

Irma Rangel Young Women's Leadership School Program, 2004-05

REIS05-141-4

At a Glance

The Irma Rangel Young Women's Leadership School program, a single-gender schooling initiative, is dedicated to providing a rigorous curriculum to middle-school female students in the Dallas Independent School District (DISD). The newest of the DISD academy schools, Irma Rangel Young Women's Leadership School serves as a college preparatory program with two primary purposes: (a) to nurture the intellectual curiosity and creativity of young women and (b) to address the developmental needs of female students. Its mission is to cultivate dynamic, participatory learning that enables students to experience great academic success at many levels especially in the fields of math, science, and technology. Students are encouraged to achieve their personal best as they prepare for college. The Irma Rangel Young Women's Leadership School strives to work with families and to instill in its students a sense of community and responsibility, as well as ethical principles of behavior that will help make them leaders of their generation.

Student Demographics

A total of 124 students was enrolled in Grade 7 (99) and Grade 8 (25). Of these, 51% were Hispanic, 38% African American, and 11% White. Almost half of the students (49%) were economically disadvantaged and only one student was in special education. Exited LEP comprised 27% of the students. Fifty-five percent of the students were in the TAG program.

Teacher Demographics

A total of 12 teachers was on staff. Of these, 1 was male and 11 were female. Eight teachers were new to the district. African Americans and Hispanics represented 17% of the staff, respectively, while White teachers represented 67%.

Recruitment, Admissions, Curriculum

Recruitment efforts began in January 2004. Applications were accepted in February with assessments performed through April 2004. However, additional recruitment practices were performed due to insufficient enrollment numbers. Admission requirements for students included performing at or above grade level (40th percentile) on norm-referenced tests, a grade point average of 75 or above, and a positive assessment based on an on-site essay and interview. The curriculum included core courses, Pre-Advance Placement, leadership training, and an advisory program. All students received a laptop computer for use at home and school.

School Climate Survey

Comments from parents, teachers, and support staff regarding the benefits of attending Irma Rangel were similar, especially in regard to no distractions from males, increased focus on schoolwork, self-esteem, and leadership skills.

The students' comments about attending a school without boys correlate with adult responses to benefits and drawbacks. Some students mentioned the benefit of fewer distractions, while others emphasized how they did not like the absence of boys. If girls indicated their parent advised them to attend Rangel, a disproportionate number of girls also reported they did not enjoy attending Rangel. Overall, the girls answered favorably to questions regarding the enhancement of their self-esteem. They felt more confident and spoke up more often in math, science, and technology classes than they did at the school they attended last year. Although the majority of the girls wanted boys to be in their school, they felt it was easier to share opinions, focus on schoolwork, and obtain support from teachers than it was at the school they attended last year.

The surveys indicated good communication among the principal, teachers, parents, and

students. Seventy-one percent of the girls reported that they would recommend attending Irma Rangel to other girls. The majority of the parents indicated their daughters enjoyed attending the all-girls' school. All teachers reported that they intended to continue teaching at Rangel next year. Overall, the climate survey conveyed positive results for Irma Rangel Young Women's Leadership School.

Achievement Outcomes

TAKS. Of all students tested on the TAKS, 98% met the standard in reading, 76% in mathematics, 92% in social studies for eighth graders, and 98% in writing for seventh graders. Table 1 displays the percent of students passing in reading and mathematics by grade.

Table 1
Percent Passing TAKS Reading and Mathematics for Rangel Students by Student Groups and Grade

Student Group	Grade	
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Reading		
African-American	97	100
Hispanic	96	100
White	100	100
Economically Disadvantaged	96	100
Exited LEP	94	100
Talented and Gifted	98	100
All Students	97	100
Mathematics		
African-American	73	64
Hispanic	82	29
White	100	100
Economically Disadvantaged	81	58
Exited LEP	91	0
Talented and Gifted	93	71
All Students	80	60

ITBS. ITBS Reading Comprehension and Mathematics Total percentile rank scores were grouped into three achievement bands: below, on, and above grade level. Of all students tested, 91% scored at or above grade level in reading, and 83% scored at or above grade level in mathematics.

Approximately 87% of African American, 92% of Hispanic, and 100% of White students scored at or above grade level in reading. In mathematics, 79% of African American, 82% of Hispanic, and 100% of White students scored at or above grade level. Economically

advantaged students performed better in both reading and mathematics than economically disadvantaged students with median percentile scores of 70 and 62, respectively for both tests. Median percentile scores of Exited LEP students were 70 in reading and 75 in mathematics, compared to median scores of 68 and 62 in reading and mathematics, respectively, for English proficient students.

Adjusted mean NCE gain scores were analyzed for 80 seventh graders and 17 eighth graders. Mean gain scores take into account test scores from two consecutive years. However, for many students, scores were not available for both years as these students were from other school districts. Across both grades tested, the mean gain scores in reading and mathematics were within the expected range of growth, with the exception of Grade 8 mathematics in which a significant negative gain (-5.12) was observed. Because this negative gain was greater than -3 NCE units, it represents growth significantly below expectations for the grade level. This result should be interpreted with caution due to the small number of Grade 8 tests that were analyzed.

As required by *No Child Left Behind (NCLB)*, Federal assessment of Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for Irma Rangel was not evaluated for the 2004-05 school year because the school had a new campus status. However, all subgroups for both the Mathematics and Reading TAKS subtests met expectations.

For the State's Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS), Irma Rangel's accountability rating for the 2004-05 school year was "Recognized." At least 70% of all students passed each of the TAKS subtests.

Recommendations

- Collaborate with other schools' athletic programs to provide students with the opportunity to participate in competitive sports.
- Organize co-educational social events like field days and dances.
- Provide training for teachers that encompass single-gender schooling issues to include topics such as stereotypes and gender gaps.