

2017-18 Evaluation of Intensive Support Network

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At-a-Glance

The Intensive Support Network (ISN) was a Dallas Independent School District (Dallas ISD) initiative started in 2016-17 to help schools achieve or maintain a *Met Standard* accountability rating by reducing the student academic achievement gap with respect to ethnicity and socioeconomic status.¹ To achieve this goal, ISN focused on the following components: 1) Data Analysis - monitoring student progress, 2) Coaching - providing professional development for teachers and administrative staff, 3) Collaboration - professional learning community planning by content and subject, 4) Monitoring Instruction - teacher observation, feedback, and follow-up, and 5) Student Management of Learning - students tracking their academic performance. Funding for ISN in the 2017-18 school year included \$85,229 from general operating funds. Each campus also received funding for an additional assistant principal and an urban specialist.

The following 15 campuses were part of ISN during the 2017-18 academic year, the final year of the program. ISN campuses with IR status are indicated in parenthesis after the campus name.

- John Neely Bryan Elementary School
- Rufus C. Burleson Elementary School
- Paul L. Dunbar Learning Center (IR)
- Martin Luther King, Jr. Learning Center (IR)
- Joseph J. Rhoads Learning Center (IR)
- Charles Rice Learning Center
- Oran M. Roberts Elementary School
- George W. Truett Elementary School (IR)
- Daniel Webster Elementary School
- T.W. Browne Middle School
- Oliver W. Holmes Middle School
- Boude Storey Middle School
- Lincoln High School (IR)
- James Madison High School (IR)
- South Oak Cliff High School

The purpose of this evaluation was to assess the effectiveness of ISN in helping campuses achieve or maintain a *Met Standard* accountability rating.²

ISN Student and Teacher Characteristics

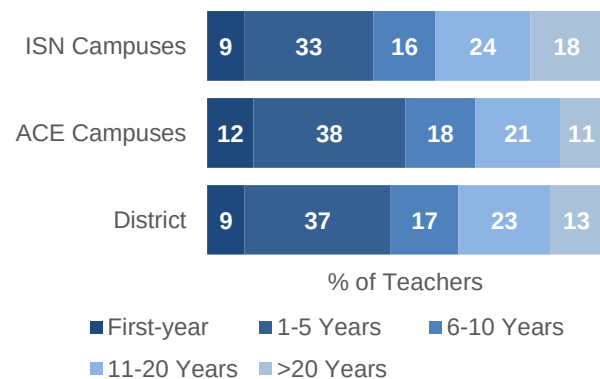
Student Demographics

The 9,919 ISN students were approximately 52 percent male, 57 percent African American, and 41 percent Hispanic. Thirty percent of students were English language learners (ELLs), and 10 percent were enrolled in special education (SPED).

Teacher Creditable Years of Service and Effectiveness Levels

Compared to ACE campuses and the district, teachers on ISN campuses were less likely to have 10 or fewer creditable years of service and more likely to have 11 or more creditable years of service (Figure 1).

Figure 1: 2017-18 Teacher Creditable Years of Service



Source: District creditable years of service file dated October 24, 2017 from Human Capital Management.

Note: $n = 648$ ISN teachers. $n = 454$ ACE teachers. $n = 10,148$ Dallas ISD teachers. ISN = Intensive Support Network. ACE = Accelerating Campus Excellence.

In addition, teachers at ISN campuses were less likely than ACE campuses and the district to hold a Proficient I or higher Teacher Effectiveness Initiative (TEI) effectiveness level and more likely than ACE campuses and the district to be Progressing II or lower (Table 1).

¹ The ISN program ended after the 2017-18 school year.

² See full report for detailed methodology of all analyses.

Table 1: 2017-18 Percentage of Teachers at Each TEI Effectiveness Level

Effectiveness Level	ISN %	ACE %	Dallas ISD %
Exemplary II	0	1	1
Exemplary I	<1	4	1
Proficient III	1	9	5
Proficient II	4	17	10
Proficient I	30	32	34
Progressing II	27	11	19
Progressing I	15	7	11
Unsatisfactory	<1	0	<1
No Level	2	1	1
N/A	21	18	18

Source: Aggregated figures obtained from Dallas ISD Data Analytics and Control as of February 8, 2018.

Note: $n = 656$ ISN teachers. $n = 478$ ACE teachers. $n = 10,355$ Dallas ISD teachers. TEI = Teacher Excellence Initiative. ISN = Intensive Support Network. ACE = Accelerating Campus Excellence. TEI effectiveness levels for the 2017-18 school year were based on scores earned during the 2016-17 school year.

ISN Outcomes

State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR)

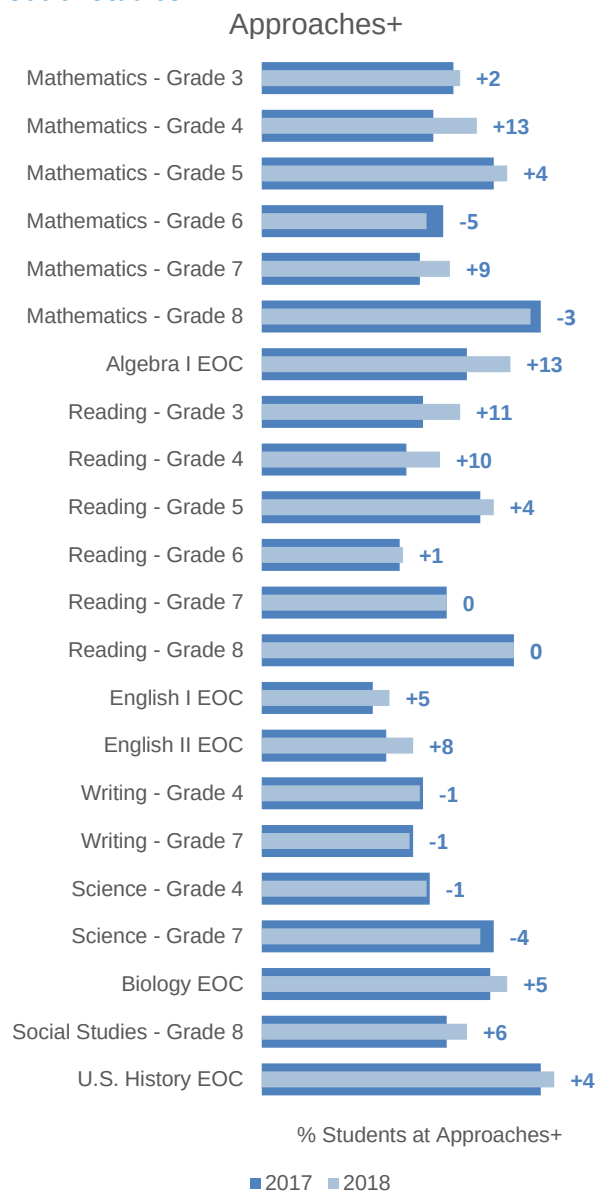
Except for two STAAR subtests (i.e., grade 8 reading and social studies), the rate of 2017-18 ISN students attaining the Approaches Grade Level or Above (Approaches+)³ standard was lower than the district at all grade levels. The rate of ISN students at the Approaches+ standard ranged between 42 percent and 80 percent compared to 56 percent and 88 percent for the district. In addition, the rate of ISN students attaining the Meets Grade Level or Above (Meets+)⁴ standard was lower than the district at all grade levels. The rate of ISN students at the Meets+ standard ranged between 14 percent and 39 percent compared to 18 percent and 55 percent for the district.

Furthermore, the rate of 2017-18 ISN students meeting or exceeding the Approaches+ and Meets+ performance standards for STAAR EOC was lower than the district for all subtests. Specifically, the rate of ISN students attaining the Approaches+ standard ranged between 38 percent and 87 percent compared to 52 percent and 92 percent for the district. The rate of ISN students attaining the Meets+ standard ranged between 19 percent and 52 percent compared to 31 percent and 70 percent for the district.

Lastly, as indicated by Figure 2, Approaches+ attainment trended upward over one year for 14 of 22 STAAR subtests (range: +1 to +13 percentage points)

and trended downward for six of 22 subtests (range: -1 to -5 percentage points).

Figure 2: 2017 to 2018 Change in the Percentage of ISN Students at Approaches+ Standard - STAAR Mathematics, Reading, Writing, Science, and Social Studies



Source: District STAAR files dated June 23, 2017 (2017) and June 20, 2018 (2018). PEIMS demographic data file dated October 30, 2017.

Note: ISN = Intensive Support Network. STAAR = State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness. Percentage of ISN and district students meeting or exceeding the Approaches Grade Level (Approaches+) included all versions and administrations of STAAR, but some test scores may have been adversely affected by online testing issues. Approaches+ includes all students in the Meets Grade Level and Masters Grade Level categories. One-year trends shown in percentage points.

³ Approaches+ includes all students in the Meets+ or Masters categories.

⁴ Meets+ includes all students in the Masters category.

Meets+ attainment trended upward over one year for 18 of 22 STAAR subtests (range: +1 to +20 percentage points) and trended downward for three of 22 subtests (range: -1 to -4 percentage points).

Attendance

Attendance rates for all ISN campuses and the district were relatively consistent from 2016-17 (94% and 95%, respectively) to 2017-18 (94% and 95%, respectively).

Discipline Referrals

The number of discipline referrals at ISN campuses decreased from 2,349 in 2016-17 to 2,212 in 2017-18, for a total reduction of 137 referrals (5.8%). For both 2016-17 and 2017-18, 11 percent of ISN students had one or more discipline referrals compared to seven percent and six percent, respectively, for the district.

District Climate Survey

The district Climate Survey results were mixed during 2017-18. In Fall 2017, the sections with the highest number of ISN campuses in the 4th or 5th quintile (most positive) were *Beliefs and Priorities* and *Positive Culture and Environment* (four campuses each), and the section with the lowest number of ISN campuses in the 4th and 5th quintile was *College-Going Culture* (two campuses). In Spring 2018, the section with the highest number of ISN campuses in the 4th or 5th quintile was *Culture of Feedback and Support* (six campuses), and the sections with the lowest number of ISN campuses in the 4th and 5th quintile were *Positive Culture and Environment* and *College-Going Culture* (two campuses each).

Perceptions of Critical Success Factors

Between 62 percent and 76 percent of assistant principals who completed the online survey reported that the implementation of the ISN components was moderately effective. In addition, between 57 percent and 90 percent of assistant principals and between 46 percent and 79 percent of campus instructional coaches who completed the online survey agreed that the critical success factors for each of the components of ISN were achieved.

Role of ISN Campus Staff

Program Staff Surveys

Assistant Principals

All assistant principals who completed the online survey ($n = 21$) reported that they had at least four years of education experience, and 71 percent of assistant principals reported that they had at least four years of administrative experience. Ninety percent of assistant principals who responded to the survey rated their level of support from ISN program staff members as good,

very good, or excellent. Assistant principals reported that they had daily or weekly contact with ISN coordinators (62%) and the ISN assistant superintendent (19%). In addition, between 62 percent and 95 percent of assistant principals reported that they completed work related to each of the components of ISN on a daily or weekly basis.

Campus Instructional Coaches

All campus instructional coaches who completed the online survey ($n = 24$) reported that they had at least 10 years of education experience, and 54 percent reported that they had at least four to six years of coaching experience. Seventy-five percent of campus instructional coaches rated their level of support from ISN program staff members as good, very good, or excellent. In addition, between 63 percent and 96 percent of campus instructional coaches reported that they completed work related to each of the components of ISN on a weekly or daily basis. Lastly, 67 percent of campus instructional coaches reported receiving professional development from ISN program staff members every four to six weeks, and most respondents reported that the professional development was at least somewhat helpful (83%).

Outcomes for Students Assigned to Urban Specialists

Attendance Rates

Attendance rates for students assigned to an urban specialist were relatively consistent from 2016-17 (90%) to 2017-18 (89%). Similarly to 2016-17, 2017-18 attendance rates for students assigned to an urban specialist (89%) were slightly lower than ISN (94%).

Discipline Referrals

The number of discipline referrals for students who were assigned to an urban specialist during the 2017-18 school year decreased from 480 in 2016-17 to 463 in 2017-18, for a total reduction of 17 referrals (4%). In 2016-17 and 2017-18, a higher percentage of students who were assigned to an urban specialist (40% and 43%, respectively) had at least one discipline referral compared to all ISN students (11%).

Program Goal

Thirteen of 15 ISN campuses received a *Met Standard* accountability rating for 2017-18. Five campuses that received an *Improvement Required* accountability rating for 2016-17 received a *Met Standard* accountability rating for 2017-18 (Lincoln High School, James Madison High School, Paul L. Dunbar Learning Center, Joseph J. Rhoads Learning Center, and George W. Truett Elementary School). One campus that received a *Met Standard* accountability rating for

2016-17 received an *Improvement Required* accountability rating for 2017-18 (Oliver W. Holmes Middle School).

Recommendations

Because the 2017-18 academic year was the final year of ISN, the following recommendations based on the ISN program may help future school improvement programs assist at-risk campuses.

- **Identify additional program goals to measure student progress at each campus.** The only explicit goal of the ISN program was for campuses to achieve the *Met Standard* accountability rating from the TEA; however, this goal did not allow student progress to be measured at campuses that experienced improvement but did not achieve a *Met Standard* accountability rating. Creating additional program goals with specific and measurable outcomes would improve the ability of programs like ISN to identify whether campuses are improving and which aspects of the program are most effective.
- **Recruit more teachers with a Proficient I or higher effectiveness level.** Compared to ACE campuses and the district, teachers on ISN campuses were less likely to have an effectiveness level of Proficient I or higher and more likely to employ teachers with an effectiveness level of Progressing II or lower. Thus, recruiting more teachers with a Proficient I or higher effectiveness level might improve student performance.
- **Continue using urban specialists to mentor students with attendance and behavior issues.** On average, the attendance rates for students who were assigned to an urban specialist during the 2017-18 school year remained relatively consistent, and discipline referrals decreased from 2016-17 to 2017-18. However, because each urban specialist served approximately 30 students at both of their assigned campuses, urban specialists were not able to dedicate all their time at a single campus. It might be beneficial to explore ways to more strongly leverage the services of urban specialists so that schools with a larger number of high-needs students can receive more support.
- **Continue to provide professional development sessions to campus instructional coaches.** Because ISN campuses were more likely than ACE campuses and the district to employ teachers with an effectiveness level of Progressing II or lower, ISN program staff members focused on training the campus instructional coaches in high needs areas (e.g., writing, science, and math) by targeting specific student expectations (SEs). Almost all

campus instructional coaches reported that the professional development sessions received from ISN program staff members were helpful. Staff members for future programs like ISN should continue to provide professional development sessions for campus instructional coaches that provide teachers with resources and information regarding best practices in the classroom.

- **Improve the relationship between each component of future school improvement programs and their critical success factors.** While most assistant principals believed that the components of ISN were effectively implemented at their campuses, not all assistant principals and campus instructional coaches agreed that the critical success factors for each component of ISN had been achieved. Staff members for programs like ISN should review program outcomes to determine which indicators are appropriate and to identify specific and measurable outcomes. This will help assistant principals and campus instructional coaches to understand more clearly how program outcomes are related to the components of the program.
- **Carefully consider transition plans for programs like ISN when campuses achieve the *Met Standard* accountability rating.** Stability among campus personnel might be important to maintaining the progress afforded by participation in the ISN program. From 2016-17 to 2017-18, the ISN STAAR scores increased for the majority of STAAR subtests at the Approaches+ and Meets+ standards. In addition, ISN students maintained their attendance rates and had slightly fewer discipline referrals. However, it is unknown how long the additional ISN personnel are needed to have a lasting impact on each campus. Thus, staff members for programs like ISN should carefully consider transition plans for successful campuses to bolster the possible benefits of the program.

An electronic version of this report as well as the full 2017-18 report can be found at www.dallasisd.org/Page/888. For more information, please contact Program Evaluation at evaluation@dallasisd.org.

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