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AISD Prekindergarten Partnership Program Summary Report, 2019–2020

Introduction

Austin Independent School District (AISD) was awarded a \$2,000,000 2-year School Transformation Fund implementation grant by the Texas Education Agency (TEA), authorized by the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), Title I, Part A, School Improvement grant. The grant supports a prekindergarten (pre-K) partnership between AISD, United Way for



Data are summarized for beginning-of-year (BOY) and middle-of-year (MOY) assessments. End-of-year data were not available due to school closures associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. This report covers the extent to which participating centers met TEA standards

visited weekly throughout the school year until mid-March, when any professional development opportunities and/or training sessions were only available online due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In-person coaching sessions included observation, conversation, and debriefing after children left for the day. Program staff reported that many teachers received informal coaching either in person or on the phone, upon request.

Academic Performance

Students completed the Children’s Learning Institute Engage CIRCLE Progress Monitoring tool (CIRCLE PM) at BOY and MOY. End-of-year performance data were unavailable due to school closures associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. Trained staff administered three subscales of CIRCLE PM to children ($n = 183$) at participating UWATX pre-K4 centers. Additional students were tested but were not included in the analyses because they were not co-enrolled with AISD. The three subscales completed by UWATX students were Book and Print Knowledge, Social and Emotional Development, and Approaches to Learning. Figure 2 shows the percentage of UWATX students scoring on track declined for the Approaches to Learning and Social and Emotional Development subscales, across the semester. On the other hand, the percentage of UWATX students scoring on track for Book and Print Knowledge increased from BOY to MOY.

Figure 2.

BOY to MOY Percentages of UWATX Pre-K4 Students Scoring on Track on CIRCLE PM Subscales

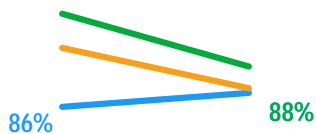
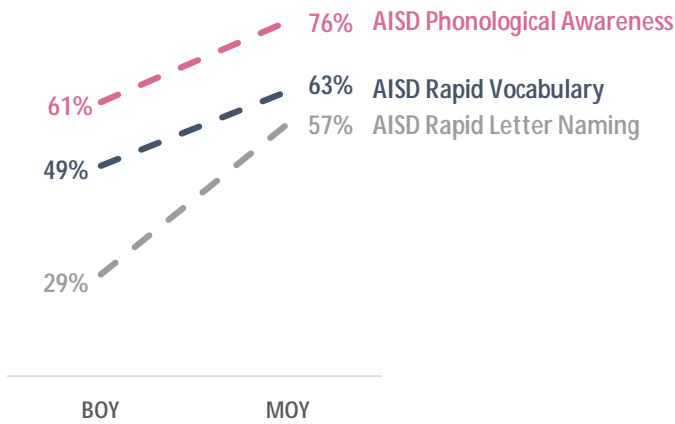


Figure 3.

BOY to MOY Percentages of Non-Tuition AISD Pre-K4 Students Scoring on Track on CIRCLE PM Subscales



Source. AISD CLI Engage Circle PM data.

Note. Appendix D, Table 2 lists the total number of AISD students scoring on track on CIRCLE PM subscales.

Conclusions and Recommendations

In the first year of the pre-K School Transformation Fund implementation grant, participating UWATX classrooms provided high-quality instruction to pre-K students, as observed by the majority of centers exceeding thresholds established by Head Start on CLASS. The centers were also accredited by various organizations that met standards set by TEA for high-quality pre-K instruction. Teachers completed various professional development sessions, but additional records of teacher professional development training will be collected in the second year of the grant.

From the beginning to the middle of the school year, participating students' academic performance declined for two out of three subtests of the CIRCLE PM tool, so staff should closely monitor and provide instruction and support to students in these skill areas (Social and Emotional Development, Approaches to Learning) in the second year of the grant. It should also be noted that UWATX students significantly improved on Book and Print Knowledge from the beginning to middle of the school year. Subtest comparisons between UWATX and AISD could not be conducted because different subtests of the CIRCLE PM were administered to each group. Future considerations could include administering additional subtests (Phonological Awareness, Rapid Vocabulary, and Rapid Letter Naming) to UWATX students to allow for more parallel comparisons with AISD students.

In AISD pre-K, students' academic performance on the three subtests (phonological awareness, rapid vocabulary and rapid letter naming) improved from the beginning to the middle of the school year. By the middle of the school year, more than half of all students were on track for each subtest. This trajectory suggests that if end of year data were collected, most students may have reached the on track levels.

Follow up on AISD kindergarten enrollment of pre-K4 students will be done later in Fall 2020.

An important consideration regarding this year's program summary is that the COVID-19 pandemic prevented administrators from gathering end-of-year data on classroom quality, teachers' professional development training, and students' academic performance. The impact of the pandemic on future analyses and reports for the second year of the grant is unknown but is being monitored.

Appendix A

Appendix B

Table 1.

UWATX Pre-K Center Accreditations

Pre-K center	Accreditation
American Youth Works Child Inc.	Head Start
Bright Beginnings	TRS 4-Star
Brodie Lane CDC Child Inc.	

Source. UWATX pre-K centers

Note. CDC = Child Development Center, NAEYC = National Association for the Education of Young Children, NAC = National Accreditation Commission, TRS = Texas Rising Star.

Appendix D

Table 1.

Total Number of Pre-K4 Students Scoring on Track on CIRCLE PM Subscales, BOY to MOY 2019–2020

Subtest	BOY		MOY	
	<i>n</i> for UWATX	<i>n</i> for AISD	<i>n</i> for UWATX	<i>n</i> for AISD
Book and Print Knowledge	152	-	158	-
Social and Emotional Development	179	-	167	-
Approaches to Learning	171	-	159	-
Rapid Letter Naming	-	3,333	-	2,068
Rapid Vocabulary	-	3,336	-	2,295
Phonological Awareness	-	3,320	-	2,782

Source. UWATX and AISD student CLI Engage records

Note. *n* = total number of students scoring on track. BOY = beginning of year, MOY = middle of year. Dashes indicate subtests that were not assessed.



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