

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Accelerating Campus Excellence (ACE) initiative was formed in 2015-16 with the goal to transform schools through strong leadership and effective teachers enveloped in an environment of high expectations for students and staff members. To accomplish this goal, the Dallas Independent School District (ISD) provided competitive stipends to incentivize top teachers and principals to relocate to some of the district's most challenged campuses.

In 2020-21, all ACE campuses were identified as part of the 80 High Priority Campuses (HPC). The district expanded the ACE program to 23 campuses including:

- ACE 1.0 - Anne Webb Blanton, Billy Earl Dade, Umphrey Lee, and Dr. Frederick Douglass Todd Sr.<sup>1</sup>
- ACE 2.0 - C.F. Carr, J.N. Ervin, Thomas J. Rusk, and Edward Titche (Campuses participated in their sixth year of the program)
- ACE 3.0 - Cesar Chavez, Paul L. Dunbar, L.L. Hotchkiss, Maple Lawn, Martin Luther King, Jr., Elisha M. Pease, and H.S. Thompson (Campuses participated in their fifth year of the program)
- ACE 4.0; John Neely Bryan, Rufus C. Burleson, Cedar Crest, Nancy J. Cochran, Frederick Douglass, Eddie Bernice Johnson, George W. Truett, and Wilmer-Hutchins Elementary (W-H ES) (Campuses participated in their third year of the program)

During the 2021-22 and 2022-23 school years, the district offered three different school calendars (School-Day Redesign, Intersession, and Base/Traditional) and other supports<sup>2</sup> to help mitigate learning loss due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Five of the ACE campuses adopted the Intersession school calendar (Bryan, Ervin, Pease, Truett, and W-H ES) and two adopted the Redesign school calendar (Maple Lawn and Rusk). Because of these variations in instructional time and support activities, all results should be reviewed with caution.

### Program Components

The ACE program aimed to improve student achievement by striving to accelerate learning through a focus on three general components: *People*, *Learning*, and *Expectations*. To support acceleration in the three areas, ACE campuses prioritized balanced literacy, social and emotional development, and professional learning communities (PLCs) with strong data practices.

To accelerate factors related to *people*, ACE campuses were staffed with strong administrators and effective teachers.

To accelerate factors related to *learning*, ACE staff members participated in supplemental professional development opportunities and committed to excellence in both academic and social-emotional learning.

To accelerate factors related to *expectations*, ACE campuses emphasized relationships among campus community members.

### Program Goals

The ACE department aimed to achieve goals for each of the three components: *People*, *Learning*, and *Expectations*.

The following objectives measured progress within the *people* component. Recruit, retain, and develop strong teachers as measured by:

- A minimum of 60 percent of teachers on ACE campuses with Proficient I or above Teacher Excellence Initiative (TEI) effectiveness ratings.
- Annual teacher retention rates at or above district retention rates.
- Fourth or fifth quintile scores on the Culture of Feedback and Support section of the district Climate Survey.

The following objectives measured progress within the *learning* component.

- Improve rates of kindergarten to grade eight students performing on grade level in reading and mathematics as measured by the Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) *Measures of Academic Progress* (MAP) (i.e., rates of students who met or exceeded their MAP beginning-of-year (BOY) to end-of-year (EOY) projected growth target rates at or above the district rate).
- Improve rates of grade three to grade eight students performing at the Approaches Grade Level or Above (Approaches+) and Meets Grade Level or Above (Meets+) in reading and mathematics as measured by the *State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness* (STAAR) and STAAR End-of-Course (EOC) (i.e., performance at or above the district and at or above the matched non-ACE student performance).<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In 2022-23, Sarah Zumwalt Middle School was renamed to Dr. Frederick Douglass Todd, Sr. Middle School.

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

<sup>3</sup> Due to the STAAR test redesign, TEA did not calculate student progress measures in 2023.

The following objectives measured progress within the *expectations* component. Increase positive student expectations and parent engagement as measured by:

- Attendance rates at or above the district rate.
- Student experience survey positive response rates at or above district averages.
- Parent perception positive response rates at or above district averages.

### Program Staff

#### Teachers

- There were 879 teachers on ACE campuses. A higher proportion of teachers on ACE campuses were female and African American compared to the district (Table 1).
- Over half of the teachers at ACE campuses (57.1%) had earned Proficient I or above TEI effectiveness ratings, which was lower than the program objective (60%).
- At the campuses level, ten of the 23 (43.5%) ACE campuses had at least 60 percent or more of teachers who had earned Proficient I or above TEI effectiveness ratings (Blanton, Lee, Titcher, King, Pease, Burleson, Cochran, Johnson, Truett, and W-H ES).
- A higher proportion of ACE 4.0 (63.8%) teachers earned Proficient I or above TEI effectiveness ratings than ACE 1.0 (55.3%), ACE 2.0 (58.3%), and ACE 3.0 (50.5%).

**Table 1: 2022-23 ACE Teacher Characteristics**

|                                | ACE Overall<br>(N = 879) |      |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------|------|
|                                | N                        | %    |
| <b>Sex</b>                     |                          |      |
| Male                           | 193                      | 22.0 |
| Female                         | 686                      | 78.0 |
| <b>Race/Ethnicity</b>          |                          |      |
| African American               | 481                      | 54.7 |
| Hispanic                       | 277                      | 31.5 |
| White                          | 104                      | 11.8 |
| Other/Missing                  | 17                       | 1.9  |
| <b>Highest Degree Earned*</b>  |                          |      |
| Associate's                    | 6                        | 0.7  |
| Bachelor's                     | 598                      | 68.0 |
| Master's                       | 186                      | 21.2 |
| Doctoral                       | 14                       | 1.6  |
| Other/Missing                  | 75                       | 8.5  |
| <b>TEI Effectiveness Level</b> |                          |      |
| No Level or N/A                | 216                      | 24.6 |
| Below Proficient I             | 161                      | 18.3 |
| Proficient I, II, or III       | 424                      | 48.2 |
| Exemplary I or higher          | 78                       | 8.9  |

Source: Dallas ISD Human Capital Management (HCM) personnel file dated 01/05/23 and teacher effectiveness level data file dated 11/29/22.

Note: \* = Highest degree earned at the time of hire. Totals include teachers and instructional leads. Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding.

#### Principals

There were 23 ACE principals who were predominately female (65.2 %) and African American (60.9%). Most

principals held at least a Master's degree (82.6%) at the time of hire. Assigned principals remained with their assigned ACE campus throughout the academic year.

### Budget

The total 2022-23 budget for the ACE program was \$18,926,142 which was the same amount of funding in 2021-22. This budget was funded through district general operating funds. The budget included funds for additional personnel and teacher stipends, uniforms, and professional development and extra duty pay.

## EVALUATION QUESTIONS/OUTCOMES

### How was the ACE program implemented?

- For the first half of the 2022-23 school year, the eight ACE 4.0 campuses were directly supervised by the ACE executive director. Through this supervision, these campuses typically received more intense and frequent interventions (i.e. site visits, observations, etc.) accompanied with higher expectations.
- In January 2023, all ACE 4.0 campuses returned to their respective vertical teams and the ACE program executive director no longer directly supervised implementation at these campuses. To ensure ACE program implementation remained consistent and accelerated for the remainder of the school year, the ACE program staff partnered with vertical team executive directors to calibrate expectations.
- The program strived to accelerate excellence through the implementation of five key levers: strategic staffing, instructional excellence, social-emotional support, extended learning, and supportive partnerships.

### ACE Student Population

- In 2022-23, there were 12,047 students at ACE campuses compared to 11,839 in 2021-22 (Table 2).
- Compared to the district, a higher proportion of students at ACE campuses were identified as Economically Disadvantaged and African American.
- Conversely, there was a smaller proportion Hispanic students and Emergent Bilingual (EB) students at ACE campuses compared to the district.

**Table 2: 2022-23 ACE Student Characteristics**

|                               | ACE Overall<br>(N = 12,047) |      |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|------|
|                               | N                           | %    |
| <b>Sex</b>                    |                             |      |
| Male                          | 6,199                       | 51.5 |
| Female                        | 5,848                       | 48.5 |
| <b>Race/Ethnicity</b>         |                             |      |
| African American              | 5,459                       | 45.3 |
| Hispanic                      | 6,022                       | 50.0 |
| White                         | 196                         | 1.6  |
| Other/Missing                 | 370                         | 3.1  |
| <b>Special Student Groups</b> |                             |      |
| Econ. Dis.                    | 11,681                      | 97.0 |
| Emergent Bilingual            | 4,807                       | 39.9 |
| Special Education             | 1,355                       | 11.2 |

Source: Dallas ISD Student Information System (SIS) demographic data dated 10/31/22.

Note: Econ. Dis. = Economically disadvantaged.

### What were the outcomes related to the people component of the ACE program?

#### Teacher Retention

- Twelve of the 23 (52.2%) ACE campuses met the program goal of having annual teacher retention rates at or above the district retention rate (64.2%).
- Two out of four (50.0%) ACE 1.0 campuses (Blanton and Lee) and one out of four (25.0%) ACE 2.0 campuses (Ervin) met the program goal.
- Three out of seven (42.9%) ACE 3.0 campuses (King, Dunbar, and Pease) and six out of eight (75.0%) ACE 4.0 campuses (Bryan, Burleson, Truett, Cochran, W-H ES, and Johnson) met the program goal.

#### District Campus Climate Survey

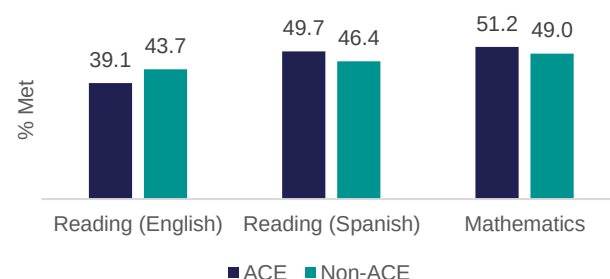
- Eight of the 23 ACE campuses (34.8%) had scores in the fourth or fifth quintile on the Culture of Feedback and Support section of the Fall 2022 district Climate Survey.
- Nine of the 23 ACE campuses (39.1%) had scores in the fourth or fifth quintile on the Culture of Feedback and Support section of the Spring 2023 district Climate Survey.

### What were the outcomes related to the learning component of the ACE program?

#### NWEA Measures of Academic Progress

- Compared to matched non-ACE students, students who attended ACE campuses were less likely to perform at the average or above growth quintiles on the MAP Reading (English) ( $X^2 = 16.696$ ,  $p < .001$ ; Cramer's  $V = .043$ ), but were more likely to perform at the average or above growth quintile on the MAP Reading (Spanish) ( $X^2 = 6.858$ ,  $p = .009$ ; Cramer's  $V = .040$ ) and MAP Mathematics ( $X^2 = 7.001$ ,  $p = .008$ ; Cramer's  $V = .022$ ).
- Compared to matched non-ACE students, students who attended ACE campuses were more likely to meet or

exceed projected growth on the MAP Reading (Spanish) ( $X^2 = 4.478$ ,  $p = .034$ ; Cramer's  $V = .033$ ) and MAP Mathematics ( $X^2 = 7.178$ ,  $p = .007$ ; Cramer's  $V = .023$ ), but were less likely to meet or exceed projected growth on the MAP Reading (English) ( $X^2 = 20.791$ ,  $p < .001$ ; Cramer's  $V = .047$ ) (Figure 1).

**Figure 1: 2022-23 ACE and Matched Non-ACE MAP Projected Growth Rates**

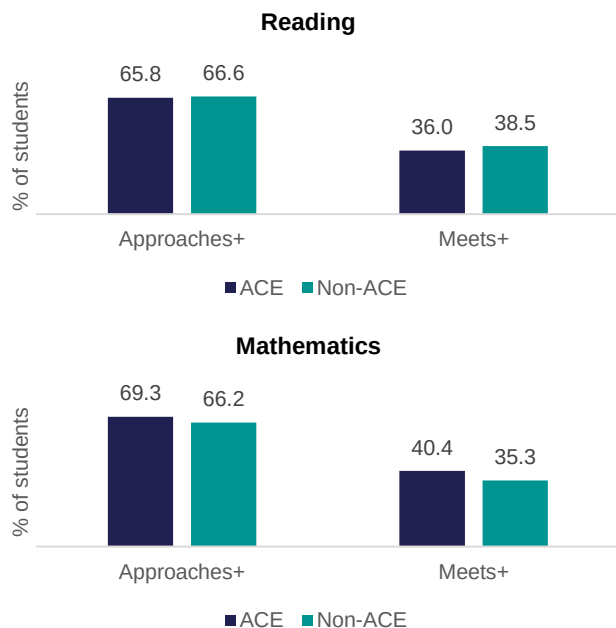
Source: Dallas ISD MAP files dated 06/25/23 (EOY). SIS demographic file dated 10/31/22.

- Seven of the 23 (30.4%) ACE campuses met the program goal of meeting or exceeding the district projected growth rate on the MAP Reading (English) test.
- Nine of the 20 (45.0%) ACE elementary campuses met the program goal of meeting or exceeding the district projected growth rates on the MAP Reading (Spanish) test.
- Fourteen of the 23 (60.9%) ACE campuses met the program goal of meeting or exceeding the district projected growth rates on the MAP Mathematics test.

#### State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness

- Compared to matched non-ACE students, students who attended ACE campuses were less likely to achieve the Meets+ performance standard ( $X^2 = 6.572$ ,  $p = .010$ ; Cramer's  $V = .026$ ) on the reading STAAR test (Figure 2).
- Compared to matched non-ACE students, students who attended ACE campuses were more likely to achieve the Approaches+ ( $X^2 = 10.644$ ,  $p = .001$ ; Cramer's  $V = .033$ ) and the Meets+ performance standard ( $X^2 = 27.155$ ,  $p < .001$ ; Cramer's  $V = .053$ ) on the mathematics STAAR test (Figure 2).

**Figure 2: 2022-23 ACE and Matched Non-ACE Student STAAR Approaches+ and Meets+ Performance Standard Rates**



Source: Dallas ISD STAAR files dated 08/12/23 and STAAR EOC files dated 08/12/23. SIS demographic file dated 10/31/22.

- Two of the 23 (8.7%) ACE campuses met the program goal of achieving Approaches+ and Meets+ performance standard rates at or above the district on the reading and mathematics STAAR tests.
- One of the four (25.0%) ACE 1.0 campuses (Blanton) and one of the four (25.0%) ACE 2.0 campuses (Carr) met the goal of achieving performance standard rates at or above the district on the reading and mathematics STAAR tests.

### What were the outcomes related to the expectations component of the ACE program?

#### Attendance Rates

- Thirteen of the 23 (56.5%) ACE campuses met the program goal of having attendance rates at or above the district (92.0%).
- Attendance rates for the district and all but three of the 23 ACE campuses (Hotchkiss, King, and W-H ES) increased from 2021-22.

### Student Experience Survey

- Fourteen of the 23 (60.9%) ACE campuses met the program goal of exceeding the overall favorable rate for the district (District Elementary = 83.0%, District Middle/High = 72.0%).

### Parent/Guardian Survey

- Twenty-one of the 23 (91.3%) ACE campuses met the program goal of meeting or exceeding the district positive response rate (91.9%).
- All ACE 1.0 and ACE 3.0 campuses met the program goal of meeting or exceeding the district positive response rate.

### What were the 2023 ACE state accountability ratings?

Due to the STAAR test redesign, state accountability results will not be available until November 2023. Therefore, the results are excluded from this report.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

**Monitor the impact of the new districtwide curricula on student outcomes.**

**Provide additional supports for schools that achieved less than 50 percent of all program objectives.**

## REFERENCES

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**Margaret Mastrogiovanni, Ph.D., Evaluation Analyst II**

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For more information, please contact Program Evaluation at [evaluation@dallasisd.org](mailto:evaluation@dallasisd.org).