

2019-20

Evaluation of Language, Literacy, and Social Studies Curriculum Enhancement Project

DEPARTMENT OF EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT

*Michael Hinojosa, Ed. D.
Superintendent of Schools*



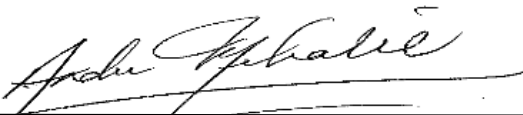
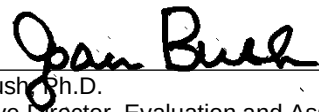
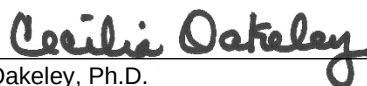
2019-20

Evaluation of Language, Literacy, and Social Studies Curriculum Enhancement Project

Approved Report of the Department of Evaluation and Assessment

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

5E	Engage, Explore, Explain, Elaborate, and Evaluate
ACE	Accelerating Campus Excellence
ACP	<i>Assessment of Course Performance</i>
AP	Advanced Placement
ESSA	Every Student Succeeds Act
HLT	High leverage tasks
ISD	Independent School District
LEA	Local Educational Agency
PLC	Professional Learning Community
STAAR	<i>State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness</i>
TCMPC	Texas Curriculum Management Program Cooperative
TEKS	Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills

Evaluation of Language, Literacy, and Social Studies Curriculum Enhancement Project

DEPARTMENT OF EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Dallas Independent School District (ISD) allocated grant funds to the District Wide Curriculum Enhancement project to provide teachers with physical and digital curriculum resources, assist with lesson planning and implementation, and provide personal support through grant-funded specialist positions.

The purpose of the Dallas ISD Curriculum Enhancement project evaluation was to provide context and implementation data so that program managers could assess the implementation of grant components and perceptions of staff that participated in grant-funded activities. Data for this report were obtained from interviews with the program staff, a review of internal documents, and analyses of available survey data.

On March 13, 2020, in alignment with federal recommendations, the Governor of Texas issued a disaster proclamation certifying that the novel coronavirus COVID-19 posed an imminent threat of disaster for all counties in the state of Texas. On March 19, 2020, all schools in the state were temporarily closed to slow the spread of the pandemic. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Dallas ISD transitioned students to at-home learning from March 23, 2020 (following spring break) to the end of the school year. As a result, the curriculum units planned for the fifth and sixth six-weeks were significantly modified.

The 2019-20 Language, Literacy, and Social Studies Curriculum Enhancement project was funded through Title I, Part A at \$1,438,532. The budget included \$438,382 for the Language, Literacy, and Social Studies Manager; Curriculum Coordinator; Curriculum Specialist; and three other specialist positions. Other funding was used to cover supplemental pay to curriculum writers, supplies and materials, and employee travel. In 2018-19, district Curriculum Design Programs were funded through Title I, Part A at \$1,271,730 (Watson, 2019).

EVALUATION QUESTIONS/OUTCOMES

How was the Dallas ISD Curriculum Enhancement Project implemented?

A districtwide curriculum was created during the 2018-19 school year for designated courses in both Reading Language Arts, Dual Language, English as a Second Language and Social Studies. The district designed and published a supplemental kindergarten through grade 12 Reading Language Arts and Social Studies curriculum package to create greater cohesion in planning daily instruction for teachers. The curriculum is housed on a digital platform, PowerSchool Learning¹, and includes key components essential to instructional design as included in the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) Resource System². The new curriculum's implementation was supported through professional learning communities (PLCs) and ongoing teacher observations and coaching. The curriculum package was rolled out incrementally, with two six-week instructional periods of content released at a time. The first two six-weeks' units were available in August 2018, and the remaining four six-weeks' units were available in December of 2018. The district hired teams of teacher writers who authored the curriculum content, which was then vetted by Teaching and Learning staff members in collaboration with campus representatives.

A feedback survey was completed on an ongoing basis through the 2018-19 school year. These data indicated that the district curriculum needed to be updated to represent the new TEKS and Instructional Materials released in 2019-20 as well as refined to enhance the experience of the user. Changes to previously created curricula were guided by end user feedback included in the departmental needs assessment, along with curriculum user feedback in the form of surveys and interviews with teachers and campus administrators. The focus for the 2019-20 school year was on the continuous improvement of the curriculum units.

Due to safety concerns surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic, in addition to shifting to at-home learning, district departments worked remotely after spring break through the end of the school year. As a result, PowerSchool Learning use was greatly reduced. At-home learning lessons were

¹PowerSchool Learning is a cloud-based digital learning management system for teachers and students. Teacher level accounts in PowerSchool Learning may belong to teachers or other professional staff who require access to the curriculum units.

²The TEKS Resource System is a comprehensive curriculum management system developed by Texas Curriculum Management Program Cooperative (TCMPC) and a team of content experts. Its focus is to provide districts and teachers tightly aligned high quality curriculum documents based on the state mandated TEKS.

simplified for parent use, comparable to a novice teaching level. Due to the shift to remote work, the responsibilities of curriculum writers changed little for the 2020-21 school year. Teachers were hired as consultants to assess curriculum improvements and test and troubleshoot existing units. Since much of the work of writing is easily completed online, the cancelation of in-person curriculum writing for the summer is not expected to negatively impact the quality or timeliness of the 2020-21 curriculum.

How were professional learning opportunities implemented?

The Language and Literacy and Social Studies departments provided school-based and districtwide curriculum training to teachers, instructional coaches, and academic facilitators. In addition, staff members conducted classroom walk-throughs to support implementation of content learned in the professional development sessions and facilitated PLCs to build teacher capacity at the school and feeder pattern level. Between June 2019 and March 2020, Language and Literacy and Social Studies staff members conducted a total of 588 training sessions, serving 6,684 total participants (Table E1).

Table E1: 2019-20 Language and Literacy and Social Studies District Curriculum Professional Development Session Attendance

Date	Sessions <i>N</i>	Participants <i>N</i>
World Languages	62	583
Social Studies	159	699
Multi-Tiered Systems of Support	77	2,062
Reading Language Arts	290	3,340
Total	588	6,684

Source: Language and Literacy department internal documents dated 01/15/20.

Note: Some participants attended multiple sessions.

Due to inconsistent sharing of the professional development feedback survey with session participants, data collected were insufficient for meaningful analysis.

What were teacher perceptions of the district curriculum?

Curriculum Feedback Survey

On the curriculum feedback survey, results were positive, with most respondents reporting that they found the units and their components useful. Overall satisfaction ratings were reported on a scale from one through four, with one being “Not Useful” and four being “Very Useful.” Because

the district transitioned to at home learning after spring break, the planned curriculum for the fifth and sixth six-weeks was significantly modified. The evaluator suspended the feedback survey at the end of the fourth six-weeks. For units one through four, a total of 1,926 teacher responses were collected.

Kindergarten through grade two Reading Language Arts and Social Studies teachers rated the Reading Block component of the units the highest (3.3 out of 4.0, $n = 622$) overall. For grades three through eight, Reading Language Arts teachers rated the Unit Outlines highest (2.9, $n = 386$), while Social Studies teachers rated the Guiding to Consensus Questions and TEKS Aligned Questions the highest (2.9, $n = 62$) overall.

Teachers shared valuable insights through open-ended items on which parts of the curriculum were most useful, suggested improvements, and which parts of the curriculum they felt benefited students most. Additionally, teachers reported the aspects of their teaching practice in which they felt they needed support or help from the Language and Literacy Department. Overall, teachers who responded to these items most appreciated instructional planning calendars, wanted to see improvements in alignment to standardized tests, and requested help with lesson pacing and lesson planning.

Reading Language Arts teachers reported that anchor charts³, the presentation of old and new TEKS side by side, and unit exemplars were helpful for consistency, and especially as support for newer teachers. The most frequently suggested improvements to the Reading Language Arts curriculum included an improved alignment of the curriculum to the *State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR)*, more videos and visual resources, and improved organization of the site. Teachers reported that students benefitted most from comprehension and character contrasting activities. Teachers reported that they needed help with lesson pacing and needed more Spanish language resources.

Social Studies teachers reported that unit outlines, instructional planning calendars, and example *Assessment of Course Performance (ACP)* questions were the most helpful resources. The most frequently suggested improvements were improved alignment to *STAAR*, improved organization of the site, more resources, and more student activities. Teachers also requested the ability to send worksheets to students through Google Classroom. Teachers reported that students benefitted the most from learning about cultures and their impact on current life,

³ Anchor charts are created during the instruction of the lesson. As the teacher models the lesson or strategy, the lesson reinforcement or strategy tool is written on chart paper. Once the lesson is complete, the chart is

placed in a convenient student-friendly location that the students can access it independently. This is another vehicle for academic support, especially for the visual learner.

colonization, slavery, and race relations. Teachers reported the need for help with lesson pacing and lesson planning.

Curriculum Usage Survey

PowerSchool Learning system usage statistics showed 51,089 unique visitors with teacher accounts between June 1, 2019 and May 29, 2020. Teachers visited the online system a total of 1,204,376 times, spending a total of 103,084 hours on the online system.

In order to explore the reasons why some teachers were not taking full advantage of the curriculum resources available on PowerSchool Learning, the evaluator invited 3,611 teachers with below average total minutes of system usage for the school year to participate in the survey. The overall mean total minutes was 215 per teacher. Teachers invited had total system usage of 214.8 minutes or fewer. Questions explored barriers to PowerSchool Learning system usage, training on the district curriculum, and resources available on PowerSchool Learning, including: instructional planning calendars and recommended texts, high leverage tasks (HLT) and “Engage, Explore, Explain, Elaborate, and Evaluate” (5E) model tasks.

A total of 340 invitees responded (out of 3,498 invited, or a 9.5% response rate). Of the 340 respondents, 10 indicated that they were not teachers and had been misclassified in PowerSchool Learning. Of the remaining 330 respondents, 142 indicated that they were specials (e.g. art, music, physical education) or other non-core subject area ⁴ teachers (43.4%). Therefore, the following results are based on responses of the remaining 188 teachers.

A total of 167 teachers responded to the survey item asking why they had not used the curriculum more. The most frequent responses included, “I haven’t had adequate training to use it” ($n = 38$), “The curriculum materials I already have include everything that I need” ($n = 38$), “The layout of the curriculum content is difficult to navigate” ($n = 37$), and “Other” ($n = 37$). Of the 37 teachers who selected “other,” nearly all ($n = 35$) indicated a lack of specialized materials for their specific course or campus type (Advanced Placement, or AP, courses; Special Education; ACE ⁵ curriculum; or Pre-Kindergarten materials) as a barrier.

When asked about training, a total of 104 out of the 166 teachers who responded to the item stated that they had received training on the curriculum (63%). However, while 79.9 percent ($n = 83$) “agreed” or “strongly agreed” that they received adequate training on how to access or log in to the curriculum, 58.7 percent ($n = 61$) “agreed” or “strongly

agreed” that they had received adequate training on how to use the curriculum to plan lessons.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the key findings, the following recommendations are offered for stakeholders.

Improve methods for collecting feedback on professional development and training.

Consider updating the layout of the PowerSchool Learning curriculum materials.

Continue seeking continuous direct feedback and partnership with classroom teachers.

⁴ Core subject areas include Reading Language Arts, Social Studies, Mathematics, and Science.

⁵ The Dallas ISD Accelerating Campus Excellence (ACE) initiative incentivizes top teachers and principals to voluntarily work at the district’s

highest-need schools, ensuring the best educators are in classrooms where they are needed the most. ACE schools combine effective instruction, additional learning time, and social and academic skill-building for continuous improvement.

2019-20

Evaluation of Language, Literacy, and Social Studies Curriculum Enhancement Project

DEPARTMENT OF EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Dallas Independent School District (Dallas ISD) received federal funds for curriculum development and implementation for the 2019-20 school year through Title I, Part A as authorized under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). According to the U.S. Department of Education website, Title I, Part A (Title I) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as amended provides financial assistance to local educational agencies (LEAs) and schools with high numbers or high percentages of children from low income families to help ensure that all children meet challenging state academic standards.

Title I schools or districts with at least 40 percent of students from low-income families may use Title I funds to operate a school- or districtwide program to upgrade the instructional program using curriculum strategies informed by scientifically based research. Dallas ISD allocated grant funds to the District-Wide Curriculum Enhancement project to provide teachers with physical and digital curriculum resources, assist with lesson planning and implementation, and provide personal support through grant-funded specialist positions.

PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION

The purpose of the Dallas ISD Curriculum Enhancement project evaluation was to provide context and implementation data so that program managers could assess the implementation of grant components and perceptions of staff that participated in grant-funded activities. Data for this report were obtained from interviews with the program staff, a review of internal documents, and analyses of available survey data.

On March 13, 2020, in alignment with federal recommendations, the Governor of Texas issued a disaster proclamation certifying that the novel coronavirus COVID-19 posed an imminent threat of disaster for all counties in the state of Texas. On March 19, 2020, all schools in the state were temporarily closed to slow the spread of the pandemic. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Dallas ISD transitioned students to at-home learning from March 23, 2020 (following spring break) to the end of the school year. As a result, the curriculum units planned for the fifth and sixth six-weeks (February 24 through May 27) were significantly modified.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS AND RESULTS

What was the amount of funding for these Title I activities?

Methodology

The amount of funding allotted for each area of the program was obtained from the project's Title I, Part A workscope. Additional information was collected from grant services and individual program managers.

Results

The 2019-20 Language, Literacy, and Social Studies Curriculum Enhancement project was funded through Title I, Part A at \$1,438,532. The budget included \$438,382 for the Language, Literacy, and Social Studies Manager; Curriculum Coordinator; Curriculum Specialist; and three other specialist positions. Other funding was used to cover supplemental pay to curriculum writers, supplies and materials, and employee travel. In 2018-19, district Curriculum Design Programs were funded through Title I, Part A at \$1,271,730. The 2018-19 Reading Language Arts Supplemental Resources and Curriculum Specialist Program was funded at \$647,462 through Title I, Part A. Additionally, the Dallas ISD School Board approved the expenditure of \$600,000 for teacher writer stipends from the district's special revenue funds on March 28, 2019 (Watson, 2019).

How was the Dallas ISD Curriculum Enhancement Project implemented?

Methodology

Evaluation of the Curriculum Enhancement Project included an interview with the Manager of Language, Literacy, and Social Studies and a review of internal documents. The purpose of the interview was to gather information about teacher-writer teams, monitoring of writing progress, timing of deliverables, any associated technical issues with Unified Classroom/PowerSchool, and purchasing of supplemental materials and contracted services. Follow-up information was collected by email.

Results

A districtwide curriculum was created during the 2018-19 school year for designated courses in both Reading Language Arts, Dual Language, English as a Second Language and Social Studies. The district designed and published a supplemental kindergarten through grade 12 Reading Language Arts and Social Studies curriculum package to create greater cohesion in planning daily instruction for teachers. The curriculum is housed on a digital platform, PowerSchool Learning⁶, and includes key components essential to instructional design as included in the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) Resource System⁷.

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⁷ The TEKS Resource System is a comprehensive curriculum management system developed by Texas Curriculum Management Program Cooperative (TCMPC) and a team of content experts. Its focus is to provide districts and teachers tightly aligned high quality curriculum documents based on the state mandated TEKS.

The new curriculum's implementation was supported through professional learning communities (PLCs) and ongoing teacher observations and coaching. The curriculum package was rolled out incrementally, with two six-week instructional periods of content released at a time. The first two six-weeks' units were available in August 2018, and the remaining four six-weeks' units were available in December of 2018. The district hired teams of teacher-writers who authored the curriculum content, which was then vetted by Teaching and Learning staff members in collaboration with campus representatives.

A feedback survey was completed on an ongoing basis at the end of each six-week period through the 2018-19 school year. Survey feedback indicated that the district curriculum needed to be updated to represent the new TEKS and Instructional Materials released in 2019-20, as well as refined to enhance the experience of the user. Changes to the previously created curricula were guided by end-user feedback included in the departmental needs assessment, along with curriculum-user feedback in the form of surveys and interviews with teachers and campus administrators. The focus for the 2019-20 school year was on the continuous improvement of the curriculum units.

Due to safety concerns surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic, in addition to shifting to at-home learning, district departments worked remotely after spring break through the end of the school year. As a result, PowerSchool Learning use was greatly reduced. At-home learning lessons were simplified for parent use, comparable to a novice teaching level. Due to the shift to remote work, the responsibilities of curriculum writers changed little for the 2020-21 school year. Teachers were hired as consultants to assess curriculum improvements and test and troubleshoot existing units. Since much of the work of writing is easily completed online, the cancelation of in-person curriculum writing for the summer is not expected to negatively impact the quality or timeliness of the 2020-21 curriculum.

How were professional learning opportunities implemented?

Methodology

Program management staff were interviewed to obtain implementation information. Language and Literacy staff constructed a survey regarding the quality and utility of the training using Google Forms, an online form development tool, to craft and administer the survey items. A link to the survey was sent to staff members who participated in training and development at the conclusion of each session.

Results

The Language and Literacy and Social Studies departments provided school-based and districtwide curriculum training to teachers, instructional coaches, and academic facilitators. In addition, staff members conducted classroom walk-throughs to support implementation of content learned in the professional development sessions and facilitated PLCs to build teacher capacity at the school and feeder pattern level. Between June 2019 and March 2020, Language and Literacy and Social Studies staff members conducted a total of 588 training sessions, serving a total of 6,684 participants (Table 1).

Table 1: 2019-20 Language and Literacy and Social Studies District Curriculum Professional Development Session Attendance

Date	Sessions N	Participants N
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Source: Language and Literacy department internal documents dated 01/15/20.

Note: Some participants attended multiple sessions.

Due to inconsistent sharing of the professional development feedback survey with session participants, data collected were insufficient for meaningful analysis.

What were teacher perceptions of the district curriculum?

Methodology

Curriculum Feedback Survey

Language and Literacy staff constructed a survey aimed at better understanding teacher satisfaction with and perceived usefulness of the district curriculum. The Language and Literacy staff utilized Google Forms, an online form development tool, to craft and administer the survey items. A link to the survey was sent to teachers on September 24, 2019. The survey remained open throughout the school year to allow teachers to continuously rate the different units they used each six-weeks. The survey included five demographic or screening items, 37 items with Likert-type response options rating various aspects of the program, three multiple-choice items, and seven open-ended items requesting additional feedback. The evaluator used frequency analyses to determine the rates of positive responses for each scaled item, along with number and percentages of responses per category for other items. Responses to open-ended survey items soliciting additional comments were analyzed for common themes and patterns. Appropriate quotations that captured the essence of significant themes were flagged for inclusion in this report.

Curriculum Usage Survey

The evaluator constructed a survey to understand the experiences of teachers with low utilization rates of the PowerSchool Learning system. The evaluator utilized SurveyMonkey, an online survey development tool, to craft and administer the survey items. A link to the survey was sent to teachers on December 20, 2019 along with multiple reminders to access and complete the survey. The survey remained open until January 24, 2020.

Questions explored barriers to PowerSchool Learning system usage, training on the district curriculum, and resources available on PowerSchool Learning, including: instructional planning calendars and recommended texts, high leverage tasks (HLT) and “Engage, Explore, Explain, Elaborate, and Evaluate” (5E) model tasks. The survey included three demographic or screening items, three items with Likert-type response options rating various aspects of the training they received on the curriculum system, and eight multiple-choice items. The evaluator used frequency analyses to determine the rates of positive

responses for each scaled item, along with number and percentages of responses per category for other items. Responses to open-ended options in multiple choice items were analyzed for common themes and patterns. Appropriate quotations that captured the essence of significant themes were flagged for inclusion in this report.

Results

Curriculum Feedback Survey

On the curriculum feedback survey, results were positive, with most respondents reporting that they found the units and their components useful. Overall satisfaction ratings were reported on a scale from one through four, with one being “Not Useful” and four being “Very Useful”. Because the district transitioned to at-home learning after spring break, the planned curriculum for the fifth and sixth six-weeks was significantly modified. The evaluator suspended the feedback survey at the end of the fourth six-weeks. For units one through four, a total of 1,926 teacher survey responses were collected.

Kindergarten through grade two Reading Language Arts and Social Studies teachers rated the Reading Block component of the units the highest (3.3 out of 4.0, $n = 622$) overall. For grades three through eight, Reading Language Arts teachers rated the Unit Outlines highest (2.9, $n = 386$), while Social Studies teachers rated the Guiding to Consensus Questions and TEKS Aligned Questions the highest (2.9, $n = 62$) overall. A complete summary of responses by six-weeks curriculum unit is available in Appendix A.

Teachers shared valuable insights through open-ended items on which parts of the curriculum were most useful, which parts of the curriculum they felt benefitted students most and suggested improvements. Additionally, teachers identified aspects of their teaching practice in which they felt they needed support or help from the Language and Literacy Department. Overall, teachers who responded to these items most appreciated instructional planning calendars, wanted to see improvements in alignment to standardized tests, and requested help with lesson pacing and lesson planning.

Reading Language Arts teachers reported that anchor charts⁸, the presentation of old and new TEKS side by side, and unit exemplars were helpful for consistency, and especially as support for newer teachers. The most frequently suggested improvements to the Reading Language Arts curriculum included an improved alignment of the curriculum to the *State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR)*, more videos and visual resources, and improved organization of the site. Teachers reported that students benefitted most from comprehension and character contrasting activities. Teachers reported that they needed help with lesson pacing and needed more Spanish language resources.

Social Studies teachers reported that unit outlines, instructional planning calendars, and example *Assessment of Course Performance (ACP)* questions were the most helpful resources. The most frequently suggested improvements were improved alignment to *STAAR*, improved organization of the curriculum website, more resources, and more student activities. Teachers also requested the ability to send

⁸ Anchor charts are created during the instruction of the lesson. As the teacher models the lesson or strategy, the lesson reinforcement or strategy tool is written on chart paper. Once the lesson is complete, the chart is placed in a convenient student-friendly location that the students can access it independently. This is another vehicle for academic support, especially for the visual learner.

worksheets to students through Google Classroom. Teachers reported that students benefitted the most from learning about cultures and their impact on current life, colonization, slavery, and race relations. Teachers reported the need for help with lesson planning and pacing.

Science teachers reported that instructional planning calendars and model lessons were the most helpful resources included in the curriculum. The most frequently suggested improvements were more labs, more models, more resources for Special Education and Gifted and Talented students and know/show charts⁹. Teachers reported that students benefitted the most from videos, virtual labs, and “engage” portions of the lessons. Teachers reported the need for a larger, more robust question bank, lab materials, and more exemplars.

Mathematics teachers reported that know/show charts, anchor charts, and instructional planning calendars were the most helpful resources. The most frequently suggested improvements were help with pacing, scaffolding, and alignment with *STAAR*. Teachers reported that students benefitted the most from real world application, decimal operations, and the “foundations of numbers” unit. Teachers reported the need for help with online resources, more manipulatives, and independent practice resources.

Curriculum Usage Survey

PowerSchool Learning system usage statistics showed 51,089 unique visitors with teacher accounts between June 1, 2019 and May 29, 2020. Teachers visited the online system a total of 1,204,376 times, spending a total of 103,084 hours on the online system. In order to explore the reasons why some teachers were not taking full advantage of the curriculum resources available on PowerSchool Learning, the evaluator invited 3,611 teachers with below average total minutes of system usage for the school year to participate in the survey. The overall mean total minutes was 215 per teacher. Teachers invited had total system usage of 214.8 minutes or fewer.

The response rate was low (9.5%), meaning results are not representative and should be viewed with caution. A total of 340 invitees responded (out of 3,498 invited, or a 9.5% response rate). Of the 340 respondents, 10 indicated that they were not teachers and had been misclassified in PowerSchool Learning. Of the remaining 330 respondents, 142 indicated that they were specials (e.g. art, music, physical education) or other non-core subject area¹⁰ teachers (43.4%). Therefore, the following results are based on responses of the remaining 188 teachers.

A total of 167 teachers responded to the survey item asking why they had not used the curriculum more. The most frequent responses included, “I haven’t had adequate training to use it” ($n = 38$), “The curriculum materials I already have include everything that I need” ($n = 38$), “The layout of the curriculum content is difficult to navigate” ($n = 37$), and “Other” ($n = 37$). Of the 37 teachers who selected “other,” nearly all ($n = 35$) indicated a lack of specialized materials for their specific course or campus type (Advanced

⁹ Know/show charts are graphic organizers that help students organize information before, during, and after a unit or a lesson. They can be used to engage students in a new topic, activate prior knowledge, share unit objectives, and monitor students’ learning.

¹⁰ Core subject areas include Reading Language Arts, Social Studies, Mathematics, and Science.

Placement, or AP, courses; Special Education; ACE¹¹ curriculum; or Pre-Kindergarten materials) as a barrier.

When asked about training, a total of 104 out of the 166 teachers who responded to the item stated that they had received training on the curriculum (63%). However, while 79.9 percent ($n = 83$) “agreed” or “strongly agreed” that they received adequate training on how to access or log in to the curriculum, 58.7 percent ($n = 61$) “agreed” or “strongly agreed” that they had received adequate training on how to use the curriculum to plan lessons. A complete listing of responses is available in Appendix B.

KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Key Findings

Dallas ISD allocated grant funds to the Language, Literacy, and Social Studies Curriculum Enhancement project to provide teachers with physical and digital curriculum resources, assist with lesson planning and implementation, and provide personal support through grant-funded specialist positions. The project was funded through Title I, Part A at \$1,438,532.

- A district wide curriculum was created during the 2018-19 school year for designated courses in Reading Language Arts, Dual Language, English as a Second Language and Social Studies. The focus for the 2019-20 school year was on the continuous improvement of the curriculum units.
- The Language and Literacy and Social Studies departments conducted 588 school-based and districtwide curriculum training sessions for teachers, instructional coaches, and academic facilitators. In addition, staff members conducted classroom walk-throughs and facilitated PLCs to build teacher capacity at the school and feeder pattern level.
- Teachers shared insights through open-ended survey items on usefulness of the curriculum, suggested improvements, and which parts of the curriculum they felt benefitted students most. Overall, teachers appreciated the instructional planning calendars, wanted to see improved alignment between the curriculum and standardized tests, and requested help with pacing and lesson planning.
- In a survey of teachers with below average total minutes of PowerSchool Learning system usage, the most frequent responses to why they had not used the curriculum more included: “I haven’t had adequate training to use it”, “The curriculum materials I already have include everything that I need”, and “The layout of the curriculum content is difficult to navigate.” Of the teachers who selected “other,” the most common reason offered was a lack of specialized materials for their specific course or campus type.

¹¹The Dallas ISD Accelerating Campus Excellence (ACE) initiative incentivizes top teachers and principals to voluntarily work at the district’s highest-need schools, ensuring the best educators are in classrooms where they are needed the most. ACE schools combine effective instruction, additional learning time, and social and academic skill-building for continuous improvement.

Recommendations

Based on the key findings, the following recommendations are offered for stakeholders.

Improve methods for collecting feedback on professional development and training. Teacher feedback from both the curriculum feedback and usage surveys revealed issues with training on the system's use. Post training feedback surveys administered were not distributed to all who were trained this year, leaving major holes in the current knowledge of training practices.

Consider updating the layout of the PowerSchool Learning curriculum materials. Feedback from teachers indicated that the current site layout may lead to confusion for users. A redesign with emphasis on ease of navigation and streamlining resources by lesson may improve the user experience.

Continue seeking continuous direct feedback and partnership with classroom teachers. Communication with teachers will be the most productive way to improve the PowerSchool Learning System curriculum and ultimately have the biggest impact on student success.

REFERENCE

Watson, C. E. (2019). 2018-19 Evaluation of Title I Curriculum Design, Resources, and Specialists Program. Dallas, TX. Dallas Independent School District.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

Appendix A: Mean Overall Satisfaction Rates by Content Area for Each Six-Week Period

	Six-Weeks Unit - Mean Rating (Scale Range: 1 to 4)					Overall Mean
	1 (n=380)	2 (n=92)	3 (n= 62)	4 (n=88)	5 and 6	
K-2 RLA and Social Studies						
Formative Assessment	3.0	3.0	3.1	3.2	**	3.1
Writing Block	3.2	3.2	3.1	3.2	**	3.2
Text Recommendation	3.2	3.2	3.1	3.3	**	3.2
Reading Block	3.3	3.2	3.2	3.3	**	3.3
K-2 Science	1 (n=9)	2 (n=2)	3 (n=2)	4 (n=0)	5 and 6	Overall Mean
Formative Assessment	2.6	3.0*	3.0*	*	**	2.6
5E Lessons	2.6	3.0*	3.0*	*	**	2.6
Week-At-A-Glance	2.7	3.0*	3.0*	*	**	2.7
Curriculum Resource Guide	2.6	3.0*	3.0*	*	**	2.6
K-2 Math	1 (n=61)	2 (n=18)	3 (n=9)	4 (n=29)	5 and 6	Overall Mean
Formative Assessment	3.3	2.7	2.1	3.4	**	2.9
HLT Lessons	3.3	3.0	2.1	3.3	**	2.9
Week-At-A-Glance	3.4	3.6	2.1	3.6	**	3.2
Classroom Resources	3.4	3.2	2.4	3.6	**	3.2
RLA	1 (n=212)	2 (n=102)	3 (n=67)	4 (n=5)	5 and 6	Overall Mean
Unit Outline	2.9	3.0	3.3	2.2	**	2.9
Selected Texts	2.7	2.8	3.0	2.0	**	2.6
TEKS aligned questions	2.8	2.9	3.1	2.4	**	2.8
Writing tasks	2.5	2.8	3.0	2.4	**	2.7
Social Studies	1 (n=28)	2 (n=14)	3 (n=20)	4 (n=0)	5 and 6	Overall Mean
Guiding to Consensus Questions	3.0	3.1	2.7	*	**	2.9
Primary and Secondary	2.8	2.9	2.8	*	**	2.8
Additional Resources	3.0	3.1	2.4	*	**	2.8
TEKS aligned questions	2.8	3.4	2.6	*	**	2.9
Mathematics	1 (n=41)	2 (n=3)	3 (n=6)	4 (n=2)	5 and 6	Overall Mean
Instructional Focus Document	3.5	3.7*	2.5	4.0*	**	3.0
Model Lessons	3.4	3.3*	2.5	2.5*	**	3.0
Math Routines	3.4	3.0*	2.5	2.5*	**	3.0
Instructional Planning Calendar	3.5	3.7*	2.7	4.0*	**	3.1
Science	1 (n=21)	2 (n=14)	3 (n=7)	4 (n=2)	5 and 6	Overall Mean
Enduring Understandings	3.5	3.6	3.1	1.0*	**	3.4
Evidence of Mastery	3.2	3.1	3.3	1.0*	**	3.2
Model Lessons	3.2	3.5	3.0	1.5*	**	3.2
Reading and Writing in Science	3.1	3.3	2.9	1.0*	**	3.1

Source: Language and Literacy Department Curriculum Feedback Survey Data dated 03/10/20.

Note: Overall satisfaction ratings are on a scale from 1-4, with 1: "Not Useful" and 4: "Very Useful."

*Fewer than five respondents. **District implementation did not occur during at home learning.

Appendix B

Appendix B, Table 1: Curriculum Usage Survey Responses

What are some of the reasons why you have not used the district curriculum more? (Select all that apply) N = 167	n	%
I haven't had adequate training to use it.	38	22.8
The curriculum materials I already have include everything I need.	38	22.8
The layout of the curriculum content is difficult to navigate.	37	22.2
Other (please specify)	37	22.2
I've seen it, and it doesn't seem useful.	31	18.6
It wasn't a requirement for me to use them.	28	16.8
The curriculum itself is poorly organized.	27	16.2
The large amount of content is overwhelming.	27	16.2
The curriculum is too difficult to access.	24	14.4
N/A. I don't experience any of the barriers listed.	24	14.4
The curriculum is not culturally relevant.	20	12.0
I was unaware of it.	14	8.4
I am not interested in learning another online system.	13	7.8
It's not one of my campus's priorities.	13	7.8
The curriculum isn't aligned to district and/or state assessments.	13	7.8
The curriculum conflicts with instructions from my campus.	10	6.0
I planned to but have not gotten around to beginning.	6	3.6
I have been hesitant due to problems with PowerSchool that I've heard about.	3	1.8

Source: Evaluation and Assessment Curriculum Usage Survey Data file dated 1/24/20.

Note: Teachers could select multiple options.

Appendix B, Table 2: Curriculum Usage Survey Responses

Survey Item: "I received adequate training on..."	Strongly Agree n (%)	Agree n (%)	Disagree n (%)	Strongly Disagree n (%)	Undecided/ No Opinion n (%)
How to access/login to the curriculum	27 (26.0)	56 (53.9)	12 (11.5)	4 (3.8)	5 (4.8)
How to use the curriculum	20 (19.2)	53 (51.0)	18 (17.3)	6 (5.8)	7 (6.7)
How to lesson plan using the curriculum	17 (16.4)	44 (42.3)	24 (23.1)	12 (11.5)	7 (6.7)

Source: Evaluation and Assessment Curriculum Usage Survey Data file dated 1/24/20.