

Together We Succeed: 2007-08

At-a-Glance

Together We Succeed (TWS) is a collaboration between the Early Childhood Education Department of Dallas Independent School District and Head Start of Greater Dallas. This is Year 5 of a five-year project designed to support the implementation of a language rich curriculum and ease the transition of preschool students from the East Dallas Head Start Center into Dallas ISD schools.

Budget

This five-year project was funded by the Communities Foundation of Texas. Budgeted expenditures for this year were \$58,305. More than half of these expenses provided instructional support and extra classroom supplies to participating teachers, teacher assistants, and schools. Additional expenses provided training and support for families of students in participating Dallas ISD schools and East Dallas Head Start Center.

Student and Teacher Demographics

Demographics below are representative of prekindergarten and kindergarten students and teachers from four Dallas ISD schools who participated in the TWS project (Bonham, Fannin, Roberts, and Zaragoza). Head Start student data were not available.

At participating Dallas ISD schools, 87% of prekindergarten students were continuously enrolled, while 91% of kindergarten students were continuously enrolled. Approximately two-thirds of the students were English Language Learners and almost all students were economically disadvantaged. The student population at both prekindergarten and kindergarten was predominately Hispanic, with African Americans making up the next largest group. Figure 1 shows the percentage of each ethnicity at each school and grade level.

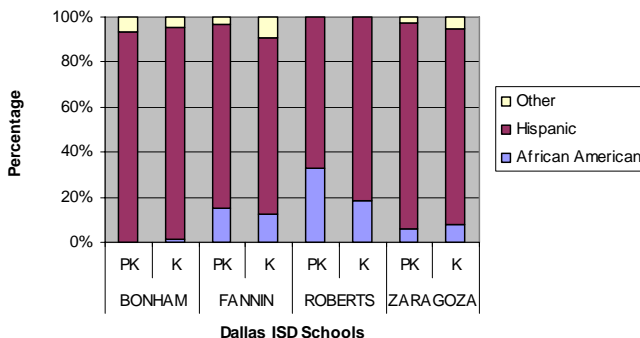


Figure 1. Percentage of ethnicities separated by grade level.

Teachers were predominately Hispanic female at both prekindergarten and kindergarten levels. Half of the program teachers had less than five years experience, but 24% had more than sixteen years of experience. As indicated in Figure 2, the characteristics of teachers in participating schools show that 64% of prekindergarten teachers have six or more years of experience compared to 33% of kindergarten teachers.

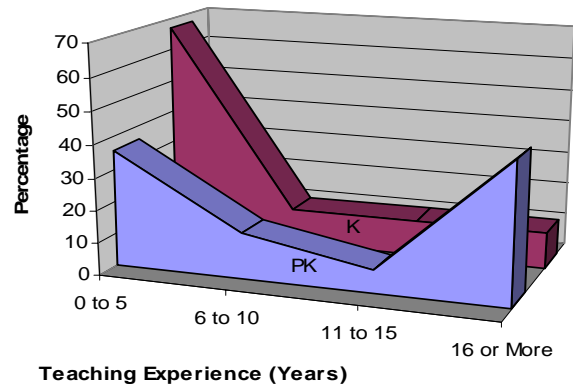


Figure 2. Teaching Experience by grade level.

Implementation

The *Dallas Achieves* Transformation Plan initiated by the Dallas ISD Board of Trustees established a vision for the district to become the best urban district by 2010. Under this plan, the District requested the assistance from National Center for Educational Accountability (NCEA) to conduct a curriculum audit and set recommendations to enhance the curriculum. Responding to these recommendations, the Curriculum and Instructional Services Division developed curriculum guides in each subject area that are consistent with the requirements of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills, but also vertically aligned, that is from one grade level to the next. The TWS project continued and completed the vertical teaming phase-in between teachers of prekindergarten through Grade 3.

A summarization of curriculum guides was prepared to inform parents about the expectations for their children. *Language Enrichment Activities Program (LEAP)* materials and methods were instrumental in the development of the prekindergarten curriculum and remain a component of prekindergarten instruction. Not only did the TWS project implement a

language rich curriculum, but also sponsored workshops, leadership training, and school and extra-curricular activities for parents and families at TWS schools.

Early Childhood Specialists

Throughout the year, three specialists from the Early Childhood Department supported the program. The specialists assessed the training and material needs for classrooms and made technical assistance visits throughout the year to support through monitoring and mentoring teachers. Specialists also provided additional materials to some classrooms and conducted parent training workshops throughout the fall and spring semesters. Specialists provided classroom math libraries for kindergarten and first grade to each Dallas ISD campus. They also facilitated teacher discussions with program directors to encourage teachers to share strategies.

Parent Training Workshops

TWS sponsored a series of workshops for parents at participating campuses. The workshops were presented in both Spanish and English and provided childcare. The topics of each workshop were specific to campus needs with a focus on early literacy. Some topics presented this year were around the concept of creating a positive and disciplined home environment to promote independent minded children. As part of each workshop, parents made take-home reading activities to support the language development of their children throughout the school year and summer.

Take-Home Materials

The TWS project provided take-home backpacks to 365 prekindergarten students. These materials are coordinated with LEAP instructional materials and are designed to provide parent support over the summer months to maintain and develop the literacy and concepts skills the students learned in the school year.

Outcomes

Developmental Indicators for the Assessment of Learning (DIAL-3)

Dallas ISD prekindergarten students were assessed in the fall and spring with the DIAL-3. DIAL-3 is a 30-minute assessment of developmental skills that are the foundation for academic learning; motor, concepts, and language. The following table shows fall and spring DIAL-3 normal curve equivalent (NCE) scores. NCE scores range from 1 to 99 with a mean of 50 and standard deviation of 21.06. They are frequently used in reporting for Title 1 and other federal programs because they are on an easily understood scale. A regression analysis was used to determine whether there were significant differences between program schools and non-program schools. Table 1 compares mean NCE scores for all TWS schools and all other

DISD schools, by screening area, on the fall and spring administrations of the DIAL-3

Screening Area	Fall		Spring		Gains	
	TWS	DISD	TWS	DISD	TWS	DISD
Motor	46	45	84	83	38	38
Concepts	22	23	60	56	42	36
Language	22	21	64	57	39	33
Total	26	26	74	69	49	43

Table 1: DIAL-3 Mean NCE scores.

In 2007-08, when controlling for other variables, students in TWS schools scored about 6 points higher on DIAL-3 than students in other Dallas schools. Results were consistent with results from the first two years of the program in which TWS schools also outperformed the other schools by as much as five points.

Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) and Logramos

Results from the ITBS and Logramos, the Spanish equivalent, were analyzed to determine whether the collaboration had an effect beyond prekindergarten. ITBS and Logramos are norm-referenced tests administered to students in kindergarten through second grade. Figure 3 shows NCE scores for all TWS schools and all other DISD schools at each grade level by test.

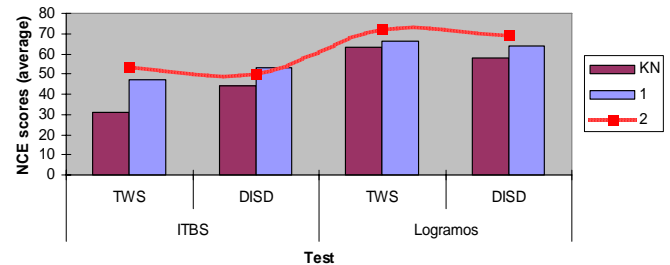


Figure 3: ITBS and Logramos scores by program and non-program schools.

Regression analysis results for kindergarten and grade 1 on ITBS and Logramos showed significant advantage for TWS schools on Logramos scores. A cross-sectional analysis of ITBS and Logramos scores found that program students in second grade scored higher on Logramos and ITBS than their counterparts in other schools; however, there were no other significant differences.

Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS)

TAKS scale scores on reading were used for grade 3 outcomes analysis. The effects of the program were also demonstrated in TAKS scores, where students who were enrolled in a TWS school in prekindergarten or kindergarten scored significantly better than other students.

For more information, see EA08-186-4, available at www.dallasisd.org/inside_disd/depts/evalacct/, or contact Veronica Martinez-Cantu at 972-925-6437.