



Dallas Independent School District

**INTERIM REPORT OF THE 2005-2006
Together We Succeed Grant**

EA06-186N-2

**DIVISION OF EVALUATION
AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

Michael Hinojosa, Ed. D. General Superintendent

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Dallas Independent School District

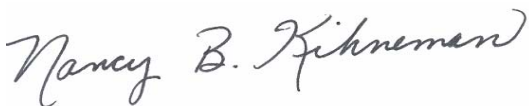
Michael Hinojosa, Ed. D.
General Superintendent

Together We Succeed Grant
2005-2006

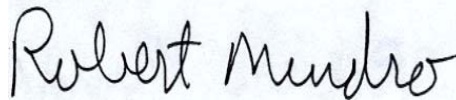
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Paul Dabbs, M.P.A.

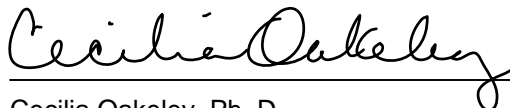
Approved Report of the Division of Evaluation and Accountability



Nancy Kihneman, Ph.D.
Executive Director
Special Projects Division



Robert Mendro, Ph. D.
Assistant Superintendent
Department of Research and Evaluation



Cecilia Oakeley, Ph. D.
Associate Superintendent
Division of Evaluation and Accountability

Dallas, Texas
August 2006

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Table of Contents

	<u>Page</u>
ABSTRACT	1
PROGRAM DESCRIPTION	2
PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION.....	2
MAJOR EVALUATION QUESTIONS	3
2.1 What is the context Year 3 Together We Succeed Collaboration.	3
Methodology	3
Results	3
2.2 How was Year 3 of Together We Succeed Implemented?.....	6
Methodology	6
Results	6
2.3 What were the academic outcomes for Together We Succeed Schools?	9
Methodology	9
Results	10
SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS	13
REFERENCES	14

List of Tables

<u>Table</u>		<u>Page</u>
1	Prekindergarten Student Ethnicity by School	4
2	Prekindergarten Student Language Proficiency by School	4
3	Kindergarten Student Ethnicity by School	4
4	Kindergarten Student Language Proficiency by School	5
5	Prekindergarten Teacher Characteristics by School	5
6	Kindergarten Teacher Characteristics by School	6
7	Parent Workshop Attendance by School and by Grade	8
8	Year 3 Expenditures	9
9	<i>DIAL-3</i> NCE Scores by School and by Domain	12

APPENDICES

<u>Appendix</u>	<u>Title</u>
A	Daily Schedule for Prekindergarten
B	Multiple Regression Tables

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Interim Report – Year 3
Evaluation of the Together We Succeed Collaboration

Project Evaluator: Paul Dabbs

ABSTRACT

This report describes the implementation and evaluation of Year 3 of the *Together We Succeed (TWS)* Collaboration. The five year collaboration, funded by the Communities Foundation of Texas, supports implementation of the Language Enrichment Activities Program (LEAP), in the East Dallas Head Start Center and four DISD elementary schools which many of the Head Start students eventually attend. LEAP was developed at Southern Methodist University and has served as the foundation for the prekindergarten curriculum in DISD and Dallas area Head Start Centers for several years. *TWS* serves prekindergarten students and their families, while strengthening the early childhood programs in the schools. The budget for Year 3 was \$84,343. Services provided under the grant in Year 3 included extra training, materials and instructional support for Head Start and DISD early childhood teachers and teacher assistants, training and support for families of students in participating schools and East Dallas Head Start, and extra materials and activities for students in these schools. Prekindergarten students at DISD *TWS* schools posted strong, positive gains on the *Developmental Indicators for the Assessment of Learning (DIAL-3)*. Regression analysis was conducted on *DIAL-3* screening results, which indicated a significant positive impact of *TWS*.

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PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Together We Succeed (TWS) is a collaboration between the Early Childhood Education Department of the Dallas Independent School District and Head Start of Greater Dallas, and is funded by the Communities Foundation of Texas. This is Year 3 of a five-year project designed to support the implementation of the Language Enrichment Activities Program (LEAP), and to ease the transition of preschool students from the East Dallas Head Start Center into four DISD schools. LEAP was developed at Southern Methodist University (SMU). SMU LEAP authors and trainers contribute significantly to the collaboration. The project serves the prekindergarten students in the four DISD schools (Bonham, Fannin, Roberts, and Zaragoza) and East Dallas Head Start, and utilizes funding to strengthen the Early Childhood programs at the schools. DISD and Head Start teachers and teacher assistants receive additional LEAP training and on-site coaching and mentoring. They have access to extra technical assistance and support from DISD Early Childhood Specialists, as well as educational consultants with expertise in early childhood education. The project also provides LEAP training and support for parents of the children who attend the participating DISD schools and the East Dallas Head Start Center. As further described in subsequent sections of this report, *TWS* provides workshops and extra-curricular activities for students and their families. Phase-in of vertical teaming between teachers of prekindergarten through Grade 3 began in Year 1 and continued in Year 3 to include teaming with first grade and second grade teachers.

PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION

This document contains context data and findings from the third year of the *Together We Succeed* project. It includes a summary of activities and expenditures for Year 3. Subsequent interim reports will be provided each September and a final evaluation report will be submitted in September 2008 (Year 5 of the grant).

MAJOR EVALUATION QUESTIONS

2.1 *What is the context Year 3 Together We Succeed Collaboration.*

Methodology

Prekindergarten student and teacher demographic data were extracted from the district database in April 2006. Kindergarten student and teacher demographic data were extracted in June 2006. Head Start student data were not available.

Results

Background The *Together We Succeed* project strengthened the Early Childhood programs at Bonham, Fannin, Roberts, Zaragoza, and East Dallas Head Start, and offered training for participating Head Start and DISD parents and teachers. Teachers received extra training on programs utilized by DISD's Early Childhood Department; on-site coaching and mentoring were available for teachers and they had access to extra technical assistance and support from Early Childhood Specialists and educational consultants. The project sponsored workshops, leadership training, and school and extra curricular activities for parents and families at *TWS* schools.

Vertical teaming phase-in between teachers of prekindergarten through Grade 3 continued and now extends through second grade. Grade three teachers will be phased in during the 2006-07 school year. Prekindergarten and kindergarten teachers from East Dallas Head Start and DISD continued their dialogue to insure a smooth transition for students who eventually attend DISD kindergarten. Vertical team meetings and discussions with Head Start personnel were designed to insure that prekindergarten teachers had a thorough understanding of what kindergarten teachers expected students to know, and likewise, for teachers' expectations to be aligned at each level through second grade. *TWS* program directors and specialists facilitated teacher discussions and encouraged teachers to share strategies

Student and Teacher Demographics The student populations at the program campuses are overwhelmingly Hispanic, as reflected in the data in Table 1 and Table 3, where Hispanic students comprise 89 to 96 percent of the students in prekindergarten and kindergarten classrooms. Table 2 and Table 4 indicate that students in these schools are also predominantly economically disadvantaged and of limited English proficiency.

Table 1

Prekindergarten Student Ethnicity
Percentage by School

School	Ethnicity					Total N
	African American	Asian	Hispanic	Native American	White	
Bonham	1.4	0.0	95.9	1.4	1.4	74
Zaragoza	2.4	0.0	92.8	1.2	3.6	83
Fannin	4.3	2.2	91.4	0.0	2.2	93
Roberts	7.9	0.0	88.9	0.0	3.2	63
Total	3.8	0.6	92.3	0.6	2.6	313

Table 2

Prekindergarten Student Language Proficiency
Percentage by School

School	Free or Reduced Lunch	Limited English	Bilingual	English as Second Language
Bonham	87.8	64.9	63.5	0.0
Zaragoza	94.0	86.7	84.3	0.0
Fannin	97.8	71.0	65.6	5.4
Roberts	96.8	68.3	66.7	0.0
Total	94.2	73.2	70.3	1.6

Table 3

Kindergarten Student Ethnicity
Percentage by School

School	Ethnicity					Total N
	African American	Asian	Hispanic	Native American	White	
Bonham	0.0	1.2	91.8	3.5	3.5	85
Zaragoza	4.8	0.0	90.4	2.9	1.9	104
Fannin	12.5	2.8	84.7	0.0	0.0	72
Roberts	10.1	1.3	88.6	0.0	0.0	79
Total	6.5	1.2	89.1	1.8	1.5	340

Table 4
Kindergarten Student Language Proficiency
Percentage by School

School	Free or Reduced Lunch	Limited English	Bilingual	English as Second Language
Bonham	91.8	57.6	50.6	7.1
Zaragoza	95.2	79.8	67.3	6.7
Fannin	98.6	58.3	55.6	1.4
Roberts	96.2	59.5	51.9	7.6
Total	95.3	65.0	57.1	5.9

Teachers in the program schools were largely female, and Hispanic. Most notably, the level of teachers' experience was predominately from first through fifth year, or more than fifteen years, as shown in Table 5 and Table 6 that follow.

Table 5
Prekindergarten Teacher Characteristics
by School

Characteristic	School								Total	
	Bonham		Zaragoza		Fannin		Roberts		N	%
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Gender										
Female	1	50.0	4	100.0	2	40.0	2	66.7	9	64.3
Male	1	50.0	0	0.0	3	60.0	1	33.3	5	35.7
Total	2	100.0	4	100.0	5	100.0	3	100.0	14	100.0
Ethnicity										
White	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	20.0	1	33.3	2	14.3
Hispanic	2	100.0	4	100.0	3	60.0	1	33.3	10	71.4
Black	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	33.3	1	7.1
Other	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	20.0	0	0.0	1	7.1
Total	2	100.0	4	100.0	5	100.0	3	100.0	14	100.0
Teaching Exp.										
0 to 5	2	100.0	3	100.0	1	33.3	0	0.0	6	54.5
6 to 10	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
11 to 15	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
16 or more	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	66.7	3	100.0	5	45.5
Total	2	100	3	100.0	3	100.0	3	100.0	11	100.0

Table 6
Kindergarten Teacher Characteristics
by School

Characteristic	School								Total	
	Bonham		Zaragoza		Fannin		Roberts		N	%
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Gender										
Female	3	60.0	4	80.0	4	100.0	4	100.0	15	83.3
Male	2	40.0	1	20.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	3	16.7
Total	5		5		4		4		18	100.0
Ethnicity										
White	1	20.0	0	0.0	1	25.0	0	0.0	2	11.1
Hispanic	4	80.0	3	60.0	3	75.0	3	75.0	13	72.2
Black	0	0.0	2	40.0	0	0.0	1	25.0	3	16.7
Total	5	100.0	5	100.0	4	100.0	4	100.0	18	100.0
Teaching Exp.										
0 to 5	1	25.0	4	100.0	1	33.3	3	75.0	9	60.0
6 to 10	2	50.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	13.3
11 to 15	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
16 or more	1	25.0	0	0.0	2	66.7	1	25.0	4	26.7
Total	4	100.0	4	100.0	3	100.0	4	100.0	15	100.0

2.2 How was Year 3 of Together We Succeed Implemented?

Methodology

The evaluator collected data regarding DISD Prekindergarten curriculum from interviews of Early Childhood Department specialists and coaches, Prekindergarten Scope and Sequence, observations of curriculum study meetings, and presentations by curriculum vendors. Data for student and parent activities, program accomplishments, and budget were obtained from interviews and documentation provided by DISD *Together We Succeed* program directors, and from observations conducted by the program evaluator.

Results

DISD Prekindergarten Curriculum and Daily Activities Program specialists and coaches conducted a needs analysis in 2004-05 which was used to guide program implementation in 2005-06.

The Texas Education Agency has developed a set of prekindergarten guidelines; for all other grades the requirements were structured as “objectives” and “elements”. These

requirements are contained in the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS). The Early Childhood Department developed Scope and Sequence documents for each grade level from prekindergarten through third grade. The Scope and Sequence aligns the curriculum with the requirements of the TEKS guidelines or with the objectives and elements. The Scope and Sequence is organized by week and details the required content, instructional tools and methods, suggested teaching time, and assessment methods. The Early Childhood Department also developed daily schedule guidelines for prekindergarten full day and half day programs. These guidelines broadly describe the time requirements and variety of activities necessary for comprehensive, developmentally appropriate instruction. The guidelines are included in Attachment A. In 2002-03 the Department adopted Language Enrichment Activities Program (LEAP) as the foundation for district prekindergarten curriculum. Other curricular components included Scholastic Early Childhood Program and Building Language for Literacy (for English language learners).

TWS Coach Activities The same DISD Early Childhood coach supported the program for the third consecutive year. The coach coordinated LEAP training by specialists from SMU, observed classroom lessons, and conducted model lessons for teachers to observe. As a result of the classroom observations and frequent communications with teachers, the coach requested additional instructional support for teachers from early childhood specialists, reading specialists, and SMU LEAP specialists. The program included extensive parent training workshops, which were coordinated by the coach throughout the year. The coach also researched, recommended, and selected supplementary materials for prekindergarten, kindergarten, and first grade as requested by teachers in vertical team meetings. The coach conducted 219 site visits across all of the program classrooms.

Parent Training Workshops *Together We Succeed* sponsored a series of workshops for parents at each participating campus. Workshops in the fall were presented around the theme "Partnering with Teachers for Your Child's Success," which was presented in Spanish and English and served 355 families. Table 7 shows the attendance for each workshop series by school and grade level. The winter series was based on the theme "The Rights and

Responsibilities of Parents in Public Schools.” The final series, presented in April and May was entitled “Creative Activities for Learning,” which gave parents practical ideas on promoting academic growth through music, dance and drama.

Table 7
Parent Workshop Attendance
by School and by Grade

School	Grade	Oct / Nov	Feb	April
East Dallas Head Start		15	16	11
Bonham	PK	33	33	24
	KN	17	27	19
	1 st	8	12	6
	Total	58	72	49
Zaragoza	PK	34	23	18
	KN	28	15	17
	1 st	16	11	12
	Total	78	49	47
Fannin	PK	58	50	37
	KN	44	27	27
	1 st	19	16	14
	Total	121	93	78
Roberts	PK	37	29	18
	KN	26	24	17
	1 st	20	19	16
	Total	83	72	51
Total		355	302	236

Take-home Materials TWS provided take-home backpacks to prekindergarten students in eighteen classrooms. These materials are coordinated with LEAP instructional materials and are designed to provide parents support over the summer months to maintain and develop the literacy and concepts skills the students learned in the school year. The program also provided additional summer lending materials for parents of kindergarten and first grade students in 35 classrooms.

Year 3 Budget Expenditures for the third year of the program are detailed in Table 8. LEAP training was provided by SMU specialists; however, a billing and payment error in the prior year was reversed leaving a zero balance in this report.

Table 8
Year 3 Expenditures

Use of Funds	Amount
Coach	17,720
Part-time Support - childcare	11,840
LEAP Training---SMU	0
Head Start	2,370
Classroom Supplies	34,127
Parent Training*	6,604
Extra Duty Pay	1,682
Evaluator	<u>10,000</u>
Total	<u>84,343</u>

*includes consultant, refreshments

2.3 What were the academic outcomes for Together We Succeed Schools?

Methodology

DISD prekindergarten students were assessed in the fall and spring with the *Developmental Indicators for the Assessment of Learning (DIAL-3)*. The *DIAL-3* is an individually administered, norm-referenced, development screening test utilizing fun, age-appropriate tasks to identify preschool children who may be at risk for academic or developmental delay or who may need further diagnostic assessment. The test comes in a reusable easy-to-carry kit. Three screening areas; motor, language, and concepts, directly assess performance items; each area also includes a behavioral score. The motor area tests gross motors skills, including catching, jumping, hopping and skipping, and fine motor skills, including building with blocks, cutting, copying shapes and letters, writing, and “finger touching” tasks. The language test involves answering personal questions (name, age, gender), articulation, naming or identifying objects and actions, phonemic awareness tasks (rhyming, I spy). The concepts test includes pointing to or naming parts of the body, naming or identifying colors, rote counting, counting blocks, spatial awareness, identifying concepts in a triad of pictures, and sorting shapes. Scale scores are

developed for each area (motor, language, concepts) as well as a *DIAL-3* total. There is a behavioral score and intelligibility rating (not reported here).

The *DIAL-3* meets the guidelines for screenings and assessments for preschool children as prescribed under the March 4, 2004 directives from the Department of Education, "Serving Preschool Children Under Title I---Non-Regulatory Guidance." Under Title I, testing is not required for children under third grade; however, the Secretary recommends that school districts utilize age-appropriate screenings and assessments to aid individualized instruction and insure a strong foundation in literacy and numeracy. According to the Department of Education, "appropriate assessments for preschool children include individually administered standardized assessments, observational checklists completed by teachers while students play, or an analysis of student work." Information should be used to guide instructional decisions and enhance teaching and learning. The screening or assessment tool should be validated for its intended purpose and population.

Results

Normal Curve Equivalent (NCE) scores are reported below for the four DISD *Together We Succeed* schools. 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. The NCE is an equal-interval scale and can be treated arithmetically.

Table 9 shows mean NCE scores for each *TWS* school and all other DISD schools, by screening area, on the fall and spring administrations of the *DIAL-3*.

Table 9

DIAL-3 NCE Scores by School
and by Domain

School	N	Fall Mean	SD	Spring Mean	SD	Gains Mean	SD
Bonham							
Motor	71	60.61	23.012	83.39	17.588	22.79	23.671
Concepts	71	21.11	18.411	55.10	20.198	33.99	17.291
Language	71	23.15	18.953	50.99	19.850	27.83	17.126
Total	71	30.92	20.322	65.92	20.218	35.00	16.927
Zaragoza							
Motor	75	39.48	21.147	90.69	10.824	51.21	19.155
Concepts	75	21.40	19.653	59.88	21.322	38.48	20.973
Language	75	24.12	19.557	58.24	23.256	34.12	20.921
Total	75	24.13	19.593	74.20	20.134	50.07	18.037
Fannin							
Motor	65	49.91	21.624	86.55	13.856	36.65	20.582
Concepts	65	23.35	17.002	64.55	17.676	41.20	15.454
Language	65	20.91	17.986	67.88	21.135	46.97	16.654
Total	65	27.20	17.558	78.34	19.885	51.14	14.314
Roberts							
Motor	57	39.89	20.732	77.46	18.127	37.56	20.252
Concepts	57	22.82	18.002	62.35	23.128	39.53	22.906
Language	57	22.68	18.304	61.11	30.902	38.42	31.463
Total	57	24.19	17.000	70.65	25.889	46.46	23.825
DISD (excl. TWS)							
Motor	6500	45.74	23.651	82.07	17.300	36.33	23.312
Concepts	6500	22.83	19.016	53.88	21.372	31.05	20.015
Language	6500	21.58	19.598	53.17	25.026	31.59	23.766
Total	6500	25.80	19.381	65.79	22.342	39.98	20.236

On average, students in *TWS* campuses scored more than five points greater gains than did students at non-*TWS* campuses. A regression analysis was conducted to determine whether the apparent differences in gains were statistically significant. Scores on the spring language domain were the dependent variable, with campus participation in *TWS* as a predictor variable, controlling for student gender, ethnicity, fall score on the language domain, and English language proficiency. The model was significant ($p < .001$) and explained about 22 percent of the variation in language scores. As expected, the score on the fall screening was significant and explained the greatest amount of variation. Gender and English proficiency were also significant. Participation in *TWS* was significant and suggested that students in a *TWS* classroom scored

almost six points higher in the spring than students who were in other DISD classrooms. The detailed regression tables are presented in Appendix B.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The *Together We Succeed* collaboration is in the third year of a five year program, serving four DISD schools and Head Start of Greater Dallas. In 2005-06, the program served 313 prekindergarten and 340 kindergarten students in DISD. Teachers and teacher assistants received training from DISD and SMU specialists, and support from an early childhood education coach. In addition to the additional instructional support, the program provided materials to classrooms and students to strengthen and extend the lessons from the LEAP program. Parent training workshops were conducted throughout the year, serving hundreds of families in the program schools. While students across the district experienced, on average, very large gains on DIAL-3 screening assessment scores, students in TWS classrooms had significantly greater gains.

- Vertical team meetings should continue at the prekindergarten through second grade, and should extend, as planned, to third grade in the next program year.
- DISD and Head Start of Greater Dallas should continue to collaborate, and search for additional ways to share information and resources.

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