

An Overview of
Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Programs

February 12, 1999

Members of the Legislative Audit Committee:

The attached information on the Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Programs includes:

- Program background and history
- State funding
- Per-student costs at selected counties
- Attendance rates
- Student academic progress
- Student demographics
- Program implementation at selected sites

Cost Per Student at Selected Sites 1997-1998 School Year	
El Paso County*	\$28
Harris County	\$57
Bexar County*	\$61
Travis County	\$229

*Note: Actual costs were not available for Bexar and El Paso, so we used budgeted costs.

This is an interim product of our review of implementation of Safe Schools legislation. We based our description of student characteristics and analysis of academic progress on the best data available from the Texas Juvenile Probation Commission as of February 1999. We are releasing this information now because we think it will be useful during the legislative session.

Unlike the final product—an audit report we expect to issue in Spring 1999—this information does not contain audit findings, recommendations, or client responses. If you have any questions, please contact Susan Riley, Audit Manager, at 479-4700.

Sincerely,

Lawrence F. Alwin, CPA
State Auditor

ggh/cbg/Attachment

cc: Texas Juvenile Probation Board Members
Ms. Vicki Spriggs, Executive Director, Texas Juvenile Probation Commission

Background

The Legislature created Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Programs (JJAEPs) to ensure that students expelled from public schools in Texas would continue to have an opportunity for public education. (See Table 1 for a history of JJAEPs.) Legislation requires that county juvenile boards in counties with a population of over 125,000 operate a JJAEP. Each juvenile board is required to have a memorandum of understanding detailing the operation of the JJAEP with each school district in the county. The Texas Juvenile Probation Commission (Commission) provides funding for these programs.

Academically, the mission of the JJAEPs is to enable students to perform at grade level. Each JJAEP is subject to minimum standards and accountability measures adopted by the Commission. A JJAEP must focus on English language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, and self-discipline and also provide a high school equivalency program. JJAEPs are required to operate seven hours a day for 180 days a year.

Currently, 22 counties are required to operate JJAEPs. Counties with populations below 125,000 have the option of developing JJAEPs.

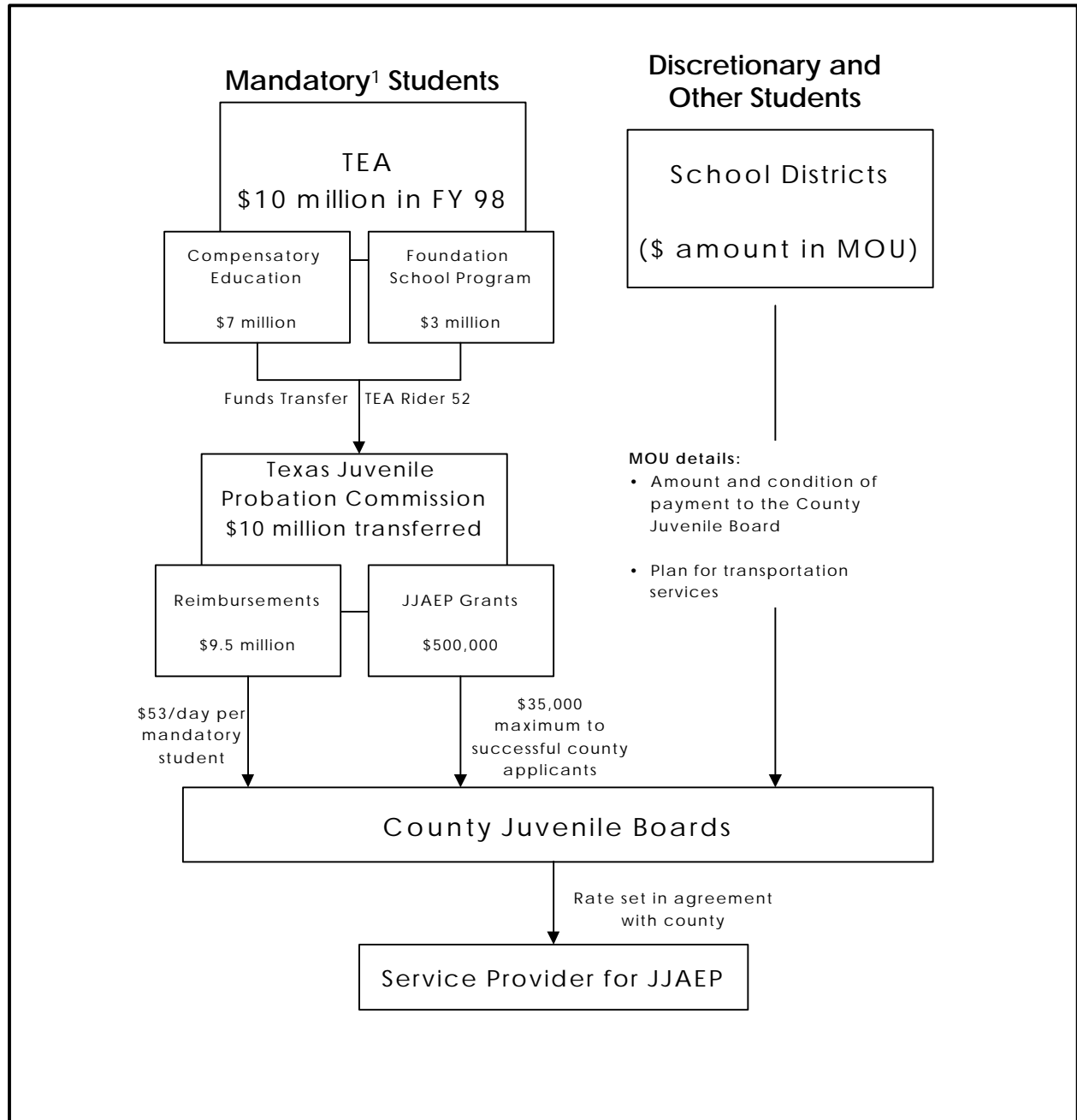
Table 1

Program History	
May 1995	Senate Bill 1 requires counties with a population greater than 125,000 to establish Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Programs for the 1996-1997 school year.
September 1996	The Texas Education Agency (TEA) awards \$7 million in start-up funds to 22 counties to establish JJAEPs.
August 1997	Senate Bill 133 gives the Commission authority to issue JJAEP rules and requires the Commission to develop and implement an accountability system.
September 1997	Commission funds are available for reimbursing counties for students mandated to attend JJAEP.
November 1998	The Commission adopts rules to establish minimum operational, programmatic, and educational standards for JJAEPs.

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How Funds Flow to JJAEPs

Figure 1



¹Students who meet specified criteria and must be expelled are called "mandatory" students. Schools have discretion about expelling and referring additional students, called "discretionary." "Other" students may attend a JJAEP as ordered by a juvenile court, by choice, or under other circumstances. Mandatory students are eligible for state funding through the Commission. School districts pay for discretionary and other students.

Funding

During Fiscal Year 1998, the Commission Spent 43 Percent of the \$10 Million Appropriated

Table 2

	TEA FUNDS	COMMISSION FUNDS				
	FY 1997	FY 1998				
County	TEA Start Up Funds	Regular School Year	Summer School	Grants	"Excess" Start-Up Funds	Total Fiscal Year 1998 State Funds
MANDATED COUNTIES						
Bell	\$ 112,813	\$ 70,702	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 70,702
Bexar	686,315	504,401	180,730	0	0	685,131
Brazoria	123,707	69,430	0	0	0	69,430
Cameron	185,229	137,058	0	35,000	0	172,058
Collin	199,206	49,237	0	0	12,995	62,232
Dallas	1,004,102	416,368	189,263	35,000	0	640,631
Denton	181,544	137,853	8,851	0	0	146,704
El Paso	394,532	65,296	13,780	0	32,030	111,106
Fort Bend	184,056	43,884	40,121	0	0	84,005
Galveston	115,813	18,868	0	2,879	12,543	34,290
Harris	1,603,545	501,380	343,281	0	0	844,661
Hidalgo	309,391	71,921	0	0	12,740	84,661
Jefferson	121,177	7,738	0	0	24,563	32,301
Lubbock	119,179	29,097	0	0	3,616	32,713
McLennan	93,154	113,208	4,293	27,018	0	144,519
Montgomery	126,033	112,943	34,344	0	0	147,287
Nueces	174,447	52,046	14,469	0	0	66,515
Smith	78,742	39,803	0	0	0	39,803
Tarrant	672,733	75,684	37,736	0	85,403	198,823
Travis	283,425	63,282	0	27,981	19,003	110,266
Webb	104,181	138,277	0	0	0	138,277
Williamson	126,663	19,769	42,771	33,196	0	95,736
NON-MANDATED COUNTIES						
Atascosa	0	0	0	27,061	0	27,061
Brooks	0	0	0	21,568	0	21,568
Grayson	0	0	0	35,000	0	35,000
Hardin	0	0	0	34,238	0	34,238
Hill	0	0	0	24,793	0	24,793
Houston	0	0	0	35,000	0	35,000
Matagorda	0	0	0	35,000	0	35,000
Rusk	0	0	0	24,715	0	24,715
Upshur	0	0	0	35,000	0	35,000
Total	\$ 6,999,986	\$ 2,738,250	\$ 909,639	\$ 433,449	\$ 202,893	\$ 4,284,226

Source: TEA startup figures and Commission contract detail

- The State has spent \$11.3 million on JJAEPs since their implementation.
- For fiscal year 1998, \$202,893 was disbursed in excess of actual student attendance days.
- Some counties have retained TEA start-up funds for future program operations.

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Cost Per Student Varies by Program

Table 3

1997-98 JJAEP Cost Information				
	Travis	Bexar	Harris	El Paso ¹
Total Cost	\$701,925	\$2,067,393	\$3,003,043	\$829,246
Total Student Attendance Days	3,060	34,131	52,928	29,528
Cost Per Student Attendance Day	\$229	\$61	\$57	\$28

Source: JJAEP programs and County Juvenile Probation Departments

¹El Paso attendance days include all students (AEP and JJAEP students) since the populations are co-mingled.

- The cost of operating a JJAEP varies according to student attendance and program services. The total cost above does not include the same costs for all sites. For example, the Bexar JJAEP cost does not include any facility cost because the JJAEP building was donated to the county. However, the Travis JJAEP cost includes \$40,000 for facility rent.
- Programs may supplement state dollars with grants and school district funds.

Student Enrollment

Three-Fourths of JJAEP Students Are Not Mandatory Enrollments¹

Figure 2

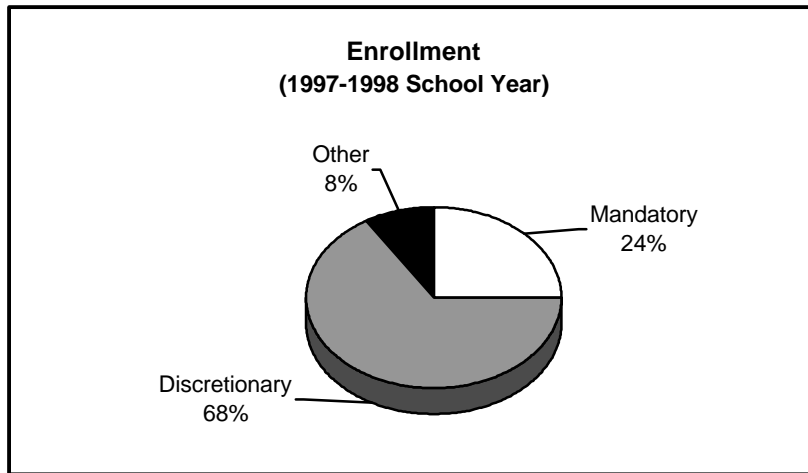


Table 4

Enrollment by County				
County	Mandatory	Discretionary	Other	Total
Bell	29	124	0	153
Bexar	209	362	10	581
Brazoria	27	162	23	212
Cameron	41	46	3	90
Collin	19	38	34	91
Dallas	138	292	25	455
Denton	50	70	3	123
El Paso	18	41	0	59
Fort Bend	17	32	103	152
Galveston	18	62	0	80
Harris	168	766	0	934
Hidalgo	30	0	0	30
Jefferson	6	112	1	119
Lubbock	14	56	0	70
McLennan	29	308	32	369
Montgomery	39	65	3	107
Nueces	13	53	0	66
Smith	12	33	0	45
Tarrant	41	59	0	100
Travis	22	32	2	56
Webb	42	69	23	134
Williamson	6	37	92	135
TOTAL	988	2819	353	4161

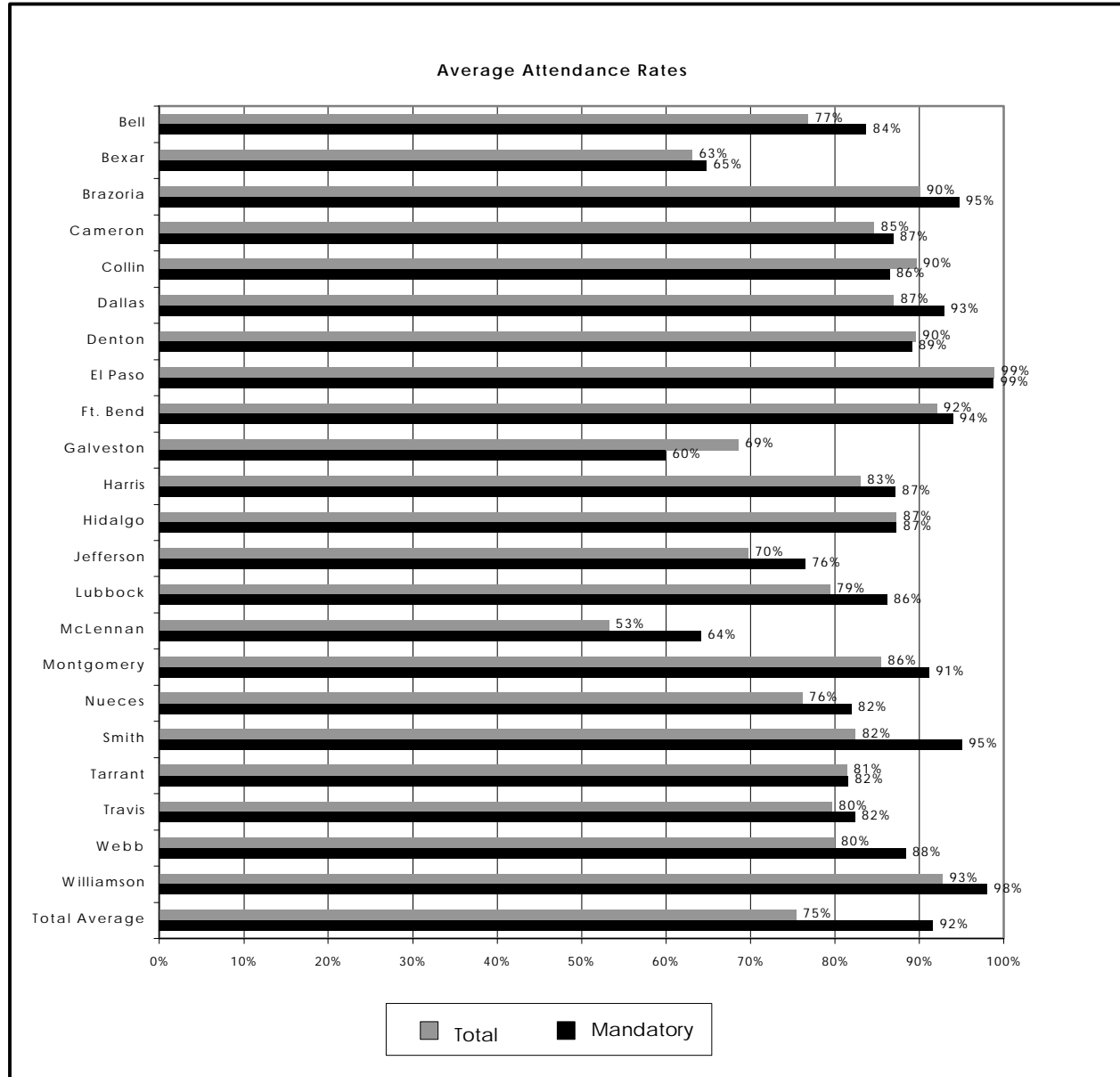
Source: Texas Juvenile Probation Commission database

¹Students who meet specified criteria and must be expelled are called "mandatory" students. Schools have discretion about expelling and referring additional students, called "discretionary." "Other" students may attend a JJAEP as ordered by a juvenile court, by choice, or under other circumstances. Mandatory students are eligible for state funding through the Commission. School districts pay for discretionary and other students.

Attendance Rates

Eight of 22 JJAEPs Exceed a 90 Percent Attendance Rate for Mandatory Students

Figure 3



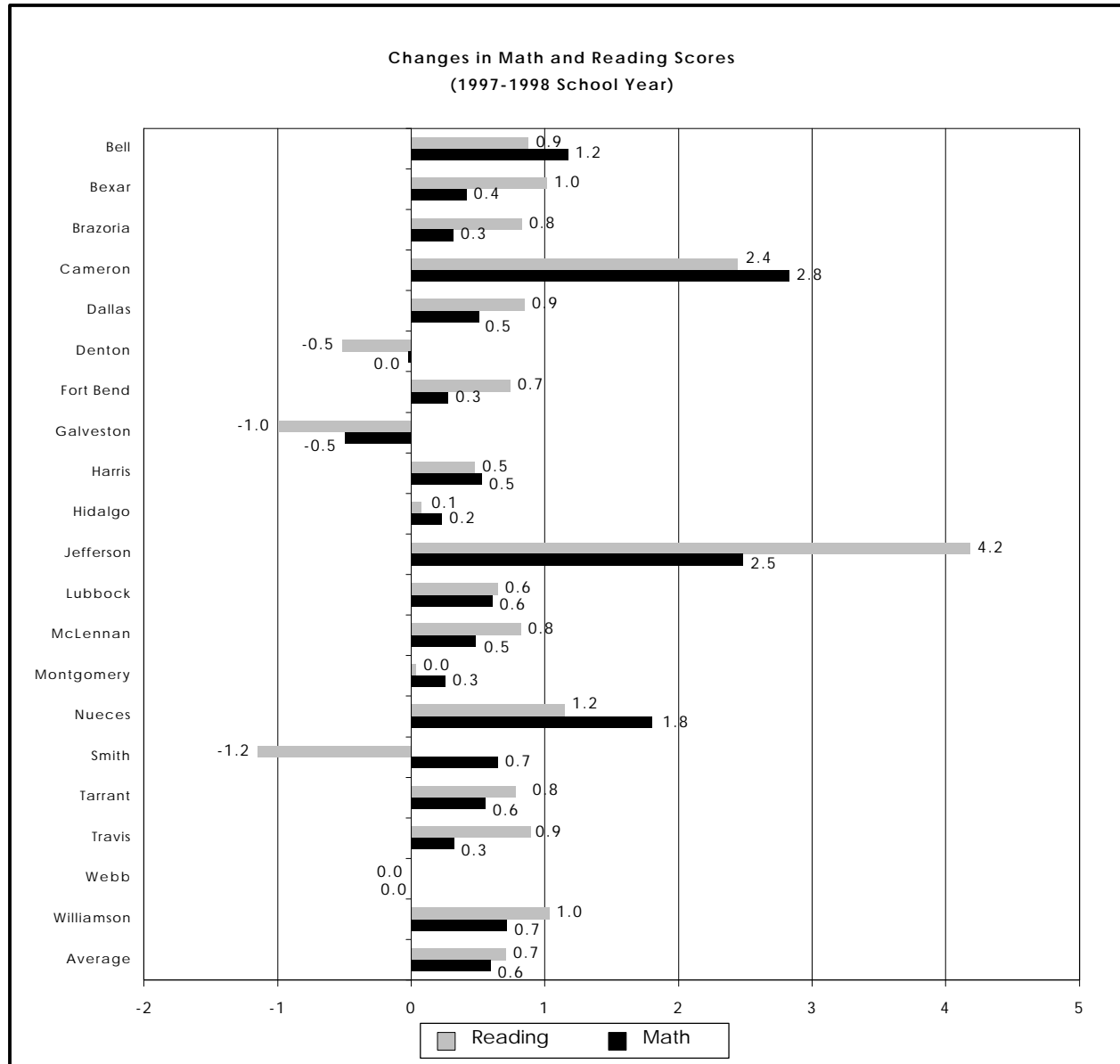
Source: Texas Juvenile Probation Commission JJAEP Monthly Activity Reports

- Only 3 of 22 mandated counties did not have attendance rates of 70 percent or greater.

Overall Academic Progress

Math and Reading Scores Have Improved

Figure 4



Source: Texas Juvenile Probation Commission database

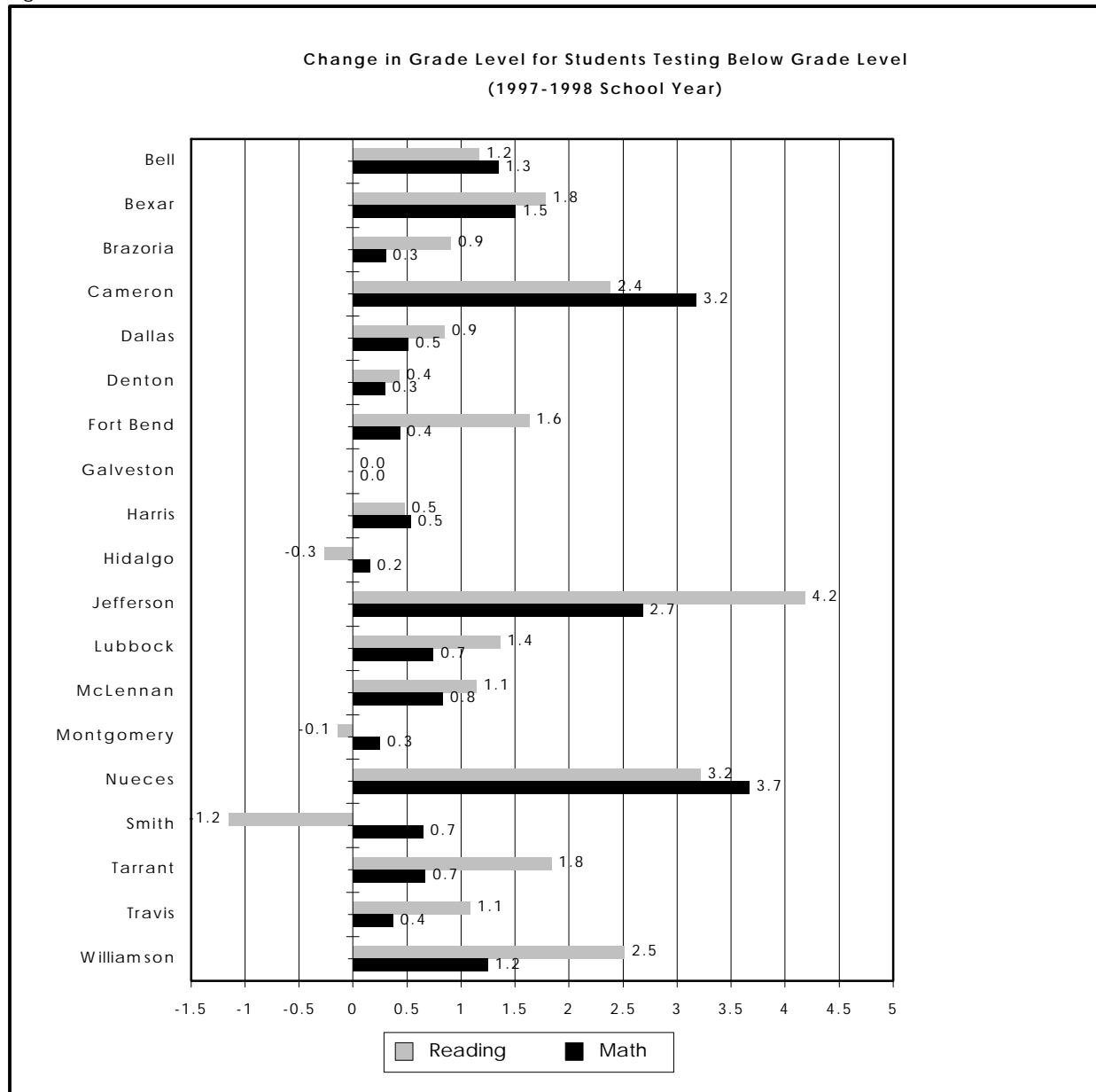
Note: We had insufficient data for Collin and El Paso Counties. Webb County's test scores did not change.

- The change in students' pre- and post-test scores is statistically significant.
- Test scores for 81 percent of JJAEP students were unavailable.

Academic Progress

For Students Below Grade Level, Exit Tests Show Progress

Figure 5



Source: Texas Juvenile Probation Commission database

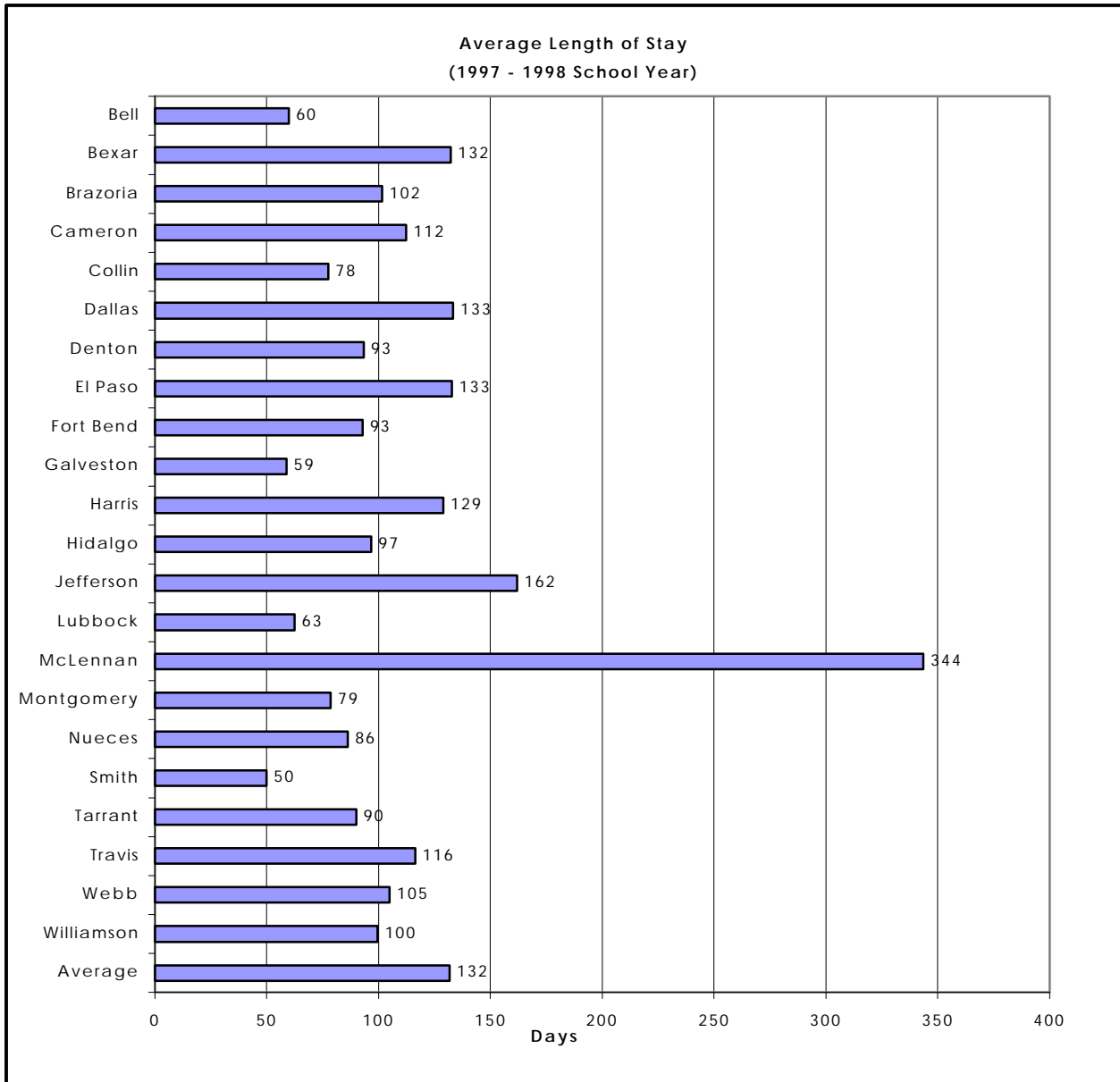
Note: We had insufficient data for Collin, El Paso and Webb Counties.

- At entry, 79 percent of students scored below grade level in reading, and 81 percent scored below grade level in math.
- Students who scored below grade level progressed an average of one grade level in reading and three-fourths of a grade level in math.
- Students tested an average of 2.2 grade levels below their age-appropriate grade level in reading and 2.1 grade levels below in math on entrance tests.

Length of Stay

Average Length of Stay Was More Than a Semester

Figure 6



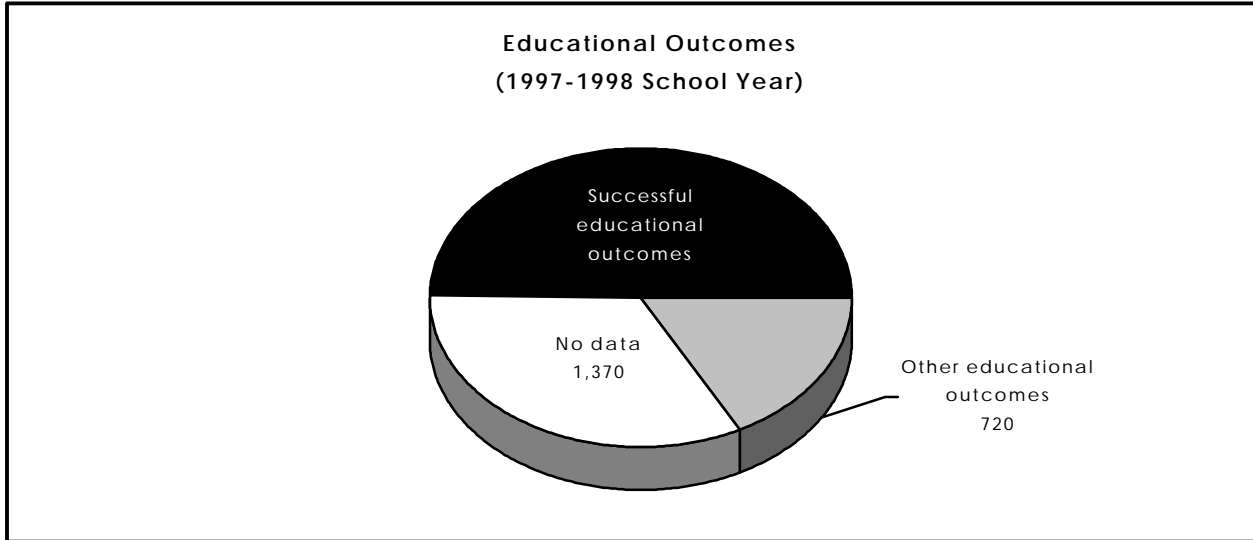
Source: Texas Juvenile Probation Commission database

- Average length of stay in a JJAEP was 132 calendar days.
- 132 calendar days is roughly 95 school days or more than one semester.

Educational Outcomes

Seventy-Four Percent of Students with Exit Data Successfully Completed the JJAEP

Figure 7



Source: Texas Juvenile Probation Commission database

Figure 8

Successful Educational Outcomes		Other Educational Outcomes	
Completed program – returned to home campus	2,014	Incarcerated	48
GED completed	35	Enrolled in other educational setting	37
Graduated from high school	22	Enrolled in residential treatment facility	5
		Runaway	1
		*Other	361
		Reason not stated	268
Total	2,071	Total	720

Source: Texas Juvenile Probation Commission database

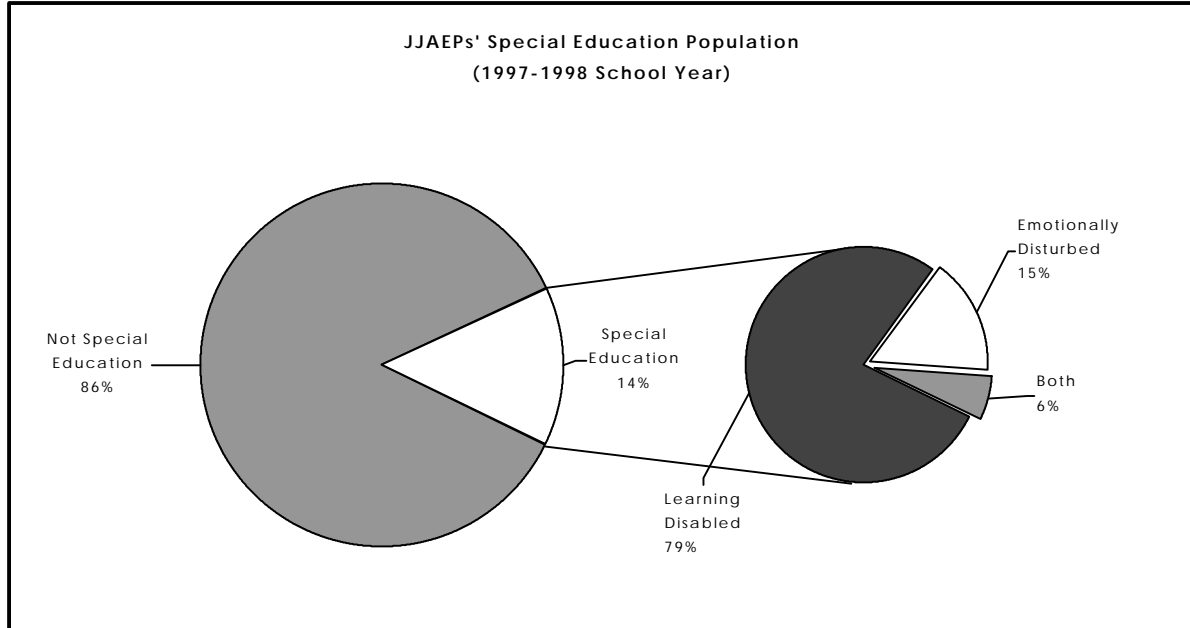
Note: *Other students are those who left the program due to out-of-county move, death, medical reason, or other non-delinquency reason.

- No exit data was available for 33 percent of students because some may still be enrolled or because the data was missing.

Special Education

JJAEPs and Texas Schools Have a Similar Percentage of Special Education Students

Figure 9



Source: Texas Juvenile Probation Commission database

- Fourteen percent of JJAEP students are special education compared to 12 percent in Texas schools.
- Eighty-five percent of the JJAEP special education population is learning disabled.

Race, Gender and Grade Level

JJAEPs Have a Disproportionate Number of Minority Students

Figure 10

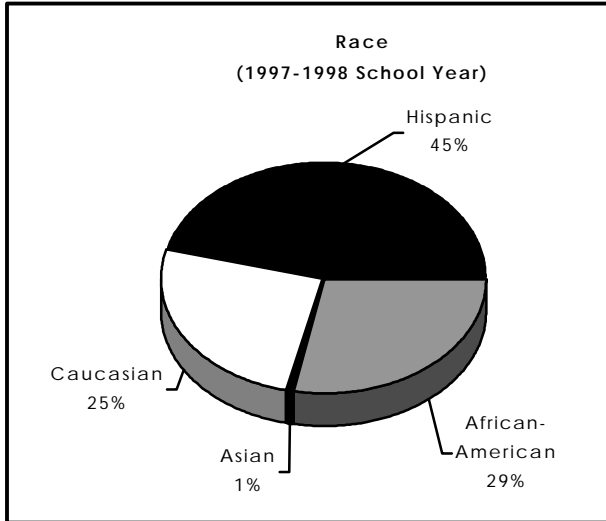


Figure 11

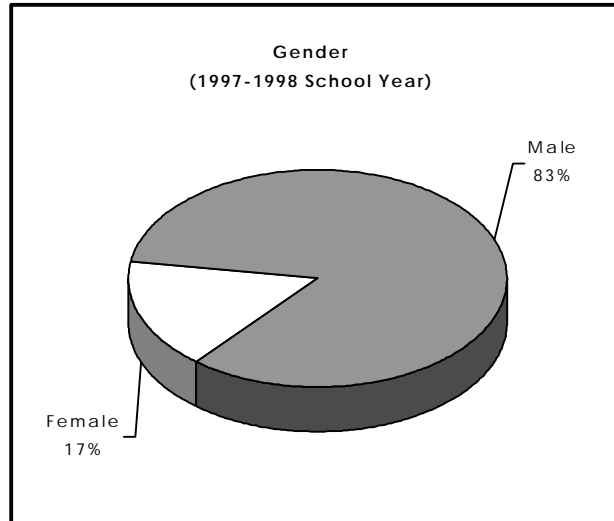
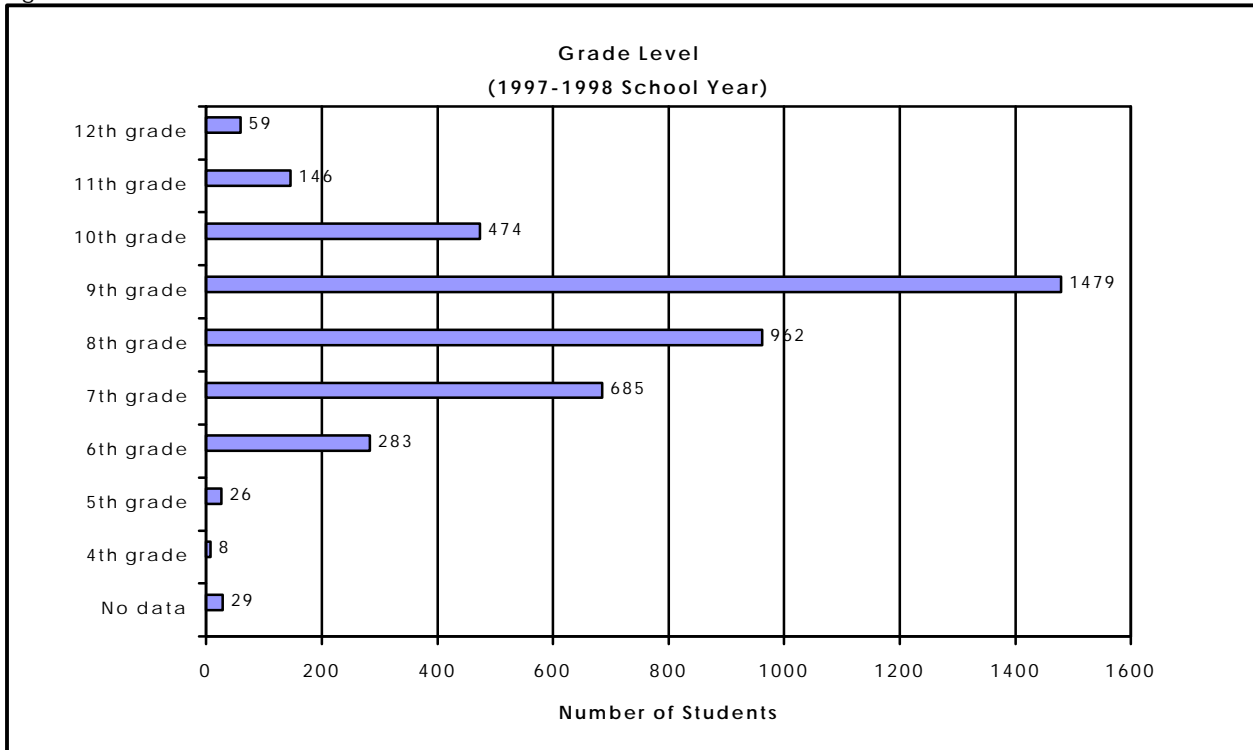


Figure 12



Source: Texas Juvenile Probation Commission database

- Seventy-five percent of all JJAEP students are minorities compared to 55 percent in Texas schools.
- Eighty-four percent of JJAEP students are in or below 9th grade.

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Program Descriptions for Selected JJAEPs

1998-1999 School Year

Table 5

General Information About Seven JJAEPs							
	Program Name (Number of Sites)						
	Bexar County Juvenile Justice Academy (1)	Harris County JJAEP (2)	Montgomery County JJAEP (1)	Travis County JJAEP (1)	Williamson County Academy (1)	El Paso County JJAEP ²	
						Cesar Chavez Academy	Raymond Telles Academy
Service Provider	Children's Comprehensive Services, Inc	Community Education Partners	Conroe ISD/ Montgomery County Juvenile Svcs.	Southwest Key/Travis County Juvenile Court	Georgetown ISD/ Williamson County Juvenile Services	Ysleta ISD	El Paso ISD
Location	County-owned building	Contractor- owned building	Conroe ISD AEP campus	Austin ISD AEP Campus	County- owned building	Ysleta ISD AEP campus	El Paso ISD AEP campus
Days in Operation ¹	250.0	182.0	187.0	189.0	190.0	187.0	182.5
Days Instructing	246.0	173.5	180.0	182.0	187.0	178.0	175.0
Target Length of Students' Stay	90-180 days (no minimum)	90-150 days	90 days	no minimum	90-180 days	90 days	90 days
Average Stay in 1997-1998	132 days	131 days	80 days	116 days	101 days	139 days	0 days
Daily Hours in Operation ²	7 hours 25 minutes	7 hours (4 every other Friday)	12 hours	7 hours	13 hours 30 minutes	7 hours 45 minutes	9 hours
Daily Hours of Instruction	5 hours 25 minutes or 4 hours 45 minutes + 1 hour counseling	6 hours 30 minutes (4 hours every other Friday)	7 hours + 2 hours counseling + 3 hours of physical training/ discipline	3 hours 55 minutes + 2 hours counseling	6 hours 30 minutes + 45 minutes counseling	6 hours 30 minutes	6 hours 20 minutes or 7 hours + 36 minutes (includes 45 minutes per week of group counseling)

Sources: Observations/interviews during on-site visits, documents from selected JJAEPs, and Texas Juvenile Probation Commission database

¹This excludes summer school but allows for Bexar's year-round program.

² Harris County operates an additional 15 minutes for nine days and dismisses students at the half-day on the 10th. This is done to allow staff development every other Friday afternoon.

Table 6

Instructional Information on Seven JJAEPs							
	Program Name						
	Bexar County Juvenile Justice Academy	Harris County JJAEP	Montgomery County JJAEP	Travis County JJAEP	Williamson County Academy	El Paso County JJAEP	
						Cesar Chavez Academy	Raymond Telles Academy
Pre/Post Tests	Kauffman Test of Educational Achievement	JNS	Wide Range Achievement Test	Wechsler Individual Achievement Test (WIAT)	Peabody Individual Achievement Test-Revised	Adult Basic Learning Exam (ABLE)	Adult Basic Learning Exam (ABLE)
Instruction Staff	Some certified teachers	Few certified teachers	All certified teachers	All certified teachers	All certified teachers	All certified or under alternative certification program	All certified teachers
Method of Instruction	Independent study, classroom instruction, computer studies	Computer assignments, self-paced instructional videos, textbook work, one-on-one and small group	Classroom instruction supplemented with computer studies	Classroom instruction supplemented with computer studies	Classroom instruction	Classroom instruction (50/50) supplemented with computer studies	Self-paced curriculum/ instruction
Stated Teacher to Student Ratio ¹	1:1:20 regular class, 1:1:16 special education	1:1:24	1:16	1:10	1:1:12	1:1:20	1:15
Number of Students ² 1997-1998	JJAEP 581	JJAEP 934 AEP 670	JJAEP 107 AEP 1,463	JJAEP 56 AEP 1,294 TYC 90	JJAEP 135 AEP 48	JJAEP 59 Choice 153 AEP 73 TYC 22 Other 23	JJAEP 0 AEP 511

Sources: Observations and interviews during on-site visits, documents provided by selected JJAEPs, and the Texas Juvenile Probation Commission database

¹ Bexar's, Harris's, and El Paso's (Cesar Chavez Academy) ratios show teacher to teacher's aide to students. The ratio for Williamson is teacher to drill instructor/academy officer to students.

² AEP students are those in a school district's off-campus alternative education program. District officials may remove students that exhibit certain behaviors from their regular classrooms. "TYC" students are those who live in a Texas Youth Commission halfway house and receive classroom instruction at the school campus.

Table 7

Additional Services		
Bexar County Juvenile Justice Academy		6 case managers, 2 social workers, 1 psychologist, 1 math tutor, 1 creative writing tutor, and Parent Project and Teen Parenting groups
Harris County JJAEP		2 probation officers; 3 truancy officers; child protective services case managers; MHMR counselors; alcohol, tobacco and drug prevention services; and nurse and social worker for student parents
Montgomery County JJAEP		4 MHMR counselors, 1 school counselor, 3 substance abuse counselors, 5 drill instructors
Travis County JJAEP		3 probation officers, 1 therapist, and 1 substance abuse counselor
Williamson County Academy		2 licensed counselors, 6 drill instructors, residential facilities
El Paso County JJEAP	Cesar Chavez Academy	4 certified social workers, free health services
	Raymond Telles Academy	Drug rehabilitation (group and individual) counseling to students and parents, prenatal and post parenting skill sessions, vocational training, mental illness referrals to Life Management Agency, TAAS tutoring, and volunteer classroom mentors (police department and adult probation department)

Source: Observations/interviews during on-site visits and documents provided by selected JJAEPs

Table 8

Security		
Bexar County Juvenile Justice Academy		Staff members pat-down students, scan with an electronic wand, remove shoes and outer wear for inspection.
Harris County JJAEP		Students walk through metal detector and are subject to daily pat-down searches. Sheriff deputies patrol inside the building and security guard patrols the parking lot.
Montgomery County JJAEP		Students walk through metal detector and are subject to daily pat-down searches. Drill instructors maintain discipline.
Travis County JJAEP		Staff members pat-down students, randomly inspect shoes, and have students walk through a metal detector. Probation officers and a school district officer maintain discipline.
Williamson County Academy		Staff members pat-down students and scan with an electronic wand. Drill instructors maintain discipline.
El Paso County JJEAP	Cesar Chavez Academy	Students are not searched. Off duty police officers patrol the campus.
	Raymond Telles Academy	Staff members pat-down students, remove shoes for inspection, and scan with students with an electronic wand. 3 campus security personnel patrol the building.

Source: Observations/interviews during on-site visits and documents provided by selected JJAEPs

Table 9

Extent to Which JJAEP and Non-JJAEP Students Co-Mingle		
Bexar County Juvenile Justice Academy		Not applicable. Only JJAEP students attend the Bexar County JJAEP.
Harris County JJAEP		JJAEP and AEP students at the Beechnut facility do not co-mingle. At the Ferndale facility, honor JJAEP and AEP students share a classroom.
Montgomery County JJAEP		JJAEP and AEP students are not co-mingled.
Travis County JJAEP		JJAEP and AEP students share bus service to and from the campus. Although TYC students are also taught on the same campus, JJAEP and TYC students are not co-mingled.
Williamson County Academy		JJAEP and AEP students are not co-mingled.
El Paso County JJEAP	Cesar Chavez Academy	JJAEP, TYC, Legacy, Choice, and AEP students are co-mingled throughout the day.
	Raymond Telles Academy	JJAEP and AEP students share bus transportation to the school and 2 periods of electives.

Source: Observations/interview during on-site visit and documents provided by selected JJAEPs

Table 10

Transportation		
Bexar County Juvenile Justice Academy		Sending districts provide pick-up/drop-off locations with security. Students are responsible for getting to location. CCS contracts for bus service to/from pick-up/drop-off points.
Harris County JJAEP		CEP contracts with private bus company to pick up/drop off students.
Montgomery County JJAEP		Sending district buses students to school and parents pick up.
Travis County JJAEP		Austin ISD buses JJAEP students from various pick-up/drop-off points as coordinated with other school districts via the memorandum of understanding.
Williamson County Academy		Sending school districts bus students from pick-up locations. Parents must bring students to the pick-up point.
El Paso County JJEAP	Cesar Chavez Academy	Parents transport most students to/from school. Ysleta and Socorro ISDs bus some students that live far from school or who are special education.
	Raymond Telles Academy	El Paso school district transports students to/from the school.

Source: Observations/interview during on-site visit and documents provided by selected JJAEPs