40%), or held campus planning meetings (32%). For three campuses, no planning activities had begun for the upcoming summer program (5%). Table 81 shows the range of responses related to planning activities for the summer transition program.

Table 81. Planning Activities Begun By Campus for Next Year's Summer Transition Program (*N*=57)

	Number of Campuses	Percentage of Campuses
Informed teachers/staff of the program	43	75.4%
Began collaborating with feeder middle school(s)	40	70.2%
Communicating to eighth-grade students about the summer program	29	50.9%
Scheduled a campus-level planning meeting	26	45.6%
Began communicating to parents about the summer program	23	40.4%
Held a campus-level planning meeting	18	31.6%
No planning activities have begun to my knowledge	3	5.3%
Other (e.g., identifying students, planning field trips and activities)	8	14.0%

Source: Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention Program April 2010 Campus Progress Report (Texas Education Agency, 2010)
Note: Respondents were asked to "Check all that apply." Percentages, therefore, do not sum to 100%.

The April 2010 campus progress report asked an open-ended question about what changes to the program the campuses would be making for the 2010–11 grant period. Of the 43 campuses that responded, the most frequent changes were additional or modified monitoring of TNGTI students (33%), additional or modified student recruitment for the program (28%), additional or modified activities for the summer program (28%), and additional or modified intervention services for students (26%). Table 82 displays the range of responses related to planned changes for the implementation of the TNGTI program next year.

Table 82. Planned Changes to TNGTI Program for 2010–11 School Year (*N*=43)

Planned changes for 2010–11 school year	Number of Campuses	Percentage of Campuses
Additional/modified monitoring of TNGTI students	14	32.6%
Additional/earlier student recruitment	12	27.9%
Additional/modified summer activities (e.g., field trips, HS credit)	12	27.9%
Additional/modified interventions (e.g., mentor program)	11	25.6%
Increased involvement of staff (e.g., monitoring, providing services)	7	16.3%
Additional/earlier coordination with middle schools	6	14.0%
Additional/earlier program planning meetings	6	14.0%
Additional parental activities and involvement	4	9.3%
Additional student incentives	3	7.0%
Modified summer transition program schedule	3	7.0%
Other (e.g., additional teacher training, staff changes)	3	7.0%
No planned changes	5	11.6%

Source: Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention Program April 2010 Campus Progress Report (Texas Education Agency, 2010)
Note: Respondents gave multiple responses. Percentages, therefore, do not sum to 100%.

During spring site visit interviews, most respondents had started planning activities for the next summer transition program. Compared to last year, planning activities were starting earlier, and more communication with the middle schools was occurring related to student recruitment. One district coordinator indicated that the middle school staff were going to be more involved in the TNGTI program compared to last year, and planning of activities and curriculum were starting earlier in the year:

Strategy Spotlights:

We plan on structuring it pretty much the same. We have got some people that are going to be doing curriculum writing between now and the start of summer school to write the specific program curriculum that we are going to use for the summer school.

Suggestions for Improvement

On the January 2010 campus progress report, respondents were asked to provide any suggestions for modifications or changes to the TNGTI grant program for future years. Staff also were asked in the April 2010 campus progress report and during interviews to indicate where they would like assistance from TEA for program implementation. To read all the written responses for suggested improvements to the TNGTI program from the January 2010 campus progress report, refer to Appendix H.

The largest group of campuses indicated that no modifications were necessary and that they were satisfied with the TNGTI program as implemented (37%). Of the campuses that offered suggestions for program modifications, the most frequent responses related to increasing the grant funds per campus or notifying campuses of the budget earlier in the year (15%). Other suggestions included making improvements to the early warning data system (13%) and more training on the TNGTI components (12%). Table 83 presents a summary of the top suggestions for the TNGTI program as a whole.

Table 83. Suggestions for Changes to TNGTI Program for Future Years (*N*=60)

	Number of Campuses	Percentage of Campuses
More funds, earlier notification of funds	9	15.0%
Make improvements to early warning data system (e.g., more user-friendly, available reports, compatibility, etc.)	8	13.3%
More training, guidance on TNGTI program	7	11.7%
Assistance with recruitment and advertising TNGTI program	6	10.0%
Increase number of students in TNGTI program	6	10.0%
Flexibility with summer transition program schedule	6	10.0%
More staff involvement	5	8.3%
TNGTI network of districts and schools, share information	3	5.0%
More incentives for students (e.g., field trips, fun activities)	3	5.0%
Earn high school credit for summer program	2	3.3%
Other (e.g., more planning time, more district support, more parent activities, more intervention services)	6	10.0%
No suggestions, satisfied with current TNGTI program	22	36.7%

Source: Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention Program January 2010 Campus Progress Report (Texas Education Agency, 2010)
Note: Respondents gave multiple responses. Percentages, therefore, do not sum to 100%.

Respondents during the spring site visit interviews had a couple of suggestions for the TNGTI program for future years. The most frequently offered suggestion was to expand the number of students allowed to participate in the program. Interviewees said that the benefits of the TNGTI program had been so great at their campuses that they wished they could include more students, both in the summer transition program and early warning data system. The coordinator at one campus hoped to reach even more students next year, if possible:

Strategy Spotlights:

The only thing that I would like to see is more students benefiting from the program. If the students doubled then of course we would have to double the personnel, but we would have more people to actually help these students as they make the transition.

Another suggestion was for more funds for incentives or for different allocation of funds for field trips and other student rewards. The coordinator at another campus wanted funding to be able to offer incentives throughout the year, not just during the summer transition program:

Strategy Spotlights:

I would have liked for the program to provide incentives that we could give out to students for the gains and progress that they have made. I think students need to be praised, even if it is a small gain.

In addition, in the January 2010 campus progress report, 51 campuses provided suggestions for specific improvements to the early warning data system. The largest group of campuses indicated that no improvements were necessary; they were satisfied with the early warning data system as implemented (35%). Of the campuses that offered suggestions, the most frequent responses related to reducing the amount of time needed for entering and monitoring student data (16%). Other suggestions included improving the early warning data system tool compatibility with current district and school systems (14%), making the sharing of data automatic instead of manual (12%), and several suggestions for adding a variable or feature to the early warning data system interface (10%). Table 84 presents a summary of the top modifications to the early warning data system suggested by campuses.

Table 84. Suggestions for Modifications to the Early Warning Data System (*N*=51)

	Number of Campuses	Percentage of Campuses
Reduce amount of time needed for entering/monitoring data	8	15.7%
Compatibility with current school or district systems	7	13.7%
Automatic upload or sharing of data	6	11.8%
Add a variable or function (e.g., extracurricular activities)	5	9.8%
Online, Web accessibility	4	7.8%
More reports available	4	7.8%
More training on early warning data system	3	5.9%
Improve tool interface, make more user friendly	3	5.9%
Collect early warning data system data in eighth grade	3	5.9%
More staff to be responsible for early warning data system	2	3.9%
Other (e.g., district support, more planning, improve timelines)	5	9.8%
None, satisfied with current early warning data system	18	35.3%

Source: Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention Program January 2010 Campus Progress Report (Texas Education Agency, 2010)

Note: Respondents gave multiple responses. Percentages, therefore, do not sum to 100%.

Specific to the early warning data system, interview respondents also stated that the amount of time needed for entering and monitoring data needed to be reduced. The other primary suggestion was to continue to develop the early warning data system tool so that it would be compatible with the current district and school systems. Program staff at some campuses had difficulty extracting the data from their own systems and then uploading it to the tool suggested by TEA, leading to several campuses having staff manually enter the data.

Assistance From TEA

In the April 2010 campus progress report, respondents were asked to reflect on how the TNGTI grant program (including all program requirements, summer activities, and the early warning data system) impacted the way the school thought about student monitoring and interventions. For most campuses, the TNGTI grant allowed the schools to offer activities that they would not have been able to implement otherwise (64%) or supplemented something that the schools already were doing for students (59%). Approximately half of the campuses were able to integrate TNGTI program components into their current systems (51%). In addition, for half of the campuses, the grant provided a new framework for thinking about student monitoring and intervention services (51%). Notably, four campuses indicated that the TNGTI grant had no impact on how they thought about student monitoring and interventions (7%). Table 85 shows the survey responses related to the overall impact of the TNGTI grant program on student monitoring and interventions.

Table 85. How TNGTI Grant Impacted Student Monitoring and Interventions (*N*=61)

	Number of Campuses	Percentage of Campuses
The TNGTI grant provided funds to conduct activities that we had wanted to do but did not have resources to implement	39	63.9%
The TNGTI grant supplemented something we were already doing	36	59.0%
The TNGTI grant program integrated nicely into how we already conducted student monitoring and interventions	31	50.8%
The TNGTI grant provided us with a new framework for thinking about student progress and intervention	31	50.8%
Our school did not think about student data monitoring and interventions in different ways as a result of the TNGTI grant	4	6.6%

Source: Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention Program April 2010 Campus Progress Report (Texas Education Agency, 2010)
Note: Respondents were asked to "Check all that apply." Percentages, therefore, do not sum to 100%.

In the January 2010 campus progress report, respondents were asked to answer an open-ended question about what types of technical assistance would be most helpful to assist in implementing, managing, or improving the TNGTI program. Campuses most frequently responded that they were satisfied with the amount of assistance provided by TEA or that no additional help was needed (42%). One respondent wrote, "The support [from TEA] thus far has been great. I would like to see it remain at the same level." The TNGTI coordinator at one school stated that the grant funds allowed for more

services to be provided to students and also gave the school a framework for progress monitoring and assisting students:

> ***Strategy Spotlights:***
>
> ***The finances and the money helped make it so that we had the energy and the resources to provide these kinds of services for our ninth graders. It gave us a framework and a structure from which to take and mold it to the school's needs.***

For those campuses that did request additional assistance, the most frequently mentioned request was for improving the compatability of the early warning data sytem tool with currrent school and district systems (22%). Other areas of assistance involved TEA providing more materials, resources, or contacts for help (17%), more training for staff on how to use the early warning data system (15%), and general ongoing help on how to implement program components (7%). Table 86 shows the range of responses related to the types of technical assistance that would be most helpful for implementing the TNGTI program.

Table 86. Technical Assistance That Would Be Most Helpful for TNGTI Program (*N*=60)

	Number of Campuses	Percentage of Campuses
Satisfied with TEA assistance, no additional assistance needed	25	41.7%
Changes to early warning data system, improve compatibility	13	21.7%
More materials, resources, contacts	10	16.7%
More training on early warning data system	9	15.0%
Ongoing implementation help for program components	4	6.7%
More training on intervention services	3	5.0%
More staff available (e.g., data entry, on-site programming)	3	5.0%

Source: The Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention Program January 2010 Campus Progress Report (Texas Education Agency, 2010)
Note: Respondents gave multiple responses. Percentages, therefore, do not sum to 100%.

During spring interviews, respondents were asked what types of assistance or support from TEA would be most helpful for implementing, managing, and improving the TNGTI program at their campuses. One frequent request related to receiving notification of funds earlier in the school year as well as an increase in funds for certain components. Another request related to providing more training on the early warning data system and fixing the compatibility issues between the early warning data tool and current school data systems. A district coordinator hoped that TEA could provide more guidance on the tool for as many staff members as possible:

> ***Strategy Spotlights:***
>
> ***I think if [TEA] really put a little bit more into the early warning data system and maybe provided some more training.… We only had one training session. And I know they had said they were going to update it and follow-up. That would be nice.***

XII. Key Findings

Findings related to the implementation of the TNGTI grant program at participating campuses are positive overall, suggesting that most aspects of the program are working well. Key evaluation findings are presented below, along with recommendations for program implementers and TEA program staff.

Key Findings: TNGTI Program Implementation

At most campuses, respondents indicated that the TNGTI grant had allowed schools to offer activities that they would not have been able to otherwise or had helped to supplement programs that they already offered to struggling students. At the end of the first year of implementation, 82% of respondents indicated that they would like to continue the TNGTI program or a similar program next year, even if grant funding from TEA was not available. The three-pronged approach of the summer transition program, early warning data system, and targeted intervention services provided multiple strategies for campus staff to address dropout issues facing at-risk ninth grade students.

Recommendations

Recommendations for Participating Schools. As is typical for the first year of a program implementation, the majority of program staff reported that they encountered a few bumps along the way and that they planned to make some modifications for the second year. Recommended changes mentioned by several campuses included better recruitment and advertising for the summer transition program and expanding program activities to include more students than the previous year.

Recommendation for TEA Program Staff. Campuses were generally satisfied with the support provided from TEA for the TNGTI grant program but suggested improvements to the early warning data system as well as more training for all ninth-grade staff on use of the data system.

Key Findings: Summer Transition Program

Overall, participating campuses indicated that the summer transition program had a positive impact on participating students and teachers. The majority of survey respondents rated the summer program as moderately to very effective (82%). Survey respondents indicated that students who participated in the summer transition program were more motivated, focused, confident, and that they already knew the expectations and school guidelines at the beginning of the school year compared to other nonparticipating ninth-grade students. At the end of the first year of implementation, 92% of campuses indicated that they would offer the summer transition program again.

Many campuses experienced problems recruiting students for the summer transition program (60%), including four campuses where no summer program activities took place due to a lack of student participants. The most common challenge was competing programs, such as summer school classes that targeted the same student population and were conducted at the same time as the transition program. Another major challenge was the lack of incentives available to motivate students to attend summer activities at school and give up their vacation time.

Note: More detailed information related to the summer transition program key findings can be found in the *Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention (TNGTI) Grant Program: Interim Evaluation Report* (Hoogstra et al., 2010).

Recommendations

Recommendations for Participating Schools. The most effective summer transition activities provided students with opportunities to meet and interact with high school staff, offered academic instruction in core subjects, high school orientation activities, team-building activities, and training in study skills. Related to student recruitment, campuses recommended planning to recruit earlier in the year for the next summer program, using multiple recruitment methods (e.g., presentations, advertisements, letters to parents) and coordinating with other summer programs to reduce scheduling conflicts and/or combine services across programs. A high level of collaboration between middle schools and high schools around student identification and recruitment was viewed as essential to making a summer transition program successful.

Recommendations for TEA Program Staff. Campuses requested that notification of grant funds occur earlier in the year so that planning for the next year's summer program activities starts well before the end of eighth grade. Assistance with early identification and recruitment of middle school students was one area where schools requested more support from TEA. Many campuses also suggested that the criteria for students be broadened to be able to include more ninth-grade students in the summer transition program when openings were available.

Key Findings: Early Warning Data System

The majority of participating campuses indicated that the early warning data system had a positive impact on students and teachers, but many campuses experienced challenges in installing and implementing the system. Overall, campuses that had an early warning data system rated it as moderately to very effective (94%), and the majority reported that the campus was more effective to much more effective at identifying students for interventions compared to last year (88%). The reported benefits of the early warning data system included timelier identification of students (72%) and identifying at least some students who may not have been identified before (75%). For example, one principal stated that having the early warning data system changed the identification process from being reactive to proactive and that struggling ninth graders could be monitored from the first day of school.

Approximately 85% of campuses reported successfully implementing an early warning data system; nine campuses indicated that they were monitoring students through a manual paper tracking system or had installed an early warning system but were not actively using it. More than half of campuses using an early warning data system indicated that it had been a moderate to a great burden to implement during the 2009–10 school year (54%). Only 38% of survey respondents indicated that teachers had direct access to the early warning data system, reflecting the frequently cited complaint that the burden of maintaining and monitoring student data fell to one or two people on the campus. Almost half of campuses reported that data from the system was not being used in teacher meetings because it was

duplicative of other sources of data or similarly related reasons (45%). At the end of the first year of implementation, only 51% of campuses indicated that they would want to implement the early warning data system again, if given the choice.

Recommendations

Recommendations for Participating Schools. Campuses need to work with TEA to fix compatibility issues with the early warning data system when problems arise. All staff members who will be using the early warning data system should access resources provided by TEA to receive training on how to manage student data. Consolidating grades, attendance, and behavioral referrals into one data system that teachers can easily access was shown to be beneficial to participating campuses. If the suggested early warning data system software does not work for a campus, staff should find a way to streamline student data to be able to flag issues when they arise. Student data should be monitored frequently, weekly if possible, to catch struggling students in a timely manner and identify them earlier in the school year.

Recommendations for TEA Program Staff. Increasing teacher understanding and use of the early warning data system is an area in which TEA can make improvements. Campuses wanted to reduce the amount of time that it took to enter and monitor student data, improve the compatibility between the early warning data system tool and the current district or campus systems, and be able to automatically upload and share student data instead of entering it manually. A few campuses also suggested adding additional variables or functions to the tool, allowing online access to the early warning data system and creating the capacity to produce customized data reports from the student data. With these suggested modifications, the campuses hope that they can use the system more effectively and more efficiently to support struggling ninth-grade students. TEA should increase efforts to make schools aware of available resources for effectively implementing and using an early warning data system.

Key Findings: Intervention Services

The majority of participating campuses indicated that the intervention services had a positive impact on struggling ninth-grade students, but the degree to which these supports were affected by the TNGTI program varied from campus to campus. Approximately 77% of campuses reported that the intervention services offered to TNGTI students were different in some way compared to services offered to other students (e.g. frequency, duration, timing, type of support, staff providing the services). The most frequently reported interventions provided to struggling students included parent contact, tutoring options, credit recovery programs, and parent/student conferences.

For the top interventions provided to struggling students, the majority of campuses had established these supports prior to implementing the TNGTI program. A notable exception was the use of a mentoring program, such as matching a freshman with an upperclassman or a teacher; three-quarters of participating campuses offered a mentoring program for TNGTI students, and for the majority of those campuses this was a new or modified program compared to programs in previous years. At the end of

the first year of implementation, 80% of campuses indicated that they would implement the student monitoring and intervention services again, if given the choice.

Small Learning Communities

Related to the instructional support provided to struggling students, many schools utilized a small learning community (SLC) structure to organize ninth graders (57%). For about one third of campuses, the SLC structure was new to the 2009–10 school year in tandem with the TNGTI grant program. In addition, seven campuses organized the TNGTI students into their own houses or clusters separate from other students to provide focused instruction and support. For those campuses with SLCs, 66% reported that this community structure facilitated the implementation of the TNGTI grant program to a moderate or to a great extent. Although creating SLCs for struggling ninth-grade students is not a specific part of the TNGTI program, it appears that providing some sort of grouping or clustering is beneficial to the targeted students.

Recommendations

Recommendations for Participating Schools. Related to interventions, a mentor program integrated with TNGTI activities was a new or modified service that many campuses offered. We recommend that campuses establish mentoring services as part of the TNGTI grant program, with teachers and staff as mentors and/or upperclassmen serving as role models for the ninth grade students. Another suggestion is to establish an SLC structure, either formally or informally, to facilitate keeping the students who participated in the summer transition program together during ninth grade. TNGTI students can be clearly defined as a separate group in the school, or they can be followed as a cohort integrated with other ninth-grade students.

Recommendations for TEA Program Staff. TEA should encourage teacher and peer mentor programs and small learning communities as part of the TNGTI program. Campuses also should be encouraged to use the funds to provide new or modified interventions to students that go beyond what was offered in previous years.

Key Findings: Parent Involvement in TNGTI Program

One of the goals of the TNGTI program is to increase parent involvement in student planning for high school and beyond. To achieve this goal, participating campuses made efforts to involve parents in program activities and to communicate more frequently with parents/guardians about student progress. The most frequently reported opportunities for parents to get involved with the campus were parent/teacher conferences, regular discussion of student progress, and visits to the school during summer transition program activities. The majority of survey respondents reported that their administrator advocated parent involvement in the TNGTI program to a moderate or to a great extent (71%). Although multiple opportunities were available, many campuses reported that a relatively small percentage of parents were actively involved in program activities. One of the barriers mentioned by respondents was a lack of parent support.

Note: More detailed information related to parent involvement in summer transition program activities can be found in the *Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention (TNGTI) Grant Program: Interim Evaluation Report* (Hoogstra et al., 2010).

Recommendations

Recommendations for Participating Schools. Campuses should hold parent information meetings and communicate with parents/guardians before the summer activities begin to help with recruitment. During the summer transition program, hold an opening day welcome activity for parents to come and meet the teachers and learn more about the high school. It also is recommended that a celebration or culminating activity be held at the end of the two weeks to recognize the accomplishments of participating students and have the parents attend. Administrators should make parent involvement a priority on their campuses and encourage frequent contact with the families of TNGTI students.

Recommendations for TEA Program Staff. Getting parents more involved is an area where campuses have requested more assistance from TEA. Campuses would like to receive information on successful parent involvement strategies and suggestions on how to increase parent participation in school activities.

Key Findings: Impact Analysis

Perceived Impact on Students

The perceived impact of the TNGTI program on students who participated in it was overwhelmingly positive. Campuses reported that TNGTI students began the 2009–10 school year with increased confidence, had fewer disciplinary referrals than expected, and performed better than expected academically. Most respondents also indicated that TNGTI students had higher attendance rates than typical, were more apt to ask questions in class than other students, and were interacting well with other students. On the staff survey, 81% of respondents believed that TNGTI students were more likely to stay in school rather than drop out. In interviews, program staff described the transformation they had seen in certain students from an attitude of defeat to an attitude of hope and a stronger connection with the school than seen with previous cohorts of at-risk ninth graders. Some campuses reported that they saw no difference between TNGTI students and other ninth graders, but the majority described noticeable positive changes in participating students.

The components of the TNGTI grant that were reported to be most beneficial to students were the availability of funds for supplies or incentives, the summer transition program activities, and the ability to flag students for interventions. Also, about half of the campuses indicated that the grant had provided a new framework for thinking about student monitoring and intervention services.

Recommendations for Participating Schools. Campuses should encourage students who benefited from the TNGTI program in the first year to share their success stories and help recruit students for the next school year.

Perceived Impact on Teachers and Staff

The teachers and staff involved with implementing TNGTI program activities reported a positive impact on their instruction, relationships with students, and ability to collaborate with each other. The majority of teachers who worked directly with participating students indicated that they had improved their own teaching abilities, were able to better direct students toward their goals, had more positive energy at the start of the 2009–10 school year, and were able to develop positive relationships with incoming ninth-grade students because of the TNGTI program. The most frequently mentioned facilitator of overall program success was the dedication of staff and their enthusiasm for the program.

The majority of respondents also reported that the TNGTI program provided more opportunities to collaborate with other teachers to support ninth-grade instruction and activities (67%). There was increased communication reported between ninth-grade teachers in SLCs or grade-level teams as well as between eighth-grade and ninth-grade teachers.

Recommendations for Participating Schools. When a campus had an SLC structure, more frequent teacher meetings were reported to occur (at least once or twice per week). Interview respondents also said that team planning and instruction during the summer transition program provided an opportunity to interact with their colleagues in a fun and relaxed atmosphere, and these positive feelings carried over into the school year. Campuses should encourage more ninth-grade teachers to be involved in the summer transition program to connect with their incoming students before school starts and to take advantage of opportunities to collaborate with colleagues. Implementing an SLC structure would help to continue opportunities for collaboration throughout the school year.

Analysis of Program Impact on Students

There was a statistically significant impact of the TNGTI program on the TAKS-Reading and TAKS-Math scores of participating students compared to nonparticipating students. Ninth-grade students who participated in the TNGTI summer program scored 14.3 points higher on the TAKS-Reading and 10.8 points higher on the TAKS-Math compared to students who did not participate. Both effects were significant at the $p < .05$ level, meaning that it is highly unlikely that this difference is a result of chance. TNGTI students performed better on the TAKS-Math and TAKS-Reading regardless of composition of student population, including percentage of low-income-family students at a campus, campus size, average campus completion rates, the percentage of LEP students at a campus, or the percentage of students identified for special education services. The program did not have a significant effect on the percentage of students who met TAKS standards or who received commended ratings on the TAKS. These findings suggest that additional efforts are needed to help prepare program participants to succeed academically and to acquire the skills needed to be college and career ready.

The effect of the TNGTI program on TAKS-Math and TAKS-Reading scores was *not* significantly related to teacher survey respondent ratings of the quality of the early warning data system implementation, the quality the intervention implementation, the perceived impact of the TNGTI program on students, or the perceived impact of TNGTI on teachers. TNGTI students performed better on the TAKS-Math and TAKS-

Reading regardless of the perceived effectiveness of program implementation. TNGTI students also performed better on the TAKS regardless of the degree to which teachers thought the program impacted students and teachers.

A slight difference was shown in the dropout rates of ninth-grade students who participated in the program compared to nonparticipating students. Data on whether TNGTI students and their matched counterparts dropped out of school in their freshman year was unavailable, but whether the student took the TAKS-Math in April 2010 was used as a proxy for not dropping out of school. Participating in the TNGTI summer program was associated with a 0.1% increase in the chances that students took the TAKS-Math in April 2010. This difference was statistically significant at the 0.01 level, but it is unclear whether this slight difference is substantively meaningful.

Recommendations for TEA Program Staff. Based on the evaluation findings, it is recommended that the TNGTI grant program continue to be funded and expanded to more campuses throughout the state. It also is recommended that program interventions and supports be strengthened for students who are struggling academically so that they are better prepared to succeed in high school and are college and career ready.

Key Findings: Financial Analysis of TNGTI Program

Most campuses expended grant money closely in line with their proposed budget. Grantees tended to spend the largest proportion of grant money on payroll/staffing, followed by supplies and maintenance. On average, grantees spent approximately half of their grant budgets on the summer transition program and half of their budgets on student interventions.

Cost Effectiveness

An analysis of the relationship between program costs and program impact on student TAKS scores revealed that programs that spent a greater portion of their TNGTI funds on the summer transition program had the largest impact on student TAKS performance. In schools that used more of their TNGTI funding on the summer program than other components, the effect of attending the summer program on participating students' scores on TAKS-Reading and TAKS-Math was greater. This relationship approached statistical significance.

Supplemental Funding

Of school districts that reported supplementing the TNGTI grant program with other funds, 75% indicated they supported the TNGTI program with federal funds, 67% reported use of other state funds, 21% reported use of local funds, and 13% reported use of private or other funds. Federal funding for Title I campuses was most commonly used by TNGTI grantee campuses to support the program, followed by American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds.

Per-Pupil Costs

Data on student summer program attendance and program expenditures indicate that per-student costs varied substantially across campuses. These costs ranged from $25 to $11,680, with a median of $780.95 per student. The cost per student overall was examined through the sum total of the expenditures across 57 grantees that provided data for both identified students and attended students. Across all grantees, the cost per student overall was $511 per identified student and $732 per attended student. Alternatively, the average campus-level costs were $959 per identified student and $1,327 per attended student.

Recommendations

Recommendations for Participating Schools. In order to fully support the TNGTI program components, many campuses combined the grant funds with supplemental funding from other sources. Campuses are encouraged to commit to offering a strong summer transition program, supported by the TNGTI grant and available funds from other federal, state, local, and private sources.

Recommendations for TEA Program Staff. A request was made by participating campuses for clarification of the guidelines on the use of grant funds. Some campuses did not know if funds could be used for student incentives, such as participant gifts (e.g., T-shirts), school supplies, and field trips. TEA should communicate with practitioners to address some of these common misconceptions about funding allocations. Campuses that designated the majority of their funding for their summer transition program had a greater impact on students; therefore, TEA should encourage campuses to invest a substantial proportion of their grant funds into offering purposeful and engaging summer activities.

XIII. Next Steps in the Evaluation

Additional data were collected during the summer and fall of 2010 at eight campuses that continued their participation in the TNGTI program for a second year. The primary purpose of the site visits was to obtain data on programs that have been effective in implementing the TNGTI program and have had the greatest impact on student participants with respect to the performance indicators (i.e., academic performance, attendance, and behavior).

Multiple criteria were used to select the eight sites. Three sites were selected on the basis of the dates of their summer transition programs as well as data on the perceived program effectiveness obtained from program staff and teachers on the first, second, and third campus reports and staff survey. Visiting campuses during their scheduled summer transition programs allowed the evaluation team to conduct observations of activities and levels of student engagement. Because most campuses held their 2010 transition programs early in the summer before plans had been finalized for conducting site visits, it was not possible to visit all selected campuses during the scheduled time of their summer transition programs.

The remaining sites were selected based solely on program effectiveness using the following criteria: TNGTI student 2009–10 outcome data (student performance on the 2009–10 TAKS-Math and TAKS-Reading), number of students participating in the program, and reported impact of the program on staff and teachers obtained from campus progress reports and staff surveys.

The types of data collected follow. The types of data analyses conducted also are described.

Data Collection

Additional data-collection activities at eight selected campuses were as follows:

- Key documents and artifacts on TNGTI program implementation collected from all selected campuses (July–October 2010).
- Interviews conducted with program staff at eight campuses regarding implementation of the second year of the summer transition program, any changes that have been made to the summer transition program since last year, and any planned changes to the early warning data system and intervention components of the program for 2010–11 (July–October 2010).
- Observations of summer transition program activities and levels of student engagement at three campuses (July–August 2010).
- Focus groups conducted with students who participated in the 2010 summer transition programs at six campuses to obtain their feedback on aspects of the program that they found helpful in preparing them for high school (August–October 2010).

Data Analyses and Reporting

Case studies of the eight campuses selected for site visits in July–October 2010 were completed based on data collected during the summer/fall 2010 site visits as well as data collected throughout the 2009–10 school year from campus progress reports, staff surveys, previous site visits (if applicable), student program participation and outcome data, and TEA administrative data (e.g., student TAKS scores from 2008–09 and 2009–10).

The case studies will be included in a supplementary chapter to the final evaluation report and will be published as an addendum to this report in spring 2011.

XIV. References

Akos, P., & Galassi, J. P. (2004). Gender and race as variables in psychosocial adjustment to middle and high school. *Journal of Educational Research, 98*(2), 102–108.

Alexander, K. L., Entwistle, D. R., & Horsey, C. (1997). From first grade forward: Early foundations of high school dropout. *Sociology of Education, 70,* 87–107.

Allensworth, E., & Easton, J. (2005). *The on-track indicator as a predictor of high school graduation.* Chicago: Consortium on Chicago School Research. Retrieved January 10, 2011, from http://ccsr.uchicago.edu/content/publications.php?pub_id=10

Allensworth, E., & Easton, J. Q. (2007). *What matters for staying on-track and graduating in Chicago public high schools: A close look at course grades, failures, and attendance in the freshman year.* Chicago: Consortium on Chicago School Research. Retrieved January 10, 2011, from http://ccsr.uchicago.edu/content/publications.php?pub_id=116

Alspaugh, J. W. (1998). Achievement loss associated with the transition to middle school and high school. *Journal of Educational Research, 92*(1), 20–25.

Andrich, D. (1978). A rating formulation for ordered response categories. *Psychometrika, 43*, 561–573.

Barber, B. K., & Olsen, J. A. (2004). Assessing the transitions to middle school and high school. *Journal of Adolescent Research, 19*(1), 3–30.

Cooney, S., & Bottoms, G. (2002). *Middle grades to high school: Mending a weak link.* Atlanta. GA: Southern Regional Education Board. Retrieved January 10, 2011, from http://www.eric.ed.gov/PDFS/ED479785.pdf

Cotton, K. (2001). *New small learning communities: Findings from recent literature*. Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory. Retrieved January 10, 2011, from http://www.eric.ed.gov/PDFS/ED459539.pdf

Dedmond, R., Brown, R. D., & LaFauci, J. M. (2006). Freshman transition programs: Long-term and comprehensive. *Principals Research Review, 1*(4), 1–8. Retrieved January 10, 2011, from www.freshmantransition.org/NASSP_ResearchBrief.pdf

EPE Research Center. (2006). Diplomas count: An essential guide to graduation policy and rates. *EdWeek.* Retrieved January 10, 2011, from http://www.edweek.org/ew/toc/2006/06/22/index.html

EPE Research Center. (2009). Diplomas count: Broader horizons—The challenge of college readiness for all students. *EdWeek.* Retrieved January 10, 2011, from http://www.edweek.org/ew/toc/2009/06/11/index.html

Falbo, T., Lein, L., & Amador, N. A. (2001). Parental involvement during the transition to high school. *Journal of Adolescent Research, 16*(5), 511–529.

Fernandez, R., & Velez, W. (1989). *Who stays? Who leaves? Findings from the ASPIRA Five Cities High School Drop Out Study.* Washington, DC: ASPIRA Association.

Finkelstein, N. D., & Fong, A. B. (2008). *Course-taking patterns and preparation for postsecondary education in California's public university systems among minority youth.* (Issues & Answers Rep., REL 2008 No. 035). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratory West. Retrieved January 10, 2011, from http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/west/pdf/REL_2008035.pdf

Heppen, J. B., & Bowles Therriault, S. (2008). *Developing early warning systems to identify potential high school dropouts.* Washington, DC: National High School Center.

Herlihy, C. (2007). *Toward ensuring a smooth transition into high school.* Washington, DC: National High School Center. Retrieved January 10, 2011, from www.betterhighschools.org/docs/NHSC_TowardEnsuring_051607.pdf

Ho, D., Imai, K., King, G., & Stuart, E. (2007). Matching as nonparametric preprocessing for reducing model dependence in parametric causal inference. *Political Analysis, 15*, 199–236. Retrieved January 10, 2011, from http://gking.harvard.edu/files/abs/matchp-abs.shtml

Hong, G., & Hong, Y. (2009). Reading instruction time and homogeneous grouping in kindergarten: An application of marginal mean weighting through stratification. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 31*(1), 54-81.

Hoogstra, L., O'Brien, B., Brown, M., Hallberg, K., Swanlund, A., Rapaport, A., et al. (2010). *Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention (TNGTI) grant program: Interim evaluation report*. Austin, TX: Texas Education Agency. Retrieved January 10, 2011, from http://www.tea.state.tx.us/WorkArea/linkit.aspx?LinkIdentifier=id&ItemID=2147485592&libID=2147485592

Isakson, K., & Jarvis, P. (1999). The adjustment of adolescents during the transition into high school: A short-term longitudinal study. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 28*(1), 1–26.

Jerald, C. (2006). *Identifying potential dropouts: Key lessons for building an early warning data system.* Washington, DC: Achieve.

Kennelly, L., & Monrad, M. (2007). *Approaches to dropout prevention: Heeding early warning signs with appropriate interventions.* Washington, DC: National High School Center at the American Institutes for Research. Retrieved January 10, 2011, from www.betterhighschools.org/docs/NHSC_ApproachestoDropoutPrevention.pdf

MacIver, D. J. (1990). Meeting the needs of young adolescents: Advisory groups, interdisciplinary teaching teams, and school transition programs. *Phi Delta Kappan, 71*, 458–464.

Mizelle, N. B. (1999). *Helping middle school students make the transition to high school.* Champaign, IL: ERIC Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education. Retrieved January 10, 2011, from http://www.kidsource.com/education/middlehigh.html

Mizelle, N. B., & Irvin, J. L. (2000). Transition from middle school into high school. *Middle School Journal, 31*(5), 57–61. Retrieved January 10, 2011, from www.nmsa.org/portals/0/pdf/publications/On_Target/transitioning_hs/transitioning_hs_4.pdf

Morgan, L. P., & Hertzog, C. J. (2001). Designing comprehensive transition plans. *Principal Leadership, 1*(7), 10–18.

Neild, R., & Balfanz, R. (2006). An extreme degree of difficulty: The educational demographics of the urban neighborhood high school. *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk, 11*(2), 123–141.

Reents, J. N. (2002). Isolating 9th graders, *School Administrator*, *59*(3), 14–19.

Roderick, M., & Camburn, E. (1999). Risk and recovery from course failure in the early years of high school. *American Educational Research Journal, 36*(2), 303–343.

Rosenbaum, P. R., & Rubin, D. B. (1984). Reducing bias in observational studies using subclassification on the propensity score. *Journal of the American Statistical Association, 79*(387), 516–524.

Schafer, J. L., & Kang, J. D. (2008). Average causal effects from nonrandomized studies: A practical guide and simulated case study. *Psychological Methods 13*(4), 279–313.

Smith, J. B. (1997). Effects of eighth-grade transition programs on high school retention and experiences. *Journal of Educational Research, 90*(3), 144–152.

Texas Education Agency. (2008). *Strategic plan.* Austin, TX: Author. Retrieved January 10, 2011, from http://www.tea.state.tx.us/WorkArea/linkit.aspx?LinkIdentifier=id&ItemID=2147485416&libID=2147485416

Texas Education Agency. (2009a). *Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention grant program guidelines.* Austin, TX: Author. Retrieved January 10, 2011, from http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/opge/disc/calendar/421-09/Guidelines.pdf

Texas Education Agency. (2009b). *Secondary school completions and dropouts in Texas public schools: 2007–08.* Austin, TX: Author. Retrieved January 10, 2011, from http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/research/pdfs/dropcomp_2007-08.pdf

Texas Education Code §29.081(d). (2007). Retrieved January 10, 2011, from http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/rules/commissioner/adopted/0708/102-1055-stat.html

Wright, B. D., & Masters, G. N. (1982). *Rating scale analysis*. Chicago: MESA Press.

Zeedyk, M. S., Gallacher, J., Henderson, M., Hope, G., Husband, B., & Lindsay, K. (2003). Negotiating the transition from primary to secondary school: Perceptions of pupils, parents, and teachers. *School Psychology International, 24(1)*, 67–79.

Appendix A

For the Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention (TNGTI) grant program, every participating high school campus was required to provide data on students participating in the program through several student data collections throughout the year. The January 2010 student data collection request focused on detailed information about the academic performance, attendance, and behavioral occurrences of participating students. The instructions were disseminated electronically to all TNGTI campuses. This information along with a list of all student variables are presented below.

Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention (TNGTI) Program
January 2010 Student Data Collection Instructions

General Instructions

TEA is collecting a second student upload for your Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention (TNGTI) program (Fall 2009 activities). The student upload is an excel file that will prompt you for information on each student who is participating in the program.

The deadline for submitting the upload through TEA's Encrypted Email System is January 29, 2010.

Specific Instructions

In the excel worksheet, please provide the requested information for each student (across campuses) who is **participating** in the Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention program (e.g., students who participated in a campus Summer Transition Program, are being tracked by the campus's Early Warning Data System, and who may be receiving TNGTI intervention services).

When entering data, please do not:

1) change the format for any field
2) copy and paste information into a cell
3) skip rows or hide columns
4) insert any additional columns

Column	Data field	Specific instructions for participating students
A	9th Grade Campus	From the dropdown list, select the name of the school the student is attending this school year (2009-2010).
B	Student (State) ID	Enter the student's state ID number (no dashes), which is either the student's social security number (SSN) or state assigned number (S Number; e.g., "s123456789").

C	Student First Name	Enter the student's first name as listed in PEIMS (if applicable; e.g., If student's name is "Barb" but in PEIMS it is listed as "Barbara," please type "Barbara" for student's first name in this column).
D	Student Last Name	Enter the student's last name as listed in PEIMS.
E	Student Birth Date	Enter the student's birth date using this format: MM/DD/YYYY.
F	Initial School Grading Period	From the dropdown list, select the school's initial grading period in fall 2009 (e.g., first six weeks, first nine weeks, other)
G	Numeric Grade in **Math** for Initial Grading Period Fall 2009	Enter the student's numeric grade in mathematics **at the end of the first grading period of the fall 2009 semester.** Round to the nearest whole number (e.g., 85, 93)
H	Numeric Grade in **ELA** for Initial Grading Period Fall 2009	Enter the student's numeric grade in English language arts **at the end of the first grading period of the fall 2009 semester**. Round to the nearest whole number (e.g., 85, 93)
I	Numeric Grade in **Science** for Initial Grading Period Fall 2009	Enter the student's numeric grade in science **at the end of the first grading period of the fall 2009 semester**. Round to the nearest whole number (e.g., 85, 93)
J	Numeric Grade in **Social Studies** for Initial Grading Period Fall 2009	Enter the student's numeric grade in social studies (e.g., history) **at the end of the first grading period of the fall 2009 semester.** Round to the nearest whole number (e.g., 85, 93)
K	Numeric Grade in **Math** Fall Semester 2009	Enter the student's numeric grade in mathematics **at the end of the fall 2009 semester.** Round to the nearest whole number (e.g., 85, 93).
L	Numeric Grade in **ELA** Fall Semester 2009	Enter the student's numeric grade in English language arts **at the end of the fall 2009 semester.** Round to the nearest whole number (e.g., 85, 93).
M	Numeric Grade in **Science** Fall Semester 2009	Enter the student's numeric grade in science **at the end of the fall 2009 semester.** Round to the nearest whole number (e.g., 85, 93).
N	Numeric Grade in **Social Studies** Fall Semester 2009	Enter the student's numeric grade in social studies (e.g., history) **at the end of the fall 2009 semester.** Round to the nearest whole number (e.g., 85, 93).
O	Total Days Absent Initial Grading Period	Enter the total days the student was absent during **the initial fall 2009 grading period** using PEIMS reporting guidelines.
P	Total Number of Tardies Initial Grading Period	Enter the total times the student was tardy for class **during the initial fall 2009 grading period**.
Q	Total Days Absent Fall Semester	Enter the total days the student was absent **during the fall 2009 semester** using PEIMS reporting guidelines.

R	Total Number of Tardies Fall Semester	Enter the total times the student was tardy for class **during the fall 2009 semester**.
S	Number of Disciplinary Incidents/Referrals Initial Grading Period	Enter the total number of disciplinary incidents or referrals (e.g., referrals to school disciplinarian, detentions, in-school suspensions, out-of-school suspensions) **during the initial fall 2009 grading period**.
T	Number of Disciplinary Incidents/Referrals Fall Semester	Enter the total number of disciplinary incidents or referrals (e.g., referrals to school disciplinarian, detentions, in-school suspensions, out-of-school suspensions) **during the fall 2009 semester**.
U	Student Received Intervention Services in Fall 2009?	From the dropdown list, indicate whether the student received intervention services in fall 2009 (yes, no). If the student did not receive intervention services, then you do not need to provide responses for the remaining columns (columns V through AH) for this student.
V	When Did Student First Receive Fall Intervention Services?	If the student received intervention services in fall 2009, when during the semester did the student first receive these services? (Select response from dropdown list.)
W	Academic Intervention 1	From the dropdown list, select the primary academic intervention received. If the student did not receive any academic interventions, select that option from dropdown list then skip to column Z. If the specific service received is not listed, select "Other".
X	Academic Intervention 2	From the dropdown list, select the second academic intervention received (if applicable). If the student did not receive a second academic intervention, choose that option from the dropdown list. If the specific service received is not included in the dropdown list, select "Other".
Y	Academic Intervention 3	From the dropdown list, select the third academic intervention received (if applicable). If the student did not receive a second academic intervention, choose that option from the dropdown list. If the specific service received is not included in the dropdown list, select "Other".
Z	Attendance Intervention 1	From the dropdown list, select the primary attendance intervention received. If the student did not receive any attendance interventions, select that option from dropdown list then skip to column AC. If the specific intervention service received is not listed, select "Other".

AA	Attendance Intervention 2	From the dropdown list, select the second attendance intervention received (if applicable). If the student did not receive a second attendance intervention, choose that option from the dropdown list. If the specific service received is not included in the dropdown list, select "Other".
AB	Attendance Intervention 3	From the dropdown list, select the third attendance intervention received (if applicable). If the student did not receive a second attendance intervention, choose that option from the dropdown list. If the specific service received is not included in the dropdown list, select "Other".
AC	Behavioral Intervention 1	From the dropdown list, select the primary behavioral intervention received. If the student did not receive any behavioral interventions, select that option from dropdown list then skip to column AF. If the specific intervention service received is not listed, select "Other".
AD	Behavioral Intervention 2	From the dropdown list, select the second behavioral intervention received (if applicable). If the student did not receive a second behavioral intervention, choose that option from the dropdown list. If the specific service received is not included in the dropdown list, select "Other".
AE	Behavioral Intervention 3	From the dropdown list, select the third behavioral intervention received (if applicable). If the student did not receive a third behavioral intervention, choose that option from the dropdown list. If the specific service received is not included in the dropdown list, select "Other".
AF	Degree to Which Student Has Made Progress After Academic Intervention(s)	If the student received academic intervention services in fall 2009, indicate the degree to which student made progress as a result of the services received (from the dropdown list). If you are not able to judge the student's progress select "Not currently able to assess progress." Leave field blank if the student did not receive any academic intervention services.
AG	Degree to Which Student Has Made Progress After Attendance Intervention(s)	If the student received attendance intervention services in fall 2009, indicate the degree to which student made progress as a result of the services received (from the dropdown list). If you are not able to judge the student's progress select "Not currently able to assess progress." Leave field blank if the student did not receive any attendance intervention services.
AH	Degree to Which Student Has Made Progress After Behavioral Intervention(s)	If the student received behavioral intervention services in fall 2009, indicate the degree to which student made progress as a result of the services received (from the dropdown list). If you are not able to judge the student's progress select "Not currently able to assess progress." Leave field blank if the student did not receive behavioral intervention services.

If you have any questions related to this form, please contact Andrew Moellmer at ProgramEval@tea.state.tx.us. Thank you for your assistance.

Appendix B

As part of the Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention (TNGTI) grant program, every participating high school campus was required to complete a campus progress report for TEA. The January 2010 campus progress report focused on implementation of the early warning data system, related intervention services, and program sustainability. The January 2010 campus progress report form was disseminated electronically to all TNGTI campuses. This form is included in its entirety below.

Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention (TNGTI) Program
January 2010 Campus Progress Report

Grant Activities Conducted From September 1, 2009 to December 31, 2009

This is the second of three progress reports that will be required by each campus participating in the Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention (TNGTI) program. This progress report will collect data on the implementation of program activities taking place over the September 1, 2009 - December 31, 2009 period.

Progress reports must be submitted for each campus in the time and manner requested by the Texas Education Agency. Refer to the application Schedule #4C - Reporting Requirements - for additional information. Failure to submit progress reports in a timely fashion may affect future funding. Please complete this report no later than **January 29, 2010**.

Questions related to completing this survey should be directed to Cheyanne Rolf, at the Gibson Consulting Group, Inc. (512-328-0884 x 115 or at crolf@gibsonconsult.com). Should you have programmatic questions, please contact Chris Ceasar at the TEA (512-936-6434) or at chris.caesar@tea.state.tx.us.

Campus Information

1. District Name:
   Dropdown list of districts (Radio Button)

2. Campus Name:
   Dropdown list of campuses (Radio Button)

3. Name of Grant Coordinator/Grant Contact: _____

4. Phone Number of Grant Coordinator/Grant Contact: _____

5. Email address of Grant Coordinator/Grant Contact: _____

6. If person completing this form is different from the Grant Contact listed in Question 3, Indicate name here: _____

7. Phone number of person competing report (if different from number reported in Question 4): _____

8. Email address of person competing report (if different from email address listed in Question 5): _____

SUMMER TRANSITION PROGRAM

*** 9. Did you experience any challenges recruiting students to participate in the summer transition program?** (Select one option)

O	Yes	Go to Page No. 3
O	No	Go to Page No. 4
		If Did Not Answer Then Go to Page No. 3

page 3

*** 10. Describe the challenges you experienced:**

_____

*** 11. How did you address these recruiting challenges (or how will you address them in the future)?**

_____

page 4

*** 12. To what extent did you attempt to assign summer transition program students to one of the summer teachers as a core subject teacher for their 9th grade year?** (Select one option)

O	No attempt was made to assign summer program students to one of the summer teachers in their core subjects	Go to Page No. 5
O	The effort was made, but it was minimally possible to execute	Go to Page No. 6
O	Every effort was made to accomplish this, but some students could not be assigned to their summer teacher	Go to Page No. 6
O	Students were purposefully and successfully assigned to their summer teacher for one of their core subject classes	Go to Page No. 6
O	Other (please specify) _____	Go to Page No. 6

page 5

*** 13. What were some of the reasons behind not attempting to assign summer transition program students to one of the summer teachers as a core subject teacher for their 9th grad year? (select all that apply)**

- ☐ Too complex to arrange with Master Schedule
- ☐ Not enough 9th grade teachers participated in the summer program
- ☐ Too few students participated in the summer program
- ☐ That idea was never generated

- ☐ Decided it was in the best interest of students to have different teachers
- ☐ Summer teachers were primarily from the middle school
- ☐ Summer teachers were primarily from grades 10 - 12
- ☐ Summer teachers were primarily not classroom teachers
- ☐ Other (please specify) _____

EARLY WARNING DATA SYSTEM

*** 14. Which of the following best describes the Early Warning Data System (EWDS) your campus has implemented or will be implementing to identify struggling ninth grade students? We are using...** (Select one option)

O	The National High School Center Early Warning System Tool	Go to Page No. 7
O	District data system(s) that were in place prior to the TNGTI program	Go to Page No. 7
O	District data system(s) that were in place prior to the TNGTI program with modifications made to meet the needs of this particular program	Go to Page No. 7
O	A custom-designed system developed either by the district, by the school, or by a contractor uniquely for the purposes of the TNGTI program	Go to Page No. 7
O	Manual paper tracking system(s)	Go to Page No. 7

O	Nothing - no system has yet been selected or implemented to date	Go to Page No. 12

If Did Not Answer Then Go to Page No. 7

page 7

*** 15. Which of the following best describes the status of the EWDS on your campus?** (Select one option)

O	The system has been chosen but is either still under development or has not yet been installed	Go to Page No. 12
O	The system has been installed but no data have been populated	Go to Page No. 12
O	The system has been installed and data have been populated, but the system is not actively in use	Go to Page No. 12
O	The system have been installed, data has been populated, and the system is currently being used to identify students struggling with academic, attendance, and/or behavioral issues	Go to Page No. 8
O	The district/campus already had a system in place prior to the grant and is currently being used to track the progress of students based on academic, attendance, and/or behavioral indicators	Go to Page No. 8

*** 16. Who at your campus is responsible for managing data in the EWDS (e.g., populating, cleaning, programming, etc.)? (select all that apply)**

- ☐ No one has been specifically designated to do this
- ☐ Information Technology staff
- ☐ Assistant Principal(s)
- ☐ Counselor(s)
- ☐ Administrative staff in the main office
- ☐ District-level administrator
- ☐ The TNGTI grant coordinator or program manager on our campus
- ☐ Core or elective teacher(s) [separate from the TNGTI grant coordinator or program manager]
- ☐ Interventionist (including at-risk specialist)
- ☐ Other (please specify) _____

*** 17. Who at your campus is responsible for monitoring EWDS data to identify students struggling with academic, attendance, and/or behavioral issues? (select all that apply)**

- ☐ No one has been specifically designated to do this
- ☐ Assistant Principal(s)

- ☐ Administrative staff in the main office
- ☐ The TNGTI grant coordinator or program manager on our campus
- ☐ Core or elective teacher(s) [separate from the TNGTI grant coordinator or program manager]
- ☐ Counselor(s)
- ☐ Interventionist (including at-risk specialist)
- ☐ Other (please specify) _____

EWDS Training:

18. For each of the following groups, indicate the number of hours of EWDS training received.

	None	Fewer than 2 hours	2 to 4 hours	4 to 6 hours	More than 6 hours
*(a) Teachers (Select one option)	O	O	O	O	O
*(b) Counselors (Select one option)	O	O	O	O	O
*(c) TNGTI grant coordinator/program manager (Select one option)	O	O	O	O	O
*(d) Office administrative staff (Select one option)	O	O	O	O	O
*(e) Assistant principal (Select one option)	O	O	O	O	O

*** 19. Who provided the training on the use of the EWDS to identify students struggling with academic, attendance, and/or behavioral issues? (select all that apply)**

- ☐ TEA (e.g., via TETN)
- ☐ District staff
- ☐ Campus staff
- ☐ Education Service Center staff
- ☐ External consultant
- ☐ No training was provided
- ☐ Other (please specify) _____

*** 20. Who at your campus is responsible for ensuring that the student and the parent are notified when a student is identified as being in need of intervention through the EWDS? (select all that apply)**

- ☐ Parents are not notified when a student is identified through the EWDS
- ☐ No one has been specifically designated to do this
- ☐ Assistant Principal
- ☐ Administrative staff in the main office
- ☐ The TNGTI grant coordinator or program manager on our campus
- ☐ Core or elective teacher(s) [separate from the TNGTI grant coordinator or program manager]

☐ Counselor(s)

☐ Interventionist (including at-risk specialist)

☐ Other (please specify) _____

*** 21. Has your campus made any changes to the measures for academic performance, student behavior, and attendance that are being tracked in the EWDS since submitting the grant application?** (Select one option)

O	Yes	Go to Page No. 9
O	No	Go to Page No. 10

page 9

22. What measures are currently being used in your EWDS to identify students struggling with academic, attendance, or behavioral issues?

(a) Academic Measures: _____

(b) Attendance Measures: _____

(c) Behavioral Measures: _____

*** 23. How frequently are data in the EWDS reviewed to identify students for interventions?** (Select one option)

- O Daily
- O Weekly
- O Every three week progress period
- O Every six week grading period
- O Every nine week grading period
- O Other (please specify) _____

*** 24. How frequently are data in the EWDS being reviewed to monitor the progress of students who are receiving interventions?** (Select one option)

- O Daily
- O Weekly
- O Every three week progress period
- O Every six week grading period
- O Every nine week grading period
- O Other (please specify) _____

*** 25. How effective has the EWDS been for identifying students for interventions in a timely manner?** (Select one option)

O Not at all effective O Minimally effective O Moderately effective O Very effective

*** 26. To what extent has your ability to identify students for interventions in a timely and effective manner changed this year through the use of the EWDS?** (Select one option)

O We are much less effective than last year

O We are less effective than last year

O There has been no change

O We are more effective than last year

O We are much more effective than last year

*** 27. Of the TNGTI students currently being tracked through the EWDS on your campus, approximately what percentage were identified for interventions during the fall 2009 semester?** (Select one option)

O 0 - 20% O 21 - 40% O 41 - 60% O 61 - 80% O 81 - 100%

Student Interventions

28. Of those students identified for intervention, approximately what percentage of students were "flagged" due to: (sum should total 100%)

* (a) Academic indicators

_____

* (b) Attendance indicators

_____

* (c) Behavioral indicators

_____

* (d) Combination of indicators

_____

* (e) Other indicators

_____

Student Interventions (cont.)

29. Approximately what percentage of students were identified for interventions at the following points in time? (sum should total 100%)

* (a) Within the first week of the fall semester

_____

* (b) At the three week grading period

_____

* (c) Between the three and six week grading periods

_____

* (d) At the six week grading period

_____

* (e) Between the six and nine week grading periods

_____

* (f) At the nine week grading period

_____

* (g) At some point after the nine week grading period

_____

page 11

*** 30. To what extent did the EWDS impact the timing of identification for intervention services being provided to TNGTI students?** (Select one option)

O The EWDS resulted in much less timely identification for intervention

O The EWDS resulted in less timely identification for intervention

O No Impact (interventions would have been provided at the same time with or without EWDS)

- O The EWDS resulted in timelier identification for intervention
- O The EWDS resulted in much timelier identification for intervention

*** 31. To what extent did the EWDS impact which students were being identified for interventions?** (Select one option)

- O The EWDS failed to identify many students who would have been identified using prior year's methods
- O The EWDS failed to identify some students who would have been identified using prior year's methods
- O No Impact (the same students would have been identified with or without the EWDS)
- O The EWDS identified some students who may not have been identified without it
- O The EWDS identified many students who may not have been identified without it

*** 32. The EWDS is being used to monitor student performance for which students:** (Select one option)

- O Only students who participated in the TNGTI program
- O All at-risk 9th grade students
- O All 9th grade students
- O All at-risk students in the school
- O All students in the school

*** 33. In what ways is the EWDS being used to monitor students differently that has been done in the past?**

_____

*** 34. What modifications to the EWDS would improve the process for identifying students for intervention services?**

_____

page 12

STUDENT INTERVENTIONS

Indicate which of the following ACADEMIC-related intervention services were used with TNGTI students at your campus. For each intervention used, indicate whether it is the same as that used in past years, modified in some way for the TNGTI students, or a new intervention developed as part of the TNGTI program.

35. Intervention Used?

	Yes	No
(a) Tutoring (before/after school, peer) (Select one option)	O	O
(b) Referral to student support/intervention team (Select one option)	O	O
(c) Saturday School (Select one option)	O	O
(d) Academic contract (Select one option)	O	O
(e) Credit recovery programs (Select one option)	O	O
(f) Conferences (parent, student, teacher) (Select one option)	O	O

(g) Pull-out programs (during school remediation) (Select one option)	O	O
(h) Referral to other intervention program (Select one option)	O	O
(i) Grades or progress reports sent to parents (Select one option)	O	O
(j) Mentoring programs (Select one option)	O	O
(k) Personal education/graduation plans (Select one option)	O	O

36. Same, Modified, or New?

	Same	Modified	New
(a) Tutoring (before/after school, peer) (Select one option)	O	O	O
(b) Referral to student support/intervention team (Select one option)	O	O	O
(c) Saturday School (Select one option)	O	O	O
(d) Academic contract (Select one option)	O	O	O
(e) Credit recovery programs (Select one option)	O	O	O
(f) Conferences (parent, student, teacher) (Select one option)	O	O	O
(g) Pull-out programs (during school remediation) (Select one option)	O	O	O
(h) Referral to other intervention program (Select one option)	O	O	O
(i) Grades or progress reports sent to parents (Select one option)	O	O	O
(j) Mentoring programs (Select one option)	O	O	O
(k) Personal education/graduation plans (Select one option)	O	O	O

Of the following ACADEMIC-related interventions, place a check next to the top 3 most frequently used, and the top 3 that most impacted student outcomes (Note: the top 3 can differ for frequency and impact):

37. Frequency and Impact

	Most frequent	Most impactful
(a) Tutoring (before/after school, peer)	☐	☐
(b) Referral to student support/intervention team	☐	☐
(c) Saturday School	☐	☐
(d) Academic contract	☐	☐
(e) Credit recovery programs	☐	☐
(f) Conferences (parent, student, teacher)	☐	☐
(g) Pull-out programs (during school remediation)	☐	☐
(h) Referral to other intervention program	☐	☐
(i) Grades or progress reports sent to parents	☐	☐
(j) Mentoring programs	☐	☐
(k) Personal education/graduation plans	☐	☐

page 13

Indicate which of the following ATTENDANCE-related intervention services were used with TNGTI students at your campus. For each intervention used, indicate whether it is the same as that used in past years, modified in some way for the TNGTI students, or a new intervention developed as part of the TNGTI program.

38. Intervention Used?

	Yes	No
(a) Conferences (parent, student, teacher) (Select one option)	O	O
(b) Referral to district truancy officer or legal system (Select one option)	O	O
(c) Contact parents (phone calls, letters) (Select one option)	O	O
(d) Referral to counselor or support team (Select one option)	O	O
(e) Home visits (Select one option)	O	O
(f) Incentives/rewards for attendance (Select one option)	O	O
(g) Attendance contracts (Select one option)	O	O
(h) Mentoring program (Select one option)	O	O
(i) Tutoring (before/after school) (Select one option)	O	O
(j) Family services intervention (e.g., social services, community liaison) (Select one option)	O	O
(k) Saturday School (Select one option)	O	O

39. Same, Modified, or New?

	Same	Modified	New
(a) Conferences (parent, student, teacher) (Select one option)	O	O	O
(b) Referral to district truancy officer or legal system (Select one option)	O	O	O
(c) Contact parents (phone calls, letters) (Select one option)	O	O	O
(d) Referral to counselor or support team (Select one option)	O	O	O
(e) Home visits (Select one option)	O	O	O
(f) Incentives/rewards for attendance (Select one option)	O	O	O

(g) Attendance contracts (Select one option)	O	O	O
(h) Mentoring program (Select one option)	O	O	O
(i) Tutoring (before/after school) (Select one option)	O	O	O
(j) Family services intervention (e.g., social services, community liaison) (Select one option)	O	O	O
(k) Saturday School (Select one option)	O	O	O

Of the following ATTENDANCE-related interventions, place a check next to the top 3 most frequently used, and the top 3 that most impacted student outcomes (Note: the top 3 can differ for frequency and impact):

40. Frequency and Impact

	Most frequent	Most impactful
(a) Conferences (parent, student, teacher)	☐	☐
(b) Referral to district truancy officer or legal system	☐	☐
(c) Contact parents (phone calls, letters)	☐	☐
(d) Referral to counselor or student support team	☐	☐
(e) Home visits	☐	☐
(f) Incentives/rewards for attendance	☐	☐
(g) Attendance contracts	☐	☐
(h) Mentoring program	☐	☐
(i) Tutoring (before/after school)	☐	☐
(j) Family services intervention	☐	☐
(k) Saturday School	☐	☐

Indicate which of the following BEHAVIOR-related intervention services were used with TNGTI students at your campus. For each intervention used, indicate whether it is the same as that used in past years, modified in some way for the TNGTI students, or a new intervention developed as part of the TNGTI program.

41. Intervention Used?

	Yes	No
(a) Conferences (parent, student, teacher) (Select one option)	O	O
(b) Referral to district truancy officer (Select one option)	O	O
(c) Referral to juvenile justice system (Select one option)	O	O
(d) Behavioral contracts (Select one option)	O	O
(e) Social skills/anger management program (Select one option)	O	O
(f) Suspension (Select one option)	O	O
(g) Detention (Select one option)	O	O
(h) Family services intervention (Select one option)	O	O
(i) Mentoring program (Select one option)	O	O
(j) Personal education/graduation plans (Select one option)	O	O
(k) Referral to other intervention program (Select one option)	O	O
(l) Community service (Select one option)	O	O

42. Same, Modified, or New?

	Same	Modified	New
(a) Conferences (parent, student, teacher) (Select one option)	O	O	O
(b) Referral to district truancy officer (Select one option)	O	O	O

(c) Referral to juvenile justice system (Select one option)	O	O	O
(d) Behavioral contracts (Select one option)	O	O	O
(e) Social skills/anger management program (Select one option)	O	O	O
(f) Suspension (Select one option)	O	O	O
(g) Detention (Select one option)	O	O	O
(h) Family services intervention (Select one option)	O	O	O
(i) Mentoring program (Select one option)	O	O	O
(j) Personal education/graduation plans (Select one option)	O	O	O
(k) Referral to other intervention program (Select one option)	O	O	O
(l) Community service (Select one option)	O	O	O

Of the following BEHAVIOR-related interventions, place a check next to the top 3 most frequently used, and the top 3 that most impacted student outcomes (Note: the top 3 can differ for frequency and impact):

43. Frequency and Impact

	Most frequent	Most impactful
(a) Conferences (parent, student, teacher)	☐	☐
(b) Referral to district truancy officer	☐	☐
(c) Referral to juvenile justice system	☐	☐
(d) Behavioral contracts	☐	☐
(e) Social skills/anger management program	☐	☐
(f) Suspension	☐	☐

(g) Detention	☐	☐
(h) Family services intervention	☐	☐
(i) Mentoring program	☐	☐
(j) Personal education/graduation plans	☐	☐
(k) Referral to other intervention program	☐	☐
(l) Community service	☐	☐

page 15

*** 44. In what ways are the intervention services provided to TNGTI students different from those provided to other students at your campus? (select all that apply)**

- ☐ Type of intervention offered differs
- ☐ Frequency or intensity/duration of interventions differ
- ☐ Timing of intervention services differ (e.g., earlier in the school year)
- ☐ Staff providing the intervention differs
- ☐ The intervention services do not differ
- ☐ Other (please specify) _____

Impact of Program

45. Rate the extent to which you agree with the following statements related to TNGTI program students:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
*(a) TNGTI students began the 2009-10 school year with increased confidence (Select one option)	O	O	O	O
*(b) The academic performance of TNGTI students has exceeded expectations (Select one option)	O	O	O	O
*(c) TNGTI students are more apt to ask questions in class than other students (Select one option)	O	O	O	O
*(d) Attendance rates for TNGTI students have been higher than typical (Select one option)	O	O	O	O
*(e) TNGTI students have received fewer office referrals than expected (Select one option)	O	O	O	O
*(f) The need for academic interventions with TNGTI students has been higher than expected (Select one option)	O	O	O	O
*(g) The need for attendance interventions with TNGTI students has been higher than expected (Select one option)	O	O	O	O
*(h) The need for behavior interventions with TNGTI students has been higher than expected (Select one option)	O	O	O	O

*** 46. In what ways does the TNGTI program provide parents with the opportunity to be more involved in their child's education? (select all that apply)**

- ☐ Visits to the school for summer transition program activities
- ☐ Regular discussions with teachers or school staff regarding students' progress

- ☐ Home visits from school staff to keep parents informed and involved
- ☐ Parent contracts with school
- ☐ Parent-teacher conferences
- ☐ Family services interventions
- ☐ The TNGTI program does not provide opportunities for parents to be more involved
- ☐ Other (please specify) _____

page 16

PROGRAM SUSTAINABILITY

*** 47. Assuming funding is available, based on your experience with the TNGTI program thus far, how likely is it that your campus will run a similar program next summer?** (Select one option)

O Very Unlikely O Unlikely O Likely O Very Likely O Don't Know

*** 48. What barriers, if any, have you encountered to the effective implementation of the EWDS portion of the TNGTI grant program, and in what ways have you been successful in overcoming those barriers (if at all)?**

_____

*** 49. Have there been any particular facilitators to effective implementation of the EWDS at your campus?**

_____

*** 50. What barriers, if any, have you encountered to the effective implementation of intervention services related to the TNGTI grant program, and in what ways have been successful in overcoming those barriers (if at all)?**

_____

*** 51. Have there been any particular facilitators to effective implementation of intervention services for TNGTI students at your campus?**

_____

*** 52. What suggestions would you make for how the TNGTI program components could be modified or changed for future years (the summer transition program, the EWDS, or the intervention services)?**

_____

*** 53. What types of technical assistance would be most helpful for you to assist in implementing, managing, and/or improving your TNGTI program?**

_____

Appendix C

As part of the Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention (TNGTI) grant program, every participating high school campus was required to complete a campus progress report for TEA. The April 2010 campus progress report focused on the structure of the high school campus, teacher collaboration, and perceived effectiveness of the program. The April 2010 campus progress report form was disseminated electronically to all TNGTI campuses. This form is included in its entirety below.

Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention (TNGTI) Program
April 2010 Campus Progress Report

Grant Activities Conducted From December 31, 2009 to April 30, 2010

This is the last progress report required of each campus participating in the Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention (TNGTI) program. This report is asking about your experiences and perceptions covering the entire TNGTI program period (from Date of NOGA to present time). The report should take approximately 15 minutes to complete. Please complete this report no later than **May 7, 2010**.

Progress reports must be submitted for each campus in the time and manner requested by the Texas Education Agency. Refer to the application Schedule #4C - Reporting Requirements - for additional information. Failure to submit progress reports in a timely fashion may affect future funding.

Questions related to completing this survey should be directed to Cheyanne Rolf, at Gibson Consulting Group, Inc. (512-328-0884 x115 or at crolf@gibsonconsult.com). Should you have programmatic questions, please contact Chris Ceasar at the TEA (512-936-6434) or at chris.caesar@tea.state.tx.us.

Campus Information

1. District Name:
   Dropdown list of districts (Radio Button)

2. Campus Name:
   Dropdown list of campuses (Radio Button)

3. Position of person completing this form: _____

4. Are ninth grade students in your school organized into small learning communities (e. g. houses, teams, schools, etc.)? (Select one option)

O	Yes	Go to Page No. 2
O	No	Go to Page No. 3

If Did Not
Answer Then
Go to Page No. 2

page 2

5. In what school year were small learning communities first implemented in your schools' ninth grade? (select one) (Select one option)

- O 2009-10
- O 2008-09
- O 2007-08
- O Other (please specify) _____

6. Are TNGTI students organized into their own small learning communities, or are they integrated into small learning communities with other students? (Select one option)

- O TNGTI students are organized into their own small learning communities
- O TNGTI students are integrated into small learning communities with other students

7. To what extent do you feel that implementation of the TGNTI grant was facilitated by the organization of your ninth grade into small learning communities? (Select one option)

- O Not at all
- O To a minimal extent
- O To a moderate extent
- O To a great extent

8. How frequently do teacher teams within the small learning communities meet formally (e.g., during a shared planning time) to discuss student progress? (Select one option)

- O Daily
- O At least once per week
- O At least twice per week
- O At least once every two weeks
- O At least once every three weeks
- O At least once per month
- O Teacher teams do not have formal meetings
- O Other (please specify) _____

9. Which of the following are present during small learning community team meetings? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ Ninth grade core subject teachers
- ☐ Ninth grade elective teachers
- ☐ Counselor
- ☐ Assistant principal
- ☐ Interventionist (including at-risk specialist)
- ☐ Other (please specify) _____

10. Of the following response options, choose the one that best represents how the early warning data system is used by teachers during small learning community team meetings: (Select one option)

O	During team meetings, teachers use the early warning data system as the single source of student data	Go to Page No. 5
O	During team meetings, teachers use the early warning data system in addition to other sources of data (e.g., gradebooks, attendance reports, failure reports, etc.)	Go to Page No. 5
O	During team meetings, teachers do not use the early warning data system, as the data contained in the early warning data system is either duplicative of other sources of data, or not timely enough to be useful.	Go to Page No. 5
O	Teachers do not use the early warning data system during team meetings for other reasons	Go to Page No. 5
O	Other (please specify) _____	Go to Page No. 5
		If Did Not Answer Then Go to Page No. 5

page 3

11. Do ninth grade teachers on your campus meet formally during a shared planning time to discuss student progress? (Select one option)

O	Yes	Go to Page No. 4
O	No	Go to Page No. 5

If Did Not Answer Then Go to Page No. 4

page 4

12. How frequently are team meetings held? (Select one option)

- O Daily
- O At least twice per week
- O At least once per week
- O At least every two weeks
- O At least every three weeks
- O At least once per month
- O Other (please specify) _____

13. Which of the following are present during team meetings? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ Ninth grade core subject teachers
- ☐ Ninth grade elective teachers
- ☐ Counselor
- ☐ Assistant principal
- ☐ Interventionist (including at-risk specialist)
- ☐ Other (please specify) _____

14. Of the following response options, choose the one that best represents how the early warning data system is used by teachers during team meetings: (Select one option)

- O During team meetings, teachers use the early warning data system as the single source of student data.
- O During team meetings, teachers use the early warning data system in addition to other sources of data (e.g., gradebooks, attendance reports, failure reports, etc.).
- O During team meetings, teachers do not use the early warning data system, as the data contained in the early warning data system is either duplicative of other sources of data, or not timely enough to be useful.
- O Teachers do not use the early warning data system during team meetings for other reasons.
- O Other (please specify) _____

page 5

15. To what extent was the early warning data system that your school implemented burdensome, in terms of updating data to enable teachers or administrators to make decisions? (Select one option)

O	Not at all	Go to Page No. 6
O	To a minimal extent	Go to Page No. 6
O	To a moderate extent	Go to Page No. 6
O	To a great extent	Go to Page No. 6
O	Our school did not implement an early warning data system	Go to Page No. 7
		If Did Not Answer Then Go to Page No. 6

page 6

Use of the EWDS:

16. Was the early warning data system in your school that was part of the TNGTI grant used for:

	Yes	No
(a) Identifying at-risk students in need of intervention (Select one option)	O	O
(b) Documenting interventions with students (Select one option)	O	O
(c) Reviewing student progress (Select one option)	O	O
(d) Monitoring at-risk students (Select one option)	O	O

17. In which of the following ways did the TNGTI grant program (including all program requirements, summer activities, and the early warning data system) encourage your school to think about student monitoring and intervention in a different way? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ The TNGTI grant program integrated nicely into how we already conducted student monitoring and interventions
- ☐ The TNGTI grant supplemented something we were already doing
- ☐ The TNGTI grant provided funds to conduct activities that we had wanted to do, but did not have resources to implement
- ☐ The TNGTI grant provided us with a new framework for thinking about student progress and intervention
- ☐ Our school did not think about student data monitoring and interventions in different ways as a result of participating in the TNGTI program
- ☐ Other (please specify) _____

18. What additional supports were provided to ninth grade students participating in the TNGTI program that were not broadly available to all ninth grade students in your school? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ TNGTI students participate in a summer transition program while other ninth grade students did not.
- ☐ TNGTI students participated in more intensive summer transition program than other ninth grade students.
- ☐ The progress of TNGTI students was monitored more closely than the progress of other ninth grade students (e.g., using the early warning data system or other forms of monitoring)
- ☐ TNGTI students received additional academic intervention services not available to all ninth grade students.

- ☐ TNGTI students received additional behavioral intervention services not available to all ninth grade students.
- ☐ TNGTI students received additional attendance intervention services not available to all ninth grade students.
- ☐ The types of supports provided to students participating in the TNGTI program did not differ from those broadly available to all ninth grade students.
- ☐ Other (please specify) _____

Student benefit:

19. To what extent did each of the following program components benefit students?

	Not at all	To a minimal extent	To a moderate extent	To a great extent
(a) The summer transition program (Select one option)	O	O	O	O
(b) The early warning data system tool (Select one option)	O	O	O	O
(c) The advance specification of indicators that would 'flag' a student as needing intervention (Select one option)	O	O	O	O
(d) The advance specification of targeted interventions that would be used (Select one option)	O	O	O	O
(e) Funds to enable purchasing of supplies or incentives for students (Select one option)	O	O	O	O

20. If you could custom-design this grant for your campus, which of the following grant pieces would you choose to be funded for: (select all that apply)

- ☐ The summer transition component
- ☐ The early warning data system tool component
- ☐ The student monitoring and intervention component

21. Has your district applied for the 2009-11 TNGTI continuation grant? (Select one option)

O	Yes	Go to Page No. 9
O	No	Go to Page No. 8
O	I don't know	Go to Page No. 9
		If Did Not Answer Then Go to Page No. 9

page 8

22. Why did your district decide not to apply for continued funding?

_____

23. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about your campus' experience with the TNGTI program this year?

_____

Stop, you have finished the survey

If Did Not Answer Then Stop, you have finished the survey

page 9

24. Which of the following planning activities has your campus begun in preparation for the summer 2010 program (select all that apply):

- ☐ No planning activities have begun to my knowledge
- ☐ Informed teachers/staff of the program
- ☐ Scheduled a campus-level planning meeting
- ☐ Held a campus-level planning meeting
- ☐ Began collaborating with feeder middle school(s)
- ☐ Began communicating to 8th grade students about the summer program
- ☐ Began communicating to parents about the summer program
- ☐ Other (please specify) _____

25. What changes to the program will your campus make for the 2010-11 grant period?

_____

26. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about your campus' experience with the TNGTI program this year?

_____

Appendix D

To provide a richer picture of the Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention (TNGTI) grant program, face-to-face interviews were conducted to learn about the firsthand experiences of participating program staff. Interviews occurred with high school staff (administrators, grant coordinators, coaches, interventionists, counselors, teachers) who were involved in planning and implementing the TNGTI grant program, specifically focusing on the early warning data system and intervention services. The campus interviews took place at selected TNGTI schools in February and March 2010, and all interview questions are included below.

Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention (TNGTI) Program Campus Staff Interview Protocol—February/March 2010

Hello, I'm _____ from Gibson Consulting Group/Learning Point Associates. We are an organization that conducts educational research and evaluation. We have been selected by TEA to evaluate the Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention grant program. The purpose of this interview is to obtain information on how the program is being implemented in different schools and districts. As you may recall, we visited your campus during the summer or fall 2009 – primarily to gain a better understanding of your Summer Transition Program. The purpose of this interview is to learn more about your Ninth Grade Early Warning Data System and the various academic, attendance, and behavioral interventions provided to ninth grade students on your campus as a result of receiving and implementing this grant specifically.

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed. The interview should take approximately 45 minutes. Your responses will be used to help inform the evaluation and to give us a sense of what these programs look like on the ground. I just want to note that in our reporting of findings, you will not be identified by name or position. Interview data will be reported in the aggregate, as we are looking for common themes across districts.

I will be taking notes as we talk and would also like to tape-record our conversation to ensure accuracy. May I have your permission to tape this conversation?

Respondent permission given for taping: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Respondent Information

1. What is your current position?

1a. How long have you worked in this position?

2. What is your role in your school's Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention program?

2a. Were you involved in the summer transition activities for your school's program? If yes: In what capacity?

2b. Are you involved in the Early Warning Data System and/or intervention components of your school's program? If yes: In what capacity?

Early Warning Data System

3. Has an Early Warning Data System been implemented at your school?

If yes: What types of data are in this system?

If no: Are there plans to implement the EWDS before the end of the school year?

3a. Did your school experience any challenges in getting the EWDS set up and providing access to teachers and staff?

4. Which students are being tracked by your school's EWDS? (Probe: students who participated in the school's Summer Transition Program, all ninth graders, other students?)

5. What measures are being used most frequently to identify ninth grade students who are struggling? (Probe for specific indicators—academic, attendance, and behavioral—and measures such as course failures, absences over some specified period, disciplinary issues.)

6. What kind of training has staff received in the use of the EWDS?

6a. Which staff members have received training? (e.g., teachers, counselors, administrators)

7. How are teachers and staff notified that a student has been identified by the EWDS as needing intervention services?

8. In what ways have the teachers used the EWDS for planning and instruction, if at all?

9. How (if at all) did the EWDS change the way in which struggling students are identified for intervention services compared to previous methods?

10. How effective do you think the EWDS has been in identifying students for interventions in a timely manner? (Probe: Are students receiving needed services any earlier through the EWDS than in prior years?)

Interventions

11. Please briefly describe the process by which students in the TNGTI program receive intervention services after being identified. (Probe: Only use EWDS, intervention team)

11a. Which campus staff members are assigned to provide intervention services and other support for these students?

12. What intervention services are used most often at your school? Which of these interventions are new to the campus this year as a result of the TNGTI program?

12a. Are there any other notable interventions related to academic issues?

12b. Are there any other notable interventions related to attendance issues?

12c. Are there any other notable interventions related to behavior issues?

13. What procedures are used to determine whether students who are receiving intervention services are making adequate progress?

13a. What happens if students are not making adequate progress within a specific intervention?

Parent and Community Involvement

14. In what ways have parents of students in the TNGTI program been involved in activities and interventions during the year, if at all?

15. In what ways do you/administrators at your campus advocate and support parent involvement? Please provide an example.

16. In what way do you/administrators at your campus advocate and support community involvement? Please provide an example. (Probes: institutions of higher education, business partners, nonprofits).

Program Impact

17. Overall, in what ways have the ninth grade students who are served by the TNGTI program at your school benefited from the program, if at all?

17a. Can you provide an example of a student or group of students who have benefited from involvement in the TNGTI program? (Probe: attendance, behavior, academics)

17b. What specific interventions seem to have a positive impact on the TNGTI ninth grade students? Please provide an example.

Influencing Factors

18. What are some of the positive factors that have facilitated the implementation of the TNGTI program at your school? (Probe specifically for EWDS and intervention services)

19. Describe any barriers to the implementation of the TNGTI program that you have encountered at your school (e.g., aspects of the program that have not gone as smoothly as planned). (Probe specifically for issues related to the EWDS and Intervention Services.)

Sustainability

20. Would you like for your school to be involved in the TNGTI program next year? Why or why not?

21. What changes, if any, do you think the school/district should make to the TNGTI program for the future?

21a. What changes, if any, do you think TEA should make to the TNGTI program for the future?

22. What types of assistance/support from TEA would be most helpful for you in implementing, managing, and/or improving your program?

Additional Comments

23. Is there anything else that you think it is important for us to know about the TNGTI program at your school?

Appendix E

For the program evaluation, researchers were interested in how different districts implemented the Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention (TNGTI) grant program on their participating campuses. Face-to-face interviews occurred with district level staff (superintendents, assistant superintendents, grant coordinators) who were involved in planning and monitoring the TNGTI grant, specifically focusing on the early warning data system and intervention services. The district interviews took place at selected TNGTI schools in February and March 2010, and all interview questions are included below.

Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention (TNGTI) Program
District Staff Interview Protocol—February/March 2010

Hello, I'm _____ from Gibson Consulting Group/Learning Point Associates. We are an organization that conducts educational research and evaluation. We have been selected by Texas Education Agency (TEA) to evaluate the Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention grant program. The purpose of this interview is to obtain information on how the program is being implemented in different schools and districts. As you may recall, we visited your district during the summer or fall 2009 – primarily to gain a better understanding of your Summer Transition Program. The purpose of this interview is to learn more about your Ninth Grade Early Warning Data System and the various academic, attendance, and behavioral interventions provided to ninth grade students in your district through the TNGTI Program.

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed. The interview should take approximately 45 minutes. Your responses will be used to help inform the evaluation and to give us a sense of what these programs look like on the ground. I just want to note that in our reporting of findings, you will not be identified by name or position. Interview data will be reported in the aggregate, as we are looking for common themes across districts.

I will be taking notes as we talk and would also like to tape-record our conversation to ensure accuracy. May I have your permission to tape this conversation?

Respondent permission given for taping: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Respondent Information

1. What is your current position?

1a. How long have you worked in this position?

2. What is your current role in your district's Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention program(s)? (Probe for how they are involved in the implementation of the EWDS and intervention services)

Goals

3. Have the goals of your district's Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention Program changed since the summer? If yes: In what ways?

District Support

4. Is the district currently providing any oversight of the implementation of the TNGTI program?

4a. If yes: Please explain oversight of the Early Warning Data System.

4b. If yes: Please explain oversight of intervention services.

5. What types of direct or indirect support, if any, is the district currently providing to schools that are implementing the TNGTI program? (e.g., materials, personnel, training, data analysis support).

5a. Are the campuses using these support services? (Probe: If so: How? If not: Why not?)

District Initiatives

6. How does the TNGTI program, specifically the Early Warning Data System and interventions to support struggling students, align with other current district initiatives?

6a. How is the TNGTI program aligned with district and/or school improvement plans?

Campus Collaboration and Implementation

7. How have the participating high schools collaborated in relation to the TNGTI program?

8. Are some high schools in your district implementing the TNGTI program more effectively than others? What differences have you seen?

9. Is planning underway for the upcoming summer transition program?

9a. If yes: To what extent are middle school and high school staff collaborating in planning and recruitment efforts? (Probe: In what ways are they collaborating?)

If no: Will high school and middle school staff be collaborating in planning the summer transition program? (Probe: If yes: In what ways? If no: Why not?)

Program Impact

10. Does the district have a process for assessing the impact of the TNGTI program on students at participating campuses? If so: Please describe the process and the types of outcomes monitored.

10a. Have any assessments of the TNGTI program been conducted for this school year?

If yes: What have you learned about program implementation and impact?

If no: Do you have plans to conduct any assessments in the future?

Influencing Factors

11. What are some of the positive factors that have aided the district in the current implementation of the TNGTI program? (Probe for factors impacting the EWDS and student intervention services.)

12. Describe any barriers to the implementation of the TNGTI program that your district has encountered (e.g., aspects of the program that have not gone as smoothly as planned). (Probe for barriers impacting the EWDS and intervention services.)

12a. How are those barriers being addressed?

Sustainability

13. Do you think the TNGTI program is a good value in terms of cost and expected benefits? Why or why not?

14. Would you encourage your district to continue this program if state funding were discontinued? Why or why not?

15. What changes, if any, do you think the district/school should make to the TNGTI program for the future?

15a. What changes, if any do you think TEA should make to the TNGTI program for the future?

16. What types of support and/or assistance from TEA would be most helpful to you in implementing, managing, and/or improving your program?

16a. How satisfied are you with the support currently provided by TEA staff for this program?

Additional Comments

17. Do you have anything else you would like to add about the TNGTI grant program?

Appendix F

To obtain perceptions of the program from a wide range of campus staff, a staff survey was distributed to all campus coordinators, principals, teachers and staff who worked with ninth-grade students. Questions on the staff survey primarily focused on details about the campuses' summer transition programs, early warning data systems, intervention services offered to ninth-grade students, and the perceived overall program impacts on students and teachers. The staff survey took place at selected TNGTI schools in March 2010, and a copy of the survey protocol is included below.

Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention (TNGTI) Program Staff Survey March 2010

This survey is designed to obtain feedback from instructional staff who helped to plan and/or implement the Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention (TNGTI) Program at your campus or who have worked with students who are participating in the program. Results of the survey will inform improvements to the TNGTI program.

The survey will take about **10-15 minutes** to complete. While your participation in the survey is voluntary, the information you can provide is critical to helping the Texas Education Agency (TEA) assess the implementation and effectiveness of the TNGTI program.

The effectiveness of the survey is dependent on your candid responses to the survey items. Please know that your anonymity is guaranteed. No one in your school or district will be able to view individual survey responses, and reports on results will not include data that could identify individuals.

To thank you for your feedback, campuses with 5 or more completed teacher surveys will be eligible for a random drawing for a **$250 gift card** for your campus. This gift card must be used to support educational activities at the school, but does not necessarily have to be part of the TNGTI program activities. One campus will be chosen as the winner and announced on April 16, 2010.

The survey is being conducted by Learning Point Associates, an independent nonprofit education organization under contract to TEA. If you have questions or concerns about the survey, contact Lisa Hoogstra at 800-356-2735 or e-mail to TEASurvey@learningpt.org.

We appreciate your time and contribution. Thank you for your participation!

Please complete this survey by April 2, 2010.

About You

1. From the dropdown list, select the district and school with which you are affiliated:

2. Select the option that best describes your current position at your school.

O a. Teacher in a core subject area (math, English language arts, science, social studies) **(1)**

O b. Teacher in an elective subject area **(2)**

O c. Special education teacher **(3) [Skip question 3, 4]**

O d. English language learner (ELL) teacher or specialist **(4) [Skip question 3, 4]**

O e. Instructional coach **(5) [Skip question 3, 4]**

O f. Counselor **(6) [Skip question 3, 4]**

O g. Interventionist (including at-risk specialist and academic coach) **(7) [Skip question 3, 4]**

O h. Other, please specify: _____ **(8) [Skip question 3, 4]**

3. What subject area(s) have you taught this academic year (the 2009-10 school year)? (Select all that apply)

☐ a. Mathematics **(1 if selected)**

☐ b. English Language Arts **(1 if selected)**

☐ c. Science **(1 if selected)**

☐ d. Social Studies **(1 if selected)**

☐ e. Foreign Language **(1 if selected)**

☐ f. Physical Education **(1 if selected)**

☐ g. Career and Technology Education Course **(1 if selected)**

☐ h. Other, please specify: _____ **(1 if selected)**

4. Have you taught any ninth grade classes/students during the 2009-10 school year?

O a. Yes **(1)**

O b. No **(2)**

5. Have you been involved in planning or implementing your school's Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention Program?

O a. Yes **(1)**

O b. No **(2) [Skip question 6]**

6. Which of the following Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention Program components have you helped to plan or implement? (Select all that apply)

		Involved in Planning (a)(1 if selected)	**Involved in Implementation (b)(1 if selected)**
a.	Summer Transition Program	☐	☐
b.	Monitoring students through the Early Warning Data System	☐	☐
c.	Providing intervention services to struggling students	☐	☐
d.	Other, please specify: _____	☐	☐

Summer Transition Program

7. Did the high school offer a Summer Transition Program for entering ninth grade students during the summer of 2009?

O a. Yes **(1)**

O b. No **(2) [Skip to Early Warning Data System]**

8. Did you participate in the Summer Transition Program in any capacity?

O a. Yes **(1)**

O b. No **(2) [Skip Question 9 and 10]**

9. What role(s) did you play in the Summer Transition Program? (Select all that apply).

☐ a. Math Teacher **(1 if selected)**

☐ b. ELA Teacher **(1 if selected)**

☐ c. Social Studies Teacher **(1 if selected)**

☐ d. Science Teacher **(1 if selected)**

☐ e. Taught other academic subject or topic, please specify: _____ **(1 if selected)**

☐ f. Lead for team building activities or social skills class **(1 if selected)**

☐ g. Teacher mentor **(1 if selected)**

☐ h. Lead for field trips **(1 if selected)**

☐ i. Planning activities related to Summer Transition Program **(1 if selected)**

☐ j. Presentations on high school policies and procedures/expectations **(1 if selected)**

☐ k. Lead for parent activities or counseling sessions **(1 if selected)**

☐ l. Counseling role related to class schedules and graduation requirements, etc. **(1 if selected)**

☐ m. Other role, please specify: _____ **(1 if selected)**

10. How effective was any specific training or professional development in preparing you for the Summer Transition Program?

O a. No training was offered **(1)**
O b. Training was offered, but I did not participate **(2)**
O c. Not effective **(3)**
O d. Minimally effective **(4)**
O e. Moderately effective **(5)**
O f. Very effective **(6)**

11. Do you currently have any of the students who participated in the Summer Transition Program in your classes?

O a. Yes **(1)**
O b. I am not a classroom teacher **(2) [Skip to Early Warning Data System]**
O c. No, I do not have any Summer Transition Program students in my classes **(3) [Skip to Early Warning Data System]**
O d. I do not know which students participated in the Summer Transition Program **(4) [Skip to Early Warning Data System]**

12. Approximately how many students who participated in the Summer Transition Program do you have in your classes for the 2009-10 school year? ☐

13. In what ways were the students who participated in the Summer Transition Program different from other students in your classes at the beginning of the fall 2009 semester, if at all?

[TEXT BOX]

14. Overall, how effective do think your school's Summer Transition Program was in preparing entering ninth grade students for high school (and beyond)?

O a. Not at all effective **(1)**
O b. Minimally effective **(2)**
O c. Moderately effective **(3)**
O d. Very effective **(4)**
O e. Don't know **(5)**

15. Which of the following activities were offered during your school's Summer Transition Program?
[Only appear when Q8=Yes and Q11=Yes]

For each activity that was offered, also select "Very Effective" if you feel the activity was very effective in preparing students for high school (and beyond).

Summer Transition Program Activities/Opportunities		**Activities Offered**	**Very Effective**
a.	Academic instruction in core subjects	O Yes **(1)** O No **(2)** O Don't know **(3)**	☐ **(1 if selected)**
b.	Academic instruction in elective courses	O Yes O No O Don't know	☐
c.	Tutorials, remediation, accelerated instruction, or credit recovery opportunities	O Yes O No O Don't know	☐
d.	Opportunities to earn high school credits	O Yes O No O Don't know	☐
e.	Training in study skills (e.g., note taking, time management)	O Yes O No O Don't know	☐
f.	Orientation activities to familiarize students with high school facilities and procedures (e.g., building tour, schedules, student handbook)	O Yes O No O Don't know	☐
g.	College site visits	O Yes O No O Don't know	☐
h.	Other field trips (e.g., educational or career-related field trips)	O Yes O No O Don't know	☐
i.	Community service activities	O Yes O No O Don't know	☐
j.	Team-building activities	O Yes O No O Don't know	☐
k.	Opportunities for students to meet/interact with older students	O Yes O No O Don't know	☐
l.	Opportunities for students to meet/interact with high school teachers/administrators	O Yes O No O Don't know	☐
m.	Leadership training	O Yes O No O Don't know	☐
n.	Mentoring (peer or teacher)	O Yes O No O Don't know	☐
o.	Behavioral or social counseling	O Yes O No O Don't know	☐
p.	Social skills development (e.g., collaboration, conflict resolution, anger management)	O Yes O No O Don't know	☐
q.	Parent activities (e.g., information sessions, workshops, conferences)	O Yes O No O Don't know	☐

Ninth Grade Early Warning Data System

16. To your knowledge, does your school use an Early Warning Data System for the Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention Program to identify struggling ninth grade students?

    Note: This type of systems typically tracks students' progress in specific domains such as academic performance, attendance, and/or disciplinary problems for the purpose of identifying students who may be at risk for retention or dropping out of school.

    O a. Yes **(1)**
    O b. No **(2) [Skip to Intervention]**

17. Is the Early Warning Data System accessible to all teachers?

    O a. Yes **(1)**
    O b. No **(2)**
    O c. Don't know **(3)**

18. Do you know who is responsible for monitoring the Early Warning Data System?

    O a. Yes **(1)**
    O b. No **(2)**

19. Have you ever been consulted by someone who monitors the data in the Early Warning Data System about the performance of any of your students?

    O a. Yes **(1)**
    O b. No **(2)**

20. What role do you play as a staff member in the use of the Early Warning Data System? (Select all that apply)

    ☐ a. Enter student data into the Early Warning Data System **(1 if selected)**
    ☐ b. Provide student data to another staff member who enters it into the Early Warning Data System **(1 if selected)**
    ☐ c. Access the Early Warning Data System directly to monitor student progress in key areas (e.g., academics, attendance, behavior) **(1 if selected)**
    ☐ d. Receive reports of feedback from Early Warning Data System administrator regarding student progress and the need for intervention services **(1 if selected)**
    ☐ e. I have no role associated with the Early Warning Data System **(1 if selected)**
    ☐ f. Don't know **(1 if selected)**

21. Are you aware of which students are being tracked through the Early Warning Data System?

- O a. Yes **(1)**
- O b. No **(2) [Skip Question 22]**
- O c. No **(2) [Skip Question 22]**

22. Which of following best describes the students that are being tracked through the Early Warning Data System?

- O a. All ninth grade students **(1)**
- O b. Only ninth grade students who participated in the Summer Transition Program **(2)**
- O c. All students in the high school (i.e., all grades) **(3)**
- O d. Other, please specify: _____ **(4)**

23. Do you monitor or enter student performance, attendance, or behavioral data differently for students who participated in your school's Summer Transition Program students than you do other ninth grade students?

- O a. Yes **(1)**
- O b. No **(2) [Skip Question 24]**
- O c. Don't know **(3) [Skip Question 24]**

24. Briefly describe the differences in how you monitor or enter data for students who participated in the Summer Transition Program compared with other students.

[TEXT BOX]

25. Answer the following questions about your school's Early Warning Data System.

Early Warning Data System		**Not at All (1)**	**To a Minimal Extent (2)**	**To a Moderate Extent (3)**	**To a Great Extent (4)**	**Don't Know (5)**
a.	To what extent do you use the Early Warning Data System?	O	O	O	O	O
b.	To what extent are you *aware* of the Early Warning Data System measures used for identifying struggling students?	O	O	O	O	O
c.	To what extent do you feel the Early Warning Data System measures are *appropriate* for identifying struggling students?	O	O	O	O	O

d.	How well do you understand the process of using the Early Warning Data System measures to determine if a student is in need of intervention services?	O	O	O	O	O
e.	To what extent have you been adequately trained in the use of the Early Warning Data System?	O	O	O	O	O
f.	To what extent do you feel the current Early Warning Data System is an effective mechanism for identifying students in need of intervention services?	O	O	O	O	O
g.	To what extent do you feel that struggling students are identified in a timely manner through the Early Warning Data System?	O	O	O	O	O

Interventions

26. What interventions are in place at your school to assist struggling students? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ a. Addressing attendance through legal system (e.g., truancy officer) **(1 if selected)**
- ☐ b. Contacting parents (phone call, letter home) **(1 if selected)**
- ☐ c. Credit recovery program **(1 if selected)**
- ☐ d. Mentor programs **(1 if selected)**
- ☐ e. Participating in conferences (student, parent, teacher) **(1 if selected)**
- ☐ f. Referral to student support/intervention team **(1 if selected)**
- ☐ g. Saturday school **(1 if selected)**
- ☐ h. Student contracts (academic/behavior/attendance) **(1 if selected)**
- ☐ i. Tutoring (before/after school, peer) **(1 if selected)**
- ☐ j. Other, please specify: _____ **(1 if selected)**
- ☐ k. Don't know **(1 if selected)**

27. Are there different interventions provided to students who participated in the Summer Transition Program compared to other students at your school?

- O a. Yes **(1)**
- O b. No **(2) [Skip Question 28]**
- O c. Don't know **(3) [Skip Question 28]**

28. In what ways are the interventions different for students who participated in the Summer Transition Program?

[TEXT BOX]

29. Do you provide any of the interventions to students?

- O a. Yes **(1)**
- O b. No **(2)**

30. Indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements about intervention services offered by your school's Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention Program.

Intervention Services		**Strongly Disagree (1)**	**Disagree (2)**	**Agree (3)**	**Strongly Agree (4)**	**Don't Know (5)**
a.	A process is in place to appropriately inform **students and parents** when a student has been identified to receive intervention services.	O	O	O	O	O
b.	There is a clear method for delivering intervention services to struggling students.	O	O	O	O	O
c.	A sufficient number of staff members have been assigned to deliver intervention services to students.	O	O	O	O	O
d.	Struggling students in need of intervention services are receiving them.	O	O	O	O	O
e.	There is a clear method for monitoring the outcomes of intervention services provided to Summer Transition Program students.	O	O	O	O	O
f.	The available intervention services are **appropriate** for addressing the needs of struggling students.	O	O	O	O	O
g.	The available intervention services are **effective** in addressing the needs of struggling students.					

Overall Program

31. Indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements about the **students** who are participating in your school's Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention Program. If you unsure whether students who are participating in program exhibit a specific behavior, please select "Don't Know".
[Only appear when Q2=Yes and Q11=Yes]

Students who participated in the Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention Program at my school...		**Strongly Disagree (1)**	**Disagree (2)**	**Agree (3)**	**Strongly Agree (4)**	**Don't Know (5)**
a.	Are engaged with their coursework.	O	O	O	O	O
b.	Are engaged in school.	O	O	O	O	O
c.	Are prepared for the demands of high school.	O	O	O	O	O
d.	Are maintaining passing grades in their courses.	O	O	O	O	O
e.	Are likely to advance to 10th grade next year.	O	O	O	O	O
f.	Are likely to stay in school rather than dropping out.	O	O	O	O	O
g.	Are engaged in planning for the future (coursework, college, workforce, etc.).	O	O	O	O	O
h.	Are regularly attending school.	O	O	O	O	O
i.	Are behaving well at school (e.g., are not experiencing disciplinary problems).	O	O	O	O	O
j.	Are interacting well with other students.	O	O	O	O	O
k.	Are interacting well with teachers and staff.	O	O	O	O	O

32. Indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements about the impact of your school's Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention Program on **you**. (i.e. Summer Transition Program, Early Warning Data System, and Intervention Services.)
[Only appear when Q2=Yes and Q11=Yes]

	As a result of my school's Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention Program...	**Strongly Disagree (1)**	**Disagree (2)**	**Agree (3)**	**Strongly Agree (4)**	**Don't know (5)**
a.	I was able to meet incoming students and develop positive relationships with them.	O	O	O	O	O
b.	I was able to better evaluate participating students' academic background and skills.	O	O	O	O	O
c.	I had more positive energy at the start of the new school year.	O	O	O	O	O
d.	I have had more opportunities to collaborate with other teachers.	O	O	O	O	O
e.	I was able to better direct students toward their goals (i.e. high school and beyond).	O	O	O	O	O
f.	I have improved my own teaching abilities.	O	O	O	O	O
g.	I was able to have more meaningful interaction with the parents of my struggling students.	O	O	O	O	O
h.	I was able to provide parents with more opportunities to become involved in their child's education.	O	O	O	O	O

33. To what degree do you feel administrators at your school advocate and support parent involvement in the Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention Program activities?
O a. Not at All **(1)**
O b. To a minimal extent **(2)**
O c. To a moderate extent **(3)**
O d. To a great extent **(4)**
O e. Don't know **(5)**

Facilitators and Barriers

[This section only appears when Q5=Yes]

34. Is your school planning to implement a Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention program for incoming freshman for the 2010-11 school year?
    - O a. Yes **(1)**
    - O b. No **(2) [Skip Question 35, 36]**
    - O c. Don't know **(3) [Skip Question 35, 36]**

35. Compared to last year, do you feel more collaboration is needed between high school and middle school staff to plan and implement a future Summer Transition Program?
    - O a. Yes, more collaboration is needed **(1)**
    - O b. No, the amount we collaborated last year was appropriate **(2)**
    - O c. We can collaborate less next year, as the work we did last year was sufficient **(3)**
    - O d. I am unaware of how high school and middle school staff collaborated last year **(4)**

36. In what ways should high school and middle school staff work together in the planning of next year's Summer Transition Program? (Select all that apply)
    - ☐ a. Discuss strategies for determining criteria for student participation in the program **(1 if selected)**
    - ☐ b. Discuss strategies for recruiting and enrolling students in the program **(1 if selected)**
    - ☐ c. Work collaboratively on the goals and timelines of the program **(1 if selected)**
    - ☐ d. Work collaboratively in the recruitment of students for the program **(1 if selected)**
    - ☐ e. Work collaboratively in implementing program activities **(1 if selected)**

37. If state funding were not available for this specific program, do you think it would be beneficial for the district to continue the Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention Program through other funding sources?
    - O a. Yes **(1)**
    - O b. No **(2)**
    - O c. Don't know **(3)**

38. In your opinion, what helps the Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention Program run successfully at your school?

[TEXT BOX]

39. In your opinion, what are the challenges to implementing the Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention Program at your school?

[TEXT BOX]

Appendix G

Propensity Score Matching Methods

Propensity score matching is a two-stage process. In the first stage, the probability that each student participates in the TNGTI program is modeled on available observable characteristics. By modeling selection into the program, this approach allows us to compare participating and non-participating students who would have a similar propensity to select into the program based on observables. In the second stage, the predicted probability of participation is used to model student outcomes.

Stage 1: Creation of the Comparison Group. The outcome of interest in modeling propensity scores is treatment status (1 for students participating in the TNGTI program, 0 for the comparison group). To account for this binary outcome, logistic regression is used to model the logit (or log-odds) of student group assignment status. Because characteristics of students, the middle schools they attended, and the high schools they will attend influence whether they attend the summer transition program, data on all of these per-treatment characteristics were acquired from TEA. Student level variables used to fit the propensity score models included:

- Age
- Gender
- Race/ethnicity
- Special education
- Limited English proficient (LEP) status
- Gifted education status
- Previous retention
- Number of eighth grade disciplinary incidences
- Percent of days absent during eighth grade
- TAKS scores in grades 4 through 8
- Economically disadvantaged

Middle and high school characteristics used to fit the propensity score model included:

- Percent race/ethnicity
- Percent LEP
- Percent special education
- Percent economically disadvantaged
- Percent bilingual
- Number of students
- Teacher/student ratio
- Number of full time teachers
- Accountability status
- Attendance rate
- Teacher's average years of experience
- Mobility rate
- Percent of teachers teaching subjects for which they do not hold a certification

Data were not available for each of these covariates for all students. To account for this, indicator variables were used to model the relationship between the pattern of missing data and propensity to participate in the summer program (Rosenbaum & Rubin, 1984).

All pre-treatment covariates were initially considered as candidates for inclusion in the propensity score model. To select an initial propensity score model, we began by regressing each of the covariates on summer program participation. All covariates with a *p* value of greater than 0.2 were then included in a forward stepwise regression function to produce an initial propensity score model. Propensity scores and propensity score logits were then estimated using this model. We examined overlap in the treatment and comparison groups and deleted non-overlapping cases. We then looked at balance across the two groups on all covariates. Balance statistics (standardized mean differences and variance ratios) were used to guide model selection. The final model included 79 covariates, and the adjusted standardized mean differences between the treatment and comparison groups were below 0.2 on all pretreatment covariates, consistent with current best practice in the propensity score literature (Ho, Imai, King, & Stuart, 2007).

Stage 2: Statistical Modeling of Student Outcomes. Outcomes of students in the TNGTI program were then compared with the outcomes of ninth-grade students who did not participate (the comparison group). We balanced pretreatment group differences in observed covariates using a propensity score stratification and marginal mean weighting approach (Hong & Hong, 2009). Fifteen strata were used based on the spread and overlap of the data. The propensity score logit along with the pre-treatment eighth grade measure of the outcome were also included in the outcome model to control for within strata differences and residual bias (Schafer & Kang, 2008). Student outcomes were modeled using two-level hierarchical linear models to account for the nested nature of the data (students within high schools) as follows:

Level 1 – Students

$$y_{ij} = \beta_{0j} + \beta_{1j} TNGTI_{ij} + \sum_{S=2}^{15} \alpha\beta_s L_{sij} + \beta_{3j} LP_{ij} + \beta_{4j} Pretest_{ij} + r_{ij}$$

Where y_{ij} are the student level outcomes (Sat for math TAKS, TAKS scores, attendance rates, number of behavioral incidences, and grades), $TNGTI_{ij}$ is an indicator of whether the student participated in the TNGTI summer program, L_{sij} is an indicator variable for the logit propensity score strata, LP_{ij} is the logit propensity score, and $Pretest_{ij}$ is the pre-treatment eighth grade measure of the outcome.

Level 2 – High School

$$\beta_{0j} = \gamma_{00} + u_{0j}$$

$$\beta_{1j} = \gamma_{10}$$

$$\beta_{2j} = \gamma_{20}$$

Because the treatment and comparison groups were matched using all of the covariates described above, it is not necessary to include these variables in the final outcome model.

Statistical Modeling of School Level Predictors of TNGTI Effects. Expecting some variation in the effect of attending the TNGTI program across campuses, several exploratory analyses were conducted to examine what characteristics were associated with greater program effects. We examined whether the effect of the TNGTI program was associated with several school level characteristics, including:

- Percent LEP
- Percent special education
- Percent economically disadvantaged
- Number of students
- High school completion rate

Very similar to the stage 2 modeling described above, the focus of these analyses was the level 2 predictors if the program effect. These models were formulated as follows:

Level 1 – Students

$$y_{ij} = \beta_{0j} + \beta_{1j}TNGTI_{ij} + \sum_{S=2}^{15} \alpha\beta_s L_{sij} + \beta_{3j}LP_{ij} + \beta_{4j}Pretest_{ij} + r_{ij}$$

Where y_{ij} are the student level outcomes (Sat for math TAKS, TAKS scores, attendance rates, number of behavioral incidences, and grades) $TNGTI_{ij}$ is an indicator of whether the student participated in the TNGTI summer program, L_{sij} is an indicator variable for the logit propensity score strata, LP_{ij} is the logit propensity score, and $Pretest_{ij}$ is the pre-treatment eighth grade measure of the outcome.

Level 2 – High School

$$\beta_{0j} = \gamma_{00} + u_{0j}$$

$$\beta_{1j} = \gamma_{10} + \gamma_{11}LEP + \gamma_{12}SPED + \gamma_{13}Economic + \gamma_{14}NumStudents + \gamma_{15}Completion$$

$$\beta_{2j} = \gamma_{20}$$

In these models the coefficients of interest are γ_{11} through γ_{15}. None of these results were statistically significant, but are presented in the table below.

Table G-1. School-Level Predictors of TNGTI Effects

	ELA (*N*=24,714)			Math (*N*=24,347)		
	Effect	**T-value**	**Significance**	**Effect**	**T-value**	**Significance**
Summer Program x Student Count	-.009	-0.63	0.27	-0.02	-1.20	0.12
Summer Program x Graduation Rate	-0.18	-0.51	0.31	0.12	0.25	0.40
Summer Program x % Economically Disadvantaged	-0.76	-0.58	0.28	1.46	0.86	0.20
Summer Program x % LEP	0.07	0.06	0.48	-1.06	-0.68	0.25
Summer Program x % Special Education	2.54	2.39	0.15	0.21	0.07	0.47

Source: Data from Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) (Texas Education Agency, 2010)

In addition, using data from the staff survey, scale scores were created using the Rasch model for ordered categories to measure each staff member's underlying attitude about a variety of constructs related to program implementation, including the quality of the early warning data system implementation, the quality the intervention implementation, the perceived impact of the TNGTI program on students, or the perceived impact of TNGTI on teachers. These scale scores, made up of multiple items that fit together from a theoretical perspective, provide a quantitative measure of frequency and intensity of an individual's responses. The scale score units are log odd units, which make them suitable for use in statistical analyses (Andrich, 1978; Wright & Masters, 1982). Like the school level characteristics, these data were used to examine the relationship between quality of program implementation and the effects of participation in the TNGTI summer program. Multilevel modeling was again used to account for the nested structure of the data. These models were formulates as follows:

Level 1 – Students

$$y_{ij} = \beta_{0j} + \beta_{1j} TNGTI_{ij} + \sum_{S=2}^{15} \alpha\beta_s L_{sij} + \beta_{3j} LP_{ij} + \beta_{4j} Pretest_{ij} + r_{ij}$$

Where y_{ij} are the student level outcomes (Sat for math TAKS, TAKS scores, attendance rates, number of behavioral incidences, and grades) $TNGTI_{ij}$ is an indicator of whether the student participated in the TNGTI summer program, L_{sij} is an indicator variable for the logit propensity score strata, LP_{ij} is the logit propensity score, and $Pretest_{ij}$ is the pre-treatment eighth grade measure of the outcome.

Level 2 – High School

$$\beta_{0j} = \gamma_{00} + u_{0j}$$

$$\beta_{1j} = \gamma_{10} + \gamma_{11} EWD_{Quality} + \gamma_{12} Intervention_{Quality} + \gamma_{13} Perceived\ Student\ Impact + \gamma_{14} Perceived\ Teacher\ Impact$$

$$\beta_{2j} = \gamma_{20}$$

In these models the coefficients of interest are γ_{11} through γ_{14}. None of these results were statistically significant, but are presented in the table below.

Table G-2. Relationship between Program Implementation Quality and TNGTI Effects

Model	ELA (*N*=24,714)			Math (*N*=24,347)		
	Effect	T-value	Significance	Effect	T-value	Significance
Summer Program x Quality of Early Warning Data System Implementation	7.02	0.61	0.27	5.09	0.33	0.37
Summer Program x Quality of Intervention Implementation	3.00	0.24	0.41	4.24	0.26	0.40
Summer Program x Perceived Impact of TNGTI on Students	7.95	0.54	0.30	-0.86	-0.04	0.48
Summer Program x Perceived Impact of TNGTI on Teachers	-1.74	-1.13	0.13	10.89	0.54	0.30

Source: Data from Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) (Texas Education Agency, 2010)

Appendix H
Complete List of Suggested Program Modifications

For the Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention (TNGTI) grant program, every participating high school campus was required to complete a campus progress report for TEA. As part of the second campus progress report in January 2010, respondents were asked an open-ended question about what suggestions they had for how the TNGTI program could be modified or changed in the future. All written responses to this question are presented below. Note, some campuses offered multiple suggestions for program modifications.

Table H1. Open-Ended Suggestions for Changes to the TNGTI Program

Suggestions
1. The summer transition program is awesome! 2. The EWDS should be more user friendly and we should be able to filter the reports.
3. Additional suggestions on the recruitment of students from the middle schools feeding into our high school summer program. How are other schools doing the recruiting and what can we learn from them? 4. What other activities do they do on their campuses to involve their parents in the summer and to keep them involved in the school year? Possibly a forum to share these ideas among the participating schools.
5. More flexibility with the types of field trips that we can go on. Our kids have been to every museum and university every year since kindergarten. That no longer works as incentive. They will work for something new and exciting.
6. For everyone on staff get a better understanding of the program.
7. Earlier notification of funding. Earlier availability of funding.
8. Allowing more flexibility in budget changes, 9. Offer schools more summer program schedule options, 10. Make the EWDS system more user-friendly and 11. Offer additional training on the EWDS during the school year.
12. More front end time to plan the summer component. Most of the people involved are gone by the beginning of June. If grant awards and budgets were in place by April, we could recruit students, plan the program and order supplies and services which will be used.
13. Given that the "weakest", most "at risk" students are those who will not participate in anything that is not specifically required (and do not have parents who will require/expect optional participation), we need ways to find meaningful interventions that are not impacted by mobility, poor background, etc.
14. Need more direction and assistance with EWDS.
15. I would like to see the summer transition program more flexible and able to include more students even if on a rotation basis.

Suggestions
16. Focus should be on ALL students who are considered at-risk.
17. Add grant money for transportation for the summer transition program. 18. More detailed training on the EWDS. 19. More support from our district.
20. More publicity and dissemination of information about the program, especially its initial success.
21. Creating and establishing regional teams and team meetings would serve as beneficial. Schools would be allowed to meet, share and discuss best practices. Summer meetings and action plan sessions would help those schools new to the program or with new personnel.
22. I had to basically figure a lot of things out on my own. So more guidance as to what is expected would be more helpful. As far as the summer program, this is for at-risk kids and most of those kids have to attend their middle schools in the summer and get prepared for the summer testing of the TAKS. This was very difficult to recruit because of course TAKS was more important than attending a summer program that was not required.
23. To maintain data that can be compared from school to school, adapt a similar EWDS system at each school. This will allow the better transition programs to assist all schools.
24. I liked the components and would like to see us expand some of the TNGTI activities into the regular school year.
25. EWDS needs to communicate better with the system programs that are already in place.
26. In order to provide a more effective program, a full-time program coordinator is needed.
27. Start identifying the students in the middle school and a higher cap in the population to insure that we have of at least 150 students to target with the expectation that not all of them will attend our campus. The upper and lower limits of the number of students must be serviced needs to be more dynamic.
28. I am very frustrated with the fact that I keep getting kicked out of the webpage. I do not have enough help at our school to want to run this program next year.
29. The summer transition program should include all incoming freshmen and there should be no minimum or maximum days. I believe a retreat would work better to motivate students to become successful high school students.
30. The amount of time and cost monitoring and completing reports is prohibitive.
31. Identify the students during the window designated by the district for choice slip (high school course selection).
32. School may want to designate the position as a part-time job as doing a thorough job is time consuming and conflicts with other job assignments that many staff and faculty participating already have.
33. Allow funds to be used to compensate outside the areas of math and science during the summer program to allow students to earn high school credit in addition to math and science.

Suggestions
34. Better communication, program benefits
35. I think that finding ways to award more credits to students during the summer would improve students participation.
36. More training could be provided for other campus administrators and clerks who will be working with the system instead of just being provided to the program coordinator.
37. The amount of the funds should be increased so that more students can be helped achieve their full potential.
38. Allow for student incentives to encourage student participation and attendance for the summer institute 39. Create forms that can be printed from the EWDS to parents with valuable data.
40. More money to hire an experienced counselor.
41. We need to work on logistics of our program in terms of start/end time coordinated with regular summer school.
42. More incentive for students to attend and educating them in middle school to the advantages of the program.
43. The length of the summer program.
44. The summer allows for team building, academic development and building learning communities. The summer program has been the heart of the TNGTI student base. 45. Contracting outside consultants to help with mentoring and tutoring has been a support for the students and eased burdens on teachers. I recommend that schools hire consultants to provide additional support and student accountability. 46. Creating a team at the campus level has been excellent in data collecting, organizing evaluation research and gives students a contact with TNGTI sponsors on a daily basis.
47. For this grant to allow for more than 100 students to be targeted because the need is there.
48. Notify schools early in the fall semester or early in the spring semester so middle school students can be recruited as early as possible.
49. Make the entire program work before mandating that the schools use it. 50. Provide online support and/or real contacts who will support us along the way if we have any questions and/or concerns. 51. Provide more trainings and have update quarterly meetings.