Early Childhood Instructional Specialists: 2012-13

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At-a-Glance

The Early Childhood department provides services to eligible children from birth to age eight through the district’s prekindergarten program, community collaborations, and the Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY) program. The Title I Early Childhood Workscope provides support to the district and community collaborations through the use of Instructional Specialists. Early Childhood Instructional Specialists (ECIS) worked to ensure that young children in the Dallas ISD attendance zone entered kindergarten with the skills necessary to be successful and that all students were reading on grade level by the end of grade two. The Title I 2012-13 allocation for this program component was $163,782.

Implementation

There were two ECIS during the 2012-13 school year. The ECIS supported the district’s Early Childhood department in the following ways: (1) provided district level support, (2) developed curriculum assessments, (3) supported early childhood programs, and (4) worked to enhance community partnerships.

District Level Support

In 2012-13, the ECIS had the opportunity to work with several district departments to enhance the training and selection process for teachers who taught students from prekindergarten through grade two. The ECIS did not work with teachers directly and therefore had to provide Executive Directors, the staff within the Human Capital Management, and other district staff with information needed to identify, select, and train teachers who taught students younger than the age of eight.

Curriculum & Assessments

The ECIS enhanced curriculum planning guides for prekindergarten through grade two classrooms by altering the curriculum to reflect current research and best practices. In addition, updates were made to reflect any legislative changes. This included college and career ready skills that start at an early age. All modifications to curriculum planning guides were uploaded to Curriculum Central. The ECIS worked with a select group of teachers from grades PK-2 to develop Teaching and Learning Connections (TLC) for the upcoming school year. The TLC was expected to supplement the curriculum planning guides for teachers in grades PK-2 for the 2013-14 school year.

Students in grades K-2 will take a district common assessment during the 2013-14 school year. The ECIS worked with several district departments to ensure the curriculum and assessments were aligned and age appropriate. During the 2012-13 school year, some elementary schools were selected to pilot an assessment that measured a student’s reading level. The implementation of this assessment during the 2013-14 school year would standardize the use of one common assessment that identifies the student’s reading level across the district.

Early Childhood Programs

Each year, the ECIS facilitated communication among district programs aimed at younger students. Prekindergarten programs were notified of changes, enrollment procedures, and available community partnerships. The ECIS worked with the campus principal to help determine if the campus could accommodate another prekindergarten classroom. Communication included the management of a waiting list for eligible free and tuition-based students.

Community Partnerships

The Early Childhood department worked to develop community partnerships with local universities, literacy experts, and community organizations. Meetings were held every quarter throughout the school year and allowed the Early Childhood department to receive feedback and establish committees designed to enhance the services the district provided to students from birth to grade two, and to inform the discussion between university partnerships and the education of classroom teachers.

Recommendations

There were three recommendations as a result of the 2012-13 evaluation. First, continue to enhance community partnerships to align community efforts and district needs. Second, conduct random audits of early childhood classrooms within the district to ensure best practices are implemented properly. Third, use assessment results to ensure curriculum is aligned with district standards and early childhood goals.

For more information, contact Program Evaluation at 972-925-6457.