NATIONAL CENTER ON
Performance Incentives

District Awards for Teacher Excellence (D.A.T.E.) Program:

Year One Evaluation Report

Texas Education Agency
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Policy Evaluation Report
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LED BY
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Awards for Teacher Excellence (D.A.T.E.) Program:Year One Evaluation Report

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

District Awards for Teacher Excellence (D.A.T.E.) is a state-funded program in Texas that provides grants to districts for the implementation of locally-designed performance pay plans. All districts in the state are eligible to receive grants, but participation is voluntary. As D.A.T.E. continues in its second year of operation with approximately $197 million in state funds during the 2009-10 school year, it stands alone as the sole state-funded performance pay program in Texas.

D.A.T.E.'s first year of implementation in 2008-09 occurred at a time when Texas was operating several state-funded performance pay programs. The three-year Governor's Educator Excellence Grant (G.E.E.G.) program was coming to its expected completion,[1] while the Texas Educator Excellence Grant (T.E.E.G.) program was in its third year of operation. During the 2008-09 school year, these programs dedicated a combined $247 million in state funds for the implementation of locally-designed performance pay plans. However, the Texas Legislature opted not to reauthorize T.E.E.G. during the 2009 session, redirecting a portion of its funds to expand the D.A.T.E. program from approximately $150 million to $197 million annually.

Performance pay for teachers entered Texas state policy deliberations during the 1980s, well before G.E.E.G., T.E.E.G., and D.A.T.E. came into existence. The 1980s was a decade marked as one of the most active periods of school reform in Texas. As early as the Texas Teacher Career Ladder program in 1984, policymakers attempted to reform the single-salary schedule and introduce performance pay for educators. Several lessons emerged from those first generation programs and play a significant role in the design and implementation of contemporary performance pay programs in the state, such as D.A.T.E. Specific lessons include the importance of (1) adequate, sustainable funding, (2) teacher involvement in program design, (3) rewarding educators for their contribution to student performance and professional collaboration, and (4) conducting independent, comprehensive program evaluations.

This report presents findings from the first year of D.A.T.E. (2008-09 school year), with emphasis on program participation decisions made by districts, the local design preferences for performance pay plans, and the early implementation experiences of D.A.T.E. participants. The first round of incentive awards for educators and other allowable grant funds were distributed in D.A.T.E. schools from May 2009 to February 2010, allowing evaluators to begin further examination of program outcomes to be presented in a later evaluation report.

An overview of key evaluation findings presented in this interim report follows.

[1] The G.E.E.G. program came to its expected completion on August 31, 2009.

D.A.T.E. Participation Decisions

- During the 2008-09 school year, 203 districts chose to participate in the D.A.T.E. program, representing approximately 16% of all public school districts in Texas. According to grant applications submitted to the Texas Education Agency (TEA), these districts included nearly 2,000 schools in their performance pay plans during the first year of the program, representing approximately 22% of all public schools in Texas during the 2008-09 school year.

- Compared to non-participating districts, first-year D.A.T.E. districts had a lower measure of district wealth, larger student enrollments, a greater share of minority and economically disadvantaged students, and were more likely to have participated and received more funding in previous state performance pay programs (i.e., G.E.E.G. and T.E.E.G.).

- Districts' decisions to participate in D.A.T.E. or not were influenced by numerous factors, especially their perceptions as to how the program would influence teaching and learning. Non-participants did not generally oppose incentive pay altogether.

- Most non-participant districts indicated that future D.A.T.E. participation would be unlikely if program guidelines remain the same. However, a notable share would be encouraged to participate by the prospect of larger grant awards or the dismantling of the local matching funds requirement. Interestingly, new D.A.T.E. guidelines issued after the 2008-09 school year did eliminate the matching funds requirement.

Design of D.A.T.E. Performance Pay Plans

- There was a notable difference between the types of district stakeholders involved with plan design and development and those who actually voted on D.A.T.E. plan approval, which is likely attributable to program guidelines issued by TEA. District officials (especially superintendents), principals, and full-time teachers were most often involved with plan design. Local school board members were those most frequently cited as approving plans. In fact, the TEA Commissioner's Rules required both significant teacher involvement in development and local school board approval of plans before the district could submit them to TEA.

- Most D.A.T.E. districts used their state grant to implement district-wide performance pay plans rather than limiting participation to select schools within districts.

- Districts most commonly designed plans in which teachers' eligibility for incentive awards would be determined by their students' performance on state-standardized assessments. Teachers' contribution to student performance would be further determined by the achievement levels of students more often than by change in student performance over time.

- Districts rarely planned to use school-wide student performance for determination of teachers' incentive award eligibility. Rather, they designed plans in which the receipt of an award would be based on the performance of individual teachers or teams of teachers.

D.A.T.E. Implementation Experiences and Challenges

- First-year D.A.T.E. districts participated in the state's required technical assistance activities. They covered topics focused on designing effective performance pay plans, building district capacity to implement plans, and understanding program guidelines specific to D.A.T.E.

- Most D.A.T.E. districts perceived technical assistance activities as useful, and the topic perceived as most constructive was the overview of program guidelines and grant requirements.

- Designing fair measures of educator performance, having adequate personnel and data systems to implement performance pay, and communicating program goals to schools were the most frequently reported challenges faced by first-year D.A.T.E. districts.

Overall, districts in Texas decided whether or not to participate in D.A.T.E. based on their beliefs about how the program would influence teaching and learning in schools. Among those participating in D.A.T.E., performance pay plans earmarked the majority of funds to reward teachers for their contribution to student performance; a guideline enforced by TEA. However, these districts maintained concerns about their ability to evaluate and reward teachers fairly throughout the first year of program participation.

While this report describes the first year experience of D.A.T.E. districts, future evaluation initiatives will examine the program's impact on teaching and learning within schools. More specifically, evaluators will study how D.A.T.E. influences the attitudes and behavior of school personnel, along with the program's impact on teacher turnover and student achievement gains. Overall, D.A.T.E. provides a unique opportunity to learn more about the effects of performance pay within the state's K-12 public education system. The distinct nature of D.A.T.E. guidelines, as compared to previous state-funded performance pay programs, allows evaluators to further understand the implications of performance pay design, and not simply how the existence of a program, more generally, impacts teaching and learning outcomes.

CHAPTER 1
Introduction to Year One D.A.T.E. Evaluation Report

This report presents findings from the first-year evaluation of Texas' District Awards for Teacher Excellence (D.A.T.E.) program. The D.A.T.E. program is state-funded and open to all public school districts in the state. It provides grants to districts for the design and implementation of performance pay plans. Approximately 203 districts first implemented D.A.T.E. plans during the 2008-09 school year using a total of $147.5 million. The program is now in its second year of operation (2009-10), and the state has increased funding to $197 million annually.

Overall, the report discusses the implementation experiences of D.A.T.E. participants during the first year of the program's operation, paying close attention to the manner in which participating districts designed their performance pay plans. This report specifically addresses each of the following questions.

- What is the national and state policy context – especially in regards to performance pay programs – in which the D.A.T.E. program operates?

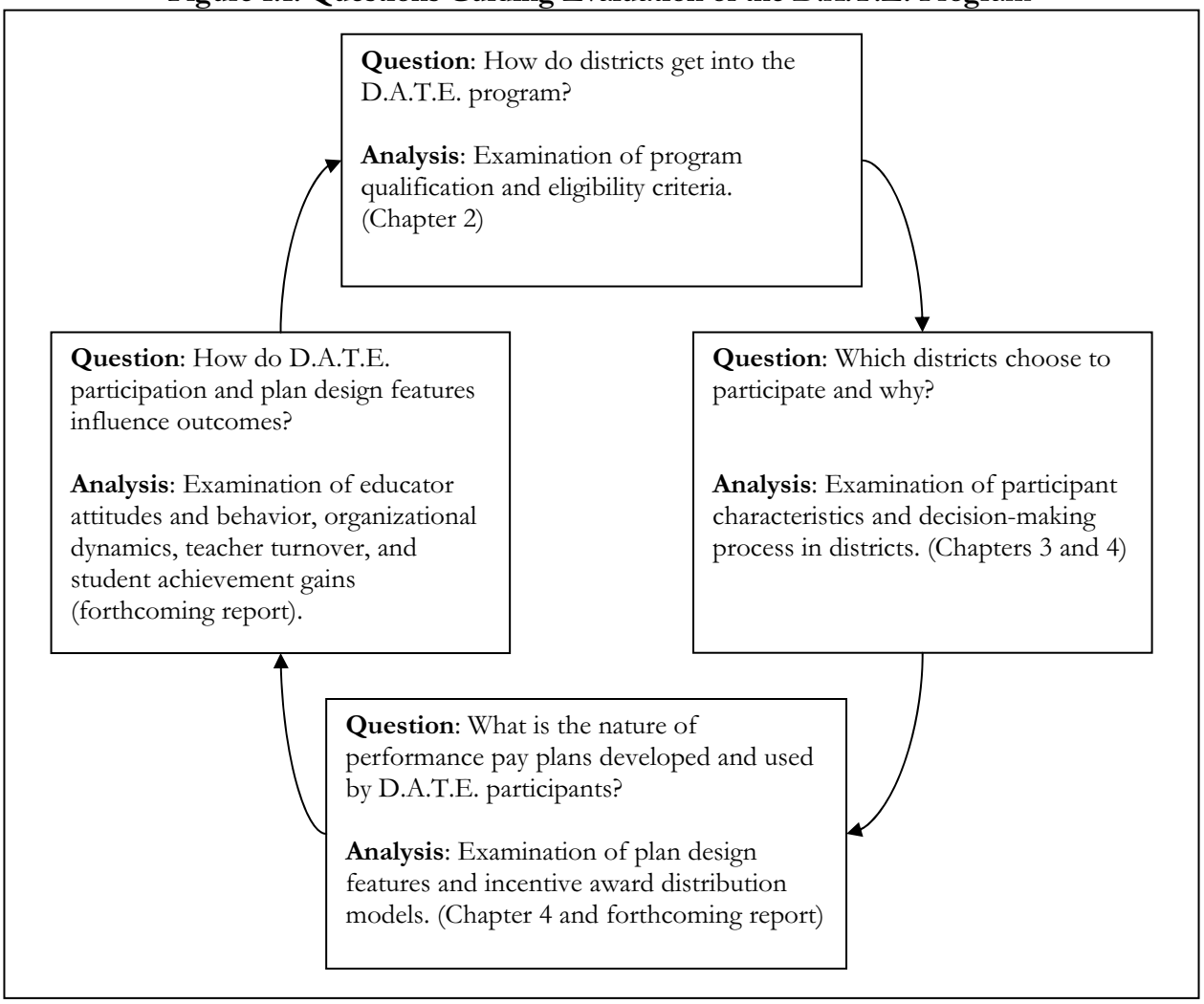
- Why did districts choose to participate – or not participate – in the first year of the state-funded performance pay program?

- What was the nature of performance pay plans designed by first-year D.A.T.E. participants?

- How will future evaluation initiatives contribute to a better understanding of the D.A.T.E. program's impact on teaching and learning in schools?

This first-year report begins with a brief overview of the D.A.T.E. program and the policy context in which it is being implemented. Subsequent chapters begin to address the four lines of questioning that guide evaluation of the program: (1) How do districts get into the D.A.T.E. program? (2) Which districts choose to participate and why? (3) What are the design features of participants' D.A.T.E. plans? and (4) What are the program outcomes?

Figure 1.1: Questions Guiding Evaluation of the D.A.T.E. Program



The first three questions are addressed by this report and allow evaluators to understand how the D.A.T.E. program is being implemented, why districts' decided to participate or not, and how participating districts designed their performance pay plans. Evaluators will examine how performance pay plans were actually implemented, along with other program outcomes in a forthcoming report (i.e., after the first round of incentive awards for educators and other allowable grant funds are distributed, which happens throughout October 2009 to February 2010).

For now, evaluators focus on the characteristics and rationale of participants as well as the design features of D.A.T.E. performance pay plans. With this information, policymakers can better understand how the program is being implemented in its early years, and evaluators can build a knowledge base for later examination of program outcomes, particularly when studying how design choices influence teaching and learning in schools.

CHAPTER 2
Overview of the D.A.T.E. Program

This chapter provides a detailed overview of the D.A.T.E. program and the policy context in which it operates. It begins with a summary of key national and state policy issues surrounding the D.A.T.E. program in Texas, followed by a review of state guidelines that inform the design of districts' performance pay plans, and how grants are distributed to those districts.[1] The key policy questions and key policy points discussed throughout this chapter are listed below.

Evaluation Questions

This chapter addresses the following questions.

- Did past experiences with performance pay inform the state's design and implementation of D.A.T.E. and other state-funded performance pay programs?
- What is the current performance pay landscape in Texas and how does it compare to other policies throughout the U.S. K-12 public education system?
- What guidelines inform the development of local performance pay plans under D.A.T.E.?

Key Findings

This chapter highlights and expands upon the following key findings based on a review of the policy context and state guidelines informing the development of the D.A.T.E. program.

- Texas' D.A.T.E. program was implemented as part of the single largest, state-funded performance pay system in U.S. K-12 public education.
- All public school districts in Texas are eligible to participate in the D.A.T.E. program, and participation is voluntary. During the first year of D.A.T.E. (2008-09 school year), 203 districts chose to participate, representing roughly 16% of all public school districts in Texas.
- The amount of each district's D.A.T.E. grant is determined by a district's student enrollment during the 2006-07 school year, and at least 60% of D.A.T.E. funds must be used as incentive awards to high-performing classroom teachers.

[1] See Chapters 1 and 2 from the *Texas Educator Excellence Grant (T.E.E.G.) Program: Year Two Evaluation Report* (2008) for a more detailed discussion of the national and state policy context as well as the history of educator performance pay reform in Texas. See http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/opge/progeval/TeacherIncentive/T.E.E.G._120108.pdf for full report.

- In the first year of D.A.T.E., participating districts had to contribute a 15% match (cash or in-kind) based on the estimated amount of their grant award. That requirement was dropped for the second year of the program and thereafter.

Educator Compensation Reform in Texas

Texas has the largest statewide performance pay system in U.S. public education, which began with the Governor's Educator Excellence Grant (G.E.E.G.) program in 2006 and grew to include the Texas Educator Excellence Grant (T.E.E.G.) program and the D.A.T.E. program. During the 2008-09 school year, the state allocated approximately $247 million under these programs for the design and implementation of locally-developed performance pay plans.

However, during the 2009 session, the 81st Texas legislature restructured funding for the state's performance pay system. The G.E.E.G. program came to a close, as originally planned, and the legislature opted not to reauthorize T.E.E.G., with funds being redirected for the expansion of D.A.T.E. As of the 2009-10 school year, the state's educator performance pay system provides $197 million annually for the development of performance pay plans, all under the umbrella of D.A.T.E.

History of Educator Compensation Reform in Texas

Performance pay for teachers in Texas entered state policy deliberations during the 1980s, a decade marked as one of the most active periods of school reform in Texas.[2] Initiatives related to performance pay included the Texas Teacher Career Ladder (1984-1993) and the Texas Successful Schools Award Program (1992-2001), among other school finance reforms. The Texas Career Ladder Program and the Successful Schools Award Program took fundamentally different approaches to performance incentive. The former distributed awards to individual teachers and the latter distributed awards primarily to schools. The Career Ladder based awards on the efforts of teachers, whereas Successful Schools based awards on the outcomes of teacher efforts (i.e., student achievement). A summary of lessons learned from the successes and obstacles of these early performance pay programs is described in Table 2.1.

[2] The State Legislature introduced the first statewide curriculum at the beginning of 1981, and replaced the appointed State Board of Education with an elected board in 1989 (Texas Education Agency, 2004). During the intervening years, the Legislature established a new state assessment system, mandatory student testing, a required high-school graduation test, class size limits, a no pass/no play rule, a dropout reduction program, a public education information system, annual district performance reports, competency testing for teacher recertification, an across-the-board pay raise for teachers, an overhaul of the state's finance system, and the Teacher Career Ladder.

Table 2.1: Lessons Learned,
Texas Career Ladder and Successful Schools Awards Program

Recommendations for Design and Implementation	Career Ladder	Successful Schools
Adequate funding	X	X
Commitment to stable funding over time	X	
State responsibility for program	X	
Local responsibility for plan design	X	
Teacher involvement in plan design	X	X
Simple and understandable plan criteria		X
Thorough communication about plan	X	
Alignment between incentives and state goals	X	X
Incentive awards as a part of teacher salary		X
Significantly large award amounts		X
Awards distributed evenly to all teachers		X
Awards based on multiple criteria		X
Awards based on objective performance evaluations	X	
Awards primarily based on student achievement	X	X
Longitudinal measures of achievement gains		X
Fixed and known criteria for incentive awards		X
Strategies to enhance teacher collaboration	X	X
Programs for schools with disadvantaged students		X
Independent, periodic program evaluations	X	X

Source: Synthesis of information gathered by authors of this report.

From 2003 to 2006, state policymakers turned their attention greatly toward school finance reform, as legislators debated new taxes for increasing state funding for public schools and new formulas for distributing these funds. Some Texans advocated more money for education while others advocated more education for the money. The largest school expenditure, teacher salaries, became a central focus of public discussions bringing performance pay proposals back to the debate.

Performance pay specifically re-entered the school finance debate in 2003 by the Koret Task Force on K-12 Education, followed by a series of legislative attempts to produce a performance pay program during the 2003 and 2005 sessions. As legislators did not create a program during the 2005 session, Governor Perry issued in November 2005 an executive order to establish a state performance pay program paving the way for the current performance pay landscape in Texas.

Statewide Framework for Performance Pay in Texas

The 21st century educator performance pay system in Texas originally consisted of three distinct, state-funded grant programs: G.E.E.G., T.E.E.G. and D.A.T.E. The first program, G.E.E.G., was funded with state and federal dollars and completed its operation on August 31, 2009. That same school year (2008-09), the T.E.E.G. program continued with its third cycle of participants and the first cycle of the D.A.T.E. program began. In the 2008-09 school year, the state was providing

approximately $247 million for the operation of performance pay plans in Texas public schools, making it the largest statewide performance pay system in U.S. K-12 public education.[3]

Governor's Educator Excellence Grant (G.E.E.G.) Program

The G.E.E.G. program was established in November 2005, when Governor Perry issued Executive Order RP 51 to create a $10-million, three-year noncompetitive grant program. G.E.E.G. grants were to be used for the provision of performance pay to teachers employed in schools with records of high or improved student achievement serving a high percentage of economically disadvantaged (ED) students.

The executive order outlined the basic design of the G.E.E.G. program and authorized the Texas Commissioner of Education to further develop program criteria, which had to adhere to the following stipulations.

- Use federal funds, as authorized by Title II of the No Child Left Behind Act.
- Set aside no less than $10 million annually for the program.
- Award grants of no less than $100,000 to schools with a high percentage of ED students.
- Require schools to dedicate at least 75 percent of grant funds for classroom teacher performance awards.

In the fall of 2006, the state made available three-year grant awards ranging from $60,000 to $220,000 per year to 99 public schools meeting eligibility criteria. Funds were distributed to schools that were in the top third of Texas schools in terms of percentage of ED students and either carried a performance rating of Exemplary or Recognized on the state accountability system, or were in the top quartile on Texas Education Agency's (TEA) Comparable Improvement measure (in the 2004-05 school year).[4]

The G.E.E.G. program operated in these 99 schools during the 2006-07 to 2008-09 school years, with incentive awards distributed to teachers during the fall 2006, fall 2007, and fall 2008 semesters.

Texas Educator Excellence Grant (T.E.E.G.) Program

State funds provided $100 million to T.E.E.G.-eligible schools during the 2006-07 school year, and $97 million for each of the 2007-08 and 2008-09 school years. Grant awards were made available to

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[3] See Chapter 2 of *Governor's Educator Excellence Grant (G.E.E.G.) Program: Year Two Evaluation Report* (2009) for a more detailed analysis of Texas versus national educator compensation trends, including analysis of the Schools and Staffing Survey.

[4] A Recognized rating indicates that for every tested subject at least 75 percent of the tested students pass the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS), while an Exemplary rating elevates the standard so that for every subject at least 90 percent of the tested students pass TAKS. Comparable Improvement (CI) is a measure that reflects how student performance on the TAKS mathematics and reading/English language arts tests has changed (or grown) from one year to the next, and compares the change to that of the 40 schools that are demographically most similar to the target school. Student demographics used to construct groups include percent of African American, Hispanic and white students, percent of ED students, percent of limited English proficient students, and percent of mobile students. CI is calculated separately for reading/English language arts and mathematics, based on individual student *Texas Growth Index* (TGI) values. The student-level TGI values are aggregated to the campus level to create an average TGI for each campus.

schools for one-year cycles. During Cycle 1 (2006-07 school year), 1,148 schools participated in the T.E.E.G. program, followed by 1,026 schools during the subsequent school year (2007-08 school year). A total of 987 schools participated in Cycle 3 during the 2008-09 school year. Eligibility criteria and requirements were nearly identical to those of the G.E.E.G. program.[5] However, schools had to be in the top half of Texas schools in terms of percentage of ED students, and schools were only eligible for grants one year at a time. Program eligibility was determined on an annual basis, with grant amounts ranging from $40,000 to $295,000 per year.

Both the G.E.E.G. and T.E.E.G. programs specified that school grants should be divided into Part 1 and Part 2 funds. Part 1 funds represented 75% of a school's total grant and were earmarked for teacher incentive awards. Part 2, representing the other 25% of a school's grant, could be used for incentive awards to other school personnel or to implement professional growth activities.

During the 81st session in 2009, the Texas Legislature eliminated the T.E.E.G. program, redirecting funds to the expansion of the D.A.T.E. program, which is described in further detail below.

District Awards for Teacher Excellence (D.A.T.E.) Program

The district-level program, D.A.T.E., was funded at approximately $150 million during the 2008-09 school year with $197 million in funds set aside for fiscal years 2010 and 2011 through the Texas Educator Excellence Fund. All districts in the state became eligible to participate beginning with the 2008-09 school year. Districts may apply for D.A.T.E. funds for all schools or simply for high-needs schools, or to implement components of the Teacher Advancement Program (TAP).[6] Grant amounts are based on student enrollment in each district.

The next section provides further details about program guidelines and how D.A.T.E. has been implemented in Texas, thus far.

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[5] It should be noted that in each T.E.E.G. cycle, schools implemented a one-year performance pay program with Cycle 1 schools implementing their plans in 2006-07, Cycle 2 schools in 2007-08, and Cycle 3 schools in 2008-09. During these "assessment" years, teacher performance was evaluated to determine eligibility for incentive awards. Schools had an extended time period to expend additional Part 2 funds; that is, Cycle 1 schools could use Part 2 funds into the 2007-08 year, Cycle 2 schools could use those funds into the 2008-09 year, and Cycle 3 schools could use those funds into the 2009-10 year.

[6] TAP, a comprehensive school reform model providing teachers with an opportunity to earn performance pay, has gained considerable attention in the recent years. Developed in 1999 by Lowell Milken and other individuals at the Milken Family Foundation (MFF) to attract highly-effective teachers, improve instructional effectiveness, and elevate student achievement. TAP is used nationally and operates in roughly 220 schools involving approximately 85,000 students and 7,500 teachers (Lewis and Springer, 2009). TAP also figured prominently in the 2006 announcement of Round 1 Teacher Incentive Fund (TIF) grantees, which received federal funds to implement incentive pay plans for teachers and principals. In fact, over one-third (36.8%) of TIF funds in Round 1 went to public school districts and states that proposed to implement TAP.

Implementation of D.A.T.E. Program

This final section of the chapter discusses the D.A.T.E. program in greater detail. Specifically, it describes how the program has been implemented and guidelines which determine program eligibility, design of performance pay plans and technical assistance activities.

D.A.T.E. Eligibility Guidelines

All districts in Texas are eligible to participate in the D.A.T.E. program, including charter schools that operate independently of a public school district, but participation is voluntary. Of all three 21st century, state-funded performance pay programs in Texas, D.A.T.E. is the only one that does not restrict participation to a select group of schools/districts. The G.E.E.G. and T.E.E.G. programs were available only to schools with a high percentage of ED students and with records of high accountability ratings or meeting Comparable Improvement thresholds.[7] During the first year of D.A.T.E., 203 districts chose to participate, representing roughly 16% of all public school districts in Texas.

Districts must also choose whether to use D.A.T.E. funds to create a performance pay plan that includes all schools within the district or targets the plan to mainly high-needs schools within the district. This represents a different approach from G.E.E.G. and T.E.E.G. programs, which focused on high-performing schools.

If participating districts choose not to include all schools in their performance pay plan, they must limit participation to schools that meet at least two of the following criteria.

- Rated Academically Unacceptable (2007 accountability ratings).
- Performed lower than the district average on the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) by subject, grade, and/or school level.
- Received Comparable Improvement ratings in the bottom quartile.
- Had above average dropout/non-completion rates relative to other schools in the district.
- Ranked in the bottom half in terms of gains on the Texas Growth Index.
- Ranked within the top quartile of schools in percentage of ED students enrolled.
- Demonstrated other academic or non-academic indicators, such as experiencing high rates of teacher turnover and attrition or high percentages of ED students.

D.A.T.E. Plan Design Guidelines

The design of performance pay plans, while guided by broad state guidelines, is delegated primarily to district-level planning committees. TEA requires each participating district to develop performance pay plans that are consistent with and motivated by the district's strategic improvement plan.

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[7] G.E.E.G. schools had to be in the top third of public schools with respect to their percentage of ED students, while T.E.E.G. schools were in the top half. Schools also had records of high performance (i.e., rated as Exemplary or Recognized on the state's accountability system) or high improvement (i.e., top quartile on TEA's Comparable Improvement measure).

D.A.T.E. program guidelines identify two funding components – Part 1 and Part 2 – that must be part of any district's performance pay plan. D.A.T.E. districts are required to use at least 60% of funds (i.e., Part 1) to directly reward classroom teachers based on measures of student achievement. Remaining funds (i.e., Part 2) were to be used for other purposes such as stipends for mentors, teacher coaches, teachers certified in hard-to-staff subjects, or teachers who hold post-baccalaureate degrees. They could be used as awards to principals and other staff members. Finally, Part 2 funds could also be used for on-going applied professional development or to increase data capacity. Table 2.2 provides an overview of approved strategies for using each funding component.

Table 2.2: Approved Strategies for Using Part 1 and Part 2 D.A.T.E. Funds

Part 1 Funds – Teacher Incentive Awards	Part 2 Funds – Other Activities
At least 60% of the grant must be used to award classroom teachers who positively impact student academic improvement, growth and/or achievement.	Up to 40% of the grant can be used as stipends and awards for (1) the recruitment and retention of teachers; (2) teachers assigned to critical shortage subject areas; (3) teachers in subject areas with high percentages of out-of-field assignments; (4) teachers certified and teaching in their main subject area; (5) teachers with post-graduate degrees in their teaching area; or (6) teachers serving as career, mentor, or master teachers.
Annual incentive award amounts for teachers should be equal to or greater than $3,000 unless otherwise determined by the local school board. Minimum awards must be no less than $1,000 per teacher.[8]	Part 2 funds can also be used to implement activities such as (1) on-going applied professional growth, (2) increasing local data capabilities to support instruction and accountability, (3) awarding principals who increase student performance or other school employees who demonstrate excellence, or (4) for implementing elements of TAP.
Funds should be distributed based on criteria that are quantifiable, reliable, valid and objective. Criteria must be generally viewed as a measure of student excellence and quality.	

Source: D.A.T.E. Frequently Asked Questions document

Roll-out of D.A.T.E. Plans in Participating Districts

A total of 203 districts elected to partake in D.A.T.E. during the 2008-09 school year, designated Cycle 1, Year 1 of the program. They committed to participate in D.A.T.E. for a period that spanned three school years during which time districts would participate in required technical

[8] If a teacher is listed as a Part 1 award recipient, he/she must at a minimum have an opportunity to earn $1,000. This can be met with a combination of Part 1 and Part 2 funds.

assistance (2007-08 school year), implement a performance pay plan (2008-09 school year), and allocate all grant funds by February 2010. These districts also committed to a 15% match in local funds (or in kind). This matching requirement was later eliminated during the 2009 legislative session meaning that districts participating in the second year of D.A.T.E. and thereafter would no longer have to contribute matching funds.

Cycle 1, Year 1 D.A.T.E. participants went through the following stages of planning and implementation.

- Submitted a Notice of Intent to Apply in October 2007.
- Participated in an unfunded planning phase during the 2007-08 school year to develop performance pay plans.
- Participated in technical assistance activities during the 2007-08 school year.
- Implemented their D.A.T.E. plans in the 2008-09 school year during which teacher performance was assessed to determine incentive award eligibility.
- Incentive awards distributed to eligible teachers and other staff starting May 2009.
- Part 2 funds to be distributed for other designated activities by February 2010.

The 2009-10 school year is considered Year 2 for Cycle 1 D.A.T.E. districts, giving them the option of continuing in program participation. Of the 203 D.A.T.E. districts from Year 1, 191 are participating in Year 2, or the 2009-10 school year. These Year 2 districts submitted continuation grant applications to TEA for another year of D.A.T.E. funding. Their Part 1 and Part 2 incentive awards to teachers and other staff will be determined by employee performance during the 2009-10 school year and will be distributed between May 2010 and October 2010. Part 2 funds for other activities will be distributed by February 2011.

Subsequent cycles of D.A.T.E. program participants will follow a similar pattern for planning and implementation of their performance pay plans. For example, Cycle 2 participants will participate in technical assistance during the 2009-10 school year; submit their D.A.T.E. grant application in March 2010; distribute Part 1 and Part 2 incentive awards by October 2011 based on employee performance in the 2010-11 school year; and use Part 2 optional funds by February 2012.

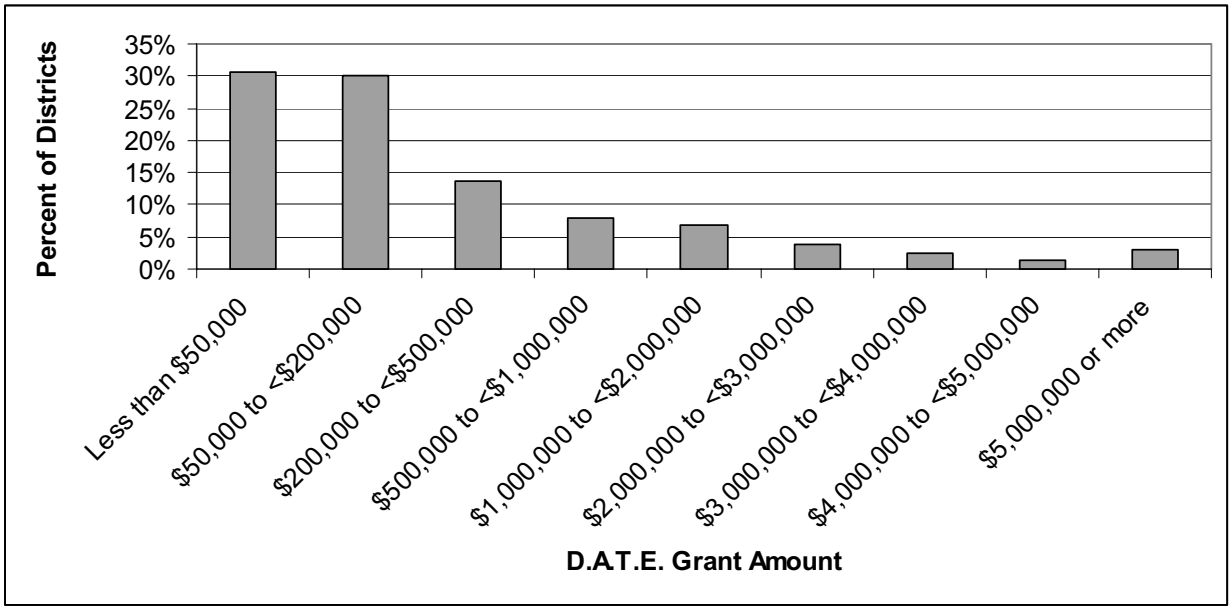
The grant amounts for Cycle 1, Year 1 D.A.T.E. districts (i.e., those participating in the 2008-09 school year) were based upon the size of their student enrollment during the 2006-07 school year. These first-year grant awards ranged from $4,395 to $13,094,393. Districts were required to provide a 15% match based upon their grant award amounts;[9] matching contributions, estimated at the start of the fall 2008 semester, ranged from $455 to $1,355,546.

The average grant award distributed to Year 1 districts was $712,193, yet the median grant award amount was $100,668.[10] Figure 2.1 displays how D.A.T.E. grant awards were distributed to Year 1 participants.

[9] The estimate for a district's matching requirement was made in October 2007 and the actual D.A.T.E. grants for participating districts actually increased since the time of that first estimate due to other districts deciding not to participate (i.e., more dollars available for those that did participate). The matching requirement was maintained at the amount first estimated in October 2007, meaning that the typical match is actually more or less 10 percent of a district's D.A.T.E. grant award.

[10] These calculations are based on the 203 D.A.T.E. Notice of Grant Awards (NOGA).

Figure 2.1: D.A.T.E. Grant Awards to Participants, 2008-09 School Year



Source: Evaluators' review of 203 D.A.T.E. applications submitted to TEA in 2008.

D.A.T.E. Technical Assistance Requirements

Districts that, in October 2007, submitted a notice of intent to apply for Year 1 of the D.A.T.E. program were required to participate in technical assistance activities during the 2007-08 school year. These activities were provided by the Institute for Public School Initiatives (IPSI) at the University of Texas in partnership with TEA.

The primary goal of D.A.T.E. technical assistance activities is to provide participants with ongoing applied guidance in developing and implementing successful, research-based performance pay plans. Services also focus on assisting districts with developing their capacity for long-term maintenance of performance pay.

Technical assistance for districts interested in Year 1 D.A.T.E. participation started with eight regional workshops conducted during the 2007-08 school year, with one make-up session in early 2008. These districts were required to attend at least one of the workshops, which addressed the following topics.

- Various ways to structure effective and meaningful performance pay plans.
- Research-based evidence on elements of an effective teacher performance pay plan.
- Identifying performance-based assessments for use at the local level.
- Developing capacity or systems for measuring value-added improvement.
- Creating capacity for effective data systems at the local level.
- Professional development on communications and stakeholder engagement.
- Overview of D.A.T.E. program guidelines and grant requirements.
- Lessons learned from other Texas performance incentive programs.

Districts had to send a team of at least two, but no more than five, individuals to at least one of these workshops. Those attending on behalf of each district were to include multiple stakeholders, such as those listed below.

- Member(s) from their district planning committee
- Member(s) from the local school board
- Superintendent
- An instructional leader
- Teacher(s)
- Principal(s)
- Grant writer(s)
- Staff responsible for data or research

Participation in technical assistance was tracked through the workshop registration process. If a district failed to adhere to technical assistance requirements, TEA could suspend, in whole or in part, D.A.T.E. grant funds, terminate the district's participation in the grant program, or impose other sanctions as determined by the agency. No such sanctions were necessary since any district that did not comply with these requirements would not have received approval from TEA for their D.A.T.E. plan application in the first place.[11]

TEA provided additional services to participating districts including a call/email center, a website dedicated to D.A.T.E. which included plan design modules, and one-on-one consultations with districts.

The remaining chapters report on findings from the first full year of the D.A.T.E. evaluation. They begin by identifying characteristics of Year 1 district participants (as compared to non-participating districts) and discussing districts' reasons for participating or not in D.A.T.E.. The report then turns to the design of Year 1 performance pay plans.

[11]A complete evaluation of technical assistance offerings is outside the scope of this D.A.T.E. evaluation with the exception of self-reported participation and perceptions of workshop usefulness as indicated by district officials in a January 2009 survey. Findings are provided in Chapter 4 of this report.

CHAPTER 3
Characteristics and Decisions of First-Year D.A.T.E. Participants and Non-Participants

This chapter discusses the characteristics and decision-making processes of first-year D.A.T.E. participants and non-participants. The chapter draws upon district-level data and surveys administered in both D.A.T.E. and non-D.A.T.E. districts. It begins with a comparison of D.A.T.E. and non-D.A.T.E. district characteristics, highlighting areas of significant difference. The chapter then turns to a discussion of decisions made about program participation (or non-participation), focusing on which stakeholders were involved in decision-making and their rationale for taking part – or not – in D.A.T.E. The key policy questions and key policy points discussed throughout this chapter are listed below.

Evaluation Questions

This chapter addresses the following questions.

- How were Year 1 D.A.T.E. districts different from or similar to other districts in Texas?
- Who was involved in districts' D.A.T.E. participation decisions?
- Why did districts choose to participate or not in the D.A.T.E. program?
- How interested are non-D.A.T.E. districts in future years of program participation?

Key Findings

This chapter highlights and expands upon the following key findings based on a comparison of participant and non-participant districts during Year 1 of the D.A.T.E. program.[12]

- In the first year of D.A.T.E., 203 districts – representing approximately 16% of all public school districts in Texas – chose to participate in the program.
- Compared to non-participating districts, first-year D.A.T.E. districts had a lower measure of district wealth, larger student enrollment, a greater share of minority and ED students, and were more likely to have participated in previous state-funded performance pay programs.

[12] See Appendix A for further details about the methodology used to compile the chapter's results.

- Districts' decisions to participate in D.A.T.E. or not were influenced by numerous factors, especially their perceptions as to how the program would influence the core operation of schools – that is, its influence on teaching and learning. Non-participants did not generally oppose incentive pay altogether.

- There was a notable difference between the types of district stakeholders involved with plan development and those who actually voted on D.A.T.E. plan approval, which is likely attributable to program guidelines issued by TEA. District officials (especially superintendents), principals, and full-time teachers were most often involved with plan design. Local school board members were those most frequently cited as approving plans. In fact, the TEA Commissioner's Rules required both significant teacher involvement in development and local school board approval of plans before the district could submit them to TEA.

- Most non-D.A.T.E. districts indicated that future program participation would be unlikely if program guidelines remain the same. However, a significant share would consider future participation if grants awards were larger or the local matching requirement was eliminated. Interestingly, revised D.A.T.E. guidelines issued after the program's first year did remove the local match requirement.

D.A.T.E. and Non-D.A.T.E. District Characteristics

This section compares the characteristics of D.A.T.E. and all non-D.A.T.E. districts along several dimensions, including those related to district size, wealth, composition, and prior performance pay experience. Findings are related to those districts participating or not during Year 1 of the D.A.T.E. program during the 2008-09 school year.

The comparison of district characteristics focused on attributes of districts during the 2007-08 school year; that is, the year in which districts decided whether or not to participate in Year 1 of D.A.T.E. Characteristics included district size (i.e., total number of teachers, students, and schools), charter status, and measure of district wealth (i.e., tax property value-standardized total per pupil). They also included student characteristics such as race/ethnicity, ED, limited English proficiency (LEP), and special needs status. Geographic indicators of rural, urban and suburban were considered, as was a district's accountability rating assigned for performance during the 2007-08 school year.

Additionally, evaluators considered prior participation in state-funded performance pay programs, specifically G.E.E.G. and T.E.E.G., along with the intensity of each district's participation (i.e., share of schools in programs, grant award per school, total grant award in district).

Evaluators identified several areas in which D.A.T.E. and non-D.A.T.E. districts were significantly different. On average, as compared to non-D.A.T.E. districts, participating districts:

- Had a *lower* measure of district wealth.
- Had a *larger* student enrollment.
- Had a *greater* share of minority, ED and limited English proficiency students.
- Were *more* likely to have participated in G.E.E.G. and/or T.E.E.G. programs, and received *more* funding – both overall and on a per school basis – to implement those programs.

Table 3.1 provides a more detailed overview of significant differences between D.A.T.E. and non-D.A.T.E. districts. It provides the average value of each characteristic.

Table 3.1: D.A.T.E. and Non-D.A.T.E. District Characteristics 2007-08[13]

District Characteristics	Non-D.A.T.E. Districts		D.A.T.E. Districts	
	Mean	N	Mean	N
District wealth	$410,381.00	1017	$288,418.00	199
Urbanicity	0.98	1018	0.97	199
Student count	2358.20	1027	9366.20	200
Percent white students	54.66%	1027	35.95%	200
Percent black students	10.79%	1027	15.82%	200
Percent Hispanic students	32.95%	1027	46.42%	200
Percent economically disadvantaged students	53.21%	1027	64.02%	200
Percent Limited English Proficient students	7.36%	1027	12.40%	200
Percent special education students	11.47%	1027	10.37%	200
Exemplary rating	0.04	1028	<0.01	201
Participated in G.E.E.G. program	0.02	1028	0.10	201
Participated in T.E.E.G. program	0.34	1028	0.77	201
G.E.E.G. and T.E.E.G. award Total	$316,313.00	358	$926,795.00	156
G.E.E.G. and T.E.E.G. award Per school	$63,226.40	358	$75,171.80	156

N counts for G.E.E.G. and T.E.E.G. award total and G.E.E.G. and T.E.E.G. award per school are lower as means were only calculated for districts that had participated in G.E.E.G. and T.E.E.G..
Source: Based on authors' calculations using the following data files: Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) 2007-08; Micropolitan Statistical Areas (MCSAS) 2007-08; G.E.E.G. and T.E.E.G. applications submitted to the Texas Education Agency for G.E.E.G. Years 1-3 and T.E.E.G. Cycles 1-3.

Decisions to Participate in the D.A.T.E. Program

The chapter now describes the decision-making process of Year 1 D.A.T.E. districts. It begins with a discussion of district stakeholders involved in the development and approval of locally-designed performance pay plans, followed by the reasons for which these 203 Year 1 districts chose to participate in D.A.T.E.

Involvement of District Stakeholders in D.A.T.E. Decision

Evaluators administered a survey in January 2009 to one district official in each of the 203 participating districts and achieved a 100% response rate.[14] The district official who completed the survey was typically the grant coordinator or superintendent. Survey results identify how stakeholders were involved in the development and approval of performance pay plans submitted

[13] Appendix A provides a full list of variables with mean values, standard deviations, and p-values for Non-D.A.T.E. and D.A.T.E. districts. There are several other variables for which significant differences were identified. Table 3.1 is limited to variables deemed most relevant to program outcome analyses and to reduce redundancy of concepts.
[14] Appendix A provides further details about survey methodology and a copy of the survey instrument.

for D.A.T.E. Table 3.2 provides an overview of responses when D.A.T.E. districts were asked about the extent of stakeholder groups' involvement.

Table 3.2: Percent of District Officials Indicating Stakeholder Involvement in Four Aspects of D.A.T.E. Year 1 Planning and Implementation

District/School Members	Development of D.A.T.E. Plan	Approval of D.A.T.E.	Disagreement with D.A.T.E. Participation	Participation in Technical Assistance
Superintendent	68.5% (139)	58.6% (119)	0.5% (1)	30.0% (61)
Other district officials (e.g., Assistant superintendent)	84.2% (171)	48.3% (98)	1.5% (3)	71.4% (145)
Local school board members	11.8% (24)	90.1% (183)	0.5% (1)	2.0% (4)
Principals	90.1% (183)	52.7% (107)	1.5% (3)	41.4% (84)
Assistant principals	46.3% (94)	36.9% (75)	0.0% (0)	10.3% (21)
Full-time classroom teachers	87.2% (177)	60.6% (123)	4.4% (9)	31.0% (63)
Part-time classroom teachers	16.7% (34)	22.2% (45)	1.5% (3)	3.0% (6)
School-level instructional specialists (e.g., reading/math specialists)	50.7% (103)	39.9% (81)	0.5% (1)	17.7% (36)
School-level instructional support staff (e.g., teacher's aid)	27.6% (56)	31.0% (63)	2.0% (4)	3.4% (7)
Librarians	26.6% (54)	33.0% (67)	2.0% (4)	3.0% (6)
School-level health support staff (e.g., nurse)	14.3% (29)	25.1% (51)	1.0% (2)	1.0% (2)
School-level counselors (e.g., social workers, career counselors)	33.0% (67)	35.0% (71)	1.5% (3)	6.4% (13)
Other school support staff (e.g., custodians, cafeteria workers, secretaries)	17.7% (36)	19.2% (39)	1.0% (2)	4.9% (10)
Community members and business leaders	33.5% (68)	39.4% (80)	0.0% (0)	2.5% (5)
Parents	31.5% (64)	34.0% (69)	0.0% (0)	3.9% (8)
Students	5.9% (12)	3.0% (6)	0.0% (0)	0.5% (1)

N=203 district officials representing each D.A.T.E. district

Source: Survey administered by evaluators in January 2009 to district officials in D.A.T.E. districts.

There was a notable difference between the type of district stakeholders involved with plan development and technical assistance activities and those who actually voted on D.A.T.E. plan approval. Superintendents, other district officials, principals, and full-time teachers were most often involved with D.A.T.E. plan development as reported by 69%, 84%, 90%, and 87% of D.A.T.E. districts, respectively. These four stakeholder groups were also the ones most frequently reported as participating in the required technical assistance activities. In fact, the TEA Commissioner's Rules required significant teacher involvement and encouraged broad stakeholder participation.[15]

Local school board members, who were rarely involved with the development of performance pay plans or technical assistance activities, were by far the most frequently reported stakeholders voting on the approval of D.A.T.E. plans. This is likely attributable to D.A.T.E. guidelines which require local school board approval of D.A.T.E. plans prior to submitting an application to TEA. Approximately 90% of D.A.T.E. districts reported that local school board members voted on approval, but only 12% and 2% indicated that they were involved with plan development or technical assistance activities, respectively.

Very few districts said that district stakeholders disagreed with the district's decision to participate in the D.A.T.E. program. In fact, the stakeholder group indicated as having the most dissent – full-time classroom teachers – was only reported by 4% of participant districts.

Reasons for Participating in D.A.T.E. Program

Decisions to participate in D.A.T.E. were influenced by numerous factors, according to district survey responses. When asked how important a series of 10 factors were in the district's participation decisions, at least 69% of respondents reported that each was of moderate or high importance. In several instances, as many as 90% of respondents responded that way. The 10 factors are listed in Table 3.3 in order of importance (i.e., the first factor received the highest share of respondents indicating it was of moderate or high importance).

The most important factors were the beliefs that the D.A.T.E. program would improve the quality of student performance in schools and the quality of instruction in schools, each reported as having moderate or high importance by roughly 95% of districts. The factors carrying the least importance for D.A.T.E. participation decisions were the positive experiences of schools that participated in G.E.E.G. or T.E.E.G. along with simply wanting to try something new. Still nearly 70% of D.A.T.E. districts said these were moderately or highly important factors.

[15] See TAC Chapter 102.1073(e)(2)(B) [teacher involvement] and TAC Chapter 102.1073(e)(3) [board approval].

Table 3.3: Percent of District Officials Indicating Importance of Factors that Influenced Districts Decision to Participate in Year 1 of the D.A.T.E. Program

Reasons for Participating in D.A.T.E.	No Importance	Low Importance	Moderate Importance	High Importance
The D.A.T.E. program will improve the quality of student performance in schools.	0.5% (1)	4.4% (9)	21.7% (44)	73.4% (149)
The D.A.T.E. program will improve the quality of instruction in schools.	1.0% (2)	4.4% (9)	28.1% (57)	66.5% (135)
The D.A.T.E. program will improve the quality of teachers in schools.	1.0% (2)	6.4% (13)	28.6% (58)	64.0% (130)
School personnel deserve extra pay for the work they are already doing.	3.0% (6)	6.4% (13)	33.0% (67)	57.6% (117)
The D.A.T.E. program will improve the district's ability to recruit and retain teachers in hard-to-staff schools.	5.9% (12)	12.3% (25)	34.0% (69)	47.8% (97)
The D.A.T.E. program will improve the district's ability to recruit and retain teachers in hard-to-staff subject areas or other teaching assignments.	5.4% (11)	15.3% (31)	34.0% (69)	45.3% (92)
The district will receive a significant sum of money from the D.A.T.E. grant.	3.0% (6)	19.2% (39)	41.9% (85)	36.0% (73)
The district wants to use any money it can possibly get from the state.	6.9% (14)	15.8% (32)	27.1% (55)	50.2% (102)
The district was interested in trying something new.	8.9% (18)	21.2% (43)	42.9% (87)	27.1% (55)
The district has heard about or witnessed the positive experiences of schools that participated in other state-funded performance incentive programs (e.g., G.E.E.G. or T.E.E.G.)	11.8% (24)	18.7% (38)	43.3% (88)	26.1% (53)

N=203 district officials representing each D.A.T.E. district

Source: Survey administered by evaluators in January 2009 to district officials in D.A.T.E. districts.

Decisions to Decline D.A.T.E. Participation

In January 2009, evaluators also surveyed a sample of 336 comparison districts that did not volunteer to participate in Year 1 of the D.A.T.E. program. A survey was administered to one district official – primarily superintendents – in each of these comparison districts. Evaluators received responses from 241 of these districts, representing a 72% response rate. Survey results captured both the types of decision makers involved in declining D.A.T.E. and why those decisions were made.[16]

District Stakeholders Declining D.A.T.E. Participation

As in participating districts (see Table 3.2), superintendents, other district officials, and principals were most frequent decision makers in non-participating districts, cited by 78%, 65%, and 62% of comparison districts, respectively. Table 3.4 presents the percent of district officials in comparison districts indicating which stakeholders were involved in the decision to decline participation in Year 1 of the D.A.T.E. program.

While full-time classroom teachers were frequently involved in D.A.T.E. districts' plan development, they were rarely involved in decisions to decline program participation. Similarly, local school board members were resoundingly involved in voting to approve D.A.T.E. plans, but less consistently involved in decisions to decline D.A.T.E. participation (only in 31% of comparison districts) as seen in Table 3.4.

[16] Appendix A provides further details about the methodology for this survey and a copy of the survey instrument.

Table 3.4: Percent of District Officials Indicating which District Stakeholders were Involved in Decision to Decline Year 1 D.A.T.E. Participation

District/School Members	Involved in Decision to Decline D.A.T.E.	Unsure of Role in D.A.T.E. Decision
Superintendent	77.6% (187)	14.9% (36)
Other district officials	64.7% (156)	17.0% (41)
Local school board members	30.7% (74)	22.0% (53)
Principals	61.8% (149)	14.9% (36)
Assistant principals	17.0% (41)	17.4% (42)
Full-time classroom teachers	34.4% (83)	15.4% (37)
Part-time classroom teachers	4.1% (10)	17.0% (41)
School-level instructional specialists (e.g., reading/math specialists)	21.6% (52)	16.2% (39)
School-level instructional support staff (e.g., teacher's aid)	12.9% (31)	17.0% (41)
Librarians	13.3% (32)	15.4% (37)
School-level health support staff (e.g., nurse)	9.1% (22)	15.8% (38)
School-level counselors (e.g., social workers, career counselors)	21.2% (51)	13.3% (32)
Other school support staff (e.g., custodians, cafeteria workers, secretaries)	4.6% (11)	17.8% (43)
Community members and business leaders	10.0% (24)	17.4% (42)
Parents	10.4% (25)	16.6% (40)
Students	2.1% (5)	14.9% (36)

N=241 district officials representing comparison districts;
Source: Survey administered by evaluators in January 2009 to district officials in a set of comparison districts.

Reasons for Declining D.A.T.E. Participation

Evaluators asked comparison districts about the importance that 11 factors played in their decisions to decline D.A.T.E. participation. These factors are listed in Table 3.5 and ranked in order of importance (i.e., the first factor listed in the table has the highest share of respondents indicating it was of moderate or high importance to their decision, with the last factor listed receiving the highest percentage of respondents stating it was of no or low importance).

District indicated numerous reasons came into play when making their decisions, but few elicited a strong majority opinion. Two exceptions are worth noting. First, approximately 70% of comparison districts reported concerns about D.A.T.E.'s potential impact on school culture and professional collegiality, with nearly 50% indicating it was a concern of high importance. Additionally, slightly more than 70% said that opposition to incentive pay was of *no or low* importance to their decision, indicating that their concerns were perhaps more about the requirements of D.A.T.E. rather than participating in a performance pay program generally.

Other factors flagged as important by a majority of non-D.A.T.E. districts – but by no more than 60% of them – include that (1) the administrative demands would not be worth the time and effort required, (2) the criteria for teachers to receive incentive awards would not measure important aspects of teaching and learning, (3) the district had too many other challenges to deal with, and (4) the program guidelines for D.A.T.E. were unclear.

Table 3.5: Percent of District Officials Indicating Importance of Factors that Influenced Districts Decision to Decline Participation in Year 1 of the D.A.T.E. Program

Reasons for Not Participating in D.A.T.E.	No Importance	Low Importance	Moderate Importance	High Importance
Implementing a D.A.T.E. program in the district would have a negative effect on school culture and professional collegiality.	16.2% (39)	12.0% (29)	19.9% (48)	49.8% (120)
The administrative demands would not be worth the time and effort required for D.A.T.E. participation.	19.1% (46)	18.7% (45)	28.6% (69)	31.5% (76)
The criteria for teachers to receive incentive awards do not measure important aspects of teaching and learning.	19.5% (47)	19.5% (47)	33.2% (80)	25.7% (62)
The district had too many other challenges to deal with this school year.	25.3% (61)	15.8% (38)	28.2% (68)	28.6% (69)
The program guidelines for the D.A.T.E. program are unclear.	22.0% (53)	19.9% (48)	36.5% (88)	19.5% (47)
The guidelines for the D.A.T.E. program and the distribution of funds are unfair.	23.2% (56)	23.7% (57)	24.5% (59)	26.6% (64)
The district was not eligible for a sufficient sum of money from the D.A.T.E. grant.	27.4% (66)	23.2% (56)	25.3% (61)	22.0% (53)
Our district heard that schools participating in other state-funded incentive pay programs (G.E.E.G. or T.E.E.G.) had a negative experience.	37.8% (91)	18.7% (45)	21.2% (51)	20.3% (49)
The district was not aware of its eligibility to participate in the D.A.T.E. program.	43.6% (105)	14.1% (34)	20.3% (49)	19.9% (48)
The district does not have the organizational or technical capacity to implement a D.A.T.E. performance incentive plan.	34.9% (84)	25.3% (61)	22.4% (54)	15.4% (37)
The district is opposed to incentive pay in the field of education.	44.8% (108)	26.1% (63)	16.6% (40)	10.4% (25)
Missing				2.1% (5)

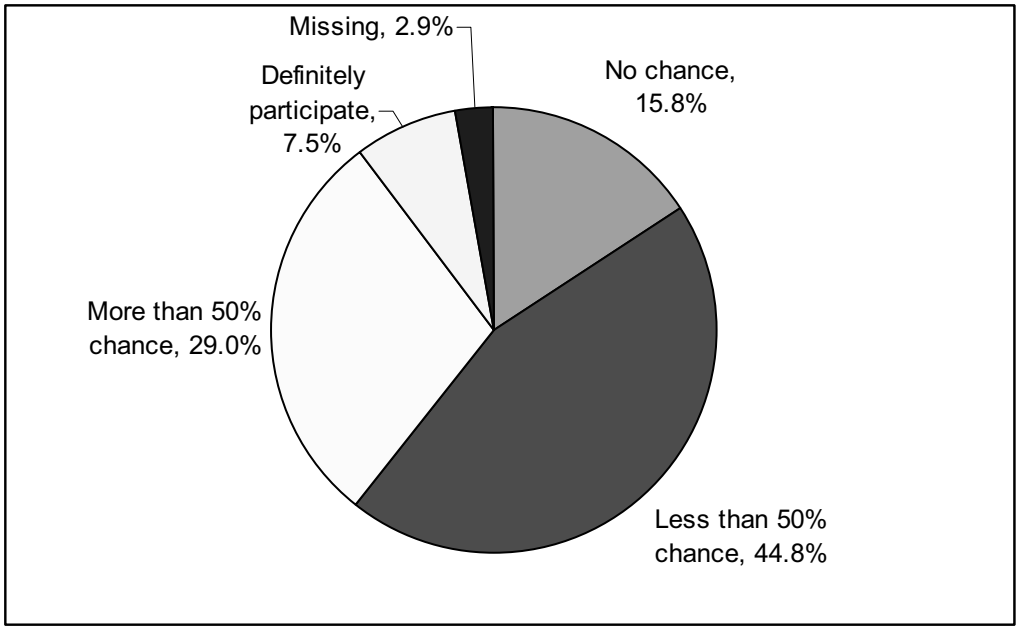
N=241 district officials representing comparison districts

Source: Survey administered by evaluators in January 2009 to district officials in a set of comparison districts.

Likelihood of Future Participation in D.A.T.E.

Evaluators also asked comparison districts if they would participate in D.A.T.E. in the future if program guidelines and grant requirements remain the same. Respondents were given choices of (1) no chance, (2) less than 50% chance, (3) more than 50% chance, and (4) definitely would participate. As seen in Figure 3.1, comparison districts leaned towards a low probability of future participation. Most districts (61%) reported a less than 50% chance of future participation in the program.

Figure 3.1: Probability of Future Participation in D.A.T.E. Program by Comparison Districts



N=241 district officials representing comparison districts
Source: Survey administered by evaluators in January 2009 to district officials in a set of comparison districts.

Finally, the survey included an open-response question asking what factors would encourage a comparison district to participate in the D.A.T.E. program in future years. Of the 241 districts responding to the survey, 226 (94%) addressed this question. Their responses can be categorized along six issues: (1) program funding, (2) program guidelines, (3) communication and information, (4) time, (5) school culture, and (6) increased assistance.

There is not a single factor that would resoundingly encourage a majority of comparison districts to participate in the future. The dimension receiving most attention was the matter of program funding. Responses from approximately 41% fell into this category, with most specifying that they would be encouraged by either the prospect of greater grant awards or the dismantling of the matching fund requirement. As one district official explained:

> The state needs to put enough funds in the program to make this worth administrators and teachers time. Our district would have to supplement the D.A.T.E. program by more than double the awarded amount for personnel to just get the $3,000 mark.

Over one-quarter (27%) of respondents indicated that modification to program guidelines would encourage future participation; specifically if guidelines were less restrictive and allowed for more equitable distribution of incentive awards across school personnel.

Less than 20% of respondents' answers fell in each of the remaining categories, with the least reported factor being increased assistance. Roughly 13% of respondents each mentioned that less time-consuming paperwork and more information about program requirements could encourage them to participate in future school years.

The report now turns to explaining how D.A.T.E. participants designed and implemented their performance pay plans in Year 1 of the program, focusing primarily on how they determined teacher eligibility for incentive awards, how they used funds for purposes other than incentive awards, and the types of challenges they encountered in the first year of implementation.

CHAPTER 4
First-Year D.A.T.E. Plan Design and Implementation

This chapter discusses the design and implementation of first-year D.A.T.E. districts' performance pay plans. First, it presents the characteristics of D.A.T.E. plans as developed by districts in the applications submitted to TEA. Primary attention is given to explaining the Part 1 performance criteria proposed in plans to determine teachers' eligibility for incentive awards. Use of Part 2 funds is discussed as well. The chapter concludes with district officials' feedback about their early experiences implementing D.A.T.E. plans. The key policy questions and key policy points discussed throughout this chapter are listed below.

Evaluation Questions

This chapter addresses the following questions.

- What was the overall strategy proposed by first-year D.A.T.E. districts to implement their locally-designed performance pay plans?
- How did districts plan on determining teachers' eligibility for incentive awards?
- For what purposes did districts propose to use Part 2 D.A.T.E. funds?
- What were the experiences of first-year D.A.T.E. districts in technical assistance activities?
- What were the most significant challenges faced by D.A.T.E. districts during their first year of program participation?

Key Findings

This chapter highlights and expands upon the following key findings based on a review of first-year D.A.T.E. performance pay plans and early implementation experiences.[17]

- Over half of D.A.T.E. districts proposed district-wide performance pay plans as compared to limiting participation to select schools within districts.
- All D.A.T.E. plans proposed using at least 60% of grant funds for Part 1 incentive awards to teachers, with over half proposing more than this minimum requirement.
- Teachers' eligibility for Part 1 incentive awards, as indicated in D.A.T.E. plans, was most commonly determined by student performance on state-standardized assessments.

[17] See Appendix B for a technical explanation of methods used to identify D.A.T.E. plan design features.

- D.A.T.E. districts most often planned on measuring teachers' contributions to student performance by the achievement levels of students. District-wide plans most often included the use of achievement levels exclusively, while select school plans frequently integrated measures of performance growth and levels of student achievement.

- D.A.T.E. plans used various units of accountability when determining teachers' incentive award eligibility. District-wide plans most often used individual teacher performance to determine incentive award eligibility, while select school plans had a preference for exclusively using the performance of teams of teachers.

- The majority of first-year D.A.T.E. districts perceived technical assistance activities as useful, with the most useful topic being the overview of program guidelines and grant requirements.

- During the first year of D.A.T.E. implementation, the most commonly reported challenges were designing fair measures of educator performance, having adequate personnel and data systems to implement performance pay plans, and communicating program goals to schools within districts.

Overview of D.A.T.E. Part 1 Design Features, Year 1

This section presents key design features of Year 1 D.A.T.E. districts' performance pay plans as they proposed implementing them in the 2008-09 school year. Specifically, evaluators focus on how districts proposed using Part 1 funds to award incentives to classroom teachers. Results are based on evaluators' review of D.A.T.E. performance pay plans submitted to TEA in 2008.[18] Three primary questions are addressed. (1) What was the overall strategy used by first-year districts for the design of performance pay plans? (2) How much funding did districts dedicate for Part 1 incentive awards to teachers? (3) What criteria did districts plan to use for determining teachers' Part 1 incentive award eligibility?[19]

Strategy for D.A.T.E. Performance Pay Plans

D.A.T.E. guidelines specify that districts can choose one of two strategies for implementing their locally-designed performance pay plans. Grant funds can be used to include all district schools in D.A.T.E. plans or only select schools. Table 4.1 describes the overall plan choices presented in Year 1 D.A.T.E. applications, showing the share of D.A.T.E. districts and schools involved in each plan type.

Among all plan types, evaluators identified nearly 2,000 schools taking part in the D.A.T.E. program, representing roughly 22% of all public schools in the state during the 2008-09 school year. The majority of these participant districts (53%) and schools (69%) were part of district-wide performance pay plans.

Table 4.1: Overall Type of D.A.T.E. Performance Pay Plan, Year 1

D.A.T.E. Plan Type	Percent (#) of Districts	Percent (#) of Schools
District-wide performance pay plan	53.2% (108)	68.7% (1,371)
Select school performance pay plan	46.8% (95)	31.3% (626)
Total	203 districts	1,997 schools

N=203 D.A.T.E. applications
Source: Review of D.A.T.E. applications submitted to TEA in 2008.

The 95 districts choosing *not* to implement D.A.T.E. district-wide were required in their application to specify their rationale for including each of the select schools. Table 4.2 lists the criteria used by these districts to select schools for D.A.T.E. participation. State guidelines require select schools be chosen based on at least two of the criteria. The most popular reason – used for 62% of select schools – was performing below the district's average on TAKS.

[18] At the time of this report, evaluators only had access to original applications submitted by D.A.T.E. districts to TEA. A forthcoming report will present any revisions to plan design features as may be uncovered in a review of amendments to D.A.T.E. plans submitted to the agency.
[19] Based on a review of original D.A.T.E. applications, evaluators are unable to present the proposed Part 1 incentive award amounts submitted by districts (i.e., the proposed minimum and maximum incentive awards for classroom teachers). These proposed amounts were unclear in too many applications, a limitation described more fully in Appendix B.

Table 4.2: Criteria for Select School Participation in D.A.T.E., Year 1

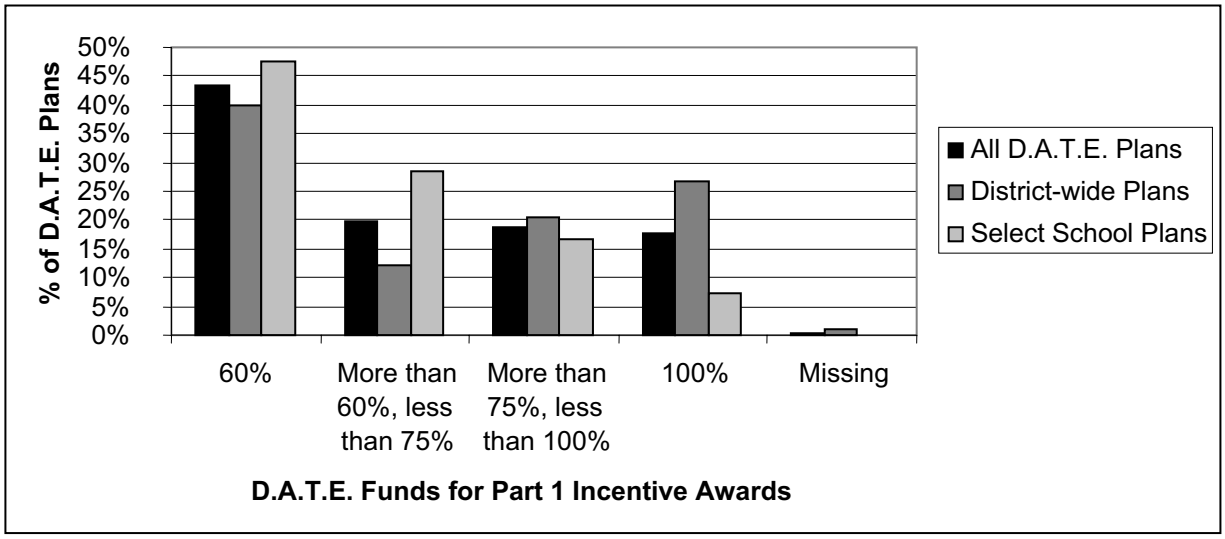
Select School Criteria	Percent (#) of Schools
Performs lower than district's average proficiency on TAKS	67.6% (404)
Other academic or non-academic indicators	51.7% (309)
Ranks in top quartile of schools enrolling high percentage of ED students	41.5% (248)
Other reasons	10.7% (64)
Rated academically unacceptable (2007)	10.2% (61)
Experiences above average dropout/non-completion rates relative to other school types in district	8.2% (49)
Ranks in bottom half in gains on Texas Growth Index (TGI)	8.2% (49)
Received comparable improvement ratings in bottom quartile relative to other school types in district	5.0% (30)

N=598 schools from D.A.T.E. applications indicating performance pay plan restricted to "Select Schools". The remaining 28 schools were part of TAP plans being implemented by D.A.T.E. districts.
Source: Review of D.A.T.E. applications submitted to TEA in 2008.

Overview of Part 1 Funds for Teacher Incentive Awards

D.A.T.E. guidelines require districts to use no less than 60% of their grant funds for incentive awards to full-time classroom teachers. Figure 4.1 displays the proposed share of grant funds used by first-year D.A.T.E. districts that would be set aside for Part 1 incentive awards. Results are shown for all D.A.T.E. plans and also broken out by district-wide versus select school plans.

Figure 4.1: Percent of D.A.T.E. Grant Used for Part 1 Incentive Awards, Year 1



N=203 D.A.T.E. applications
Source: Review of D.A.T.E. applications submitted to TEA in 2008.

All 203 D.A.T.E. districts adhered to guidelines and proposed using at least 60% of funds for Part 1 incentive awards. Select school plans more often proposed less than 75% of funds for Part 1. Conversely, a greater share of district-wide plans set aside a larger portion of their D.A.T.E. grants for Part 1 incentive awards to teachers, thus, leaving a smaller pot of money available for Part 2 purposes.

Criteria for Part 1 Incentive Awards to Teachers

Evaluators identified several design features used by Year 1 D.A.T.E. districts to determine teachers' Part 1 incentive award eligibility. In order to receive a incentive award, program guidelines require that a teacher positively impact student academic improvement, growth, and/or achievement. Districts must use criteria that are quantifiable, reliable, valid and objective.

Evaluators focused on the following features of each district's Part 1 incentive award strategy. (1) Which indicators were used to measure teachers' impact on student performance? (2) Was performance measured by achievement levels, performance growth, or a combination of the two? and (3) What was the unit of accountability; that is, whose performance would determine teachers' incentive award eligibility (e.g., the performance of an individual, team, or entire school)?

Table 4.3 provides an overview of these Part 1 design features. It shows the frequency of each design choice broken out by district-wide and select school D.A.T.E. plans. The former is reported as a share of the 108 districts using each kind of design feature district-wide. Design features of select school plans are reported as a share of the 626 schools with distinct performance pay plans. Appendix B presents these design features broken out by grade levels, because many D.A.T.E. districts created unique plans for elementary, middle, and high schools.

Table 4.3: Part 1 Design Features Used by D.A.T.E. Districts, Year 1

Part 1 Design Feature	District-wide Plans (n=108)	Select School Plans (n=626)
Campus-wide Student Performance	6.5% (7)	1.4% (9)
High TEA rating	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)
Acceptable TEA Rating	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)
Comparable Improvement	6.5% (7)	0.6% (4)
Adequate Yearly Progress	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)
Other	0.0% (0)	0.8% (5)
Individual Student Performance	100.0% (108)	98.4% (616)
State standardized tests	92.6% (100)	91.5% (573)
End-of-year tests	8.3% (9)	10.7% (67)
Local benchmark tests	41.7% (45)	16.3% (102)
Student portfolio assessments	4.6% (5)	4.3% (27)
Other student assessments	26.9% (29)	32.1% (201)
Performance Measure		
Achievement level	45.4% (49)	19.3% (121)
Change over time	26.9% (29)	37.1% (232)
Achievement level + Change Over time	36.1% (39)	41.1% (257)
Unit of Accountability		
School only	0.9% (1)	1.8% (11)
Team only	26.9% (29)	51.9% (325)
Teacher only	37.0% (40)	9.9% (62)
School + Team	2.8% (3)	9.3% (58)
School + Teacher	2.8% (3)	5.9% (37)
Team + Teacher	11.1% (12)	13.1% (82)
School + Team + Teacher	0.0% (0)	1.8% (11)

Note: The 108 district-wide plans include the one D.A.T.E. district using TAP district-wide. Similarly, the 626 select school plans include the 28 schools in the 10 districts using TAP in select schools.
Source: Review of D.A.T.E. applications submitted to TEA in 2008.

Indicators of student performance

D.A.T.E. districts resoundingly used student assessment results to measure teachers' contribution to student performance. In fact, all of the district-wide plans used such indicators and nearly all (98%) of select school plans did so as well. The most popular type of student assessment was state standardized tests (e.g., TAKS, TPRI). Approximately 42% of district-wide plans used local benchmark tests, while select school plans used these much less frequently.

Both district-wide plans and select school plans rarely used campus-wide performance measures, such as assigned TEA accountability ratings, Comparable Improvement rankings, or Adequate Yearly Progress.

Measure of student performance

D.A.T.E. districts used different strategies when it came to the choice of using achievement levels and/or measures of student growth to determine teachers' incentive award eligibility. District-wide plans most often used achievement levels, as reported in 45% of their Year 1 D.A.T.E. applications. However, 41% of select school plans used achievement levels and performance growth in combination. Fewer than 20% of select school plans used achievement levels exclusively.

Unit of accountability

District-wide plans and select school plans also differed in their choices for unit(s) of accountability to determine teachers' eligibility for Part 1 incentive awards. District-wide plans most often used teachers exclusively (37%) followed closely by teams of teachers exclusively (27%). The majority of select school plans (52%) determined incentive award eligibility by the performance of teacher teams exclusively. Very few used teachers as the only unit of accountability.

Overview of D.A.T.E. Part 2 Design Features, Year 1

D.A.T.E. program guidelines specify that a district use no more than 40% of grant funds for one or more of the following purposes.

- Incentive awards for principals who increase student performance.
- Incentive awards for other school employees who demonstrate excellence.
- Stipends for teachers assigned to critical shortage subject areas.
- Stipends for teachers in subject areas with high percentages of out-of-field assignments.
- Stipends for teachers certified and teaching in their main subject area.
- Stipends for teachers with post-graduate degrees in their teaching area.
- Stipends for teachers serving as career, mentor, or master teachers.
- Funds for on-going applied professional growth.
- Funds to increase local data capabilities for supporting instruction and accountability.

Table 4.4 presents the D.A.T.E. Part 2 design choices used in district-wide plans and select school plans. The most popular uses of Part 2 funds, as reported in district-wide and select school plans, were incentive awards for teachers, school administrators, and other school personnel. The share of select school plans using Part 2 funds for teacher incentive awards was nearly double the percent of district-wide plans (75% of select school plans versus 39% of district-wide plans). Similarly, the share of select school plans using Part 2 funds for professional growth and data capacity initiatives was also twice that of district-wide plans. These findings are perhaps not surprising given earlier findings (Figure 4.1) that select school plans reserved a greater share of their total D.A.T.E. grant for Part 2 purposes than did district-wide plans.

Table 4.4: Part 2 Design Features Used by D.A.T.E. Districts, Year 1

Part 2 Design Feature	District-wide Plans (n=108)	Select School Plans (n=626)
Incentive awards for teachers	38.5% (42)	75.4% (472)
Incentive awards for administrators	37.6% (41)	46.2% (289)
Incentive awards for other personnel	42.2% (46)	45.5% (285)
Stipends for shortage areas	11.9% (13)	5.6% (35)
Stipends for areas with high % of out-of-field teachers	1.8% (2)	1.0% (6)
Stipends for certification in main teaching subject area	6.4% (7)	6.7% (42)
Stipends for holding post-graduate degree	0.0% (0)	1.0% (6)
Stipends for mentor teachers	7.3% (8)	6.5% (41)
Stipends for master teachers	4.6% (5)	6.9% (43)
Stipends for teacher coaches	2.8% (3)	1.0% (6)
Funds for professional growth	12.8% (14)	26.4% (164)
Funds for data capacity	8.3% (9)	20.8% (130)

Note: The 108 district-wide plans include the one D.A.T.E. district using TAP district-wide. Similarly, the 626 select school plans include the 28 schools in the 10 districts using TAP in select schools.
Source: Review of D.A.T.E. applications submitted to TEA in 2008.

Early Implementation and Technical Assistance Experiences

Evaluators also examined the early implementation experiences of D.A.T.E. districts during the first year of the program. Through surveys, evaluators identified their perceptions about various technical assistance activities and the most significant implementation challenges they encountered during their first year of D.A.T.E. implementation.[20]

Participation in Technical Assistance Activities

Districts submitting a notice of intent to apply for Year 1 of the D.A.T.E. program were required to participate in technical assistance activities during the 2007-08 school year (i.e., the year preceding implementation of D.A.T.E. performance pay plans). These activities were provided by IPSI at the University of Texas in partnership with TEA.

Districts were required to send a team of at least two, but no more than five, individuals to at least one of the technical assistance workshops. Those attending on behalf of each district were to include multiple stakeholders. As presented previously in Chapter 3, district officials other than superintendents most often participated in these activities, as reported by over 70% of Year 1 D.A.T.E. districts. Principals were the second-most common participants, reported by 41% of D.A.T.E. districts.

Technical assistance activities provided by IPSI included eight regional workshops for D.A.T.E. participants, which addressed the following topics.

- Various ways to structure effective and meaningful performance pay plans.
- Research-based evidence on elements of an effective teacher performance pay plan.
- Identifying performance-based assessments for use at the local level.
- Developing capacity or systems for measuring value-added improvement.
- Creating capacity for effective data systems at the local level.
- Professional development on communications and stakeholder engagement.
- Overview of D.A.T.E. program guidelines and grant requirements.
- Lessons learned from other Texas performance incentive programs.

When asked if district stakeholders participated in the state's technical assistance activities, all but 11 districts reported yes. Therefore, it appears that roughly five percent did not fulfill the technical assistance requirement; however, it may also be that survey respondents in each of those 11 districts were simply unaware of district activities during the 2007-08 school year.

[20] Refer to Appendix A for a review of survey methods and instrument used for the January 2009 D.A.T.E. district survey.

Table 4.5 describes the share of D.A.T.E. districts participating in each type of technical assistance activity along with the perceived usefulness of each activity. If participating in a given activity, respondents were subsequently asked to rate its usefulness along the following scale.

- Useless: Information provided did not influence the D.A.T.E. plan design or decision at all.
- A little useful: Information helped to think about options, but did not directly influence how district designed the D.A.T.E. plan.
- Moderately useful: Information provided general principles that were used to develop D.A.T.E. plan, but district could have used more specific assistance.
- Extremely useful: Lessons about design features introduced during the session were directly adopted into the district's D.A.T.E. plan design.

Table 4.5: Participation in and Perceived Usefulness of D.A.T.E. Technical Assistance Activities in 2007-08

Technical Assistance Activity	Participated	Useless	A Little Useful	Moderately Useful	Extremely Useful
Ways to structure effective and meaningful incentive pay plans.	75.4% (153)	2.6% (4)	15.0% (23)	58.2% (89)	24.2% (37)
Research-based evidence on effective incentive pay plans.	60.1% (122)	4.1% (5)	16.4% (20)	54.9% (67)	24.6% (30)
Identifying performance-based assessments for use at the local level.	59.1% (120)	3.3% (4)	20.0% (24)	52.5% (63)	24.2% (29)
Developing capacity or systems for measuring value-added improvement.	54.2% (110)	10.0% (11)	27.3% (30)	44.5% (49)	18.2% (20)
Creating capacity for effective data systems at the local level.	45.3% (92)	8.7% (8)	23.9% (22)	52.2% (48)	15.2% (14)
Professional development on communications and stakeholder engagement.	53.2% (108)	1.9% (2)	19.4% (21)	50.9% (55)	27.8% (30)
Overview of D.A.T.E. program guidelines and grant requirements.	82.3% (167)	2.4% (4)	5.4% (9)	35.3% (59)	56.9% (95)
Lessons learned from other Texas performance incentive programs.	53.7% (109)	2.8% (3)	11.0% (12)	48.6% (53)	37.6% (41)

N=203 D.A.T.E. districts

Note: Responses on perceived usefulness of technical assistance activities uses the number of participating districts as the denominator. For example, for "ways to structure effective and meaningful incentive pay plans", the percents for perceived usefulness are determined using a denominator of 153.

Source: Survey administered by evaluators in January 2009 to district officials in D.A.T.E. districts.

For all but one of the technical assistance activities, at least half of D.A.T.E. Year 1 districts participated. The topics with the greatest participation rates were (1) the overview of D.A.T.E. program guidelines and grant requirements (82% of districts), and (2) ways to structure effective and meaningful incentive pay plans (75% of districts).

The majority of Year 1 participants (at least 60%) perceived each technical assistance activity as moderately or extremely useful. Of those, most responses fell into the moderately useful category with one exception. Approximately 57% reported that the overview of D.A.T.E. program guidelines and grant requirements was extremely useful.

Challenges during Year 1 D.A.T.E. Implementation

The January 2009 survey for D.A.T.E. district officials also asked about the most significant challenges when trying to implement Year 1 D.A.T.E. plans. Replies to this open-response question can be grouped into six categories: (1) design challenges, (2) capacity challenges, (3) communication challenges, (4) school culture challenges, (5) timing challenges, and (6) funding challenges.

Challenges related to plan design, district capacity, and communication were most common during the first year of D.A.T.E. implementation. Roughly 35%, 28%, and 23% of respondents' answers fell into these three categories, respectively.

Design challenges most often involved the difficulty of selecting criteria to evaluate educators and, specifically, their contribution to student performance. Consequently, they also had trouble identifying who should receive incentive awards of varying amounts. As one district official reported:

> The most challenging aspects are trying to accurately link students to teachers, identify eligible staff, and identify measures for non-tested grades and subjects.

Over 27% of districts reported challenges related to capacity. Many lacked adequate personnel to manage program participation and to complete the required paperwork, while others were without necessary data systems to implement a performance pay plan.

One district explained:

> The district does not currently have a data disaggregating package, which will allow tracking of value added growth, linking individual students to teachers.

Another respondent stated:

> Our challenge is having the manpower to keep up with the documentation, collection, and reinforcement. We are a small district, and administrators and district personnel are stretched already. Our teachers get frustrated that it's more paperwork for them to keep up.

Districts also struggled with stakeholder communication during the first year of D.A.T.E.; specifically, how to convey program goals and guidelines to schools within districts. They less often cited concerns about grant negotiations with TEA.

As one district official described it:

> Meeting with the entire D.A.T.E. committee to work on the implementation phase has been somewhat of a challenge and working to ensure that each component of the plan is well communicated to the entire district. These two things have been the most significant challenges.

The report now turns to a discussion of conclusions from the first-year D.A.T.E. evaluation and their implications for research and policy.

CHAPTER 5
Conclusions and Implications for Policy and Research

This chapter reviews key findings from the first-year evaluation of the D.A.T.E. program, with a focus on the implementation experiences of participants and the design features of their locally-developed performance pay plans. It then discusses the implications of these findings for policy. The chapter concludes with a discussion of next steps for the D.A.T.E. evaluation. The key policy questions and key policy points discussed throughout this chapter are listed below.

Evaluation Questions

This chapter addresses the following questions:

- How do findings from the first-year evaluation of D.A.T.E. inform the debate on performance pay?
- What can be learned from the decisions made by districts not to participate in the voluntary D.A.T.E. program?
- What can be learned about participants' first-year implementation experiences and the design features of locally-developed D.A.T.E. plans?

Key Findings

This chapter highlights and expands upon the following key findings based on the summary of first-year evaluation findings.

- During the first year of D.A.T.E., 203 districts chose to participate, representing approximately 16% of all public school districts in Texas and 22% of all public schools in the state during the 2008-09 school year.
- Compared to non-participating districts, first-year D.A.T.E. districts had a lower measure of district wealth, larger student enrollment, a greater share of minority and ED students, and were more likely to have participated in previous state-funded performance pay programs.
- Districts' decisions to participate or not in the D.A.T.E. program were influenced by numerous factors, but most common were their beliefs about how the program would influence teaching and learning in their schools. Program participants believed that D.A.T.E. would improve the quality of student performance and instruction in schools. However, non-participants were concerned about the program's impact on school culture and professional collegiality; yet, they did not oppose incentive pay altogether as an education reform.

- Most non-participant districts reported little chance of future D.A.T.E. participation if program guidelines remain the same. However, a significant share would be encouraged by the prospect of larger grant awards or the dismantling of the matching funds requirement for districts. The latter of these two issues was already addressed prior to the second year of D.A.T.E. operation.

- Most D.A.T.E. districts proposed using their grants to implement district-wide performance pay plans as compared to limiting participation to select schools.

- Teachers' eligibility for Part 1 incentive awards, as proposed by D.A.T.E. participants, was most commonly determined by student performance on state-standardized assessments and the achievement levels of students on those assessments.

- District-wide D.A.T.E. plans most often used teachers as the exclusive unit of accountability, while select school plans most often used teacher teams as the exclusive unit of accountability.

- The majority of D.A.T.E. districts participated in the state's technical assistance activities, which included topics focused on designing effective performance pay plans, building district capacity to implement plans, and understanding program guidelines specific to D.A.T.E. The most useful topic, as reported by district officials, was the overview of program guidelines and grant requirements.

- During the first year of D.A.T.E. implementation, the most common challenges reported by districts were designing fair measures of educator performance, having adequate personnel and data systems to implement performance pay plans, and communicating program goals to schools within districts.

- Future evaluation initiatives will study how program participation and the design features of local D.A.T.E. plans influence educator behavior, organizational dynamics, teacher turnover, and student achievement gains.

Summary of First-Year Evaluation Findings and Policy Implications

This section discusses findings from the first-year evaluation of the D.A.T.E. program, with a focus on the implementation experiences of participants during the 2008-09 school year. It then turns to the implications that these findings have for policy, specifically for educator compensation initiatives.

Summary of First-Year D.A.T.E. Evaluation

D.A.T.E. Participation Decisions

During the first year of D.A.T.E. operation in the 2008-09 school year, 203 districts chose to participate in the program, representing approximately 16% of all public school districts in Texas. According to a review of districts' original D.A.T.E. proposals submitted to TEA, there were nearly 2,000 schools participating in the program, or nearly 22% of all public schools in the state during the program's first year. Compared to non-participant districts, D.A.T.E. districts had a lower measure of district wealth, larger student enrollment, a greater share of minority and ED students, and were more likely to have participated in previous state-funded performance pay programs.

Numerous factors led first-year D.A.T.E. districts to participate in the program, especially the belief that the program would improve the quality of student performance and instruction in their schools. However, non-participant districts had less consensus about the issues that led them to forego participation, with two exceptions. A clear majority was both concerned about the program's impact on school culture and professional collegiality, and most did not oppose incentive pay altogether as an education reform. Additionally, most non-participant districts reported a small likelihood of future participation in D.A.T.E. if program guidelines remain the same. A significant share would be encouraged by the prospect of larger grant awards or the dismantling of the matching funds requirement for districts. Interestingly, the matching funds requirement was eliminated after the first year of D.A.T.E.

Design of D.A.T.E. Performance Pay Plans

There was a notable difference between the types of district stakeholders involved with plan development and those who actually voted on D.A.T.E. plan approval. Superintendents, other district officials, principals, and full-time teachers were most often involved with plan design, while local school board members most frequently voted on plan approval. These findings were not too surprising given TEA's recommendation that numerous stakeholders be involved in the process and the requirement that plans be approved by the local school board before submission to the agency.

Over 50% of D.A.T.E. districts used funds to implement district-wide performance pay plans as compared to limiting participation to select schools within districts. For both types of plan strategies, teachers' eligibility for Part 1 incentive awards was most commonly determined by student performance on state-standardized assessments. However, many other plan design features differed between the district-wide and select school approach. First, a greater share of district-wide plans set aside a larger portion of their D.A.T.E. grants for Part 1 teacher incentive awards, thus, leaving a smaller pot of money available for Part 2 purposes.

While districts tended to measure teachers' contribution to student performance using achievement levels, district-wide plans most commonly used levels exclusively; select school plans more often integrated measures of performance growth with levels of student achievement. Finally, district-wide plans most often used teachers as the sole unit of accountability, but select school plans mostly used teacher teams exclusively.

D.A.T.E. Implementation Experiences and Challenges

The majority of D.A.T.E. districts participated in the required technical assistance activities offered by the state, which included topics focused on designing effective performance pay plans, building district capacity to implement plans, and understanding program guidelines specific to D.A.T.E. However 11 districts (roughly 5%) indicated that they did not send any district representatives to any of the sessions; this may be because of a lack of awareness by survey respondents in those districts. Most districts reported that technical assistance activities were useful for the development of their performance pay plans, with the most highly praised topic being the overview of program guidelines and grant requirements.

Evaluators also examined the implementation challenges reported by D.A.T.E. districts during the first year of program implementation. The most commonly reported struggles included designing fair measures of educator performance, having adequate personnel and data systems to implement performance pay plans, and communicating program goals to schools within districts.

Implications for Policy

First-year evaluation findings mostly provide policymakers with insight into districts' rationale for participating – or not – in the program and how districts opted to design their performance pay plans. With nearly 25% of the state's public schools participating in D.A.T.E. during its first year, and the expansion of state funding for the program in the 2009 and 2010 fiscal years, it is worthwhile considering the implications of these evaluation findings thus far.

As previously discussed, D.A.T.E. participants held quite different opinions from non-participating districts about the program's likely influence on teaching and learning in schools. Participants believed that program participation would improve the quality of student performance and instruction in schools, while non-participants were most emphatic about their concerns that D.A.T.E. would have a negative impact on school culture and professional collegiality.

It is probable that these forecasts about D.A.T.E.'s likely impact were influenced by preconceived notions of performance pay generally and the features of D.A.T.E., specifically. Even non-participants, however, were not altogether opposed to performance pay as a general reform, but held more doubts about the specific nature of D.A.T.E.. Evaluators also found that D.A.T.E. districts had more often participated in previous state-funded performance pay programs (such as G.E.E.G. and T.E.E.G.) than non-D.A.T.E. districts. Perhaps this previous experience shaped their attitudes about D.A.T.E. or at least made them more comfortable with the idea of taking part in a state-funded performance pay initiative.

With this in mind, it is important that D.A.T.E. guidelines and objectives be made accessible and comprehensible for local decision makers. Fortunately, communication with TEA was described

favorably by D.A.T.E. participants thus far. However, a majority of non-participating districts stated that program guidelines from TEA were unclear. This again raises the question of whether a true understanding of D.A.T.E. or simply preconceived notions shaped the decisions of these non-participating districts.

Understanding how districts design their performance pay plans is just as critical as understanding why they participate in D.A.T.E. altogether. Policymakers need to know not only how teaching and learning in schools *differs* between D.A.T.E. and non-D.A.T.E. participants, but also how design features of performance pay plans *influence* these outcomes. That is, how the design choices made by participants influence educator attitudes and behavior, teacher turnover, and student achievement gains.

During the first year of D.A.T.E., participants were most commonly using state standardized assessments and determining incentive award eligibility by either individual teacher or teacher team performance (as opposed to school-wide performance). The implications of these design choices for teaching and learning outcomes can inform the way policymakers devise future guidelines for educator compensation reform.

Overall, first-year D.A.T.E. districts implemented plans generally within the scope of program guidelines. The D.A.T.E. performance pay plans used the majority of grant funds to reward teachers for their contribution to student performance. However, despite broad participation in technical assistance offerings, D.A.T.E. districts still maintain concerns about designing plans that they perceive to be fair in evaluating and rewarding teachers.

Finally, it should be mentioned that money matters to overall program participation decisions. While there is not a single factor that would resoundingly encourage a majority of non-D.A.T.E. districts to participate in the program at a later time, the factor receiving the most attention was program funding. Specifically, these non-participating districts would most likely participate in D.A.T.E. if offered larger grant funds or if the matching-fund requirement was eliminated. The latter of these two issues has already been resolved; the matching requirement was removed after the first year of D.A.T.E.

However, money is not the only thing that matters, especially when looking at the differences between D.A.T.E. and non-D.A.T.E. districts during the program's first year. Non-participant districts, for example, were smaller and less likely to have participated in previous state-funded performance pay programs. It may be that these systemic features influence the probability of future participation and that policymakers need to consider how program guidelines can better suit the needs of these non-participant districts *if* the state wants to operate D.A.T.E. on a broader scale.

Next Steps for Research

As the evaluation of D.A.T.E. moves forward, researchers will be able to further examine educators' attitudes about performance pay generally and the D.A.T.E. program specifically. Future evaluation initiatives will continue to refine evaluators' understanding of D.A.T.E. plan design and implementation as well as address three major objectives, including (1) an examination of D.A.T.E. incentive award distribution to teachers and other school personnel; (2) an analysis of D.A.T.E.'s

influence on the attitudes and behavior of school personnel, organizational dynamics within districts and schools, teacher turnover, and student achievement gains; and (3) an examination of district characteristics, school characteristics, and DATE plan features associated with positive DATE program outcomes.

Evaluators will collect and examine the nature of actual incentive award distribution to teachers and other school personnel in D.A.T.E. districts. Evaluators will identify the minimum and maximum actual award amounts, the range of awards, as well as the degree of inequality in award distribution to teachers (i.e., the degree to which incentive award distribution can be characterized as egalitarian or individualistic in nature). This evaluation component will also include an analysis of district, school, and teacher characteristics that are related to the nature of incentive award distribution.

D.A.T.E. program outcomes will be assessed along three dimensions. The first will be a study of the program's impact on the attitudes and behavior of school personnel, as well as the organizational dynamics within districts and schools. Evaluators will use a two-pronged survey approach to capture this information, by administering a fall semester and spring semester survey in schools participating in the D.A.T.E. program and in a sample of non-participating schools. Evaluators will also examine the impact of D.A.T.E. participation on rates of teacher turnover, and how district, school, teacher and performance pay plan characteristics influence those outcomes. Finally, evaluators will examine the program's impact on student achievement gains using performance on TAKS as an indicator of student achievement effects. Again, this examination will consider the influence of district, school, and performance pay plan characteristics on outcomes for student achievement gains.

These preliminary and forthcoming findings not only have policy relevance for Texas but for other educator compensation initiatives as well. In fact, avenues for more performance pay initiatives are blooming in the current political climate. Federal funding initiatives alone, such as the Teacher Incentive Fund (TIF) and Race to the Top, offer millions in dollars to schools for the development of alternative educator compensation systems.[21] As of 2009, for example, TIF has allocated over $200 million to a handful of districts and states for the design and implementation of performance pay programs. Race to the Top will provide states with approximately $4 billion in funds to implement education reform initiatives focused on teacher quality, which could include alterations to the traditional teacher salary schedule. As pay-for-performance programs gain popularity in education, it is important that policymakers consider the experiences of programs such as D.A.T.E.

[21] TIF is administered by the U.S. Department of Education, supports efforts to develop and implement performance-based teacher and principal compensation systems, primarily based on increases in student achievement, in high-need schools. States, districts, and some charter schools are eligible to apply for five-year federal grants. TIF began in fiscal year 2006 with a first cohort of 16 grantees who have received $132.8 million in funding to date. A second cohort of 18 grantees received TIF grants in 2007 and has received a total of $90.1 million to date. Race to the Top stems from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 and will provide states with funds to implement education reform initiatives around four primary areas of interest: enhancing standards and assessments; improving the collection and use of data; increasing teacher effectiveness and the equity of teacher distribution within school systems; and turning around low-performing and other struggling schools. Race to the Top funds are approximately $4 billion which will be distributed to states in two phases during 2010.

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APPENDIX A
Technical Appendix for Chapter 3, Characteristics and Decisions of First-Year D.A.T.E. Participants and Non-Participants

This appendix discusses the methods used to generate findings reported in Chapter 3. The appendix first describes the survey for Year 1 D.A.T.E. participants. It then describes the non-D.A.T.E. survey, including discussion of data collection and how evaluators generated the comparison group. The latter section on comparison group also addresses how evaluators identified differences between D.A.T.E. and non-D.A.T.E. districts.

Survey Methodology

In January 2009, evaluators administered two district-level surveys as part of the examination of districts' decisions to participate – or not – in the D.A.T.E. program. These surveys were administered to district officials, and evaluators requested only one response per district.

D.A.T.E. District Survey

All 203 D.A.T.E. districts participating in the program during the 2008-09 school year were sent an online survey in January 2009 to be completed by a district official (or some district representative) most familiar with the district's D.A.T.E. decision process. The online survey was first sent to district superintendents, who could then either complete the survey or send it along to the most appropriate district representative.

The online survey took approximately 15 minutes to complete and responses are kept confidential by the evaluation team. Results are reported in the aggregate and no responses are attributed to any specific district or individual.

Evaluators achieved a 100 percent response rate by February 2009. Select characteristics of respondents are provided in Table A.1.

Table A.1: D.A.T.E. District Survey, Respondent/District Characteristics Jan. 2009

Respondent/District Characteristic	Percent (#) of Respondents
Job title of respondent	
Superintendents	15.8% (32)
Other district official	49.8% (101)
Local school board member	0.0% (0)
Principal	9.9% (20)
Assistant principal	1.0% (2)
Full-time classroom teacher	2.5% (5)
Part-time classroom teacher	0.5% (1)
Other school staff member	20.7% (42)
Respondent involved in development of D.A.T.E. plan	90.6% (184)
District used other incentive pay program (i.e., not G.E.E.G., T.E.E.G., or D.A.T.E.) in past three school years	31.0% (63)

Source: Based on authors' calculations of D.A.T.E. District January 2009 Survey results.

Comparison District Survey

A district-level survey was also administered to superintendents in 336 comparison group districts. Again, the survey was online and sent out in January 2009 to be completed by a district official (or some district representative) most familiar with the district's decision not to participate in the D.A.T.E. program.

The online survey took approximately 10 minutes to complete and responses remain confidential. Results are reported in the aggregate and no responses are attributed to any specific district or individual.

Evaluators achieved nearly a 72 percent (71.7%) response rate, with surveys completed by 241 of the 336 comparison group districts. Select characteristics of survey respondents are provided in Table A.2.

Table A.2: Comparison District Survey, Respondent Characteristics Jan. 2009

Respondent/District Characteristic	Percent (#) of Respondents
Job title of respondent	
Superintendents	61.8% (149)
Other district official	28.6% (69)
Local school board member	0.4% (1)
Principal	3.7% (9)
Assistant principal	0.4% (1)
Full-time classroom teacher	0.0% (0)
Part-time classroom teacher	0.0% (0)
Other school staff member	0.0% (0)
Respondent involved in decision not to participate in D.A.T.E.	0.0% (0)
District used other incentive pay program (i.e., not G.E.E.G., T.E.E.G., or D.A.T.E.) in past three school years	0.0% (0)

Source: Based on authors' calculations of Comparison District January 2009 Survey results.

A more detailed discussion of the propensity score methodology used for selecting the 336 comparison districts follows.

Propensity Score Matching: Selection of Comparison Districts

In the 2008-09 school year, 203 districts participated in the D.A.T.E. program. Evaluators identified a comparison group of districts with characteristics similar to that of D.A.T.E. districts. Often, the distribution of observed characteristics of the participants and non-participants in a program will differ substantially, leading to biased estimates of the effect of the program if evaluators were to compare the participants to the non-participants. The treated and non-treated (or, comparison) groups may have large differences on their observed covariates, and these differences can lead to biased estimates of treatment effects. Even traditional covariance analysis adjustments may be inadequate to eliminate this bias. The propensity score, defined as the conditional probability of being treated given the covariates, can be used to balance the covariates in the two groups, and therefore reduce this bias. In order to estimate the propensity score, one must model the distribution of the treatment indicator variable given the observed covariates. Once estimated, the propensity score can be used to reduce bias through matching, stratification (sub-classification), regression adjustment, or some combination of all three.

Modeling

Predictors: The first step was to identify a list of potential predictors or correlates of participation in the D.A.T.E. program. Evaluators selected attributes of the district including measures of size (total teacher FTE count, total student count, number of schools), charter or not, and tax property value-standardized total (after exemptions) per pupil as a measure of wealth. They also included compositional variables that are averages of student characteristics such as percent of students that are white, black, economically disadvantaged, with limited English language proficiency or have special needs. Measures of prior participation in pay-for-performance, such as whether the district did or did not participate in G.E.E.G. or in any of the three cycles of T.E.E.G., were included as well. In addition, evaluators included measures of intensity of involvement in incentive programs including percent of campuses in the district that participated in G.E.E.G. and T.E.E.G., award amount per campus (as larger districts get larger awards), and sum of total award received through G.E.E.G. and T.E.E.G.. Geographic indicators of rural, urban and suburban were added. They included a variable called TOP_CAT_RATIO needing definition. It is a district value obtained from assigning a value for rural/urban status to the district based on data for their schools. It is the ratio of the number of schools in the modal urbanicity category / total schools in the district. In the vast majority of cases, ALL buildings in a district were classified into the same urbanicity categories and thus the value for ratio is 1.0. Finally, evaluators used binary indicators that are coded from the district's accountability rating.

Variable List

DPFVTOTK: tax property value-standardized total
DPSTTOFC: teacher FTE count
DPETALLC: count of all students
n_schools: number of campuses
CHARTER
DPETWHIP: percent of white/Caucasian students
DPETBLAP: percent of black/African american students
DPETHISP: percent of hispanic students
DPETECOP: percent of students economically disadvantaged
DPETLEPP: percent students with limited english proficiency
DPETSPEP: percent students with a special need
award_per_campus: ratio of amount of G.E.E.G. and T.E.E.G. awards to number of campuses
G.E.E.G.: received G.E.E.G. funding or not
G.E.E.G._part_rate: percent of campuses that participated in G.E.E.G., if the district participated
T.E.E.G.: received T.E.E.G. funding or not
T.E.E.G._part_rate: percent of campuses that participated in a cycle of T.E.E.G. if the district participated
urban
suburban
sum_total_award: dollar amount of G.E.E.G. and T.E.E.G. awards
top_cat_ratio
d_exem: : derived from district rating (exemplary)
d_recog: derived from district rating (recognized)
d_accept: derived from district rating (academically acceptable, AEA or standard)
d_unaccept: derived from district rating (academically unacceptable, AEA or standard)
d_nr: derived from district rating (not rated, very few)

Propensity score generation: Evaluators conducted t-tests initially to see whether each of these characteristics was significantly different for the participants and non-participants. They fit a logistic model with all of these predictors on the right hand side and the binary indicator of participation in the D.A.T.E. program as the outcome. The algorithm initially showed warning signals about convergence and complete separation of the data, so evaluators removed two variables with very few events D_NR and D_UNACCEPT. They then re-ran the logistic model without these two variables and the algorithm converged. It produced a predicted probability of participation or p-score for each district. The Propensity score is the conditional probability of being assigned to treatment $Zi = 1$ vs. control $Zi = 0$ given a vector $\mathbf{x}i$ of observed covariates, where it is assumed that, given the X's the Zi's are independent

$$e(\mathbf{x}_i) = \Pr(Z_i = 1 \mid \mathbf{X}_i = \mathbf{x}_i)$$

It can be thought as a balancing score, i.e., as a function $b(\mathbf{X})$ of the observed covariates such that the conditional distribution of **X** given $b(\mathbf{X})$ is the same for the treated (Z=1) and control (Z=0) subjects. By using the probability that a subject would have been treated (the propensity score) to adjust the estimate of the treatment effect, evaluators created a *quasi-experiment***.** The goal is then to find two subjects with the same or nearby propensity score, one treated, one a control. These two subjects can be though of as "*randomly assigned"* to each group, since they have the same probability of being in either group, given their covariates.

Identifying a comparison set: The propensity scores can be used to adjust for covariates 'prior' to calculating the treatment effect, through the use of matching (explicitly on the p-score) or stratification. They can be used also for regression adjustment. Evaluators used the distribution of predicted probabilities across the combined set of participants and non-participants to identify quintiles; then divided the sample of districts into quintiles. Each quintile corresponds to one of five strata (Rosenbaum and Rubin 1984). Evaluators plotted the predicted probabilities within each stratum to compare the distribution of participants to non-participants. They sampled comparison districts from each stratum, as in stratified sampling, with disproportionate allocation across the strata. The strata with most number of "treatment" districts had the largest allocation of comparison districts, while strata with few "treatment" districts provided few comparison districts.

Results

The sample size is 1,231 districts. Evaluators left two participant districts out of the matching process as they were unique due to their size (Dallas ISD and Houston ISD). Eleven comparison districts were missing a predictor variable and could not be included in the logistic model. Thus, 1,218 districts were used in the matching process with 201 D.A.T.E. districts and 1,017 non-D.A.T.E. participants.

The t-tests suggested that the following characteristics were significantly different among the participants and non-participants: District wealth, All students count, percent Black, percent Hispanic, LEP percent, award_per_campus, ever participated in G.E.E.G., award amounts, and proportion of exemplary districts. After adjustment by the p-score, the following characteristics still remained significant indicating a lack of balance across the participants and non-participants: teacher FTE count, student count, number of schools, sum_total_award and proportion of exemplary districts.

The distribution of the predicted probabilities for the participants and non-participants overlapped completely in the middle three strata (percentiles 20% - 80%); the shape of the histograms was very similar across the two groups. In the highest quintile or stratum 5 (with p-scores close to 1), the participants had a longer right tail with more participants having p-score values closer to 1 than the comparison group. In the lowest quintile or stratum 1, the non-participants had a longer left tail with values close to 0 while there were no participants with predicted probabilities below .02. Finally, the D.A.T.E. participants were concentrated in the top three strata (3-5), while the comparison districts were distributed across all of the strata. See Table A.3 for details

Table A.3: Distribution of D.A.T.E. and Non-D.A.T.E. Districts by Quintile

Quintile	Non-D.A.T.E. Districts	D.A.T.E. Districts	Total
1	234	9	243
2	231	13	244
3	223	21	244
4	189	55	244
5	140	103	243
Total	1,017	201	1,218

In a stratified approach to estimating the effect of participation, evaluators would produce a stratified estimator of the treatment effect. However, as evaluators had to go out and survey the comparison districts and had a lot of comparisons within each stratum, they drew a sample for each one with a sample size set to twice as many comparison districts as the number of participants in that stratum. As the distribution of the histograms was very similar within each stratum across the participants and non-participants, they felt comfortable drawing a random sample to represent the entire distribution of the p-scores in that stratum. In stratum 5, the number of comparisons was close to the number of participants, so they kept all of them. In strata 2-4, they drew a random sample of comparison districts. In stratum 1, evaluators restricted the range of p-scores for the comparison group to the region of overlap (.02 or above) and then sampled.

Evaluators decided to use the p-scores for stratification rather than matching because they suspected that the predictors were not able to fully model the selection behavior, based on the predicted probabilities of the participants from non-participants. If the predictors were strongly correlated with participation (or, good discriminants), one would expect the predicted probabilities of the D.A.T.E. participants to be close to 1 while those of the non-participants would be closer to 0. However, evaluators found that the predicted probabilities for each group ranged between 0 and 1, and there were participants with predicted probabilities even in the lowest quintile (with pred. probabilities close to 0). As a result, they decided not to use the actual p-score value for matching. Instead they used the p-scores for stratification, which seems to be more robust to mis-specification of the model. Using the p-score just for stratification makes evaluators less dependent on model assumptions and on the magnitude of the p-score.

See Figures A.1 to A.7 for visual representation of the strata explained above.

Figure A.1: P-Score Matching, Stratum 1

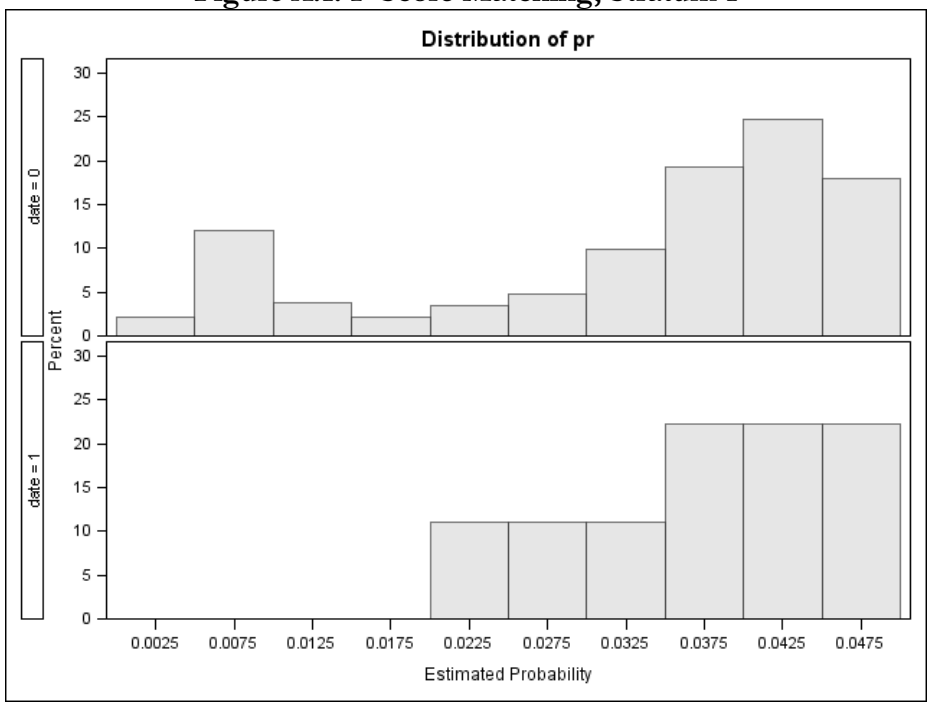


Figure A.2: P-Score Matching, Stratum 2

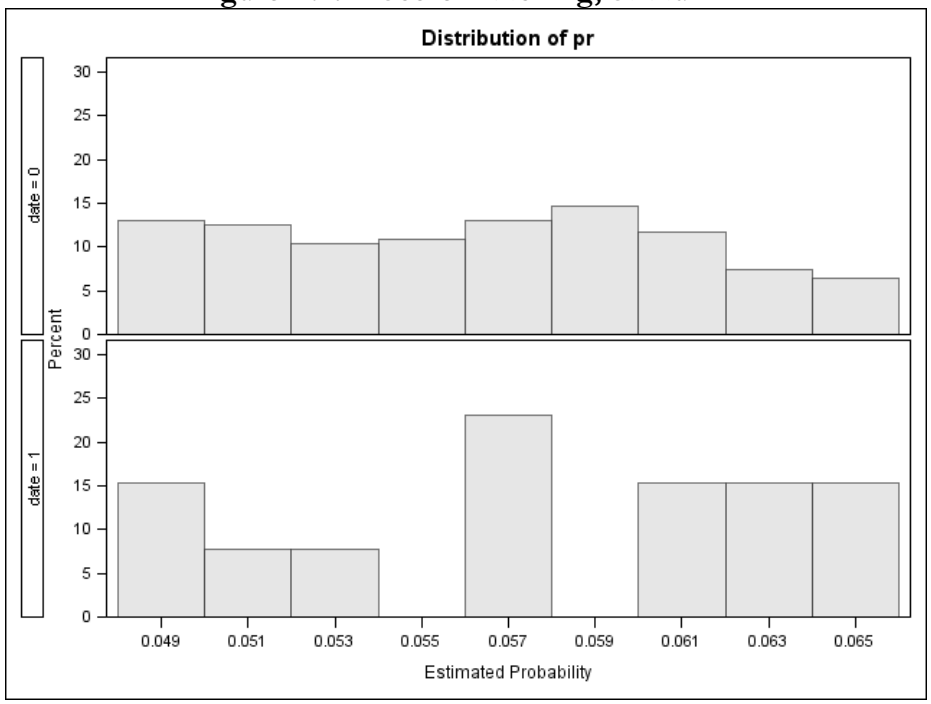


Figure A.3: P-Score Matching, Stratum 3

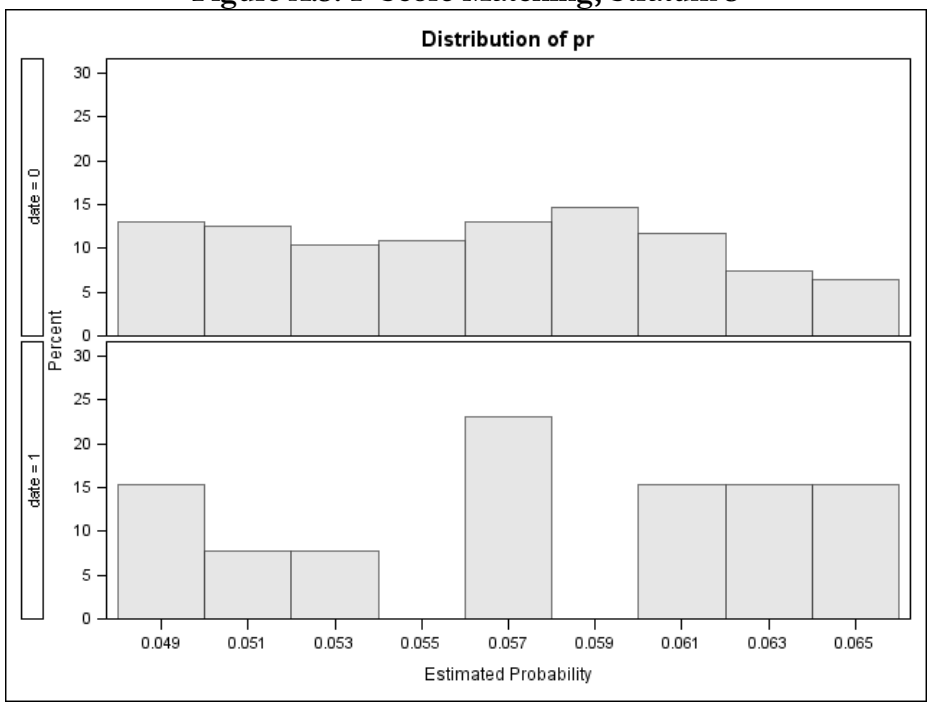


Figure A.4: P-Score Matching, Stratum 4

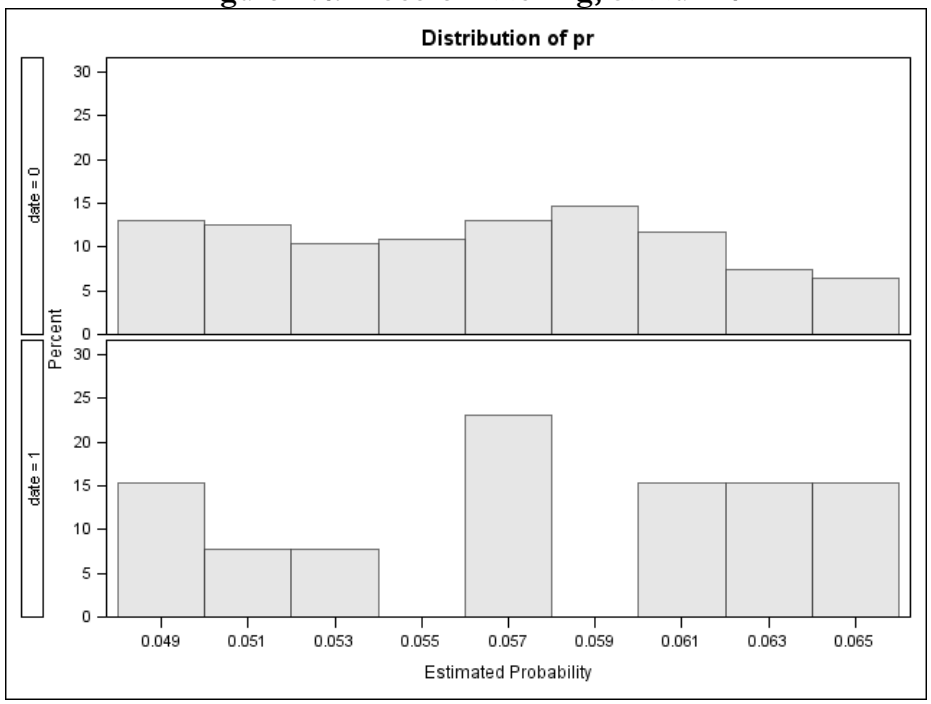


Figure A.5: P-Score Matching, Stratum 5

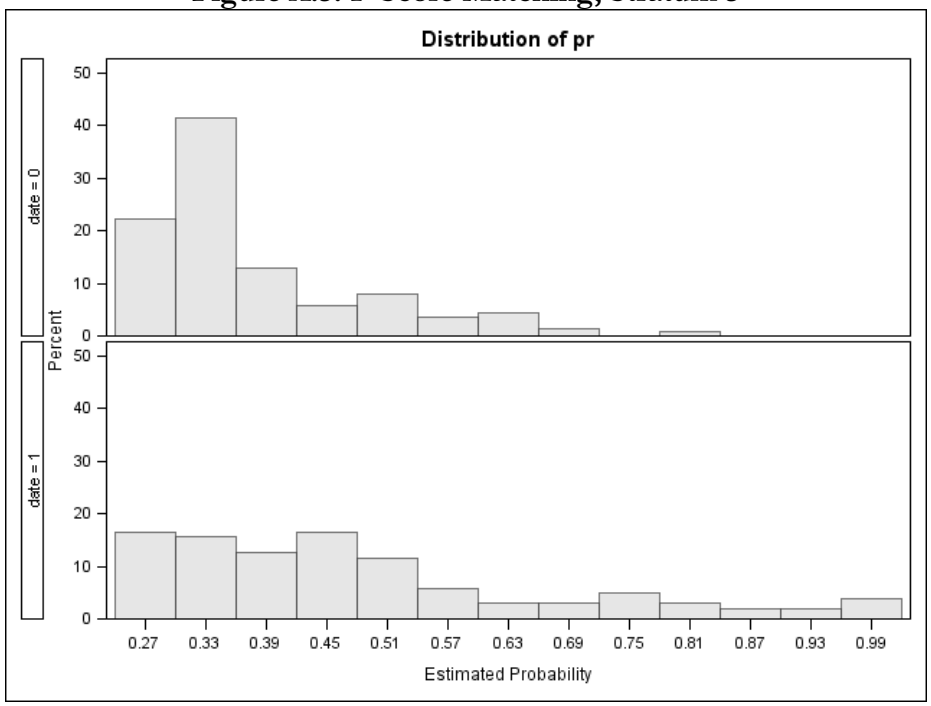


Figure A.6: P-Score, Before Matching

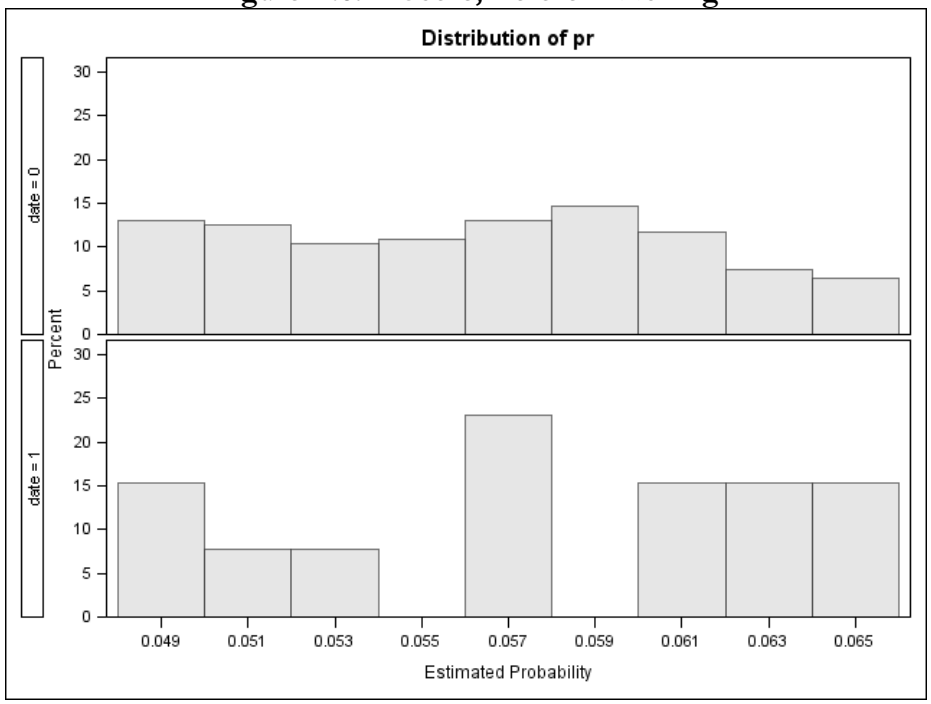
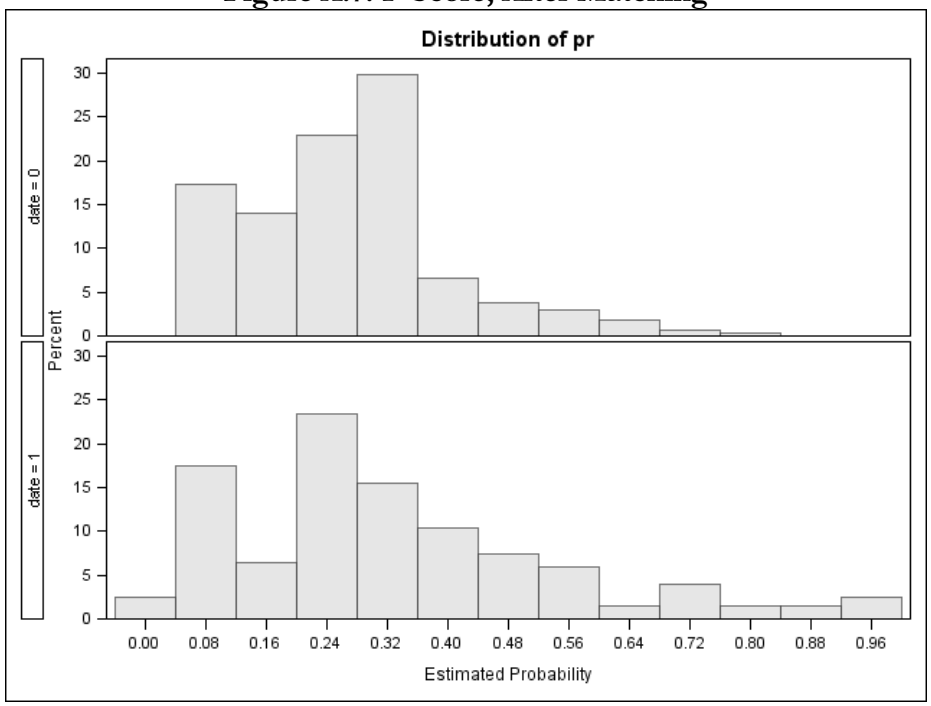


Figure A.7: P-Score, After Matching



Using this methodology, evaluators selected a comparison group of 336 districts. Table A.4 provides an overview of characteristics identified as statistically different between participant and non-participant districts. More specifically, it identifies the average value of each characteristic for participant districts, non-participant districts, and the set of comparison districts. For most variables, with the exception of two, the value for comparison districts approximates that of D.A.T.E. participant districts.

Table A.4: Year 1 D.A.T.E., Non-D.A.T.E. and Comparison District Characteristics

District Characteristics	Non-D.A.T.E. Districts		D.A.T.E. Districts		Comparison Group	
	Mean	N	Mean	N	Mean	N
District wealth	$410,381.00	1017	$288,418.00	199	$287,810.15	336
Urbanicity	0.98	1018	0.97	199	0.97	336
Student count	2358.20	1027	9366.20	200	4178.63	336
Percent white students	54.66%	1027	35.95%	200	39.67%	336
Percent black students	10.79%	1027	15.82%	200	13.80%	336
Percent Hispanic students	32.95%	1027	46.42%	200	45.26%	336
Percent economically disadvantaged students	53.21%	1027	64.02%	200	64.24%	336
Percent Limited English Proficient students	7.36%	1027	12.40%	200	11.44%	336
Percent special education students	11.47%	1027	10.37%	200	10.69%	336
Exemplary rating	0.04	1028	<0.01	201	<0.01	336
Participated in G.E.E.G. program	0.02	1028	0.10	201	0.06	336
Participated in T.E.E.G. program	0.34	1028	0.77	201	0.74	336
G.E.E.G. and T.E.E.G. award Total	$316,313.00	358	$926,795.00	156	$301,339.29	336
G.E.E.G. and T.E.E.G. award Per school	$63,226.40	358	$75,171.80	156	$49,753.50	336

N counts for G.E.E.G. and T.E.E.G. award total and G.E.E.G. and T.E.E.G. award per school are lower as means were only calculated for districts that had participated in G.E.E.G. and T.E.E.G..
Source: Based on authors' calculations using the following data files: Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) 2007-08; Micropolitan Statistical Areas (MCSAS) 2007-08; G.E.E.G. and T.E.E.G. applications submitted to the Texas Education Agency for G.E.E.G. Years 1-3 and T.E.E.G. Cycles 1-3.

A full list of variables including mean values, standard deviations, and p-values for Year 1 Non-D.A.T.E. and D.A.T.E. districts is provided in the following table.

Variables	Non-D.A.T.E. Districts		D.A.T.E. Districts		P-value
	Mean	Std Dev	Mean	Std Dev	
Charter	0.1634 (1028)	0.3699	0.1493 (201)	0.3572	0.6176
District wealth	$410,381.00 (1017)	$695,395.00	$288,418.00 (199)	$525,912.00	**0.0050****
Teacher count (FTE)	166.9 (1027)	391.2	635.0 (200)	1178.3	**<.0001****
Student count	2358.2 (1027)	5815.0	9366.2 (200)	17723.0	**<.0001****
Percent white students	54.6567% (1027)	29.1143	35.9515% (200)	28.6126	**<.0001****
Percent black students	10.7929% (1027)	17.4932	15.8220% (200)	22.1004	**0.0026****
Percent Hispanic students	32.9523% (1027)	26.8523	46.4230% (200)	31.5050	**<.0001****
Percent economically disadvantaged students	53.2105% (1027)	20.9674	64.0205% (200)	19.5347	**<.0001****
Percent LEP students	7.3637% (1027)	10.3213	12.3960% (200)	12.9981	**<.0001****
Percent special ed students	11.4702% (1027)	6.1422	10.3740% (200)	3.5154	**0.0005****
G.E.E.G. and T.E.E.G. award per school	$63,226.40 (358)	$33,721.00	$75,171.80 (156)	$34,560.20	**0.0003****
Participated in G.E.E.G. program	0.0233 (1028)	0.1511	0.1045 (201)	0.3066	**0.0003****
G.E.E.G. participation rate	0.0190 (357)	0.1060	0.0265 (156)	0.1075	0.4635
Participated in T.E.E.G. Cycle 1	0.2364 (1028)	0.4251	0.5821 (201)	0.4944	**<.0001****
Participated in T.E.E.G. Cycle 2	0.2169 (1028)	0.4124	0.5622 (201)	0.4974	**<.0001****
Participated in T.E.E.G. Cycle 3	0.1683 (1028)	0.3743	0.6020 (201)	0.4907	**<.0001****
Participated in T.E.E.G. program	0.3434 (1028)	0.4751	0.7761 (201)	0.4179	**<.0001****
T.E.E.G. participation rate	0.8150 (357)	0.6354	0.7346 (156)	0.5394	0.1427
Number of schools in T.E.E.G. Cycle 1	1.4581 (358)	2.3256	3.1218 (156)	5.7567	**0.0006****
Number of schools in T.E.E.G. Cycle 2	1.1872 (358)	1.9449	2.7372 (156)	4.9437	**0.0002****

Number of schools in T.E.E.G. Cycle 3	0.9888 (358)	1.9803	3.0833 (156)	5.9351	**<.0001****
Number of schools in G.E.E.G.	0.1006 (358)	0.5303	0.2821 (156)	0.9490	**0.0261***
Number of schools in district	4.8595 (1018)	7.1734	14.1759 (199)	22.9808	**<.0001****
Rural	0.1187 (1028)	0.3236	0.1144 (201)	0.3191	0.8645
Urban	0.7733 (1028)	0.4189	0.7512 (201)	0.4334	0.4964
Suburban	0.0982 (1028)	0.2978	0.1244 (201)	0.3308	0.2991
T.E.E.G. Cycle 1 award amount	$166,132.00 (243)	$323,175.00	$386,368.00 (117)	$683,339.00	**0.0012****
T.E.E.G. Cycle 2 award amount	$144,238.00 (223)	$261,324.00	$364,956.00 (113)	$635,160.00	**0.0005****
T.E.E.G. Cycle 3 award amount	$170,954.00 (173)	$311,313.00	$373,719.00 (121)	$727,879.00	**0.0045****
G.E.E.G. Year 1 award amount x's 3	$154,583.00 (24)	$239,319.00	$205,000.00 (21)	$183,589.00	0.4373
Total G.E.E.G. and T.E.E.G. award amount	$316,313.00 (358)	$828,989.00	$926,795.00 (156)	$2,007,396.00	**0.0003****
Urbanicity (i.e., Percent of schools in district identified as urban)	0.9821 (1018)	0.0779	0.9657 (199)	0.1057	**0.0384***
Exemplary rating	0.0409 (1028)	0.1981	0.00498 (201)	0.0705	**<.0001****
Recognized rating	0.2675 (1028)	0.4429	0.2687 (201)	0.4444	0.9732
Acceptable rating	0.6556 (1028)	0.4754	0.7065 (201)	0.4565	0.1632
Unacceptable rating	0.0282 (1028)	0.1657	0.0149 (201)	0.1216	0.1853
Not rated	0.00292 (1028)	0.0540	0.0	0.0	0.0833

* indicates significant difference at p<.05; ** indicates significant difference at p<.01
N counts are provided in parentheses under the "mean" value.
Source: Based on authors' calculations using the following data files: Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) 2007-08; Micropolitan Statistical Areas (MCSAS) 2007-08; G.E.E.G. and T.E.E.G. applications submitted to the Texas Education Agency for G.E.E.G. Years 1-3 and T.E.E.G. Cycles 1-3.

Survey Instruments

The following pages provide the survey instruments used in January 2009, starting with the survey administered to D.A.T.E. districts followed by the survey for comparison districts.

The survey for D.A.T.E. districts addressed the following concepts:

- Importance of factors the led district to participate in the D.A.T.E. program.
- Role of district stakeholders in developing and approving D.A.T.E. plan.
- Extent of district stakeholder disagreement with decision to participate in D.A.T.E.
- Nature of district's participation in D.A.T.E. technical assistance activities.
- Usefulness of technical assistance activities.
- Challenges faced by district when implementing D.A.T.E. plan.
- Recommendations for D.A.T.E. program.

The survey for comparison districts addressed the following concepts:

- Importance of factors that led district not to participate in D.A.T.E. program.
- District stakeholders' involvement in decision not to participate in D.A.T.E.
- Prospect of future participation in D.A.T.E.
- Factors that would encourage future participation in D.A.T.E.

District Awards for Teacher Excellence (D.A.T.E.) Program
January 2009 District Survey for D.A.T.E. Participants

Dear Superintendent,

The National Center on Performance Incentives (NCPI), under contract with the Texas Education Agency (TEA), is conducting an evaluation of the District Awards for Teacher Excellence (DATE) program. We understand that your district is participating in DATE during this 2008-09 school year. As part of program reporting requirements, we are asking that you complete this short progress report about your district's reasons for participating and the process by which your DATE plan has been implemented.

We remind you that all responses will remain entirely confidential and no identifying information will be shared with TEA or included in any published reports. If you feel that another district official is better informed about the reason(s) for which the district chose to participate in DATE and the implementation process, we ask that you direct that person to complete this survey.

If you have any questions, please contact the following persons indicated below.

Dr. Jessica Lewis (NCPI)
(615) 322-5622
jessica.l.lewis@vanderbilt.edu

Andrew Moellmer (TEA)
(512) 936-6503
ProgramEval@tea.state.tx.us

Why Participate in the DATE Program?

1. It is our understanding that your district is participating in the District Awards for Teacher Excellence (DATE) program during this 2008-09 school year. We would like to learn more about the factors that led your district to participate in this state-funded performance incentive program.

   How important was each of the following factors in your district's decision to participate in the DATE program? Please select the most appropriate response for each item below.

	Not Important	Low Importance	Moderate Importance	High Importance
a. School personnel deserve extra pay for the work they are already doing.	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. The DATE program will improve the quality of instruction in schools.	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. The DATE program will improve the quality of student performance in schools.	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. The DATE program will improve the quality of teachers in schools.	☐	☐	☐	☐
e. The DATE program will improve the district's ability to recruit and retain teachers in hard-to-staff schools.	☐	☐	☐	☐
f. The DATE program will improve the district's ability to recruit and retain teachers in hard-to-staff subject areas or other teaching assignments.	☐	☐	☐	☐
g. The district has heard about or witnessed the positive experiences of schools that participated in other state-funded performance pay programs (e.g., G.E.E.G. or T.E.E.G. programs).	☐	☐	☐	☐
h. The district wants to use any money it can possibly get from the state.	☐	☐	☐	☐
i. The district will receive a significant sum of money from the DATE grant.	☐	☐	☐	☐
j. The district was interested in trying something new.	☐	☐	☐	☐

Please indicate any other factors that led to your district's decision to participate in the DATE program. _____
_____
_____

Design and Implementation of DATE Plan

2. We are interested in learning which district community members participated in the process of DATE plan design and implementation. For each community member listed below, please indicate whether anyone in that position was involved in each of the following ways:

   (1) Were they involved in the development of your district's DATE plan?
   (2) Did they vote to approve the district's DATE plan?
   (3) Did they disagree with the district's decision to participate in the DATE program?

For each row below, please select all applicable responses. Note: If your district did not take a formal vote to approve the DATE plan, please do not select any cells in that column.

	Yes, they were involved in the development of DATE plan.	**Yes, they voted to approve the DATE plan.**	**Yes, they disagreed with the district's DATE decision.**	**Do not know how person was involved in DATE planning and implementation.**
a. Superintendent	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. Other district officials	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. Local school board members	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. Principals	☐	☐	☐	☐
e. Assistant principals	☐	☐	☐	☐
f. Full-time classroom teachers	☐	☐	☐	☐
g. Part-time classroom teachers	☐	☐	☐	☐
h. School-level instructional specialists (e.g., instructional coaches, reading/math specialists)	☐	☐	☐	☐
i. School-level instructional support staff (e.g.., teacher's aid)	☐	☐	☐	☐
j. Librarians	☐	☐	☐	☐
k. School-level health support staff (e.g., nurse)	☐	☐	☐	☐
l. School-level counselors (e.g., social workers, career counselors).	☐	☐	☐	☐
m. Other school support staff (e.g., custodians, cafeteria workers, secretaries)	☐	☐	☐	☐
n. Community members and business leaders	☐	☐	☐	☐
o. Parents	☐	☐	☐	☐
p. Students (i.e., those enrolled in the district)	☐	☐	☐	☐

3. You indicated that at least one group disagreed with the district's decision to participate in the DATE program. Are you familiar with the factors that led to this disapproval of program participation?
    a. Yes (go to question 3a)
    b. No (go to question 4)

    3a. How important was each of the following factors that led district community members not to support participation in the DATE program? Please select the most appropriate response for each item below.

	Not Important	**Low Importance**	**Moderate Importance**	**High Importance**
a. The administrative demands (e.g., paperwork) would not be worth the time and effort required for DATE participation.	□	□	□	□
b. The guidelines for the DATE program are unclear.	□	□	□	□
c. The guidelines for the DATE program and the distribution of funds (e.g., 60% of funds for teacher incentive awards) are unfair.	□	□	□	□
d. The criteria for teachers to receive incentive awards (as specified in DATE guidelines) do not measure important aspects of teaching and learning.	□	□	□	□
e. Implementing a DATE program in the district would have a negative effect on school culture and professional collegiality.	□	□	□	□
f. They heard that schools participating in other state-funded performance pay programs (e.g., G.E.E.G. or T.E.E.G. programs) had a negative experience.	□	□	□	□
g. The district does not have the organizational or technical capacity to implement a DATE performance incentive plan.	□	□	□	□
h. The district had too many other challenges to deal with this school year.	□	□	□	□
i. They are opposed to performance pay in the field of education.	□	□	□	□
j. The district was not eligible for a sufficient sum of money from the DATE grant.	□	□	□	□

DATE Technical Assistance Activities

4. Did members in your district participate in the technical assistance activities offered to DATE participants by the state during the 2007-08 school year?
    a. Yes (go to question 5)
    b. No (go to question 7)
    c. Do not know (go to question 7)

5. You indicated that your district participated in DATE technical assistance activities during the 2007-08 school year. Which of the following members of your district participated in those technical assistance activities? Please select all applicable responses.

	Yes	No	Do Not Know
a. Superintendent	☐	☐	☐
b. Other district officials	☐	☐	☐
c. Local school board members	☐	☐	☐
d. Principals	☐	☐	☐
e. Assistant principals	☐	☐	☐
f. Full-time classroom teachers	☐	☐	☐
g. Part-time classroom teachers	☐	☐	☐
h. School-level instructional specialists (e.g., instructional coaches, reading/math specialists)	☐	☐	☐
i. School-level instructional support staff (e.g.., teacher's aid)	☐	☐	☐
j. Librarians	☐	☐	☐
k. School-level health support staff (e.g., nurse)	☐	☐	☐
l. School-level counselors (e.g., social workers, career counselors).	☐	☐	☐
m. Other school support staff (e.g., custodians, cafeteria workers, secretaries)	☐	☐	☐
n. Community members and business leaders	☐	☐	☐
o. Parents	☐	☐	☐
p. Students (i.e., those enrolled in the district)	☐	☐	☐

Please use the space provided below to describe members of other groups that participated in DATE technical assistance activities during the 2007-08 school year. _____
_____.

6. You indicated that your district participated in DATE technical assistance activities during the 2007-08 school year. Below is a list of topics that were addressed in the technical assistance sessions provided by the state. Please indicate if your district participated in any of the sessions, and if so, how valuable that session was to your district.

   Useless – Information provided did not influence our DATE plan design or decision at all.
   A Little Useful – Information helped us think about our options, but did not directly influence how we designed our DATE plan.
   Moderately Useful – Information provided general principles that we used to develop our DATE plan, but we could have used more specific assistance.
   Extremely Useful – Lessons about design features introduced during the session were directly adopted into our DATE plan design.

	Yes, we participated in this session.	**Useless**	**A Little Useful**	**Moderately Useful**	**Extremely Useful**
a. Various ways to structure effective and meaningful performance pay plans.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. Research-based evidence on elements of an effective teacher performance pay plan.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. Identifying performance-based assessments for use at the local level.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. Developing capacity or systems for measuring value-added improvement.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
e. Creating capacity for effective data systems at the local level that support teacher incentive pay programs.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
f. Professional development on communications and stakeholder engagement.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
g. Overview of DATE program guidelines and grant requirements.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
h. Lessons learned from other Texas performance incentive programs.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Please use the space provided below to describe other topics addressed during DATE technical assistance sessions during the 2007-08 school year. _____
_____.

DATE Recommendations and Concluding Thoughts

7. What have been the most significant challenges your district has faced in trying to implement its DATE plan during this 2008-09 school year? Please use the space provided below.

_____
_____
_____

8. What recommendations do you or others in your district have that would improve your district's ability to implement its DATE plan more effectively? Please use the space provided below.

_____
_____
_____

9. In the past three school years (2006-07, 2007-08, 2008-09), has your district operated a pay-for-performance plan that rewards teacher performance OTHER THAN the following state-funded programs: (1) Governor's Educator Excellence Grant (G.E.E.G.) program, (2) Texas Educator Excellence Grant (T.E.E.G.) program, or (3) District Awards for Teacher Excellence (DATE) program?
    a. Yes (if "Yes", provide essay box for districts to provide details)
    b. No

    9a. If yes, please name and briefly describe these other local pay-for-performance program(s).

    _____
    _____

Background Information

10. Please identify the job title that best describes your current professional position during this 2008-09 school year.
    a. Superintendent
    b. Other district official
    c. Local school board member
    d. Principal
    e. Assistant principal
    f. Full-time classroom teacher
    g. Part-time classroom teacher
    h. Other school staff member (i.e., not principal, assistant principal, or classroom teacher)

11. Were you personally involved in the development of your district's DATE performance incentive plan?
    a. Yes
    b. No

District Awards for Teacher Excellence (D.A.T.E.) Program
January 2009 District Survey for Comparison Districts

Dear Superintendent,

The National Center on Performance Incentives (NCPI), under contract with the Texas Education Agency (TEA), is conducting an evaluation of the District Awards for Teacher Excellence (DATE) program. We understand that your district is not participating in that state-funded performance pay program, but your district has been randomly selected to participate in this data collection activity. We are asking that you complete this very short survey about the reasons for which your district chose not to participate in the voluntary DATE program. Much can be learned from the attitudes and opinions of those districts that did not participate and we look forward to receiving your response.

We remind you that all responses will remain entirely confidential and no identifying information will be shared with TEA or included in any published reports. If you feel that another district official is better informed about the reason(s) for which the district did not participate in DATE, we ask that you direct that person to complete this survey.

If you have any questions, please contact the following persons indicated below.

Dr. Jessica Lewis (NCPI)
(615) 322-5622
jessica.l.lewis@vanderbilt.edu

Andrew Moellmer (TEA)
(512) 936-6503
ProgramEval@tea.state.tx.us

Why Not Participate in the DATE Program?

1. We are aware that your district decided not to participate in the state-funded District Awards for Teacher Excellence (DATE) program. Please indicate which members of your district were involved in the decision not to participate in the DATE program. Select all applicable responses.

	Yes	No	Do Not Know
a. Superintendent	☐	☐	☐
b. Other district officials	☐	☐	☐
c. Local school board members	☐	☐	☐
d. Principals	☐	☐	☐
e. Assistant principals	☐	☐	☐
f. Full-time classroom teachers	☐	☐	☐
g. Part-time classroom teachers	☐	☐	☐
h. School-level instructional specialists (e.g., instructional coaches, reading/math specialists)	☐	☐	☐
i. School-level instructional support staff (e.g.., teacher's aid)	☐	☐	☐
j. Librarians	☐	☐	☐
k. School-level health support staff (e.g., nurse)	☐	☐	☐
l. School-level counselors (e.g., social workers, career counselors).	☐	☐	☐
m. Other school support staff (e.g., custodians, cafeteria workers, secretaries)	☐	☐	☐
n. Community members and business leaders	☐	☐	☐
o. Parents	☐	☐	☐
p. Students (i.e., those enrolled in the district)	☐	☐	☐

Please use the space provided below to describe members of other groups that were involved in the district's decision not to participate in the DATE program. _____
_____.

2. We are interested in learning why your district decided not to participate in the state-funded DATE program despite being eligible to receive funds. Please indicate how important each of the following factors was in the district's decision not to participate in the DATE program. Please select the most appropriate response for each item below.

	Not Important	**Low Importance**	**Moderate Importance**	**High Importance**
a. The district was not aware of its eligibility to participate in the DATE program.	□	□	□	□
b. The administrative demands (e.g., paperwork) would not be worth the time and effort required for DATE participation.	□	□	□	□
c. The guidelines for the DATE program are unclear.	□	□	□	□
d. The guidelines for the DATE program and the distribution of funds (e.g., 60% of funds for teacher incentive awards) are unfair.	□	□	□	□
e. The criteria for teachers to receive incentive awards (as specified in DATE guidelines) do not measure important aspects of teaching and learning.	□	□	□	□
f. Implementing a DATE program in the district would have a negative effect on school culture and professional collegiality.	□	□	□	□
g. Our district heard that schools participating in other state-funded performance pay programs (e.g., G.E.E.G. or T.E.E.G. programs) had a negative experience.	□	□	□	□
h. The district does not have the organizational or technical capacity to implement a DATE performance incentive plan.	□	□	□	□
i. The district had too many other challenges to deal with this school year.	□	□	□	□
j. The district is opposed to performance pay in the field of education.	□	□	□	□
k. The district was not eligible for a sufficient sum of money from the DATE grant.	□	□	□	□

Please use the space provided to explain any other reasons that your district did not participate in the DATE program despite being eligible to do so. _____

_____

_____

Prospect of Future Participation in DATE Program

3. Assuming DATE program guidelines and grant requirements remain the same, if given another opportunity to participate in the DATE program, what is the likelihood that your district would participate?
    a. Zero chance that the district would participate.
    b. Less than a 50% chance that the district would participate.
    c. More than a 50% chance that the district would participate.
    d. The district would definitely participate.

4. What factors would encourage your district to participate in the DATE program in future years? Please use the space provided below.

_____

_____

_____

5. In the past three school years (2006-07, 2007-08, 2008-09), has your district operated a pay-for-performance plan that rewards teacher performance OTHER THAN the following state-funded programs: (1) Governor's Educator Excellence Grant (G.E.E.G.) program or (2) Texas Educator Excellence Grant (T.E.E.G.) program?
    a. Yes (if "Yes", provide essay box for districts to provide details)
    b. No

    5a. If yes, please name and briefly describe these other local pay-for-performance program(s).

    _____

    _____

Background Information

6. Please identify the job title that best describes your current professional position during this 2008-09 school year.
    a. Superintendent
    b. Other district official
    c. Local school board member
    d. Principal
    e. Assistant principal
    f. Full-time classroom teacher
    g. Part-time classroom teacher
    h. Other school staff member (i.e., not principal, assistant principal, or classroom teacher)

7. Were you personally involved in your district's decision not to participate in the DATE program?
    a. Yes
    b. No

APPENDIX B
Technical Appendix for Chapter 4, First-Year D.A.T.E. Plan Design and Implementation

Application Coding Methodology

In the fall of 2008, evaluators reviewed the original D.A.T.E. applications submitted for approval to the Texas Education Agency. The following sections describe the process used by evaluators to identify key design features of each locally-developed performance pay plan.

Coding Process

Evaluators reviewed the 203 D.A.T.E. proposals originally submitted to the Texas Education Agency in 2008. Evaluators developed a detailed taxonomy to code key features of performance pay plans, identifying how districts planned to use both Part 1 and Part 2 funds of their D.A.T.E. grants. These key features focused on variables that have been of use in evaluations of other state-funded performance pay programs in Texas (i.e., G.E.E.G. and T.E.E.G.) and identified as pertinent design choices in performance pay research literature and policy debate. A more detailed discussion of taxonomy variables follows in a subsequent section of this appendix.

During the fall of 2008, three evaluators coded the D.A.T.E. plan components as explained in applications submitted to the agency. These evaluators first participated in extensive training to ensure common understanding of the taxonomy and to practice common application of the taxonomy to a sample of D.A.T.E. applications. Both during the coding process and upon completion of coding applications, evaluators reviewed each other's findings to ensure inter-rater reliability. This systematic approach for reviewing D.A.T.E. applications enhanced the validity and reliability of results.

It is important to note that prior to compiling results for this fall 2009 D.A.T.E. evaluation report, evaluators did not have access to D.A.T.E. amendments submitted by districts to the Texas Education Agency. These amendments may or may not include significant changes to the performance pay plans used by D.A.T.E. participants. Upon receipt of these amendments, evaluators will review them and revise coding as needed. Any substantive changes will be reported in subsequent D.A.T.E. evaluation reports.

Taxonomy Variables

Tables B.1 to B.3 provide a list of variables capturing the design features coded for each D.A.T.E. plan. Table B.1 explains some overall characteristics of each D.A.T.E. plan, while Tables B.2 and B.3 focus on the design features related to the use of Part 1 and Part 2 funds, respectively. The tables report the percent of D.A.T.E. plans for which information on each design feature was not available.

Table B.1: Overall Plan Design Features, Missing Values

Overall Plan Design Feature	Percent of Plans w/Missing Values (n=203)
D.A.T.E. grant amount	0.0% (0)
D.A.T.E. plan type (District-wide v. Select school v. TAP)	0.0% (0)
Select school rationale (n=598)	0.0% (2)

Source: Based on authors' review of 203 D.A.T.E. applications submitted to Texas Education Agency.

Table B.2: Part 1 Design Features, Missing Values

Part 1 Design Feature	District-wide Plans w/Missing Values (n=108)	Select School Plans w/Missing Values (n=626)
Minimum Part 1 incentive award	31.1% (31)	42.8% (268)
Maximum Part 1 incentive award	31.1% (31)	42.8% (268)
Campus-wide Performance	0.0% (0)	0.8% (5)
High TEA rating	0.0% (0)	0.8% (5)
Acceptable TEA Rating	0.0% (0)	0.8% (5)
Comparable Improvement	0.0% (0)	0.8% (5)
Adequate Yearly Progress	0.0% (0)	0.8% (5)
Other	0.0% (0)	0.8% (5)
Student Academic Assessments	0.9% (1)	0.8% (5)
State standardized tests	0.0% (0)	0.8% (5)
End-of-year tests	0.0% (0)	0.8% (5)
Local benchmark tests	0.0% (0)	0.8% (5)
Student portfolio assessments	0.0% (0)	0.8% (5)
Other student assessments	0.9% (1)	0.8% (5)
Performance Measure		
Achievement level	0.0% (0)	2.6% (16)
Change over time	0.0% (0)	2.6% (16)

Achievement level + Change over time	0.0% (0)	2.6% (16)
Unit of Accountability		
School only	0.0% (0)	5.0% (31)
Team only	0.0% (0)	5.0% (31)
Teacher only	0.0% (0)	5.0% (31)
School + Team	0.0% (0)	5.0% (31)
School + Teacher	0.0% (0)	5.0% (31)
Team + Teacher	0.0% (0)	5.0% (31)
School + Team + Teacher	0.0% (0)	5.0% (31)

Source: Based on authors' review of 203 D.A.T.E. applications submitted to Texas Education Agency.

As shown in Table B.2 above, there are many missing values for the Part 1 minimum and maximum incentive award amounts. Hence, evaluators chose not to report those findings in this fall 2009 evaluation report. It is their hope that forthcoming D.A.T.E. amendments provide clarifying details to allow report of that design feature in later evaluation reports.

Table B.3: Part 2 Design Features, Missing Values

Part 2 Design Feature	District-wide Plans w/Missing Values (n=108)	Select School Plans w/Missing Values (n=626)
Incentive awards for teachers	0.9% (1)	0.3% (2)
Incentive awards for administrators	0.9% (1)	0.3% (2)
Incentive awards for other personnel	0.9% (1)	0.5% (3)
Stipends for shortage areas	0.9% (1)	2.1% (13)
Stipends for areas with high % of out-of-field teachers	0.9% (1)	2.1% (13)
Stipends for certification in main teaching subject area	0.9% (1)	2.1% (13)
Stipends for holding post-graduate degree	0.9% (1)	2.1% (13)
Stipends for mentor teachers	0.9% (1)	2.1% (13)
Stipends for master teachers	0.9% (1)	2.1% (13)
Stipends for teacher coaches	0.9% (1)	2.1% (13)

Funds for professional growth	0.9% (1)	2.1% (13)
Funds for data capacity	0.9% (1)	2.1% (13)

Source: Based on authors' review of 203 D.A.T.E. applications submitted to Texas Education Agency.

Coding Detail Tables

As explained in Chapter 4, these tables provide an overview of Part 1 design features broken out by grade level. Table B.4 provides this information exclusively for D.A.T.E. districts using grant funds district-wide. Although all schools within a given district participate in the program, many districts specified different design choices by grade level. Note that an "all grades plan" pertains to performance pay plans for which a district is using the exact same design features for all schools regardless of grade level.

Table B.4: Part 1 Design Features: District-wide D.A.T.E. Plans

Part 1 Design Features	D.A.T.E. Plan Overview (n=108)	All Grades Plans (n=29)	Elementary School Plans (n=77)	Middle School Plans (n=66)	High School Plans (n=70)	Other Grades Plans (n=1)
Campus-wide Performance	6.5% (7)	0.0% (0)	2.0% (7)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)
High TEA rating	0.0% (0)	---	0.0% (0)	---	---	---
Acceptable TEA Rating	0.0% (0)	---	0.0% (0)	---	---	---
Comparable Improvement	6.5% (7)	---	2.0% (7)	---	---	---
Adequate Yearly Progress	0.0% (0)	---	0.0% (0)	---	---	---
Other	0.0% (0)	---	0.0% (0)	---	---	---
Student Academic Assessments	100.0% (108)	100.0% (29)	100.0% (77)	100.0% (66)	100.0% (70)	100.0% (1)
State standardized Assessments	92.6% (100)	75.9% (22)	94.8% (73)	95.5% (63)	95.7% (67)	100.0% (1)
End-of-year Assessments	8.3% (9)	0.0% (0)	6.5% (5)	3.0% (2)	8.6% (6)	0.0% (0)
Local benchmark Assessments	41.7% (45)	34.5% (10)	41.6% (32)	28.8% (19)	31.4% (22)	0.0% (0)
Student portfolio Assessments	4.6% (5)	6.9% (2)	3.9% (3)	1.5% (1)	1.4% (1)	0.0% (0)
Other student Assessments	26.9% (29)	17.2% (5)	27.3% (21)	13.6% (9)	12.9% (9)	100.0% (1)

Performance Measure						
Achievement Level	45.4% (49)	41.4% (12)	44.2% (34)	42.4% (28)	41.4% (29)	0.0% (0)
Change over time	26.9% (29)	31.0% (9)	16.9% (13)	18.2% (12)	22.9% (16)	0.0% (0)
Achievement level + Change over time	36.1% (39)	24.15 (7)	39.0% (30)	39.4% (26)	35.7% (25)	100.0% (1)
Unit of Accountability						
School only	0.9% (1)	0.0% (0)	1.3% (1)	1.5% (1)	1.4% (1)	0.0% (0)
Team only	26.9% (29)	17.2% (5)	27.3% (21)	30.3% (20)	31.4% (22)	0.0% (0)
Teacher only	37.0% (40)	48.3% (14)	28.6% (22)	24.2% (16)	27.1% (19)	100.0% (1)
School + Team	2.8% (3)	0.0% (0)	2.6% (2)	3.0% (2)	4.3% (3)	0.0% (0)
School + Teacher	2.8% (3)	3.4% (1)	2.6% (2)	3.0% (2)	1.4% (1)	0.0% (0)
Team + Teacher	11.1% (12)	3.4% (1)	14.3% (11)	13.6% (9)	11.4% (8)	0.0% (0)
School + Team + Teacher	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)

Note: The "D.A.T.E. Plan Overview" column provides the overall frequency of design features used by the 108 districts implementing plans district-wide. The remaining columns are not mutually exclusive (i.e., n counts add up to more than 108) because many districts distinguish design features by grade levels.
Note: --- indicates field not applicable.
Source: Evaluators identified design features in fall 2008 when reviewing D.A.T.E. applications submitted by districts to the Texas Education Agency. Analysis restricted to 108 plans using performance pay district-wide. These features do not yet reflect any changes submitted by districts in D.A.T.E. application amendments. The 2010 D.A.T.E. evaluation report will report such changes, as applicable.

Table B.5 provides information on Part 1 plan design exclusively for D.A.T.E. districts using grant funds in select district schools. Note that an "all grades plan" pertains to performance pay plans for which a district is using select schools representative of all grade levels and the exact same design features are used in all of them.

Table B.5: Part 1 Design Features: Select School D.A.T.E. Plans

Part 1 Design Features	D.A.T.E. Plan Overview (n=626)	All Grades Plans (n=4)	Elementary School Plans (n=356)	Middle School Plans (n=135)	High School Plans (n=121)	Other Grades Plans (n=10)
Campus-wide Performance	1.4% (9)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	5.9% (8)	0.8% (1)	0.0% (0)
High TEA rating	0.0% (0)	---	---	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	---
Acceptable TEA Rating	0.0% (0)	---	---	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	---
Comparable Improvement	0.6% (4)	---	---	2.2% (3)	0.8% (1)	---
Adequate Yearly Progress	0.0% (0)	---	---	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	---
Other	0.8% (5)	---	---	3.7% (5)	0.0% (0)	---
Student Academic Assessments	98.4% (616)	100.0% (4)	98.6% (351)	96.3% (130)	100.0% (121)	100.0% (10)
State standardized assessments	91.5% (573)	75.0% (3)	89.9% (320)	91.1% (123)	97.5% (118)	90.0% (9)
End-of-year Assessments	10.7% (67)	0.0% (0)	5.9% (21)	17.0% (23)	17.4% (21)	20.0% (2)
Local benchmark Assessments	16.3% (102)	0.0% (0)	16.0% (57)	17.8% (24)	15.7% (19)	20.0% (2)
Student portfolio Assessments	4.3% (27)	0.0% (0)	2.8% (10)	5.9% (8)	5.0% (6)	30.0% (3)
Other student Assessments	32.1% (201)	25.0% (1)	38.8% (138)	23.0% (31)	23.1% (28)	30.0% (3)
Performance Measure						
Achievement Level	19.3% (121)	75.0% (3)	17.1% (61)	21.5% (29)	19.8% (24)	40.0% (4)
Change over time	37.1% (232)	0.0% (0)	37.4% (133)	34.1% (46)	41.3% (50)	30.0% (3)
Achievement level + Change over time	41.1% (257)	25.0% (1)	42.1% (150)	42.2% (57)	38.0% (46)	30.0% (3)
Unit of Accountability						
School only	1.8% (11)	0.0% (0)	0.8% (3)	0.0% (0)	6.6% (8)	0.0% (0)
Team only	51.9% (325)	0.0% (0)	55.9% (199)	45.2% (61)	52.1% (63)	20.0% (2)

Teacher only	9.9% (62)	75.0% (3)	7.3% (26)	10.4% (14)	12.4% (15)	40.0% (4)
School + Team	9.3% (58)	25.0% (1)	9.6% (34)	11.1% (15)	6.6% (8)	0.0% (0)
School + Teacher	5.9% (37)	0.0% (0)	7.6% (27)	5.9% (8)	1.7% (2)	0.0% (0)
Team + Teacher	13.1% (82)	0.0% (0)	11.0% (39)	13.3% (18)	12.4% (15)	10.0% (10)
School + Team + Teacher	1.8% (11)	0.0% (0)	0.8% (3)	3.7% (5)	2.5% (3)	0.0% (0)

Note: The "D.A.T.E. Plan Overview" column provides the overall frequency of design features used in the 626 schools selected for D.A.T.E. participation by 95 districts choosing not to implement plans district-wide. The remaining columns are mutually exclusive (i.e., n counts add up to 626 schools).
Note: --- indicates field not applicable.
Source: Evaluators identified design features in fall 2008 when reviewing D.A.T.E. applications submitted by districts to the Texas Education Agency. Analysis restricted to 95 plans using performance pay in only select schools. These features do not yet reflect any changes submitted by districts in D.A.T.E. application amendments. The 2010 D.A.T.E. evaluation report will report such changes, as applicable.

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