

Updated Evaluation of the Dallas ISD Birth to Five Initiatives 2015-16

Department of Evaluation and Assessment

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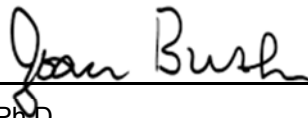
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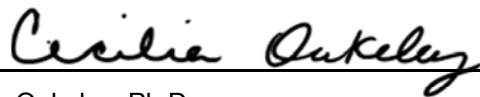
Istation provided recalibrated Istation's Indicators of Progress data for the fall 2015 English administration in January 2017. As a result, relevant text, tables, and figures were updated.

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UPDATED EVALUATION OF THE DALLAS ISD BIRTH TO FIVE INITIATIVES 2015-16

Project Evaluator: Sarah Hinkley, Ph.D.

ABSTRACT

In 2015-16, there were 10,371 students enrolled in early childhood (EC) education, community partnership programs, or Dallas Independent School District (ISD) prekindergarten (PK; 390, 1,002, and 8,899, respectively). The total budget for the Early Childhood and Community Partnerships (ECCP) department was \$2,737,153, which included \$2,396,327 of general operating funds and \$340,826 of Title II, Part A funds. The evaluator examined the context of ECCP initiatives and analyzed staff perceptions and student outcomes. The following summarizes the main findings.

Strategic Planning and Progress. As part of strategic planning, the Dallas ISD ECCP department endeavored to increase kindergarten readiness by working toward increasing access to and demand for PK, improving quality, increasing community partnerships, and expanding the continuum of care.

Staff Perceptions of the Prekindergarten Program. The curriculum and instruction manager indicated that PK specialists provided group professional development (PD) programs and individualized, tiered support to teachers. This was confirmed with interviews and observations of four PK specialists.

PK Teacher Survey respondents (309 teachers; 67.5% of PK teachers) were mostly positive toward the PK program, the PK specialists, and the ECCP department's group PD. The most frequent successes included administrator support and increased student achievement. Key challenges were student behavior problems and lack of materials and/or resources. The main suggestion was to increase resources.

Quality of Prekindergarten Instruction. Results of the *Classroom Assessment Scoring System* (CLASS) indicated that the district was above the quality threshold in the emotional support and classroom organization domains and below the quality threshold in the instructional support domain.

Student Outcomes on 2015-16 ISIP. Across administrations, *Istation's Indicators of Progress* (ISIP) showed that the percentages of PK students at or above grade level for English and Spanish administrations combined were 54 percent to 59 percent. Between 46 percent and 56 percent of district tested in English and more than 50 percent (52% to 67%) of students tested in Spanish were at grade level.

Kindergarten Readiness and Achievement. A higher percentage of students who were enrolled in Dallas ISD prekindergarten (*DISD PK*) were kindergarten ready (at or above grade level on September ISIP) in comparison to the *No DISD PK* group. The *DISD PK* group had more students at or above grade level on spring 2016 kindergarten ISIP, TerraNova, and SUPERA than the *No DISD PK* group.

Recommendations. Recommendations were to (1) continue implementing the district plan, using PK specialists, and providing group PD for teachers; (2) train PK teachers to provide more effective instructional support for students; and (3) create a testing protocol to increase the accuracy of PK student achievement data.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Dallas Independent School District (Dallas ISD) Early Childhood and Community Partnerships (ECCP) department was created in October 2013 to increase kindergarten readiness and foster community partnerships. In spring 2015, the department was expanded to include coordination of kindergarten through grade two services. Even so, kindergarten readiness remained a focal point of the ECCP department. The main goal of the prekindergarten (PK) program was to improve kindergarten readiness. This goal was accomplished through the expansion of the PK program. Expansion was encouraged by increasing access, increasing demand, increasing quality through teacher specialization and effectiveness, and increasing community partnerships. The program staff also worked toward improving PK readiness through partnerships that provided educational services to children from birth.

PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION

The purpose of this report was to describe Dallas ISD's birth to five initiatives. This included contextual information about the services provided to children from birth through PK, results of PK specialist observations and interviews, and teacher surveys. The report also included analyses of kindergarten readiness and students' academic achievement through kindergarten.

Specifically, this evaluation focused on (a) summarizing funding allocations for the birth to five initiatives in the 2015-16 school year, (b) summarizing strategic planning and progress, (c) describing the characteristics of PK students, (d) summarizing staff perceptions of the PK program, (e) summarizing the quality of PK instruction, (f) examining PK student *Istation's Indicators of Progress (ISIP)* scores over the year, (g) examining differences in kindergarten readiness based on Dallas ISD PK enrollment, and (h) examining differences in academic performance in kindergarten based on Dallas ISD PK enrollment.

MAJOR EVALUATION QUESTIONS AND RESULTS

What was the source and funding for the birth to five initiatives?

Budget information was collected from ECCP department central administrators. As of April 20, 2016, the 2015-16 budget was \$2,737,153.00. This included \$2,396,327.00 of district funds and \$340,826.00 of Title II, Part A funds.

What strategic planning and progress has occurred since 2013-14?

Methodology

The evaluator interviewed ECCP central administrators¹ in fall 2015 and reviewed district documents and community partnership websites. The purpose of the interviews was to find out about the plan and goals for birth to five initiatives and to understand the structure of the ECCP department. The documents reviewed included the ECCP strategic plan presented to the Dallas ISD administration.

Results

The ECCP department was created in October 2013 to increase kindergarten readiness and foster community partnerships. In August 2014, Boston Consulting Group (BCG) worked with ECCP central administrators to develop a strategic plan to achieve the overarching goal of increasing kindergarten readiness. The plan had four main objectives including (1) increasing access to PK, (2) increasing parental demand for PK, (3) improving PK quality, and (4) extending the continuum of care by increasing community partnerships.

The ECCP assistant superintendent indicated that the plan was dynamic and proposed that future plans include two major changes. Mentioned changes included increasing the number of three-year-olds attending PK and having a greater focus on children's socioemotional health. He said this would be accomplished through measurement of adult-child interactions and making these interactions the focus when defining quality in early childhood education. The assistant superintendent also indicated that ECCP staff reentered into a partnership with BCG in January 2016 and asked BCG to focus on design, analytics optimization, and systems to streamline ECCP activities.

Access/Demand

One goal of the strategic plan was increased access to PK. The assistant superintendent reported increased PK enrollment under the umbrella of Dallas ISD since the plan's implementation. Most Dallas ISD PK students attended school at district elementary schools; others attended the Harlee or Wilmer Early Childhood Centers and still others attended third-party centers and were taught by Dallas ISD teachers. In Dallas ISD, most children were separated into classrooms by age; three-year-olds attended half-day PK and four-year-olds attended full-day PK. In a few Dallas ISD Montessori classrooms and in third-party childcare centers, classrooms were mixed-age; children in these environments attended full-day PK regardless of age.

The ECCP assistant superintendent indicated that the district's early childhood centers were working toward two goals. The first goal was for early childhood centers to create space for more three-year-old students to attend PK. The second was for centers to serve as demonstration sites for the implementation of best practices at the PK level.

¹ In this report, all references to "assistant superintendent" refer to the previous ECCP assistant superintendent who was employed from October 2013 through March 2016.

The ECCP assistant superintendent indicated that the Harlee Early Childhood Center opened in fall 2015 as the district's first school serving only three and four year olds. He also reported that as of November 2015, both the morning and afternoon sessions of Harlee's two three-year-old classrooms were full. This was indicative of the second goal, increased parental demand for PK.

The assistant superintendent noted that, as the budget allowed, more standalone early childhood centers were planned. The goal was to eventually have one in each quadrant of the district. Arlington Park and Far North Dallas were named as possible future locations.

The ECCP assistant superintendent indicated that PK enrollment and access increased in part due to community partnerships with Head Start programs and third-party childcare centers. More information about community partnerships is provided below.

Quality

Another goal in the strategic plan was increased PK quality. As an initial step, PK specialists were introduced into the classroom in 2014-15 to provide one-on-one professional development (PD) and support to teachers. In December 2015, the ECCP curriculum and instruction manager reported that there were 29 PK specialists working in Dallas ISD.

As mentioned above, PK specialists were introduced into the PK classrooms during the 2014-15 school year. In 2014-15, specialists tried to cultivate teachers' trust by implementing a checklist designed by the Children's Learning Institute (CLI) to assess the physical classroom. Checklist items included having a print-rich environment, displaying student work, and having activity centers. After completing the checklist, specialists brought in supplies for each teacher to use in his or her classroom based on the specific needs found through the checklist. These interactions had two goals. First, teachers received necessary classroom supplies. Second, these interactions were designed to try to help teachers feel that the specialist program was a long-term program with the goal of improved PK quality. ECCP central administrators indicated that teachers were receptive to working with the specialists and that classroom organization was improved. In 2015-16, specialists continued to provide targeted, teacher-specific interventions.

The ECCP assistant superintendent said that socioemotional learning was key to improved PK quality and later academic success. The ECCP department collaborated with Southern Methodist University (SMU) to measure classroom interactions using an observation instrument, the *Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS)*.² The ECCP superintendent indicated that, once administered, school principals received the data and had autonomy when deciding what PK specialists should focus on when working with their teachers to increase PK quality.

Community Partnerships/Continuum of Care

The ECCP department's largest partnerships were with Head Start and third-party centers. The goal of these partnerships was to keep students in their current childcare setting while they received instruction from Dallas ISD teachers. As of November 2015, an ECCP data coordinator indicated that there

² For more information about the CLASS, see <http://teachstone.com/classroom-assessment-scoring-system/>.

were 19 community partnership sites; 13 were Head Start sites and six sites were run by other organizations. At each community partnership site, the Dallas ISD teacher served as the lead teacher and the program's own employee worked in the role of teaching assistant.

Another major partner, Commit!,³ works to foster student achievement throughout Dallas County by using data, identifying best practices, and communicating these findings to the community. The partnership between Dallas ISD and Commit! had two goals. The first goal was to work toward alignment beyond the district, especially in terms of operationalizing definitions (e.g., defining “quality”). The second goal was to create a data sharing system to distribute information while maintaining student privacy.

Finally, the ECCP department worked to expand the continuum of care by continuing to invest in programs for children from birth to three years old. In 2015-16, Dallas ISD continued to operate the Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY)⁴ program and invest in AVANCE.⁵ HIPPY, a home visitation program staffed by home visitors and coordinators, is designed to help parents become their children's first teachers through the provision of scientifically backed curricula, role-playing, and support. Support includes supplies, materials, home visitors⁶ to mentor parents, and coordinators (who oversee home visitors and organize parent group meetings). AVANCE provides education and support to families and helps parents achieve their goals. Like HIPPY, AVANCE focuses on parents being their children's first teachers. Additionally, AVANCE parents are educated about child wellness, provision of nurturing care, and language development. AVANCE also helps parents build personal resources (e.g., the Workplace English Program).

What were the characteristics of prekindergarten students?

Methodology

Demographic data for all early childhood (EC) and PK students were extracted from the Dallas ISD Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) snapshot data file.⁷ The evaluator conducted frequency analyses to determine student demographic information by pathway and grade.

Results

Students must meet criteria in order to be eligible to attend Dallas ISD's EC and PK programs. All eligible children with disabilities are able to begin school at Dallas ISD as early as age three through the EC program.⁸ Otherwise, to be eligible for Dallas ISD PK, students must meet age requirements by September 1⁹ and (1) be unable to speak or comprehend English, (2) be economically disadvantaged,

³ More information about Commit! can be found at <http://commit2dallas.org/>.

⁴ For more information about the HIPPY program, see the HIPPY evaluation report (Palladino, 2016).

⁵ More information about AVANCE can be found at <https://www.avance-dallas.org/> and the AVANCE evaluation report (Palladino, 2016).

⁶ Home visitors are parents from the community who have typically completed the HIPPY program.

⁷ The data were pulled on 10/30/15.

⁸ For information about EC enrollment, see <http://tea.texas.gov/index4.aspx?id=2147494988>.

⁹ Students enrolling in a three-year-old classroom must be three years of age by September 1st of that school year, and students enrolling in a four-year-old classroom must be four-years old by September 1st.

(3) be homeless, (4) have an active military parent, (5) have a parent who was killed or injured on active military duty, and/or (5) be in foster care.^{10,11}

Dallas ISD's EC and PK programs served 10,371 students in 2015-16. Demographic information is presented in Table 1. Over half of the students were male (51.1%), Hispanic (71.3%), economically disadvantaged (93.4%), and/or English Language Learners (ELLs; 52.8%).

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics for 2015-16 EC and PK Students by Pathway and Grade

	Early Childhood/PPCD (n=390)		Community Partnerships (n=1,002)		3 Year Old PK (n=302)		4 Year Old PK (n= 8,597)		Total (n=10,371)	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%
Sex										
Male	290	74.4	489	48.8	150	49.7	4,345	50.5	5,304	51.1
Female	100	25.6	513	51.2	152	50.3	4,252	49.5	5,067	48.9
Ethnicity										
Hispanic	228	58.5	384	38.3	205	67.9	6,517	75.8	7,396	71.3
African American	126	32.3	460	45.9	83	27.5	1,702	19.8	2,378	22.9
White	27	6.9	19	1.9	2	0.7	218	2.5	275	2.7
Multi-Racial	2	0.5	6	0.6	2	0.7	41	0.5	52	0.5
Asian	6	1.5	9	0.9	9	3.0	104	1.2	129	1.2
Am. Indian/Alaskan Native	1	0.3	2	0.2	1	0.3	13	0.2	17	0.2
Unknown	N/A	N/A	122	12.2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	122	1.2
Socioeconomic Status										
Economic Disadvantage	304	77.9	943	94.1	274	90.7	8,099	94.2	9,686	93.4
English Language Learner (ELL)										
ELL	32	8.2	182	18.2	174	57.6	5,053	58.8	5,472	52.8
Homeless										
Homeless	4	1.0	1	0.1	6	2.0	88	1.0	99	1.0

Source. PEIMS district database: 10/30/2015.

Note. Some percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding. Some numbers may not add up to the total due to missing data. Students at Mata are in mixed-age classrooms; thus these students are only included in the total (N=77). Three students could not be classified and are only included in the total. Students were classified as being in three-year-old PK if the majority of students in the classroom were not four years old by September 1, 2015 and a four-year-old classroom if most students were four years old by September 1, 2015.

What were prekindergarten specialist and teacher perceptions of the prekindergarten program?

Methodology

To understand perceptions of the PK program the evaluator conducted interviews, observations, and surveys. The curriculum and instruction manager was interviewed, PK specialists were interviewed and observed, and PK teachers completed surveys. Specific details follow.

¹⁰ For more information about Dallas ISD's PK requirements, see <http://www.dallasisd.org/Page/37706>.

¹¹ Dealey and Stone Montessori schools are not required to follow these requirements.

Manager Interview

The curriculum and instruction manager of the ECCP department was interviewed in December 2015. The purpose of this interview was to collect information about the PK specialists and group trainings offered by the department. The evaluator received a list of PD opportunities with descriptions.

Specialist Interviews and Observations

Four PK specialists were interviewed and observed during January and February of 2016. The purpose was to gather open-ended information about specialists' perceptions of the PK program and understand the specialist role. Each specialist was shadowed for one day; during this time, the evaluator conducted an interview and observed the specialist. Specialists were asked about the specialist role, how they supported their teachers, successes, challenges, and suggestions. Additionally, specialists were asked about feedback received from teachers and about the support and PD provided by the ECCP department.

Teacher Surveys

The purpose of the PK teacher survey was to understand teacher perceptions of the PK program. Teachers were asked about their general understanding of the ECCP department, support received, resources, group PD, and experiences with the PK specialists. Teachers also had the option to discuss successes, challenges, and suggestions.

The PK teacher survey was administered during a three-week window from late February through mid-March 2016. All 2015-16 PK teachers were sent an email with the survey link along with weekly follow-up reminders. The response rate was 68 percent. Upon removal of invalid responses, 309 PK teachers were included in the analyses.

Frequency and descriptive analyses were conducted for rating-scale items on the survey. Qualitative analyses were used to analyze the open-ended items. Responses were categorized into themes and tabulated; some open-ended responses included information that fit into more than one theme.

Results

Manager Interview

In the interview, the manager indicated that as of December 2015 there were 29 specialists with the hope of having a total of 30 by the spring semester. Each specialist worked with a maximum of 15 PK teachers. The manager indicated that the specialists' main goal was to provide teachers with individualized, tiered support. To do this, specialists completed intensive PD and then provided teacher PD.

Specialists were reported to have received various types of PD through several different programs. The PD programs included CLI Engage training, CLASS observer certification training, and Making the Most of Classroom Interactions (MMCI) training. CLI Engage training was an online training focused on the *Circle* assessment, one of Dallas ISD's PK assessments. Specialists underwent CLASS observer training to be able to help teachers understand the data and to use it to improve the quality of their classroom

interactions. Finally, each specialist completed MMCI training, which was an intense training on *CLASS* that required specialists to complete course work and submit recorded teacher training sessions; specialists then received feedback from Teachstone (the creator of the *CLASS*).

In addition to specialist support, ECCP staff members provided teachers with group trainings. PD sessions focused on the *CLASS* (including the *CLASS* Academy), the *Circle* assessment, the Opening the World of Learning (OWL) curriculum (the main PK curriculum) and best practices, and Just in Time trainings. The department also provided a Summer Institute and a two-day training about student activity centers. Lastly, the ECCP department provided training for teachers in third-party settings and for teacher assistants.

- *CLASS* trainings were half-day to one-day sessions designed to give teachers an overview of the *CLASS* and its dimensions; some sessions also included discussions about strategies to engage students and/or strategies for working with ELL students.
- The *CLASS* Academy was a series of in-depth *CLASS* trainings for teachers. It included 10 three-hour sessions and covered each domain of the *CLASS* assessment.
- *Circle* trainings were half-day and designed to give an overview about how the *Circle* assessment measured student progress as well as the resources provided by the CLI (*Circle*'s developer) to assist student growth.
- OWL curriculum trainings helped teachers become familiar with the OWL curriculum.
- ECCP department Just in Time trainings were two-hour sessions that allowed teachers to preview the OWL curriculum for the next six weeks. These trainings were divided into "novice" and "returning" sections.
- The Summer Institute was a three-day training that covered content, guidelines for differentiating activities, and bilingual and English as a second language (ESL) instructional strategies.
- The two-day center training instructed teachers on effectively using center-based learning.

Specialist Interviews and Observations

Specialist Interviews. During interviews, the specialists defined their job as supporting and coaching teachers. This helped teachers effectively transfer best practices from PD into their classrooms and provide students with a developmentally appropriate education. The specialists indicated that their greatest successes included seeing teachers effectively implement suggestions and watching teachers grow and take ownership of their progress. The specialists reported that their greatest challenges were getting teachers to implement suggestions consistently and interacting with the few teachers and/or administrators who resisted help. In these cases, the specialists indicated that they still assisted these individuals when possible.

The specialists indicated that most teachers appreciated having their help. When informally asked by the evaluator, teachers echoed this response; teachers indicated that specialists served as helpful resources for ideas, materials, and hands-on support.

Specialists reported feeling supported by the ECCP department. The specialists reported that ECCP staff members helped handle any issues that arose with campuses or teachers and provided

requested resources or training. One specialist noted that, in addition to the previously discussed PD, the specialists also received training on how to be an effective coach. In the coaching training, specialists learned to coach teachers with a focus on solutions, goals, planning, and reflection on successes.

Specialist Observations. The evaluator observed specialists using several different modalities to work with teachers; these included observation, communication, demonstrations, and hands-on assistance. During teacher observations, the specialists were seen recording general observations, successes, areas for improvement, and needed resources. The specialists' work with the CLI checklist was readily apparent; classrooms had print-rich environments including labeled centers with a variety of materials (e.g., centers for reading, writing, ABCs, math, science, construction, etc.). It was also clear that, in most classrooms, students and teachers accepted the specialists; students recognized the specialists and greeted them, and specialists addressed students by name.

Specialists were also observed communicating directly with teachers through informal conversations, individual meetings, and group meetings. Specialists informally asked teachers about needed resources and helped teachers troubleshoot problems by offering suggestions or demonstrations. In individual teacher meetings, specialists helped solve problems, assessed progress toward teacher goals, and set new goals. Example goals included differentiating instruction, working on children's vocabulary, and using centers more effectively (e.g., integrating concepts across centers, integrating instructional themes within centers, etc.). Three specialists were observed leading group meetings with all the PK teachers on that campus. These meetings were used to plan future teacher tasks, debrief on past trainings, discuss concerns, review assessment data, plan small group assignments, and set up future observations and meeting times. In many of these interactions, the specialists referenced the Teacher Learning Connection (TLC) Planner. The TLC, a set of suggestions for teachers based on the current curriculum theme, included ideas about content, center activities, and appropriate questions for students.

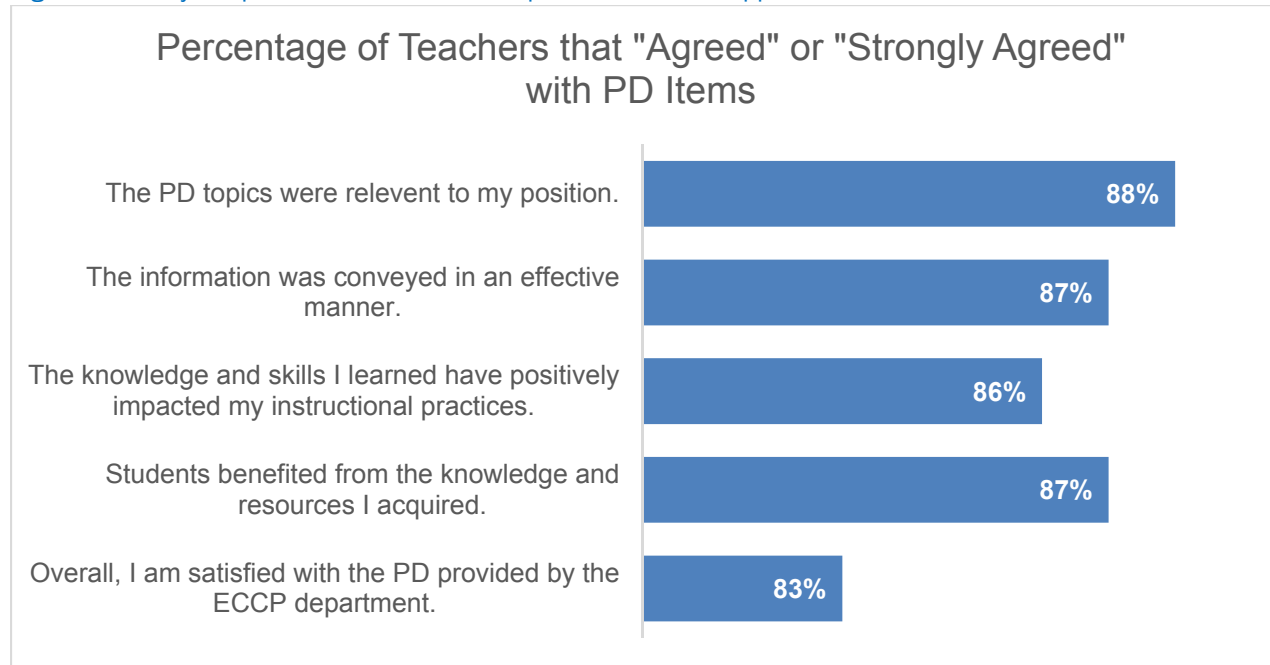
Last, specialists were observed providing demonstrations and assisting the teacher as needed. Specialists modeled methodologies and techniques to assist teachers, particularly newer teachers, in applying best practices. The specialists also directly assisted teachers by providing materials, leading all or part of some lessons, and conducting assessments (e.g., the *Circle*).

Teacher Surveys

Of the 458 PK teachers with an active email address, 309 (67.5 %) teachers completed surveys. Appendices A and B show survey results by item. Most respondents "agreed" or "strongly agreed" that they understood the goals for PK students (96%), were familiar with the district's ECCP plan (92%), thought that the PK curriculum ensured kindergarten readiness (81%), and would recommend a PK teaching position on their campus (83%). Many teachers who responded also felt supported by their campus administrators and the ECCP department (79% and 86%, respectively). Additionally, 88 percent indicated that the TLC Planners provided by the ECCP department were helpful. Though less positive than other items, many teachers (73%) "agreed" or "strongly agreed" that they had quality classroom resources; 14 percent "disagreed" or "strongly disagreed."

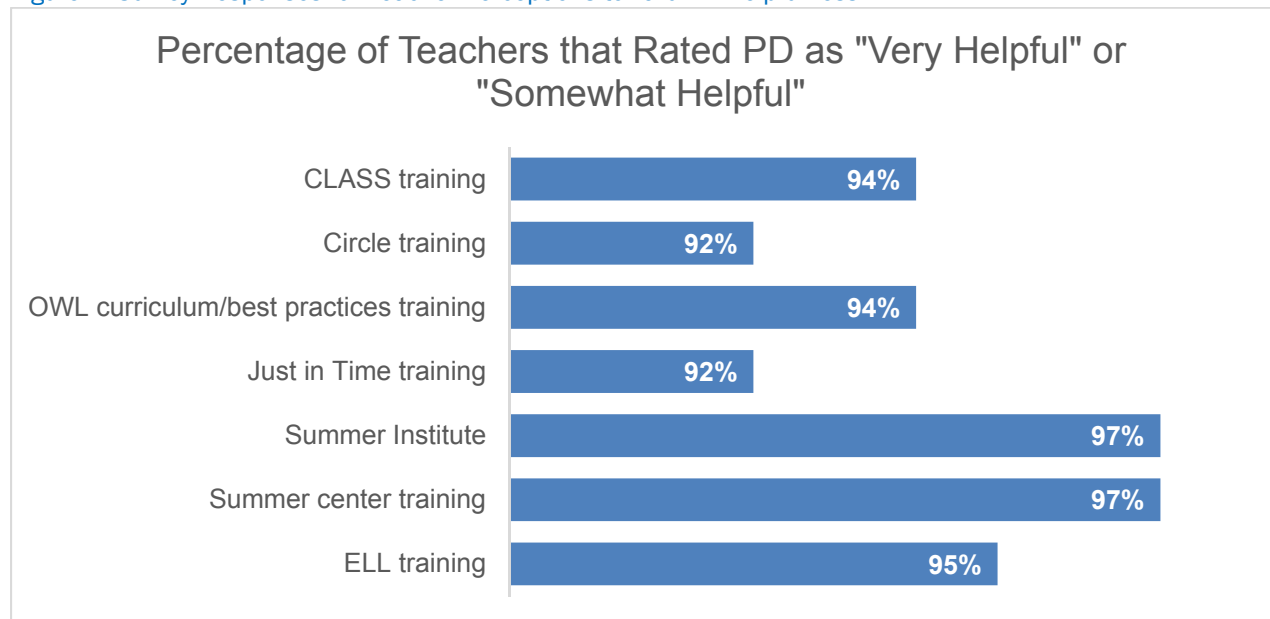
In general, respondents were positive about the PD provided by the ECCP department. Between 83 percent and 88 percent “agreed” or “strongly agreed” with each item concerning PD (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Survey Responses for Teacher Perceptions toward PD Opportunities



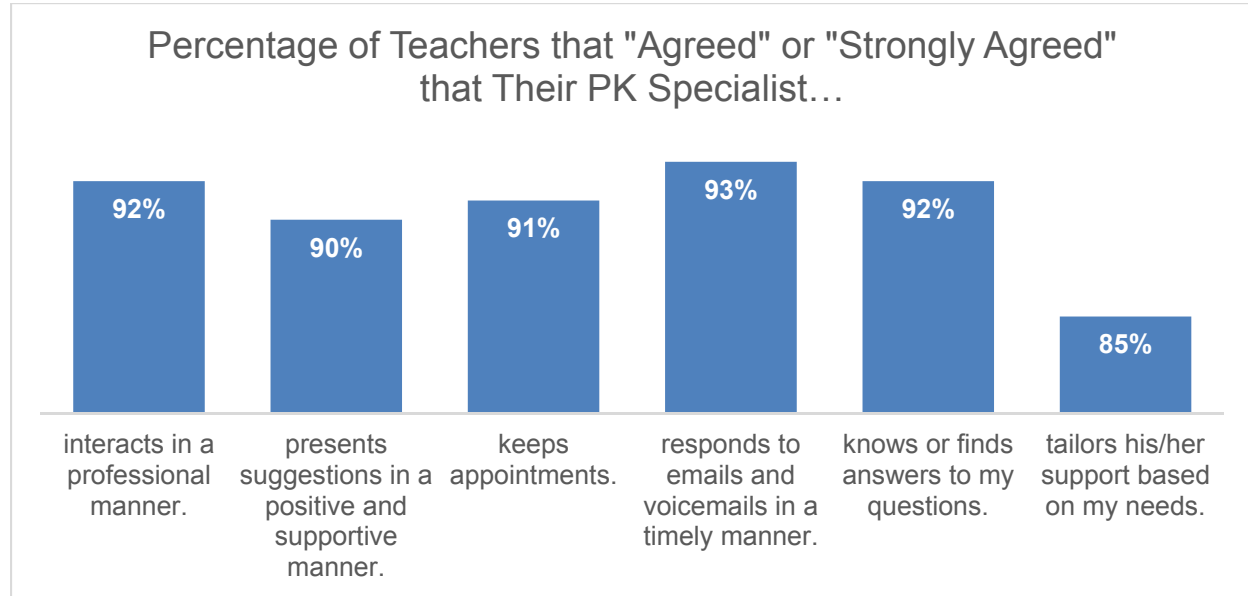
All trainings provided by the ECCP department were seen as being at least somewhat helpful by the majority of respondents (Figure 2). Between 92 percent and 97 percent rated the PD as “somewhat helpful” or “very helpful.”

Figure 2: Survey Responses for Teacher Perceptions toward PD Helpfulness



Between 90 and 93 percent of respondents “agreed” or “strongly agreed” with five of the six items about PK specialists (Figure 3). Eighty-five percent reported that their specialists tailored their support (Figure 3). Additionally, 87 percent of teachers felt adequately supported by their PK specialist overall (Appendix A).

Figure 3: Survey Responses for Teacher Perceptions toward PK Specialists



Some teachers completed optional open-ended questions about successes, challenges, and suggestions (Appendix C). The most commonly reported successes included administrator support (this could include campus administration, ECCP, or both; n=55), increased student achievement (academic and/or social emotional) and engagement (n=54), teamwork with other PK teachers (n=38), and the trainings/products made in the trainings (n=29).

There was a wider array of challenges reported. The most common challenges included student behavior (n=40), lack of materials and/or resources (n=37), and conflicting information and/or guidelines from members of the ECCP department and campus administration (n=26).

The most common suggestion was to increase classroom resources (n=40). Multiple teachers specifically mentioned needing more manipulatives, increased technology access, and more color copier access. The second most common suggestion was that campus administrators should receive training about the PK program and PK teacher expectations (n=15).

What was the quality of prekindergarten instruction?

Methodology

Teachstone’s CLASS is an observation instrument used to measure teacher-child interactions using 10 dimensions that can be collapsed into three domains. These domains include emotional support, classroom organization, and instructional support. Emotional support includes teacher behaviors that foster child comfort, excitement about learning, and appropriate autonomy. Classroom organization includes

supporting children in regulating behavior, learning, and maintaining interest in activities. Instructional support includes teacher behaviors that support children's cognitive development and language growth. Each domain score ranges from one to seven. There are quality thresholds for each domain (Burchinal et al., 2010). For emotional support and classroom organization, the threshold is a five. For instructional support, the threshold is 3.25.

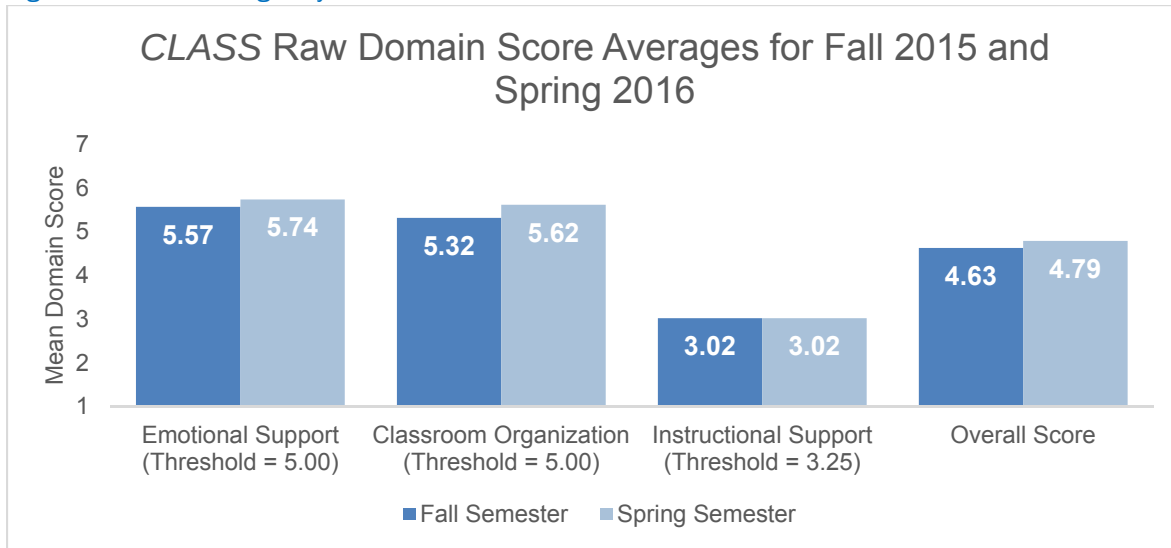
SMU's trained researchers observed teachers using the *CLASS*; observations occurred once in the fall semester (October 2015 through December 2015) and once in the spring semester (February 2016 through May 2016). Each observation included four 20-minute blocks of time occurring 10 minutes apart. During each timeframe, each teacher was rated on a scale of one to seven on each of the *CLASS*'s 10 dimensions.

The evaluator received data files from SMU for the fall and spring semesters of the 2015-16 school year. The files contained each teacher's raw scores for each dimension within in each timeframe. The evaluator averaged the dimension scores across time points. Then, these scores were averaged to create a score for each of the three domains. Finally, domain scores were averaged to create an overall score. Domain scores were examined to determine whether scores met the threshold. Paired samples *t*-tests were conducted to examine change in domain mean scores and overall mean scores over the course of the 2015-16 school year.

Results

The district was above the quality threshold for both semesters on the emotional support and classroom organization domains; both domains showed small increases from fall to spring. The district was slightly below the quality threshold on the instructional support domain; there was no change between semesters. Figure 4 shows the average scores by dimension and semester. Appendix D shows average scores by feeder pattern for each dimension and semester.

Figure 4: CLASS Averages by Domain and Semester



Source. Data provided by Southern Methodist University, received 2/4/16 and 6/9/16.

Note. Possible raw scores ranged from one to seven; actual scores spanned the entire range.

In fall 2015, CLASS scores were reported for 456 teachers in 147 Dallas ISD elementary schools.¹² Of these teachers, 78.3 percent scored at or above the quality threshold (5) for emotional support; scores ranged from 2.31 to 7.00. For classroom organization, 71.5 percent scored at or above the quality threshold (5); scores ranged from 1.92 to 7.00. Finally, 39.9 percent of teachers met or exceeded the quality threshold (3.25) for the instructional support domain; scores ranged from 1.00 to 6.58. The average overall fall score was 4.63 (range=2.07 to 6.78). Thus, teachers were strongest in emotional support and weakest in instructional support.

In spring 2016, CLASS scores were reported for 455 teachers in 147 Dallas ISD elementary schools.¹³ Of these teachers, 84.8 percent scored at or above the quality threshold (5) for emotional support; scores ranged from 2.63 to 7.00. For classroom organization, 84.4 percent scored at or above the quality threshold (5); scores ranged from 2.42 to 7.00. Finally, 35.4 percent of teachers met or exceeded the quality threshold (3.25) for the instructional support domain; scores ranged from 1.08 to 6.50. The average overall spring score was 4.79 (range=2.31 to 6.61). As in the fall semester, the teachers were strongest in the emotional support domain and weakest in the instructional support domain.

Of the 457 observed PK teachers, 454 had CLASS dimension scores for both the fall and the spring semesters. Two teachers only had fall scores and one teacher only had spring scores. Analysis indicated that scores increased over time for each of the three dimensions except instructional support. There was a 0.2 percent change in emotional support; this was a statistically significant change ($t(453)=4.17$, $p<.001$, $d=.23$) with small practical significance.¹⁴ There was a 0.3 percent change in classroom organization; this

¹² CLASS was not conducted at Jackson, Lakewood, or Tatum as these elementary schools did not offer PK in 2015-16.

¹³ CLASS observations were only conducted in PK Partnership sites in the spring; therefore, they are not reported here.

¹⁴ Cohen's d is a measure of effect size and is indicative of practical significance. A small effect size is .20, medium is .50, and large is .80 (Cohen, 1988).

was a statistically significant change ($t(453)=6.92$, $p<.001$, $d=.30$) with small practical significance. There was no percentage-point change in instructional support, nor was there statistical or practical change ($t(453)=.09$, $p=.93$, $d=.01$). Results also showed that there was a 0.2 percent increase in overall CLASS scores during the 2015-16 school year. This change was statistically significant ($t(453)=3.65$, $p<.001$, $d=.21$). It also was practically significant with a small effect size.

How did prekindergarten student *ISIP* scores change throughout the 2015-16 school year?

(Updated with fall 2015 *ISIP* recalibrated data)

Methodology

ISIP was a reading assessment completed on the computer in English or Spanish throughout the 2015-16 school year. *ISIP* test results were used to provide continuous progress monitoring. Students were considered to be on grade level when they performed at or above Tier 1 or the 40th percentile (Mathes, Torgesen, & Herron, 2011).

ISIP data from the beginning, middle, and end of the year and demographic data (PEIMS; 10/30/15) were merged for analyses. Istation provided recalibrated *ISIP* data for the fall 2015 English administration in January 2017. As a result, the text, tables, and figures in this section were updated. For these analyses, the English and Spanish administrations were combined into one file to allow for examination of overall student performance.¹⁵ If a student completed the assessment in both languages, departmental guidelines were used to determine which assessment to include in the combined dataset.¹⁶ If a student took the test more than once, the latest score was used. In order to examine change in performance at grade level throughout the year, frequency and crosstabs analyses were completed. Results were reported overall and by feeder pattern.

Results

There were notably more students tested in the middle and end of the year than in the beginning of the year. *As a result, comparisons across time periods should be reviewed with caution.* The percentage of prekindergarten students tested in Spanish that scored at or above grade level¹⁷ increased (52% to 62% to 67%) across all *ISIP* administrations (beginning, middle, and end of the 2015-16 school year). Students tested in English did not show a consistent pattern of increase (e.g., 56% at the beginning of the year to 46% at the middle of the year to 48% at the end of the year).

¹⁵ Comparisons between the English and Spanish versions of *ISIP* are not recommended because the two versions are normed differently. Therefore, the percentage of students at or above Tier 1 (which indicates performing at grade level) was used.

¹⁶ Staff members from Evaluation and Assessment, Early Childhood and Community Partnerships, and Bilingual/ESL worked together to develop *ISIP* data analysis guidelines. The purpose of the guidelines is to ensure consistent reporting of *ISIP* data across departments and over time.

¹⁷ The percentage of students at or above grade level is equivalent to the percentage of students at or above Tier 1 or the 40th percentile (Mathes et al., 2011).

Across the three time periods assessed, the overall percentages of prekindergarten students at or above grade level for the English and Spanish administrations combined were between 54 percent and 59 percent. Whereas 46 to 56 percent of students tested in English were at or above grade level, over 50 percent (52% to 67%) of prekindergarten students tested in Spanish were at or above grade level. Districtwide data showed that more students who tested in Spanish performed at or above grade level than those that tested in English with the exception of the beginning-of-year administration.

Theoretically, students' scores should improve during the school year. However, across student groups (Table 2) for English and Spanish combined, from the beginning of the year to the middle of the year, change was mixed. From the middle of the year to the end of the year, scores generally increased. For the English administration, the percentage of students at or above grade level at the beginning of the year was generally higher than the percentage at or above grade level in the middle of the year. From the middle of the year to the end of the year, scores generally increased, though the scores typically did not reach the beginning of the year level. Typically, the Spanish administration showed a steady increase across the 2015-16 school year.

Table 2: Percentage of PK Students Performing At or Above Grade Level on 2015-16 *ISIP* by Version

	Beginning of 2015-16 ^a		Middle of 2015-16		End of 2015-16	
	<i>n</i> Tested	% at 40 th %ile	<i>n</i> Tested	% at 40 th %ile	<i>n</i> Tested	% at 40 th %ile
English and Spanish Combined						
All	2,363	54.0	3,865	55.2	3,493	59.1
African American	515	52.8	846	44.2	739	44.9
Hispanic	1,755	53.5	2,878	58.0	2,615	62.6
White	71	69.0	99	63.6	101	68.3
ELL	1,301	51.8	2,272	61.3	2,060	66.1
Economically Disadvantaged	2,243	53.5	3,661	54.9	3,283	58.9
Special Education	26	65.4	53	37.7	56	37.5
English						
All	1,074	56.4	1,613	46.0	1,455	48.2
African American	514	52.9	844	44.3	737	44.9
Hispanic	483	57.8	654	45.0	603	47.9
White	58	70.7	79	64.6	83	71.1
ELL	39	51.3	61	42.6	60	43.3
Economically Disadvantaged	1,009	55.3	1,522	45.3	1,352	47.4
Special Education	17	76.5	38	36.8	35	22.9
Spanish						
All	1,289	52.0	2,252	61.9	2,038	66.9
African American	*	*	*	*	*	*
Hispanic	1,272	51.9	2,224	61.8	2,012	67.0
White	13	61.5	20	60.0	18	55.6
ELL	1,262	51.8	2,211	61.8	2,000	66.8
Economically Disadvantaged	1,234	51.9	2,139	61.7	1,931	66.9
Special Education	9	44.4	15	40.0	21	61.9

Source: PEIMS district database: 10/30/2015. *ISIP*: 6/17/16 for MOY and EOY; 1/31/17 for BOY.

Note: * = less than 5 students were tested. Time period- Beginning: September 1, 2015 to September 30, 2015; Middle: January 6, 2016 to January 27, 2016; End: May 2, 2016 to May 27, 2016. ^a Istation provided recalibrated data for the fall 2015 English administration in January 2017. District *ISIP* data were pulled for both the English and Spanish administrations and were combined into one file to allow for examination of overall student performance.¹⁸ If a student completed the assessment in both languages, departmental guidelines were used to determine which assessment to include in the combined dataset.¹⁹ If a student took the test more than once, the latest score was used in all datasets.

A closer examination of results by feeder pattern (Appendix E) reveals results that are more mixed. Students tested in English or Spanish combined in the Hillcrest, Jefferson, Spruce, and Sunset feeders were at or above the district averages for all three *ISIP* administrations. Students tested in English in the ACE, Adamson, Conrad, Hillcrest, Roosevelt, Sunset, and White feeders were at or above the district averages for all three *ISIP* administrations. Students tested in Spanish in the ACE, Pinkston, Spruce, and Sunset feeders were at or above the district averages for all three *ISIP* administrations. Sunset was above the district average for the Spanish, English, and combined administrations at all three time points. ACE, Hillcrest, and Spruce were above the district average for two of the three administrations (English, Spanish, or combined) at all three time points.

The percentage of students at or above grade level who tested in either English or Spanish increased across administrations in the district as a whole, and in the Adams, Conrad, Molina, Samuell,

¹⁸ Comparisons between the English and Spanish versions of *ISIP* are not recommended because the two versions are normed differently. Therefore, the percentage of students at or above Tier 1 (which indicates performing at grade level) was used.

¹⁹ Staff members from Evaluation and Assessment, Early Childhood and Community Partnerships, and Bilingual/ESL worked together to develop *ISIP* data analysis guidelines. The purpose of the guidelines is to ensure consistent reporting of *ISIP* data across departments and over time.

Seagoville, and Skyline feeders. The percentage of students at or above grade level who tested in English increased across administrations in the Conrad, Hillcrest, and Madison feeders. The percentage of students at or above grade level who tested in Spanish increased across administrations in the district as a whole, and in the ACE, Adams, Conrad, Pinkston, Seagoville, Spruce, and Skyline feeders. The highest percentage of students at or above grade level at the end of 2015-16 was for the Madison feeder (95.1%) for the Spanish administration.

Did attending Dallas ISD prekindergarten make a difference in students' kindergarten readiness?

(Updated with fall 2015 *ISIP* recalibrated data)

Methodology

To examine whether attending Dallas ISD PK made a difference in students' kindergarten readiness, PEIMS (pulled 10/30/15) demographic data and *ISIP* test files were extracted from the district database and merged to prepare for analyses. Istation provided recalibrated *ISIP* data for the fall 2015 English administration in January 2017. As a result, text, tables, and figures in this section were updated. District *ISIP* data were pulled for both the English and Spanish administrations and were combined into one file to allow for examination of overall student performance.²⁰ If a student completed the assessment in both languages, departmental guidelines were used to determine which assessment to include in the combined dataset.²¹ If a student took the test more than once, the latest score was used in all datasets.

Kindergarten was used as the sampling frame to compare students attending PK with those who did not attend.²² The current kindergarten cohort was created by pulling PEIMS data for the year prior to the kindergarten year (e.g., 2014-15 PEIMS data for 2015-16 kindergarten students). Next, cohort students were classified as attending Dallas ISD PK or not. A student was classified as *DISD PK* if he or she ever attended Dallas ISD PK even if it was not the year prior to attending kindergarten. The remaining students were classified as *No DISD PK*. Finally, to produce comparable groups, the cohort students were limited to kindergarteners who were ELLs and/or economically disadvantaged and who were not retained.

Frequency analyses were used to determine the percentage of Dallas ISD PK students who began kindergarten with *ISIP* scores at grade level (at or above the 40th percentile) compared to those who did not attend Dallas ISD PK. Results should be reviewed with caution due to the following limitations. First, students classified as *No DISD PK* may have attended preschool elsewhere (e.g., Head Start, private

²⁰ Comparisons between the English and Spanish versions of *ISIP* are not recommended because the two versions are normed differently. Therefore, the percentage of students at or above Tier 1 (which indicates performing at grade level) was used.

²¹ Staff members from Evaluation and Assessment, Early Childhood and Community Partnerships, and Bilingual/ESL worked together to develop *ISIP* data analysis guidelines. The purpose of the guidelines is to ensure consistent reporting of *ISIP* data across departments and over time.

²² Due to the constraints of the district database, the evaluator followed the sampling procedure that was used by Huston, Gupta, and Schexnayder (2012).

preschool, other school district) or not at all. Second, some students may have been eligible for PK but were not included due to unavailable information related to additional eligibility criteria such as whether the student was homeless, in foster care, or had a parent in the military, etc. Third, differences between the *DISD PK/No DISD PK* groups may be attributable to a parent's decision to place a student in PK or not (a self-selection issue).

Results

More students tested in Spanish performed at grade level than those who were tested in English. Table 3 includes the percentage of each category of students who were on grade level by PK attendance and version. Due to the limitations mentioned above, results should be reviewed with caution. Of the 8,974 kindergarten students assessed, 70 percent (n=6,282) attended Dallas ISD PK; the remaining 30 percent (n=2,692) did not.

When English and Spanish scores were combined, the data showed that 51.0 percent (n=4,578) of kindergarten students had beginning-of-year *ISIP* scores at or above grade level indicating that they were kindergarten ready. Of the kindergarten ready students, 83.3 percent (n=3,812) attended Dallas ISD PK and 16.7 (n=766) percent did not. Of the students who were not kindergarten ready (n=4,396), 56.2 percent (n=2,470) attended Dallas ISD PK and 43.8 percent (n=1,926) did not. Thus, over half of the students who were not K ready attended Dallas ISD PK.

When the scores of students tested in English were examined, 37.9 percent (n=1,496) of kindergarten students had beginning-of-year *ISIP* scores at or above grade level indicating that they were kindergarten ready. Of the kindergarten ready students, 75.3 percent (n=1,126) attended Dallas ISD PK and 24.7 percent (n=370) did not. Of the students who were not kindergarten ready (n=2,454), 47.7 percent (n=1,170) attended Dallas ISD PK and 52.3 percent (n=1,284) did not. Percentages of K ready students were much higher for students who attended Dallas ISD PK than for those who did not.

When the scores of students tested in Spanish were examined, 61.3 percent (n=3,082) of kindergarten students had beginning-of-year *ISIP* scores at or above grade level indicating that they were kindergarten ready. Of the kindergarten ready students, 87.2 percent (n=2,686) attended Dallas ISD PK and 12.8 percent (n=396) did not. Of the students who were not kindergarten ready (n=1,942), 66.9 (n=1,300) percent attended Dallas ISD PK and 33.1 (n=642) percent did not. Thus, the majority of students who were not K ready attended Dallas ISD PK.

Table 3: Updated^a Percentage of Kindergarten Students Performing At or Above Grade Level on 2015-16 *ISIP* by PK Participation and Version

	Attended DISD PK		Did Not Attend DISD PK		Total	
	<i>n</i> Tested	% at 40 th %ile	<i>n</i> Tested	% at 40 th %ile	<i>n</i> Tested	% at 40 th %ile
English and Spanish Combined						
All	6,282	3,812 (60.7)	2,692	766 (28.5)	8,974	4,578 (51.0)
African American	989	446 (45.1)	900	185 (20.6)	1,889	631 (33.4)
Hispanic	5,163	3,285 (63.6)	1,595	512 (32.1)	6,758	3,797 (56.2)
White	78	48 (61.5)	138	49 (35.5)	216	97 (44.9)
Other	52	33 (63.5)	59	20 (33.9)	111	53 (47.7)
ELL	4,105	2,718 (66.2)	1,080	393 (36.4)	5,185	3,111 (60.0)
Eco. Dis.	5,407	3,244 (60.0)	2,542	707 (27.8)	7,949	3,951 (49.7)
Special Education	160	64 (40.0)	45	10 (22.2)	205	74 (36.1)
English						
All	2,296	1,126 (49.0)	1,654	370 (22.4)	3,950	1,496 (37.9)
African American	989	446 (45.1)	899	185 (20.6)	1,888	631 (33.4)
Hispanic	1,202	616 (51.2)	577	123 (21.3)	1,779	739 (41.5)
White	66	41 (62.1)	127	45 (35.4)	193	86 (44.6)
Other	39	23 (59.0)	51	17 (33.3)	90	40 (44.4)
ELL	153	56 (36.6)	58	4 (6.9)	211	60 (28.4)
Eco. Dis.	2,253	1,107 (49.1)	1,641	369 (22.5)	3,894	1,476 (37.9)
Special Education	77	21 (27.3)	34	8 (23.5)	111	29 (26.1)
Spanish						
All	3,986	2,686 (67.4)	1,038	396 (38.2)	5,024	3,082 (61.3)
African American	-	-	*	*	*	*
Hispanic	3,961	2,669 (67.4)	1,018	389 (38.2)	4,979	3,058 (61.4)
White	12	7 (58.3)	11	4 (36.4)	23	11 (47.8)
Other	13	10 (76.9)	8	3 (37.5)	21	13 (61.9)
ELL	3,952	2,662 (67.4)	1,022	389 (38.1)	4,974	3,051 (61.3)
Eco. Dis.	3,154	2,137 (67.8)	901	338 (37.5)	4,055	2,475 (61.0)
Special Education	83	43 (51.8)	11	2 (18.2)	94	45 (47.9)

Source: PEIMS district database: 10/30/2015, September *ISIP*: 1/31/17.

Note: Eco. Dis. = Economically Disadvantaged; * = less than five students were tested; - = no students were tested. In this table, *ISIP* includes the beginning-of-year data (tested September 1, to September 30, 2015). ^a Istation provided recalibrated data for the fall 2015 English administration in January 2017. To allow for examination of overall student performance the English and Spanish administrations were combined.²³ If a student completed the assessment in both languages, departmental guidelines were used to determine which assessment to include in the combined dataset.²⁴ If a student took the test more than once, the latest score was used.

Did attending Dallas ISD prekindergarten make a difference in students' reading and mathematics performance?

Methodology

To examine whether attending Dallas ISD PK made a difference in students' academic achievement in kindergarten, PEIMS demographic data and test files were extracted from the district database and merged to prepare for analyses. Kindergarten was used as the sampling frame to compare

²³ Comparisons between the English and Spanish versions of *ISIP* are not recommended because the two versions are normed differently. Therefore, the percentage of students at or above Tier 1 (which indicates performing at grade level) was used.

²⁴ Staff members from Evaluation and Assessment, Early Childhood and Community Partnerships, and Bilingual/ESL worked together to develop *ISIP* data analysis guidelines. The purpose of the guidelines is to ensure consistent reporting of *ISIP* data across departments and over time.

students attending PK with those who did not attend.²⁵ The current kindergarten cohort was created by pulling PEIMS data for the year prior to the kindergarten year (e.g., 2014-15 PEIMS data for 2015-16 kindergarten students). Next, cohort students were classified as attending Dallas ISD PK or not. A student was classified as *DISD PK* if he or she ever attended Dallas ISD PK even if it was not the year prior to attending kindergarten. The remaining students were classified as *No DISD PK*. Finally, to produce comparable groups, the cohort students were limited to kindergarteners who were ELLs and/or economically disadvantaged and who were not retained.

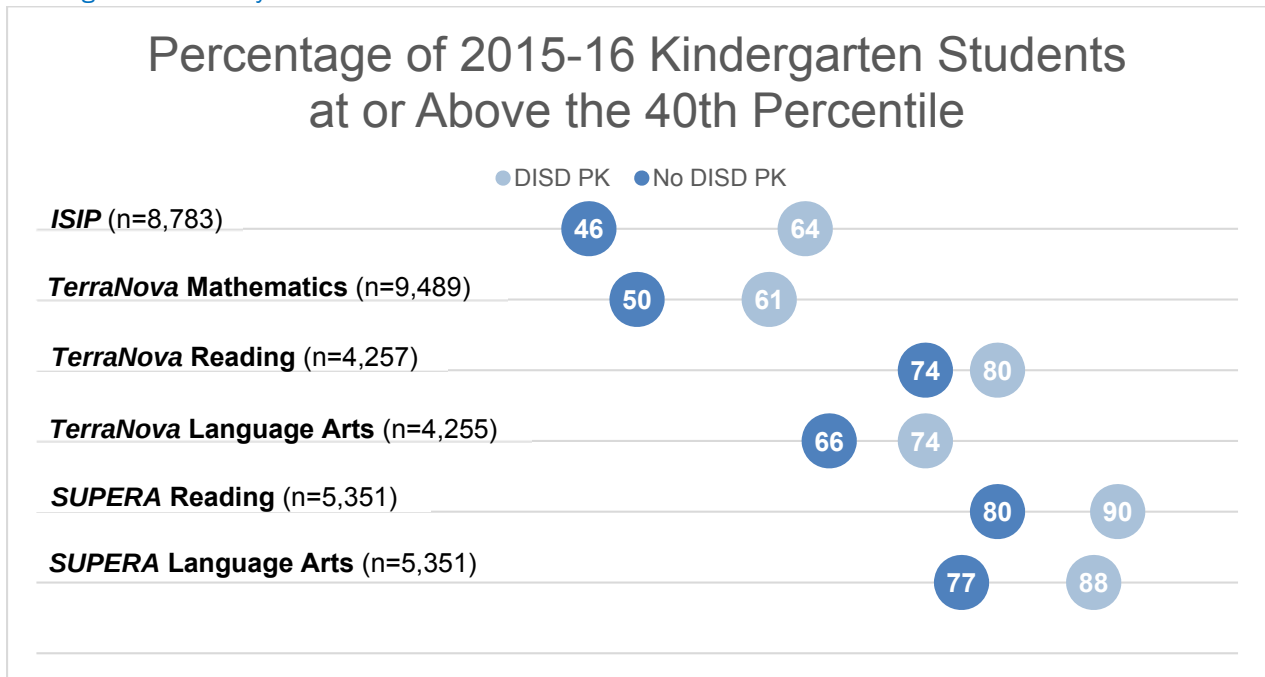
For the 2015-16 kindergarten cohort group (students enrolled in kindergarten in 2015-16), *ISIP*, *TerraNova*, and *SUPERA* data were reviewed. Frequency and crosstabs analyses were computed to determine the percentage of students that scored at or above grade level. Results should be reviewed with caution due to the following limitations. First, students classified as *No DISD PK* may have attended preschool elsewhere (e.g., Head Start, private preschool, other school district) or not at all. Second, some students may have been eligible for PK but were not included due to unavailable information related to additional eligibility criteria such as whether the student was homeless, in foster care, or had a parent in the military, etc. Third, differences between the *DISD PK/No DISD PK* groups may be attributable to a parent's decision to place a student in PK or not (self-selection issue).

Results

Comparisons between *DISD PK* and *No DISD PK* groups on *ISIP*, *TerraNova*, and *SUPERA* showed that *DISD PK* group outperformed the *No DISD PK* group in all cases (Figure 5 and Appendix F). That is, current kindergarten students who attended district PK were more likely to be reading and doing mathematics at or above grade level than those who did not attend district PK. Due to the limitations mentioned above, results should be reviewed with caution.

²⁵ Due to the constraints of the district database, the evaluator followed the sampling procedure that was used by Huston et al., (2012).

Figure 5: Percentage of Kindergarten Students At or Above Grade Level on Assessments for the 2015-16 Kindergarten Cohort by DISD PK Enrollment



Source. PEIMS district database: 10/30/2015; *ISIP*: 6/17/16; *TerraNova*: 6/9/16; *SUPERA*: 6/9/16.

Note. In this figure *ISIP* includes the English and Spanish combined End-of-Year data (tested May 2, to May 27, 2016) to allow for examination of overall student performance.²⁶ If a student completed the assessment in both languages, departmental guidelines were used to determine which assessment to include in the combined dataset.²⁷ If a student took the test more than once, the latest score was used.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

In 2015-16, there were 10,371 students enrolled in early childhood (EC) education, community partnership programs, or Dallas Independent School District (ISD) prekindergarten (PK; 390, 1,002, and 8,899, respectively). The total budget for the Early Childhood and Community Partnerships (ECCP) department was \$2,737,153, which included \$2,396,327 of general operating funds and \$340,826 of Title II, Part A funds. Analyses were conducted to examine the context of ECCP department services, staff perceptions, kindergarten readiness, and kindergarten student assessment outcomes for those who did and did not attend Dallas ISD PK.

²⁶ Comparisons between the English and Spanish versions of *ISIP* are not recommended because the two versions are normed differently. Therefore, the percentage of students at or above Tier 1 (which indicates performing at grade level) was used.

²⁷ Staff members from Evaluation and Assessment, Early Childhood and Community Partnerships, and Bilingual/ESL worked together to develop *ISIP* data analysis guidelines. The purpose of the guidelines is to ensure consistent reporting of *ISIP* data across departments and over time.

Strategic Planning and Progress

The Dallas ISD ECCP department was created in October 2013 to increase kindergarten readiness and foster community partnerships. In spring 2015, it was expanded to include services from kindergarten through grade two. To work toward the goal of increasing kindergarten readiness, ECCP staff endeavored to increase demand for and access to PK, increase quality, increase community partnerships, and expand the continuum of care for children from birth to three years old.

Demand/Access. Access to and demand for PK was increased by opening early childhood centers and working with 19 community childcare centers so that students in these settings were taught by Dallas ISD teachers.

Quality. To improve PK quality, the ECCP department introduced PK specialists into the classroom to provide individual support for teachers. Another attempt to increase quality was a focus on assessing socioemotional learning. The *Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS)*, an observation instrument, was administered by Southern Methodist University to measure the quality of teachers' interactions with students.

Community Partnerships/Continuum of Care. Lastly, ECCP staff fostered community partnerships with Commit! and third-party childcare centers and expanded the continuum of care to increase kindergarten readiness. Students from birth to three could receive services through the Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY) program and AVANCE.

Staff Perceptions of the Prekindergarten Program

Interview. During an interview, the curriculum and instruction manager indicated that 29 PK specialists²⁸ provided individualized, tiered support to a maximum of 15 teachers each. First, specialists participated in professional development (PD) programs including Children's Learning Institute (CLI) Engage training, *CLASS* observer certification training, Making the Most of Classroom Interactions (MMCI) training, and coaching training. Then, specialists provided teachers with trainings about the *CLASS* (including the *CLASS* Academy), the *Circle* assessment, the OWL curriculum and best practices, and Just in Time trainings. The department also provided a Summer Institute and a two-day training about student activity centers. Lastly, the ECCP department provided training for teachers in third-party settings and for teacher assistants.

Specialist Interviews and Observations. Four specialists were interviewed and observed. During interviews, the specialists defined their role as supporting and coaching teachers. The specialists indicated that their greatest successes included seeing teachers effectively implement suggestions and watching teachers improve and take ownership of their progress. Specialists' greatest challenges were getting teachers to implement suggestions consistently and interacting with the few teachers and/or administrators who resisted help. Specialists reported feeling supported by the ECCP department. During observations,

²⁸ As of December 2015.

the specialists used several different modalities to work with teachers; these included observation, communication, demonstrations, and hands-on assistance.

PK Teacher Survey. PK Teacher Survey respondents (309 teachers; 67.5% of PK teachers) were mostly positive (“agree” or “strongly agree”) toward the PK program (81% to 96%), the support and resources they received (73% to 88%), the PK specialists (85% to 93%), and the PD provided by the ECCP department (83% to 88%). Additionally, most teachers rated the ECCP trainings as “somewhat helpful” or “very helpful” (92% to 97%). The most-cited successes were administration support, increased student achievement, and teamwork between teachers. The most commonly referenced challenges were student behavior, lack of materials and/or resources, and conflicting information from campus and ECCP department staff. The main suggestions were increasing resources and training campus administrators about expectations in PK.

Quality of Prekindergarten Instruction

Results of the *CLASS* indicated that the district was above the quality threshold for both semesters in the emotional support and classroom organization domains; both domains showed statistically and practically significant increases from fall to spring. The district was below the quality threshold in the instructional support domain; there was no change between semesters. The districts’ teachers were strongest in emotional support and weakest in instructional support. While more than 70 percent of teachers met the quality thresholds for emotional support and classroom organization, less than 40 percent of teachers met the quality threshold for instructional support, which means that about 60 percent did not.

Student Outcomes on 2015-16 *ISIP*

Across all *ISIP* administrations, the percentage of prekindergarten students tested in Spanish that scored at or above grade level²⁹ increased from 52 percent (beginning of the year) to 62 percent (middle of the year) to 67 percent (end of the year). Students tested in English did not show a consistent pattern of increase (e.g., 56% at the beginning of the year to 46% at the middle of the year to 48% at the end of the year).

Across the three time periods assessed, the overall percentages of prekindergarten students at or above grade level for the English and Spanish administrations combined were between 54 percent and 59 percent. Whereas 46 to 56 percent of students tested in English were at or above grade level, over 50 percent (52% to 67%) of kindergarten students tested in Spanish were at or above grade level. Districtwide data showed that more students who tested in Spanish performed at or above grade level than those that tested in English with the exception of the beginning-of-the-year administration.

Theoretically, students’ scores should improve during the school year. However, across student groups, for English and Spanish combined, from the beginning of the year to the middle of the year, change was mixed. From the middle of the year to the end of the year, scores generally increased. For the English administration, the percentage of students at or above grade level at the beginning of the year was generally

²⁹ The percentage of students at or above grade level is equivalent to the percentage of students at or above Tier 1 or the 40th percentile (Mathes et al., 2011).

higher than the percentage at or above grade level in the middle of the year. From the middle of the year to the end of the year, scores generally increased, though the scores typically did not reach the beginning of the year level. Typically, the Spanish administration showed a steady increase across the 2015-16 school year.

Kindergarten Readiness

Of the 8,974 kindergarten students that took *ISIP* in September of 2015, about 51 percent of the district's kindergarten students were kindergarten ready (scored at or above the 40th percentile). A higher percentage of students who were previously enrolled in Dallas ISD prekindergarten (*DISD PK*; 60.7%) were kindergarten ready than students who did not attend Dallas ISD PK (*No DISD PK*; 28.5%).

Differences in Kindergarten Achievement Scores by Prekindergarten Enrollment Status

There were differences in kindergarten achievement scores by PK enrollment status. The percentages of students at or above grade level in 2015-16 were higher for the Dallas ISD prekindergarten group than for those that did not attend on *ISIP*, *TerraNova* (mathematics, reading, and language arts), and *SUPERA* (reading and language arts).

Recommendations

Continue implementing the district plan, using PK specialists, and providing group PD for teachers. Training about expectations should also be provided to campus administrators. The ECCP department should continue its work increasing kindergarten readiness following the district plan created in conjunction with BCG. The department should also continue providing support to teachers through the PK specialist program and group PD sessions as both received positive feedback from teachers. The department should address the discontinuity reported by teachers between the department and some campus administrators. This could be accomplished through training or a written manual to inform campus administrators about guidelines and about developmentally appropriate expectations for PK so that teacher evaluations are conducted accordingly.

Train PK teachers to provide more effective instructional support for students. Overall, the district performed well on the *CLASS* assessment; however, about 60 percent of teachers did not meet the quality threshold for instructional support. Thus, the department should make efforts to improve these scores. This could be accomplished using group PD sessions or individual coaching with PK specialists focusing on supporting students' cognitive and language development.

Create a standardized testing protocol to ensure the accuracy of student achievement data. Of the 8,597 four-year-old PK students enrolled in Dallas ISD PK in 2015-16, less than half of the students took *ISIP* during the district testing windows (beginning-, middle-, or end-of-year). The district should require that all four-year-old PK students complete the same assessment during specified testing windows as indicated on the district testing calendar. This would provide more accurate information about how PK students develop through the course of the academic year.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Appendix A: PK Teacher Perceptions of the PK Program

Survey Item	Strongly Agree n (%)	Agree n (%)	Neutral n (%)	Disagree n (%)	Strongly Disagree n (%)
I have a clear understanding of the goals for prekindergarten students.	187 (61)	107 (35)	6 (2)	4 (1)	5 (2)
I am familiar with the district's Early Childhood Education plan.	152 (49)	131 (43)	14 (5)	7 (2)	4 (1)
The current prekindergarten curriculum ensures that my students are kindergarten ready.	127 (41)	122 (40)	28 (9)	21 (7)	9 (3)
I would recommend a prekindergarten teaching position at my school to other teachers.	145 (47)	110 (36)	34 (11)	5 (2)	14 (5)
I receive adequate support from my campus administrators.	117 (38)	127 (41)	36 (12)	15 (5)	14 (5)
I receive adequate support from the Early Childhood and Community Partnership (ECCP) department.	159 (52)	105 (34)	25 (8)	8 (3)	11 (4)
The Teaching and Learning Connection (TLC) Planners provided by ECCP are helpful.	159 (52)	110 (36)	25 (8)	7 (2)	6 (2)
I have quality classroom resources.	93 (30)	133 (43)	38 (12)	29 (9)	16 (5)
The professional development topics offered by the ECCP department are relevant to my position.	143 (47)	126 (41)	28 (9)	5 (2)	4 (1)
The information provided in the ECCP department PD sessions was conveyed in an effective manner.	137 (45)	128 (42)	29 (10)	8 (3)	3 (1)
The knowledge and skills I learned from the ECCP department PD sessions have positively impacted my instructional practices.	135 (44)	128 (42)	31 (10)	8 (3)	3 (1)
Students benefited from the knowledge and resources I acquired from the ECCP department PD sessions.	142 (47)	123 (40)	28 (9)	7 (2)	5 (2)
Overall, I am satisfied with the professional development sessions provided by the ECCP department.	137 (45)	116 (38)	34 (11)	12 (4)	6 (2)
My PK specialist interacts in a professional manner.	211 (70)	66 (22)	15 (5)	3 (1)	7 (2)
My PK specialist presents suggestions in a positive and supportive manner.	197 (65)	74 (25)	17 (6)	5 (2)	9 (3)
My PK specialist keeps appointments.	197 (65)	78 (26)	18 (6)	5 (2)	4 (1)
My PK specialist responds to emails and voicemails in a timely manner.	204 (68)	76 (25)	14 (5)	5 (2)	3 (1)
My PK specialist knows or finds answers to my questions.	201 (67)	74 (25)	21 (7)	3 (1)	3 (1)
My PK specialist tailors his/her support based on my needs.	189 (63)	67 (22)	30 (10)	10 (3)	6 (2)
I am adequately supported by my PK specialist.	191 (63)	71 (24)	26 (9)	7 (2)	7 (2)

Note. Responses marked "not applicable" are not included in results. Percentages may not equal 100 due to rounding.

Appendix B

Appendix B: PK Teacher Perceptions of Helpfulness of 2015-16 ECCP Department PD Sessions

Training Type	Very Helpful n (%)	Somewhat Helpful n (%)	Not Helpful n (%)
CLASS training	145 (61)	77 (33)	15 (6)
Circle training	159 (61)	91 (31)	19 (7)
OWL curriculum/best practices training	138 (55)	97 (39)	15 (6)
Just in Time training	152 (54)	109 (38)	23 (8)
Summer Institute	110 (65)	54 (32)	5 (3)
Summer center training	117 (68)	50 (29)	5 (3)
Training for teachers of ELL students	61 (51)	53 (44)	6 (5)

Note. Responses marked "Did Not Attend" are not included in results. Percentages may not equal 100 due to rounding.

Appendix C

Appendix C: PK Teacher Survey Open-Ended Response Themes

Comment	n
Success	
Support from campus administration/specialist/ECCP Department	55
Student achievement (academic/social emotional) and engagement	54
Working with peers as a PK team	38
Trainings/products made during trainings	29
Curriculum	20
Classroom environment and increased resources	18
Centers	15
Challenges	
Behavior issues	40
Lack of materials/resources	37
Conflicting expectations/guidelines	26
Academic challenges	19
Lack of support, communication, and understanding from campus administration	19
Not having the teacher assistant remain in the classroom	16
Suggestions for Improvement	
Increased resources (manipulatives, technology, color copiers)	40
Principal/administration training to increase understanding of PK	15

Note. This table was limited to comments given by 15 or more respondents.

Appendix D

Appendix D: CLASS Averages by Domain, Semester, and Feeder Pattern

Feeder Pattern		Fall 2015		Spring 2016		Mean Difference
TEA		<i>n</i>		<i>n</i>		
#	School	Observed	Average	Observed	Average	
Emotional Support						
1	Adams	27	5.3	27	5.9	0.6
2	Adamson	14	5.6	14	5.5	-0.1
5	Molina	16	5.8	16	6.0	0.2
6	Hillcrest	17	6.0	17	6.1	0.1
7	Jefferson	33	5.5	33	5.9	0.4
8	Kimball	28	5.4	28	5.7	0.3
9	Lincoln	7	5.7	7	5.7	0.0
12	Pinkston	24	5.3	24	5.7	0.4
13	Roosevelt	15	5.3	15	5.5	0.2
14	Samuell	32	5.6	32	5.8	0.2
15	Seagoville	14	6.0	14	5.6	-0.4
16	SOC	23	5.6	23	5.8	0.2
17	Spruce	33	5.2	33	5.5	0.3
18	Sunset	22	5.8	22	6.0	0.2
21	White	30	5.9	30	6.0	0.1
22	Wilson	16	5.3	16	5.7	0.4
23	Carter	12	5.6	12	5.5	-0.1
24	N. Dallas	22	5.9	22	5.6	-0.3
25	Skyline	22	5.7	22	5.9	0.2
28	Conrad	18	5.4	18	5.4	0.0
32	Madison	14	5.5	14	5.4	-0.1
380	Wilmer-Hutchins	7	5.5	7	6.0	0.5
401	ACE	10	5.8	9	5.7	-0.1
	District	456	5.6	455	5.7	0.1
Classroom Organization						
1	Adams	27	5.2	27	5.8	0.6
2	Adamson	14	5.2	14	4.9	-0.3
5	Molina	16	5.7	16	6.1	0.4
6	Hillcrest	17	5.8	17	6.0	0.2
7	Jefferson	33	5.3	33	5.7	0.4
8	Kimball	28	5.3	28	5.8	0.5
9	Lincoln	7	5.7	7	5.9	0.2
12	Pinkston	24	5.1	24	5.5	0.4
13	Roosevelt	15	5.1	15	5.7	0.6
14	Samuell	32	5.2	32	5.5	0.3
15	Seagoville	14	5.4	14	5.5	0.1
16	SOC	23	5.4	23	5.5	0.1
17	Spruce	33	5.1	33	5.5	0.4
18	Sunset	22	5.3	22	5.8	0.5
21	White	30	5.5	30	5.8	0.3
22	Wilson	16	4.8	16	5.7	0.9
23	Carter	12	5.5	12	5.5	0.0
24	N. Dallas	22	5.5	22	5.3	-0.2
25	Skyline	22	5.6	22	5.7	0.1
28	Conrad	18	5.0	18	5.3	0.3
32	Madison	14	5.6	14	5.6	0.0
380	Wilmer-Hutchins	7	4.8	7	5.7	0.9
401	ACE	10	5.2	9	5.6	0.4
	District	456	5.3	455	5.6	0.3

table continues

Table (continued)

Feeder Pattern		Fall 2015		Spring 2016		Mean Difference
TEA #	School	n	Average	n	Average	
Instructional Support						
1	Adams	27	2.9	27	3.1	0.2
2	Adamson	14	3.0	14	2.4	-0.6
5	Molina	16	3.6	16	3.7	0.1
6	Hillcrest	17	3.6	17	3.4	-0.2
7	Jefferson	33	2.7	33	2.8	0.1
8	Kimball	28	2.8	28	3.3	0.5
9	Lincoln	7	3.0	7	2.9	-0.1
12	Pinkston	24	3.1	24	3.3	0.2
13	Roosevelt	15	2.8	15	3.2	0.4
14	Samuell	32	3.1	32	2.9	-0.2
15	Seagoville	14	3.0	14	3.0	0.0
16	SOC	23	2.9	23	2.8	-0.1
17	Spruce	33	2.9	33	2.9	0.0
18	Sunset	22	3.0	22	3.4	0.4
21	White	30	3.3	30	2.9	-0.4
22	Wilson	16	2.5	16	2.8	0.3
23	Carter	12	3.0	12	3.0	0.0
24	N. Dallas	22	3.3	22	2.9	-0.4
25	Skyline	22	3.1	22	2.8	-0.3
28	Conrad	18	2.9	18	2.4	-0.5
32	Madison	14	2.8	14	3.2	0.4
380	Wilmer-Hutchins	7	3.3	7	3.6	0.3
401	ACE	10	3.0	9	3.4	0.4
	District	456	3.0	455	3.0	0.0
Overall Average						
1	Adams	27	4.5	27	4.9	0.4
2	Adamson	14	4.6	14	4.3	-0.3
5	Molina	16	5.1	16	5.3	0.2
6	Hillcrest	17	5.1	17	5.2	0.1
7	Jefferson	33	4.5	33	4.8	0.3
8	Kimball	28	4.5	28	4.9	0.4
9	Lincoln	7	4.8	7	4.9	0.1
12	Pinkston	24	4.5	24	4.8	0.3
13	Roosevelt	15	4.4	15	4.8	0.4
14	Samuell	32	4.6	32	4.7	0.1
15	Seagoville	14	4.8	14	4.7	-0.1
16	SOC	23	4.6	23	4.7	0.1
17	Spruce	33	4.4	33	4.6	0.2
18	Sunset	22	4.7	22	5.1	0.4
21	White	30	4.9	30	4.9	0.0
22	Wilson	16	4.2	16	4.7	0.5
23	Carter	12	4.7	12	4.7	0.0
24	N. Dallas	22	4.9	22	4.6	-0.3
25	Skyline	22	4.8	22	4.8	0.0
28	Conrad	18	4.4	18	4.4	0.0
32	Madison	14	4.6	14	4.7	0.1
380	Wilmer-Hutchins	7	4.5	7	5.1	0.6
401	ACE	10	4.7	9	4.9	0.2
	District	456	4.6	455	4.8	0.2

Source: Data provided by Southern Methodist University, received 2/4/16 and 6/9/16.

Note: Time period- Fall data was collected from October 2015 to December 2015; Spring data was collected from February 2016 to May 2016. Statistics by feeder pattern included magnet (White feeder: Dealey; Wilmer-Hutchins feeder: Stone, H.) schools. Blue indicates feeder patterns at or above the quality threshold. School in bold indicates feeder patterns at or above the quality threshold at both observations.

Appendix E

Appendix E: Percentage of PK Students Performing At or Above Grade Level on 2015-16 ISIP by Feeder Pattern

Feeder Pattern		Beginning of 2015-16 ^a		Middle of 2015-16		End of 2015-16	
TEA #	School	n Tested	% at 40 th %ile	n Tested	% at 40 th %ile	n Tested	% at 40 th %ile
English and Spanish Combined							
1	Adams	185	54.1	262	55.0	311	70.1
2	Adamson	92	48.9	162	64.2	130	63.8
5	Molina	169	49.1	204	49.5	179	50.8
6	Hillcrest	143	55.9	147	71.4	142	64.1
7	Jefferson	291	60.8	474	56.8	437	62.2
8	Kimball	74	68.9	130	50.8	119	52.9
9	Lincoln	8	87.5	67	73.1	28	42.9
12	Pinkston	36	52.8	91	38.5	52	38.5
13	Roosevelt	17	76.5	38	65.8	38	57.9
14	Samuell	211	44.1	338	51.2	282	52.8
15	Seagoville	150	45.3	234	59.0	211	66.8
16	SOC	184	54.3	282	48.2	226	57.1
17	Spruce	*	*	144	64.6	127	63.8
18	Sunset	46	67.4	58	60.3	35	68.6
21	White	116	56.9	191	52.4	199	56.3
22	Wilson	28	67.9	40	45.0	61	42.6
23	Carter	44	61.4	91	38.5	56	23.2
24	N. Dallas	103	60.2	191	55.0	152	45.4
25	Skyline	238	51.3	293	54.6	304	59.2
28	Conrad	95	46.3	182	69.8	150	72.0
32	Madison	62	45.2	106	43.4	116	75.0
380	Wilmer-Hutchins	54	50.0	36	41.7	37	43.2
401	ACE	16	87.5	104	53.8	100	58.0
	District	2,363	54.0	3,865	55.2	3,493	59.1
English							
1	Adams	71	62.0	87	37.9	122	54.9
2	Adamson	21	71.4	38	52.6	31	58.1
5	Molina	55	63.6	67	35.8	69	43.5
6	Hillcrest	60	61.7	57	75.4	53	79.2
7	Jefferson	64	57.8	81	51.9	75	48.0
8	Kimball	44	61.4	59	45.8	52	42.3
9	Lincoln	8	87.5	46	63.0	28	42.9
12	Pinkston	27	51.9	62	21.0	42	28.6
13	Roosevelt	17	76.5	19	57.9	19	63.2
14	Samuell	102	39.2	152	35.5	106	39.6
15	Seagoville	80	51.3	92	54.3	88	63.6
16	SOC	151	52.3	183	46.4	155	48.4
17	Spruce	*	*	54	48.1	46	32.6
18	Sunset	18	66.7	15	46.7	*	*
21	White	35	74.3	71	59.2	67	56.7
22	Wilson	20	80.0	29	51.7	35	40.0
23	Carter	35	62.9	78	39.7	43	14.0
24	N. Dallas	55	60.0	111	44.1	91	31.9
25	Skyline	94	48.9	103	42.7	123	46.3
28	Conrad	22	59.1	51	60.8	41	63.4
32	Madison	27	37.0	60	38.3	75	64.0
380	Wilmer-Hutchins	51	49.0	30	36.7	27	37.0
401	ACE	16	87.5	68	47.1	65	50.8
	District	1,074	56.4	1,613	46.0	1,455	48.2

table continues

Table (continued)

Feeder Pattern		Beginning of 2015-16 ^a		Middle of 2015-16		End of 2015-16	
TEA #	School	n Tested	% at 40 th %ile	n Tested	% at 40 th %ile	n Tested	% at 40 th %ile
Spanish							
1	Adams	114	49.1	175	63.4	189	79.9
2	Adamson	71	42.3	124	67.7	99	65.7
5	Molina	114	42.1	137	56.2	110	55.5
6	Hillcrest	83	51.8	90	68.9	89	55.1
7	Jefferson	227	61.7	393	57.8	362	65.2
8	Kimball	30	80.0	71	54.9	67	61.2
9	Lincoln	-	-	21	95.2	-	-
12	Pinkston	9	55.6	29	75.9	10	80.0
13	Roosevelt	-	-	19	73.7	19	52.6
14	Samuell	109	48.6	186	64.0	176	60.8
15	Seagoville	70	38.6	142	62.0	123	69.1
16	SOC	33	63.6	99	51.5	71	76.1
17	Spruce	*	*	90	74.4	81	81.5
18	Sunset	28	67.9	43	65.1	34	67.6
21	White	81	49.4	120	48.3	132	56.1
22	Wilson	8	37.5	11	27.3	26	46.2
23	Carter	9	55.6	13	30.8	13	53.8
24	N. Dallas	48	60.4	80	70.0	61	65.6
25	Skyline	144	52.8	190	61.1	181	68.0
28	Conrad	73	42.5	131	73.3	109	75.2
32	Madison	35	51.4	46	50.0	41	95.1
380	Wilmer-Hutchins	*	*	6	66.7	10	60.0
401	ACE	-	-	36	66.7	35	71.4
	District	1,289	52.0	2,252	61.9	2,038	66.9

Source. PEIMS district database: 10/30/2015. ISIP: 6/17/16 for MOY and EOY; 1/31/17 for BOY.

Note. * = less than 5 students were tested; - = no students were tested. Time period- Beginning: September 1, 2015 to September 30, 2015; Middle: January 6, 2016 to January 27, 2016; End: May 2, 2016 to May 27, 2016. ^a Istation provided recalibrated data for the fall 2015 English administration in January 2017. District ISIP data were pulled for both the English and Spanish administrations and were combined into one file to allow for examination of overall student performance.³⁰ If a student completed the assessment in both languages, departmental guidelines were used to determine which assessment to include in the combined dataset.³¹ If a student took the test more than once, the latest score was used in all datasets. Statistics by feeder pattern included magnet (White feeder: Dealey; Wilmer-Hutchins feeder: Stone, H.) schools; hospital homebound students are only included in the district total. Blue indicates feeder patterns at or above district average. School in bold indicates feeder patterns at or above district average for all three administrations.

³⁰ Comparisons between the English and Spanish versions of ISIP are not recommended because the two versions are normed differently. Therefore, the percentage of students at or above Tier 1 (which indicates performing at grade level) was used.

³¹ Staff members from Evaluation and Assessment, Early Childhood and Community Partnerships, and Bilingual/ESL worked together to develop ISIP data analysis guidelines. The purpose of the guidelines is to ensure consistent reporting of ISIP data across departments and over time.

Appendix F

Appendix F: Percentage of Kindergarten Students Performing At or Above Grade Level on 2015-16 Assessments by PK Participation and Version

	Attended DISD PK		Did Not Attend DISD PK		Total	
	<i>n</i> Tested	% at 40 th %ile	<i>n</i> Tested	% at 40 th %ile	<i>n</i> Tested	% at 40 th %ile
<i>ISIP</i> English & Spanish Combined	6,174	63.9	2,609	46.4	8,783	58.4
<i>ISIP</i> English	2,154	48.9	1,543	42.1	3,697	46.1
<i>ISIP</i> Spanish	4,020	71.9	1,066	52.6	5,086	67.9
<i>TerraNova</i> Mathematics	6,679	61.3	2,810	49.6	9,489	57.8
<i>TerraNova</i> Reading	2,520	80.0	1,737	73.9	4,257	77.5
<i>TerraNova</i> Language Arts	2,520	73.8	1,735	65.9	4,255	70.6
<i>SUPERA</i> Reading	4,231	89.9	1,120	79.5	5,351	87.7
<i>SUPERA</i> Language Arts	4,231	88.2	1,120	77.1	5,351	85.8

Source. PEIMS district database: 10/30/2015, May *ISIP*: 6/17/16; *TerraNova*: 6/9/16; *SUPERA*: 6/9/16.

Note. In this table, *ISIP* includes the end-of-year data (tested May 2, to May 27, 2016). To allow for examination of overall student performance the English and Spanish administrations were combined.³² If a student completed the assessment in both languages, departmental guidelines were used to determine which assessment to include in the combined dataset.³³ If a student took the test more than once, the latest score was used.

³² Comparisons between the English and Spanish versions of *ISIP* are not recommended because the two versions are normed differently. Therefore, the percentage of students at or above Tier 1 (which indicates performing at grade level) was used.

³³ Staff members from Evaluation and Assessment, Early Childhood and Community Partnerships, and Bilingual/ESL worked together to develop *ISIP* data analysis guidelines. The purpose of the guidelines is to ensure consistent reporting of *ISIP* data across departments and over time.