

Imagine 2020 Initiative: 2015-16

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At-a-Glance

Imagine 2020 was the Dallas Independent School District's (Dallas ISD) strategic feeder pattern initiative, designed to serve as a pilot for transforming the entire district in accordance with the district improvement plan known as Destination 2020. The initiative included the Pinkston, Lincoln, Madison, and South Oak Cliff feeder patterns, serving a total of 33 campuses: 23 elementary, 6 middle, and 4 high schools. Four Imagine 2020 schools also participated in the Accelerating Campus Excellence (ACE) initiative and were moved out from under the high school feeder pattern executive director to the executive director of ACE. The ACE program incentivized (via competitive stipends) top teachers and principals to relocate to some of the district's most challenged schools. Imagine 2020 involved a three-pronged approach to improvement that focused on school staffing, curriculum and instruction, and parent and community engagement.

A new assistant superintendent was hired in December 2015 to oversee implementation of both the Imagine 2020 and ACE initiatives. The new assistant superintendent worked with Imagine 2020 executive directors to evaluate current implementation of the initiative and decide on next steps for the remainder of the 2015-16 school year and future years; however, in February 2016 the superintendent of Dallas ISD recommended to the Board of Trustees that the Imagine 2020 initiative be discontinued for the 2016-17 school year and replaced with a new initiative called the Intensive Support Network (ISN). The board approved the recommendation and the assistant superintendent along with a group of Dallas ISD leadership staff worked throughout the spring and summer of 2016 to design and set goals for the new initiative.

The Imagine 2020 budget increased from approximately \$8.68 million in 2013-14 to approximately \$12.14 million for 2015-16, an increase of \$3.46 million (40 percent). The addition of the South Oak Cliff feeder pattern in 2014-15, which consisted of 12 campuses, accounted for much of the difference.

Evaluation Methods

The evaluation for 2015-16 emphasized the implementation of all Imagine 2020 programs and components. The programs and components that were evaluated included additional staff positions (assistant principals, urban specialists and student advocate coordinators, and department chairs and demonstration teachers), in-school tutoring, extended day, optional

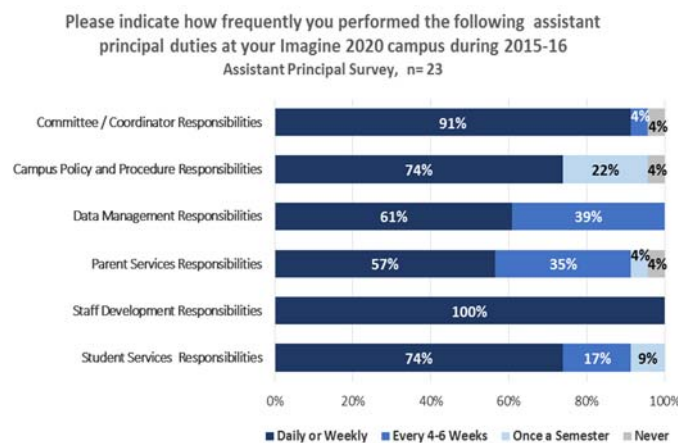
and required initiatives, Student Advocacy Management teams, and parent engagement.

Additional Staff Positions

Imagine 2020 campuses received additional funding to hire additional assistant principals, urban specialists and student advocate coordinators, and department chairs and demonstration teachers.

Additional assistant principal positions were provided to Imagine 2020 campuses to ensure the immediate needs of parents and students were met and to allow the campus principal to serve as a true instructional leader. Additional assistant principals were added at a ratio of 1:300 (42 additional assistant principals added). Additional assistant principals most often focused on staff development and committee or coordinator responsibilities (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Assistant Principal Duties



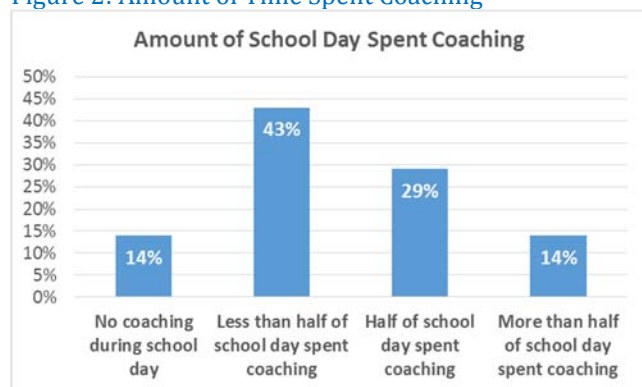
The majority of principals reported positive relationships with their Imagine-2020 funded assistant principals and indicated they had fulfilled the expectations of the role.

Urban specialists and student advocate coordinators were Imagine 2020-specific positions. Urban specialists served the middle school and high school campuses (one per campus), and student advocate coordinators served elementary schools (one per feeder pattern). They provided support to administrators, committees, and teachers, and provided direct services to targeted students, supplementing the existing interventions performed by campus personnel. Urban specialists and student advocate coordinators contributed to campus success by addressing attendance and discipline issues on the Imagine 2020 campuses. Urban specialists and student advocate coordinators focused

on the social and emotional needs of students as well as providing classroom management assistance to teachers. They worked with students on a weekly basis and most often attended to attendance and discipline issues. The majority of urban specialists and student advocate coordinators, and principals and assistant principals reported having positive relationships with one another. Some limitations to the urban specialist and student advocate coordinator positions included unclear expectations and role definition and time constraints on the part of student advocate coordinators because they served multiple campuses.

Department chairs were teachers at the middle and high school level, while demonstration teachers were teachers working at elementary campuses. Department chair and demonstration teacher positions were intended to be half-day teacher of record and half-day coach for other teachers. When the position was used as designed, department chairs and demonstration teachers were able to provide an informal support network for new and struggling teachers. Demonstration teachers and department chairs focused on coaching and supporting teachers, leading professional development, teaching their own students, and permanently substituting for teachers who were absent. Over half of demonstration teachers and department chairs were not coaching half a day as originally intended (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Amount of Time Spent Coaching



Demonstration teachers and department chairs found it challenging to balance their coaching duties with teaching responsibilities. Administrators reported having positive relationships with their demonstration teachers and department chairs and reported that staff were fulfilling the expectations of their roles. Principals indicated that role conflict between being both a coach and a teacher of record was a problem for demonstration teachers and department chairs.

In-School Tutoring

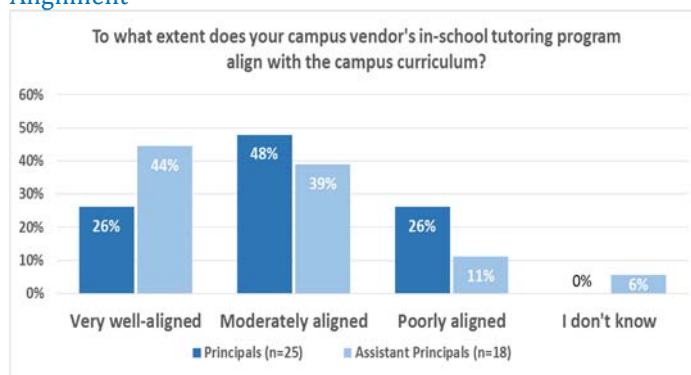
In 2015-16, the Imagine 2020 principals selected six in-school tutoring vendors, which included Beacon Hill Preparatory Institute, Catapult Learning West, Sylvan Learning, Readers 2 Leaders, Reading Partners, and Group Excellence. Elementary schools received

reading tutoring services, and secondary schools received math tutoring services.

The in-school tutoring selection process was unclear. Though Tier 3 lists (students with at least three course failures, four disciplinary referrals, or six unexcused absences) were identified as the primary means of selecting students for tutoring, campuses were mostly selecting students using other means. Because vendors used different measures of student progress, no analysis of direct student outcomes was possible for the 2015-16 school year. The evaluators used course passing rates as well as attendance and discipline data as proxies for performance measures. Common assessments should be used in future years to measure performance improvement.

Results were mixed when looking at attendance, discipline, and course passing rates. Statistical analyses showed no major significant differences in these variables over time. Course passing rates increased for most campuses from fall to spring. Attendance percentages across all campuses and vendors dropped between fall 2015 and spring 2016, but this is a common occurrence across the district. The number of disciplinary referrals increased for 23 of the 33 campuses (70%). Classroom observations showed in-school tutoring environments were positive. Principals and assistant principals reported being in contact and having positive relationships with in-school tutoring vendors. Administrators reported that vendors often pulled students out of core classes which caused issues. They indicated that there were some alignment issues between the campus curriculum and the in-school tutoring vendor curriculum (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Tutoring Program and Campus Curriculum Alignment



Extended Day

The Imagine 2020 school day was extended by one hour to increase instructional focus on tutoring, credit recovery, mentoring, and enrichment. The extended day was mandatory for teachers but could be mandatory or optional for students. Campuses had a choice as to how they integrated the extra hour into the school day. Results of the extended day were unclear because of varying implementation and tracking

methods. The extended day was either spread throughout master schedule by increasing class times or implemented before or after school. The extended day was mandatory for students across most campuses. Student tracking methods varied, which would be expected if campuses were implementing extended day in different ways. Because implementation varied and tracking was limited, a full evaluation of this component of Imagine 2020 was not possible.

Optional and Required Initiatives

The Imagine 2020 initiative provided a variety of programs to Imagine 2020 campuses. Some programs or initiatives were designated as mandatory by Imagine 2020 leadership staff, while others were considered optional. Possible programs consisted of science and math programs (n=5), reading and social studies programs (n=5), and general curriculum and instruction programs (n=10). The most commonly used programs were Reasoning Mind, I-Station Reading, the “Big Four” (Learning Objectives, Purposeful Instruction, Multiple Response Strategies, and Demonstrations of Learning), In-School Tutoring, Mandatory Extended Day, and Classroom Management.

Half of the most often used programs and initiatives on Imagine 2020 campuses were not unique to Imagine 2020 schools. Many Imagine 2020-specific programs were still in initial stages of implementation or were not offered at all. If there is evidence to suggest that these programs are effective, then more support and training may be necessary to get these programs integrated into campus culture.

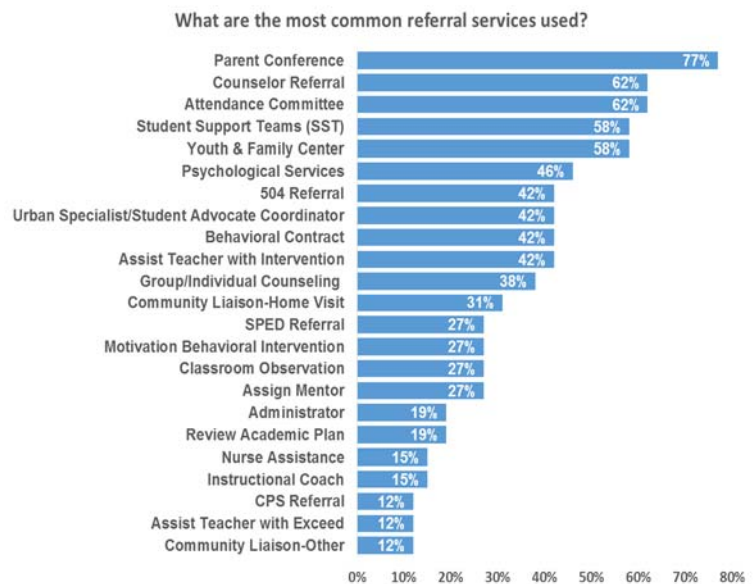
Student Advocacy Management Teams

The Student Advocacy Management (SAM) model was designed to serve students with the most severe attendance, disciplinary, and academic problems. Students with at least three course failures, four disciplinary referrals, or six unexcused absences were assigned to a Tier 3 list and referred to the SAM teams at their schools. Other students who did not meet the Tier 3 definition could be referred based on need. Students only needed to meet one of the three criteria to be on the Tier 3 list. Each of the 33 Imagine 2020 schools was to establish a SAM team, which would review the records of such students and establish a comprehensive plan of wrap-around services, which could include academic, social, and behavioral interventions. A principal or other campus administrator was to serve as the campus SAM administrator. In addition, another campus-based professional (often a counselor) served as SAM team chair.

Rules and procedures for SAM teams were not adequately developed. There was a lack of administrative support and accountability regarding SAM teams, leading to sporadic meeting schedules and a lack of pertinent staff attending all meetings. When

implemented with fidelity, SAM teams could be effective. Students served during SAM meetings were most often referred for parent conferences, counselor referrals, or to the attendance committee (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Common Referral Services



Parent Engagement

The Office of Family and Community Engagement provided various training opportunities to parents. Parents rated PREP University sessions as very helpful and indicated that the sessions increased their interest in becoming involved in their children’s education. In addition to PREP University training sessions, the Office of Family and Community Engagement also partnered with the National Network of Partnership Schools at Johns Hopkins to provide additional training. The Office of Family and Community Engagement also provided two resources for parents to become more involved in their children’s education: Parent Portal and Parent Centers. A small majority of principals and assistant principals reported having at least moderate levels of parent engagement on their campuses.

Year 3 Outcomes

As of the release of this report, no formal initiative goals were set for the 2015-16 school year. As a result, the evaluators analyzed data related to the 2014-15 initiative goals.

There were positive changes with regards to state accountability measures. Eleven of 33 Imagine 2020 schools were rated as Improvement Required (IR) in 2015-16, six were designated as Improvement Required (IR) status for the 2016-17 school year. Six schools came off the list and one school came on to the list. *State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR)* and *STAAR (End-of-Course) EOC* results were mixed. Imagine 2020 elementary schools did fairly well with about a third or more of campuses for

grades three through five doing better than the district in reading, math, and writing (where applicable). Middle schools did not fare as well with only one campus outperforming the district (Dallas Environmental Science Academy). In general, Imagine 2020 middle schools and high schools did not outperform the district on *STAAR EOC* exams. The majority of results for the 2015-16 Climate Survey showed improvements over the 2014-15 school year (Table 1).

Table 1: Climate Survey Results

	Beliefs and Priorities			Culture of Feedback and Support			Positive Culture and Environment			College-Going Culture		
	2015	2016	Change	2015	2016	Change	2015	2016	Change	2015	2016	Change
Lincoln	90.2%	91.5%	1.3%	87.8%	91.5%	3.7%	76.8%	81.9%	5.1%	92.4%	94.4%	2.0%
Madison	80.5%	66.9%	-13.6%	73.4%	54.7%	-18.7%	69.3%	50.3%	-19.0%	89.0%	77.9%	-11.1%
Pinkston	71.5%	77.3%	5.8%	60.5%	68.3%	7.8%	58.3%	65.4%	7.1%	77.7%	81.5%	3.8%
South Oak Cliff	78.3%	78.4%	0.1%	68.0%	66.3%	-1.7%	60.9%	63.4%	2.5%	81.0%	81.2%	0.2%
ACE (Imagine 2020 Campuses Only)		80.3%			68.3%			67.0%			83.4%	
District	77.6%	78.0%	0.4%	67.0%	68.2%	1.2%	64.6%	65.9%	1.3%	82.1%	81.5%	-0.6%

Results of the 2015-16 Student Experience Survey were quite positive. The Lincoln, Pinkston, and South Oak Cliff feeder patterns either maintained or improved their results from the 2014-15 school year for each of the five sections: Pedagogical Effectiveness, Classroom Environment, Expectations and Rigor, Student Engagement, and Supportive Relationships. The Madison feeder pattern showed increases in some sections and grades, but decreases in others.

Table 2: Student Experience Survey Results

Feeder Pattern	Survey Type	Pedagogical Effectiveness			Classroom Environment			Expectations and Rigor			Student Engagement			Supportive Relationships			Overall		
		2015	2016	Chg	2015	2016	Chg	2015	2016	Chg	2015	2016	Chg	2015	2016	Chg	2015	2016	Chg
Lincoln	Grades 3-5	88%	91%	3%	73%	77%	4%	85%	90%	5%	86%	88%	2%	75%	76%	1%	81%	84%	3%
	Grades 6-12	74%	74%	0%	76%	79%	3%	76%	77%	1%	57%	59%	2%	64%	70%	6%	69%	72%	3%
Pinkston	Grades 3-5	84%	88%	4%	74%	79%	5%	81%	87%	6%	79%	82%	3%	65%	72%	7%	77%	82%	5%
	Grades 6-12	73%	73%	0%	76%	79%	3%	75%	77%	2%	53%	54%	1%	60%	66%	6%	67%	70%	3%
South Oak Cliff	Grades 3-5	85%	89%	4%	72%	76%	4%	83%	88%	5%	82%	84%	2%	69%	72%	3%	78%	82%	4%
	Grades 6-12	71%	71%	0%	71%	74%	3%	73%	73%	0%	54%	56%	2%	60%	65%	5%	66%	68%	2%
Madison	Grades 3-5	85%	84%	-1%	73%	71%	-2%	82%	84%	2%	82%	80%	-2%	67%	68%	1%	78%	77%	-1%
	Grades 6-12	69%	73%	4%	73%	79%	6%	71%	76%	5%	53%	56%	3%	57%	64%	7%	65%	70%	5%
ACE (Imagine 2020 Campuses Only)	Grades 3-5		83%			70%			84%			82%			69%			78%	
	Grades 6-12		76%			75%			79%			62%			69%			72%	
DISTRICT	Grades 3-5	76%	89%	13%	83%	80%	-3%	86%	88%	2%	82%	84%	2%	68%	74%	6%	79%	83%	4%
	Grades 6-12	74%	72%	-2%	72%	79%	7%	70%	75%	5%	51%	53%	2%	56%	64%	8%	65%	69%	4%

Attendance remained relatively stable with some small increases or decreases across the three years of the initiative. The results regarding discipline referrals were mixed. The majority of high schools and middle schools showed reductions in referrals from 2014-15 to 2015-16, while 13 of the 23 elementary schools (57%) had increases in referrals from the same time.

Recommendations

Although the Imagine 2020 initiative will not continue for the 2016-17 school year, the following recommendations are based on the findings of the 2015-16 Imagine 2020 evaluation and are intended as a guide for future strategic initiative development.

- 1) Additional staff positions such as urban specialists and student advocate coordinators, department chairs and demonstration teachers, and additional

assistant principal positions have the potential to be valuable components of any strategic initiative. However, program leadership should set clear expectations for roles and responsibilities and ensure that these staff positions are used as designed throughout the school year.

- 2) If in-school tutoring continues to be used in a new initiative, a clear student selection process should be determined and adhered to, outcome indicators and progress monitoring procedures should be determined at the beginning of the school year, and vendors should be required to collect pertinent data. Vendor curriculum should be vetted before selection to determine whether materials align with the current campus curriculum.
- 3) If an extended school day is used, either make the process for implementing the extended school day common across all campuses OR clearly track the methods used for extending the school day as well as student participation.
- 4) With regard to optional and required initiatives, only programs with an evidence base of success should be chosen for campus use. If campuses are using these programs, they should be required to ensure the programs are fully implemented with fidelity to increase student benefit.
- 5) SAM teams appeared to be a promising aspect of the Imagine 2020 initiative, but were not implemented with fidelity. SAM team members need set rules and procedures for student selection and service provision, and adequate training on how to conduct SAM meetings. If lists are created using certain criteria to select students, the criteria should be thoroughly reviewed to make sure they are the most appropriate indicators, and procedures for moving students on and off the lists should be determined.
- 6) The ISN initiative should set clear outcome indicators and goals for the program, and all activities should be geared toward accomplishing these outcomes.

The full evaluation report on Imagine 2020 contains a more in-depth discussion of the program and recommendations. For more information, refer to the final evaluation report, EA16-530-2, which can be found at <http://www.dallasisd.org/Page/888>.