

## MEMORANDUM

February 1, 2012

TO: School Board Members

FROM: Terry B. Grier, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: **TITLE I PART A, STIMULUS, SURESCORE DUKE TIP, 2009–2010 AND 2010–2011**

CONTACT: Carla Stevens, 713-556-6700

Attached is the Title I, Part A, Stimulus, SureScore Duke TIP report for 2009–2010 and 2010–2011. The report assessed the impact of the SureScore program on SAT Reasoning Test taking preparedness for HISD seventh-grade students. SureScore, an educational consulting firm, provided workshops to HISD teachers to help teachers focus on critical areas of student instruction and test-taking strategies for improved performance on the SAT. This program supported two HISD core initiatives: Effective Teacher in Every Classroom and Rigorous Instructional Standards and Supports. Funding for the program totaled \$642,712 over the two years of implementation. The 2010–2011 allocation was \$309,679, and the 2009–2010 allocation was \$333,033.

Key findings are as follows:

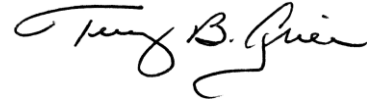
- In 2010–2011, 92 of the 1,049 seventh grade students who participated in the SureScore program were eligible for Duke TIP recognition based on their official SAT scores. In 2009–2010, 41 of the 877 seventh grade participants were eligible for Duke TIP recognition.
- In 2010–2011, 88 teachers participated in the mathematics and ELA/reading workshops. Seventy teachers participated in the workshops in 2009–2010.
- In 2009–2010, 243 or 27.7 percent of participating students took the official SAT. Gains were noted for critical reading, mathematics, and writing. In 2010–2011, 797 or 76.0 percent of participating students took the official SAT. Gains were noted for each of the subject tests, though at smaller magnitudes than in 2009–2010.

### **Administrative Response:**

Research shows that raising college awareness at an early age is a key factor in increasing the likelihood that students will pursue postsecondary education. By introducing college entrance exams at the middle school level, districts increase college readiness and put students on the path to academic success. SureScore's Middle School SAT Preparation introduces students to the general structure of the SAT and provides them with proven test-taking strategies necessary to perform well on the exam. The comprehensive curriculum combines interactive and engaging activity-based lessons with hundreds of practice problems to reinforce strategies and prepare students for every section of the SAT. Throughout the program, students take several practice tests that closely simulate real testing conditions. Provided assessments allow teachers to establish a baseline for student performance as well as to identify student strengths and weaknesses. This enables teachers to focus on the critical areas of individual student instruction.

District strategies to increase the number of 7<sup>th</sup> graders that qualify for Duke Talent Identification Program (TIP) have met with success and continue to improve. The goals of the implementation of Campus-led Middle School SAT Academy include increase knowledge of college entrance exams, prepare students for SAT, and increase the number of state-recognized Duke TIP participants. Middle school students participated in a 20-hour campus-led academy focused on preparing students for SAT including 4 hours of diagnostics and 16 hours of instruction. On average, students increased their composite scores 47 points from the initial diagnostic to the official SAT with the greatest overall composite increase of 400 points.

Should you have any further questions, please contact my office or Carla Stevens in Research and Accountability at 713-556-6700.



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Attachment

cc: Superintendent's Direct Reports  
Chief School Officers  
School Improvement Officers  
Martha Salazar-Zamora  
Alan Summers  
June Giddings  
Matilda Orozco  
Pamela Evans

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **TITLE I, PART A, STIMULUS, SURESCORE DUKE TIP, 2009–2010 AND 2010–2011**

#### **Program Description**

The purpose of Title I, Part A is to ensure that all children, particularly low-achieving children in the highest-poverty schools, have a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain a high-quality education and reach, at a minimum, proficiency on challenging state academic achievement standards and state academic standards. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) stimulus bill was enacted on February 17, 2009 with provisions for key investments in education to help states and school districts across the country implement innovative strategies that will improve education for at-risk students and close the achievement gap while also stimulating the economy. The district's projected share of Title I funds in the stimulus bill was approximately \$89 million, including indirect costs, over a two-year period. Funds were to be allocated into required allocations mandated by federal law, campus-based initiatives, and districtwide initiatives.

The SureScore (SureScore PSAT and SAT Test Preparation) program is a districtwide initiative to expand opportunities for high performing HISD seventh grade students to prepare for the SAT Reasoning Test. SureScore, an educational consulting firm located in Austin, Texas, claims that student participants have averaged 100-point-plus increases in SAT composite scores because of program participation. Additionally, SureScore helps school districts create opportunities for success for their students including recognition by programs like Duke University's Talent Identification Program (Duke TIP Seventh Grade Talent Search, 2010).

In the SureScore program, students are introduced to the general structure of the SAT and are provided with proven test-taking strategies necessary to perform well on the exam. The SureScore Train-the-Teacher Model SAT curriculum combines interacting and engaging activity-based lessons with hundreds of practice problems to reinforce strategies and prepare students for every section of the SAT. Throughout the program, students take several practice tests that closely simulate real testing conditions. Provided assessments allow teachers to establish a baseline for student performance as well as identify student strengths and weaknesses. This enables teachers to focus on the critical areas for individual student instruction.

Funding for the program totaled \$642,712 over the two years of implementation. The 2010–2011 allocation was \$309,679, and the 2009–2010 allocation was \$333,033. Funds were used for supplies and materials, contracted services, student registration fees for the official SAT, and scholarships for students who qualified for summer studies at Duke University.

The program goals are:

- Increase SAT scores; and
- Improve student SAT knowledge and confidence.

#### **Purpose of the Evaluation**

The purpose of this evaluation is to comply with federal mandates requiring the evaluation of Title I, Part A programs. The evaluation focused on determining the percentage of SureScore student participants meeting Duke TIP selection criteria, teacher and student evaluation of the SureScore program, and a comparison of participant performance on a baseline SAT diagnostic to performance on an official administration of the SAT for the 2009–2010 and 2010–2011 school years.

## Key Findings

1. How many seventh-grade students participated in the SureScore program?
  - In 2009–2010, 877 seventh grade students from 25 middle schools participated in the SureScore program.
  - In 2010–2011, 1,049 seventh grade students from 34 middle schools participated in the SureScore program.
2. To what extent did participating students meet the criteria for Duke TIP recognition?
  - In 2009–2010, 19 or 2.2 percent of the 877 seventh grade students participating in the SureScore program initially met the criteria for Duke TIP recognition based on performance on a released SAT administered by SureScore prior to the implementation of its curriculum. After program participation, 41 students who took the official SAT were eligible for Duke TIP recognition.
  - In 2010–2011, 52 or 5.0 percent of the 1,049 seventh grade students participating in the SureScore program initially met the criteria for Duke TIP recognition based on performance on a released SAT administered by SureScore prior to the implementation of its curriculum. After program participation, 92 students who took the official SAT were eligible for Duke TIP recognition.
3. How many teachers participated in the SureScore program?
  - In 2009–2010, 70 teachers from 31 schools participated in the mathematics and ELA/reading workshops.
  - In 2010–2011, 88 teachers from 36 schools participated in the mathematics and ELA/reading workshops.
4. How did student participants evaluate the SureScore program?
  - Students appeared to be less satisfied with the program in 2010–2011 than in 2009–2010. In 2009–2010, 95.0 percent of student survey respondents reported that they believed the preparation course provided them with the strategies and resources needed to perform well on college entrance exams. In 2010–2011, 73.2 percent of responding students reported that they believed the preparation course provided them with the strategies and resources needed to perform well on college entrance exams.
5. How did teacher participants evaluate the SureScore program?
  - Based on survey data provided by SureScore from 20.0 percent of the participating teachers in 2009–2010, teacher feedback was positive with 79 percent or more responding affirmatively to eight questions pertaining to student preparation and overall quality of the program.
6. Did the SureScore program have an impact on SAT performance?
  - In 2009–2010, 243 or 27.7 percent of participating students took the official SAT. Gains were noted for critical reading, mathematics, and writing when compared to the diagnostic pre-test. The greatest

gains were made on the writing test, for which the average writing score increased by almost 100 points.

- In 2010–2011, 797 or 76.0 percent of participating students took the official SAT. Gains were noted for each of the subject tests, though at smaller magnitudes than in 2009–2010.
7. How many SureScore participating students were recognized by Duke TIP?
- In 2009–2010, 41 students met the criteria for Duke TIP recognition based on official SAT scores.
  - In 2010–2011, 92 students met the criteria for Duke TIP recognition based on official SAT scores.

### **Recommendations**

1. Continue to increase the number of program participants who take the official SAT at the end of SureScore preparation, as taking the official SAT is a prerequisite for obtaining Duke TIP honors. When sitting for the official SAT is not a viable option, a post-program assessment should be administered to reinforce the knowledge, skills, and strategies learned in the SureScore program. Such an assessment would also increase capacity to evaluate the effectiveness of SureScore programming.
2. Further investigation is recommended to determine student-level factors that lead to successful implementation of SureScore.
3. Monitor the SAT performance of participating students as they progress through middle school and high school. HISD's participation in the ReadyStart program provides a great point from which to evaluate the long-term impact of the SureScore SAT preparation program.



# **TITLE I, PART A, STIMULUS, SURESCORE DUKE TIP, 2009–2010 AND 2010–2011**

## **Introduction**

### **Program Description**

The purpose of Title I, Part A is to ensure that all children, particularly low-achieving children in the highest-poverty schools, have a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain a high-quality education and reach, at a minimum, proficiency on challenging state academic achievement standards and state academic standards. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) stimulus bill was enacted on February 17, 2009 with provisions for key investments in education to help states and school districts across the country implement innovative strategies that will improve education for at-risk students and close the achievement gap while also stimulating the economy. The district's projected share of Title I funds in the stimulus bill was approximately \$89 million, including indirect costs, over a two-period period. Funds were to be allocated into required allocations mandated by federal law, campus-based initiatives, and districtwide initiatives.

The SureScore program is a districtwide initiative to expand opportunities for high performing HISD seventh grade students to prepare for the SAT college preparation exam. SureScore, an educational consulting firm located in Austin, Texas, claims that student participants have averaged 100-point-plus increases in SAT composite scores. Additionally, SureScore helps school districts create opportunities for success for their students including recognition by programs like Duke University's Talent Identification program (Duke TIP).

In the SureScore program, students are introduced to the general structure of the SAT and are provided with proven test-taking strategies necessary to perform well on the exam. The SureScore Train-the-Teacher Model SAT curriculum combines interacting and engaging activity based lessons with hundreds of practice problems to reinforce strategies and prepare students for every section of the SAT. Throughout the program, students take several practice tests that closely simulate real testing conditions. Provided assessments allow teachers to establish a baseline for student performance as well as identify student strengths and weaknesses. This enables teachers to focus on the critical areas for individual student instruction.

### **Program goals**

The program goals are:

- Increase SAT scores; and
- Improve student SAT knowledge and confidence.

### **Program Participants**

In both 2009–2010 and 2010–2011, students were selected for participation in the SureScore program based on their scores on the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) from the previous academic year and teacher and school recommendations. The fifty students with the highest TAKS mathematics and reading/ELA scores on each middle school campus were identified as potential program participants. The list was adjusted to compensate for misalignment between test scores and students' general demonstrations of ability through discussions with campus leadership to produce a final roster for the SureScore preparation program.

**Budget arrangements**

Funding for the program totaled \$642,712 over the two years of implementation. The 2010–2011 allocation was \$309,679, and the 2009–2010 allocation was \$333,033.

**Purpose of the Evaluation Report**

The purpose of this evaluation is to comply with federal mandates requiring the evaluation of Title I, Part A programs. The evaluation focused on determining the percentage of SureScore student participants meeting Duke TIP selection criteria, student evaluation of the SureScore program, and a comparison of participant performance on a baseline SAT diagnostic to performance on the Duke TIP administration of the SAT. The following research questions were addressed.

1. How many seventh-grade students participated in the SureScore program?
2. To what extent did participating students meet the criteria for Duke TIP recognition?
3. How many teachers participated in the SureScore program?
4. How did student participants evaluate the SureScore program?
5. How did teacher participants evaluate the SureScore program?
6. Did the SureScore program have an impact on SAT performance?
7. How many SureScore participating students were recognized by Duke TIP?

**Methodology****Data Collection**

Primary program documentation included the program budget and description from the 2009–2010 Consolidated Title I, Part A, Stimulus Application. Teacher and student participant data were provided by SureScore. SureScore also distributed feedback surveys to student and teacher participants in both the 2009–2010 and 2010–2011 school years. Survey response data from students (2009–2010 and 2010–2011) and teachers (2009–2010 only) were provided by SureScore.

**Measures of Academic Achievement**

The extent to which student participants met Duke TIP eligibility criteria was assessed using students' scores on a released SAT administered by SureScore prior to the implementation of the SureScore curriculum. Performance on the official SAT was collected and reported by SureScore.

**Data Analysis**

Diagnostic and actual SAT scores, student and teacher survey data, and educator workshop participation were provided by SureScore. Weighted average responses for student survey data in 2009–2010 were based on the number of students from each school agreeing or strongly agreeing with survey items. Response data from the 2010–2011 student survey were not weighted.

**Results****How many seventh-grade students participated in the SureScore program?**

In 2010–2011, 1,049 HISD students participated in the program. This represents a 19.6% increase over the previous year's 877 participants. The program was offered to seventh grade students in 34 middle schools in 2010–2011, compared to 25 schools in 2009–2010. The number of participants by school ranged from 8 at Attucks Middle School to 103 at Lanier Middle School in 2010–2011 (**Table 1**).



Table 1. SureScore Participants by School and Number and Percent Meeting Duke TIP Recognition Criteria Prior to Curriculum Implementation

School	Participants		Number Eligible for Duke TIP Recognition		Percent Eligible for Duke TIP Recognition	
	2009–2010	2010–2011	2009–2010	2010–2011	2009–2010	2010–2011
Attucks Middle School	–	8	–	0	–	0.0
Black Middle School	26	13	0	0	0.0	0.0
Briar Meadow Charter School	17	23	0	0	0.0	0.0
Burbank Middle School	48	22	0	1	0.0	4.5
Cullen Middle School	16	–	0	–	0.0	–
Clifton Middle School	–	41	–	0	–	0.0
Contemporary Middle School	–	18	–	0	–	0.0
Deady Middle School	22	15	0	0	0.0	0.0
Dowling Middle School	46	23	0	0	0.0	0.0
Edison Middle School	55	19	0	1	0.0	5.3
Energized for Excellence Middle School	–	23	–	0	–	0.0
Energized for STEM-West Middle School	–	28	–	1	–	3.6
Fleming Middle School	49	42	0	1	0.0	2.4
Fonville Middle School	39	15	1	0	2.6	0.0
Grady Middle School	47	23	0	2	0.0	8.7
Gregory-Lincoln Middle School	28	10	0	0	0.0	0.0
Hamilton Middle School	48	--	0	--	0.0	--
Henry Middle School	--	13	--	0	--	0.0
Holland Middle School	15	--	0	--	0.0	--
Jackson Middle School	38	21	0	0	0.0	0.0
Johnston Middle School	45	86	0	7	0.0	8.1
Key Middle School	34	--	0	--	0.0	--
Lanier Middle School	16	103	5	17	31.3	16.5
Long Middle School	55	19	0	0	0.0	0.0
Marshall Middle School	--	17	--	0	--	0.0
McReynolds Middle School	34	--	0	--	0.0	--
Ortiz Middle School	52	35	0	0	0.0	0.0
Pershing Middle School	--	68	--	8	--	11.8
Pilgrim Academy	--	23	--	0	--	0.0
Pin Oak Middle School	--	35	--	3	--	8.6
Project Chrysalis Middle School	--	26	--	1	--	3.8
Rice Middle School	--	72	--	0	--	0.0
Sharpstown Middle School	--	36	--	0	--	0.0
Stevenson Middle School	44	50	0	1	0.0	2.0
Thomas Middle School	25	--	0	--	0.0	--
Welch Middle School	6	20	0	0	0.0	0.0
West Briar Middle School	38	65	13	9	34.2	13.8
Wharton Middle School	--	14	--	0	--	0.0
Williams Middle School	34	12	0	0	0.0	0.0
Woodson Middle School	--	11	--	0	--	0.0
Totals	877	1,049	19	52	2.2	5.0

Note: “–” indicates that a school did not participate in the SureScore program.

Source: SureScore

**To what extent did participating students meet the criteria for Duke TIP recognition?**

Each year, the Duke Talent Identification Program (TIP) hosts two types of recognition ceremonies to honor the accomplishments of seventh-grade students who perform well on the SAT and the ACT. The eligibility criteria for participation in the recognition ceremonies are listed in **Table 2** (see page 9), as are test specifications for students who Duke TIP designates as college-ready.

Based on performance on the SAT assessment administered by SureScore, 52 or 5.0 percent of the 2010–2011 participating seventh-grade students met Duke TIP criteria for state or grand recognition prior to introduction of the SureScore curriculum (Table 1; see also **Figure 1**). In comparison, 19 or 2.2 percent of students who participated in the program in the previous year met these criteria prior to introduction of the curriculum.

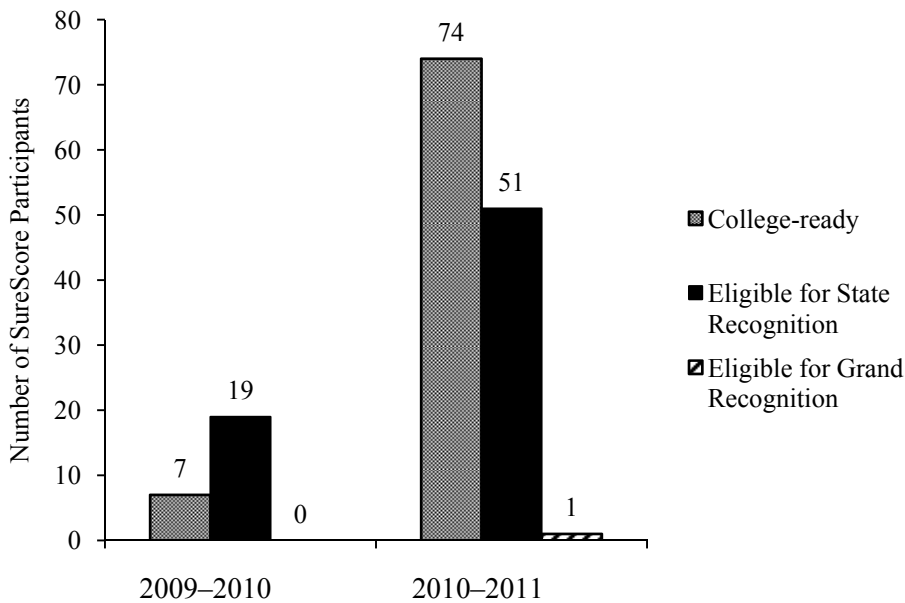


Figure 1. Levels of participant qualification for recognition prior to introduction of the curriculum.

Source: SureScore

**Table 3** presents information, by school, on the number of students performing at each of the recognition levels prior to introduction of the SureScore curriculum. In 2010–2011, 74 seventh grade students tested as college-ready, while seven tested as college-ready in 2009–2010. The highest number of students testing at the college-ready level were enrolled at Lanier Middle School (28 students in 2010–2011, three in 2009–2010) and West Briar Middle School (three students in 2009–2010).

Fifty-one students met Duke TIP State Recognition criteria prior to the introduction of the Sure Score curriculum in 2010–2011, and 19 students met the criteria in 2009–2010. Lanier Middle School enrolled the most students qualified as such in 2010–2011 (n=17), and West Briar Middle School enrolled the most students so qualified in 2009–2010 (n=13). Only one student met Duke TIP Grand Recognition criteria prior to the introduction of the SureScore curriculum. This student was enrolled in West Briar Middle School in the 2010–2011 school year.

Table 2. SAT Criteria for Duke TIP Recognition, 2009–2010 and 2010–2011

<b>Achievement level</b>	<b>Criteria</b>
College-ready	A. Math + Critical Reading $\geq$ 1070 B. Math $\geq$ 500 C. Critical Reading $\geq$ 500
State Recognition	A. Math $\geq$ 520 B. Critical Reading $\geq$ 510 C. Writing $\geq$ 500 D. Two of the three following scores: Math $\geq$ 510, Critical Reading $\geq$ 500, Writing $\geq$ 490
Grand Recognition	A. Math $\geq$ 650 B. Critical Reading $\geq$ 650 C. Writing $\geq$ 650 D. Composite score (Math + Critical Reading + Writing) $\geq$ 1850

Table 3. Achievement Level of Students at Program Commencement

<b>School</b>	<b>Designated College-ready by Duke TIP</b>		<b>Eligible for Duke TIP State Recognition</b>		<b>Eligible for Duke TIP Grand Recognition</b>	
	<b>2009–2010</b>	<b>2010–2011</b>	<b>2009–2010</b>	<b>2010–2011</b>	<b>2009–2010</b>	<b>2010–2011</b>
Attucks Middle School	–	0	–	0	–	0
Black Middle School	0	0	0	0	0	0
Briar Meadow Charter School	0	1	0	0	0	0
Burbank Middle School	0	2	0	1	0	0
Clifton Middle School	–	0	–	0	–	0
CLC Middle School	–	0	–	0	–	0
Cullen Middle School	0	–	0	–	0	–
Deady Middle School	0	0	0	0	0	0
Dowling Middle School	0	0	0	0	0	0
Edison Middle School	0	1	0	1	0	0
Energized for Excellence Middle School	–	0	–	0	–	0
Energized for STEM-West Middle School	–	1	–	1	–	0
Fleming Middle School	0	0	0	1	0	0
Fonville Middle School	1	0	1	0	0	0
Grady Middle School	0	3	0	2	0	0
Gregory-Lincoln Middle School	0	0	0	0	0	0

Note: “–” indicates that a school did not participate in the SureScore program.

Source: SureScore

Table 3. Achievement Level of Students at Program Commencement (continued)

School	Designated College-ready by Duke TIP		Eligible for Duke TIP State Recognition		Eligible for Duke TIP Grand Recognition	
	2009– 2010	2010– 2011	2009– 2010	2010– 2011	2009– 2010	2010– 2011
Hamilton Middle School	0	–	0	–	0	–
Henry Middle School	–	0	–	0	0	0
Holland Middle School	0	–	0	–	0	–
Jackson Middle School	0	0	0	0	0	0
Johnston Middle School	0	7	0	7	0	0
Key Middle School	0	–	0	–	0	–
Lanier Middle School	3	28	5	17	0	0
Long Middle School	0	0	0	0	0	0
Marshall Middle School	–	0	–	0	–	0
McReynolds Middle School	0	–	0	–	0	–
Ortiz Middle School	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pershing Middle School	–	10	–	8	–	0
Pilgrim Academy	–	0	–	0	–	0
Pin Oak Middle School	–	5	–	3	–	0
Project Chrysalis Middle School	–	1	–	1	–	0
Rice Middle School	–	1	–	0	–	0
Sharpstown Middle School	–	0	–	0	–	0
Stevenson Middle School	0	1	0	1	0	0
Thomas Middle School	0	–	0	–	0	–
Welch Middle School	0	1	0	0	0	0
West Briar Middle School	3	12	13	8	0	1
Wharton Middle School	–	0	–	0	–	0
Williams Middle School	0	0	0	0	0	0
Woodson Middle School	–	0	–	0	–	0
Totals	7	74	19	51	0	1

Note: “–” indicates that a school did not participate in the SureScore program.

Source: SureScore

### How many teachers participated in the SureScore program?

In 2010–2011, 88 HISD educators participated in the program, and 70 educators participated in the program in 2009–2010. These educators attended one of two (six hours per day) professional workshops to prepare them to implement the SureScore curriculum. One day focused on reading/ELA activities and one day focused on mathematics. Teachers from 36 schools participated in 2010–2011 compared to 31 schools in 2009–2010.

Table 4. Educator Participation in SureScore Workshops by Campus, 2009–2010 and 2010–2011

School	Number of Teachers Who Attended Training	
	2009–2010	2010–2011
Attucks Middle School	0	0
Black Middle School	2	2
Briar Meadow Middle School	2	1
Burbank Middle School	2	2
Clifton Middle School	0	1
Contemporary Learning Center	0	3
Cullen Middle School	2	0
Deady Middle School	2	1
Dowling Middle School	3	1
Edison Middle School	3	3
Energized for Excellence Middle School	0	2
Energized for STEM-West Middle School	0	1
Fleming Middle School	4	3
Fonville Middle School	2	1
Grady Middle School	2	2
Gregory-Lincoln Education Center	2	4
Hamilton Middle School	2	3
Hartman Middle School	0	1
Henry Middle School	2	3
Holland Middle School	3	0
Jackson Middle School	2	1
Johnston Middle School	2	4
Key Middle School	3	0
Lanier Middle School	2	2
Long Middle School	3	2
Marshall Middle School	0	2
McReynolds Middle School	2	0
Ortiz Middle School	2	4
Pershing Middle School	2	4
Pilgrim Academy	3	4
Pin Oak Middle School	2	4
Project Chrysalis Middle School	2	2
Revere Middle School	2	3
Rice Middle School	0	4
Sharpstown International School	0	3
Stevenson Middle School	1	3
Thomas Middle School	2	0
Welch Middle School	3	3
West Briar Middle School	2	2
Wharton Middle School	0	1
Williams Middle School	2	2
Woodson Middle School	0	4
Totals	70	88

Source: SureScore

### How did student participants evaluate the SureScore program?

In 2010–2011, students from eleven participating campuses evaluated the SureScore program in a survey administered by SureScore. The 265 respondents represented 25.3 percent of program participants. This was an increase from 69 students or 7.9 percent in 2009–2010. The results are presented in **Table 5**. Overall, student feedback was less positive in 2010–2011 than in 2009–2010. In 2010–2011, the highest percentage responding agree or strongly agree was 73.2 percent (regarding strategies and resources to perform well on the college admissions exam). Additionally, five items exceeded 90 percent agreeing or strongly agreeing in 2009–2010 compared to none in 2010–2011.

Table 5. Student Survey Results, 2009–2010 and 2010–2011

Survey Question	Percent Agree or Strongly Agree:	
	2009–2010 (n=69)	2010–2011 (n=265)
The SureScore SAT Preparation course provided me the strategies and resources needed to perform well on the college admissions exam.	95.0	73.2
The SureScore SAT Preparation course helped prepare me to take the college admissions exam.	97.0	72.1
The strategies that I learned in the SureScore Preparation course were introduced in a way that was easy to learn and apply.	94.0	53.6
The strategies that I learned in the SureScore SAT Preparation course helped improve my performance in other classes.	83.0	46.0
I found the coursework challenging.	96.0	56.2
I am confident that I am able to apply the new test taking strategies on the college admissions exam.	91.0	65.2
The activities in the SureScore SAT Preparation course were fun and engaging.	–	27.7
My teacher went over the initial results of my SAT assessment with me.	–	58.9
The individual report provided by SureScore made it easy to identify my strengths and areas in need of improvement on the college admissions exam.	–	55.1
The look and feel of the SAT student workbook was appealing.	–	43.4
The SAT student workbook was user friendly.	–	62.6

Source: SureScore

### How did teacher participants evaluate the SureScore program?

In 2009–2010, SureScore provided survey data from 14, or 20.0 percent, of the 70 teacher participants (**Table 6**). Feedback was positive as 79.0 percent or more responded “agreed” or “strongly agreed” on each of eight items addressing program quality and student impact. The lowest score of 79 percent was regarding the application of SureScore strategies to other coursework. Survey responses from teacher participants were not provided for 2010–2011.

Table 6. Teacher Survey Results, SureScore 2009–2010

Survey Question	Percent Agree or Strongly Agree (n=14)
I am confident that my students are able to learn new test-taking strategies and apply them on the college admissions exam.	93.0
Students gained confidence in their ability to take the SAT.	86.0
The students were challenged by the coursework.	93.0
This course taught my students strategies that they are able to apply in other classes to improve their performance.	79.0
I would recommend this course to a colleague.	100.0
SureScore provided quality lessons and activities.	100.0
SureScore’s instructional strategies were effective.	100.0
The teacher resource guide is organized in a way that is user friendly.	86.0

Note: Results not available for 2010–2011

Source: SureScore

### Did the SureScore program have an impact on SAT performance?

Of the 1,049 students who participated in the SureScore program in 2010–2011, 797 students sat for the official SAT (76.0 percent). Only 27.7 percent of the seventh grade students who participated in the SureScore program in 2009–2010 (243 of 877) sat for the official examination. The mean assessment and SAT scores of the students who sat for the examination are presented in **Table 7**. Performance on the assessment was higher on all three subject tests in 2009–2010 than in 2010–2011. In addition, mean scores on the official SAT were lower on the subject tests in the second year of the program than in the first year. The average score changes were also smaller in 2010–2011 than in 2009–2010.

Table 7. Pre-Test and Post-Test Performance of SAT Examinees, 2009–2010 and 2010–2011

	2009–2010					2010–2011				
	Mean Pre-Test Score	Mean Post-Test Score	Mean Score Change	Highest Official SAT Score	Greatest Score Increase	Mean Pre-Test Score	Mean Post-Test Score	Mean Score Change	Highest Official SAT Score	Greatest Score Increase
Critical Reading	362	393	31	730	430	374	378	4	650	210
Mathematics	380	420	40	610	310	389	398	9	780	160
Writing	293	392	99	650	400	334	368	34	650	230
Composite	1035	1205	170	1860	990	1097	1144	47	2070	400

Note: Pre-test score refers to performance on the released SAT and post-test score refers to performance on the official SAT

Source: SureScore

### How many SureScore participating students were recognized by Duke TIP?

**Figure 2** depicts the proportion of students who qualified for Duke TIP recognition in relation to the number of program participants who learned the SureScore curriculum only and program participants who took the official SAT in 2009–2010 and 2010–2011. As is shown, a greater proportion of students took the official SAT, qualified for state recognition, and qualified for grand recognition in 2010–2011 than in 2009–2010.

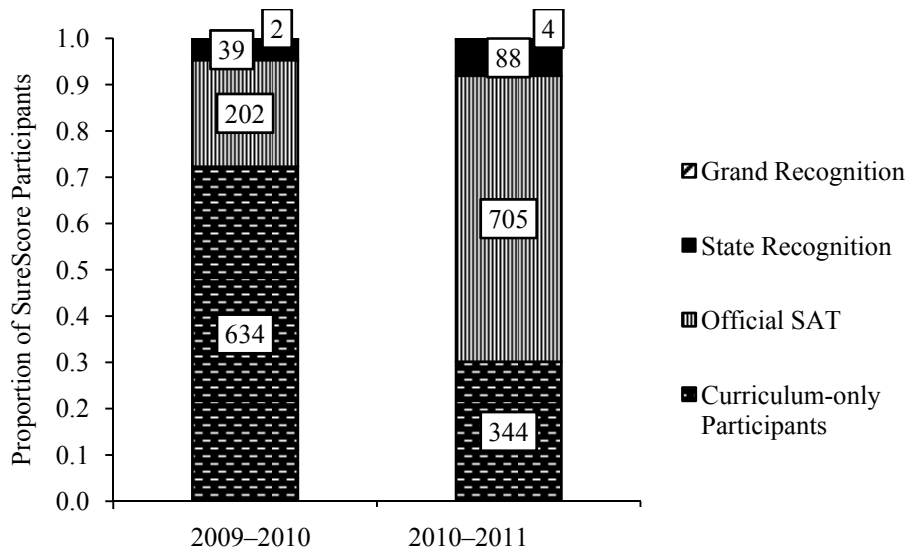


Figure 2. Proportion of SureScore participants taking the official SAT and achieving recognition levels.

**Table 8** presents information on the impact of the SureScore program on students’ qualifications for Duke TIP recognition. In 2010–2011, 51 students whose pre-assessment test scores did not meet the cutoff criteria for Duke TIP recognition qualified for state recognition on the official SAT. In 2009–2010, 27 students whose pre-assessment test scores did not meet the cutoffs for Duke TIP recognition achieved scores on the official SAT that qualified them for state level recognition. Also in 2009–2010, one student whose pre-assessment test scores did not meet the cutoffs for Duke TIP recognition qualified for grand recognition on the official SAT. This did not happen in 2010–2011. The performance of three students in 2010–2011 and one student in 2009–2010 improved from state recognition to grand recognition.

Some students scored higher on the pre-assessment than on the official SAT. Among these students, some moved from initially qualifying for Duke TIP recognition to qualifying for recognition no longer. This was the case for seven students in 2010–2011 and three students in 2009–2010. Among students qualifying for state or grand recognition on the pre-assessment, 38 students in 2010–2011 and 12 students in 2009–2010 qualified for the same level of recognition on the official SAT.

Table 8. Achievement levels of recognized students, 2009–2010 and 2010–2011

Change in achievement level	Number of students	
	2009–2010	2010–2011
Not qualified for recognition to State Recognition	27	51
Not qualified for recognition to Grand Recognition	1	0
Qualified for State Recognition to Grand Recognition	1	3
Qualified for State Recognition (unchanged)	12	37
Qualified for Grand Recognition (unchanged)	0	1
Total receiving recognition	41	92
Qualified for state or grand recognition to not qualified for recognition	3	7

Source: SureScore



## Discussion

The extent to which this program will contribute to improved SAT performance is difficult to determine given the long interval between participation in the program and actual high school SAT testing, specifically four years. Initial results are positive, as gains were noted on all three subtests of the SAT. It is disappointing, however, that test scores and the magnitude of score changes were much smaller in 2010–2011 than in the previous year. There could be several explanations for these outcomes: differences in curriculum implementation, increased size of the SAT workshops and therefore less time for individualized assistance, and differences in the level of student preparedness at the program’s onset, for example. These findings once again highlight the absence of information on actual classroom implementation of the activities learned during the professional development training provided by SureScore.

The rate of program completion is also noteworthy. In 2010–2011, 76.0 of the students enrolled in the SureScore program sat for the official SAT. This is a marked improvement from the 27.7 percent of program participants who sat for the official examination in 2009–2010. Increasing the rate at which program participants’ sit for the official examination is critical to increasing the number of HISD students eligible for Duke TIP honors. More fundamentally, exposure to the official test-taking environment offers an invaluable experience for students on the road to college readiness.

The long term impact of SureScore SAT preparation for seventh grade students should be bolstered by HISD’s participation in the ReadyStep program. ReadyStep is an SAT preparation curriculum that was first offered in 2010–2011 to eighth grade students throughout the district. When 2010–2011 SureScore participants participate in ReadyStep in 2011–2012, the knowledge, skills, and strategies introduced by the SureScore program should be reinforced.

## Recommendations

1. Continue to increase the number of program participants who take the official SAT at the end of SureScore preparation, as taking the official SAT is a prerequisite for obtaining Duke TIP honors. When sitting for the official SAT is not a viable option, a post-program assessment should be administered to reinforce the knowledge, skills, and strategies learned in the SureScore program. Such an assessment would also increase capacity to evaluate the effectiveness of SureScore programming.
2. Further investigation is recommended to determine student-level factors that lead to successful implementation of SureScore.
3. Monitor the SAT performance of participating students as they progress through middle school and high school. HISD’s participation in the ReadyStep program provides a great point from which to evaluate the long term impact of the SureScore SAT preparation program.