Prekindergarten Expansion Grant: 2007-09

Veronica Martinez-Cantu, MS

At-a-Glance

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) required a school district to offer a prekindergarten program if classroom space was available and 15 or more eligible students were four years of age. If classroom space was unavailable, a school district could consider implementing a School Readiness Integration (SRI) plan, which was the option of sharing the use of an existing Head Start or licensed child care facility to operate a prekindergarten classroom as authorized under Section 29.1533 of the Texas Education Code.

These programs were designed to develop skills necessary for success in school, with a focus on pre-reading, language, and mathematics.

Highlights

- In 2008-09, the Dallas ISD Early Childhood Education Department was awarded the Outstanding Community Partner Award by ChildCare Group.
- Texas Early Childhood Education Coalition developed an SRI manual, using the district’s SRI model, to provide to other Texas school districts.
- The district’s Early Childhood Department provided 405 licensed child care centers in Dallas County professional development opportunities for their staff and the “Key Steps to School Readiness” manual.

Participants

Over the last two years, more than half of the students in the district’s prekindergarten classrooms were English Language Learners, with 60.7% in 2007-08 and 58.7% in 2008-09. In the two years combined, 94% of the students served were economically disadvantaged.

In 2008-09, enrollment increased by 68 students from 2007-08. In both school years, more than half of the students served in the district’s prekindergarten program attended a full day program, with 60.7% in 2007-08 and 58.6% in 2008-09. As seen in Figure 1, more than half of the students enrolled from 2007-09 participated in the full day program.

Budget

The Dallas ISD was awarded the Prekindergarten Expansion Grant in 2007-08 and 2008-09. The grant allowed the district to expand existing half day prekindergarten or kindergarten programs to full day, or to establish prekindergarten programs at additional campuses.

Cycle 13 (2007-08)

Cycle 13 operated with a grant amount of $5,480,824 serving 8,527 students; 45 schools offered a half day program, 98 schools offered a full day program, and there were three SRI sites.

Cycle 14 (2008-09)

Cycle 14 operated with a grant amount of $5,436,274 serving 8,595 students; 46 schools offered a half day program, 96 schools offered a full day program, and there were eight SRI sites.

Overall, three-fourths of all prekindergarten students were Hispanic and about 21% were African American. African American students were more likely to be enrolled in the full day program each school year. In 2007-08 slightly more female students were served in the prekindergarten program, while they were equally represented in 2008-09 with 50.1% male and 49.9% female.

Professional Development

The district’s Early Childhood Department provided professional development opportunities for every prekindergarten teacher. Each professional development session was tailored by experience. They were also open to employees from any Dallas County Head Start or licensed child care facility. More than 75% of these facilities participated in professional development training in the summer of 2008. During the summer of 2009, 30 licensed facilities pre-registered their staff to participate in professional development.
development sessions. All sessions were free with pre-registration.

**SRI Partnerships**

In 2007-08, three SRI sites in Dallas County served 75 students. In 2008-09, eight SRI sites served 224 students, with a total of 299 students served in both years. As seen in Figure 2, slightly more African American students were enrolled than Hispanic students in 2008-09 compared to enrollment in 2007-08.

![Figure 2. SRI participant characteristics by year.](image)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2007-2009 SRI Sites</th>
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<tr>
<td>Bachman Head Start</td>
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<td>ChildCare Group Bock Center</td>
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<td>ChildCare Group Landauer Center</td>
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<td>ChildCare Group Martin Luther King Center</td>
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<td>Dallas Bethlehem Center</td>
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<td>David’s Place Head Start</td>
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<td>Ferguson-Oates Head Start</td>
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<td>Good Street Baptist</td>
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<td>SER Child Development Center</td>
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**Participation**

There were 405 licensed childcare facilities that fed into Dallas ISD schools and received an invitation for SRI partnership. Several applications were reviewed and evaluated by a committee of Dallas ISD staff. Approved SRI sites received several site visits, and partnered with a nearby elementary school that provided the childcare facilities with a Dallas ISD certified teacher to teach preschool in their center.

Each SRI site was:

- Licensed by the State of Texas
- Served 3- and 4- year olds in classes of 15-18 students
- Served a minimum of 30 3- and 4- year olds who lived within Dallas ISD boundaries
- Had a minimum classroom space of 36 square feet per student as required by TEA
- Met other requirements determined by the Dallas ISD

**Summary and Recommendations**

The SRI partnership brought great benefits to children who resided within Dallas County. The certified teachers at each SRI site met with employees at their SRI site on a regular basis to improve curriculum. In many cases, employees began setting goals for their children in their classroom. For example, instead of students watching movies all day they began working on numbers and letters.

A few SRI sites were able to implement cohesive SRI partnerships. The following recommendations are offered regarding the prekindergarten program:

- Continue to pursue avenues to increase expansion from half day to full day programs and to increase the number of SRI partnerships.
- Consider placing certified teachers in SRI sites before the school year begins to minimize communication problems and scheduling limits.
- Continue administration of an appropriate assessment for prekindergarten students and consider administration of assessment for SRI participants.

**Outcomes**

Dallas ISD prekindergarten students were screened in the fall and spring with the *Developmental Indicators for the Assessment of Learning (DIAL-3)*. SRI students were not assessed on either administration. In 2007-08, 2,908 Dallas ISD students who participated in the half day prekindergarten program took both the fall and spring administrations of DIAL-3 along with 4,749 students who participated in the full day prekindergarten program. In 2008-09, a total of 7,704 students took both the fall and spring administrations of DIAL-3, with 3,016 students who participated in the half day program and 4,688 students who participated in the full day program.

Each year, Dallas ISD students’ scores on language and concepts were far below the national average of 50. In 2007-08, the mean score for students who attended a half day program was 17 in language and 19 in concepts. Mean scores for students who attended a full day program were 24 in language and 25 in concepts. In 2008-09, the mean scores for students who attended a half day program were 20 in language and 21 in concepts, while the mean score for students who attended a full day program were 26 in language and 25 in concepts. Dallas ISD prekindergarten students demonstrated large gains on the spring administration each year in all areas of the assessment and were above the national average of 50 on concepts and language by the end of the year.
For more information, see EA09-171-2, available at www.dallasisd.org/inside_disd/depts/evalacct/.