

TEXANS GETTING ACADEMICALLY PREPARED (TGAP)



Year Four Evaluation Report Executive Summary

September 2002 – August 2003

December 2003

Prepared for Texas Education Agency
By
Texas Center for Educational Research
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Executive Summary

Background

In October 1999, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) received a federal GEAR UP grant. TEA's project, Texans Getting Academically Prepared (TGAP), is a five-year effort beginning at the middle-school level to prepare low-income and minority students for higher education opportunities. TGAP includes interrelated activities supporting early awareness of and preparation for higher education among students, their families, and schools. TGAP's three overarching goals are:

- *Building capacity*—building the capacity of educators and students so teachers can adequately prepare students for successful participation in challenging college preparatory programs,
- *Increasing student and family awareness*—increasing student and family awareness of opportunities for college and financial aid assistance, and
- *Gaining business and community support*—providing meaningful incentives and support for high student achievement from the business community.

Prior to TGAP, several Texas initiatives promoted student access to higher education. The state developed the Recommended High School Program (RHSP) and Distinguished Achievement Program (DAP) requiring students to take academically challenging courses to prepare for higher education. The state has also provided funds to support the Advanced Placement (AP) program through exam fee subsidies, equipment grants, teacher reimbursement for professional development, and school incentives. Additionally, in 1999, the 76th Texas Legislature established the Toward Excellence, Access, and Success (TEXAS) Grant program to provide financial support for academically prepared students enrolled in Texas public or private, non-profit colleges or universities. The program was expanded by the 77th Legislature to provide grants to eligible students attending community colleges and technical colleges, and the 78th Legislature extended funding for TEXAS Grants.

Project Partners

TGAP represents a partnership including the TEA, Texas A&M Precollege Outreach Centers in Alice and Laredo, Project GRAD, AMS Production Group, and the Texas Business and Education Coalition (TBEC). TGAP concentrates efforts on six school districts in south Texas (Alice, Corpus Christi, Jim Hogg County, Laredo, Robstown, and United ISDs) with a concentration of low-income, Hispanic students. TEA contracts with The Texas A&M University System to direct and manage the TGAP grant. TEA also works closely with the College Board regional office in Austin and the Region XIII Education Service Center (ESC) TGAP Production Center. The College Board provides AP course and AP Vertical Team training. The TGAP Production Center at Region XIII ESC oversees development of products for students, parents, and educators.

Participating Campuses

In total, 15 district campuses (9 mid-level schools and 6 high schools) participate in TGAP. Two area universities, Texas A&M International University and Texas A&M University-Kingsville, are also program participants through the Faculty Fellows program.

Each district has a designated TGAP coordinator to organize and facilitate campus and district activities that meet local goals as well as state GEAR UP objectives. During year 4, three districts paid 100% of the coordinator salary from grant funds; two used grant funds for a portion of the coordinator's salary. In one district, where the high school principal serves as the TGAP coordinator, no grant funds were used for the position. Each district submits quarterly reports to the state project director detailing capacity-building activities, efforts to increase student and family awareness, and incentives and support for student achievement from the business community. In year 4, districts also submitted plans for sustaining TGAP activities beyond the grant period.

More than 15,000 students participate in TGAP. Each participating school district includes a feeder system consisting of at least one middle school "feeding" students into a high school. As Figure 1 shows, student enrollment in TGAP districts and campuses varies widely. On average, middle schools have fewer students (784 students) than high schools (1,423 students). Hebbrownville Junior High (Jim Hogg County) has the lowest mid-level school enrollment, with 269 students, while Christen Middle School (Laredo) has the highest enrollment, with 1,533 students. The smallest high schools are Hebbrownville (359 students, Jim Hogg County) and Robstown (933 students), while United South High School (2,222 students) is the largest.

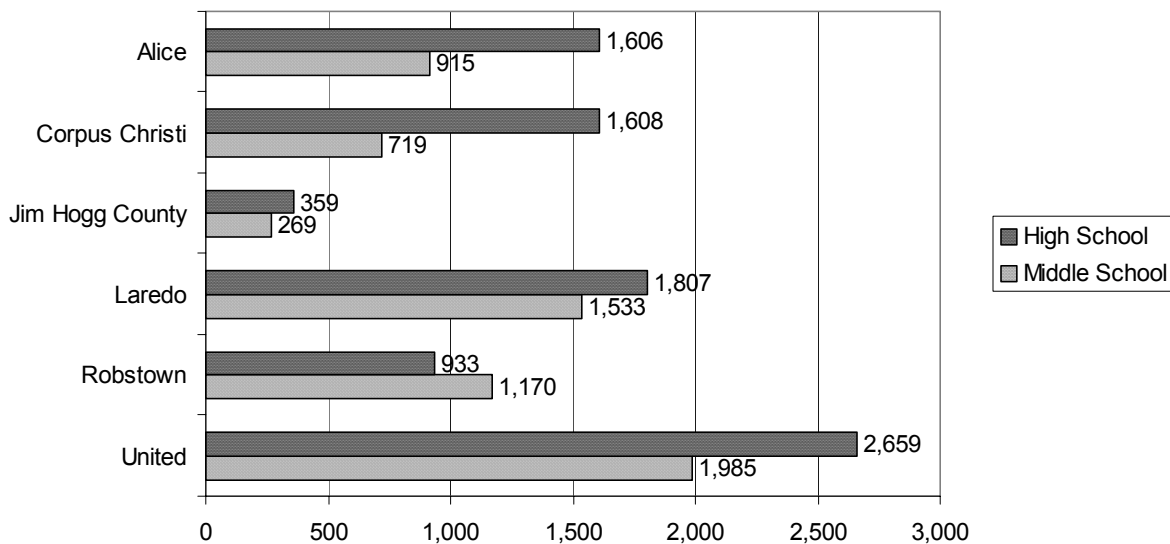


Figure 1. Student enrollment for TGAP districts by campus type (N=15,563, AEIS 2002).

The TGAP student population is predominately Hispanic (95%), with less than 2% African American and just over 3% White students (Figure 2). By contrast, student distribution for the state is approximately 42% Hispanic, 14% African American, and 41% White. The percentage of Hispanic students in TGAP schools ranges from 82% at Miller High School and 84% at Driscoll Middle School (Corpus Christi ISD) to over 99% at Garcia and United South Middle Schools and Lyndon B. Johnson (United ISD) and at Christen Middle School and Martin High School (Laredo ISD). Overall, 83% of TGAP students are economically disadvantaged, compared with the state average of 51%.

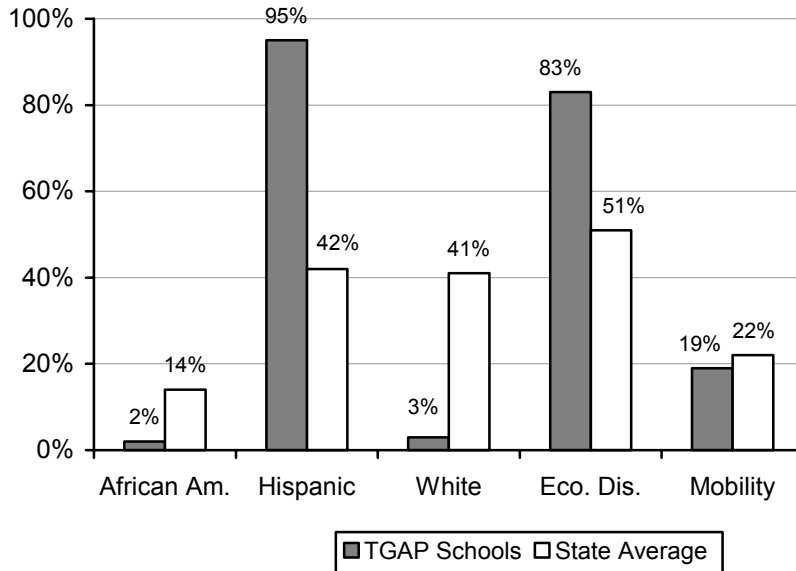


Figure 2. TGAP student characteristics, 2002.

Based on data reported by parent survey respondents, the overwhelming majority of TGAP parents are Hispanic or Latino (90%), with smaller percentages of White (6%), African American (2%), and other ethnic groups (2%). However, given that, according to AEIS data, 95% of students in TGAP districts are Hispanic, other ethnic groups may be slightly over-represented. Parent survey results also indicate that TGAP parents have low incomes. Nearly half (49%) have household incomes below \$25,000, and over two-thirds (68%) have household incomes below \$35,000. The reported educational attainment of respondents is also low. Almost one-third of parents interviewed (27%) indicate they have less than a high school education, an additional third (36%) indicate they have received a high school diploma or GED, and slightly more than a third (37%) report having some college, a college degree, or a graduate or professional degree.

Methodology

The year 4 evaluation (2002-03) assesses progress toward the project goals: *building capacity, increasing student and family awareness, and gaining business and community support*. Evaluation data include demographic and performance data from the Texas Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) and the Texas Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS); document reviews; surveys of teachers, university faculty, parents, and students;

and site visits—including interviews with project partners, project personnel, school administrators, counselors, Faculty Fellows, and teachers; student focus groups; and classroom observations.

Major Findings

Building Capacity in TGAP Districts

TGAP capacity building seeks to ensure that economically disadvantaged students are adequately prepared for, pursue, and succeed in post-secondary education. Capacity-building efforts in year 4 involved the creation of district plans to guide grant activities, development of GEAR UP products, support provided by the Precollege Outreach Centers (POCs), and opportunities for teachers’ professional growth.

District plans. In year 4, required areas of emphasis for district capacity building included continued work on grades 6-12 curriculum alignment, continued focus on strengthening the Advanced Placement (AP) and Pre-AP programs, systematic teacher observation and feedback, ongoing professional development for teachers, and the use of appropriate and relevant data to inform curriculum, instruction, and assessment development.

Product development. Each year TGAP has developed a variety of products to increase higher education awareness. *Education Partners*, a video toolkit featuring 12 school programs that rely on partnerships to raise academic achievement, was released in year 4. The toolkit also included *TAKS: Keeping Pace with Change*, a video to help schools explain the new statewide testing program to parents and community groups. In addition, brochures were distributed across the state for the dissemination of information about college readiness and awareness to students and parents. Each TGAP campus received copies of all products.

Precollege Outreach Centers. As it has throughout the grant period, TGAP funded two POCs (in Alice and Laredo) to provide a variety of college preparatory services for school districts, including sponsoring and organizing college field trips, making classroom presentations on higher education, and arranging teacher and counselor professional development activities (Table 1). In addition, each POC director assists in coordinating the Faculty Fellows program and, at the request of participating districts, conducts classroom observations and walk-throughs.

Table 1
Activities Offered by Precollege Outreach Centers, 2002-03

Event	Alice POC		Laredo POC		Total
	Number of Events	Participants	Number of Events	Participants	
Classroom presentations ^a	330	4,759	228	3,751	8,510
College visits ^a	22	1,500	22	2,687	4,187
College/career night ^a	2	176	1	306	482
ESL Classes ^a	0	0	1	19	19
Teacher training ^b	7 ^c	647	7 ^c	309	956

^a Student participants.

^b Numbers reflect teacher participants only. In some districts, however, counselors attended training events.

^c Four additional training sessions were jointly offered.

Altogether, 9,972 students, or 62% of the fourth-year TGAP enrollment, received one or more services that were sponsored, and often delivered, by the POCs. This included 8,510 students who received a classroom presentation on various aspects of college readiness and awareness, 4,187 students who participated in a POC-sponsored college visit, 482 students who attended college or career nights, and 19 students involved in ESL classes. In addition to student services, a total of 956 teachers participated in at least one opportunity sponsored by POCs, including topics such as Thinking Maps, Project CRISS, Psychology of Poverty, Building Success, Cornerstones, and Write for the Future.

All interviewed coordinators, and many counselors as well, are familiar with the basic services that are provided by the POCs and participating districts have a fairly high level of satisfaction with the services they receive. When asked what service the POCs should offer that they have not offered in the past, four of six coordinators mentioned parent outreach.

Teacher professional growth and development. During the 2002-03 school year, TGAP continued its support of teacher professional development, including AP training and workshops on instructional strategies. The College Board delivered AP, AP Vertical Team, and Building Success training; POCs sponsored Thinking Maps, Project CRISS, and other training events; and individual school districts offered a variety of training opportunities. As Table 2 shows, across four project years, 392 core-content area teachers (who remain in the districts as teachers) have participated in AP and AP Vertical Team training. The number of trained teachers and teacher retention varies considerably by district. Corpus Christi ISD had the highest teacher retention rate (90%), whereas United ISD (77%) had the lowest.

Table 2
Teachers Participating in Advanced Placement and Vertical Team Training

District	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	Total Number Trained	Number Retained in District ^a	Retention Rate
Alice ^b	NA	27	31	29	87	70	80%
Corpus Christi	28	20	19	16	83	75	90%
Jim Hogg County	24	8	0	25	57	45	79%
Laredo	33	20	29	0	82	72	88%
Robstown	22	21	22	22	87	76	87%
United	35	17	18	0	70	54	77%
TGAP Total	142	113	119	92	466	392	84%

^a Teachers remaining in the district in 2002-03.

^b Alice ISD joined the project near the end of the first year.

Information in Table 3 illustrates the variety of training events attended by 1,438 teachers in 2002-03 (based on a duplicated count). In five of the six districts, the majority of teachers in participating campuses (79% to 94%) attended at least one TGAP event. However, the majority of teachers who attended professional development events reported that activities impacted their teaching either *moderately* or *a lot*. In particular, teachers attending the Psychology of Poverty and AP Summer Institutes regarded these as very helpful. Many teachers note challenges, however, in trying to implement new strategies due to time constraints.

Table 3
Number of Teachers Attending Professional Development Events
Sponsored or Funded by TGAP/GEAR UP

Event	Alice	Corpus Christi	Jim Hogg County	Laredo	Robstown	United	Total
Thinking Maps*	155	127	41	173	136	9	641
AP Summer Institute	45	0	12	20	42	1	120
Project CRISS*	28	23	13	13	10	6	93
Psychology of Poverty*	24	26	0	14	8	2	74
Rubrics*	0	0	0	0	64	0	64
SureScore	2	6	0	4	20	3	35
Building Success*	5	6	4	5	7	4	31
Cornerstones*	7	6	1	5	5	4	28
Write for the Future*	9	1	9	6	0	0	25
University coursework	0	0	0	0	3	0	3
TAKS	0	0	0	0	3	0	3
Law-related education	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Vertical Team training	20	72	42	0	0	0	134
Curriculum writing	0	42	0	0	140	4	186
Total	295	309	123	240	438	33	1,438

* Indicates a professional development activity sponsored by a Precollege Outreach Center.

Curriculum alignment. TGAP districts have had limited success in implementing vertical teams to support curriculum alignment. Although surveyed teachers have relatively positive views of vertical teaming, they also indicate that vertical team meetings do not occur regularly (Figure 3). In year 4, 34% of vertical team teachers reported meeting 1 to 2 times per semester, but 40% reported meeting only 1 to 2 times per year, and 14% stated that their vertical team had never met. Moreover, the frequency of vertical team meetings declined between the 2002 and 2003 surveys.

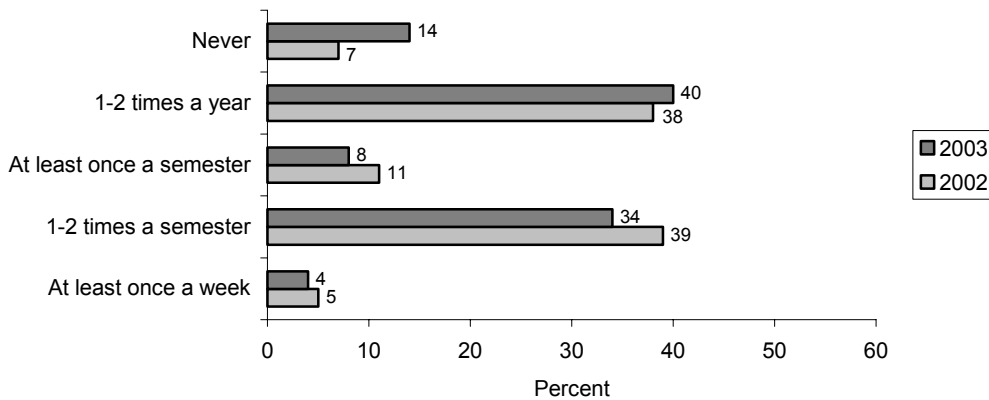


Figure 3. Frequency of vertical team meetings, n = 272 vertical team teachers.

A number of factors appear to contribute to infrequent vertical team meetings. Time constraints, scheduling difficulties, and inadequate leadership or guidance are most often cited by surveyed teachers as obstacles to the implementation of vertical teams (Table 4). Moreover, only a small percentage of interviewed teachers (9%) reported that vertical teaming had impacted curricular alignment across grades. Instead, teachers most often stated that vertical teaming had enhanced teacher awareness of the curriculum in other grades.

Table 4
Difficulties Encountered in Implementing Vertical Teams

Response Category	Percent
Time constraints	35.2
Scheduling meetings	14.5
Inadequate leadership or guidance	14.5
Not all teachers participate and/or meetings are not regular	10.3
Poor communication	9.7
No difficulties	7.6
Other	8.2

Building Capacity through the Advanced Placement Program

Advanced Placement (AP) courses offered. Overall, the number of advanced courses offered by TGAP high schools has increased substantially since TGAP began in 1999, although changes for individual campuses vary. Four of six high schools have had notable increases in Pre-AP course offerings since TGAP began. In contrast, the number of AP courses has remained relatively stable across years (Table 5).

Table 5
Number of Pre-AP and AP Courses Offered at TGAP High Schools by Year

Campus	AP Courses				Pre-AP Courses			
	Year 1^a 1999-00	Year 2^a 2000-01	Year 3^b 2001-02	Change	Year 1^a 1999-00	Year 2^a 2000-01	Year 3^b 2001-02	Change
Alice HS	11	12	11	0	0	7	12	+12
Hebbronville HS	5	8	8	+3	4	7	7	+3
Martin HS	10	9	10	0	7	7	17	+10
Miller HS	13	15	11	-2	9	10	22	+13
Robstown HS	10	10	10	0	11	12	9	-2
United South HS	14	4	9	-5	9	6	9	0
Total	63	58	59	-4	40	49	76	+36
Average number	10.5	9.7	9.8		6.7	8.2	12.7	

Note. Change=year 3 - year 1.

^a Numbers self-reported by districts.

^b Numbers based on 2001-02 student-level enrollment data.

Student enrollment in advanced courses. In 2001-02, more than one-fourth of eleventh- and twelfth-grade TGAP students were enrolled in at least one AP course (28%, 1,083 students), and more than a quarter of all high school students were enrolled in at least one Pre-AP course (29%, 2,591 students). The proportion of students enrolled, however, varied across districts (Table 6). The AP courses with the largest enrollments were English Language, U.S. History, Spanish Language, Calculus, English Literature, and Government.

**Table 6
Number and Percent of Students Enrolled in at Least One
AP and Pre-AP Course, 2001-02**

High School	Enrolled in AP ^a		Enrolled in Pre-AP ^b	
	N	Percent	N	Percent
Alice HS	165	24.3	392	24.4
Miller HS	137	17.4	487	24.3
Hebbronville HS	49	26.6	88	24.5
Martin HS	254	34.0	881	53.1
Robstown HS	127	28.0	274	24.4
United South HS	351	33.9	469	21.1
TGAP Average	1,083	27.9	2,591	28.9

^a Percentages based on number of grades 11 and 12 students enrolled in high school.

^b Percentages based on all students enrolled in high school.

Characteristics of students taking advanced courses. Contrary to state and national trends favoring non-minority students, in TGAP high schools, comparable percentages of Hispanic and White students are taking at least one AP or Pre-AP course (28% to 30%). Likewise, economic disadvantage is not highly associated with AP program participation, with similar percentages of students who qualify or do not qualify for free- or reduced-price lunches participating in AP or Pre-AP courses (27% to 30%). Female students, however, are more likely than males to take AP courses (34% versus 22%) or Pre-AP courses (34% versus 24%) (Table 7).

**Table 7
Number and Percent of AP and Pre-AP Students
by Demographic Category, 2001-02**

Category	AP ^a		Pre-AP ^b	
	N	Percent	N	Percent
Hispanic	1,003	28	2,389	29
White	59	30	122	28
Other	21	18	80	29
Female	661	34	1,489	34
Male	422	22	1,102	24
Free- or reduced-price lunch	771	27	1,959	29
No free or reduced-price lunch	310	30	616	28

^a Percentages based on number of grades 11 and 12 students enrolled in high schools.

^b Percentages based on all students enrolled in high schools.

Opportunity to learn in AP and Pre-AP classrooms. TGAP schools have strengthened their AP and Pre-AP programs to allow more students to begin experiencing college preparatory courses as early as middle school. To assess the extent to which instructional strategies and methods introduced through teacher professional development are being used in middle and high school classrooms, and to examine changes over time, evaluators conducted observations during the spring semesters of 2002 (31 classrooms) and 2003 (48 classrooms).

Observations conducted primarily in AP and Pre-AP classrooms revealed limited implementation of instructional and learning strategies promoted through TGAP/GEAR UP training sessions. As information in Table 8 reveals, instruction is generally teacher-centered with whole-group instruction occurring in 90% of classrooms for 63% of observed time. Still, in 2003, there was some movement toward more small-group instruction. Consistent with the prevalent whole-class organization, teacher activities most frequently involved directing whole-group activities (about half the time in 69% of classes), and student activities most frequently involved listening passively to a presentation (almost half the time in 63% of classrooms). While teachers' use of higher-order questioning strategies increased between spring 2002 and 2003, teachers, on average, still only use these techniques to a *small extent*. Teachers, however, are increasingly using subject-specific learning activities offered in training. The percentage of observed classrooms using Thinking Maps or graphic organizers almost doubled between 2002 and 2003 (from 7% to 13%). Overall, the limited implementation of the kinds of learning activities expected in the AP program may partially explain students' lackluster performance on AP exams in core-subject areas.

**Table 8
Classroom Organization and Teacher and Student Activities**

	Percent of Classrooms Observed		Mean Percent of Observed Time	
	2002	2003	2002	2003
Classroom Organization				
Whole class	90	90	73	63
Individual students working alone	45	50	49	43
Small groups (3+ students)	13	27	39	70
Pairs of students	10	4	61	43
The teacher is...				
Directing whole group	74	69	58	54
Monitoring student work	45	44	44	49
Facilitating/coaching	16	23	46	47
Guiding interactive discussion with whole group	32	13	50	39
Managing behavior or materials	16	13	72	26
Modeling for whole group (demonstrates a strategy)	3	6	20	32
Providing one-on-one instruction	3	6	33	87
Giving test	10	2	67	20
Viewing a video	--	8	--	36
Facilitating checking/grading	--	4	--	60
Sitting at desk	--	2	--	20

Table 8 (continued)
Classroom Organization and Teacher and Student Activities

	Percent of Classrooms Observed		Mean Percent of Observed Time	
	2002	2003	2002	2003
The students are...				
Listening to a presentation (majority of students)	61	63	58	46
Listening to discussion (majority of students)	35	35	48	53
Writing communication related to lesson	23	27	39	44
Engaged in problem solving, investigation	23	21	50	71
Using technology or audio-visual resource	3	17	25	62
Taking notes	19	13	45	51
Using graphic organizers/thinking maps	7	13	53	45
Engaged in interactive discussion	29	10	41	39
Engaged in focused discussion	7	0	40	0
Engaged in reading and reflection	7	0	20	0
Giving a presentation	--	6	--	51
Completing an exercise or short answer worksheet	--	33	--	41
Viewing a video	--	8	--	36
Taking a test	--	2	--	20

Note. N=31 classrooms in 2002. N=48 classrooms in 2003.

Building Capacity Through Faculty Fellows

The Faculty Fellows program pairs high school AP teachers and university faculty members by shared subject areas. The program goal is for university faculty to assist AP teachers by enhancing their capacity to teach AP courses and to assist students by helping them prepare for AP exams. Student exposure to professors and the university environment is a secondary benefit.

In year 4, 49 AP teachers in the six TGAP districts participated in the Faculty Fellows program, with 21 of these teachers continuing in the program for a second year. Altogether, 23 faculty members from Texas A&M University—Kingsville (8) and Texas A&M International University (15) served as Faculty Fellows. About three-fourths of faculty members (15) had also participated in the program the previous year. Faculty Fellows were required to attend an orientation meeting and an AP Vertical Team conference to help build their capacity to support partner teachers.

Faculty members participated in a variety of activities with partner teachers, including classroom presentations, campus visits, and AP exam preparation. Overall, both Faculty Fellows and teachers report that they have reaped benefits from the program. Program effectiveness was enhanced in year 4 by allowing teachers to volunteer for the program instead of being assigned. The effectiveness of the program in helping students' raise their scores on AP exams, however, remains limited due to institutional barriers such as block scheduling and other factors.

Increasing Student and Family Awareness of Higher Education

Increasing student and family awareness of higher education is a central goal of the TGAP project. The POCs and participating districts developed a variety of strategies and services to heighten both student and parent awareness of higher education and provided both groups with advice, information, activities, and programs to help prepare students for successful participation in higher education. In addition, parents and students received a variety of TGAP products designed to increase higher education awareness.

Student Support and Capacity Building

Student services. Data from sign-in forms indicate that 11,483 students, or 71% of students enrolled in participating TGAP schools, received services in year 4 (2002-03). This is an increase of 12.5 percentage points over year 3. Almost half of TGAP students (49.9%) received college counseling, up from 38.9% in year 3 and 27.8% in year 2. In addition, about 30% (4,927) of TGAP students visited a college or university in year 4. This is up from 15.3% in year 3 and 9.0% in year 2.

Results of surveying students (10,546) in year 4 indicate that efforts to communicate TGAP goals to students are meeting with some success. Increased percentages of middle and high school students reported receiving counseling about college, as well as participating in college-oriented activities such as college visits (Tables 9 and 10).

Table 9
In the past school year, which of the following school activities have you participated in or attended? (High School Students)

Activity	Percent Answering "Yes"		
	High School Year 2	High school Year 4	Change
Visiting a college	46.3	63.0	+16.7
Tutoring for an academic subject	33.7	34.1	+0.4
Accompanying an adult to work	36.3	32.0	-4.3
Attending a cultural event	24.9	22.2	-2.7
Workshop on careers	26.8	24.3	-2.5
TGAP/GEAR UP family activity	9.5	15.5	+6.0
Workshop on study skills	15.2	13.6	-1.6
Mentoring by an adult	21.6	20.8	-0.8
Counseling about classes	33.1	19.4	-13.7
Workshop on college preparation	14.8	14.4	-0.4
Attending a class at a college	13.5	12.0	-1.5
Counseling/advising about college	34.4	44.4	+10.0
Tutoring for ACT/SAT	11.9	13.2	+1.3

Table 10
In the past school year, which of the following school activities have you participated in or attended? (Middle School Students)

Activity	Percent Answering "Yes"		
	Middle School Year 2	Middle School Year 4	Change
Visiting a college	53.7	74.0	+20.3
Tutoring for an academic subject	43.6	41.2	-2.4
Accompanying an adult to work	37.5	34.0	-3.5
Attending a cultural event	29.6	48.4	+18.8
Workshop on careers	25.5	27.0	+1.5
TGAP/GEAR UP family activity	18.9	25.4	+6.5
Workshop on study skills	20.1	20.3	+0.2
Mentoring by an adult	23.4	23.0	-0.4
Counseling about classes	26.5	18.6	-7.9
Workshop on college preparation	15.4	18.4	+3.0
Attending a class at a college	14.7	16.6	+1.9
Counseling/advising about college	16.9	20.3	+3.4

Student familiarity with higher education. There have been moderate increases in the percentages of students who say they are familiar with four-year universities and community colleges. These increases, as illustrated in Table 11, have occurred predominantly among students in the lower grades in both middle and high schools. This pattern indicates that there has been some success in causing students to think about and prepare for college at an earlier age.

Table 11
How familiar would you say you are with public, four-year universities and what they do? (Percentages answering *very familiar* or *somewhat familiar*.)

Grade	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Change
6th	53.2	58.9	59.8	+6.6
7th	61.6	63.0	66.9	+5.3
8th	68.7	64.5	70.8	+2.1
9th	66.1	68.0	70.7	+4.6
10th	70.5	72.2	75.1	+4.6
11th	73.0	73.1	76.9	+3.9
12th	82.3	81.2	84.4	+2.1
All	67.8	68.9	71.8	+4.0

Student familiarity with TEXAS Grants. The percentages of students who say they are familiar with the TEXAS Grants, one of the chief means of helping students to defray the costs of higher education, have increased dramatically (Table 12). These increases have practical significance because surveyed students who report they are familiar with the TEXAS Grants are also more confident that they can afford the costs of attending four-year universities and community colleges.

Table 12
Percent of Students who are *Very Familiar* or *Somewhat Familiar*
with TEXAS Grants by Grade

Grade	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Change
6th	20.3	30.2	36.4	+16.1
7th	24.1	37.3	41.1	+17.0
8th	31.7	39.1	43.9	+12.2
9th	27.7	41.9	44.6	+16.9
10th	32.5	37.8	47.1	+14.6
11th	25.0	45.0	51.1	+26.1
12th	49.6	62.5	67.3	+17.7
All	29.6	41.7	46.6	+17.0
Total responses	9,368	8,728	9,485	--

Student educational aspirations. Despite numerous indications of successful outreach to students as well as evidence that participating in TGAP programs improves a number of student outcomes, other measures show almost no improvement. Most indicators of improvement have to do with student knowledge, such as familiarity with the TEXAS Grants or familiarity with colleges and universities. Indicators of change in student attitudes or educational intentions have not shown similar changes for the most part. For instance, the percentage of students who say they expect to pursue some form of higher education after leaving high school has not increased since year 1 of the grant, nor do students say that participating in TGAP activities has changed their plans about attending college (data not shown).

Likewise, in year 4, students do not report that they are more likely to take various college entrance examinations and aptitude tests, such as the SAT, PSAT, ASVAB, and ACT (data not shown), or to take Advanced Placement courses (Table 13). One explanation for the lack of change in student intentions may be that these percentages were already fairly high when the grant began. For instance, nearly two-thirds of students said that they expected to go to a university, community college, or vocational school in the first grant year (1999-2000).

Table 13
How likely are you to take AP or Pre-AP courses? (Percent)

Response	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Change
Very likely	39.6	39.1	37.4	-2.2
Somewhat likely	16.7	16.9	21.3	+4.6
Very unlikely	17.3	17.3	15.2	-2.1
Don't know	26.4	26.5	26.1	+0.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	--
Total responses	5,554	5,735	10,256	--

Student perceptions of financial ability. In year 4, students are also less confident that they can afford to attend a public, four-year university (Table 14) or a community college (not shown) than they were earlier in the grant period. Student confidence about the affordability of higher education initially declined in the third year of TGAP, as did parent confidence. In year 4, however, parent confidence rebounded completely, but student confidence remained low. Students who are familiar with the TEXAS Grants, however, are much more confident about

being able to afford post-secondary education than students who are not familiar with them. Thus, one of the most effective ways of encouraging TGAP students to attend college is to familiarize them with the TEXAS Grants.

Table 14
If you decided to attend a public, four-year university in Texas,
how sure are you that you could afford it? (Percent)

Response	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Change
Very sure	22.2	17.7	17.1	-5.1
Somewhat sure	58.0	48.0	49.6	-8.4
Probably cannot afford it	13.8	25.0	23.9	+10.1
Cannot afford it	6.0	9.2	9.4	+3.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	--
Total students	10,013	9,353	10,070	--

Relationship between TGAP exposure and student outcomes. A statistical regression analysis of a number of desirable student outcomes was conducted to estimate the impact of student exposure to TGAP activities. Regression analysis allows an estimate of the efficacy of TGAP activities that is independent of other influences on student outcomes. In this analysis, controls were imposed for student academic achievement, household composition, household socioeconomic status (SES), and parent educational expectations. Results indicate that TGAP exposure has a substantial estimated impact on desirable student outcomes independent of these other influences (Table 15). For instance, students who have not attended any TGAP activities have a probability of 0.22 of saying they are *very sure* they could afford to attend a community college. Students with the maximum TGAP exposure, on the other hand, have a probability of saying they are *very sure* they could afford to attend a community college of 0.90—an increase of 0.68. Students with maximum TGAP exposure are 0.93 more likely than students who have not attended any TGAP events of saying they are *very likely* to take an AP course.

Table 15
Probability Changes Corresponding to Changes in Student TGAP Exposure

Outcome	No Exposure Probability	Maximum Exposure Probability	Change in Probability Due to Exposure
4-year college familiarity	0.15	0.66	0.51
Taking an AP course	0.06	0.99	0.93
Taking the SAT	0.08	0.82	0.74
Affordability of comm. college	0.22	0.90	0.68
College visit (self-reported)	0.86	0.99	0.13
Discuss college	0.09	0.97	0.88
Receives homework help	0.20	0.50	0.30
TEXAS Grant	0.01	0.46	0.45

Parent Support and Capacity Building

Parent services. The total number of parents who received a TGAP service in 2002-03 was 2,738, or about 17%. This was an increase over the 2,659 parents, or 15%, that received a TGAP service in 2001-02, and the 2,076, or 13%, who received a service in 2000-01.

Parent involvement and support. Results for the year 4 parent telephone survey (877 parents) suggest that outreach to parents is having some effect. Compared to students, improvements for parents, however, are more likely to involve both behavioral and attitudinal change as well as increases in knowledge and familiarity with topics related to higher education. For instance, the percentage of parents who say that they talk to their children about attending college *very frequently* increased. The percentage of parents who say they have participated in TGAP events also increased substantially (data not shown).

Parent familiarity with TEXAS Grants. The increases in parents' familiarity with the TEXAS Grants, like students' awareness, has been dramatic. The percentage of parents who express some degree of familiarity with the TEXAS Grants rose by nearly 16 points (Table 16). As with students, parents who are familiar with the TEXAS Grants are more confident that they can afford to send their children to a university or community college (data not shown).

Table 16
How familiar are you with the TEXAS Grant program?

Response	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Change
Very familiar	8.3	9.5	10.5	+2.2
Somewhat familiar	12.2	19.8	25.9	+13.7
Not very familiar	25.1	20.2	27.2	+2.1
Not familiar at all	54.5	49.5	36.4	-18.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	--
Total responses	930	867	876	--

Information for parents. Substantial increases have also occurred in the percentages of parents who say they have received information or counseling on college-related topics (Table 17). The percentage of parents who say they are familiar with the TGAP Program at their children's schools has decreased by 30 points since TGAP year 2 (data not shown).

Table 17
Have you received any information from your child's school about college admission requirements or college costs and financial assistance? Have you talked with your child's counselor about college entrance requirements, costs, and financial aid?

Response (Percent saying "yes")	Year 1 and 2 Percent	Year 3 Percent	Year 4 Percent	Change
Information on entrance requirements	19.4	25.7	33.3	+13.9
Information on finances and aid	15.1	24.3	29.5	+14.4
Counseled on entrance requirements	11.7 ^a	20.3	21.0	+9.3
Counseled on financial aid	9.3 ^a	18.4	19.6	+10.3

^aThis figure represents the percentage of parents answering "yes" during the second year survey. This question was not asked on the first-year survey.

Student survey responses show an increase in the percentages of students who received counseling about college and a decrease in the percentages of students who received counseling about more traditional topics such as their classes (Table 18). When parents were asked about the activities in which they participated, and the activities in which their children participated, their responses were consistent with those of students. There have been increases in the percentages of parents saying they participated in counseling about college, family activities, and neighborhood walks, and a marked decrease in the percentage of parents who say they participated in counseling about classes (Table 19).

Table 18
Which of the following school-related activities have you participated in or attended in the last year? (Student Survey)

Activity	Year 2 Percent	Year 3 Percent	Year 4 Percent	Change
Counseling about college	20.5	20.1	23.4	+2.9
Counseling about classes	53.5	35.8	40.6	-12.9
Workshop on college prep	12.6	12.1	15.7	+3.1
Workshop on study skills	18.2	12.1	17.0	-1.2
Workshop on careers	15.8	13.0	16.0	+0.2
Cultural event	40.6	34.7	34.9	-5.7
Family activity	8.6	10.2	13.5	+4.9
Parent training	5.6	7.9	8.9	+3.3
Neighborhood walk	4.8	6.7	11.8	+7.0

Table 19
Which of the following school-related activities did your child participate in or attend in the last year? (Parent Survey)

Activity	Year 2 Percent	Year 3 Percent	Year 4 Percent	Change
Counseling/advising about college	31.7	35.1	38.1	+6.4
Counseling concerning classes	54.3	51.5	50.5	-3.8
Workshop on college preparation	21.2	26.3	28.8	+7.6
Workshop on study skills	31.0	23.7	27.7	-3.3
Workshop on careers	31.7	25.5	31.6	-0.1
TGAP/GEAR UP family activity	10.4	10.7	17.8	+7.3
Tutoring for an academic subject	36.0	36.4	26.1	-9.9
Tutoring for SAT or ACT	16.4	31.1	28.5	+12.1
Mentoring	16.9	15.0	16.3	-0.6
Class at a university	9.8	16.5	13.1	+3.3
Visit a university	38.4	45.2	47.9	+9.5
Job shadowing	19.3	16.1	15.5	-3.8
College student shadowing	10.1	10.8	9.9	-0.2

Furthermore, increased percentages of parents say their children participated in counseling about college, workshops on college preparation, TGAP family activities, tutoring for SAT and ACT tests, taking classes at a college or university, and visiting a college or university. There is a

sharp decrease in the percentages of parents who say that their children participated in counseling about classes. The patterns of both student and parent responses are consistent with reports by counselors in some districts that they are spending less time on traditional counseling activities and more time counseling students about college.

Parent perceptions of financial capacity. Student and parent confidence in their ability to afford the costs of attending a four-year university or community college declined in year 3. In year 4, student confidence remained low, but parent confidence rebounded. In fact, in the fourth year, there was an increase of 11.9 points in the percentage of parents who had some level of confidence that they could afford post-secondary education (data not shown).

Relationship between TGAP exposure and parent outcomes. A statistical regression analysis of a number of desirable parent outcomes was conducted to estimate the impact of parent exposure to TGAP activities. Regression analysis allows the estimation of the efficacy of TGAP activities independent of other influences on parent outcomes. In this analysis, controls were imposed for student academic achievement, household composition, household socioeconomic status (SES), and parent educational expectations. The results indicate that TGAP exposure has a substantial estimated impact on desirable parent outcomes independent of these other influences (Table 20). For instance, parents who have attended the maximum number of TGAP events have a probability of 0.96 of saying that they have received information on college financial requirements. That is 0.59 greater than the probability that parents who have attended no TGAP events will say that they have received information on college financial requirements.

Table 20
Probability Changes Corresponding to Changes in Parent TGAP Exposure

Outcome	No Exposure Probability	Maximum Exposure Probability	Change in Probability due to Exposure
College admissions information	0.47	0.96	0.49
Financial aid information	0.37	0.96	0.59
Admissions counseling	0.25	0.99	0.74
Financial aid counseling	0.51	0.99	0.48
TGAP familiarity	0.07	0.28	0.21

Relationship Between TGAP and College Attendance, 2003

Survey of parents of 2003 graduating seniors. In June of 2003, 344 parents of seniors who graduated at the end of the 2002-03 school year were interviewed to determine their children’s post-graduation plans. Three-quarters of the parents interviewed said that their children had applied to a college, and more than 90% of students who applied to college were accepted. In turn, 97.5% of those who were accepted intended to attend college, according to parents. In all, about 7 in 10 parents reported that their child who had graduated high school in 2003 would attend college in the 2003-04 academic year (data not shown).

Relationship between TGAP exposure and college attendance. Of the 237 parents who said their children would be continuing their education after high school, 99 (41.8%) said children would attend a four-year public college or university in Texas, 115 (48.5%) said children would attend a community college, 9 (3.8%) said children would attend a vocational-technical school, 7 (2.9%) said children would attend a private, four-year institution in Texas, one said a child would attend a music academy out of state, and 6 (2.5%) said their children were still undecided. Analyses relating reported college attendance to various TGAP activities indicate that participating in these activities increases the probability that parents will say that their children are going to attend college (Tables 21 through 25). In most cases, the differences are substantial.

**Table 21
College Attendance by Counseling about Entrance Requirements**

College Attendance	Received Counseling	No Counseling	All
Attending	83.7	62.7	69.1
Total Respondents	104	236	340

**Table 22
College Attendance by Counseling about Costs and Financial Aid**

College Attendance	Received Counseling	No Counseling	All
Attending	79.7	60.4	69.1
Total Respondents	153	187	340

**Table 23
College Attendance by Information about Entrance Requirements**

College Attendance	Received Information	No Information	All
Attending	77.9	61.0	69.1
Total Respondents	163	177	340

**Table 24
College Attendance by Information about Costs and Financial Aid**

College Attendance	Received Information	No Information	All
Attending	74.0	64.7	69.1
Total Respondents	169	170	339

**Table 25
College Attendance by TGAP Exposure**

College Attendance	TGAP Exposure	No TGAP Exposure	Don't Know	All
Attending	89.1	66.1	65.3	69.1
Total Respondents	46	245	49	340

To determine if relationships among variables are credible, it is necessary to assess the independent impact of TGAP participation. Statistical regression analysis is one way to approach this problem. In this analysis, controls were imposed for student academic achievement, household socioeconomic status (SES), household composition, and parent involvement in their children’s education. Results indicate that student TGAP exposure—the number of TGAP events a student attended—is a strong predictor of the probability of reported college attendance. The estimated impacts of three variables on the probability of reported college attended are presented in Table 26 for two kinds of students. Advantaged students are those who come from a two-parent household in Laredo ISD and have a sibling who has attended college. Disadvantaged students are those who come from a single-parent household in Jim Hogg County ISD and have no siblings who have attended college.

Table 26
Changes in Probability of Attending College Corresponding to Changes in Parent Education, Student Attendance, and Student TGAP Exposure

Variable	Minimum Value Probability	Maximum Value Probability	Change in Probability
Disadvantaged Student			
Respondent education	0.145	0.530	0.385
Student attendance	0.029	0.372	0.343
Student TGAP exposure	0.104	1.000	0.896
Advantaged Student			
Respondent education	0.754	0.965	0.211
Student attendance	0.358	0.886	0.528
Student TGAP exposure	0.688	1.000	0.312

The relationships presented in Table 26 are what one would expect given that they pertain to hypothetical disadvantaged and advantaged students. For instance, though both parent education and student attendance have a marked positive impact on estimated college attendance probabilities, disadvantaged students start from much lower values, and remain much less likely than their advantaged counterparts to attend college at similar values for these variables. However, even though disadvantaged students start with a much lower probability of college attendance, if they attend enough TGAP events, they eventually catch up with their advantaged counterparts. Most of the impact of TGAP exposure on advantaged students has been achieved by the time they attend 10 TGAP events. At the same level of TGAP exposure, disadvantaged students have a much lower probability of attendance—about 0.6 for 10 events. However, if disadvantaged students continue to attend TGAP events, they eventually catch up with the advantaged students. If a disadvantaged student attends 20 TGAP events, she has about the same high probability of attending college as an advantaged student who attends about 10 events. In contrast, disadvantaged students never catch up with advantaged students in the probability of attending college as a result of the impact of parent education or student attendance.

Relationship Between TGAP and College Attendance, 2002

Follow-up survey of parents of 2002 graduating seniors. A survey of 211 parents of graduating seniors was also conducted in year 3. In that survey, 130 of the senior parents that were interviewed said that their children would be attending an institution of higher education.

In year 4, 101 of 130 parents participated in a follow-up survey to determine how many students “actually” entered a college the following fall, and of those, how many were continuing to attend college. An overwhelming majority of parents said that their children, in fact, did enter college in the fall of 2002 (91.1%) and that, at the time of the interview, their children were continuing in college (93.5%).

Parents were also asked if their children participated in TGAP activities, what kinds of programs they thought were most beneficial for their children, and whether they felt their children were better prepared for college because of TGAP (Tables 27 and 28). Many of the parents surveyed were unfamiliar with TGAP (44.2%, data not shown), and many did not know if their children participated in TGAP programs or not (37.2%). Nevertheless, substantial percentages of parents said their children did participate and said that TGAP was helpful in preparing their children for college.

Table 27
Did your child participate in TGAP or GEAR UP activities when he/she was in high school?

Response	Count	Percent
No	16	18.6
Yes, sometimes	25	29.1
Yes, frequently	13	15.1
Don't know	32	37.2
Total	86	100.0

Table 28
Do you feel that your child was better prepared for college because of GEAR UP?

Response	Count	Percent
Didn't make much difference	6	7.0
It helped somewhat	19	22.1
It helped quite a bit	18	20.9
Don't know	43	50.0
Total	86	100.0

Campus and Student Performance

Although the TGAP project is in its fourth year of implementation, campus and most student performance outcome measures reflect the first three implementation years because year 4 student-level PEIMS and AEIS performance data (2002-03) become available from TEA in the fall of the following school year. Thus, most performance data reflect earlier stages of the project. Despite this limitation, 2001-02 data provide informative statistics and information that identifies areas for improvement.

Accountability ratings. TGAP schools' accountability ratings declined in 2002. The number of Exemplary schools dropped from 3 to 1, the number of Recognized schools remained at 4, and the number of Acceptable schools increased from 7 to 10. This runs counter to 2002 state figures of more Exemplary campuses and less Acceptable campuses.

Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS). As summarized in Table 29, TGAP campuses generally have increasing TAAS passing rates for all subject areas. However, 2002 TAAS passing rates are uniformly lower than peer campuses and the state. In addition, percentage point change comparisons between TGAP and peer campuses favor the peer campuses in all cases. While percentage point change comparisons between TGAP campuses and the state are similar, the state gains are more impressive because of higher initial passing rates in 1999.

Table 29
Percent Passing TAAS by Subject-Area Subtest

TAAS	TGAP Campuses					Peer Campuses					State				
	1999	2000	2001	2002	Chg.	1999	2000	2001	2002	Chg.	1999	2000	2001	2002	Chg.
Reading															
Grade 7	73	76	82	83	+10	75	75	84	86	+11	84	84	89	91	+7
Grade 8	82	82	86	89	+7	82	84	89	92	+10	82	82	92	94	+12
Grade 10	82	85	86	90	+8	82	85	86	93	+11	89	90	90	95	+6
Mathematics															
Grade 7	80	83	85	85	+5	79	85	88	88	+9	85	88	90	92	+7
Grade 8	84	87	87	88	+4	82	87	90	91	+9	86	90	92	93	+7
Grade 10	74	85	86	87	+13	77	84	87	91	+14	82	87	89	92	+10
Social Studies															
Grade 8	54	47	58	71	+17	55	55	65	77	+22	70	72	77	84	+14
Science															
Grade 8	80	78	84	85	+5	79	81	88	91	+12	87	88	92	93	+6

Source: TEA AEIS reports.

Note: Change refers to the difference between 1999 (baseline year) and 2002 (year three).

Algebra I performance. TGAP campuses are making progress toward enrolling middle school students in algebra classes. Algebra I EOC participation rates for TGAP 8th graders are higher than peer campuses (Table 30). In addition, since 1999, participation rates have increased more at TGAP campuses than at peer campuses. As increasing numbers of TGAP students take algebra, the Algebra I EOC passing rate has declined by 2 percentage points over the four-year period. In contrast, the passing rate at peer campuses has increased by 10 percentage points.

As might be expected considering middle-school participation trends, in 2002, TGAP high schools had Algebra I EOC taking rates slightly below peer campuses (Table 31). Moreover, since 1999, the Algebra I EOC taking rates at TGAP campuses declined by 5 percentage points, compared to a 2 percentage point decrease at peer campuses and a 1 percentage point decrease at the state level. TGAP high school Algebra I EOC passing rates are somewhat lower than peer campuses (25% compared to 32% in 2002), and substantially lower than the state overall (about 33 percentage points).

Table 30
Algebra I End-of-Course Examination Taking and Passing Rates for Middle School

Campus	Percent Taking					Percent Passing				
	1999	2000	2001	2002	Chg.	1999	2000	2001	2002	Chg.
Adams MS	34.3	7.3	5.7	5.8	-28.5	53.7	90.5	94.0	100.0	+46.3
Driscoll MS	6.7	12.0	12.9	14.2	+7.5	97.1	100.0	98.4	97.1	0.0
Hebbronville JH	9.1	11.3	12.2	13.6	+4.5	94.4	90.5	77.3	96.2	+1.8
Christen MS	13.6	24.0	24.0	23.6	+10.0	73.1	61.9	67.5	79.8	+6.7
Seale JH	3.3	2.9	5.3	5.8	+2.5	94.7	100.0	68.8	97.1	+2.4
Garcia MS	0.0	8.5	9.2	19.3	+19.3	--	45.0	45.0	30.1	--
United South MS	4.5	5.7	11.3	11.3	+6.8	54.2	67.6	47.9	66.2	+12.0
LBJ	--	--	--	40.1	--	--	--	--	38.9	--
Group Average^a	10.2	10.2	11.5	16.7	+6.5	77.9	79.4	71.3	75.7	-2.2
Peer Campuses^a	8.9	9.9	10.4	12.2	+3.3	73.7	76.8	79.6	83.5	+9.8

Source: TEA AEIS reports.

Note. Change refers to the difference between 1999 (baseline year) and 2002 (year three).

^aSimple average.

Table 31
Algebra I End-of-Course Examination Taking and Passing Rates for High School

Campus	Percent Taking					Percent Passing				
	1999	2000	2001	2002	Chg.	1999	2000	2001	2002	Chg.
Alice HS	7.8	19.8	19.4	16.9	+9.1	1.0	10.2	19.3	23.5	+22.5
Miller HS	29.2	22.9	22.9	18.2	-11.0	15.8	18.8	15.2	10.9	-4.9
Hebbronville HS	19.8	14.7	14.6	13.4	-6.4	27.4	32.7	47.2	25.0	-2.4
Martin HS	16.4	17.9	19.8	21.2	+4.8	29.1	32.0	19.6	18.5	-10.6
Robstown HS	35.5	25.4	23.3	23.5	-12.0	17.1	29.0	29.3	45.7	+28.6
United South HS	35.1	23.6	23.7	19.0	-16.1	12.3	21.0	18.8	26.8	+14.5
Group Average^a	24.0	20.7	20.6	18.7	-5.3	17.1	24.0	24.9	25.1	+8.0
Peer Campuses^a	24.1	23.4	21.7	21.7	-2.4	20.1	24.6	26.5	31.7	+11.6
State Average	18.0	17.6	17.2	17.0	-1.0	43.4	43.9	49.2	57.8	+14.4

Source: TEA AEIS reports.

Note. Change refers to the difference between 1999 (baseline year) and 2002 (year three).

^aSimple average.

Graduation rates and advanced academic measures. TGAP high schools have made notable progress in a number of important areas since beginning the GEAR UP program. High school graduation rates increased in 2002 to 86%, a level above the peer campuses and the state average (Table 32). Moreover, students enrolled in TGAP high schools during 1998 to 2002 have higher advanced course completion rates than peer campuses and the state overall. And compared to peer campuses and state averages, greater percentages of TGAP students completed the Recommended High School Program between 1998 and 2002, with 78% completing the program in 2002, compared to 72% for peer campuses and 58% for the state.

Table 32
Graduation Rates and Advanced Academic Measures For High School (percent)

Campus	Graduation Rate					Advance Course Completion					Recommended HS Program Completion				
	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Alice HS	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	16.3	13.2	13.6	13.7	21.1	0.0	80.9	76.1	80.7
Miller HS	70.7	65.6	75.1	75.6	76.2	0.0	20.3	23.2	25.1	27.9	0.0	0.0	21.0	3.2	51.5
Hebbronville HS	85.7	92.0	92.2	95.1	97.8	6.0	16.2	18.9	19.7	21.6	0.0	1.2	82.6	86.4	89.4
Martin HS	83.1	79.8	80.4	82.8	82.9	1.2	24.1	26.9	23.4	39.0	81.3	82.0	96.2	86.8	91.7
Robstown HS	82.9	87.6	75.7	90.0	83.4	1.7	20.1	5.9	16.1	17.0	0.0	30.7	48.8	57.4	76.2
United South HS	82.6	81.1	85.3	87.1	87.9	2.0	11.9	16.9	20.5	21.6	0.0	0.0	71.0	76.0	76.1
Group Average^a	81.0	81.2	81.7	86.1	85.6	2.2	18.2	17.5	19.7	20.1	17.1	19.0	66.8	64.3	77.6
Peer Campuses^a	78.3	79.6	81.1	81.3	83.1	1.8	12.9	15.8	15.7	15.4	0.0	0.5	45.9	62.9	72.0
State Ave.	78.7	79.5	80.7	81.1	82.8	4.3	17.5	20.1	19.3	19.4	8.7	15.0	38.6	51.1	58.2

Source: TEA AEIS reports.

^aSimple average.

NR – Not Reported

Advanced Placement Examinations. In addition to increased participation in advanced courses, in TGAP high schools, an increasing number of students are taking AP Examinations. The 1,870 examinations taken in 2003 represent a 110% increase over the 890 taken in 2000. This compares to a 53% increase in Texas and a 37% increase nationally over the same time period. Unfortunately, performance on AP exams in TGAP schools lags behind state and national levels. For example, in 2003, considerably higher percentages of students had AP Examination scores of 3 or above nationally (61.5%) and in Texas (51.9%) compared to TGAP high schools (29.5%) (Table 33).

Table 33
Number of AP Examinations Taken and Percent Scoring 3 or Above by Content Area and Year

Content Area	2000		2001		2002		2003	
	N Exams	% 3 or Above	N Exams	% 3 or Above	N Exams	% 3 or Above	N Exams	% 3 or Above
TGAP Schools								
English Language	309	5.2	451	7.3	483	5.6	509	6.7
Mathematics	37	16.2	49	18.4	103	15.5	111	5.4
Science	64	0.0	104	1.9	141	0.7	120	4.2
Social Studies	173	8.7	271	2.6	259	3.5	492	5.1
Foreign Language	290	82.4	456	79.6	490	75.7	632	75.8
Fine Arts	17	52.9	8	75.0	8	75.0	6	50.0
Computer Science	0	--	4	25.0	1	100.0	0	--
Total								
TGAP schools	890	32.0	1,343	31.3	1,485	29.0	1,870	29.5
Texas Schools	107,640	54.8	125,785	51.0	144,060	53.3	164,804	51.9
National Schools	1,242,324	63.7	1,380,146	61.3	1,548,999	63.1	1,705,207	61.5

Over the four years (2000-2003), participation in English language examinations increased by 65%, participation in mathematics examinations by 200%, participation in science examinations by 88%, participation in social studies examinations by 184%, and participation in foreign language examinations by 118%. Over the same time period, the percentage of students with scores of 3 or above decreased in mathematics (16% to 5%), foreign language (primarily Spanish, 82% to 76%), and social studies (9% to 5%); scores increased in science (0% to 4%); and scores remained in the 5% to 7% range in English language. Thus, while participation in all content areas has increased markedly, performance in every content area except foreign language (primarily Spanish) has been well below state (50% to 55% scoring 3 or above) and national (60% to 64% scoring 3 or above) standards.

College entrance examinations. The percentage of TGAP students taking college entrance examinations changed little between 1998 and 2000, but increased to 61% in 2001 and to 62% in 2002 (Table 34). However, student performance mitigates these positive participation rates. Small percentages of TGAP students scored at or above the criterion (1,110 on the SAT and 24 on the ACT) in any year—although, the percentage increased slightly in 2002 (from 4% to 6%). Outcomes for TGAP campuses are now slightly above their peer campuses (5% at or above the criterion) but well below the state average (27%). In 2002, TGAP students’ average scores on the SAT (859) and ACT (16.7) were similar to peer campuses but markedly lower than state averages.

Table 34
Campus-level Performance, College Entrance Examinations

Campus	Percent Taking Exams					Percent at or Above Criterion				
	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Alice HS	77	65	70	75	74	15	10	11	11	12
Miller HS	48	39	46	55	60	9	11	5	5	9
Hebbronville HS	79	61	60	77	75	11	5	3	3	5
Martin HS	37	30	31	36	39	4	3	3	2	3
Robstown HS	66	79	70	84	81	3	0	2	1	2
United South HS	32	26	42	37	46	4	3	2	2	3
TGAP Average^a	57	50	53	61	62	8	5	4	4	6
Peer Campuses Average^a	53	52	55	54	56	6	7	4	7	5
State Average	62	62	62	63	62	27	27	27	27	27

GED and dropout rates. GED completion rates for TGAP students, similar to their peers, have remained relatively stable across years. In 2002, TGAP students’ GED completion rate of 2.5% is slightly above the peer campus rate of 1.6%, but below the state average of 4.1%. On the other hand, TGAP high schools have made substantial strides in reducing student dropout. The dropout rate for TGAP campuses in 2002 (5.1%) remained below the dropout rates for peer campuses (5.7%) and the state (5.4%). While all three groups have shown consistent dropout rate declines since 1998, the TGAP campuses’ rate of decline has been largest (Table 35).

Table 35
GED Completion and Dropout Rates (percent)

Campus	GED Completion Rate						Dropout					
	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	Chg.	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	Chg.
Alice HS	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	--	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	--
Miller HS	0.0	3.2	2.5	2.5	3.9	+3.9	14.6	16.0	11.0	8.7	6.6	-9.4
Hebbronville HS	6.0	4.6	6.5	2.4	2.2	-3.8	8.3	2.3	1.3	1.2	0.0	-8.3
Martin HS	1.2	1.1	0.2	1.5	0.7	-0.5	11.1	11.4	10.7	6.5	5.8	-5.6
Robstown HS	1.7	0.0	2.0	1.6	4.9	+3.2	8.8	8.4	14.6	4.2	7.8	-1.0
United South HS	2.0	1.6	1.0	1.1	0.9	-1.1	7.7	8.4	7.9	5.3	5.5	-2.2
Group Average^a	2.2	2.1	2.4	1.8	2.5	+0.3	10.1	9.3	9.1	5.2	5.1	-5.0
Peer Campuses^b	1.8	1.6	2.0	2.2	1.6	-0.2	9.6	8.3	8.1	6.7	5.7	-3.9
State Average	4.3	4.0	4.8	4.8	4.1	-0.2	8.9	8.5	7.2	6.2	5.4	-3.5

Source: TEA AEIS reports.

Note. Change refers to the difference between 1999 (baseline year) and 2002 (year 3).

^aAll data refer to the class of that year. ^bSimple average. NR – Not Reported.

Enrollment in Texas public, post-secondary institutions. Based on data from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, in 2002, as in the previous two years, about 18% of TGAP graduates entered a four-year university (Table 36). In 2002, however, only 27% of students enrolled in a community or technical school (a 9 percentage point decrease compared to previous years). Thus, overall, only 45% of TGAP students entered a Texas public, post-secondary institution in 2002 (a 9 percentage point decrease compared to previous years). It is important to note, however, that 55% of graduating seniors could not be located in 2002 (a 9 percentage point increase compared to previous years). Some of these students in this larger pool of “not located” students may also have enrolled in post-secondary institutions.

Table 36
TGAP Graduates Entering Texas, Public Post-Secondary Institutions

Year	University		Community/ Technical		Total Entering Post-Secondary		Students Not located	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
2000	304	18.7	582	35.8	886	54.5	740	45.5
2001	288	17.4	605	36.5	893	53.8	766	46.2
2002	316	18.4	458	26.7	774	45.1	944	55.0

Institutionalization and Sustainability

In the fourth project year, evaluators examined each TGAP district’s progress toward program institutionalization and assessed prospects for TGAP continuation, or sustainability, after GEAR UP funding ends in year 5.

Teacher familiarity with TGAP/GEAR UP. Teachers are increasingly familiar with the TGAP/GEAR UP program. About 84% of 771 surveyed teachers are either *somewhat* or *very familiar* with the program, and 75% of teachers report participating in at least one TGAP/GEAR UP activity. Teachers most often report participating in TGAP-sponsored professional development (58%) and curriculum writing (30%), having students who made a college visit (39%), and receiving materials (36%). Notably, there was a positive relationship between

familiarity with TGAP/GEAR UP and teachers' likelihood of giving advice to students on post-secondary educational opportunities.

TGAP/GEAR UP successes. When asked to identify the most successful elements of the program, district representatives—counselors, coordinators, and principals—most often cited staff development or teacher training (14), college visits (8), parental involvement/outreach/interest (8), Center for Successful Fathering activities (5), vertical teaming (5), Walks for Success (4), increased numbers of students taking AP courses and AP exams (4), raised student expectations and awareness of college opportunities (4), and paying for various student tests (ACT, SAT, AP, PSAT) (3). Similarly, teachers also consider TGAP/GEAR UP and quite successful. More than 90% of vertical team trained teachers expressed confidence that TGAP/GEAR UP will increase the percentage of students taking academically demanding courses and continuing their education after high school.

Recommendations for improvement. District representatives also provided suggestions for program improvement. Individuals who offered comments most frequently recommended continuing TGAP/GEAR UP beyond five years (3), providing an on-site GEAR UP counselor (2), providing strategies to encourage business collaboration (2), reducing training that takes teachers out of the classroom (2), increasing counselor training (2), and increasing the frequency of communication with the district TGAP coordinator (2). Teachers also suggested changes for the program. In contrast to district representatives, teachers most often cite a need for increased awareness and information about TGAP/GEAR UP (44); expanded teacher participation (30); more hands-on activities, presentations, and college tours for students (27); increased student participation (18); and increased parental involvement (16).

Sustainability. District coordinators and school principals described their plans to sustain TGAP programs after the expiration of the grant. Overwhelmingly, when individuals identified a potential alternative funding source, it was another grant. Typical responses included, “We are looking at different grants to sustain programs,” or “Title I funds will be the most important source that will help us continue some of our programs.” The dependency of TGAP schools on external funding is also illustrated by other remarks. Coordinators, in particular, frequently stated that if it were not for GEAR UP funds, some services for students or teachers would not exist. Most frequently mentioned were college field trips, teacher training, and funds to pay for various tests such as the SAT, ACT, and AP examinations. Simply put, many TGAP schools cannot finance important aspects of the education program, such as staff development, out of local and state funds. Thus, funding for successful practices made possible by GEAR UP may not be continued by school districts beyond the grant. Furthermore, teacher turnover is another barrier to program sustainability. Districts may not be able to replace AP-trained teachers who leave campuses after GEAR UP funding expires.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Building Capacity in TGAP Districts

Precollege Outreach Centers (POC) allow TGAP districts to offer extensive support for educators, students, and parents. Records indicate that 9,972 students (about 62%) received TGAP services in the fourth year through POC sponsorship and provision of services. The POCs are also heavily involved in providing professional development and assisting districts in parent outreach. POCs should continue to provide services for TGAP districts, as their efforts meaningfully extend and enhance the capabilities of participating districts.

Teacher participation in TGAP professional development has been widespread in most districts, and training is highly regarded by teachers. Still, instructional practices in classrooms need improvement. Overall findings, consistent with research on teacher growth, suggest that teachers need time, ongoing support for the implementation of strategies learned during professional development sessions, and administrative encouragement. In particular, district administrators should use the walk-throughs and teacher appraisals as a means to heighten teacher awareness of the importance of using appropriate instructional approaches. Subsequently, teacher support should focus on areas of identified need. Districts with high teacher turnover rates must offer training to support AP subject areas affected by teacher attrition.

Progress toward implementing the AP Vertical Team concept in TGAP districts languished during the fourth project year. TGAP should work with district and campus administrators to provide stronger support for the implementation of vertical team efforts. By the end of the fifth year, each district should have a written plan for curricular alignment and the continuation of vertical teams.

Building Capacity Through the Advanced Placement Program

TGAP districts have made strides in serving traditionally under-represented students in their Advanced Placement programs. Over three program years, TGAP districts have expanded their AP programs, primarily by offering a wider array of Pre-AP courses that prepare students for AP coursework. Moreover, student-level data available for 2001-02 reveal that more than one-fourth of TGAP eleventh- and twelfth-grade students were enrolled in at least one AP course, and more than one-fourth of all TGAP students were enrolled in at least one Pre-AP course. These students, contrary to state and national trends, included comparable proportions of Hispanic and White students and similar proportions of economically advantaged and disadvantaged students.

Although AP exam participation rates for TGAP schools are similar to state and national averages, TGAP students' AP exam scores are well below state and national trends. Overall, average AP exam scores for TGAP schools are well below state and national averages, except that TGAP schools with high percentages of students taking AP Spanish Language exams have higher average AP exam scores.

Teachers continue to view the AP program positively, but they express concerns about academic standards. Nearly half of AP teachers believe that AP program effectiveness is undermined by the characteristics of students enrolled. Teachers most often recommend more stringent academic entry requirements and academic preparation for students as a way to improve the AP program.

Although progress is apparent, districts must continue to improve student access to and success in their AP programs. Creating effective programs will require continued work on curricular alignment through AP Vertical Teams, improved implementation of research-based instructional practices in middle and high school classrooms (both regular and advanced), administrative support for improved classroom practice through informal walk-throughs and teacher appraisals, removal of organizational barriers that undermine student success in AP coursework and on AP Examinations, and continued support for the Faculty Fellows program as a resource for AP teachers.

Building Capacity Through Faculty Fellows

The Faculty Fellows program has overcome many previous implementation barriers, and although challenges remain, high school AP teachers and Faculty Fellows are benefiting from the program. Exposing students to university professors and a campus environment can positively impact students, teachers, and faculty members if a working, peer relationship is established between teachers and Faculty Fellows. Changes in the organization of the Faculty Fellows program, such as allowing teachers to volunteer for the program, has fostered more productive faculty-teacher relationships. Although Faculty Fellows and teachers have established productive working relationships, Faculty Fellows' involvement in vertical team meetings remains limited. Faculty Fellows should be informed and included in vertical team activities whenever possible.

Increasing Student and Family Awareness of Higher Education

Student and parent awareness of higher education and related subjects has increased. Several measures indicate increased awareness of higher education and related subjects on the part of students and parents, such as greater familiarity with the TEXAS Grants and with four-year colleges and community colleges.

Greater exposure to TGAP services increases the probability of desirable outcomes for students and parents. Statistical analysis that controls for other influences on student outcomes, such as socioeconomic status and student academic achievement, indicates that greater student exposure to TGAP increases the probability of students reporting familiarity with four-year colleges and the TEXAS Grants, taking an AP course or the SAT, believing in the affordability of college, having college discussions with their parents, and receiving support from parents with homework. Likewise, greater student exposure to TGAP increases the probability of parents saying they have received information on college admissions and financial aid, have been counseled on college admissions and financial aid, and are familiar with TGAP in their children's schools.

Student TGAP participation increases the likelihood that parents will report that their graduating senior children will attend college. Statistical analysis indicates that student TGAP participation increases the likelihood that parents will report that their graduating senior children will attend college in the following year.

District representatives believe that students and parents are more knowledgeable about college opportunities, and that more students are taking rigorous classes and applying for college because of TGAP. Counselors and coordinators report greater emphasis on student preparation

for college, increased effectiveness through the availability of TGAP-provided information and materials, and in larger districts, greater awareness of college in middle schools.

Statistical analyses that control for socioeconomic status and student achievement provide evidence that TGAP programs are reaching parents and students who, due to their life circumstances, might not otherwise consider post-secondary education. In fact, gaps in college awareness between advantaged students and less-advantaged students may actually be narrowed by TGAP participation.

Considering overall findings, TGAP outreach activities that seek to familiarize students and parents with college opportunities should be continued, maintaining an emphasis on reaching low and moderate SES households and involving students of modest or marginal academic achievement.

Gaining Business and Community Support

TBEC continued their statewide support for the RHSP, Texas Scholars program, and TEXAS Grants—however, local initiatives were offered inconsistently across districts. TBEC should continue to create stronger channels of communication with TGAP campuses and expand current efforts to provide comparable services to all TGAP districts. Although TBEC’s documentation of services improved substantially in year 4, they should continue to work with TEA and evaluators to improve the documentation of campus-level services.

Increasing School and Student Performance

TGAP campuses are performing well on a number of indicators associated with improved student preparation for post-secondary education—however, many are only participatory in nature. The following list includes indicators that show progress toward providing the kinds of experiences that will support student access to post-secondary education.

- Student participation in AP Examinations has more than doubled since 2000.
- The percentage of TGAP students taking college entrance examinations increased in 2002 to state average levels and to a level above peer campuses.
- Algebra I EOC participation rates for TGAP 8th graders are higher than peer campuses.
- Compared to peer campuses and state averages, greater percentages of TGAP students completed the Recommended High School Program between 1998 and 2002.
- Students enrolled in TGAP high schools have higher advanced course completion rates than peer campuses and the state overall.
- TGAP high school graduation rates are above peer campuses and the state average.
- The student dropout rate for TGAP campuses in 2002 remained below the dropout rates for peer campuses and the state.

TGAP campuses are performing poorly on key academic achievement indicators. The following list of academic indicators suggest that, although student access to higher education may be improved, their academic preparation may undermine prospects for succeeding academically.

- TGAP students do not perform as well as peer campus students on the TAAS. In 2002, TGAP TAAS passing rates are uniformly lower than rates at peer campuses. In addition,

four-year percentage point change comparisons between TGAP and peer campuses uniformly favor the peer campuses.

- Algebra I EOC passing rates for TGAP 8th graders and high school students are lower than peer campuses.
- Performance in every content area of the AP Examinations except foreign language has been well below state and national standards (about 45%-48% below state standards and 55%-58% below national standards).
- Small percentages of TGAP students scored at or above the criterion on the SAT or ACT in any year (e.g., 6% in 2002 versus 27% statewide).

Districts have markedly improved student participation in advanced programs, courses, and examinations. Yet student academic performance lags behind participation. Districts should increase their efforts to improve conditions that support student performance on achievement measures like the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS), the AP Examinations, and the SAT and ACT.

Institutionalization and Sustainability

Increasing numbers of teachers are familiar with TGAP/GEAR UP and most believe the program has positively impacted students and parents. Teachers continue to recommend increased awareness and information about TGAP/GEAR UP programs, expanded teacher participation, increased student and parental participation, and more-hands-on activities, presentations, and college tours for students. Districts should continue to raise teacher awareness of TGAP activities and resources and encourage their participation in and support for TGAP initiatives.

Dependency on grant funding undermines prospects for TGAP sustainability. Overwhelmingly, when principals and coordinators identify a potential alternative funding source, it is another grant. Moreover, respondents frequently note that if it were not for GEAR UP funds, some program or services to students or teachers would not exist. Due to local and state financial constraints, many TGAP schools cannot finance important aspects of the education program, such as staff development and various means of exposing students to college environments. Although this is an area that is somewhat outside the control of TGAP implementers, participating districts should be encouraged to identify those aspects of their TGAP programs that do not require large budgetary commitments and that have been effective as a means of outreach and capacity building, and to provide specific information about how these aspects can be sustained.