

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Early childhood (i.e., birth to approximately eight years old) is generally considered the most significant and influential time of life (Follari, 2015) and can provide a multitude of benefits, such as (a) developing foundational skills in language and literacy, (b) improving children's academic performance in reading and mathematics, and (c) closing achievement gaps based on ethnicity and socioeconomic status.¹

In 2021-22, the Dallas Independent School District (ISD) Early Learning Department strove to (a) improve kindergarten (K) readiness and (b) ensure all students performed at or above grade level in reading and mathematics by the end of grade two. The budget for the department in 2021-22 was \$32,392,950, an increase from 2020-21 (\$26,296,009).

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the district returned to in-person instruction for all students in 2021-22, with minimal exceptions. The district offered virtual learning to a small subset of students who met district eligibility requirements. To help mitigate learning loss and further support students, the district offered three different school calendars in 2021-22 (School-Day Redesign, Intersession, and Base/Traditional) and other supports.² Because of these variations in instructional time, and support activities, all results should be reviewed with caution.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS/OUTCOMES³

What was the context of the Early Learning programs and the related 2021-22 initiatives?

To improve K readiness, the Early Learning Department:

- Focused on increasing PK enrollment, extending community resources, increasing classroom quality, and supporting reading and language acquisition and mathematical concepts mastery.
- Offered full-day three-year-old PK at 40 campuses in 2021-22 (an increase from 37 in 2019-20).⁴

- Operated the Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY) program for children from two to five years old.⁵ One goal of the HIPPY program was to increase African American family involvement, which increased from 2020-21 (9%; $N = 646$) to 2021-22 (13%; $N = 770$).⁴
- Fostered community partnerships with AVANCE, Concilio, and PK partnership sites.⁶
- Continued using PK and K through grade-two specialists to improve classroom quality. The district employed 39 PK specialists, 71 K through grade-two specialists,⁷ six floating specialists to support teachers new to Reading Academies Cohort One campuses, 30 bilingual specialists, two special education/talented and gifted specialists, and 19 campus lead specialists. Specialists participated in professional development (PD) and provided teachers with training.⁸
- Administered *CLASS*, which is an observation instrument, to measure the quality of teacher-student interactions.⁹

To ensure all students performed on grade level in reading and mathematics by the end of grade two, the Early Learning Department:

- Increased focus on reading and language acquisition¹⁰
- Continued provision of supplemental mathematics manipulatives to students.
- Provided teachers with specialist coaching and PD.

What were the characteristics and continuous enrollment rates of early learning students?

In 2021-22, 41,892 students enrolled in early childhood education through grade two, an increase from 40,583 in 2020-21. A similar pattern of increase was observed in K (10,276 in 2020-21 to 10,308 in 2021-22).

¹ A full list of references can be found in the full report (Voss et al., 2022).

² Additional information can be found at <https://www.dallasisd.org/timetolearn> and <https://www.dallasisd.org/esser>.

³ Methodologies are available in the full report. Portions of this report have been adapted from Tyree and Hinkley (2020) and Tyree (2021).

⁴ As of December 2021.

⁵ For more information about the HIPPY program, see the HIPPY evaluation report (Tyree, 2020).

⁶ For more information about AVANCE, see <https://www.avance.org/>. For more information about Concilio, see <https://www.theconcilio.org/>.

⁷ Fifty-five of K through grade-two specialists also supported grade-three classrooms at Texas Reading Academies Cohort Two campuses.

⁸ A list of the trainings given to and provided by specialists is available in the full report.

⁹ For more information, see <http://teachstone.com/classroom-assessment-scoring-system/>.

¹⁰ K through grade-two teachers at 46 campuses attended Texas Reading Academies Cohort Two which provided training on concepts and methods that support the science of teaching reading (see Lorenz et al., 2022). An additional 56 campuses attended in 2020-21 as part of Cohort One.

Students were generally male (51%) and/or Hispanic (67%), and most were economically disadvantaged (87%). Emergent Bilinguals comprised 48 percent of students.

Seventy-nine percent of students who attended Dallas ISD PK in 2020-21 returned to Dallas ISD for K in 2021-22, meaning over a fifth left the district. Sixty-seven percent of students were continuously enrolled from 2018-19 (their K year) to 2021-22 (most students' grade-three year).

What were the early learning teacher retention rates?

Overall, a sizeable proportion of early learning teachers were no longer teaching in early learning grades or left the district during the past three years.

- For 2018-19 early learning teachers, 67 percent continued to teach in an early learning grade level in 2019-20; however, this rate dropped to 58 percent after two years and to 46 percent after three years.
- For 2019-20 early learning teachers, 73 percent continued to teach in an early learning grade level in 2020-21; however, this rate dropped to 56 percent after two years.
- For 2020-21 early learning teachers, 67 percent continued to teach in an early learning grade in 2021-22.

What was the quality of early learning instruction as measured by CLASS?¹¹

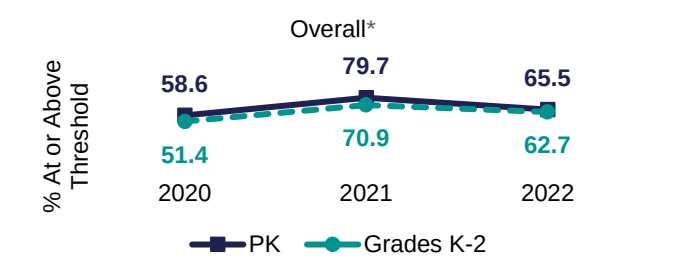
In spring 2022, almost all district teachers in PK and K through grade-two were:

- Strongest in emotional support and classroom organization (above 90% for all groups) but
- Instructional support (66% of PK through grade-two teachers) is an area for improvement.
- Sixty-six percent of PK teachers and 63 percent of K through grade-two teachers met or exceeded the quality threshold in all three domains.

From fall 2021 to spring 2022, the rate of teachers who met or exceeded quality thresholds were generally similar or trended upward for all three domains across all grades.

While the rate of teachers who met or exceeded all three quality thresholds from spring 2020 to spring 2021 trended upward, the rate trended downward from spring 2021 to spring 2022 (Figure 1).

Figure 1: 2020 to 2022 Spring Percentages of Prekindergarten and Kindergarten through Grade-Two Teachers At or Above the Quality Threshold by CLASS



Source: Data files can be found in the full report (Voss et al., 2022).
Note: * = These percentages reflect the percentage of teachers that met all three domain thresholds. 2020 and 2021 results should be reviewed with caution; details can be found in the full report (Voss et al., 2022).

How did early learning student scores change throughout the 2021-22 school year?

CIRCLE (PK)

The percentage of PK students scoring *On Track* on CIRCLE increased from BOY to EOY on vocabulary (46% to 69%) and mathematics (52% to 71%).

TX-KEA (K)

On the Literacy Screener (i.e., the K-readiness standard within TX-KEA), 67 percent of tested students (N = 8,112) were K ready in 2021-22.

- A higher percentage of students who attended Dallas ISD PK (DISD PK; 75%) were K ready than students who did not attend (No DISD PK; 42%).
- The percentage of K students scoring *On Track* on TX-KEA increased from BOY to EOY on vocabulary (69% to 71%) and mathematics (43% to 69%).¹²

MAP Growth

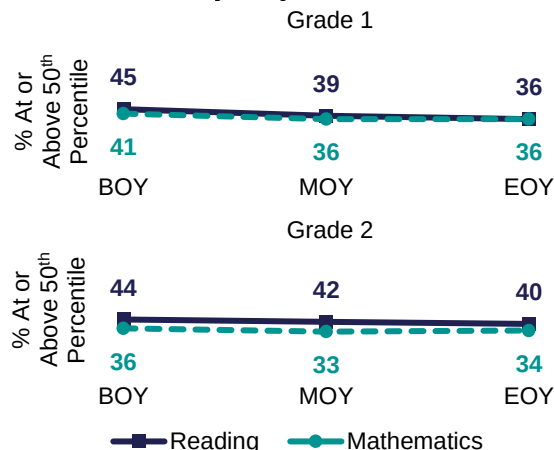
For both grade one and grade two, the percentage of students at or above grade level on MAP decreased from BOY to EOY on reading and mathematics (Figure 2). When reviewed by student group, the percentage of white students in grade two increased from BOY (68%) to MOY (71%) to EOY (74%) for reading.

- The board-approved progress measure goal that 38 percent of grade-two African American students would score at or above the 50th percentile on EOY MAP reading was not met (28%).
- The board-approved progress measure goal that 33 percent of grade-two African American students would score at or above grade the 50th percentile on EOY MAP mathematics was not met (19%).

¹¹ SMU conducted CLASS observations in person and virtually.

¹² This met the board-approved student progress measure that 57 percent of K students would score at or above grade level on TX-KEA EOY mathematics.

Figure 2: 2021-22 Percentage of Grade-One and Grade-Two Students At or Above the 50th Percentile on Combined K-2 MAP by Subject and Administration



Source: Data files can be found in the full report (Voss et al., 2022).
Note: To allow for examination of overall student performance of reading, the English and Spanish administrations were combined.

Overall

Overall, the rate of K students in 2021-22 who scored at or above their respective standards at BOY, MOY, and EOY in 2021-22 was higher than PK, grade-one and grade-two students, with the exception of PK mathematics (Table 1).

Compared to 2020-21, the percentage of students in 2021-22 who scored at or above grade level was generally higher for PK and K students and was similar or lower for grade-one and grade-two students.

Table 1: 2020-21 to 2021-22 Percentage of Students Performing At or Above Grade Level on Assessments by Subject, Administration, and Grade

Exam	BOY		MOY		EOY	
	20-21 %	21-22 %	20-21 %	21-22 %	20-21 %	21-22 %
PK						
CIRCLE-V	42.2	45.5	51.1	60.0	67.7	68.6
CIRCLE-M	57.9	52.0	64.5	63.9	73.8	70.9
K						
TX-KEA-V	58.7	68.7	73.4	68.0	69.3	71.0
TX-KEA-M	39.2	42.7	54.6	60.7	67.0	68.7
Grade One						
MAP-R	49.6	45.0	50.1	38.8	43.1	35.7
MAP-M	41.1	40.8	44.8	36.1	43.7	35.8
Grade Two						
MAP-R	48.1	43.9	49.7	41.8	44.6	39.9
MAP-M	37.5	36.0	38.5	32.9	35.0	34.0

Source: Data files can be found in the full report (Voss et al., 2022).
Note: % = Percentage of students On Track (CIRCLE and TX-KEA) or at or above the 50th percentile (MAP). Additional note information can be found in the full report (Voss et al., 2022).

Did student reading and mathematics performance differ by Dallas ISD PK enrollment status?

Overall, for students who attended district PK (Table 2),

- They attained at or above grade level (50th percentile) for reading and mathematics on EOY MAP at higher rates than those who did not attend district PK.
- They attained Approaches+¹³ or Meets+¹⁴ for STAAR reading and mathematics at higher rates than those who did not attend district PK.

Table 2: 2021-22 Percentage of Students At or Above the 50th Percentile, Approaches+, or Meets+ on Assessments by Cohort and PK Enrollment Status

Exam	Total N	DISD PK %	No DISD PK %
Kindergarten Data for 2021-22 K Cohort			
MAP Reading	7,473	38.3	27.8
MAP Math	7,848	40.8	28.1
Grade-One Data for 2020-21 K Cohort			
MAP Reading	6,929	35.1	28.1
MAP Math	7,019	34.5	27.5
Grade-Two Data for 2019-20 K Cohort			
MAP Reading	6,444	37.2	36.9
MAP Math	6,597	32.4	27.9
Grade-Three Data for 2018-19 K Cohort			
STAAR Reading Approaches+	6,359	65.9	62.6
STAAR Reading Meets+	6,193	37.4	36.2
STAAR Math Approaches+	6,360	68.7	63.1
STAAR Math Meets+	6,194	39.3	31.8

Source: Data files can be found in the full report (Voss et al., 2022).
Note: % = Percentage of students at or above the 50th percentile (MAP) and Approaches+ or Meets+ (STAAR). Additional note information can be found in the full report (Voss et al., 2022).

Did grade-three students meet outcome goals related to STAAR reading and mathematics?

For STAAR reading:

- Compared to 2020-21, a higher percentage of grade-three students performed at Approaches+ and Meets+ in 2021-22.
- The largest percentage point increases from 2020-21 to 2021-22 were observed for African American students (+10 at Approaches+ and +12 at Meets+).
- Sixty-seven percent of grade-three students scored Approaches+ in 2021-22, which was lower than the state (75%).
- Forty percent scored Meets+ in 2021-22. This did not meet the board-approved student outcome goal that

¹³ Approaches+ = Approaches Grade Level or Above

¹⁴ Meets+ = Meets Grade Level or Above

45 percent of grade-three students would attain Meets+ on STAAR reading.

For STAAR mathematics:

- Compared to 2020-21, a higher percentage of grade-three students performed at Approaches+ and Meets+ in 2021-22, except for special education students at Approaches+.
- The largest percentage point increases from 2020-21 to 2021-22 were observed for African American students (+12) at Approaches+ and for EB students (+14) at Meets+.
- Sixty-seven percent of grade-three students scored Approaches+ in 2021-22, which was lower than the state (70%).
- Thirty-eight percent scored Meets+ in 2021-22. This did not meet the board-approved student outcome goal that 46 percent of grade-three students would attain Meets+ on STAAR mathematics.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Continue efforts to retain Dallas ISD PK students in the district. While the continuous enrollment rates for K students increased from 2019-20 (77%) to 2020-21 (79%), the percentage stayed the same in 2021-22 (79%). This means that 21 percent of PK students did not remain in the district for K during the past two school years. However, despite substantial decrease in enrollment from 2019-20 to 2021-22 due to COVID-19, K enrollment slightly increased from 2020-21 to 2021-22, which might have been impacted by the Early Learning Department's launch of a marketing campaign aimed at increasing enrollment. Thus, program staff members should continue their efforts to increase enrollment (e.g., partnership sites).

Continue efforts to retain Dallas ISD early learning teachers in early learning grades. Since 2018-19, only between 67 percent and 73 percent of early learning teachers have remained in an early learning grade level after one year, and less than half of 2018-19 early learning teachers were still teaching an early learning grade after three years. Because the district provides PD and extended support to many early learning teachers, the Early Learning

Department should continue their efforts to retain early learning teachers in their current position.

Continue to implement the early learning initiatives with a focus on language and literacy development to drive K readiness and on-level performance by the end of grade two. While the percentage of students who tested as K ready decreased slightly (69% to 67%) from 2020-21 to 2021-22, 75 percent of students overall who attended DISD PK were rated as *On Track*. In addition, grade-two student performance on 2021-22 MAP decreased from BOY to EOY for reading (44% to 40%) and mathematics (36% to 34%). Because a higher percentage of students who attended Dallas ISD PK (75%) were K ready compared to those who did not attend (42%), the Early Learning Department should continue its focus on increasing K readiness and ensuring students are performing on grade level by the end of grade two, such as increasing access to PK.

Continue to train teachers to provide more effective instructional support for students. Overall, in both fall 2021 and spring 2022, teachers were strongest in emotional support, followed by classroom organization, then instructional support. However, from spring 2021 to spring 2022, the district saw declines in CLASS for all three domains individually and combined, and, 34 percent of PK and K through grade-two teachers did not meet the instructional support threshold in spring 2021. Thus, the department should continue efforts to improve these scores and provide additional resources regarding instructional support.

REFERENCES

- Follari, L. (2015). *Foundations and best practices in early childhood education: History, theories, and approaches to learning*. 3rd ed. Pearson Higher Education AU.
- Lorenz, A., Zhang, J., & Tyree, D. (2022). 2021-22 Evaluation of the Texas Reading Academies Program. Dallas, TX. Dallas Independent School District.
- Tyree, D. (2020). 2019-20 Evaluation of the Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPI). Dallas, TX. Dallas Independent School District.
- Tyree, D. (2021). 2020-21 Evaluation of Dallas ISD Early Learning Initiatives. Dallas, TX. Dallas Independent School District.
- Tyree, D. & Hinkley, S. (2020). 2019-20 Evaluation of Dallas ISD Early Learning Initiatives. Dallas, TX. Dallas Independent School District.
- Voss, S., Kim, M., & Tyree, D. (2022). 2021-22 Evaluation of Dallas ISD Early Learning Initiatives. Dallas, TX. Dallas Independent School District.

EA22-170-4

Sydney Voss, Ph.D., Evaluation Analyst II

Danielle Tyree, Ph.D., Evaluation Analyst I

Myoungsook Kim, Ph.D., Evaluation Analyst II

©2022 Dallas Independent School District (Dallas ISD)

Mail a written request for permission to use or reproduce any part of this document to:

Dallas ISD Department of Evaluation and Assessment; H. B. Bell School Support Center; 2909 Buckner Blvd.; Box10; Dallas, TX 75228

An electronic version of this report and the full 2021-22 report can be found at www.dallasisd.org/Page/888.

For more information, please contact Program Evaluation at evaluation@dallasisd.org.