

PREKINDERGARTEN EXPANSION GRANT: 2005-2006

EA06-171-4

At a Glance

Prekindergarten programs are implemented by Local Education Agencies based on state law and the guidelines of the Texas Education Agency. School districts must offer programs if they have 15 or more eligible 4-year olds. Districts may apply to TEA for grants to expand existing half day prekindergarten or kindergarten programs to full day or establish prekindergarten programs at additional campuses. The programs are designed to develop skills necessary for success in school with a focus on pre-reading, language, and mathematics.

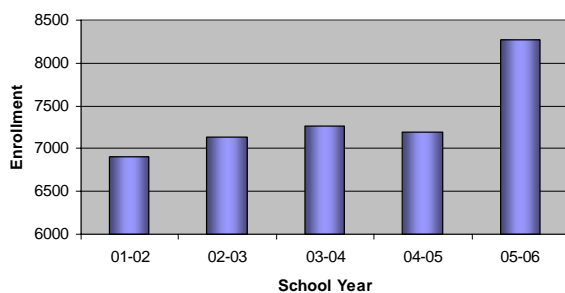
Budget

Under Cycle 11 (2005-06) of the grant, funding for Dallas ISD was \$4,717,719 and funding originally designated for Wilmer-Hutchins ISD of \$672,668, for a total to the district of \$5,390,387.

Prekindergarten Enrollment and Staffing

The district offered full day prekindergarten in 80 schools in 2005-06, an increase of 14 schools from the previous year. Students were served in half day programs at 59 campuses. Student enrollment increased 14.9 percent in 2005-06 with 8,272 students served. About 47% of students were in full day programs. Three-fourths of all prekindergarten students were Hispanic; about 22% were African American. Overall, 51% of prekindergarten students were classified as English Language Learners (ELL) and 92% were from economically deprived families.

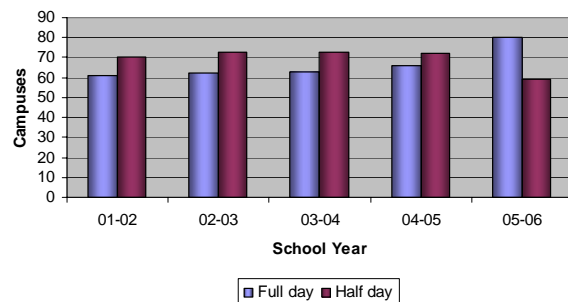
Figure 1
Prekindergarten Enrollment by Year



The increase in enrollment was the largest single year increase since the grant program began in Dallas ISD. The increase coincided with an in-

crease in the number campuses that offered full day programs.

Figure 2
Full Day and Half Day Programs by Year



During the 2005-06 school year, there were 303 prekindergarten teachers and 277 teacher assistants. The vast majority (89%) of teachers were female. Among teacher assistants, 97% were female. A majority of the teachers (59 %) were Hispanic; more than two-thirds of teacher assistants were Hispanic. Fifty-five percent of teachers had five years or less teaching experience. The preponderance of inexperienced prekindergarten teachers may be attributed to the district's bilingual staffing initiative launched in 2003 that resulted in substantial new hires, many of whom received teacher certification under alternative certification programs.

Prekindergarten Program Description

The full day and half day prekindergarten programs included bilingual, ESL (English as a Second Language) and regular education classrooms. The curriculum was aligned with Texas Education Agency guidelines for prekindergarten. Curriculum materials included *Language Enrichment Activities Program (LEAP)*, which was implemented as the foundation of the curriculum, with *Building Language to Literacy (BLL)* as the ESL component and *Scholastic Early Childhood Program* as the State adoption. Full day and half day programs followed similar schedules in terms of daily activities and curriculum, with full day programs providing more time on task and a brief rest time. Curricular activities included meeting and greeting, *LEAP*, Math/Science/Social Studies, learning center work time, music/movement, journal writing,

outdoor learning, reading/rest, small group activities, storytime/read aloud, songs, poems, review and dismissal. Classrooms were configured to incorporate learning centers. Schools exercised some flexibility in implementing the schedule, in accordance with site-based management. The Early Childhood Department provided teachers with a syllabus and a scope and sequence that supplied details, by week of required content, instructional tools, instructional methods, suggested teaching time and assessment methods.

Early Childhood Department Program Support

The district's Early Childhood Department devoted many resources to support prekindergarten program implementation. Training and assistance in curriculum implementation was ongoing throughout the year. The district continued active participation in DallasKids, the early childhood reading collaborative headed by the Foundation for Community Empowerment. In addition, the Early Childhood Department managed the Together We Succeed grant, funded by the Communities Foundation of Texas. This grant supported a partnership with Head Start of Greater Dallas to supplement *LEAP* implementation and kindergarten transition for students in the East Dallas Head Start Center and the four DISD schools which many of the Head Start students ultimately attend.

Coaching and Mentoring

The Early Childhood Department continued to facilitate curriculum and instruction implementation with a coaching and mentoring program. Mentors participated in monthly training provided through the Early Childhood Department. Mentors also planned and provided periodic training for teachers. Mentor teacher's classrooms were used as demonstration classrooms and mentors modeled lessons and offered assistance to teachers. Coaches were part-time district employees, experts in early childhood classroom education, who were not currently teaching in their own classrooms. They observed prekindergarten teachers, modeled lessons, helped with training and provided assistance upon teacher request. Coaches met monthly with Early Childhood and served as the primary liaison between Early Childhood specialists and mentor teachers.

Prekindergarten Outcomes

Prekindergarten students were screened in the fall and spring with the *Developmental Indicators for the Assessment of Learning (DIAL-3)*. The following table shows fall and spring *DIAL-3* normal curve equivalent (NCE) scores. NCE scores were

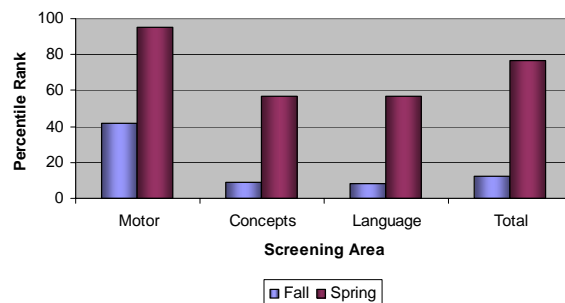
used because they translate scale scores to a continuous interval, and an easily understood scale of one to 99 on which 50 is the mean for all students in a national norming group. Scores reported in the table were for 6,768 Dallas ISD students who were screened on both the fall and spring administration of *DIAL-3*.

Table 1
DIAL-3 Mean NCE Scores

Screening Area	Fall		Spring	
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
Motor	45.82	23.638	82.18	17.252
Concepts	22.80	18.986	54.14	21.385
Language	21.63	19.563	53.41	25.030
Total	25.84	19.361	66.04	22.356

In the fall, Dallas ISD students' scores on language and concepts were far below the national average of 50. The mean score for Dallas ISD students was 22.80 in the concepts area and 21.63 on language development. In the spring, Dallas ISD prekindergarten students demonstrated very large gains in all areas of the assessment and were above the national average on concepts and language. Expressed in terms of percentile ranks, Dallas ISD students improved on concepts and language from approximately the 8th percentile to the 57th percentile.

Figure 3
Gains in *DIAL-3* Scores



Longitudinal analysis of scores on *Iowa Test of Basic Skills* and *Logramos* demonstrated the continued effect of prekindergarten. In first grade, almost 74.3 percent of the students who attended Dallas ISD prekindergarten were on grade level compared to 65.5 percent of those who did not attend. In second grade the percentages on grade level dropped, but a higher percentage of the Dallas ISD prekindergarten cohort were on grade level. Similar results were obtained on *Logramos* reading comprehension as well.