

Approved: 2-24-99
Date

MINUTES OF THE HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE.

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Phill Kline at 9:00 a.m. on February 3, 1999 in Room 514-S of the Capitol.

All members were present except: Rep. Landwehr

Committee staff present: Legislative Research - Alan Conroy, Robert Waller
Revisor of Statutes - Mike Corrigan

Conferees appearing before the committee:
Dale Dennis, Assistant/Deputy Commissioner, Department of Education

Others attending: See attached list

Chair called the meeting to order at 9:10 a.m.

Chair noted two bills had been rereferred to the House Appropriations Committee and are being assigned for hearings as follows:

H.B. 2016 - Demand transfer to state tourism fund
to General Government and Human Resources Budget Committee

H.B. 2061 - Community colleges, credit hour state aid, determination and payment
to Education and Legislative Budget Committee

Continued hearings on:

Children's Health Care Initiatives

Dale Dennis, Assistant/Deputy Commissioner, State Department of Education

Mr. Dennis addressed the additional funds recommended by the Governor for four programs administered by the State Department of Education: (1) At-risk weighting which is part of the School District Finance and Quality Performance Act - \$4.1 million; (2) Four-year old at-risk - \$1 million; (3) Parent education (parents as teachers) - \$777,833; (4) Discretionary grants - \$250,000.

Mr. Dennis enumerated the criteria for determining eligible students for at-risk programs. This program involves 110,000 eligible students of the 468,000 total students in Kansas. This program started at 5% participation and was increased 1 1/2% every two years to 8% and is recommended to be increased from 8% to 9%. Mr. Dennis noted the four-year old at-risk weighting would increase by 444 the number of students included. Some discussion occurred on Head Start and its funding. Parent education covers children 0 to 3 years of age and involves 3000 students. Chair asked for a report on how the local level schools are handling waiting lists. Mr. Dennis will provide the committee with the 1996-1997 evaluation which is now available and the 1997-1998 Evaluation when it becomes available in March. Discretionary grant which involves the National Geographic endowment program will return all monies invested by Kansas through interest accrual in eight years. This report reviewed the use of tobacco funds for children's education. (Attachment 1)

Next meeting is February 4, 1999

Adjournment.

Respectfully submitted,

Ann McMorris, Secretary

Attachments - 1



TO: House Committee on Appropriations

FROM: State Board of Education

SUBJECT: Review of Governor's Recommendations of Children's Health
Care Programs Funded in KSBE Budget

The Governor recommended Children's Health Care Program funds for four programs administered by the State Department of Education: (1) At-risk weighting which is part of the School District Finance and Quality Performance Act; (2) Four-year old at-risk; (3) Parent education (parents as teachers); and (4) Discretionary grants. Listed below is a summary of these programs.

AT-RISK WEIGHTING -- \$4.1 MILLION

The at-risk weighting program is recommended to be increased from 8 to 9 percent. The types of students who would be eligible are students who are failing to meet the local or state standards for learning, are not completing the requirements for promotion or for graduation, or are not acquiring skills necessary to be successful in the work place. Listed below are indicators of students that would be eligible for at-risk programs.

- Failure to achieve standards or outcomes
- Failure of subjects or courses of study
- Failure to meet graduation standards
- Failure to attain a GED or high school diploma
- Retention at any level
- Below average grade level for pupils in the same age group
- Dropout
- Insufficient mastery of skills to function effectively in society
- Low attachment to or involvement with school

FOUR-YEAR OLD AT-RISK WEIGHTING--\$1 MILLION

Currently, the law provides for 1,350 students to be included in the School District Finance and Quality Performance Act at .5 weighting. These four-year-old at-risk students are selected from school districts that apply through a competitive grant process. The Governor has recommended for Fiscal Year 2000 that this number be increased by 444 to 1,794 students. Four-year-old at-risk children to be served under this program must be identified using multiple criteria such as the following: (1) poverty, (2) single parent families, (3) SRS referral, (4) teen parents, (5) parents lacking a high school diploma or GED, (6) referrals of at-risk four-year-olds from early childhood programs, (7) limited English proficiency, and (8) developmentally or academically delayed based on assessments.

PARENT EDUCATION--\$777,833

The underlying premise of the Parent Education Program is that new parents can be assisted in their role as their children's first teacher. The program helps parents work with their child as he/she grows and develops. The purpose is to lay a strong foundation for learning, thus preparing the child to enter school.

Parents voluntarily enroll in the parent education program at the local school district and are selected to participate on a first come, first serve basis. Availability of the program to all families avoids the potential segregation, stigma, and labeling associated with targeted programs.

Delivered by trained parent educators, the program centers around personal visits with parents and their children, preferably in the home, a practice which allows parent educators to tailor educational guidance to each family. Parent educators observe parent-child interaction, provide timely information on the child's development, and respond to each parent's concern. Parent educators are also trained to screen for vision, hearing, and developmental delays and to suggest resources for follow-up if problems surface.

An independent evaluation of the first pilot Parents as Teachers program in Missouri concluded that "parental participation in a high quality parent education program during a child's first three years of life significantly increases a child's intellectual achievement and language ability at age three and above and beyond what can be explained by differences that result from socioeconomic advantage." A number of other early childhood intervention programs that took place across the country including the High/Scope Perry Preschool Project, the Carolina Abecedarian Project and the Infant Health and Development Program showed similar results. The participants in these programs, on the average, had higher IQ scores, better scores in reading and math, improved communication skills, less need for special education services and fewer health problems.

This program has proven successful. The State Board of Education believes that by making the parent education program available to all children in Kansas at risk factors will be reduced and educational achievement will be improved. Intervention in the early years has been shown to be a cost effective strategy for reducing later expenditures on developmental and educational problems which interfere with learning. Taxpayers should also realize a savings in public assistance programs and the criminal justice system.

These funds will be primarily used to help reduce the local match from 75 to 50 percent. The additional funds would help reduce the waiting list for the program which is approximately 3,000 children.

DISCRETIONARY GRANT--\$250,000

The National Geographic Society has pledged \$250,000 to assist Kansas in establishing a \$500,000 endowment fund for geography education. The fund will work with the Kansas Geographic Alliance to carry out professional development including: conducting a summer "train the trainers" program for teachers who will in turn provide in-service training to other teachers; developing teaching strategies and making them available via the Internet; producing *Geographic Insights* for more than 3000 Kansas teachers; conducting geography workshops; hosting the state finals of the National Geography Bee; training in new technologies such as G.I.S.; and sponsoring geography fairs.

In addition to their initial contribution of \$250,000, the National Geographic Society will also continue to match the 5 percent pay out dollar-for-dollar each year until it reaches \$50,000, and then will continue to support programming to a total of \$100,000 annually. It is projected that there will be a pay out of \$55,000, the first year of the program and a pay out of \$100,000 by 2015.

**STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
GENERAL STATE AID PROGRAM
(At-Risk Program and Four-Year-Old At-Risk)**

| | <u>FY 1998</u> | <u>Est. FY 1999</u> | Governor's Recommendations <u>FY 1999</u> | Governor's Recommendations <u>FY 2000</u> |
|--|----------------|---------------------|---|---|
| School District Finance and Quality Performance Act & State General Fund Tobacco | 1,519,823,555 | 1,715,601,000 | 1,715,601,000 | 1,798,909,000 ¹ |
| | | 0 | 0 | 5,100,000 ² |
| TOTAL | 1,519,823,555 | 1,715,601,000 | 1,715,601,000 | 1,804,009,000 |

**PARENT EDUCATION PROGRAM
(Parents as Teachers)**

| | <u>FY 1998</u> | <u>Est. FY 1999</u> | Governor's Recommendations <u>FY 1999</u> | Governor's Recommendations <u>FY 2000</u> |
|--------------------|------------------------|------------------------|---|---|
| State General Fund | 2,748,210 | 4,667,000 | 4,667,000 | 4,667,000 |
| Tobacco | 0 | 0 | 0 | 777,833 |
| TOTAL | 2,748,210 ³ | 4,667,000 ⁴ | 4,667,000 ⁴ | 5,444,833 ⁵ |

DISCRETIONARY GRANT FUNDS

| | <u>FY 1998</u> | <u>Est. FY 1999</u> | Governor's Recommendations <u>FY 1999</u> | Governor's Recommendations <u>FY 2000</u> |
|--------------------|---------------------|----------------------|---|---|
| State General Fund | 70,000 ⁶ | 100,000 ⁶ | 100,000 | 100,000 |
| Tobacco | 0 | 0 | 0 | 250,000 ⁷ |
| TOTAL | 70,000 | 100,000 | 100,000 | 350,000 |

¹ Includes general fund tax reductions, motor vehicle tax reduction, increase in base state aid per pupil of \$35, and an increase in correlation weighting (1,750 to 1,725).

² Includes an increase in at-risk weighting from 8 to 9 percent (\$4,100,000), and an increase of 444 students to four-year-old at-risk program.

³ Dollar for Dollar match by school districts

⁴ Local match-- .75 to dollar match by school districts

⁵ Local match-- .50 to dollar match by school districts

⁶ Includes Environmental Education, Cultural Heritage Center, Kansas Education for Agriculture in Classroom

⁷ Includes funds for National Geographic Foundation to be used for geography education.



Kansas State Department of Education

120 S.E. 10th Avenue
Topeka, Kansas 66612-1182

February 3, 1999

TO: Representative Phill Kline, Chairman
House Appropriations Committee

FROM: Dale M. Dennis, Deputy
Commissioner of Education

SUBJECT: Parents as Teachers and At-Risk Funding

Attached is a one-page summary of the parents as teachers program goals, curriculum and participants, and an evaluation of the program conducted by an independent consultant.

We are also forwarding an evaluation of the at-risk funding program for the 1996-97 school year which is part of the School District Finance and Quality Performance Act.

We hope this information will be of assistance to you.

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Kansas Parents as Teachers Program

GOALS

The primary goal of the Parents as Teachers Program is to assist parents in giving their child the best possible start in life, laying the foundation for school and life success. Other goals are:

- Increase parents' competence and confidence
- Increase parents' knowledge of child development and appropriate ways to stimulate learning
- Promote a strong parent-child relationship
- Develop true partnership between parents and school
- Provide a means for early detection of potential learning problems

PAT CURRICULUM

The Parent as Teachers National Center developed a home visiting curriculum in 1981 which was updated in 1993 based on research findings and information from families and parent educators. The curriculum has recently been rewritten to infuse the most recent research on brain development. Parent educators are given information to assist them in helping families feel comfortable with neuroscience information. Parents learn about the importance of prenatal development, early attachment between parent and child and the impact of early experiences on social emotional development. The curriculum continues to provide information on feeding, sleeping, toileting, safety, and discipline issues based on research. Parents are given information from several sources so that they may make decisions for themselves on what works best for their child. Language, motor skills, social emotional and cognitive development are addressed as the child goes through various stages of development.

PARTICIPANTS

Parents who live in participating school districts may enroll their child in the program up to the third birthday. The program is voluntary so the child may also be withdrawn from the program at any time. There are very few withdrawals except for relocation to another school district, however. The curriculum follows the natural development of young children up to age five. The Kansas program stops at the child's third birthday as required by the legislative guidelines.

The program is not targeted to any income level or category of risk. Research shows that it is more difficult to attract troubled families to targeted programs. Experience shows that poverty does not guarantee poor parenting skills, nor does high income guarantee quality life for children.

The Kansas Parenting Program is a primary prevention program. It is designed to maximize children's overall development during the first three years of life, thus laying the foundation for school success and minimizing developmental problems which might interfere with learning. Components of the PAT program include home visits, play groups and parent meetings. These services are available to all children living in the sponsoring school district.

The yearly statistics show that teen, single, low income, and non-English speaking families are participating in large numbers. Parent educators actively recruit families in high need areas such as housing projects, alternative high schools and migrant neighborhoods. However, they relate many case histories of families in all social/economic areas who need the training and support of a parenting program. There were 11,924 children served in FY 98.

EVALUATION REPORT

KANSAS PARENTS AS TEACHERS PROGRAM

Research & Training Associates, Inc.

1997

Prepared for:

Kansas State Department of Education

EVALUATION REPORT

KANSAS PARENTS AS TEACHERS PROGRAM

Judy Pfannenstiel

**Research & Training Associates, Inc.
9209 W. 110th Street, Suite 200
Overland Park, KS 66210-1439**

1997

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Special thanks to PAT staff members from the following organizations who participated in the planning, design, and implementation of this study:

- ◆ Kansas City Area PAT Consortium
- ◆ Northeast Kansas Education Service Center
- ◆ Kansas State Department of Education

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STUDY OF KANSAS PARENTS AS TEACHER PROGRAM

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Are PAT children ready for school?

- Children who participated in PAT are significantly more likely to attend preschool than are children who do not participate in PAT. Only 17% of PAT children do not attend preschool compared to 25% of children who do not participate in PAT.
- The achievement of kindergartners who participated in PAT is rated higher by teachers in comparison to other children in the class.
- Children who participated in PAT are rated higher by their teachers in terms of how well the child feels s/he is doing in school.
- Those parents who report that their participation in the PAT program helped them to better understand how young children learn are more likely to send their child to preschool. Children who attend preschool are rated higher by their teachers in terms of how well they get along socially and are rated higher by their parents in terms of their sensitivity and respect for others. Parents of children who attend preschool read more frequently to their children at home and visit their child's kindergarten class more frequently. Children who attend preschool for longer periods of time are reported by their parents to write more frequently at home.

Is PAT participation related to readiness for school?

Children who participated for longer periods of time in PAT:

- Are rated higher by their teachers in terms of how well they are doing in kindergarten.
- Are rated higher by their parents in terms of how well they are doing in kindergarten.
- Are rated higher by their parents in terms of how well they feel they are doing in kindergarten.

Parents who participated for longer periods of time in PAT:

- Rate their child's overall kindergarten experience more positively.

Children who received more frequent PAT home visits:

- Are rated higher by their teachers in terms of how well they are doing in kindergarten.
- Are rated higher by their parents in terms of how well they are doing in kindergarten.
- Are rated higher by their teachers in comparison to the achievement of other children in their class.
- Are rated higher by their parents in terms of how well they feel they are doing in kindergarten.
- Are reported by their parents to write more frequently.
- Are reported by their parents to talk more frequently about daily events such as school experiences, family outings, or at home activities.

Parents who received more frequent PAT home visits:

- Rate the PAT program more positively for its contributions to their child's readiness for kindergarten.
- Rate the PAT program more positively for helping them to support their child's learning experiences in kindergarten.
- Rate the PAT program more positively for helping them understand how young children learn.

How involved are PAT parents in school?

- Parents who participated in PAT communicate more frequently with their child's teacher than do parents who did not participate in PAT.
- Teachers report that PAT parents initiate contacts with them more frequently throughout the year than do parents who did not participate in PAT.

How involved are PAT parents in activities that support learning in the home?

- Parents who participated in PAT report they read to their kindergartner more frequently than do parents who did not participate in PAT.
- Kindergartners who participated in PAT tell or retell stories more frequently than do children who did not participate in PAT.

- The more frequently the child reads at home—and the more frequently the child is read to at home—the higher are teacher and parent ratings of how well the child is doing in kindergarten and how well the child is doing compared to other children. Thus, the PAT program's focus on activities that support learning in the home serves as link to school readiness.

Is the school ready for children?

- Virtually every parent indicates that they feel welcome in their child's classroom.
- About 90% of teachers indicate they provide frequent opportunities for children to make choices, to learn through play, to talk with others, and to try new things. Parents rate these opportunities significantly less frequent in occurrence (about 75%) than do teachers. When these opportunities are provided to children more frequently, both teachers and parents rate the child's liking of school more positively and the more positively parents rate the kindergarten experience as challenging for the child.
- Teachers rate significantly more PAT children as only *sometimes* challenged by the kindergarten experience. Children rated most ready for kindergarten are significantly more likely to be reported by teachers as unchallenged by kindergarten.
- Teachers who more frequently use practices—such as allowing students to make choices, learning through play, encouraging talk, and trying new things—are significantly less likely to describe kindergarten as unchallenging for children.

What are parents' perceptions of the effectiveness of the Pat program?

- Even three years after their participation in PAT, more than 80% of parents indicate that the program was *very helpful* in helping them understand how young children learn. Since the program is offered to pre-birth through age three children, parents do not as frequently make the connection between PAT participation and children's readiness for kindergarten.

The results of this study replicate findings from a number of studies of PAT in Missouri and nationwide which indicate that participation in Parents as Teachers (1) assists parents in becoming the first and most important teachers of their children, (2) encourages activities in the home that support early literacy development, (3) promotes school readiness, and (4) promotes greater parental involvement in schools when children are of school age.

INTRODUCTION

In 1996, the Kansas State Board of Education directed the Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE) to conduct an evaluation of the Parents as Teachers Program. The KSDE contracted with Research & Training Associates, Inc. (RTA) to provide technical assistance to districts and programs willing to participate in this evaluation. Because few resources were available to conduct the study, the evaluation was intended to largely rely on the cooperation of local programs and the use of staff time to design the evaluation and collect data.

At the State Board's direction, the evaluation addressed the three purposes of the Parents as Teachers program outlined in the legislation:

- School readiness and early school success
- Early detection of developmental delays
- Improved parenting attitudes and skills

A team comprised of Lynne Owen, the KSDE program consultant for PAT, PAT coordinators in participating districts, and RTA staff developed a research design to evaluate each of these purposes.

EVALUATION DESIGN

The following evaluation questions were formulated by the evaluation team to guide the study design:

- (1) Are PAT children "ready" for school? How does the school readiness of PAT children compare to the readiness of children who do not participate in PAT? In what ways is participation in the PAT program (in terms of varying quantity or quality of participation) related to children's readiness for school?
- (2) Is PAT participation related to readiness for school?
- (3) How involved are PAT parents in their child's school compared to parents who do not participate in PAT?
- (4) How involved are PAT parents in activities that support learning in the home and how does that involvement compare to parents who do not participate in PAT?
- (5) Is the school "ready" for children? Are the early school experiences of children challenging?
- (6) What are parents' perceptions of the effectiveness of the PAT program?

The evaluation team planned a data collection methodology for each of the three purposes in keeping with available data and resource limitations.

School Readiness

Information was obtained from participating districts to compare the readiness of all children served by the PAT program who entered kindergarten in fall, 1996, to children in the same kindergarten classrooms who were not served by the PAT program. "Readiness" was initially intended to be measured by common areas that could be identified across districts in children's end of 1st quarter reports to parents. "Early school success" was intended to be measured by the improvement between first quarter and end-of-year reports.

However, preliminary analysis of kindergarten report cards demonstrated vast differences in the comprehensiveness, specificity, and generality by which kindergarten performance is assessed. It was not uncommon for a kindergarten report to contain 150 assessment items. A restricted range of ratings often accompanied the detailed listing of skills. While in most districts a 3- or 4-point scale was used, in some instances the scale contained a response form that indicated whether or not the skill had been "introduced." (A category of "not appropriate to rate" was thus generated as one of the rating options). The result is that given these differences in rating systems, only a two-point rating scale could be obtained across districts. The evaluation design team concluded that efforts to obtain these data would be time-consuming, would pose an issue of confidentiality for many districts, and would generate little comparable information across districts.

Information on readiness and early school performance for the evaluation effort was ultimately obtained from parents and teachers.¹ Teachers responded to some of the same questions asked of parents for both PAT and comparison children in their classrooms.

Early Detection of Developmental Delays

PAT records provided information on the identification and resolution of developmental delays during a child's participation in the PAT program. All participants agreed to obtain available screening data at 12, 24, and 36 months on hearing and vision as well as the results of the administration of the Denver Developmental Screening Assessment at each point in time. Denver results were recorded using the instrument's "normal," "untestable," or "suspect" coding schema. Data on whether services were received (yes, no, don't know) and whether they were resolved by the completion of the program (yes, no, don't know) was provided. Finally, whether children were identified as Part H Special Education during their participation in PAT was provided.

The evaluation team generally agreed that neither teachers nor school nurses could provide information on hearing or vision screenings that would add much of significance to the study given the extensive efforts that would be required to obtain such information on an individual child basis. All obtained information on whether the child was identified for Special Education in kindergarten.

¹ Teachers were *NOT* provided information on how children were selected or which children had participated in PAT.

Improved Parenting Attitudes and Skills

The design team examined six areas of interest in studying the effects of PAT on parents:

1. whether children attended preschool
2. parents' assessment of their child's "readiness" for school and early school performance
3. parents' assessment of the quality of their child's kindergarten experience
4. the frequency of activities in the home that support children's learning
5. the frequency and types of parental involvement in school during the kindergarten year
6. parent perceptions of their skills as parents (i.e., parent-child interaction, communication.)

RTA staff drafted an instrument that was edited and revised by the design team.

Family Background Characteristics

The following family background characteristics were obtained from PAT records:

- Mother's education, one- or two-parent family, race/ethnicity
- Age of child at program entry and exit
- Quantity of PAT participation
 - Number of home visits per year of participation
 - Length of participation in months
- Child's achievement/performance at age 3
- Existence of development delay and whether delay was resolved/unresolved at age 3

Sample

Those districts that volunteered to commit local resources to conduct the study determined the sample of districts participating in the evaluation. Two large consortiums of districts volunteered, one that included districts in the Kansas City metropolitan area and one that included rural districts in the Northeast area. Seventeen districts representing urban, suburban, and rural areas provided data for this study.

Virtually all of the district's representatives on the evaluation team expressed concerns about the timing of the evaluation and the quality of the sample. Children entering kindergarten in 1996-97 did not experience a fully-implemented PAT program. Since the funds for a fully-implemented PAT program began in 1993-94, most agreed that the 1998-99 cohort of kindergartners would be the first to represent the effects that a fully implemented program might have on school readiness. Despite their concerns about the quality of the evaluation, districts agreed to participate in the early study of the effects of PAT participation. The implication of the timing of the evaluation is that any effects of the program are expected to be understated; longitudinal study of the effects of PAT on a sample that participated in a fully-implemented program is needed.

Sampling methodology centered on the identification of PAT children entering kindergarten. Among the 17 districts, 227 PAT children entered kindergarten in 82 schools. The parents and teachers of these 227 children form the parent and teacher samples.

The identification of a comparison sample given limited resources was the single most difficult methodological issue to resolve. The following methodology guided the identification of the comparison sample:

- A comparison sample of similar size as comprises the PAT sample was selected overall. Comparison children (and their parents) were selected from the same classrooms that PAT kindergartners attend. For example, if two PAT children were in a classroom, then two comparison children were randomly selected from the same classroom.
- Comparison children were matched to the PAT child on gender. In cases where information on gender was not available on the class list, staff contacted the school secretary to confirm gender. If the gender proved to be different from the PAT child, another child was randomly selected.
- Staff confirmed that the child selected had been in the classroom for the entire year. If the child transferred into the classroom, a replacement selection was made.

Sample sizes and response rates for selected parents and teachers are provided in Table 1. Parents enthusiastically responded to requests from their districts for their perceptions of their child's readiness and achievement and the school's readiness for their child—97% of parents of PAT children and a randomly-selected comparison group responded to the phone survey. Eighty-one percent of respondents were the child's mother, 16% were the child's father, and 3% were other adults responsible for the child.

Primarily due to the reluctance of some school administrators to request the cooperation of their teachers and/or to provide information on individual children, a somewhat lower 84% of teachers of PAT and comparison children responded to the written survey.

Some data was obtained on 78% of PAT participants from records maintained by the program; for many of the variables, however, data was sporadically available since comparable data was not obtained at all program sites during the early years of implementation.

Table 1. Sample Size and Response Rate By Respondent

| Respondents | Number | Response Rate |
|-----------------------------|---------------|----------------------|
| School Districts | 17 | NA |
| Schools | 82 | NA |
| Teacher Reports on Students | 381 | 84% |
| Parent Surveys | 439 | 97% |
| Data on PAT Participants | 177 | 78% |

Since data was obtained on virtually all PAT children entering kindergarten in these school districts, the sample is highly representative of those who participated in the PAT program—though some sample attrition due to family relocations occurred. The background characteristics of these children and families were examined to describe the characteristics of PAT participants and the extent to which these families are similar to or different from typical families in Kansas. Caution must be exercised in generalizing from these data since missing data on some background characteristics (e.g., mother's age) is as high as 47%.

About 90% of children lived in two-parent households at the time of their enrollment in PAT and 87% lived in two-parent households at their exit; this indicates that the early PAT recruitment efforts were more successful with two-parent families since their statewide representation is a lower 77%. Fifteen percent of mothers and 10% of fathers were of minority status. Mother's age at child's birth ranged from 17 to 32, with an average age of 26. Six percent of PAT mothers had not obtained a high school diploma or GED, identical to the statewide percentage. Ten percent of families qualified for public assistance. Thirty percent of participants had one child at the time of enrollment, almost one-half had two children, and one-fourth had more than two children.

In these early years of PAT implementation, the age of children at enrollment varied widely from pre-birth to 2.9 years, with an average age of 11 months at enrollment. Correspondingly, participation in PAT ranged from 2 months to 38 months, with an average of 19 months, a significantly lower length of participation than the intended 36+ months. Missing data for about 35% of participants indicates that caution must be exercised in interpreting or generalizing from these data.

Data Collection

PAT staffers concluded that information from parents would best be obtained through a phone interview conducted by PAT staffers that identified the district as the party seeking the information (i.e., the survey would not be specifically identified as a study of the PAT program but as a study of kindergarten readiness). The information obtained on such a survey was thought to be of widespread interest to superintendents.

Staffers specified that the parent survey should be no more than 10 minutes in length. RTA developed a draft instrument that addressed each of the six identified areas of interest and which could be conducted in less than 10 minutes. PAT staffers provided suggestions and revisions to drafts of the instrument.

Members of the evaluation team field-tested the revised instrument on parents who were not sample members and noted the following:

- How long it took to complete
- Whether parents thought it was too long
- Which words or questions needed further explanation

The instrument was revised based on the results of this field test (see Appendix for Parent Survey). The teacher survey was developed to obtain similar information on children's readiness for school, the quality of the kindergarten experience, and parents' involvement in their child's school experience (see Appendix for Teacher Survey).

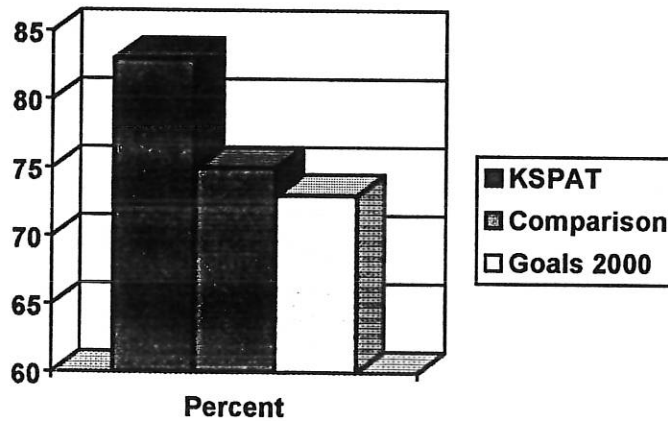
In the following section, study findings are presented for each of the research questions.

STUDY FINDINGS

Are PAT children "ready" for school?

Children who participate in PAT are significantly more likely to attend preschool than are children who do not participate in PAT ($\chi^2 = 4.86, df = 2,411, p < .05$). Only 17% of PAT children do not attend preschool compared to 25% of children who do not participate in PAT.² (See Figure 1). On average, children attended preschool for two years prior to kindergarten.

Figure 1. Percent of Children Participating in Preschool



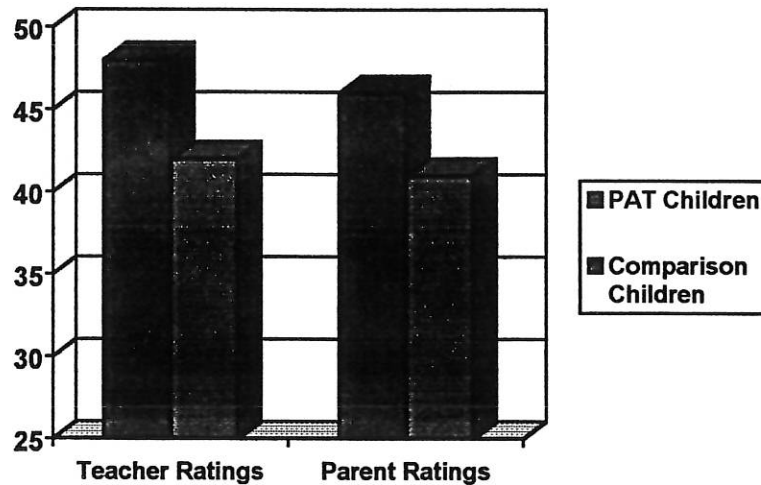
The kindergarten achievement of children who participated in PAT is rated significantly higher by teachers in comparison to other children in the class ($r = .17, p < .05$). Teachers rate 48% of PAT children *above average* compared to 42% of comparison children. PAT parents rate 46% of their children *above average* compared to 41% of comparison parents. (See Figure 2). Children who participated in PAT are also rated higher by their teachers in terms of how well the child feels s/he is doing in school ($r = .12, p < .05$).

Virtually no parents thought that their child was doing poorly in school; about 5% rate their child's achievement, social interactions, and liking for school as *fair*. Teachers, on the other hand, rate about 2% of children as doing poorly in school and 12% as *fair*. Almost two-thirds of parents (compared to 48% of teachers) believe their child is doing *excellent* in kindergarten, but only one-half of parents (and teachers) believe that their own child thinks he/she is doing as well.

Parents who report that participation in the PAT program helped them to better understand how young children learn more frequently sent their child to preschool. Children who attended preschool are rated higher by their teachers in terms of how well they get along socially and are rated higher by their parents in terms of their sensitivity and respect for others.

²The most recent statewide statistics available indicate that 41% of 3- to 5-year-olds in Kansas are not enrolled in nursery school or kindergarten. (Kids Count, 1997).

Figure 2. Percent of Kindergarten Children Rated Above Average by Teachers and Parents



Parents of children who attended preschool read more frequently to their children at home and visit their child's kindergarten class more frequently. Children who attended preschool for longer periods of time are reported by their parents to write more frequently at home. Thus, the effectiveness of PAT in terms of school readiness is increased by its encouragement of high-quality preschool experiences and other activities in the home that support the learning of young children.

Is PAT participation related to readiness for school?

If participation in the PAT program is beneficial for parents and children, then greater degrees of participation in terms of length of participation and/or frequency of home visits can be expected to be related to more positive outcomes. The investigation of the relationship between PAT participation and school readiness indicates that children who participated for longer periods of time in PAT:

- Are rated higher by their teachers in terms of how well they are doing in kindergarten ($r = .22, p < .05$).
- Are rated higher by their parents in terms of how well they are doing in kindergarten ($r = .31, p < .001$).
- Are rated higher by their parents in terms of how well they feel they are doing in kindergarten ($r = .27, p < .001$).

Parents who participated for longer periods of time in PAT:

- Rate their child's overall kindergarten experience more positively ($r = .30, p < .001$).

Children who received more frequent PAT home visits:

- Are rated higher by their teachers in terms of how well they are doing in kindergarten ($r = .17, p < .05$).
- Are rated higher by their parents in terms of how well they are doing in kindergarten ($r = .26, p < .001$).
- Are rated higher by their teachers in comparison to the achievement of other children in their class ($r = .17, p < .05$).
- Are rated higher by their parents in terms of how well they feel they are doing in kindergarten ($r = .25, p < .001$).
- Are reported by their parents to write more frequently ($r = .17, p < .05$).
- Are reported by their parents to talk more frequently about daily events such as school experiences, family outings, or at home activities ($r = .23, p < .01$).

Parents who received more frequent PAT home visits:

- Rate the PAT program more positively for its contributions to their child's readiness for kindergarten ($r = .17, p < .05$).
- Rate the PAT program more positively for helping them to support their child's learning experiences in kindergarten ($r = .22, p < .01$).
- Rate the PAT program more positively for helping them understand how young children learn ($r = .36, p < .0001$).

These findings are summarized in Table 2.

How involved are PAT parents in school?

Parents who participated in PAT communicate more frequently with their child's teacher than do parents who did not participate in PAT ($r = .20, p < .05$). About 25% of PAT parents and 16% of comparison parents communicate with their child's kindergarten teacher on a daily basis. About 15% of PAT and comparison parents report that they rarely communicate with their child's teacher.

Teacher reports indicate that parents who participated in PAT visit their child's classroom 15 times a year compared to 11 times a year for parents who do not participate. (See Figure 3). Almost 20% of PAT parents but less than 10% of comparison parents indicate that they visit their child's classroom almost daily. One-fourth of PAT parents and one-third of comparison parents indicate that they rarely visit their child's kindergarten classroom.

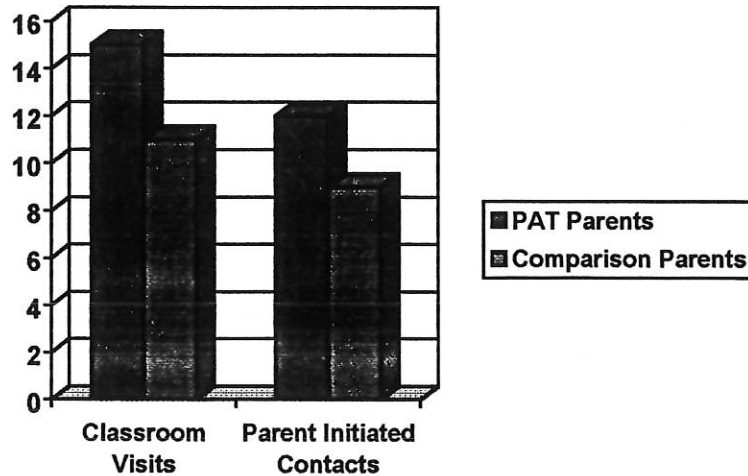
1-24

Table 2. Benefits of Participation in the Parents As Teachers Program

| | Longer Participation | More Home Visits |
|--|-----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Children are rated higher by <u>teachers</u> on how well they are doing in kindergarten | ✓ | ✓ |
| Children are rated higher by <u>parents</u> on how well they are doing in kindergarten | ✓ | ✓ |
| Children are rated by teachers as higher achievers compared to other children in their class | | ✓ |
| Children feel they are doing well in school | ✓ | ✓ |
| Children write more frequently at home | | ✓ |
| Children talk about daily events more frequently | | ✓ |
| Parents rate their child's kindergarten experience more positively | ✓ | |
| Parents rate the PAT program more highly for: -its contribution to their child's readiness -helping them support their child's learning -helping them understand how children learn | | ✓ ✓ ✓ |

Teacher reports indicate that PAT parents also initiate contacts with them more frequently throughout the year—an average of 12 times a year compared to 9 times a year for parents who do not participate in PAT. (See Figure 3).

Figure 3. Number of Classroom Visits and Parent Initiated Contacts Per Year



How involved are PAT parents in activities that support learning in the home?

Parents who participated in PAT read to their kindergartner more frequently than do parents who did not participate in PAT ($r = .10, p < .05$). Eighty-four percent of parents who participated in PAT read to their kindergartner on a daily basis compared to 77% of comparison parents. Ninety-five percent of PAT parents and 90% of comparison parents report that their child "reads" at home on a daily basis. (See Figure 4).

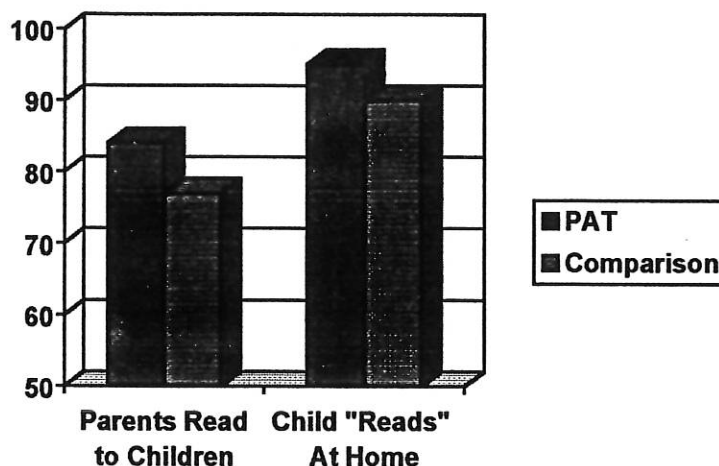
Parents who participated in PAT are also more likely to understand the educational significance of children's telling or retelling stories. About 10% of comparison parents, but only 3% of PAT parents, indicate that their child *rarely* tells stories ($\chi^2 = 7.20, df = 4,420, p = .05$).

The more frequently the child reads at home—and the more frequently the child is read to at home—the higher are teacher and parent ratings of how well the child is doing in kindergarten and how well the child is doing compared to other children ($r = .20, p < .0001$). Thus, the PAT program's focus on activities that support learning in the home serves as a link to school readiness.

Is the school "ready" for children?

Teachers indicate that they provide frequent opportunities for children to make choices (86%), to learn through play (89%), to talk with others (93%), and to try new things (90%). Parents also rate kindergarten classrooms as providing frequent opportunities for these practices, but rate

Figure 4. Percent of Parents Who Read to Their Children and Percent of Children Who "Read" At Home



them significantly less frequent in occurrence than do teachers. In particular, significantly fewer parents report frequent opportunities for their child to learn through play (77%) and to talk with others (76%). Parent perceptions of the frequency of these practices in the kindergarten classroom are similar for PAT participants and non-participants.

Both teachers and parents rate children's liking of school more positively when children are given more opportunities to make choices, to talk with others, and to try new ideas. Parents rate opportunities for parent involvement and their experience in their child's classroom more positively when they perceive that teachers provide frequent opportunities for children to make choices, to learn through play, to talk with others, and to try new things.

PAT and comparison parents also rate opportunities for parent involvement in their child's school similarly. More than one-half of parents rate opportunities for parent involvement as *excellent*, 30% rate them *good*, and slightly more than 10% rate them *fair* or *poor*. Virtually every parent indicates that they feel welcome in their child's classroom.

Overall, 83% of parents report that kindergarten *often* challenges their child to learn; about 15% report that their child is *sometimes* challenged by kindergarten. Ratings are similar for PAT participants and non-participants. Parents are significantly more likely to report that kindergarten challenges their child when the child is given more opportunities to make choices, to talk with others, and to try new ideas.

Similar to parent ratings, teachers rate 81% of comparison children as *often* challenged by kindergarten experiences. Teachers rate significantly more PAT children as only *sometimes* challenged by kindergarten experiences. Children rated most ready for kindergarten are significantly more likely to be reported by teachers as unchallenged by kindergarten ($r = -.37, p = .0001$.) These teachers believe that the kindergarten curriculum is not meeting the needs of children who are ready for school. Children

who are ready for school could be further challenged and do not respond well to a curriculum that is so teacher- or curriculum-driven and lacking in individualization.

Teachers also cite too few opportunities for children to talk with others or to try new things within the kindergarten curriculum. Teachers who more frequently use teaching practices—such as allowing students to make choices, learning through play, encouraging talk, and trying new things—are significantly less likely to describe kindergarten as unchallenging for children ($r = -.30, p = .0001$.)

Despite their children's more highly-rated achievement, parents of PAT children rate their child's liking of school somewhat less positively than do parents of comparison children. Sixty percent of PAT parents and 64% of comparison parents give an *excellent* rating to their child's liking of school. Only about 5% of all parents indicate that their kindergartner has a *fair* or *poor* liking of school.

Parents made the following unsolicited comments about the kindergarten experience provided by their schools:

My child is doing very well this year. I appreciate the good work of the school district.

We are extremely happy with {our child's} kindergarten experience.

Overall, we are impressed with full day kindergarten. It has been tremendous for his learning. They need it. We have friends that aren't in a district with full day kindergarten. We can tell the difference.

Parents from districts conducting half-day kindergarten classes commented that they favored all-day kindergarten classes. For example, one parent said

We moved {here} from {another state}. They had an all day kindergarten. I think that it would help to have an all day kindergarten. My other children were reading when they finished kindergarten.

What are parents' perceptions of the effectiveness of the PAT program?

Even three years after their participation in PAT, parents continue to rate the program very highly. Eighty-three percent of parents indicate that the program was *very helpful* in a primary goal of understanding how young children learn. More than one-half rate the program as *very helpful* in supporting their child's learning in kindergarten; almost one-half rate the program as *very helpful* in contributing to their child's readiness for kindergarten. Since the PAT program is offered to pre-birth through age three children, parents do not as frequently make the connection between PAT participation and children's readiness for kindergarten. Since PAT promotes the importance of high-quality preschool experiences, the preschool experience itself may be the factor in parents' minds most

closely aligned with school readiness.

Over one-third of parents provided unsolicited comments about the PAT program's importance, often by suggesting that PAT should serve families until children are five years of age. Parents said:

{PAT services} should go to kindergarten age.

I was glad you had {questions about} Parents As Teachers. . I used to be a walking testimonial for the program.

I would like to see PAT mandated. I believe this program is more important than kindergarten.

Parents as Teachers was absolutely wonderful. It helped me to be an advocate {for my child}.

I wish they could expand the program. My neighbor wants in. I wish there was more funding.

A parent of a special needs child said:

If we hadn't been enrolled in the program, I wouldn't have sought further evaluation {for my child}.

Approximately one-third of the parents who commented about PAT made statements about the short time in the program with their kindergartner, often because participation had been mostly with an older child. Services to the family were stopped when the older child turned three or when the family had three years of services. Parents commented:

I was very active with my older child. We went to play group every week. I only received one visit with {this child}.

I loved Parents As Teachers. I wish I could have stayed involved with {this} child.

CONCLUSION

The results of this study replicate findings from a number of studies of PAT in Missouri and nationwide which indicate that participation in Parents as Teachers (1) assists parents in becoming the first and most important teachers of their children, (2) encourages activities in the home that support early literacy development, (3) promotes school readiness, and (4) promotes greater parental involvement in schools when children are of school age.

APPENDIX

Now I'd like to ask about how frequently you had contact with your child's school this year. Please indicate about how frequently these activities occurred: (1) almost daily; (2) weekly; (3) monthly; or (4) rarely.

| | Almost <u>Daily</u> 4 | <u>Weekly</u> 3 | <u>Monthly</u> 2 | <u>Rarely</u> 1 |
|---|---|--|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 11. How often did you visit your child's kindergarten classroom? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 12. How often did you visit your child's school, aside from classroom visits (special events, parent organization meetings, family nights)? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 13. How often do you communicate with your child's teacher? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 14. How often do you contact your child's school, aside from communication with your child's teacher? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 15. How would you rate the opportunities for parent involvement in your child's school this year? | <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> Good 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> Fair 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> Poor 1 |
| 16. How would you rate your experiences in your child's school this year? | <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> Good 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> Fair 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> Poor 1 |
| 17. Do you feel welcome in your child's classroom? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> No 2 | | |
| 18. Did you participate in the Parents as Teachers Program | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> No [IF NO, SKIP TO QUESTION #22] 2 | | |
| If yes, in which district? _____ | | | | |

Please indicate how helpful the Parents as Teachers program was by responding (1) very helpful; (2) somewhat helpful; or (3) not very helpful.

How helpful was Parents as Teachers in:

| | <u>Very helpful</u> 3 | <u>Somewhat helpful</u> 2 | <u>Not very helpful</u> 1 |
|--|--------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 19. Contributing to <u>your child's</u> readiness for kindergarten? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 20. Helping <u>you</u> to support your child's learning in kindergarten? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 21. Helping you understand how young children learn? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

In our last section, I'd like to ask about some activities in the home. Please indicate about how frequently these activities occur in your home: (1) almost daily; (2) weekly; (3) monthly; or (4) rarely.

| | <u>Almost Daily</u> 4 | <u>Weekly</u> 3 | <u>Monthly</u> 2 | <u>Rarely</u> 1 |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 22. My child looks at or reads books and other print in the house (labels, magazines, signs, etc.) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 23. My child is read to in our home. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 24. My child tells stories. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 25. My child "writes" notes, lists, messages, or letters, etc. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 26. My child s artwork, writing, or schoolwork is displayed. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 27. My child sees adults in the home reading. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 28. My child talks about daily events such as school experiences, family outings, or at home activities. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 29. My child plays games that require reading, writing, and/or math (Chutes & Ladders, Candyland). | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 30. My child builds things and experiments to understand how things work (legos, blocks, rocks, sand). | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 31. My child displays sensitivity and respect for others. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 32. My child explores and tries new things. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR SHARING YOUR TIME WITH US.

Prepared for the Kansas State Department of Education by Research & Training Associates, Inc., Overland Park, KS, 1997.

KINDERGARTEN READINESS TEACHER SURVEY

Child's Name _____
Last
First

USD _____ Date Form Completed _____ - _____ - _____
Mo. Day Year

School _____

Child's I.D. _____ Child's Date of birth _____ - _____ - _____
Mo. Day Year

PLEASE CHECK ONE RESPONSE FOR EACH QUESTION.

| | <u>Excellent</u> 4 | <u>Good</u> 3 | <u>Fair</u> 2 | <u>Poor</u> 1 |
|---|---------------------------------------|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. How well do <u>you</u> think this child is doing in kindergarten? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. How does he/she get along socially with others? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. How well do you think this child likes school? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. How do you think this child feels he/she is doing in kindergarten? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. How does this child compare to other children in his/her class? | | | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Above average 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> Average 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> Below Average 1 | | |

6. Do you think kindergarten challenged this child?

Often
3

Sometimes
2

Not Very Often
1

Why or why not? (Provide examples.) _____

7. How often do you provide opportunities for children to learn by:

| | <u>Often</u> 3 | <u>Sometimes</u> 2 | <u>Not Very Often</u> 1 |
|------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| a) making choices | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b) playing | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c) talking with others | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d) trying new things | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

8. About how often did a parent of this child visit your kindergarten classroom?
___ times this year

9. About how often were you contacted by a parent of this child?
___ times this year

10. About how often did you communicate with the parent of this child?
___ times this year

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION WITH THIS STUDY!

Prepared for the Kansas State Department of Education by Research & Training Associates, Inc., Overland Park, KS, 1997.

**Kansas At-Risk Pupil Assistance Program
EVALUATION REPORT
For
1996-97**

**Prepared for
Kansas State Board of Education**

**Prepared by
Kansas State Department of Education
Consolidated and Supplemental Programs Team
120 S.E. Tenth Avenue
Topeka, KS 66612-1182**

February, 1998

Kansas At-Risk Pupil Assistance Program
EVALUATION REPORT
1996-97

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 301 public school districts participated in the State At-Risk Program
- Weighted enrollment count generated \$19,730,573 for at-risk students
- Approximately 85,540 students participated in at-risk programs
- 45% of the at-risk programs were for elementary students
- 94% of reporting at-risk programs considered theirs to be successful
- 79% of reporting at-risk programs saw students' grades improve
- 86% of reporting at-risk programs indicated students passed courses they had been failing
- 81% of reporting at-risk programs saw a positive impact on students who had been behind in graduation credits
- 47% of reporting at-risk programs had an increase in student attendance
- 58% of reporting at-risk programs experienced a decline in discipline referrals
- 35% of reporting at-risk programs had a decline in the number of dropouts
- 58% of reporting at-risk programs indicated a positive impact on state reading assessment results
- 52% of reporting at-risk programs indicated a positive impact on state mathematics assessment results
- 72% of reporting at-risk programs saw students making progress toward meeting either local student exit outcomes or State outcomes for Quality Performance Accreditation
- 21% of reporting at-risk programs said students met either local student exit outcomes or State outcomes for Quality Performance Accreditation

**Kansas At-Risk Pupil Assistance Programs
EVALUATION REPORT
For
1996-97**

Since the 1992-93 school year, the State of Kansas has provided funding for at-risk programs at public schools . These programs are to provide opportunities to at-risk students that are not available to the general population of students. The goal of the Kansas At-Risk Pupil Assistance Program is to increase the academic achievement of at-risk students.

FUNDING

Public school districts received weighted enrollment funds for students identified as at-risk as part of the school finance formula. The school finance formula calculated at-risk enrollment at 5% of the base per pupil amount of \$3,648. In 1996-97, this equated to about \$182 per student eligible for free lunch. For the purposes of allocating funds, "at-risk" was defined as those students on September 20 who were eligible for free lunches under the National School Lunch Act. Each district accessing the funds had to have an At-Risk Pupil Assistance Plan approved by the Kansas State Department of Education staff. The purpose of the district plans was to be certain that the at-risk funds provided extra opportunities for at-risk students.

During the 1996-97 school year, 301 of the 304 public school districts in Kansas accessed \$19,730,573 of state funds for specific at-risk programs. This was an increase of \$252,789 and one additional school district from 1995-96.

IDENTIFICATION OF AT-RISK STUDENTS

Though the funds were allocated on the basis of free lunch count, the districts indicated in their At-Risk plans the criteria used for identifying which "at-risk" students would participate in the program. The criteria was to be based on the definition of at-risk as approved by the Kansas State Board of Education in the *Kansas At-Risk Pupil Assistance Plan Guidelines (1992 HB 2892)*:

At-risk student means any student who is not completing the requirements necessary for promotion to grade level, grade-to-grade promotion or graduation from high school. An at-risk student's educational attainment is below the level that is appropriate for students of his or her age and/or grade level. An at-risk student is a potential drop-out.

The definition of at-risk student does not include any student determined to be an exceptional child under the provisions of the Special Education for Exceptional Children Act.

At-risk students might be characterized by any of the following indicators:

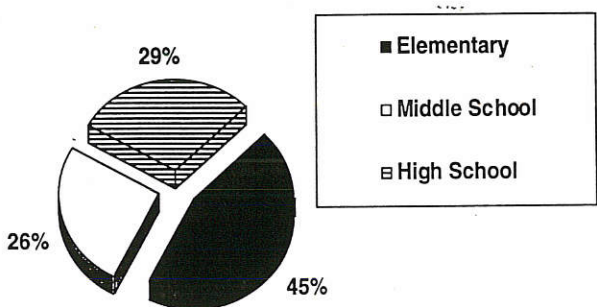
- Failure to achieve grade-level standards
- Failure in two or more subjects or courses of study
- Two or more credits behind in the number of graduation credits attained
- Retention at grade level one or more times
- Significantly behind in meeting Quality Performance Accreditation outcomes

Districts frequently used one or more of the following criteria when identifying at-risk students: failing grades, low test scores, teacher referrals, retentions, not mastering outcomes, not completing schoolwork or homework, multiple absences, low self-esteem and lacking graduation credits.

Approximately 85,540 or 19% of the 446,000 Kansas K-12 school-age children enrolled in school participated in the at-risk programs in 1996-97. There were 38,880 elementary students; 22,072 middle level/junior high students; and 24,588 high school students. This is an increase of 22,816 students participating in the at-risk programs from 1995-96.

When reflecting on the increasing numbers of at-risk students, USD 307 El-Saline commented, "One of our concerns is that the number of students who need extra help is increasing. We are seeing an increase of students who do not qualify for special education, but who are in many cases, more *needy* . . . Another concern is the numbers are increasing, but our ability timewise to provide services is decreasing."

Level of Participating Students



TYPES OF AT-RISK SERVICES

The 301 participating school districts developed programs that provided opportunities for students from preschool through high school. Some districts chose to provide at-risk programs for all grades levels while others provided programs at only one level.

The goal of the At-Risk Pupil Assistance Programs was to increase student academic achievement. In many instances, districts provided more than one program and more than one type of service to accomplish this goal; thus, the total number of types of programs provided to at-risk students mentioned in this report exceed the total number of participating districts. Following are the types of programs and the number of districts offering it:

- 271 tutoring
- 67 alternative schools
- 174 remedial math
- 59 peer helpers or mentors
- 126 credit completion or make-up
- 62 staff development
- 166 computer assisted instruction
- 103 alternative classes
- 175 remedial reading
- 31 second language assistance
- 98 counseling

Districts provided these programs and services at a variety of times. They were provided during the regular school year as well as through extended school terms and during summer school. Programs were available before, during and after school for students identified as at-risk. About 24% of the programs were summer programs.

EVALUATION DESIGN

Districts participating in the At-Risk Pupil Assistance Program were requested to evaluate their program using two components. When districts developed their at-risk plans, they were to include their desired outcomes for participating at-risk students. The plan also indicated how the district would evaluate whether or not the desired outcomes had been met. This was the first component of the evaluation process; the second was an evaluation report form completed by the districts. Data was collected on grades, failures, graduation credits, absences, discipline referrals, dropouts, state assessments, district and state student outcomes and parent feedback. Of the 301 participating USDs, 297 provided evaluation information regarding their 1996-97 At-Risk Pupil Assistance Programs. The information following is a compilation of the two evaluation components.

The comments attributed to districts that are contained in this report were randomly selected from the evaluation reports submitted by those districts. These comments reflect a sample of what districts believed about their at-risk programs.

IMPACT OF AT-RISK PUPIL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

Success of Program

Districts were asked whether or not they considered their At-Risk Pupil Assistance programs to have been successful. Of the 338 programs reviewed, 94% were considered to be successful. In 1993-94, 88% and in 1994-95, 95% of those reporting claimed their programs were successful. In 1995-96, 94% said their programs were successful. One district commented that it was difficult to pull data on only at-risk students as often the programs and services provided them overlap with other issues.

| Percent of Districts Reporting Success of Programs | | | |
|--|-----|----|-----------|
| Year | Yes | No | Uncertain |
| 1993-94 | 88 | 1 | 11 |
| 1994-95 | 95 | 0 | 5 |
| 1995-96 | 94 | 0 | 6 |
| 1996-97 | 94 | 1 | 5 |

About 5% of the programs were uncertain about their success. In some cases the data on students was mixed. Some data such as grades showed improvement, but other data such as discipline referrals declined. Some districts had changed their at-risk programs and were in the process of establishing new baseline data; therefore, they were uncertain as to the success of their programs. USD 263 Mulvane was concerned with the limited access high school students had to the at-risk program since it was available only two hours a day; therefore, they were going to offer the program all day during the 1997-98 school year. Several districts such as USD 312 Haven recognized that their at-risk program was improving. They reflected that they still needed to "research and experiment in order to find a program that works for all students."

USD 260 Derby felt their program was successful as they provided 180 kindergarten and first grade students with increased learning opportunities. As a result, the number of referrals to the transitional first grade and the number of students retained were reduced. USD 311 Pretty Prairie believed in the benefits of providing their at-risk program at the primary grades; the early intervention with reading difficulties helped them build a strong foundation of reading skills which increased student confidence and success.

USD 255 South Barber reflected on their at-risk program, "Although we have observed some quite positive outcomes; we must realize that this program is not an end in itself; rather the program is the beginning point of a retraining process that must be supplemented, cultivated and evaluated for several years before retraining becomes habit!!!" The small group setting and the hands on activities made reteaching and practice easier which attributed to the success of the at-risk program at USD 469 Lansing.

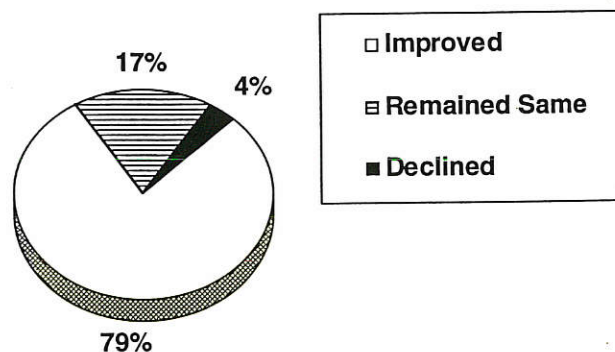
Students' Grades

Of the 391 at-risk programs which reported on their impact on participating at-risk students' grades, 79% indicated that grades had improved and 17% said grades remained the same. Only 4% indicated a decline in grades. Many programs attributed the improvement of grades to the additional help and additional time devoted to problem areas.

USD 334 Southern Cloud found that their systematic tutoring during the school year yielded improved grades in 50% of the students; there was no change in grades with the after school and Saturday school programs. USD 256 Marmaton Valley said that students' grades improved because of individual help being offered to students prior to test taking. Help was also available for students in learning how to organize their work and complete their homework. The special help provided to at-risk students in USD 258 Humboldt helped them stay on task which allowed students to complete more daily assignments.

USD 469 Lansing reported, "We had less late work and an increase in the quality of work. We also had a decrease in numbers needing this from last year." USD 328 Lorraine indicated that students and parents felt overwhelmed by school. The at-risk program taught the students organizational skills, time management tips, setting priorities and other skills that made assignments more manageable.

Impact on Grades



Courses and Graduation Credits

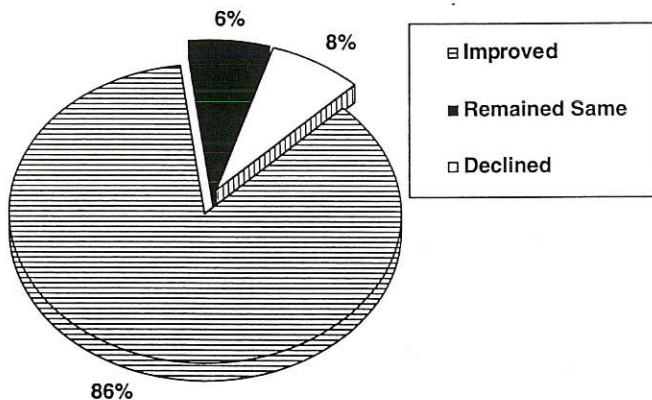
Three hundred and forty-two programs collected data on students who were failing courses and 237 reported data on students who were behind in graduation credits. With these programs, 86% indicated that students had passed the courses they had been failing. In addition, 81% reported a positive impact on students who were behind in graduation credits. Since 45% of the at-risk programs were at the elementary level, many programs did not directly impact the number of graduation credits.

The at-risk program at USD 204 Bonner Springs brought many students to achieving a passing grade or being on course to graduate. Not all the students participating achieved complete success; however, a high percentage were able to succeed academically once they were identified and interventions implemented.

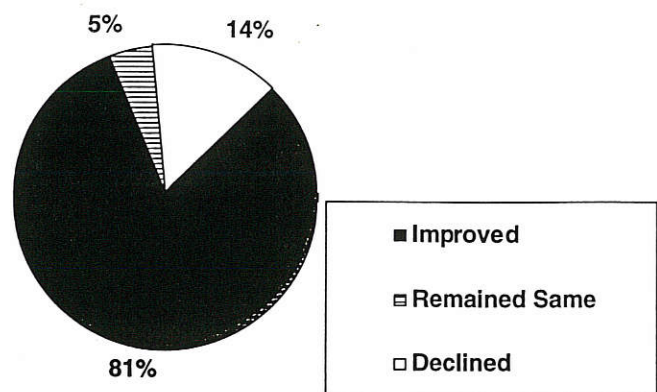
USD 261 Haysville's middle school at-risk program had 33 students pass, 11 fail and 7 not completing the program. They stated that the eleven that failed had caught up but when placed back in the regular classroom, old habits returned and they failed. USD 247 Cherokee believed that eleven seniors in the program graduated this year "because of one-on-one tutoring, having someone to LISTEN to their problems and fears as well as hopes and dreams, and having someone who expected them to graduate."

USD 256 Marmaton Valley commented, "For students who were falling behind in course/graduation credits this program offered an opportunity for students to receive extra help that prevented them from falling even further behind." The students at USD 200 Greeley had an opportunity to successfully earn credits by taking home study courses over the summer.

Impact on Students Failing Subjects or Courses



Impact on Graduation Credits



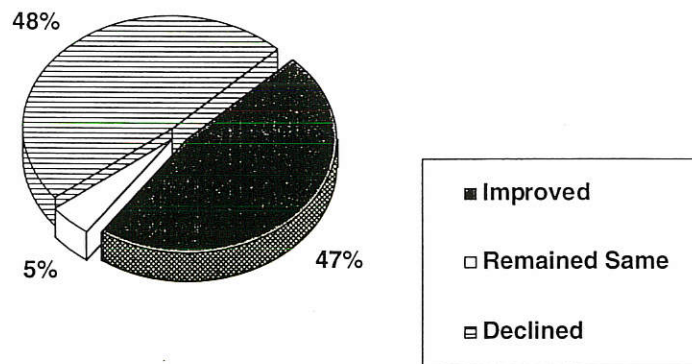
Student Attendance

Many at-risk programs collected data on the attendance of participating students. Forty-seven percent of these reported a decline in the absences of at-risk students. Only 5% of the 1996-97 at-risk programs indicated an increase in student absences. Forty-eight percent reported no significant change in the absences of at-risk students. USD 323 Rock Creek saw no significant change in attendance but noted that traditionally the district has not had a problem with student absences. "Absence rate declined substantially during the time period the students were in the program. During class periods outside the program there was decline but it was less substantial," reported USD 229 Blue Valley.

USD 255 South Barber stated, "Students expressed a more willing attempt to attend since they developed a need as well as a better outlook on life because they did not have to feel/suffer embarrassment because of lack of homework completed."

Students from USD 252 Southern Lyon County "really looked forward to coming. The program really helped build positive attitudes. . . Students learned to help one another." Students at USD 223 Barnes discovered that attainable goals required them to remain diligent in attendance. Teachers also incorporated strategies that encouraged student attendance.

Impact on Student Attendance



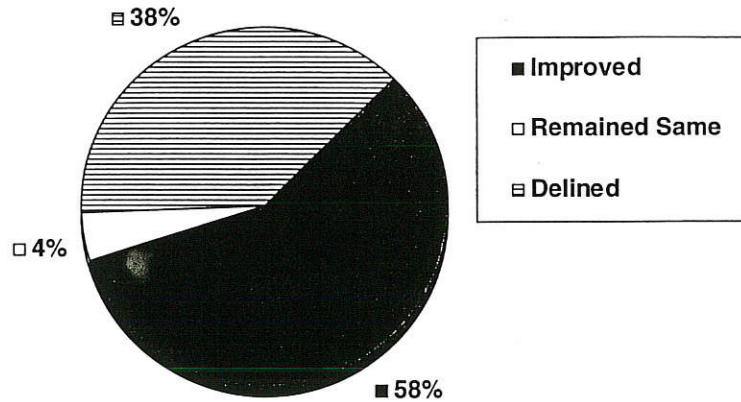
Discipline Referrals

Fifty-eight percent of the at-risk programs which collected data on discipline referrals reported a decline in the number of discipline referrals for at-risk students. Four percent had an increase of referrals; thirty-eight percent reported no change in the number of referrals. Several programs said that impact on discipline referrals was not applicable to their specific at-risk program.

As a result of more individual attention and consistent daily individual support USD 327 Ellsworth saw the evidence of discipline intensity lessen. Another district reported similar results because help was available when the students needed it; therefore, the students did not become bored or frustrated and act out to receive attention.

USD 328 Lorraine's referrals increased. In their evaluation report they stated, "This may sound contradictory but referrals went up as a priority was placed on early intervention and careful monitoring of students *on the bubble*. I don't think student problems increased but instead I think monitoring of student achievement increased." USD 323 Rock Creek saw a positive impact on discipline referrals, especially at the high school.

Impact on Discipline Referrals



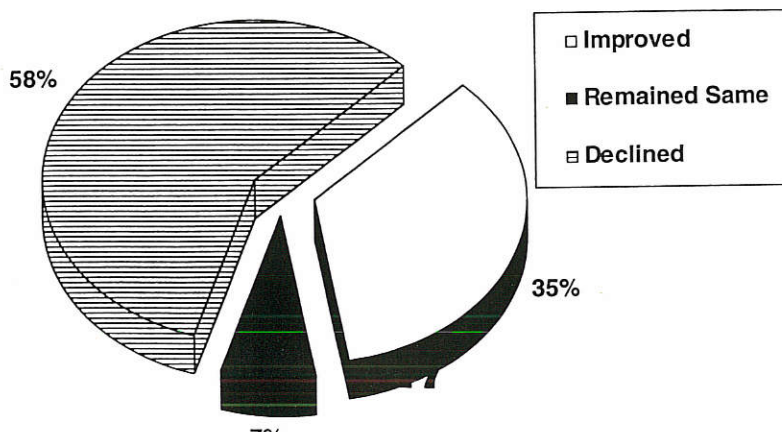
Number of Dropouts

Many at-risk programs reported that their particular programs did not impact specifically on the number of dropouts. The primary reason given was that the programs were at the elementary level where the direct impact on dropouts is not known. Of those reporting on the impact of their at-risk programs on dropouts, 35% percent had a decline in the number of dropouts; 7% had an increase. Approximately 58% reported no change in the number of dropouts. For several districts, their dropout rates are so low that they saw little impact of the at-risk program on those rates.

USD 331 Kingman reported no change in the number of dropouts; however, they stated, "The original plan and goal of the tutor teacher program was to help keep at-risk students in school. By giving students more individualized help, the students not only gained more knowledge but also in many cases they developed a feeling of trust in their instructors. This has helped the students to realize that someone does really care for them."

The at-risk coordinator at USD 247 Cherokee stated, "I feel our program is very successful. The graduation rate was high this year and dropout rate was low. Students are comfortable with the program and thrive with the one-on-one attention."

Impact on Reducing the Number of Dropouts



1-44

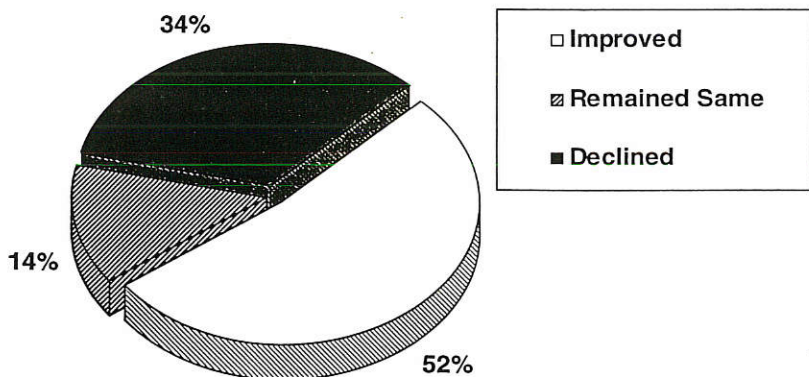
State Assessments

Districts were asked what impact their at-risk programs had on the state mathematics and reading assessment results of participating at-risk students. There were 269 at-risk programs which collected math assessment data. Of these 52% reported an increase in state math assessment results; 13% reported a decrease in results; and 34% show no change. Regarding the state reading assessment, 277 programs collected impact data. There were 58% of the programs reporting an increase, 11% reporting a decrease, and 31% showing no change in results.

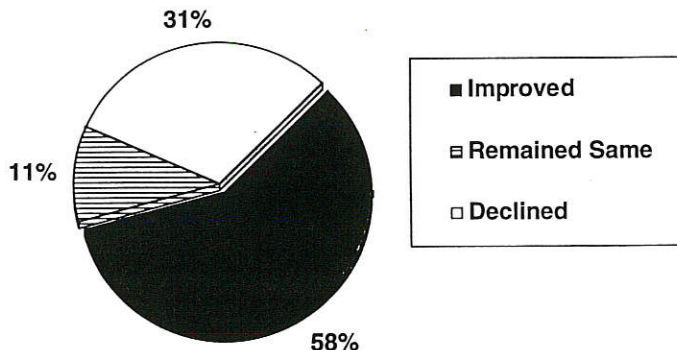
One of USD 259 Wichita's at-risk programs involved a longer school day with more time addressing math. Students were better prepared for the state math assessments. USD 475 Geary County reported that state assessment results varied by building but that the general trend showed improvement.

In addition, many programs also reported improvement on other assessment results. USD 411 Goessel commented that the at-risk students knowledge of basic skills was enhanced to perform better on the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills (CTBS).

Impact on State Math Assessments



Impact on State Reading Assessment



1-45

Student Outcomes

Many districts reported that their at-risk programs had an impact on students meeting either the district's student exit outcomes or the State's outcomes for Quality Performance Accreditation. Nineteen percent of the reporting programs said that the students had met the outcomes. Seventy-two percent reported that students were showing progress toward meeting the outcomes. Less than 1% did not show progress in meeting outcomes.

USD 256 Marmaton Valley reported that the students who had not mastered the district's outcomes would be referred to mandated summer school to continue working on the outcomes.

Parental/Guardian Feedback

Approximately 63% of the at-risk programs had a process for obtaining feedback from parents and/or guardians regarding their at-risk programs. Many districts sent parent surveys; information was also gathered at parent-teacher conferences. In many cases, the number of parents responding was limited. Districts are continually exploring ways to obtain parental input and feedback.

USD 249 Frontenac summarized their feedback as follows:

The school's at-risk programs have been popular with parents, students, and teachers. Parents and students see the school as willing to take the time necessary to help students. Teachers see the school making a commitment to holding all students to the same standards and working to provide the same education to all. We continue to get several requests from parents and students in other districts to participate in our at-risk programs. Students' grades improve because of these programs and a greater number of students are on line to graduate because of them.

When asked to summarize parent comments, districts reported the following:

- Parents felt that the at-risk program offered to students help that would otherwise not be available.
- Some parents even went as far as to say they do not think their child would have graduated if it were not for the tutorial program.
- Parents provided very positive comments.
- Parents reported significant improvement for their children in the areas in which they received tutoring.
- Some parents wanted their children to continue in the at-risk program even though they were having success in the regular program.

SUMMARY

In 1996-97, the Kansas At-Risk Pupil Assistance Program continued to provide services to children who were at risk of failing or dropping out. The number of students participating in the programs continue to increase as does the number of services available to at-risk students. Many districts mentioned that additional funding would help to enhance the programs so that more students could participate and benefit. Many districts spent more on their at-risk programs than was allocated through the school finance formula.

Districts reported that overall, the impact of their at-risk programs was positive. USD 352 Goodland commented that the at-risk program met many of the needs of students who would not otherwise receive help. USD 315 Colby commented, "Throughout the years this program has

continued to show growth and success. We feel our program provides a helping hand to those students who would otherwise fall between the cracks. We stress to our students not only the importance of pride in their academic performance but also the value of self-esteem in their personal achievements.”

The at-risk program at USD 346 Jayhawk is in it's fourth year. They reported, “We continue to see student success. The small group and individual attention have helped students improve their grades, pass subjects, and gain credits in their school work.”

Many districts expressed their thanks for the continued support available for at-risk students. Without the at-risk funds, additional help and opportunities for those who needed it would not have been available.