

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 137 440

UD 016 796

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 TITLE Supportive Services Program; School Year 1975-1976.
 INSTITUTION New York City Board of Education, Brooklyn, N.Y. Office of Educational Evaluation.
 PUB DATE 76
 NOTE 20p.; Appendix B and Appendix C are omitted because of marginal legibility of the original document; New York City Board of Education Function No. 09-69618

EDRS PRICE MF-\$0.83 HC-\$1.67 Plus Postage.
 DESCRIPTORS Adjustment Problems; *Counseling Services; English (Second Language); *High School Students; Psychological Services; Referral; *Remedial Mathematics; *Remedial Reading; Secondary Education; Student Problems

IDENTIFIERS *New York (New York); *Supportive Services Program

ABSTRACT

This document presents a description and evaluation of the Supportive Services Program in New York City for the 1975-76 school year. It was designed to reinforce the cognitive growth of disadvantaged high school students who were referred from one of three Title I programs: Skills Remediation in Reading; Remedial Mathematics; and Native Language Arts, English as a Second Language. The program provided supplementary counseling and family consultation to eligible students and operated in 32 high schools. The treatment group consisted of 2,873 students who received intensive services of at least 10 small group sessions or 12 individual sessions. The control group consisted of a subset (1,061 students) of the treatment group who participated in the same main component in the previous year or semester and who did not receive intensive service during the previous period. Findings indicated that students in the remedial reading program showed statistically significant improvements in grades 9 through 12, when the treatment length was for one year and in grades 9 and 10 when the treatment length was for one semester. Remedial math students showed an improved average monthly gain, but these were not statistically significant. The number of students from the ESL program was small (19 students) and results did not indicate statistically significant gains. (Author/AM)

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SUPPORTIVE SERVICES PROGRAM,

SCHOOL YEAR 1975 - 1976

ROBERT E. DOYLE, Ph. D.

An evaluation of a New York City School district educational project funded under Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (PL 89-10) performed for the Board of Education of the City Of New York for the 1975-76 school year.

ED16796

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CHAPTER I - THE PROGRAM

The Supportive Services Program was designed to reinforce the cognitive growth of disadvantaged high school students who were participating in one of three Title I programs: Skills Remediation in Reading(#09-69613); Remedial Mathematics Skills(#09-69616);and Native Language Arts, English as a Second Language (#09-69614). This component provided a coordinated program of counseling, family visitation, consultation, referral and follow-up for those Title I participants who were referred by teachers, other school personnel, parents, or self, and who appeared to have problems that were impeding their academic growth.

The program was in operation from September 8, 1975 to June 30, 1976. It was conducted in 32 high schools and was staffed by 36 counselors, 79 family assistants and 4 school neighborhood workers. The target population consisted of students referred from one of the three Title I components indicated above. It was expected that 8250 subjects would be referred.

Specifically the program was designed to improve the reading, mathematics and English as a second language skills of students who encountered learning, adjustment, or attendance problems in the classrooms of the main components of the Title I umbrella.

In order to accomplish these objectives, the Supportive Services personnel concentrated their efforts on students from the referred population who were expected to attend remediation classes at least 60% of the time. These intensive services consisted of a minimum of 10 small group sessions or 12 one-to-one sessions. The small group sessions consisted of a group not larger than 10 and ran for approximately 35 minutes each. The individual sessions ran for a minimum of 20 minutes each. The intensive services

included treatment by the counselor and the family assistant and included home visitations as well as in-school sessions. It was expected that 2160 subjects of the target population of 8250 would receive intensive treatment, and the other referrals would receive a variety of treatments including: individual and group counseling of less duration; home visitations of one or more times; referrals to outside agencies such as medical facilities, reading institutes, alternative schools, employment agencies, rehabilitative programs, recreational programs, psychological clinics and/or social service agencies; and/or case conferences with other professional staff personnel.

CHAPTER II - EVALUATIVE PROCEDURES

This section specifies the evaluation objectives, the population sample, the data collection procedures, the instrumentation, and the methods of data treatment.

EVALUATION OBJECTIVES

There were two major evaluation objectives for this program which were specified in the evaluation design dated April, 1976.

These objectives were:

1. to determine whether, as a result of participation in the Supportive Services Program, the average monthly gain of the treatment group will surpass the average monthly gain of the control group at the .05 level of statistical significance for each of the following achievement areas specified within separate component programs of this umbrella: Skills Remediation in Reading(09-69613); Remedial Mathematics Skills(09-69616); Native Language Arts - ESL (09-69614).
2. to determine the extent to which the program as actually

carried out, coincided with the program as described in the project proposal.

THE SAMPLE

The program was designed to service 8250 Title I participants referred by the component area teachers, other staff members or self. Table 1 below indicates that the program actually serviced far more subjects than it was designed for.

TABLE 1: NUMBER OF REFERRALS RECEIVED BY COUNSELORS AND FAMILY ASSISTANTS, BY SOURCE OF REFERRAL.

<u>SOURCE OF REFERRAL</u>	<u>NUMBER RECEIVED BY COUNSELORS</u>	<u>NUMBER RECEIVED BY FAMILY ASSIST.</u>
Reading Teachers	5621	6661
Mathematics Teachers	3334	3810
ESL Teachers	933	1133
Attendance Office	1180	1051
Other Staff	971	1180
<u>Self</u>	<u>1007</u>	<u>982</u>
Total	13,046	14,817

The table shows that the counselors handled 13,046 referrals and the family assistants handled 14,817 referrals.

The treatment group consisted of all subjects who received intensive supportive services of at least 10 sessions in a small group or 12 individual sessions, and who participated in one of the main components of the umbrella program. It was expected that 2160 subjects would receive intensive treatment either over the entire year or over one semester.

Table 2, below indicates that 2873 students received this treatment. Of this number 1703 were in Reading; 964 were in Mathematics and 206 were in the ESL program.

TABLE 2: TREATMENT AND CONTROL GROUPS BY GRADE LEVEL, COMPONENT AREAS AND TREATMENT LENGTH.

GRADE AND TREATMENT LENGTH	READING		MATHEMATICS		ESL	
	T	C	T	C	T	C
<u>Grade 9</u>						
1 Year	316	117	205	0	66	8
1 Semester	<u>398</u>	<u>159</u>	<u>413</u>	<u>121</u>	<u>29</u>	<u>0</u>
Total	714	276	618	121	95	8
<u>Grades 10-12</u>						
1 Year	340	193	119	0	66	11
1 Semester	<u>649</u>	<u>361</u>	<u>227</u>	<u>91</u>	<u>45</u>	<u>0</u>
Total	989	554	346	91	111	11

Totals: Treatment Groups N=2873; Control Groups N=1061.

The control group was defined as a subset of the treatment group who were in the same major component the previous year or semester, who did not receive the intensive treatment during the previous period, and who had the requisite pre and post test data. A thorough search of the files of the host program revealed that complete test scores were available for 1061 students who were distributed among various grade levels, component areas, and treatment lengths as indicated in Table 2 above. An analysis of this table shows that of the subjects who had complete test scores, 830 were in Reading; 212 were in Mathematics and 19 were in the ESL program.

DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES

All students participating in one of the Title I programs of remedial reading, and mathematics, were tested on appropriate instruments in September, 1975; January, 1976; and May, 1976. The ESL students were tested

in September, 1975 and May, 1976. The test data for subjects who received intensive treatment from the Supportive Service component, were obtained from these specified programs.

Data for the control groups were obtained as indicated above. The OEE evaluator made thirty-two field visits to schools conducting the Supportive Service Program in order to assess the implementation of this component.

THE INSTRUMENTATION

Appropriate levels of the Metropolitan Achievement Test (MAT) in Reading and Mathematics were administered for pre and post test data for both treatment and control periods. The Stanford Achievement Test (SAT) in Reading was utilized to assess performance in the ESL program in a similar fashion.

METHODS OF DATA TREATMENT

The data were analyzed by a pretest - posttest gain vs expected gain without treatment (comparison group) design. Correlated t tests were applied to determine if the differences between the average monthly gain of the treatment groups and the control groups were statistically significantly different at the .05 level.

All data were analyzed by components, length of treatment and grade levels or SED code levels.

CHAPTER III - THE FINDINGS

This chapter reports on the findings for each evaluation object, discusses the degree that the program was serving the needs of the target population and implementing the project proposal; comments on the facilities and materials utilized in the project; and reviews the implementation of the recommendations of the previous year's study.

of the Supportive Services Program by comparing the average monthly gain for a treatment vs control group design in each of the three subject area components supported by this program. Table 3 summarizes the results for this objective by component area, treatment length and grade level.

TABLE 3: A COMPARISON OF THE CONTROL AND TREATMENT GROUPS AVERAGE MONTH GAIN IN SUBJECT COMPONENT, BY GRADE LEVELS & TREATMENT LENGTH.

	<u>GRADE 9</u>			<u>GRADE 10</u>			<u>GRADE 11-12</u>		
<u>Reading:</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>C</u>	<u>T</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>C</u>	<u>T</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>C</u>	<u>T</u>
1 Year	117	.03	.10*	114	.06	.11*	79	.06	.11*
1 Semester	159	.07	.14*	282	.08	.12*	79	.17	.22 N.S.

	<u>GRADE 9</u>			<u>GRADE 10-12</u>		
<u>Mathematics:</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>C</u>	<u>T</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>C</u>	<u>T</u>
1 Semester	121	.23	.27 N.S.	91	.15	.23 N.S.

	<u>GRADE 9</u>			<u>GRADE 10-12</u>		
<u>ESL:</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>C</u>	<u>T</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>C</u>	<u>T</u>
1 Year	8	.07	.05 N.S.	11	.02	.04 N.S.

*Significant at the .05 level; N.S.: Not significant at .05 level.

An analysis of Table 3 reveals the following findings:

- 1) The subjects serviced from the Reading component had statistically significant improvement in all grades when the treatment length was for a year; and in grades 9 and 10 when the treatment length was 1 semester. For this later treatment length, grades 11 and 12 showed an improved gain but it was not significant at the .05 level.
- 2) The subjects serviced from the Mathematics component revealed an improved monthly gain; however, these results were not significant at the .05 level.

- 3) The number of subjects available from the ESL component was extremely small, and the results did not demonstrate statistically significant gains.

Complete results of this evaluation objective are contained in the MIR forms found in Appendix B.

Evaluation objective #2 was designed to determine the extent to which the implemented program actually coincided with the project proposal. This objective was assessed by means of thirty-three site visits made to the field schools and training sessions.

THE TARGET POPULATION

The program was in operation in each of the specified schools and was servicing disadvantaged students in the 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th grades. The proposal estimated that the program would service 8250 students who would be referred. (The counselors actually received 13,046 referrals and the family assistants received 14,817.)

THE DELIVERY SYSTEM

The site visits revealed that all the schools had implemented the service delivery system specified in the program proposal. The Supportive Services counselors were supplementing the tax levy counselor and serviced the referred Title I participants. The counselors: conducted individual and small group counseling sessions; made program adjustments and appropriate referrals to social, psychiatric and educational agencies; conferred with other staff personnel on a need basis; observed students in the classroom; monitored the activities of the family assistants; and kept appropriate records.

The family assistants: made home visits; contacted parents by telephone; acted as a liason between the home and the school; provided school personnel with pertinent feedback about the home background and

and family relationship; and in some cases assisted counselors in counseling and/or advising individual students.

The Supportive Services Program gave a great deal of assistance to many students and their families; and the Title I content area programs made extensive use of this program. Table 1 on page 3 indicated that the program actually serviced more than the expected number of students.

An analysis of Table 4, below, shows that counselors received an average of 362 referrals, and the family assistants received an average of 188 referrals.

TABLE 4: CASE ACTIVITIES OF COUNSELORS AND FAMILY ASSISTANTS.

<u>COUNSELORS (N=36)</u>		<u>FAMILY ASSISTANTS (N=79)</u>	
<u>ACTIVITY</u>	<u>NUMBER</u>	<u>ACTIVITY</u>	
Referrals Received	13,046	Referrals Received	14,817
Students Interviewed	8,359	Students Seen in School	8,198
Parents Interviewed	2,239	Parents Seen at Home	10,031
Classroom Visitations	904	Home Visitations	14,730
Case Conferences	590	Parents Contacted by Phone	6,140
Faculty Meetings Addressed	33	Interpretation Cases	2,070
Group Sessions	1,101	Cases Escorted	659

Table 5 reveals that a key to the solution of many of the students problems required outside assistance. Approximately 20% of the cases referred to the school counselors were ultimately referred to other agencies, clinics, and programs.

TABLE 5: REFERRALS MADE TO OTHER AGENCIES, CLINICS, AND PROGRAMS.

<u>TYPE OF REFERRAL</u>	<u>NUMBER</u>
Mental Health Agencies & Clinics	423
Physical Health Problems	380
Alternative Schools	487
Employment Agencies	389
BCG: Learning Disability Diagnosis	186
Other Agencies: Learning Disability Diagnosis	110
BCG: Emotional Problems	193
Bureau of Child Welfare: Social Services	61
Bureau of Child Welfare: Child Abuse	9
N.Y.S. Office of Vocational Rehabilitation	90
Recreational Programs & Agencies	<u>85</u>
Total Referrals	2413

Title I teachers, assistant principals, and principals who were interviewed in the field schools reported highly positive attitudes about the program. They reported that the program was having a very positive effect in several ways:

1. that many students who were frequently truant were returning to school, albeit, in some cases for brief periods;
2. that parents were gaining a better understanding of their children, the school and the program offerings available in New York City;
3. that many students were having medical and psychological problems attended to that may not have been noticed;

4. that positive attitudinal changes were noted: students improved their relationships with school personnel; disciplinary problems were reduced; and students appeared to have a more positive self image;
5. that other students were being serviced by: receiving help in obtaining jobs; being referred to more appropriate educational programs, or special agencies such as O.V.R.;¹
6. that impediments to learning were minimized by helping students cope more effectively with: language problems; poor home environment; and other cultural, social and/or psychological problems.

In the main, the staff reported that the Supportive Services personnel were working with the hardest cases in their schools and that an effective evaluation should be based on successful cases handled rather than on the global achievement success of the treatment load for whom test scores may be available.

The delivery system was not without its problems. First, there was a large turnover of personnel. Fifteen of the 36 counselors were replaced during the academic year because of excessing and layoffs of educational personnel by the Board of Education. Second, there was some resistance on the part of a few personnel to involve themselves in group counseling and intensive case loads - both of which were new for them. Third, there was a feeling of impotence with some staff members who had difficulty in dealing with clients whose educational history was one of repeated failure, whose communication skills were poor, and whose motivation was, at best, confused. Fourth, there was some confusion over the role of the Supportive Services personnel and their relationships to regular tax levy counselors, and to

1. O.V.R. - Office of Vocational Rehabilitation

other Title I personnel. Fifth, in some schools, the counselors and family assistants evidenced minimal team efforts and provided bilateral service wherein the family assistants handled attendance referrals and the counselor handled all other behavior and learning referrals. Finally, the program design which specified that the program would only service referred subjects was a handicap insofar as it precluded counselors from early identification of students who could benefit from an intensive counseling program.

The impact of these problems was minimized by the supervisory staff and the training programs indicated below.

SUPERVISION AND TRAINING

The Supportive Services Program was supervised by two coordinators. One was responsible for the supervision of the school counselors, the other for the supervision of the family assistants. The supervisors advised school administrators on the guidelines for implementing the program; conducted training programs for their respective personnel; visited the schools on a regular basis to supervise the operations of the program; and performed other leadership and coordinative functions. The supervisors were assisted in the performance of their tasks by two assistant coordinators.

The counselors were required to attend training sessions held twice monthly. These sessions focused on: the socio-psychological and cultural background of Hispanic and Black students; the ways to diagnose various types of learning problems and learning disabilities; the psychodynamics of family life and interaction; the increased interpersonal sensibility and self-awareness of counselors; and the enhancing of both individual and group counseling skills in working with target population students. The family assistants were required to attend monthly training sessions which focused on techniques of working with parents and students; individual and group counseling; adolescent behavior and the deviant child; and community

resources and services. Approximately 60% of the family assistants received fifteen additional training sessions in group counseling and workshops in case processing. Furthermore, those assistants who were working on a career ladder were granted three hours of released time each week in order to pursue their formal college education.

The supervisors of the program carried out their mission with consummate skills. They were highly regarded by field personnel and school administrators. The training programs were well run and provided worthy examples of in-service education. This information was shared at faculty meetings and informal discussions with regular tax levy counselors.

FACILITIES AND MATERIALS

Every school provided an office for Supportive Services personnel, and in most schools the counselors were able to locate space for small group counseling sessions. However, the quality and the adequacy of the facilities varied from school to school. Several schools had excellent facilities, the majority of the schools provided good or adequate facilities, and some schools had extremely poor and inadequate facilities. Many of these conditions were outside the control of the Supportive Services Program. Several of the high schools are overutilized and good space was not currently available. However, steps could be taken to improve the conditions at those schools where the counselors and family assistants shared small, noisy, poorly ventilated cubicles. In general the facilities appeared to be excellent in 2 schools, good in 13 schools, adequate in 13 schools and poor in 4 schools.

The staff reported that they were able to obtain appropriate materials.

PREVIOUS RECOMMENDATIONS

The evaluation report conducted for the 1974-1975 academic year made four recommendations. These were:

1. that high schools should be allowed to volunteer to serve as sites for the program and the principals should receive copies of the guidelines and sign statements indicating that they understand the terms;
2. that time should be allowed for each school to develop a working team model and that family assistants should participate in groups;
3. that greater flexibility should be available for utilization of family assistants - some should be allowed to do counseling in schools, others should develop community resources, and others make home contacts. Three hundred visits are too many for every family assistant to make and more regular use of the telephone should be instituted;
4. that counselors should organize themselves into borough teams with some members taking a resource role in each of the following areas: Administration-program policies; Career counseling; Group counseling; and Learning problems.

These recommendations were implemented in the following ways:

1. All Title I high schools have the option of having the program; the guidelines were distributed to all principals and conferences were held with administrative personnel who did not understand or who disagreed with the guidelines.
2. Time was allowed for team models to develop. Family assistants were provided with training in group procedures and some cases acted as co-leaders in the actual group counseling sessions.

3. More flexibility in the roles of family assistants was instituted. Some family assistants acted as supportive counselors, others participated in the group process and others concentrated on the home-community school liaison role. Each family assistant was not required to visit 300 homes and the telephone was widely employed in contacting the home.
4. Counselors met twice a month for training sessions on a bi-borough basis; and individual counselors assumed leadership responsibilities in these sessions which covered specified areas as well as other contact areas.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The test results revealed that the project did have an impact on academic achievement in certain component areas and not in others. Statistically significant gains were obtained for reading, for all grade levels when the treatment length was for 1 year and for grades 9 and 10 when the treatment length was for 1 semester. Improved scores were obtained for reading in grades 11 and 12, and mathematics in all grades when the treatment length was 1 semester, however, these later improvements were not statistically significant. The ESL sample was very small and yielded no statistically significant results.

The site visits revealed that the project was staffed by personnel who were highly motivated, had strong identification with the program, knew the project's goals and implementation criteria, and cared a great deal about the students who were referred.

Interviews with key school personnel showed the program was having an excellent impact on the "hard to reach and hard to teach" students that this program was designed to help. The interviews revealed that: many students were attending classes that heretofore had been truant; parents were gaining a better understanding of their children and the schools; many students were referred to appropriate outside agencies that probably would not have been assisted; and that many individuals who manifest serious impediments to learning had these handicaps minimized and in several cases overcame them.

Several observations were made that appeared to detract from the project's accomplishing greater goals. The study found that: there was a large turnover of personnel; some personnel had difficulties in involving themselves in what was for them new and unsure techniques; some personnel became disillusioned after repeated failures in working with these difficult cases; there was some confusion in the role of Supportive Services personnel; some schools had a bilateral rather than a coordinated team approach; and that the referral system had built in limitations. It was further observed that poor facilities existed in several of the schools. The excellent supervision and staff training provided for in the project tended to minimize these limitations.

While the test results demonstrated that the program was having a significant impact in improving achievement scores in some areas and not in others, the site visits and the interviews with key staff personnel revealed that the program is accomplishing other significant humanistic goals not measured by standardized test scores.

The project should be continued based upon the findings reported above. However, there are several recommendations which the project

directors should consider for the future. They are:

1. Expand group counseling activities - serious thought should be given to making each counselor or team responsible for conducting a minimum number of groups each semester, depending upon experience, expertise of the counselor and the facilities available in school;
2. Modify the referral procedure so that each counselor or team, working with Title I personnel, identify a minimum of 100 students who might benefit from intensive treatment. This effort should be a major thrust during the early part of each semester;
3. Maintain the in-service training programs for both counselors and the family assistants in the content areas identified, and in effective team approaches. Counselors should continue to receive training in group counseling and more extensive training in using and supervising paraprofessionals.
4. Explore various methods which would ensure closer professional dialogue between Supportive Services personnel and Title I teachers;
5. Institute, on a limited basis, interschool visitation activities so that effective practices and techniques are shared;
6. Encourage innovative practices such as group counseling programs for students and their parents;
7. Improve the facilities in schools which have inadequate quarters.
8. Institute, where possible, a team selection process, involving both the program supervisor and the host principal, in the placement of personnel into the program.

The Supportive Services Program provided a coordinated program of supplementary counseling and family consultation to disadvantaged high school students who were referred from one of three Title I programs: Remedial Reading (#09-69613); Remedial Mathematics (#09-69616); and Native Language Arts, English as a Second Language (#09-69614). The program concentrated its efforts on students who attended the remediation classes at least 60% of the time, and was designed to reinforce the student's cognitive growth in these remedial areas.

The treatment group consisted of all subjects who received intensive services of at least 10 small group sessions or 12 individual sessions (N=2873). Of these 1703 were referred from Reading; 964 from Mathematics and 206 from English as a Second Language. The control group consisted of a subset of the treatment group who participated in the same main component in the previous year or semester and who did not receive intensive service during the previous period (N=1061). Of these 803 were from Reading; 212 from Mathematics and 19 from ESL.

Correlated t tests comparing the average monthly gain of the treatment vs control groups revealed the following findings:

1. The subjects serviced from Remedial Reading showed statistically significant improvement in grades 9,10,11, and 12 when the treatment length was for 1 year; and in grades 9 and 10 when the treatment length was for 1 semester. Grades 11 and 12 showed an improved monthly gain but statistical significance was not reached at the .05 level.
2. The subjects serviced from Remedial Mathematics showed an improved average monthly gain, however these gains were not statistically significant at the .05 level.
3. The number of subjects available from the ESL population was extremely small, N=19, and the results did not reveal statistically significant gains.

The site visits and interviews with key staff members revealed that the program was having a significant positive effect in improving attendance and home-school relationships; making appropriate referrals to medical, psychological, educational and vocational agencies; minimizing impediments to learning; and enhancing positive attitudinal changes.