Accelerated Reading Instruction (ARI) Program: 2003-2004

At a Glance

The Accelerated Reading Instruction (ARI) Program is a component of the Student Success Initiative. In 1999, the 76th Texas Legislature passed the Student Success Initiative (SSI) through an amendment to the Texas Education Code. Beginning in 2003, SSI required third grade students to pass the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) in reading for promotion to fourth grade. These grade advancement requirements will also apply to the TAKS in reading and mathematics for fifth and eighth grades beginning in 2004-2005 and 2007-2008, respectively.

The main objective of the ARI program is to identify students in kindergarten through grade four at risk for reading difficulties and provide an additional 30 to 45 minutes of targeted reading instruction in small, flexible groups during the school day. ARI interventions covered basic skills for good reading, including phonics, decoding, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.

Budget

In 2003-2004, allocation of funds to districts was based on the number of students failing the Spring 2003 administration of the grade three Reading Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS), with districts receiving $1,007.46 for each failing student. Districts were to use the 2003-2004 ARI funding in direct efforts to meet the needs of all students identified as struggling in reading in grades kindergarten through fourth, with an emphasis on grades three and four.

The district’s ARI budget for 2003-2004 was $2,891,410. The largest percentage (47.2%) of monies was allocated for the purchase of reading materials; the next largest allocation was for extra duty pay for professionals (32.1%).

Student Demographics

Initially, 13,038 (17%) of the district’s students in K-4 were identified as being eligible to receive ARI. Of the 13,038 eligible students, 10,854 were served by the ARI program, 1,223 were not served, and 961 had no attendance data. An additional 898 students were added to the eligibility list and served over the course of the 2003-2004 school year, putting the total number of students served at 11,752. A majority of the students served through ARI were male (58.6%), Hispanic (68.1%), economically disadvantaged (86.1%), and limited English proficient (58.8%). Special education students eligible for ARI were more unlikely than their regular education counterparts to be served.

Program Implementation

- Small group was the predominant instructional grouping practice used for ARI instruction.
- The majority of ARI sessions during the school year were conducted during the regular school day, with average number of ARI sessions similar across grade levels.
- The majority (70%) of ARI students received 60 or more ARI sessions.
- All third graders who took and failed to pass the reading portion of the TAKS in the first two administrations of the test were recommended to attend the ARI sponsored TAKS Mastery Summer School. Overall, 1,351 third graders were recommended to attend the ARI summer school, of which 861 were eligible or served during the 2003-2004 school year. Of those recommended, 245 did not attend, 267 attended regular summer school, and 839 attended the ARI sponsored TAKS Mastery Summer School.
**Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS)/Logramos**

- Adjusted *Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS)* and *Logramos* reading comprehension scores were the highest for kindergarten ARI students and then dropped with each consecutive grade level.

- Students in grades K through 4 who were on the original ARI eligibility list, but not served after additional assessment indicated no need, had higher scores than those served, indicating the importance of continual assessment over the course of the year.

- In grade 3, eligible and served students had higher adjusted *Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS)* and *Logramos* reading comprehension scores than students who were eligible but did not receive ARI instruction for reasons other than additional assessments indicating no need. When special education students were removed from consideration, however, this finding was no longer statistically significant.

**Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS)**

- Overall, 78.8% of all third grade ARI students passed the reading portion of the TAKS after the three administrations.

- Students who attended 90% or more of summer school had higher reading TAKS passing rates. For students attending 90% or more, those in regular summer school had slightly higher passing rates than those attending the third grade TAKS Mastery summer school. Students who received ARI during the 2003-2004 school year had significantly lower passing rates than non-ARI students who had been identified for Grade 3 TAKS mastery summer school.