

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Texas Legislature House Bill 3 (HB 3), passed by the 86th Texas Legislature in June of 2019, requires all Texas Kindergarten (K) through grade-three teachers and principals to attend Texas Reading Academies. The goal of the Texas Reading Academies is to “increase teacher knowledge and implementation of evidence-based practices to positively impact student literacy achievement.” (TEA, n.d.). The Texas Commission on Public School Finance final report (2018) noted that student outcome shortfalls were evident in early childhood education. The report further noted that “the most effective and financially efficient way to close educational attainment gaps [...] is through focusing investment on improving student outcomes in early childhood education, before the gaps compound over subsequent years.” (p. 19) However, the Texas Director of Texas Reading Academies noted during a 2022 webinar that “many educators are not prepared to provide evidence-based reading instructions [...] based on specific needs.” (TEA, 2022).

To address these issues, Texas Reading Academies were implemented to provide school districts with the flexibility to meet local needs and priorities, such as the selection of study model (comprehensive in-person vs blended), choice of Authorized Provider, and implementation level (local vs direct service). Starting in 2020-21, the Dallas Independent School District (ISD) became an authorized provider of Texas Reading Academies through the Texas Education Agency (TEA), allowing the district to conduct training using Early Learning specialists as cohort leaders. All elementary campuses will participate in Texas Reading Academies over three-year span (2020-2023). Texas Reading Academies will play a central role in meeting the Dallas ISD Board Goal that 56 percent of students score at the Meets Grade Level or Above (Meets+) standard on grade-three *State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR)* reading by 2025.

The total budget for the 2021-22 Texas Reading Academies program was \$2,068,977, an increase of 37 percent from last year (\$1,511,794). The total included \$1,700,000 for stipends and supplemental pay for teacher work required beyond the school day, \$25,000 for supplemental pay for librarians and campus coaches that attended Saturday PD sessions, \$253,977 to hire additional staff members to support the Texas Reading Academies program, and \$90,000 for printing facilitator guides and materials.

PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION

The purpose of the 2021-22 Texas Reading Academies evaluation was to examine context, process, and outcome data. Context data included a summary of the program. Process data included beginning-of-year (BOY), middle-of-year (MOY), and end-of-year (EOY) teacher surveys, MOY and EOY administrator surveys, and post-PD survey data. Outcome data included student academic outcomes including *Texas Kindergarten Entry Assessment (TX-KEA)*, *Measures of Academic Progress Growth (MAP)*, and *STAAR* reading. Detailed methodology is available in the full report.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS/OUTCOMES

What was the context of the Texas Reading Academies?

The 86th Texas Legislature passed HB 3 in 2019.¹ The bill required all K through grade-three teachers and principals to complete Reading Academy training by 2022-23. The Dallas ISD planned to train staff members in three one-year cohorts (2020-21, 2021-22, and 2022-23). The goal of the Texas Reading Academies was to increase teacher knowledge of evidence-based methods of teaching reading and ensure these methods were implemented in classrooms, thereby increasing student achievement in reading. Ultimately, the program served to push the district toward achieving Student Outcome Goal Two as set by the Board of Trustees that 56 percent of students score at the Meets+ standard on grade-three *STAAR* reading by 2025.

Implementation during Year 1 in the Dallas ISD began with teachers and administrators at 56 high-priority elementary campuses; Year 2 targeted 46 elementary campuses and any teachers new to Year 1 campuses, and Year 3 will target 48 elementary campuses and any teachers new to Year 1 and Year 2 campuses. While HB 3 only required teachers and principals to attend Texas Reading Academies, the Dallas ISD also trained all assistant principals, Campus Instructional Coaches (CICs), and Instructional Lead Coaches (ILCs) on campuses included in each cohort.

Based on job requirements, participants completed one of three learning pathways. General and special education teachers completed the English Language Arts pathway, bilingual general education and bilingual special education

¹ More information about HB 3 can be found at <https://tea.texas.gov/about-tea/government-relations-and-legal/government-relations/house-bill-3>.

teachers completed the Biliteracy pathway, and campus administrators completed the Administrator pathway. Each pathway consisted of 12 PD modules.² The module content for each pathway was the same except for additional content embedded in the Biliteracy pathway modules.

The Dallas ISD applied for and was approved to serve as an authorized provider for Texas Reading Academies PD. Texas Reading Academy cohort leaders implemented two different PD models (comprehensive and blended). Comprehensive coaches could lead up to 60 participants in person. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the comprehensive model was implemented primarily in a virtual asynchronous format from fall 2020 until the beginning of spring 2022. Implementation returned to a face-to-face format in March 2022. Blended facilitators could coordinate online learning for up to three cohorts of participants with up to 100 participants per cohort.

What were the characteristics and completion rates of teachers and administrators who participated in Texas Reading Academy Cohort Two?

Texas Reading Academy Cohort Two included 741 teachers in the English Language Arts pathway, 392 teachers in the Biliteracy pathway, and 186 administrators in the Administrator pathway.³ For teachers in the English Language Arts and Biliteracy pathways combined, most Texas Reading Academies teachers were female (86%) and had obtained a bachelor's degree (67%). About 42 percent of teachers were Hispanic and 35 percent were African American. The Cohort 2 teachers had taught, on average, 10 years in the state of Texas. Administrators were predominantly female (78%) and almost half were African American (48%). About 76 percent had obtained a master's degree or higher.

Per state accountability metrics, out of the 1,317 Cohort Two learners (i.e., teachers and administrators), 1,251 learners participated in Texas Reading Academies in 2021-22. Of those, 99.9 percent of learners ($n=1,250$) completed the Texas Reading Academy program.

What were the participant perceptions of the Texas Reading Academies?⁴

Fifty-one percent of Cohort Two teachers responded to the BOY survey ($N=340$). Response rates at MOY and EOY were 32 percent ($N=221$) and 53 percent ($N=519$), respectively. Overall, the percentage of positive responses (i.e., agreed to a moderate or great extent) either remained consistent or increased from BOY to EOY for Cohort Two teachers. For example, the percentage of respondents who agreed that their administration strongly supported the

HB 3 changes remained consistent (85%) from BOY to EOY. While the rate of positive responses dipped slightly at MOY when respondents were asked if they valued the changes by the HB 3 Reading Academies, the overall rate increased from BOY (89%) to EOY (92%). Likewise, while the rate of positive responses dipped at MOY when teachers were asked if they felt capable of making the kinds of changes needed for HB 3 Reading Academies, the overall rate increased to 90% by EOY. Lastly, the rate of positive responses gradually increased from BOY to EOY when respondents were asked if (a) the HB 3 changes helped their students reach higher levels of achievements (84% to 91%) and (b) teachers at their school strongly supported the HB 3 changes (78% to 85%).

While teacher perceptions regarding campus collaboration and coach tended to fluctuate over time, the rate of positive responses (i.e., somewhat or strongly agreed) were higher at EOY compared to BOY. For example, the rate of positive responses increased from BOY to EOY when respondents were asked if (a) weekly teacher meetings were a valuable opportunity to collaborate with colleagues (70% to 75%) and (b) there was a strong building level communication around teaching reading (66% to 72%). Likewise, the rate of teachers who agreed that they had frequent opportunities to share ideas about how to teach reading better increased from BOY (68%) to EOY (76%). The rate of positive responses increased from BOY (59%) to EOY (62%) when respondents were asked whether the CIC provided effective assistance in teaching reading, and it increased from BOY (64%) to EOY (76%) when asked if the early learning instructional specialist provided effective assistance in reading.

The proportion of teachers who indicated that they had mostly or completely integrated the Reading Academies content in their work increased from MOY (50%) to EOY (63%). At the end of the year, teachers were asked to select up to three modules that were most impactful on their teaching reading during the school year. Teachers most often selected phonological awareness (47%), followed by decoding, encoding, and word study (39%) and reading comprehension (32%). Conversely, teachers viewed the modules on science of teaching reading (10%), establishing a literacy community (8%), and tiered support (7%) as least impactful.

At MOY survey administration, teachers were asked to identify the best parts of their Reading Academy experience. Of the 360 respondents who answered this question (70% of sample), they most often reported that sharing ideas and experience (9%) was the best part of the program, followed by reading strategies (7%), resources provided (7%), activities and discussion (6%) explicit

² Modules included: Introduction to the Texas Reading Academies; The Science of Teaching Reading; Establishing a Literacy Community; Using Data to Support Instruction and Tiered Levels of Support; Oral Language and Vocabulary; Phonological Awareness; Pre-Reading Skills; Decoding, Encoding, and Word Study; Reading Fluency; Reading Comprehension; Written Composition; and Pulling It All Together.

³ Participant list dated 11/10/21 and district personnel file dated 11/11/21. Two teachers were not included in analyses because characteristic data could not be matched.

⁴ As HB 3 was used in the surveys in lieu of Texas Reading Academies, the survey results report HB 3 instead of Texas Reading Academies to accurately reflect the wording of the surveys.

instruction (4%), collaboration with peer and teachers (3%), flexibility and self-paced (2%), and learning content (2%). At EOY, teachers also responded that their experience could have been improved by making it more of a meaningful learning experience (26%), having more time to complete modules/ being less time consuming (24%), being flexible and self-paced (9%), being face to face (6%), having fewer modules or assignments (6%), and making it a summer course or held on PD days (2%).

Of the 172 Cohort Two administrators who received a MOY survey invitation, 69 (40%) completed the survey and were included in the analyses. Additionally, 166 Cohort Two administrators received an EOY survey invitation and 115 (69%) completed at least part of the survey. Overall, the rate of positive responses (i.e., agree to a moderate or great extent) for administrators increased from MOY to EOY. For example, the rate of positive responses increased from MOY to EOY when respondents were asked if (a) teachers at their school strongly supported HB 3 changes (78% to 88%) and (b) HB 3 changes helped their student reach higher levels of achievement (91% to 96%). Likewise, the percentage of administrators who reported that they valued the kind of changes called for by the HB3 Reading Academies increased from MOY (88%) to EOY (95%). The rate of administrators who agreed that they were capable of supporting the kinds of changes called for by the HB3 reading academies increased by one percentage point from MOY to EOY (88% to 89%).

Administrators' responses to campus collaboration and coach effectiveness items responses of administrators tended to be more positive than teachers at both MOY and EOY. However, administrator responses generally trended downward from MOY to EOY. For example, the rate of positive responses decreased from MOY to EOY when respondents were asked if (a) weekly teacher meetings were a valuable opportunity to collaborate with colleagues (91% to 84%) and (b) there was a strong building level communication around teaching reading (84% to 77%). Likewise, the rate of administrators who agreed that the instructional specialist provided effective assistance in teaching reading slightly decreased from MOY (77%) to EOY (74%). The rate of positive responses also decreased from MOY (84%) to EOY (79%) when respondents were asked if there were frequent opportunities to share the ideas about better teaching reading. Lastly, the percentage of administrators who agreed that the CIC provided effective assistance in teaching reading slightly decreased from MOY (78%) to EOY (75%).

In addition, the percentage of administrators who reported that they had mostly or completely integrated the Reading Academies content into their work trended slightly downward from 56 percent at MOY to 53 percent at EOY.

Teachers and administrators were also asked to complete post-PD survey in December 2021. Most participants somewhat agreed or strongly agreed that the sessions were well organized and effectively presented (87%) and that the

presenter or presenters effectively communicated the session content (87%). Participants were also asked to rate the extent to which the session content was relevant to their work and the extent to which they would incorporate elements from the session into their work. Most participants indicated that they would incorporate elements of the session in their teaching (90%) and that the session content was relevant (85%).

What were the student outcomes at campuses that had and had not completed Texas Reading Academies?

Results should be viewed with caution because Texas Reading Academies Cohort One and Cohort Two campuses were selected due to previous low performance and Cohort Two teachers may not have received all PD in time to implement it in the 2021-22 school year. Assessment results are presented in Table 1.

TX-KEA

In general, the proportions of K students scoring *On Track* were similar for students at Texas Reading Academies Campuses Cohorts One and Two and at non-implementing campuses. Sixty-two percent of Cohort One and 61 percent of Cohort Two K students at Texas Reading Academies campuses scored *On Track* on TX-KEA Blending, and 61 percent of K students at non-implementing campuses scored *On Track*. Thus, the ESSER-related goal that at least 62 percent of students would score at or above grade level (*On Track*) on TX-KEA Blending in spring 2022 was only met by Cohort One. For Cohort One, the one-year change in the percentage of students scoring *On Track* on TX-KEA Blending increased by six percentage points from 56% in 2020-21 to 62% in 2021-22.

MAP

For Kindergarten, the rate of students scoring at or above the 50th percentile was higher for students at Texas Reading Academies Cohorts One (38%) and Two (41%) campuses than non-implementing campuses (37%). For grade one, a slightly higher proportion of students in Cohort One (36%) and non-implementing campuses (36%) scored at or above the 50th percentile than Cohort Two campuses (35%). For grade two, the rate of students in Cohort One (41%) and Cohort 2 (40%) was slightly higher than non-implementing campuses (39%).

For Cohort One, the one-year change (2020-21 to 2021-22) in the percentage of students scoring at or above the 50th percentile on MAP decreased by 11 percentage points for K students (49% to 38%), decreased by five percentage points for grade-one students (41% to 36%), and decreased by four percentage points for grade-two students (45% to 41%). This downward trend was also evident in the overall district data from 2020-21 to 2021-22: Grade K (48% to 38%), Grade One (43% to 36%), and Grade Two (45% to 40%).

STAAR

Overall, a higher proportion of Grade-Three Texas Reading Academies Cohort One students met each standard (Approaches+: 69%, Meets+: 42%, Masters: 25%) than non-implementing (68%, 41%, 24%, respectively) or Cohort Two students (64%, 38%, 23%, respectively). For Cohort One grade-three students, the one-year change in the percentage of students scoring at STAAR standards increased by 10 percentage points for Approaches+ (59% to 69%) and Meets+ (32% to 42%) and increased by seven percentage points for Masters (17% to 24%).

Table 1: 2020-21 to 2021-22 Percentage of Students Performing At or Above Grade Level on Reading Assessments by Year, Cohort, Grade, and Assessment

Exam	2020-21			2021-22			
	RA1 %	Non %	DISD %	RA1 %	RA2 %	Non %	DISD %
K							
TX-KEA	55.5	58.4	57.5	61.9	60.7	61.4	61.3
MAP	49.3	47.8	48.3	37.5	40.5	36.8	38.3
Grade One							
MAP	40.9	44.1	43.1	36.0	35.4	35.6	35.7
Grade Two							
MAP	45.4	44.2	44.6	41.2	39.6	39.0	39.9
Grade Three							
S-App+	59.0	61.4	60.6	69.0	64.2	67.7	67.0
S-Meet+	31.7	32.8	32.4	41.5	38.4	40.9	40.3
S-Mast	17.4	18.2	17.9	24.7	22.5	24.2	23.8

Source: Public Education Information Management System district database: 10/30/20 (2020-21) and 11/01/21 (2021-22). TX-KEA: 10/28/20 (2020-21) and 06/17/22 (2021-22). MAP: 06/23/21 (2020-21) and 06/22/22 (2021-22). STAAR: 07/12/21 (2020-21) and 06/26/22 (2021-22).

Note: % = Percentage of students at standard. DISD = Dallas ISD. App+ = Approaches+. Meet+ = Meets+. Mast = Masters. Non = Non-Implementing Campuses. RA = Reading Academies. S = STAAR.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Expand the administration of the post-PD survey to include all participants at both BOY and EOY. In 2021-22, the post-PD survey was only administered in fall 2021. No spring 2022 PD survey data was collected. Because the HB3 Reading Academies was implemented throughout the 2021-22 school year, post-PD survey data should be collected after each training session to track changes in (a) the quality of the PD sessions, (b) the extent that

participants incorporated elements of the lesson into their work, and (c) the relevance of the material.

Expand the administration of the administrator survey to include BOY. While Cohort Two Teachers were surveyed at BOY, MOY, and EOY, administrators who directed the reading instruction on their campuses were only surveyed at MOY and EOY. Measuring administrator perceptions at BOY, MOY, and EOY could provide additional insight into how their perceptions regarding the Texas Reading Academies program change over time. For example, while administrator's overall perceptions regarding HB3 trended upward from MOY to EOY, their perceptions regarding campus collaboration and coach effectiveness trended downward during the same period. To determine if these trends would continue or fluctuate during the school year, additional information (i.e., BOY data) is needed to measure how administrator perceptions change over time.

Continue monitoring the performance of students at Cohort One and Cohort Two Texas Reading Academies campuses. The academic achievement of students at Texas Reading Academies campuses (Cohort One and Cohort Two) was similar or slightly higher than students at non-participating campuses on TX-KEA Blending and MAP and STAAR reading. However, because training lasted all year, Cohort Two participants were not able to fully incorporate the Reading Academy content into their classroom instructions during the 2021-22 school year. Thus, future evaluations should continue to monitor student reading achievement during Year 3 of the program as Cohort One and Two teachers continue to employ concepts from the Reading Academies.

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