

2017-18 Evaluation of African American Success Initiative

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At-a-Glance

The African American Success Initiative (AASI) is the Dallas Independent School District's (Dallas ISD) strategic initiative aimed at closing the achievement gap and increasing access to academic opportunities for African American students. The initiative focused on academic support, student advocacy, and increasing parental engagement, all of which were designed to improve student academic achievement and prepare students for college and career readiness. During the 2017-18 school year, the AASI expanded its services to 26 schools within five feeder patterns: Carter, Roosevelt, Wilmer-Hutchins, Madison, and Lincoln. Title I funding for AASI was \$1,200,000 for 2017-18. Starting in 2018-19, the district will establish a Racial Equity Office.

Purpose of Evaluation

The purpose of the evaluation was to assess the implementation of the AASI program and to evaluate the effectiveness of the services that AASI provided. The evaluation goals included: 1) describe characteristics of AASI program components; 2) evaluate implementation and outcome of professional development and student mentoring and tutoring program; 3) identify achievement differences between students involved in the AASI program and those not in the program measured by *TerraNova*, *Istation's Indicators of Progress (ISIP)*, the *State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR)* and *STAAR End of Course (EOC)*; 4) describe stakeholder perceptions of the AASI program; and 5) examine the academic achievements of African American students and other students in the district.

Evaluation Results

Neuhaus Reading Program

The AASI provided Neuhaus as a mandatory supplemental reading curriculum to improve the reading readiness of K-3 students. Teachers were required to implement 30 minutes of structured lessons at least three times a week in addition to the regular reading curriculum. In total, 110 teachers received two days of training prior to the start of the 2017-18 school year. Training included up to seven professional development (PD) hours.

During the 2017-18 school year, 2,740 students in grades K to three participated in the Neuhaus supplemental reading program. Most of the participants were African American (82%) and economically disadvantaged (85%).

Academic Outcomes of Neuhaus Students

Student academic achievements were measured by *TerraNova* for grades kindergarten through two, the *STAAR* Approaches Grade Level or Above (Approaches +) for grade three, and the *ISIP* for beginning of year (BOY), middle of year (MOY) and end of year (EOY) for grades K-2.

Table 1 displays the percentage of *ISIP* BOY, MOY, and EOY Tier I students for grades K-2. The analysis included AASI schools only.

Both the AASI students and the district increased the percentage of students at grade level from BOY to EOY. AASI students increased by eight percentage points (pps), while the district increased by five pps. (pps=percentage points). Although AASI students showed a slightly larger increase from BOY to EOY than district students, AASI students lagged the district students by 16 pps at EOY.

Table 1: 2017-18 Percentage of Neuhaus *ISIP* BOY, MOY, and EOY Tier I Students for Grades K-2

	Neuhaus Students		District	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Beginning of Year (BOY)				
K	686	33	10,091	51
1	544	28	10,897	47
2	674	34	11,135	54
All	1,904	32	32,123	51
Middle of Year (MOY)				
K	613	35	9,900	53
1	516	36	10,625	50
2	599	41	10,667	55
All	1,728	37	31,192	53
End of Year (EOY)				
K	576	37	9,612	55
1	503	42	10,416	56
2	614	41	10,402	56
All	1,693	40	30,430	56

Source: Student demographic file 10/30/2017. *ISIP* data file 11/1/2017, 2/5/2018 and 6/3/2018.

Note: *ISIP*= *Istation's Indicators of Progress Assessment*. K=kindergarten. The data includes students in the district as of PEIMS snapshot date.

TerraNova reading results showed that the percentage of students performing at grade level decreased as grade level increased, with 78 percent in kindergarten, 57 percent in grade one, and 50 percent in grade two for Neuhaus students.

STAAR results for Neuhaus grade three students showed that almost 60 percent met the Approaches +

standard whereas the district percentage was 72.4 percent. When reviewed by campus, the percentages at Approaches + varied widely (24.3% to 87.0%).

Teacher Perceptions of Neuhaus Program

Sixty-nine Neuhaus teachers completed the online survey from March through May 2018. Overall, teachers responded favorably regarding the Neuhaus program. Most teachers believed that 1) the training sessions were well-organized (81%), 2) the trainings were relevant and up-to-date (80%), 3) the trainings provided knowledge and skills (74%), and 4) the Neuhaus program fit well within the Dallas ISD's literacy lesson structure (62%).

Math the Whitlow Way

During the 2017-18 school year, 2,633 students in grades three to eight participated in the Whitlow program. Most of the participants were African American (69%) and economically disadvantaged (90%). Teachers used the lessons and manipulatives three days a week.

Academic Outcomes of Whitlow Students

The district STAAR results (dated 6/20/2018) showed that the Whitlow students' percentage at Approaches + increased as grade level increased from grade three (64.9%) to grade five (84.4%). The achievement gap between Whitlow students and the district decreased as grade level increased (Table 2).

Table 2: 2017-18 Whitlow STAAR Mathematics Approaches + for Grades 3-5 by Campus

Campus	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
	%	%	%
Alexander	65.1	86.8	-
Budd	-	60.0	82.1
Dunbar	43.8	48.4	100.0
Ervin	61.4	61.7	-
Johnston	63.2	72.5	80.3
Lee, U	80.7	71.4	90.9
King	53.2	32.7	-
McNair	81.4	59.2	83.8
Miller	-	72.2	88.5
Rhoads	50.0	59.3	46.3
Rice	75.0	94.4	100.0
Mills	77.6	80.0	91.3
Starks	62.2	93.0	-
Terry	73.5	-	-
Turner	58.3	64.4	90.0
Twain	63.3	-	-
Weiss	80.7	60.0	-
All	64.9	67.0	84.4
District	75.6	76.0	87.6

Source: Student demographic file 10/30/2017 and STAAR data file 6/20/2018.
Note: Whitlow students' STAAR mathematics included 773 students in grade three, 775 in grade four, and 462 in grade five. The data includes students in the district as of PEIMS snapshot date.

Table 3 displays STAAR mathematics Approaches + for grades seven and eight by campus. Students in grade

eight performed better than grade seven in STAAR mathematics for Whitlow students and the district.

Table 3: 2017-18 STAAR Mathematics Approaches + for Grades 7-8 by Campus

Campus	Grade 7		Grade 8	
	n	%	n	%
Atwell	126	27.8	75	62.7
Kennedy-Curry	-	-	217	71.9
All	126	27.8	292	69.5
District	7,653	55.7	9,886	84.0

Source: Student demographic file 10/30/2017 and STAAR data file 6/20/2018.

Note: No sixth grade students at AASI middle school participated in the Whitlow program. The data includes students in the district as of PEIMS snapshot date.

Teacher Perceptions of Whitlow Program

A total of 71 Whitlow teachers completed the online survey from March through May 2018. Teachers responded favorably regarding the training and the implementation of the Whitlow program. Most teachers believed 1) the training sessions were well-organized (96%), 2) the Whitlow program fit well within Dallas ISD's mathematics lesson structure (96%), and 3) the training provided knowledge and skills (94%).

Culturally and Linguistically Responsive (CLR) Teaching and Learning Workshop

Dr. Sharoky Hollie's CLR teaching and learning strategy trainings were held in November and December 2017, respectively. One hundred and fifteen staff members attended the workshops. A total of 83 staff members responded to the November survey and 96 responded to the December survey.

Most teachers responded favorably regarding the impact of CLR training. Most teachers believed that the two workshops 1) helped them gain new knowledge and skills (98%, 98%), 2) stimulated their learning about CLR strategies (96%, 97%), 3) assisted them in making better-informed decisions related to CLR teaching and learning (94%, 97%), and 4) enhanced their understanding of how to infuse CLR strategies into classroom (93%, 99%).

Tutoring and Mentoring

Throughout 2017-18 school year, a total of 50 mentors worked with 800 students from 23 campuses. Mentors met with students at least once a week for 20-60 minutes of mentoring. Also, the two AASI student advocate coordinators mentored 20 Tier II and III students each, with a total of 80 students from four high schools. Each coordinator worked one on one with students for 20-30 minutes once every two weeks.

EduGuide was selected as the primary social and emotional learning (SEL) program for Tier II & III students. EduGuide was a web based online tool using

blended online activities to deliver the mentoring. Students in the mentoring program used EduGuide.

There were 190 grade one students from eight elementary schools that used TutorMate. TutorMate was an online tutoring program to help struggling students gain proficiency in reading.

Academic Outcomes of African American Students and Other Students in the District

The purpose of AASI was to primarily close the achievement gap between African American students and other students. A comparison of academic outcomes is included in this section. Table 4 displays African American students and the district in *TerraNova* reading and mathematics for 2015-16 through 2017-18 for grades K through two.

TerraNova reading results indicated that the percentage of students performing at grade level decreased as grade level increased for African American students and the district. 2017-18 data showed African Americans (78.8%) achieved at the district (80.0%) level in kindergarten. However, grade two African American (51.2%) students performed below the district (60.0%). Combined K-2 reading results showed the gap increased from 2015-16 (4.6 pps) to 2016-17 (5.9 pps) and decreased in 2017-18 (4.5 pps).

TerraNova mathematics data showed a decrease in achievement from kindergarten to first grade followed by an increase in achievement to second grade from 2015-16 through 2017-18. The achievement gap between African American students and the district increased from a 5.9 pps difference at kindergarten to a 11.6 pps difference at grade two in 2017-18. The combined K-2 mathematics results showed the achievement gap increased from 2015-16 (7.9 pps) to 2017-18 (9.4 pps).

Table 4: Dallas ISD 2015-16 to 2017-18 Percentage of *TerraNova* Reading and Mathematics At or Above Grade Level for Grades K-2 by Grade and Year

	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Reading Kindergarten			
All Students	79.4	77.8	80.0
A.A.	77.7	74.8	78.8
Difference	1.7	3.0	1.2
Reading Grade 1			
All Students	66.5	63.3	63.2
A.A.	63.2	58.0	59.2
Difference	3.3	5.3	4.0
Reading Grade 2			
All Students	61.0	60.0	60.0
A.A.	52.3	51.6	51.2
Difference	8.7	8.4	8.8
Reading Grades K-2			
All Students	68.5	66.7	67.4
A.A.	63.9	60.8	62.9
Difference	4.6	5.9	4.5

Table continues

Table (continued)

	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Mathematics Kindergarten			
All Students	59.5	59.7	61.3
A.A.	53.2	52.8	55.4
Difference	6.3	6.9	5.9
Mathematics Grade 1			
All Students	52.2	54.4	55.5
A.A.	44.7	45.2	44.7
Difference	7.5	9.2	10.8
Mathematics Grade 2			
All Students	56.9	57.9	58.8
A.A.	47.3	47.9	47.2
Difference	9.6	10.0	11.6
Mathematics Grades K-2			
All Students	56.1	57.2	58.5
A.A.	48.2	48.4	49.1
Difference	7.9	8.8	9.4

Source: MyData Portal District Packet for 2015-16 and 2016-17. MyData Portal database for 2017-18 (7/30/2018).

Note: A.A.=African American.

Table 5 displays *STAAR* reading results for grades three through eight. At elementary level, the achievement gap between African American students and the district was 12.8 pps at grade three, 13.9 pps at grade four and 14.2 pps at grade five during 2017-18.

At the middle school level, the percentages of African American students at the Approaches + level increased from grade six to grade eight (44.0%, 53.8% and 68.1%) with grade eight having the highest percentage at Approaches +. The achievement gap between African American students and the district decreased from grade six through eight (10.5, 8.4 and 5.3 pps) in 2017-18. The combined *STAAR* 3-8 reading results showed the achievement gap slightly increased from 2015-16 (10.0 pps) to 2017-18 (11.1 pps).

Table 5: Dallas ISD 2015-16 to 2017-18 Percentage of *STAAR* Reading Approaches + for Grades 3-8 by Grade and Year

	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Grade 3			
All Students	61.5	62.3	71.2
A.A.	48.2	47.9	58.4
Difference	13.3	14.4	12.8
Grade 4			
All Students	62.0	59.5	64.4
A.A.	52.6	44.0	50.5
Difference	9.4	15.5	13.9
Grade 5			
All Students	73.6	77.0	80.1
A.A.	60.2	62.7	65.9
Difference	13.4	14.3	14.2
Grade 6			
All Students	51.4	52.4	54.5
A.A.	42.5	47.0	44.0
Difference	8.9	5.4	10.5
Grade 7			
All Students	55.2	58.5	62.2
A.A.	49.2	51.2	53.8
Difference	6.0	7.3	8.4
Grade 8			
All Students	76.4	74.5	73.4
A.A.	68.2	70.6	68.1
Difference	8.2	3.9	5.3

Table continues

Table (continued)

	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Grades 3-8			
All Students	63.5	64.0	67.9
A.A.	53.5	53.4	56.8
Difference	10.0	10.6	11.1

Source: MyData Portal files 6/14/2017 and 6/13/2018.

Note: A.A.=African American.

Table 6 shows STAAR mathematics results. At the elementary level, the achievement gap between African American students and the district decreased from grade three (13.3 pps) to grade five (10.6 pps). At the middle school level, percentages of African Americans at the Approaches + level decreased from grades six to seven. The gap between African American students and the district decreased from grade six to grade eight (12.9, 11.2 and 7.9 pps) in 2017-18. The combined STAAR 3-8 mathematics results showed the achievement gap decreased from 2015-16 (13.7 pps) to 2016-17 (12.1 pps) and 2017-18 (11.7 pps).

Table 6: Dallas ISD 2015-16 to 2017-18 Percentage of STAAR Mathematics Approaches + for Grades 3-8 by Grade and Year

	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Grade 3			
All Students	65.1	69.6	74.2
A.A.	49.6	55.7	60.9
Difference	15.5	13.9	13.3
Grade 4			
All Students	63.1	67.6	74.7
A.A.	47.1	51.2	61.9
Difference	16.0	16.4	12.8
Grade 5			
All Students	78.9	80.0	86.5
A.A.	66.8	68.4	75.9
Difference	12.1	11.6	10.6
Grade 6			
All Students	58.0	64.1	66.8
A.A.	41.5	53.6	53.9
Difference	16.5	10.5	12.9
Grade 7			
All Students	42.6	45.4	53.6
A.A.	32.6	35.0	42.4
Difference	10.0	10.4	11.2
Grade 8			
All Students	70.4	79.2	82.7
A.A.	59.8	72.3	74.8
Difference	10.6	6.9	7.9
Grades 3-8			
All Students	64.3	69.0	74.2
A.A.	50.6	56.9	62.5
Difference	13.7	12.1	11.7

Source: MyData Portal files 6/14/2017 and 6/13/2018.

Note: A.A.=African American.

STAAR EOC results showed percentages at Approaches + for English I increased slightly from 2015-16 to 2017-18 for the district. The achievement gap between African American students and the district went from 5.4 pps in 2015-16 to 10.3 pps in 2016-17 and to 6.0 pps in 2017-18. Percentages at Approaches + for STAAR EOC English II showed slight increased for African American students and the district from 2015-16 to 2017-18. The achievement gap for English

II increased from 2015-16 (5.5 pps) to 2016-17 (6.7 pps) and 2017-18 (8.3 pps). Percentages at Approaches + for STAAR EOC Algebra I increased from 2015-16 to 2017-18 for African Americans and the district. The achievement gap increased from 2015-16 (7.2 pps) to 2016-17 (8.4 pps) and then decreased in 2017-18 (5.8 pps). See Table 7.

Table 7: Dallas ISD 2015-16 through 2017-18 Percentage of STAAR EOC English I, English II, and Algebra I Approaches + by Subject and Year

	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
English I			
All Students	57.6	58.7	60.0
A.A.	52.2	48.4	54.0
Difference	5.4	10.3	6.0
English II			
All Students	57.8	60.3	65.7
A.A.	52.3	53.6	57.4
Difference	5.5	6.7	8.3
Algebra I			
All Students	77.7	83.5	86.8
A.A.	70.5	75.1	81.0
Difference	7.2	8.4	5.8

Source: MyData Portal files 6/5/2017 and 5/25/2018.

Note: A.A.=African American.

Recommendation

In future initiatives such as AASI, ensure that the program is cohesive and consistent over time. Also, it will be important that data collection procedures are in place for all components.

References

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