



STUCK IN THE MIDDLE GRADES

During the 2014-15 school year, the Texas education agency estimates that eight percent of Texas dropout students left school in the seventh or eighth grade. Yet programs and resources for dropout prevention and recovery are limited for students before the ninth grade.

Chandra Villanueva

villanueva@cphp.org

March 9, 2017

TOO MANY TEXAS STUDENTS GET STUCK IN THE MIDDLE GRADES

CONTENTS

Stuck in the Middle Grades	2
Create an Early Warning Data System Pilot Program	3
Recommendation:	3
Strengthen Supports for Students At Risk of Dropping Out in the Middle Grades	3
Mentoring	4
School Community Programs	4
Student Success Initiative	4
Expanded Learning Opportunities	5
Study Best Practices for Dropout Recovery in Texas	5
Appendix I – Policy Scan	6
The Texas High School Completion and Success Initiative	6
<i>Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention Grant Program (TNGTI)</i>	7
<i>Collaborative Dropout Reduction Program (CDR)</i>	7
<i>Texas Dropout Recovery Pilot Program (TDRPP)</i>	7
Amachi Mentoring	8
CommunitIES in Schools of Texas (CIS of Texas)	8
Community School Model	9
Student Success Initiative (SSI)	10
21st Century Community Learning Centers	10
Dropout Recovery Schools	11
Appendix II - Recent Legislation that Promotes Dropout Prevention and Recovery	11

STUCK IN THE MIDDLE GRADES

For children to graduate high school ready to pursue college and career, they need support throughout the educational pipeline. Exposure to high quality early education has long been recognized as a tool for helping children enter school ready to learn, and the state has funded various programs and initiatives over the years focused on high school completion. However, state leaders have paid little attention to the needs of students in the middle grades.

Roughly defined as grades four through eight, the middle grades are a known pressure point in the educational pipeline – a make or break period for determining future academic success. Research has shown that students who are not proficient in reading by the beginning of fourth grade are four times more likely to drop out of school.¹ Similarly, sixth graders have only a 15 – 25 percent chance of graduating high school on time if they are failing math or English, if they have an attendance rate of less than 85 percent, or if they have exhibited unsatisfactory behavior in a core course.²

During the 2014-15 school year, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) estimates that eight percent of Texas dropout students left school in the seventh or eighth grade.³ That assessment does not include the number of students who are falling behind their peers and are likely to drop out once they get to high school, nor does it include anyone who leaves school before the seventh grade.

The economic impact of failing to complete high school is large for Texas students and for the state. In 2009, student researchers from the Bush School of Government at Texas A&M University estimated that Texas high school dropouts earn \$7,000 less annually than high school graduates with no college education. Annual estimated losses for the state ranged between five and nine billion dollars in terms of lost income, use of government aid, and criminal justice system involvement.⁴

Dropout prevention and recovery strategies can take many different forms. Targeted student interventions, access to structured out-of-school time, and student supports all play a role in keeping students engaged and promoting academic success. Most initiatives use a variety of strategies to reduce the number of students that leave school. However, few of these programs target students in the middle grades, and many saw funding reduced or eliminated as part of the \$5.3 billion cut that the Texas legislature made to public education in 2011.

To keep students in the middle grades on the path to graduation, CPPP recommends that the state:

- Create an early warning data system pilot program that begins in sixth grade;
- Strengthen academic and social supports for students at risk of dropping out, including out-of-school time and mentoring programs; and
- Study best practices for dropout recovery in Texas.

CREATE AN EARLY WARNING DATA SYSTEM PILOT PROGRAM

The earlier a school can identify a student who is off track, the greater the chance that student has of graduating high school. Literacy skills at the beginning of fourth grade is one of the earliest indicators of whether a student is on track for future academic success, and drop-out risks can be identified as early as sixth grade when using a comprehensive set of indicators.

Robert Balfanz at the Center for the Social Organization of Schools at Johns Hopkins University School of Education identified three early indicators that can predict risk of dropping out. Coined the ABC's of secondary school success, these indicators include: Attendance, Behavior, and Course Performance. Students who are off-track on just one of these indicators in the sixth grade have only a 15-25 percent chance of graduating high school on time.⁵

As part of the Texas High School Completion and Success Initiative, the Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention grant program provided resources to 60 campuses across 23 districts to develop and implement an early warning data system. According to a 2011 program evaluation, 37 percent of campuses chose the National High School Center Early Warning System Tool,⁶ which is a Microsoft Excel based program developed by the National High School Center at the American Institute for Research.⁷ Other data system options that districts developed or implemented included those that were already in place prior to the grant program either with (23 percent) or without (15 percent) modifications made to meet the grant program needs, custom-designed systems uniquely for the grant program (13 percent), manual paper tracking systems (8 percent), or no system at all (3 percent).⁸

Fifty-seven percent of staff surveyed reported that using an early warning data system was effective for identifying struggling students, however 33 percent of campuses found that data entry was time consuming or that the system was not user friendly. Incorporation of a data system was smoothest when there was buy-in from teachers and leadership, a supportive administration, and team collaboration.⁹

The early warning data systems program did not include the middle grades, and all funding for the Texas High School Completion and Success Initiative was eliminated as part of the \$5.3 billion funding cut to public education in 2011.

RECOMMENDATION:

The state should start an early warning data system pilot program that begins in the sixth grade at a select number of campuses that require improvement or receive a D or F rating in the new accountability system. The data system should be uniform across districts and based on currently collected data on attendance, behavior, and performance in core courses.

STRENGTHEN SUPPORTS FOR STUDENTS AT RISK OF DROPPING OUT IN THE MIDDLE GRADES

After identifying struggling students, it is important to ensure they have the social and academic supports needed to get back on track.

MENTORING

Mentoring has a positive impact on school attendance and recurring behavior problems. At-risk youth who have mentors miss fewer days of school, maintain better attitudes toward school, and are more likely to attend college.¹⁰ The National Mentoring Resource Center found that school based mentoring is especially beneficial during the middle school years, when educators can see the first signs of dropping out.¹¹

Texas currently supports two school based mentoring programs, Amachi Mentoring and Communities in Schools. Amachi Mentoring is a program administered by Big Brothers Big Sisters Lone Star, is available to elementary, and middle school students impacted by paternal incarceration. Amachi serves 1,800 students per year in eight communities across Texas. In an effort to preserve funding for programs that improve outcomes for the largest amount of students and the least amount of cost, the Commissioner of Education has recommended eliminating all funding for Amachi as part of the Ten Percent 2018-19 Biennial Base Reduction Suggestions. However, the Commissioner acknowledged that eliminating funding to this program would have negative impacts on the students enrolled.¹²

SCHOOL COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

Communities in Schools is a national dropout prevention program that blends social supports with academic supports for at-risk students. Approximately 86,000 students receive support through the Communities in Schools of Texas affiliate on 900 school campuses—many of which are middle schools. Of the students who participated during the 2013-14 school year, 99 percent stayed in school, 94 percent achieved promotion to the next grade, and 94 percent of those eligible to graduate did so.¹³

Closely related to the Communities in School dropout prevention program is the national school turn-around model known as Community Schools. The Coalition for Community Schools describes their model as, “both a place and a set of partnerships between the school and other community resources... Schools become centers of the community and are open to everyone – all day, every day, evenings, and weekends.”¹⁴ In fact, schools implementing the Community Schools model often partner with a Communities in Schools affiliate. Communities often choose middle schools to focus these efforts because they connect to both the neighborhood elementary and high school. While Communities in Schools (the dropout prevention program) receives state support, there is no funding for Community Schools model coordination, nor is the model a recognized school turn-around method by the Texas Education Agency.

STUDENT SUCCESS INITIATIVE

Struggling Students also need academic supports to get back on track. Though not considered a dropout prevention initiative by the Texas Education Agency, the Student Success Initiative promotes grade advancement by providing additional academic support to students who do not reach proficiency on the state STAAR reading or math tests in fifth or eighth grades. A Notre Dame University study found that students held back a grade were 60 percent more likely to dropout than students not held back with similar backgrounds and academic records.¹⁵

Before the 2011 budget cuts, the \$152 million annual appropriation for the Student Success Initiative provided resources for math and literacy academies, teacher training, and diagnostic screenings for students.¹⁶ Since then the Legislature scaled the program back significantly in funding and scope. Currently funded at only \$16 million for 2017, SSI funding goes toward the purchase statewide licenses for computer-based math and reading instruction for students who failed the STAAR test.¹⁷ The Commissioner of Education recommends eliminating all funding for the Student Success Initiative as part of the Ten Percent 2018-19 Biennial Base Reduction Suggestions.¹⁸

EXPANDED LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Students who are behind academically also need structured learning time outside of the regular school day. The Expanded Learning Opportunities Council, created in 2013 to study out-of-school learning opportunities and make recommendations to the legislature, found that expanded learning opportunities provide safe places and improve academic achievement by providing supplemental educational activities. However, access to quality programs, especially for schools with high concentrations of poverty, is very limited.

The largest and only dedicated source of public funds for expanded learning opportunities comes through the federally funded 21st Century Community Learning Centers—known as Afterschool Centers on Education (ACE) in Texas. The ACE program provides afterschool academic support in core subject areas for students struggling academically.¹⁹ A 2013 program evaluation found positive gains for students in the middle grades. Participants in grades six through twelve had fewer disciplinary incidents compared to non-participants and participants in grades four through eleven missed fewer days of school.²⁰ The Expanded Learning Opportunities Council recommends using the ACE program as a model for expanding state-funded programs.²¹

RECOMMENDATION:

Strengthen academic and social supports for students at-risk of dropping out in the middle grades. Low-levels of funding and threat of elimination hamper the limited interventions currently available. To keep students in the middle grades on track, school districts need reliable funding and the flexibility to invest in the programs and interventions that meet their unique needs. The most equitable method to direct additional funds to schools for these purposes, while also ensuring school districts have flexibility, is to [increase the Basic Allotment and Compensatory Education weight](#) in the [school finance formulas](#).

STUDY BEST PRACTICES FOR DROPOUT RECOVERY IN TEXAS

Once a student drops out of school, too often our schools make little or no effort to bring them back into the educational pipeline. Dropout recovery is much harder than prevention. Schools lack information on students who have left, do not have resource or policies for getting these students caught up to grade level, and have few financial incentives to conduct outreach and re-engage out-of-school youths.

When students leave school before high school, the barriers to re-entry are even greater. In Texas, there is not a clear path back into the classroom for those who leave early. Only a hand-full of alternative

education programs, often referred to as Dropout Recovery Schools, accept students below the ninth grade level, and students need to be at least 16 years-old before they are eligible to earn a certificate of high school equivalency. As a result, students that drop out in the middle grades can find themselves in educational limbo for several years before opportunities to continue their education are available.

Boston's Re-Engagement Centers are a good example of an innovative approach to dropout recovery. In 2004, Boston Mayor Thomas Menino established the Youth Transitions Task Force, comprised of business and community leaders, to study and address the city's high dropout rate. Outreach conducted by Task Force members while walking door to door in their communities found that many students who had dropped out wanted to return to school, but they did not know how.

From the work of the Task Force, the Re-Engagement Center (REC) launched in 2009 to provide the counseling and resources students need to re-enroll or get on track to graduate. Students wishing to re-engage hear the stories of others who have dropped out including why they left school, the economic and social impact of that choice, and what helped them return. The REC pairs students with adult mentors who provide motivation and financial education. A review of the student's transcripts determines where they are on their educational path and what it will take to get back on track. Students can then take advantage of several educational programs such as online credit recovery, night school, day, and summer school class, or referral to an adult education and high school equivalency test prep program.²²

RECOMMENDATION:

The Texas Education Agency should conduct a study on best practices in Texas and in other states for re-engaging students who drop out in the seventh and eighth grades. Though the Boston Re-Engagement Centers focus on high school aged students, they provide a good model for how to engage students who have already dropped out. Providing support such as credit recovery and summer school would help those who dropped out during the middle grades to get back on track and rejoin their peers in the classroom.

APPENDIX I – POLICY SCAN

The following is a policy scan of past and present state-directed initiatives that receive state and/or federal funding to reduce the number of Texas dropouts. Ability to serve students in the middle grades varies by program/intervention.

THE TEXAS HIGH SCHOOL COMPLETION AND SUCCESS INITIATIVE

In 2007, the Legislature passed HB 2237, the Texas High School Completion and Success Initiative, which extended funding for existing dropout prevention initiatives and created new grant programs to support high school completion and overall student academic success. The Legislature appropriated \$53.71 million a year for 2008 and 2009; \$25 million of those funds were dedicated to programs that target students at-risk of dropping out. Funding for these initiatives declined to \$48.65 million in 2010 and \$37.33 million in 2011.²³ The Legislature eliminated all funding for the Texas High School Completion and Success Initiative after 2011.²⁴

The three programs within the Texas High School Completion and Success Initiative with the greatest emphasis on dropout prevention and recovery are the Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention Grant Program (TNGTI), the Collaborative Dropout Reduction Program (CDR), and the Dropout Recovery Pilot Program (TDRPP).

TEXAS NINTH GRADE TRANSITION AND INTERVENTION GRANT PROGRAM (TNGTI)

The Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention (TNGTI) grant program was designed to identify ninth graders at risk of dropping out and prepare them for success in high school. With grant funds, districts were able to implement three types of interventions: 1) a summer transition program for incoming ninth graders, 2) an early warning data system to monitor student progress, 3) fall and spring interventions for students identified through the early warning data system.

An evaluation from the 2009-10 school year found that the early warning data system improved student monitoring at most participating campuses and that the program had a positive, significant impact on TAKS Reading and Math scores. These positive results were higher for campuses that dedicated more resources to the summer transition program.²⁵

Available in the middle grades: Yes, while in operation, the summer transition program targeted students leaving eighth grade and entering ninth grade.

Funding: Grants ranged from \$37,472 to \$425,000 depending on school district size, with a median per student cost at \$781. This program is no longer funded.

COLLABORATIVE DROPOUT REDUCTION PROGRAM (CDR)

The Collaborative Dropout Reduction Program (CDR) was created as part of the Texas High School Completion and Success Initiative to encourage schools to form partnerships with community stakeholders to provide dropout prevention services. Funding allowed grantees to create new local dropout prevention programs or to expand or enhance existing efforts.

A survey of student participants found that the program assisted them in attending class regularly, preparing for college, self-led learning, and using technology. However, some grantees expressed difficulties in coordinating large numbers of partners.²⁶

Available in the middle grades: No, the program targeted students in grades 9 – 12 only.

Funding: Grant awards were capped at a maximum of \$250,000 per grantee. The average cost per student was \$673 during the first two years of the program. This program is no longer funded.

TEXAS DROPOUT RECOVERY PILOT PROGRAM (TDRPP)

As a part of the Texas High School Completion and Success Initiative, the Texas Dropout Recovery Pilot Program (TDRPP) was launched to recruit students who have already dropped out of school and enable them to earn a high school diploma or equivalency and create a pathway to post-secondary education.²⁷

The pilot program ran from 2008 to 2013. The Texas Education Agency projected that 2,042 dropouts would be served, however the program actually served 11,493 dropouts. Of those, 1,490 enrolled in college.²⁸

Available in the middle grades: Unsure. The program targeted students who have already dropped out and TEA reports that 40 percent of participants last attended grade nine. Students who dropped out before ninth grade maybe have been served by the program, though it appears to have a high school level focus.

Funding: TDRPP was a pay-for-performance program that allowed grantees to earn up to \$2,000 per student based on progress. This program is no longer funded.

AMACHI MENTORING

Students age 6 – 14 with parents or family members who are incarcerated or have been recently released from prison are eligible for one-on-one mentoring through the Amachi Mentoring program.²⁹ Big Brothers Big Sisters Lone Star who coordinates with community-based programs across the state to provide training for mentors and mentoring services administers the program.³⁰

Available in the middle grades: Yes, Amachi Mentoring specifically targets students in elementary through middle school.

Funding: Prior to the cuts in 2011, Amachi Mentoring received \$2.5 million annually from federal TANF funds. During the 2016-17 biennium, \$1.25 million was appropriated for each year out of General Revenue. The Commissioner of Education recommended eliminating funding to this program as part of the 10 percent agency reductions outlined in the 2018-19 budget instructions.

COMMUNITIES IN SCHOOLS OF TEXAS (CIS OF TEXAS)

Communities in Schools is a national organization focused on dropout prevention, with affiliates operating in 25 states and the District of Columbia.³¹ CIS of Texas provides a host of services to support at-risk students and encourages them to stay in school by engaging community partners. The program model has six components:

- Academic support;
- College and career readiness;
- Enrichment activities;
- Health and human services;
- Parent and family involvement;
- Supportive guidance and counseling.

During the 2013-14 school year over 86,000 students received support from CIS of Texas. Of those served, 99 percent stayed in school, 94 percent were promoted to the next grade, and 94 percent of those eligible to graduate did so.³²

Available in the middle grades: Yes, there are 27 CIS of Texas affiliates serving nearly 900 campuses in over 140 school districts; many of these campuses are intermediate and middle schools.³³

Funding: CIS of Texas is one of few educational support programs that has seen an increase in funding since the 2011 budget cuts. For each year of the 2016-17 biennium, CIS of Texas received \$20,973,318 in combined state and federal funds, up from \$20,364,158 in 2011.

COMMUNITY SCHOOL MODEL

The Coalition for Community Schools describes the Community Schools model as “both a place and a set of partnerships between the school and other community resources. Its integrated focus on academics, health and social services, youth and community development and community engagement leads to improved student learning, stronger families, and healthier communities. Community schools offer a personalized curriculum that emphasizes real-world learning and community problem solving. Schools become centers of the community and are open to everyone – all day, every day, evenings, and weekends.”³⁴

Community Schools develop organically at the local level based on the unique needs of the school and community. However, they all work to mobilize the assets of the school and entire community to improve student outcomes. In addition to providing wraparound services to students and their families and promoting community engagement, the Community School model has been used to turn around struggling campuses. Over 5,000 schools across the country identify as Community Schools.

Though the State does not formally recognize Community Schools as a turn-around strategy or provide funding for Community School coordinators, the model is beginning to gain traction in Texas. Austin Voices for Education and Youth has formed two Community School campuses within Austin ISD and is working with an additional 11 campuses on Community School Planning.

Communities in Schools, the national dropout prevention program, often partners with schools that have implemented the Community Schools model. It is easy to confuse the two approaches: CIS is a program within a school that provides case management services to identified at-risk students, and a Community Schools model means the entire school focuses on working with the community to strengthen both the school and the surrounding community.

Recent legislation to promote the Community Schools Model in Texas:

- HB 1891/SB 1483 (2015) - Relating to Texas community schools. Last Action: Referred to Education/Placed on Intent Calendar

This legislation defines Community Schools according to national standards and offers the Community School model as a strategy for improving low-performing campuses.

- HB 1892/SB 1484 (2015) - Relating to the establishment of a community school grant program. Last Action: Failed at Second Reading/Referred to Education

This legislation would create a grant program to provide funding for a Community School coordinator on a campus and to support planning activities.

STUDENT SUCCESS INITIATIVE (SSI)

Though not considered a dropout prevention initiative by the Texas Education Agency, the Student Success Initiative promotes grade advancement by providing additional academic support to students who do not reach proficiency on the STAAR reading or math tests in fifth or eighth grades. Students are unable to advance to the next grade if they do not pass the STAAR tests. A 2014 study out of Notre Dame University found that students held back a grade were 60 percent more likely to dropout than students with similar backgrounds and academic records who were not held back.³⁵

The SSI program provides accelerated instruction to students who fail to reach the passing standards for the STAAR reading and math tests. Students are allowed to take these tests three times. If a student is unable to pass the assessment by the third try, the student may be promoted to the next grade if all required accelerated instruction is completed and the district's Grade Placement Committee determines that the student is likely to perform at grade level by the end of next year if provided additional accelerated instruction. Students promoted after meeting these requirements are entitled to a teacher that meets all state and federal qualifications to teach math or reading in that grade. Since 2009, SSI supports have been available to students with academic struggles in grades 3 through 8, not just 5th and 8th grade.³⁶

Available in the middle grades: Yes. SSI specifically targets students in the middle grades to help ensure they are promoted to high school.

Funding: SSI was hit particularly hard by the 2011 budget cuts. Before the cuts, the program had annual funding of \$152 million for 2010 and 2011. At that time, the program was quite expansive and provided for academic academies, teacher training, and diagnostic screenings for students.³⁷ Only \$16 million was appropriated annually for 2016 and 2017. The program has been reduced to the purchasing of statewide licenses for computer-based math and reading instruction.³⁸ The Commissioner of Education recommended eliminating funding to this program as part of the 10 percent agency reductions outlined in the 2018-19 budget instructions.³⁹

21ST CENTURY COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTERS

The 21st Century Community Learning Centers are funded through federal grants as a part of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.⁴⁰ The Afterschool Centers on Education or ACE program, as it is known in Texas, provides out-side-of-school time support in core subject areas through community learning centers for students who are struggling academically.⁴¹

A program evaluation conducted in 2013 found positive gains for students in the middle grades. Participants in grades six through twelve had fewer disciplinary incidents compared to non-participants and participants in grades four through eleven missed fewer days of school.⁴²

Available in the middle grades: Yes, ACE programs are run by 74 grantees that serve 519 campuses across Texas; many of these campuses are intermediate or middle schools.

Funding: Texas was awarded \$106.2 million in federal funds in 2014, the latest year funding numbers are available.⁴³

DROPOUT RECOVERY SCHOOLS

School district and charter school campuses can be designated a Dropout Recovery School if they use a private or public community-based dropout recovery education program to provide an alternative education program for students at risk of dropping out. While these districts provide valuable alternative educational programs, such as the School Age Parent Program, Discipline Alternative Education Program, or Transitions to Life for students with disabilities, it is unclear how much outreach is conducted to bring students who have already dropped out back into the education pipeline.

Campuses with this designation must provide at least four hours of instruction a day, employ teachers with baccalaureate or advanced degrees, uphold a 1 to 28 instructor-to-student ratio, and meet the Alternative Education Accountability standards.⁴⁴

Available in the middle grades: Out of the 227 campuses designated as Dropout Recovery Schools, only 19 accepted students in grades below the ninth grade.⁴⁵

Funding: Funding per campus varies and is determined by the school finance formulas outlined in Chapter 42 of Texas Education Code.

APPENDIX II - RECENT LEGISLATION THAT PROMOTES DROPOUT PREVENTION AND RECOVERY

- HB 879 (2015) – Relating to evaluating the performance of dropout recovery schools. Last Action: Pending in Public Education
- SB 1521 (2013) – Relating to an allotment under the public school finance system for dropout prevention. Last Action: Referred to Education
- HB 271 (2011) – Relating to a study on effective methods for high school dropout prevention. Last Action: Referred to Public Education
- HB 1786 (2011) – Relating to the availability of certain information concerning dropout prevention on a district’s website. Last Action: Referred to Public Education
- HB 2748 (2011) – Relating to grant to student clubs for dropout prevention. Last Action: Failed to Pass after 3rd Reading
- HB 2479/SB 1726 (2009) – Relating to best practices for public school student dropout prevention and recovery. Last Action: Referred to Public Education/Left Pending in Committee
- HB 2407 (2007) – Relating to school district programs to reduce truancy and dropout rates. Last Action: Referred to Public Education

- SB 1512 (2007) – Relating to the use of certain funds by certain school districts and open-enrollment charter schools for the development and implementation of strategies for dropout prevention. Last Action: Referred to Education
- SB 1513 (2007) – Relating to a dropout prevention and opportunity program for public school students who have dropped out of school or are at risk of dropping out of school. Last Action: Referred to Education

¹ Fiester, Leila. *Early Warnings! Why Reading at the End of Third Grade Matters*. A KIDS COUNT Special Report from the Annie E. Casey Foundation; 2010.

² Middle School Matters Institute; *The Importance of Middle School*. <https://greatmiddleschools.org/the-importance-of-middle-school/>; accessed January 2017.

³ Texas Education Agency. Annual Drop Out Rate, by Grade Span; 2014-15.

⁴ Alvarez, Roman and Capstone Team. *The ABCD's of Texas Education: Accessing the Benefits and Costs of Reducing the Dropout Rate*. Texas A&M University Bush School of Government and Public Service; May 2009.

⁵ Balfanz, R. Annual Conference for Middle Level Education 2016 (AMLE2016) Keynote Address. Austin, TX; October 2016.

⁶ Learning Points Associates, an affiliate of American Institutes for Research, and Gibson Consulting Group, Inc. *Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention (TNGTI) Grant Program: January 2011 Evaluation Report*; January 2011.

⁷ Blumenthal, David. *Early Warning System High School Tool*. American Institutes for Research; October 2016.

⁸ Learning Points Associates, an affiliate of American Institute for Research, and Gibson Consulting Group, Inc. *Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention (TNGTI) Grant Program: January 2011 Evaluation Report*; January 2011.

⁹ Learning Points Associates, an affiliate of American Institute for Research, and Gibson Consulting Group, Inc. *Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention (TNGTI) Grant Program: January 2011 Evaluation Report*; January 2011.

¹⁰ Mentor: The National Mentoring Partnership. <http://www.mentoring.org/why-mentoring/mentoring-impact/>; accessed February 2017.

¹¹ National Mentoring Resource Center. *School Based Mentoring Program for At-Risk Middle School Youth*. <http://www.nationalmentoringresourcecenter.org/index.php/insight-display/48-school-based-mentoring-program-for-at-risk-middle-school-youth.html>; accessed February 2017.

¹² Texas Education Agency. Legislative Appropriations Request 2018 – 2019.

¹³ Texas Education Agency. Community in Schools. <http://tea.texas.gov/interiorpage.aspx?id=4639>; accessed February 2017.

¹⁴ Institute for Educational Leadership. *What is a Community School?* http://www.communityschools.org/aboutschools/what_is_a_community_school.aspx; accessed February 2017.

¹⁵ Education by the Numbers. *New Research Suggests Repeating Elementary School Grades – Even Kindergarten – is Harmful*. http://educationbythenumbers.org/content/new-research-failing-students_2034/; accessed February 2017.

¹⁶ General Appropriations Act, 2010 – 2011 Biennium; 2009.

¹⁷ General Appropriations Act, 2016 – 2017 Biennium; 2015.

¹⁸ Texas Education Agency. Legislative Appropriations Request 2018 – 2019.

¹⁹ Texas Education Agency. *21st Learning Century Community Learning Centers*. http://tea.texas.gov/Texas_Schools/Support_for_At-Risk_Schools_and_Students/21st_Century_Community_Learning_Centers/; accessed February 2017.

²⁰ Naftzger, Neil. Et al. *Texas 21st Century Community Learning Centers: Year 2 Evaluation Report*. American Institutes for Research; February 2013.

²¹ *Biennial Report to the Texas Legislature on Expanded Learning Opportunities in Texas*. Expand Learning Opportunities Council; November 2016.

²² Boston Public Schools. Re-Engagement Center. <http://www.bostonpublicschools.org/Domain/1389>; accessed February 2017.

²³ Texas Education Agency. *Texas High School Completion and Success: Final Report on Performance of Programs Authorized by House Bill 2237*; December 2010.

²⁴ General Appropriations Act, 2012 – 2013 Biennium; 2011.

²⁵ Learning Points Associates, an affiliate of American Institute for Research, and Gibson Consulting Group, Inc. *Texas Ninth Grade Transition and Intervention (TNGTI) Grant Program: January 2011 Evaluation Report*; January 2011.

-
- ²⁶ ICF International. *High School Success Pilot Program: Collaborative Dropout Reduction Pilot Program; Interim Report #1*. Submitted to the Texas Education Agency; December 2010.
- ²⁷ Texas Education Agency. *Texas High School Completion and Success: Final Report on Performance of Programs Authorized by House Bill 2237*; December 2010.
- ²⁸ Wayman, Julie. *Dropout Recovery Pilot Program – Final*. Texas Education Agency; March 2014.
- ²⁹ Texas Education Agency. *Amachi Mentoring*. http://tea.texas.gov/Texas_Schools/Support_for_At-Risk_Schools_and_Students/Amachi_Mentoring/; accessed February 2017.
- ³⁰ General Appropriations Act, Article III Rider 53, 2016 – 2017 Biennium; 2015.
- ³¹ Communities in Schools. www.communitiesinschools.org; accessed February 2017.
- ³² Texas Education Agency. *Communities in Schools of Texas*. <http://tea.texas.gov/interiorpage.aspx?id=4639>; accessed February 2017.
- ³³ Texas Education Agency. *Communities in Schools of Texas*. <http://tea.texas.gov/interiorpage.aspx?id=4639>; accessed February 2017.
- ³⁴ Institute for Educational Leadership. *What is a Community School?* http://www.communityschools.org/aboutschools/what_is_a_community_school.aspx; accessed February, 2017.
- ³⁵ Education by the Numbers. *New Research Suggests Repeating Elementary School Grades – Even Kindergarten – is Harmful*. http://educationbythenumbers.org/content/new-research-failing-students_2034/; accessed February 2017.
- ³⁶ *Student Success Initiative Manual: Grade-Advancement Requirements*. Texas Education Agency; 2017.
- ³⁷ General Appropriations Act, 2010 – 2011 Biennium; 2009.
- ³⁸ General Appropriations Act, 2016 – 2017 Biennium; 2015.
- ³⁹ Texas Education Agency. Legislative Appropriations Request 2018 – 2019.
- ⁴⁰ U.S. Department of Education. *21st Century Community Learning Centers*. <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/21stccclc/index.html>; accessed February 2017.
- ⁴¹ Texas Education Agency. *21st Learning Century Community Learning Centers*. http://tea.texas.gov/Texas_Schools/Support_for_At-Risk_Schools_and_Students/21st_Century_Community_Learning_Centers/; accessed February 2017.
- ⁴² Naftzger, Neil. Et al. *Texas 21st Century Community Learning Centers: Year 2 Evaluation Report*. American Institutes for Research; February, 2013.
- ⁴³ *Top 100 Federal Funding Sources in the Texas State Budget: Legislative Primer*. Legislative Budget Board; August 2014.
- ⁴⁴ Texas Education Code 29.081(e)
- ⁴⁵ 2016 Alternative Education Accountability Campus List. Texas Education Agency; April 2016.

For more information or to request an interview, please contact Oliver Bernstein at bernstein@cphp.org or 512.823.2875.

About CPPP

The Center for Public Policy Priorities is an independent public policy organization that uses research, analysis and advocacy to promote solutions that enable Texans of all backgrounds to reach their full potential. Learn more at CPPP.org.

Twitter: [@CPPP_TX](https://twitter.com/CPPP_TX)

Facebook: [Facebook.com/bettertexas](https://www.facebook.com/bettertexas)