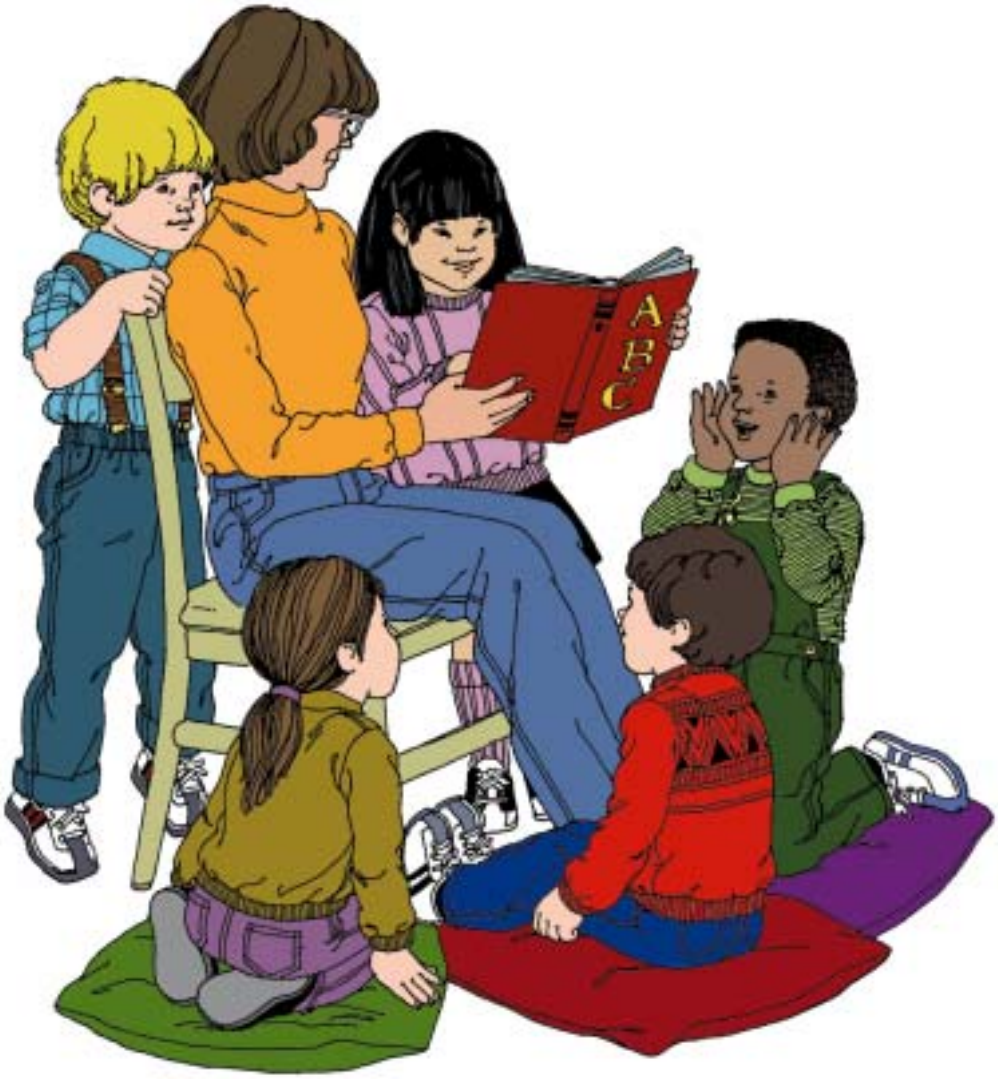
Prekindergarten Evaluation, 2001-02



Austin Independent School District
Office of Program Evaluation
September 2002

Prekindergarten Evaluation, 2001-02
Austin Independent School District

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The prekindergarten (pre-K) program is an important part of the systemic effort to have every Texas student reading on grade level by the end of third grade. In 2001-02, the Austin Independent School District (AISD) received $4,715,264 from the state *Prekindergarten Expansion Grant* to fund an additional half day of instruction for the district's 47 full-day prekindergarten programs.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

In 2001-02, AISD offered pre-K instruction to eligible students through both half-day and full-day programs. A student is eligible to attend prekindergarten because of low-income, LEP (limited English proficient), or homeless status. Of the 61 (84% of all) AISD elementary schools that offer pre-K instruction, 77% (n=47) had full-day and 23% (n=14) had half-day programs.

A total of 3,823 four year olds (3,127 full-day and 696 half-day students) attended pre-K during 2001-02. This total represents an increase of 382 students from the 2000-01 enrollment. While the prekindergarten enrollment increased by 10% from 2000-01 to 2001-02 (from 3,441 to 3,823), the LEP pre-K enrollment increased by 24% (from 1,442 to 1,901). According to AISD student files, demographics for this pre-K class include the following:

- Gender was balanced with 48% female and 52% male students.
- Eighty-two percent of students (n=3,153) were from low-income families.
- Fifty percent of students (n=1,901) were limited English proficient.
- Homeless students (n=25) made up less than 1% of the pre-K group.
- Hispanic students made up the largest ethnic group (n=2,797), followed by African American (n=642), Anglo/Other (263), and Asian (n=121) students.

In 2001-02, there were 201 prekindergarten teachers. The average years of teaching experience for pre-K teachers was 7.1 years. However, 25% of these teachers had 0-1 year teaching experience.

MAJOR FINDINGS

As AISD considered a move to full-day prekindergarten programs for all eligible four-year-olds in 2002-03, an examination was done in 2001-02 to compare language and literacy achievement for full-day and half-day pre-K students. Results indicate that there is benefit to students attending pre-K for a full day of instruction.

Progress in Literacy/Pre-Reading

Program effectiveness in language and literacy for prekindergarten was determined by gains from pretest to posttest on the English language *Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test-III* (PPVT-III) and the Spanish language *Test de Vocabulario en Imágenes Peabody* (TVIP).

Full-day students outperformed half-day students on the *Peabody Picture Vocabulary-III* (PPVT-III) and the *Test de Vocabulario en Imágenes Peabody* (TVIP) in 2001-02 in three out of four comparisons:

- The average gain from pretest to posttest on the PPVT-III for full-day students (6.1 standard score points) was significantly higher than the average gain for half-day students (5.4 points).
- Spanish LEP full-day students showed a mean gain (8.4 standard score points) significantly higher than the gain for half-day students (7.9 points) on the TVIP.
- The average gain for full-day Spanish LEP students (6.4 points standard score points) was significantly higher than the average gain for half-day Spanish LEP students (4.9 points) on the PPVT-III.

In addition, when tested in their native language, 80% (n=1,791) of all students scored in the average range (85-115 standard score points) at the posttest.

Progress in Mathematics

Because there is no formal mathematics assessment for pre-K–grade 2 in AISD at this time, mathematics ratings on the *Prekindergarten Report to Parents* were used to determine if students made progress in mathematics during prekindergarten. According to this informal mathematics assessment, 73% of full-day students made progress in mathematics during pre-K.

Professional Development

In 2001-02, AISD prekindergarten teachers were offered ongoing training in language arts and mathematics through the district Professional Development Academy (PDA). Pre-K teacher response to professional development includes the following:

- Prekindergarten teachers participated in literacy training for a total of 306 hours. In response to PDA surveys, 92% of pre-K teachers agreed or strongly agreed that the language and literacy training that they attended was beneficial to their understanding of teaching literacy skills to pre-K students.
- Prekindergarten teachers had a total of 1,743 hours of mathematics training in 2001-02. In response to PDA surveys, 94% of pre-K teachers agreed or strongly agreed that the TEXTEAMS training this year was beneficial to their understanding of teaching mathematics skills to pre-K students.

Classroom Observations

In spring 2002, AISD Office of Program Evaluation staff conducted classroom observations in prekindergarten classrooms at seven elementary schools. The purpose of the observations was to see evidence of effective practices in prekindergarten classes that prepare students for success in kindergarten. To accomplish this purpose, campuses that were being successful with student achievement at all levels were selected. Classroom observations revealed the following:

- Pre-K teachers are implementing the districtwide instructional initiatives, balanced literacy practices and *Principles of Learning strategies. The Prekindergarten Curriculum Guidelines,* which are aligned with the TEKS, are also being used by pre-K teachers to plan instruction and guide assessment.

- Students in full-day prekindergarten programs received an average of 74 minutes more of scheduled core academic learning activities each day than half-day students. This represents an additional 223 hours during the school year.
- All of the classrooms visited were safe and comfortable learning environments for the four-year olds. There were an abundance of hands-on activities to provide opportunities for self-expression and creativity. Teachers were enthusiastic and children seemed eager to learn.
- Developmentally appropriate practices were observed most of the time in the classrooms visited.
- Teachers at the observation schools asked for more consistency in the district prekindergarten programs in instruction, curriculum, timeline for teaching and learning, and assessment and reporting to parents.
- Principals at observation schools overwhelming believe that prekindergarten has a positive effect on the four-year-olds who attend. All agreed that these students are better prepared for kindergarten than students who do not attend pre-K.

Impact of Prekindergarten Program

The 2001-02 school year was the third year that AISD received the *Prekindergarten Expansion Grant* from the state. The director of the prekindergarten program indicated that the grant "has had a significant impact on the ability to provide a high quality program" for prekindergarten students in AISD. The benefits include additional instructional time for full-day students, more students served by the program, and increased opportunities for professional development. She added, "The added instructional time has given the teachers the opportunity to enrich and reinforce individual learning."

To examine the long-term effects of prekindergarten attendance on TAAS performance in AISD, an analysis was completed for students in grade 3 during 2001-02 who took TAAS reading and TAAS mathematics. These students were divided into two groups: 1) students who attended the AISD prekindergarten program, and 2) students who did not attend AISD prekindergarten. When looking at the results for LEP and low-income students, the results were as follows:

- The percentage of grade 3 students passing *TAAS mathematics* was higher for low-income students and for LEP students who had attended AISD pre-K than for similar groups of students who had not attended AISD pre-K.
- The percentage of grade 3 students passing *TAAS reading* was higher for LEP students and low-income students who were also LEP who had attended AISD pre-K than for similar groups of students who had not attended AISD pre-K.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results of this evaluation, the following recommendations are offered to district decision makers for their consideration:

- Insist on developmentally appropriate practices for prekindergarten while supporting the academic rigor required for these students to close the achievement gap.

- Implement consistent expectations for teaching and learning for prekindergarten (e.g., curriculum, timeline of instruction, schedules, and assessment).
- Redesign the *Prekindergarten Report to Parents* with a scale that is defined with standards and clarify expectations for student performance in each nine-week reporting period.
- Develop districtwide prekindergarten assessments in literacy and mathematics for 2003-04 to ensure that instruction is aligned with the *Prekindergarten Curriculum Guidelines*.
- Refine the mathematics assessment that will be piloted in prekindergarten in 2002-03 and consider its use districtwide for the assessment of progress in mathematics for prekindergarten students.
- Provide quality language/literacy and TEXTEAMS professional development for prekindergarten teachers to ensure consistency and quality in curriculum and instruction even in the face of limited funds.

In 2002-03, AISD will implement a uniform curriculum that mirrors state standards to ensure consistent, quality education throughout the district. The AISD curriculum department staff has created a written document for pre-K through grade 12 that will align the curriculum across all subjects and all grades. Pre-K teachers will be a part of the district's effort to provide educational experiences that will prepare their students for further success in kindergarten through high school.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES

AUSTIN ISD PREKINDERGARTEN PROGRAM, 2001-02

The purpose of this evaluation report on the Austin Independent School District (AISD) prekindergarten (pre-K) program is to inform decision-makers at the local and state level about the academic progress of pre-K students. Student acquisition of language and mathematics skills, quality of professional development for pre-K teachers, and effectiveness of classroom instructional practices are the main focus of this evaluation.

The program evaluation plan for the *Prekindergarten Expansion Grant*, Cycle 5 for Austin ISD is included in Appendix A. The major questions to be explored in this evaluation for the *Prekindergarten Expansion Grant* for TEA include the following:

1. How will the program demonstrate evidence of gains in cognitive development, especially in pre-reading and language, and mathematics?
2. How will the program demonstrate the effectiveness of activities of the expanded full-day prekindergarten in achieving the aims of the program?
3. How will the program determine the impact, short-term and long-term, of the activities of the expanded full-day prekindergarten on the participants?

INTRODUCTION

In the State of Texas, there has been an increasing focus on early learning to help more children pass state reading exams and ensure that state standards be met by all students. The Texas Legislature first earmarked funds for voluntary prekindergarten in 1984, requiring school districts with at least 15 4-year-olds who qualified as low income, non-English-speaking, or homeless to offer half-day prekindergarten programs at state expense (Texas Education Code, Section 29.153a). Low-income students are defined by TEA as students eligible to participate in the national free or reduced-price lunch program.

Prekindergarten education was highlighted in the 1999 Texas Legislature as policymakers earmarked $100 million for each of the following two years to expand prekindergarten programs to full day. The funding for the *Prekindergarten Expansion Grant* was extended in 2001. Districts apply for the grant to expand half-day prekindergarten programs to full day programs.

In addition, in 1999, the Texas Education Agency published the *Prekindergarten Curriculum Guidelines* to align pre-K programs with the TEKS (*Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills*) and provided funding for training on the guidelines for prekindergarten teachers. As the guidelines state, they are "based on the knowledge of theory and research about how children develop and learn; they reflect the growing consensus among early childhood professional organizations that a greater emphasis be placed on young children's conceptual learning, acquisition of basic skills, and participation in meaningful and relevant learning experiences" (Guidelines 1999). The focus areas of instruction include: language and early literacy; mathematics; science; social studies; fine arts; health and safety; personal and social development; physical development; and technology applications.

AISD Prekindergarten Program Description

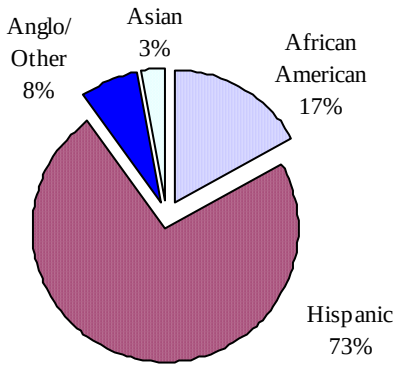
In 2001-02, AISD offered pre-K instruction to eligible students through both half-day and full-day programs. The decision to offer a half-day or full-day program was a campus-based decision. Of the 61 (84% of all) AISD elementary schools that offered prekindergarten instruction in 2001-02, 77% (n=47) had full-day and 23% (n=14) had half-day programs. In 2002-03, all AISD 4-year olds who qualify for prekindergarten will receive full-day instruction. See Appendix B for a complete list of the schools that had prekindergarten programs in 2001-02.

Student Demographics

A total of 3,823 four year olds (3,127 full-day and 696 half-day students) attended AISD pre-K during 2001-02. This total represents an increase of 382 students from the 2000-01 enrollment. According to AISD student files, demographics for 2001-02 prekindergarten children include the following:

- Gender was balanced with 48% female and 52% male students.
- Eighty-two percent of students (n=3,153) were from low-income families.
- Fifty percent of students (n= 1,901) were LEP (limited English proficient).
- Homeless students (n=25) made up less that 1% of the prekindergarten group.
- As shown in Figure 1, Hispanic students made up the largest ethnic group (n=2,797), followed by African American (n=642), Anglo/Other (n=263), and Asian (n=121) students. The greatest increase in numbers was for Hispanic students (from 2,445 in 2000-01 to 2, 797 in 2001-02).

Figure 1: Ethnicity of AISD Prekindergarten Students, 2001-02



Source: AISD SASI Student File

Three campuses were added to the list of schools offering prekindergarten instruction increasing the number of schools from 58 in 2000-01 to 61 in 2001-02. Pickle opened in fall 2001 with five full-day classes, while Menchaca had one full-day class and Patton had two half-day prekindergarten classes. The number of pre-K students served at each of the 61 campuses varied widely in 2001-02, and ranged from 18 students at Casis to 140 students at Walnut Creek.

Teachers of half-day programs teach two groups of students, one group in the morning and another group in the afternoon, allowing them to serve more children (for a

shorter time each day). In the full-day programs, pre-K students remain with the same teacher during the entire school day. The average pre-K student teacher ratio in 2001-02 was 19.0, about the same as in 2000-01. Full-day teachers served an average of 18 students and half-day teachers served an average of 29 students during the school year.

The number of full-day classes increased in 2001-02 as a result of the district participating in the *Prekindergarten Expansion Grant* program. Table 1 summarizes various program comparison data from 1995-96 through 2001-02. (Note: These data include all pre-K students served at any point in a given year.)

Table 1: AISD Pre-K Program Information, by Category, 1995-96 through 2001-02

Category	1995-1996	1996-1997	1997-1998	1998-1999	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002
Half-Day Classes	56	68	70	72	74	60	**48
Full-Day Classes	138	152	153	147	142	148	177
Teachers	164	186	188	183	179	178	201
Low-Income Students*	3,267	3,437	3,364	3,310	2,890	2,762	3,153
LEP Students*	1,140	1,181	1,236	1,392	1,336	1,442	1,901
Half-Day Students	901	942	967	1,021	1,048	793	696
Full-Day Students	2,498	2,652	2,596	2,532	2,523	2,648	3,127
Total Students	3,399	3,594	3,563	3,553	3,571	3,441	3,823

* Students can be both low income and LEP. ** Represents 24 teachers each with two half-day classes.
Source: AISD SASI and Office of Program Evaluation files

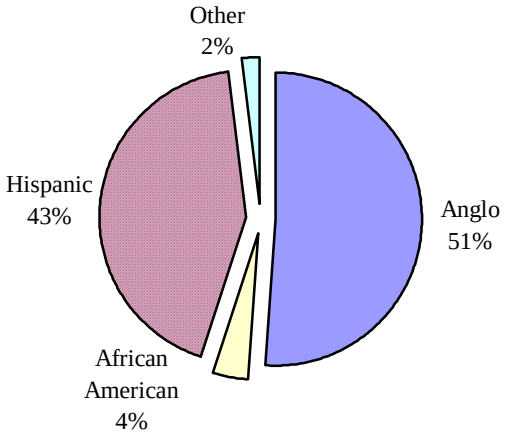
Teacher Demographics

There were 201 prekindergarten teachers in 2001-02. The average years of teaching experience for pre-K teachers in AISD was 7.1 years (up slightly from 6.9 in 2000-01). The majority (57%) of the pre-K teachers had five years or less teaching experience. In addition, 25% of prekindergarten teachers had 0-1 years experience in 2001-02. The percentage of teachers at each AISD teaching experience level is as follows:

- 0-1 year – 25%;
- 2-3 years – 20%;
- 4-5 years – 12%;
- 6-10 years – 18%;
- 11-20 years – 19%; and
- Over 20 years – 6%.

In 2001-02, 95% of the pre-K teachers were female and 51% were Anglo. There was an increase in Hispanic teachers (from 41% to 43%), an increase in African American teachers (from 3% to 4%), and a decrease in Anglo teachers (from 54% to 51%) from 2000-01 to 2001-02. AISD teacher ethnicity for 2001-02 is shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Ethnicity of AISD Pre-K Teachers, 2001-02

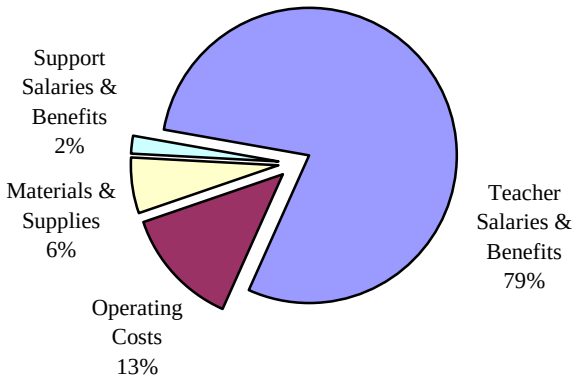


Source: AISD Professional Personnel Files

Prekindergarten Budget

The State of Texas Foundation School Program provides the funding for half-day pre-K. The district must pay for the additional half day of instruction for the full-day pre-K classes. AISD received the Cycle 5 *Prekindergarten Expansion Grant* in 2001-02 to fund the full-day pre-K classes in AISD. The grant amount of $4,715,264 was allocated for pre-K teacher salaries and benefits, career ladder, substitutes for professional development, reading materials and supplies, professional support salaries, and miscellaneous operating costs for the full-day programs. As shown in Figure 3, the largest amount of money was allocated to teacher salaries and benefits (79%), followed by miscellaneous operating costs (13%), supplies and reading materials (6%), and professional support salaries (2%). This year's grant was more than the 2000-01 grant of $4,124,131.

Figure 3: Prekindergarten Expansion Grant Allocations, 2001-02



Source: AISD Finance Records

PREKINDERGARTEN PROGRAM EVALUATION

The following section will focus on the evaluation questions from TEA. Examination of the evidence of the impact of the prekindergarten program, short-term and long-term, on academic growth will include discussion in the following areas: results of the pre-K assessments in language/literacy, mathematics, and social skills; professional development for pre-K teachers; classroom observations at seven schools; and comments by teachers, principals, and program facilitators about the prekindergarten program in AISD. See Appendix A for the details of the evaluation plan.

1. How will the program demonstrate evidence of gains in cognitive development, especially in pre-reading and language, and mathematics?

Progress in Language Arts/Pre-Reading

According to the *Quality Counts 2002: Starting Early* (Olson, 2002) report, "Research suggests that the precursors to literacy start at a much earlier age than once assumed." During a White House summit on early learning in summer 2001, G. Reid Lyon of the National Institutes of Health, said: "There is remarkably strong and stable link between what preschool kids know about words, sounds, letters, and print, and later academic performance" (Olson, 2002). The importance of vocabulary knowledge has long been recognized in the development of reading skills, according to a report by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (1999). In addition, researchers have found that children in poverty start school with a vocabulary of only 10,000 words, compared with 40,000 for children from middle class homes (Newsweek, 2002). For this reason, the main assessment tool used to evaluate the AISD pre-K program is one that measures growth in receptive (hearing) vocabulary as the foundation for later reading skills.

Thus, program effectiveness in language and literacy for prekindergarten was determined by gains from pretest to posttest on the English language *Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test-III* (PPVT-III) and the Spanish language *Test de Vocabulario en Imágenes Peabody* (TVIP). The PPVT-III and TVIP measure knowledge of receptive vocabulary in English or in Spanish, respectively. Standard test scores are based on national age norms, with a mean of 100 and a standard deviation of 15 for both tests. For a student to maintain his or her standing relative to the national average, the gain score would be zero. Any gain greater than zero indicates that the student's performance improved compared to the national average.

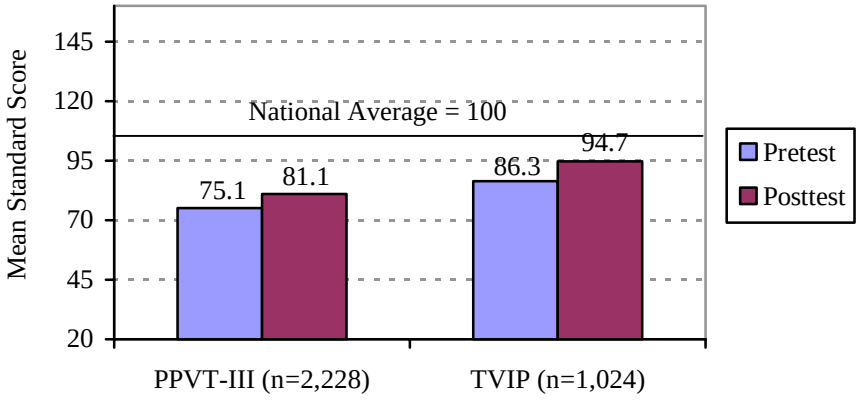
The PPVT-III and TVIP are achievement tests of the level of a person's vocabulary acquisition. However, the tests can only be used as a screening test of verbal ability when tested in the examinee's home language. Spanish LEP students are tested in English (in addition to Spanish) to measure growth in English language acquisition that is part of the English as second language (ESL) component of pre-K.

The PPVT-III and TVIP were administered to a random sample of students in all AISD pre-K classes in fall 2001 and spring 2002. The ethnicity and gender of the students

tested closely matched the overall AISD pre-K population. All students in the sample were tested in English (PPVT-III); Spanish LEP students were also tested in Spanish (TVIP). See Appendix C for the average PPVT-III and TVIP scores by school.

In fall 2001, 2,493 pre-K students were pretested on the PPVT-III. Although every effort was made to posttest all students who had a valid pretest score, 264 fewer students were posttested due to withdrawals, illnesses, and relocations of eligible students. A total of 2,229 (58% of all) pre-K students had valid pre- and posttest scores on the PPVT-III. In addition, 1,139 (60% of all) Spanish LEP pre-K students had valid pre- and posttest scores on the TVIP. For all students tested, the average gain was 6.0 (8.6 in 2000-01) standard score points on the PPVT-III and 8.3 points (7.6 in 2000-01) on the TVIP. Figure 4 shows the average scores on the PPVT-III and the TVIP for all students with valid pre- and posttest scores in 2001-02. (Spanish LEP results on the PPVT-III are included in these percentages.)

Figure 4: PPVT-III and TVIP Mean Standard Scores for All Pre-K Students Tested, 2001-02



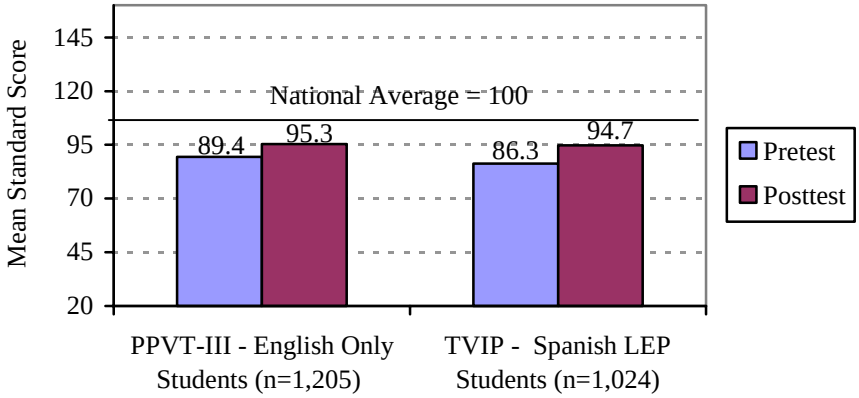
Source: AISD Office of Program Evaluation PPVT and TVIP Records, 2001-02

Test Data by Native Language

The PPVT-III results in Figure 4 give a general idea where students are in their English language acquisition, but because the test measure verbal ability when administered in the student's home language, it is necessary to look at the results by native language. Average gains for students who had only PPVT-III scores (English only) and average gains for students who had TVIP scores (Spanish LEP) are presented in Figure 5.

Seventy percent of all Spanish language students and 71% of all English language students made gains when tested in their native language. Spanish LEP students showed an average gain of 8.3 standard score points on the TVIP and English-only students showed a gain of 5.9 points on the PPVT-III from pre- to posttest. (The percentages of students making gains were similar for full-day and half-day students.)

Figure 5: Average PPVT-III and TVIP Pretest and Posttest Scores for AISD Pre-K Students When Tested in Their Native Language, 2001-02



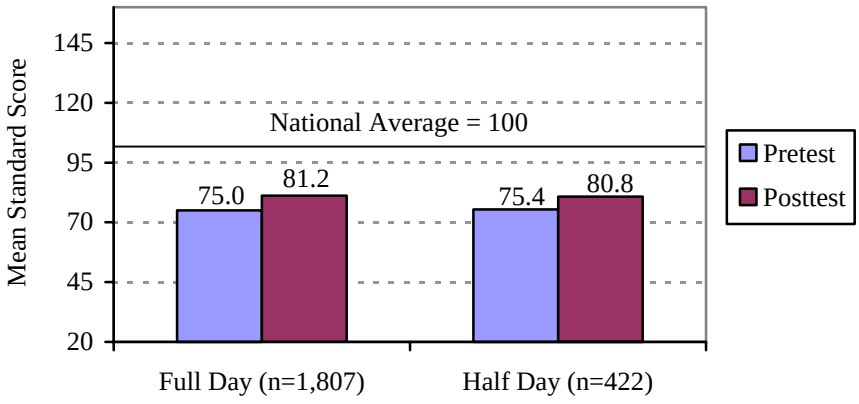
Source: AISD Office of Program Evaluation PPVT and TVIP Records, 2001-02

Full Day and Half Day Comparisons

With the additional funding provided by the *Prekindergarten Expansion Grant*, more pre-K programs were full day in 2001-02 than in 2000-01. Eighty-two percent of all AISD pre-K students were enrolled in full-day programs in 2001-02 compared with 76% in 2000-01. As more students are receiving instruction through full-day programs, it is important to know if that extra half day of instruction is helping improve language acquisition for the four-year-olds who participate.

Half-day and full-day pre-K students began the 2001-02 year with about the same average PPVT-III pretest score. **However, the average gain from pretest to posttest on the PPVT-III for full-day students (6.1 standard score points) was significantly higher than the average gain for half-day students (5.4 points).** Figure 6 shows a comparison of PPVT-III pretest and posttest scores for all students tested by length of day. (Spanish LEP results on the PPVT-III are included in these percentages.)

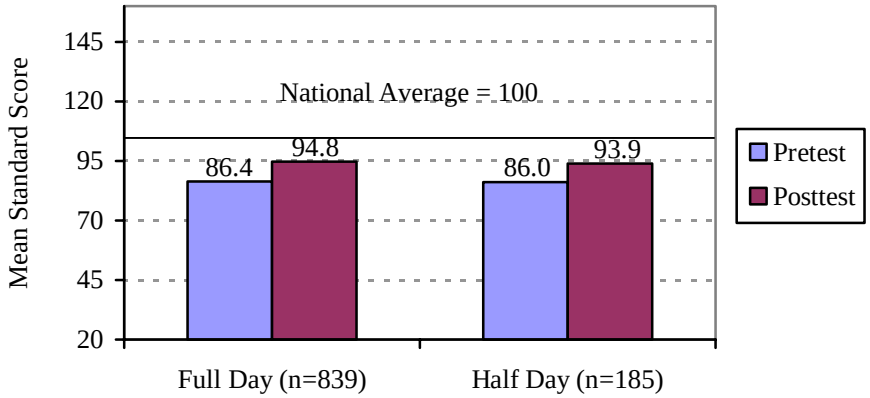
Figure 6: Mean Pretest and Posttest PPVT-III Standard Scores for All AISD Pre-K Students Tested by Length of Day, 2001-02



Source: AISD Office of Program Evaluation PPVT Records, 2001-02

Spanish LEP full-day students showed a mean gain (8.4 standard score points) significantly higher than the gain for half-day students (7.9 points) on the TVIP. The 2001-02 school year is the third consecutive year that the average gain on the TVIP for full-day Spanish LEP students has been significantly higher than for half-day students. Figure 7 shows the average pretest and posttest scores for full-day and half-day Spanish LEP students in 2001-02.

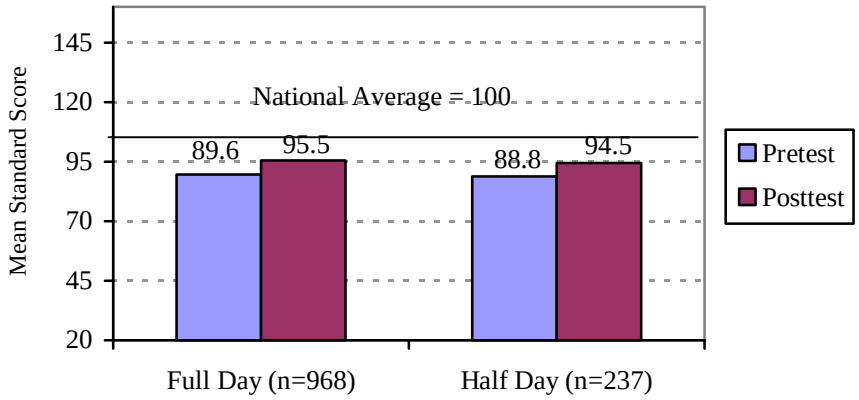
Figure 7: Mean Pretest and Posttest TVIP Standard Scores for Spanish LEP Students by Length of Day, 2001-02



Source: AISD Office of Program Evaluation TVIP Records, 2001-02

When examining PPVT-III scores for English language students, it can be seen that full-day students showed only a slightly greater average gain (6.0 standard score points) than half-day English-only students (5.7 points). Figure 8 shows the average pretest and posttest scores for English-only students on the PPVT-III by length of day.

Figure 8: Mean Pretest and Posttest PPVT-III Standard Scores for AISD English-Only Students by Length of Day, 2001-02

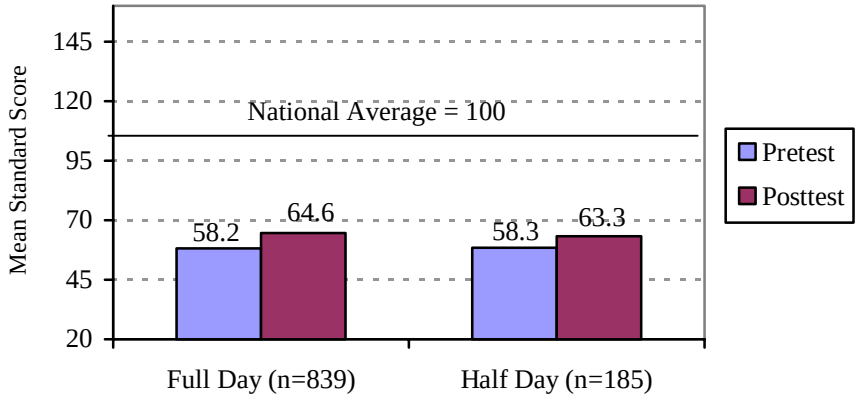


Source: AISD Office of Program Evaluation TVIP Records, 2000-01

Because English is the second language for Spanish LEP students, the average pre- and posttest scores on the PPVT-III are very low. Full-day Spanish LEP students began the year with an average PPVT-III pretest score (58.2 standard score points) similar to that of half-day Spanish LEP students (58.3 points), but ended the year with a higher average

posttest score (64.6 points) than half-day students (63.3). **The average gain for full-day Spanish LEP students (6.4 points standard score points) was significantly higher than the average gain on the PPVT-III for half-day Spanish LEP students (4.9 points).** Figure 9 shows the average pre- and posttest scores on the PPVT-III for Spanish LEP students in 2001-02.

Figure 9: Mean PPVT-III Standard Scores for AISD Spanish LEP Pre-K Scores by Length of Day, 2001-02

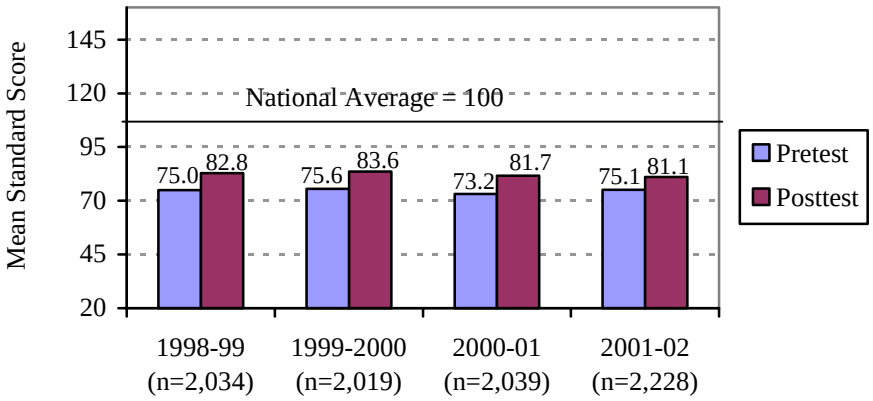


Source: AISD Office of Program Evaluation TVIP Records, 2001-02

Multi-Year Comparisons

While this year's overall PPVT-III average pretest score for all students tested (English and Spanish language) was higher than in 2000-01, the average posttest score was slightly lower. The mean gains increased slightly each year from 1998-99 to 2001-02 (7.8, 8.0, and 8.5 standard score points, respectively); however, the average gain for 2001-02 decreased to 6.0 standard score points. Figure 10 shows the average pre- and posttest scores for all students tested on the PPVT-III, 1998-99 through 2001-02. (Spanish LEP results on the PPVT-III are included in these percentages.)

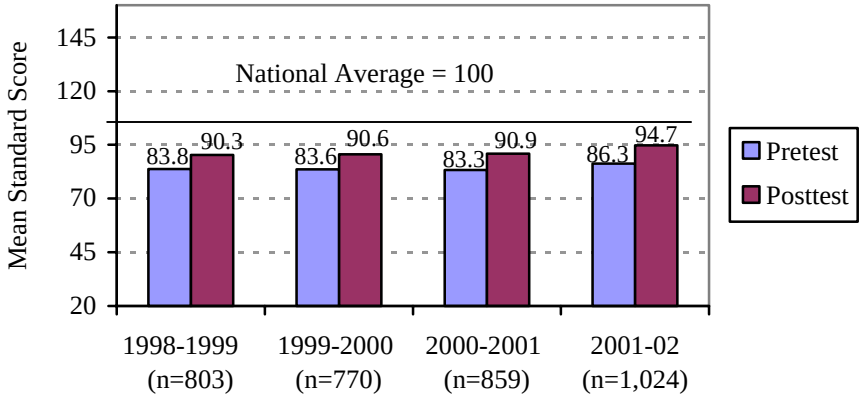
Figure 10: Four-Year Comparison for All AISD Pre-K Students Tested on PPVT-III, 1998-99 through 2001-02



Source: AISD Office of Program Evaluation PPVT Records, 1998-99 through 2000-01

The 2001-02 results for Spanish LEP students indicate that students entered the program at a higher average pretest score, ended the program with a higher average posttest score, and had a higher gain than any previous year. The average gains have increased each of the last four years (6.5, 7.0, 7.6, and 8.3 standard score points, respectively. Figure 11 shows the multi-year data for Spanish LEP students on the TVIP, 1998-99 through 2001-02.

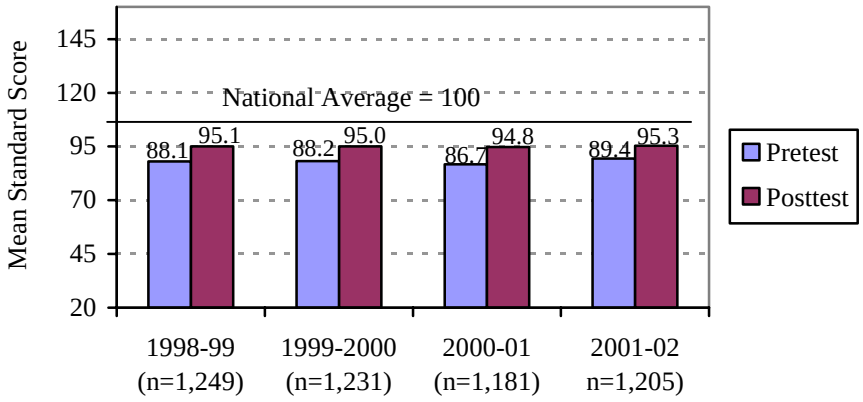
Figure 11: Four-Year Comparison for AISD Spanish LEP Pre-K Students Tested on the TVIP, 1998-99 through 2001-02



Source: AISD Office of Program Evaluation TVIP Files, 2001-02

In 2001-02, English-only students had a pretest average of 89.4 standard score points and posttest of 95.3 points, the highest averages of the past four years. Figure 12 shows the multi-year test data for English-only students on the PPVT-III, 1998-99 through 2001-02.

Figure 12: Four-Year Comparison for AISD English-only Pre-K Students Tested on PPVT-III, 1998-99 through 2001-02



Source: AISD Office of Program Evaluation PPVT Records, 1998-99 through 2001-02

Students Scoring in Average Range

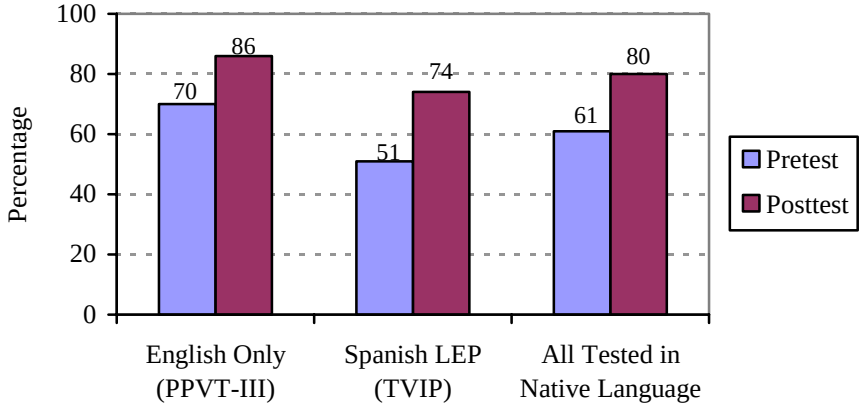
It is important to know how prepared the pre-K students will be when they start kindergarten. Although 100 is the national average score, there is an average range (low average to high average) for both the PPVT-III and the TVIP of 85-115 standard score points, which is one standard deviation above and below the mean. The assumption is that students who advance to the average range in the test of their native language will be ready to accelerate future literacy learning in kindergarten.

Each posttest score was examined to determine if it fell within this range for all students taking the PPVT-III, Spanish LEP students taking the TVIP, Spanish LEP students taking the PPVT-III, and English-only students on the PPVT-III. Analysis of these data reveals the following information:

- 53% (n=1,178) of all students taking the PPVT-III scored in the average range at the posttest. (This includes the Spanish LEP students.);
- 86% (n=1,032) of English-only students scored in the average range at the posttest on the PPVT-III;
- 74% (n=759) of all Spanish LEP students scored in the average range at the posttest on the TVIP;
- **80% (n=1,791) of all students scored in the average range at the posttest when tested in their native language;**
- 14% (n=146) of Spanish LEP students scored in the average range at the posttest on the PPVT-III; and
- 12% (n=124) of Spanish LEP students scored in the average range at the posttest on both the PPVT-III and the TVIP.

The greatest growth was for Spanish LEP students on the TVIP moving from 51% in the average range at the pretest to 74% in the average range at the posttest. Figure 13 shows the percentage of students who scored in the average range at the pretest and posttest when tested in their native language.

Figure 13: Percentage of Students Who Scored in the Average Range at the Pretest and Posttest When Tested in Native Language, 2001-02



Source: AISD Office of Program Evaluation PPVT/TVIP Records, 1998-99 through 2001-02

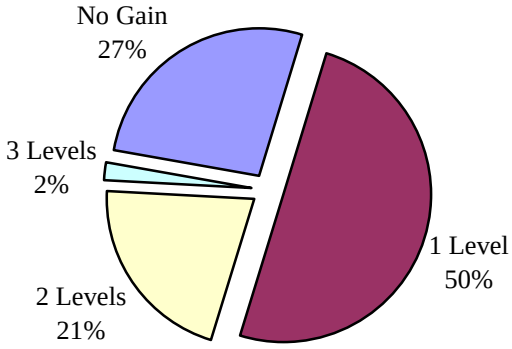
In addition, 19% (n=425) of all English-only students taking the PPVT-III had a standard score of 100 or higher, and 41% (n= 421) of all Spanish LEP students tested on the TVIP had a standard score of 100 or higher on the posttest. A total of 38% of the 2001-02 prekindergarten students were at or above the national average when tested in their native language.

Progress in Mathematics

AISD uses the *Prekindergarten Report to Parents* four times each year to report student academic progress. Student academic performance is rated by teachers for the areas of pre-reading/concepts of print, oral language, writing, listening, mathematics, social studies/science/health, and English as a second language. The performance scale used for rating academic progress is as follows: 1-needs improvement, 2-basic understanding, 3-skilled, and 4-advanced. Although there are major instructional goals listed on the *Prekindergarten Report to Parents*, there is no continuum for development by which to assess progress.

Because there is no formal mathematics assessment for pre-K–grade 2 in AISD at this time, mathematics ratings on the *Prekindergarten Report to Parents* were used to determine if students made progress in mathematics during prekindergarten. The *Prekindergarten Curriculum Guidelines* elaborates on appropriate academic progress for pre-K students. Full-day prekindergarten teachers were asked to list the mathematics performance levels for students who had reports for the first and last nine weeks. A sample of the *Prekindergarten Report to Parents* was analyzed. A total of 104 (59%) teachers of full-day pre-K students reported the first and last nine weeks mathematics ratings for 1,434 students. **According to this informal assessment, 73% of full-day students made progress in mathematics during pre-K, with the average gain of 1.0 level.** Figure 14 shows the growth in mathematics performance ratings from first to last nine weeks reported to prekindergarten parents in 2001-02.

Figure 14: Percentage of Pre-K Students by Gain on a Sample of *Prekindergarten Report to Parents*, 2001-02



Source: AISD *Prekindergarten Report to Parents* for Full-day Classes

Progress in Social Skills

For many students entering prekindergarten, this is the first educational experience shared with other children. As a result, there is much to be learned about working and playing with other students. As stated in the *Prekindergarten Curriculum Guidelines* concerning personal and social development, "Prekindergarten children develop personal and social skills that enable them to function well within the social setting of the classroom. Children develop a sense of who they are and their capabilities, and establish positive relations with others, which enables them to effectively participate in class and community and accomplish meaningful tasks.

As is the case for mathematics assessment, there is no formal assessment for personal and social skills for prekindergarten students in AISD. Teachers assess the following social skills each nine weeks on the *Prekindergarten Report to Parents:*

- Responds to questions appropriately;
- Exhibits appropriate gross motor skills;
- Exhibits appropriate fine motor skills;
- Adjusts to school routine;
- Demonstrates healthy practices;
- Focuses on assigned tasks;
- Works productively in a small group;
- Follows directions;
- Demonstrates self discipline;
- Respects the rights and property of self and others;
- Assumes responsibility for own actions;
- Works and plays cooperatively; and
- Solves problems appropriately.

Specific skills in these areas are rated as 1-rarely, 2-occasionally, 3-frequently, and 4-consistently. The assessment is subjective as there is no standard for the ratings. An informal review of the *Prekindergarten Report to Parents* at the classroom observation schools indicated varying levels of growth in these skill areas for prekindergarten students.

2. How will the program demonstrate the effectiveness of activities of the expanded full-day prekindergarten in achieving the aims of the program?

Professional Development

After consulting for AISD, a memo from *Just for the Kids* (June 10, 2002) says, "For Austin ISD, the number of new teachers and the lack of professional development time for all teachers present barriers that will be difficult to overcome." Because 25% of all prekindergarten teachers had 0-1 years of teaching experience in 2001-02, it is important for the district to ensure that quality professional development for pre-K teachers is available and supported.

In 2001-02, AISD prekindergarten teachers were offered ongoing training in language arts and mathematics through the district Professional Development Academy (PDA). The categories of training that were offered include the following:

- *Prekindergarten Guidelines for Mathematics* - One two-hour session was offered on *Prekindergarten Guidelines* mathematics.
- *Prekindergarten Mathematics TEXTEAMS* - Two series of classes were offered. Each series included three seven-hour days of training. Pre-K TEXTEAMS is a TEKS/Standards-based professional development program that emphasizes five content areas of the guidelines: statistics and probability; number and operations; patterns and algebraic thinking; geometry and spatial sense; and measurement. Substitutes are hired for teachers who attend.
- *DLM Early Childhood Program* (state-adopted prekindergarten system) - Sessions included: *Here and There; Make Believe; World of Animals; Creeping Crawlies; Snap, Crackle, and Jump*; and *Three for the Sea*. Each class was two hours and was offered to all prekindergarten teachers.
- *Building Language for Literacy* - This curriculum, which was purchased for full-day prekindergarten teachers, was presented in four two-hour sessions including the following topics: Firehouse and Restaurant; Store; Farm; and Aquarium.
- *Phonemic Awareness in Young Children* - One two-hour session was offered.
- *Developmental Writing in Prekindergarten and Kindergarten* - One two-hour session was offered.

Language and Literacy Training

During the 2001-02 school year, 63 (31%) of the teachers attended language and literacy training. **This represents 306 hours of literacy training for prekindergarten teachers.** A sample of 59 PDA teacher evaluation forms from the language and literacy training revealed that teachers were positive about the benefits of the training. All of the teachers who responded (n=39) agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, "My teaching skills improved because of this training." Teachers were positive about the instructors and the content of the training sessions. A summary of pre-K teacher responses from PDA evaluation forms for pre-K literacy training is included in Appendix D.

Mathematics Training

In 2001-02, 96 (48%) prekindergarten teachers attended TEXTEAMS and Prekindergarten Guidelines mathematics training. Sixty-eight teachers went to all three days of TEXTEAMS training, 13 teachers attended two days, and 15 teachers attended one day of TEXTEAMS training. **Prekindergarten teachers had a total of 1,743 hours of mathematics training in 2001-02.**

A review of a sample of the PDA teacher evaluation forms from the mathematics training for prekindergarten teachers indicated a positive attitude to pre-K training in math. Ninety-nine percent of the teachers who responded to the survey agreed or strongly agreed to the statement, "This training has had a positive impact on my classroom."

Teachers especially liked the TEXTEAMS training sessions taught by Brian Mowry, an early childhood Mathematics Specialist for the district. One teacher wrote about the sessions, "Excellent training. It was actually fun and entertaining as well as informative." Another teacher wrote, "I appreciated the multitude of ideas for classroom

applications." See Appendix E for more responses to the PDA evaluation forms for pre-K literacy training.

Teachers at full-day prekindergarten programs were surveyed about the 2001-02 school year. Surveys from 109 teachers (62%) were completed. The topics of question included resources, *Prekindergarten Curriculum Guidelines*, language and literacy training, mathematics training, and areas of greatest need. The following is a summary of their input.

- 78% of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that they were satisfied with the resources provided to impact learning in the pre-K classroom.
- **92% agreed or strongly agreed that the language and literacy training that they attended was beneficial to their understanding of teaching literacy skills to pre-K students.**
- **94% agreed or strongly agreed that the TEXTEAMS training this year was beneficial to their understanding of teaching mathematics skills to pre-K students.**

See Appendix F for more comments from the pre-K teacher surveys.

Classroom Observations

In spring 2002, AISD Office of Program Evaluation staff conducted classroom observations in prekindergarten classrooms at seven elementary schools. The purpose of the observations was to see evidence of effective practices in prekindergarten classes that prepare students for success in kindergarten. To accomplish this purpose, campuses that were being successful with student achievement at all levels were selected. The selected schools, Barrington, Brooke, Cunningham, Govalle, Hart, Odom, and Zavala, were chosen to be representative of AISD pre-K programs (full-day and half-day programs at Title I and non-Title I schools) that have shown academic achievement in the following areas:

- Above average gains for AISD pre-K students on the *Peabody Picture Vocabulary III* (PPVT-III) and *Test de Vocabulario en Imagenes Peabody* (TVIP) during 1999-2000 and 2000-01; and
- School accountability ratings of *Recognized* in 2001.

Evaluation staff visited each of the pre-K classrooms at these schools to observe the classroom environment, instructional strategies, materials and curriculum used, and learning opportunities for pre-K students. In addition, pre-K teachers and principals at the selected schools were interviewed about the strengths and areas of need of the AISD pre-K program. Also, a sample of *Prekindergarten Report to Parents* was reviewed.

The classroom observation instrument was designed to observe evidence of the use of balanced literacy, *Prekindergarten Curriculum Guidelines*, and *Principles of Learning* (POL). These district initiatives for prekindergarten include the following.

- *Balanced literacy* at prekindergarten includes the following elements, Read Aloud, Shared Reading, Independent Reading, Shared Writing, and Independent Writing. Observers looked for many different opportunities for students to read and write.
- *Prekindergarten Curriculum Guidelines* provide a means to align prekindergarten programs with the TEKS curriculum. The guidelines describe

specific goals for prekindergarten children in each content area: language and early literacy; mathematics; science; social studies; fine arts; health and safety; personal and social development; physical development; and technology applications. Observers looked for evidence of a strong instructional program using the guidelines.

- *Principles of Learning* at prekindergarten includes Accountable Talk and Clear Expectations. Observers watched the interaction between teacher and children to determine if these *Principles of Learning* elements were part of the classroom environment.

See Appendix G for a copy of the classroom observation instrument.

Location and Size of Observation Schools

The schools that participated in the prekindergarten observations were of varied sizes and locations. Three of the schools, Brooke, Govalle, and Zavala, have enrollments of less than 500 students and are in east Austin. The other four schools, Barrington, Cunningham, Hart, and Odom, have enrollments of 500-800 students. Barrington and Hart are in north Austin and Cunningham and Odom are in south Austin.

Four of the campuses, Barrington, Brooke, Govalle, and Zavala, serve grade 6 students. All the schools except Cunningham received Title I funds in 2001-02. These seven schools were selected from a pool of 18 *Recognized* campuses that also had above average PPVT-III and TVIP scores for the past two years. The 20 prekindergarten teachers observed had an average of 12.6 years teaching experience, which is higher than the average for all AISD pre-K teachers (7.1 years). All of the teachers were certified in early childhood education or were working on certification requirements.

Classroom Environment

All of the classrooms visited were safe and comfortable learning environments for the four-year olds. There were an abundance of hands-on activities to provide opportunities for self-expression and creativity. Teachers were enthusiastic and children seemed eager to learn. Some of the observations made by evaluation staff include the following:

- Classrooms were rich in print and pictures.
- Books were attractively displayed and accessible for students. In bilingual classrooms, there were books in both English and Spanish.
- Students had many opportunities to work in centers including books/pre-reading, literacy activities, writing, listening, math manipulatives, computer, dramatic play, art, and blocks.
- Students were actively engaged in activities through one-on-one, small group, and large group instruction.
- Teachers asked open-ended questions designed to encourage children to think and express their ideas.
- *Principles of Learning* strategies such as Accountable Talk, Clear Expectations, and criteria charts with pictures were used to support learning.

Academic Rigor

While trying to maintain developmentally appropriate practices for pre-K students, it is necessary for teachers to insist on academic rigor for these four-year-olds who are disadvantaged by income, language, and/or homelessness. Because of the needs of these students and the high cost of the additional half day at school, the question arises, "How much additional core academic (i.e., language/literacy, mathematics, social studies, and science) opportunities actually occur in a full-day program as compared to a half-day program."

To try to answer this question, the schedules of the observation school prekindergarten teachers were analyzed to determine how much core academic time was scheduled for full-day students and for half-day students. The sample schedules for half-day and full-day pre-k classes provided in the AISD prekindergarten information brochure indicate that the full-day program offers 275 minutes of scheduled instructional time. The sample schedule for morning half-day classes have 150 minutes of core academic time and for afternoon half-day classes have 165 minutes.

The average of scheduled core academic opportunities for the 16 full-day classes at the observation schools was 202 minutes per day compared to 128 minutes in the half-day classes. **This equates to an additional 74 minutes of core academic time per day and a possibility of an additional 223 hours of core academics for full-day students during the prekindergarten year.** However, there is inconsistency in the amount of time scheduled at the full-day campuses visited. The schedules of full-day classrooms showed a range of 150 to 255 minutes for core academics each day. More than half (n=9) of the full-day classes had over 200 minutes of core academics scheduled each day. While the additional time in instruction for full-day students is beneficial, it appears that more students could benefit if there was a consistent prekindergarten schedule for the full-day classes that required increased time on core academics.

Teachers of half-day programs indicated that a half day is not enough time to incorporate all subjects and skills required in prekindergarten. In 2002-03, all prekindergarten classes will be full day.

Developmentally Appropriate Practices

According to the *National Association for the Education of Young Children* (NAEYC), there must be a balance between developing standards for the early childhood education and utilizing developmentally appropriate practices (NAEYC, 2002). The NAEYC takes the position that "early learning standards can contribute to better educational experiences for all young children today and a better future tomorrow, but standards simply describe checkpoints or markers that point the way." The organization states that "desired results for young children can be achieved only if early learning standards (1) are grounded in ethical principles; (2) have a foundation of support for programs, professionals, and families; (3) address significant developmental and educational content; (4) use informed, inclusive processes to develop and revise the standards; and (5) are linked with effective, developmentally appropriate strategies for implementation and assessment (2002)."

Developmentally appropriate practices were observed in the classrooms visited. Elements of developmentally appropriate practices as defined by NAEYC include: active learning activities; child-initiated learning; a variety of materials that stimulate a wide range of interest and ability levels; an environment that is stimulating and age-appropriate, safe and clean; toys and materials that are varied and in good condition; books that are of good quality and age-appropriate; and opportunities for music, movement, indoor and outdoor play.

The schedules of full-day classes may indicate a difference in philosophy about developmentally appropriate practices for prekindergarten students. The sample schedule for full-day students in the AISD prekindergarten brochure has two outdoor times scheduled each day. Some of the full-day classes at the observation schools had only one outdoor time and more academic time scheduled each day. In one classroom observed, the students got very active as they completed three hours of structured academic learning before lunch with one scheduled outdoor time after lunch. In another classroom, the teacher was doing a lesson that might have been more appropriate in kindergarten or first grade. Teachers at the observation schools asked for more consistency in the district prekindergarten programs in instruction, curriculum, timeline for teaching and learning, and assessment and reporting to parents.

Curriculum

There are two curricula provided for use in prekindergarten classrooms. The *Developmental Learning Materials* (DLM) Early Childhood Education, the state-adopted curriculum (1991), was available to all prekindergarten teachers. Full-day teachers also have the Scholastic curriculum, *Building Language for Literacy* (BLL), which was purchased to supplement instruction for the additional half day of instruction. Teachers also mentioned using a multitude of additional resources, including *Math Their Way, TEXTEAMS* materials, *Math Investigations*, *Open Court*, *Pre-Phonics Kit*, and AISD Science Kits. Bilingual teachers use *English in My Pocket*, *Estrellita*, and *Cancionero*.

The *Prekindergarten Curriculum Guidelines* were developed at the state level and are aligned with the TEKS. Prekindergarten teachers from the observation schools reported using the guidelines frequently in their classrooms in the following ways:

- To determine objectives, expectations, and developmental appropriateness of instruction and materials;
- To plan instruction for all subjects;
- To plan an outline/timeline for skills to be taught throughout the year;
- To share expectations for prekindergarten with parents;
- To guide assessment of student progress; and
- To report student progress to parents.

Only one of the teachers had not attended training on the *Prekindergarten Curriculum Guidelines*. Teachers who attended professional development specific to pre-K said that the trainings were beneficial and provided ideas that can be taken back to the classroom.

Assessment

Because there is no formal required AISD pre-K assessment (PPVT-III and TVIP are given to a sample of students), teachers perform informal assessments with their students. Examples of these assessments include the following:

- On-going assessment of students through teacher observations and anecdotal notes;
- General checklist using *Prekindergarten Curriculum Guidelines*;
- Skills assessment each nine weeks;
- BLL assessments;
- Daily conversations about what students have learned;
- Work samples; and
- Portfolios and journals.

Teachers reported meeting regularly with other pre-K and kindergarten teachers at their campus to plan and align curriculum with the TEKS. In addition, many of the teachers said that they were part of a vertical team of teachers. One teacher said, "Since we are using the curriculum guidelines and the other grade levels have TEKS, we feel alignment has been done. If we all follow through and do instruction that meets the state standards, then the children will have success."

Principles of Learning

While most of the pre-K teachers have not participated in a Learning Walk, they are using the POL strategies with their students. Academic rigor, Accountable Talk, Talk Alouds, and Clear Expectations are used with some modifications. Some teachers indicated that criteria charts and rubrics with photos displaying the desired outcome are well suited to pre-K. One teacher summarized *Principles of Learning* strategies by saying, "The four year olds must have clear expectations in order to follow through and benefit from instruction. Accountable Talk is worked on continuously. We try to get the student to be able to say what they are doing—not always why—just because it is hard for them to understand the why of an activity. Personally, I believe everything academic in pre-K represents rigor. The first time in school—following rules, making decisions, solving problems, being away from home for the first time, etc."

Factors That Contribute to Academic Success in Pre-K

Because their students were successful with the PPVT-III and/or the TVIP during the past two years, the teachers at the observation schools were asked what are the factors that contribute to academic success of students in their classrooms. One teacher summed it up by saying that there should be a "positive, nurturing environment where there isn't a wrong answer." Other responses to this question include the following:

Environment:

- Strong and consistent discipline –consistency throughout the day and with each student;
- High expectations for all students;
- Abundance of hands-on activities;
- Structured classroom with clear expectations;

- Safe and comfortable learning environment; and
- A classroom that provides opportunity for self-expression and creativity, and generates eagerness to learn.

Teacher:

- Enthusiastic and motivated teachers who use creativity in the teaching process;
- Teacher knowledge of curriculum;
- Fun and interesting learning activities;
- Plenty of opportunities to learn and practice new vocabulary;
- Use of repetition;
- Discussions that involve children talking about what they are learning;
- Good communication with parents; and
- Doing more than just the assigned curriculum.

Parents:

- Good student attendance;
- Parental support; and
- Homework sent home for parents to work with their kids.

Factors That Contribute to Academic Success Campus-wide

In addition, teachers were asked what factors contribute to academic success of the students at their campus. A list of factors that influence campus-wide academic success are presented here followed by a teacher quote:

- *Dedicated and Hardworking Teachers* – "The teachers here are very involved in doing what's best for their students. They do what they can to make sure their students' basic physical and emotional needs are met so they are ready and able to learn."
- *Focus on Instruction* – "All grade levels are focused on the TEKS. All grade levels have worked on narrowing the focus of instruction to students and areas of greatest needs. Very organized way of tutoring and tracking these needs and students."
- *Clear expectations* – Clear expectations for students and teachers. "There is feedback of students' performance and learning, and students talking about what they are learning."
- *Communication* – "There is constant communication between school, staff, and parents."
- *Belief in Students* – "There is a strong belief in our students' ability to learn, willingness to try new models of instruction."
- *Resources* – "Resources and technology are available for teaching and learning."
- *Parental Involvement* – Parent involvement in student learning is important to the child's success in pre-K.

Areas of Improvement

Because prekindergarten students have multiple needs, teacher support, both financial and physical, is critical for the education of these young children. Support by the district was summarized by one teacher this way, "I think the support and quality of

professional development provided by AISD has been and continues to be excellent for pre-K. Whenever there is money, we have received new materials, and we have been able to overhaul our old units with new furniture and equipment and materials." While pre-K teachers are generally pleased with materials and support for the prekindergarten program, there are areas of improvement to be explored. Pre-K teachers at the observation schools had these suggestions when asked how AISD could provide more support to improve student learning in the prekindergarten classrooms:

- Develop districtwide assessments using *Prekindergarten Curriculum Guidelines*;
- Update *Prekindergarten Report to Parents* with standards for each nine-weeks' report;
- Develop standard curriculum framework for prekindergarten to promote consistency among programs;
- Have smaller class size and/or place a cap on class size;
- Provide instructional aides for large classes to help with language and writing activities;
- Provide planning time for teachers to develop games, folders of activities, make and take activities;
- Provide training for teachers on campuses with on-site daycare (child pick-up is at 4:30pm);
- Provide training when new curriculum adoptions are made with extension of the program and not just an overview;
- Provide time for collegial visits among teachers;
- Provide money for consumables;
- Provide more on-level computer software; and
- Provide some kindergarten materials for those students that are working above grade level and need a challenge.

Principal Comments about the Impact of Prekindergarten

Five of the principals at the seven observation schools responded to questions about prekindergarten at their campus. There was an overwhelming belief that prekindergarten has a positive effect on the four-year-olds who attend. All agreed that these students are better prepared for kindergarten than students who do not attend pre-K. One principal said, "Students who attend pre-K are better prepared academically to enter kindergarten. This extra acceleration carries over to other grades and TAAS achievement." Another principal commented, "Our program provides kindergarten readiness and reading readiness in English and Spanish. Our program provides early literacy and math skills."

Principals indicated that pre-K teachers are part of vertical planning teams at their schools and are encouraged to participate in professional development specific to the early childhood teacher. Principals visit classrooms at least once each week.

Principles of Learning initiatives are stressed at these campuses. Most of the principals indicated that the pre-K teachers participate in Learning Walks. All of these principals said that teachers use the *Principles of Learning* strategies with modification in

their classroom. One principal said, " Clear Expectations is evident in the use of rubrics and criteria charts in the classrooms and in the discussions between teacher and students. Accountable Talk is abundant."

When principals were asked what factors contribute to academic success of pre-K students at their campus, one principal responded, "High-quality staff and high expectations based on curriculum guidelines are the foundation of success." Many of the factors listed by principals concurred with what teachers said. Additional factors listed include the following:

- Implementation of POL and the ongoing assessments;
- Implementation of research-based instruction and the practice of looping from one grade to the next;
- Support from central administration; and
- Teacher support such as study groups, staff development, and structured planning time.

Principals indicated that the factors that contribute to the success for pre-K are the same factors that contribute to the academic success for their entire campus. These ideas for campus-wide academic success can be summarized as:

- Clear curricular expectations focused on the TEKS;
- High expectations for every child;
- A strong staff with regular planning and staff development;
- Language and math programs that focus on critical thinking and problem solving; and
- Grouping strategies to tutor and reteach at-risk students.

Principals gave these ideas for additional districtwide support for the prekindergarten program to improve student learning:

- Integrate content areas (i.e., science and social studies into language arts and math);
- Provide a teacher aide if a class exceeds 18. One principal says that "18 students is really too large as it is;"
- Provide specific models of how to implement POL in the pre-K classroom;
- Provide clear benchmarks of what students should know and do with a strong academic focus;
- Provide cognitive coaches in reading and math that could come in and model balanced literacy strategies and math best practices; and
- Organize district meetings just for pre-K teachers to discuss curriculum frameworks.

3. How will the program determine the impact, short-term and long-term, of the activities of the expanded full-day prekindergarten on the participants?

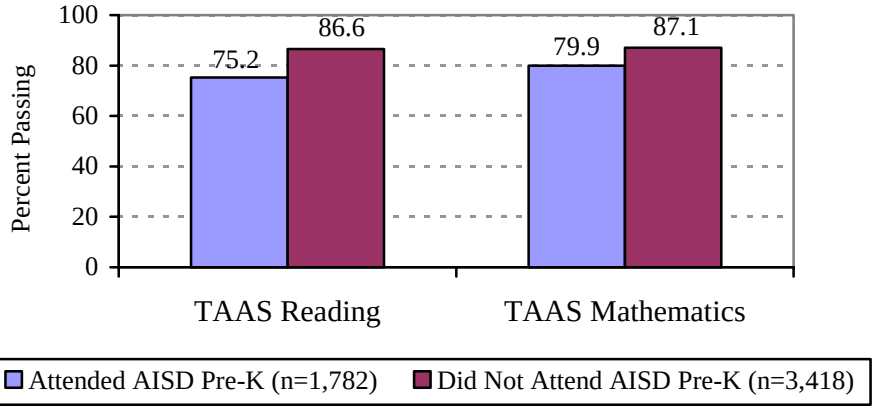
In 1999-2000, prekindergarten programs in Texas served almost 150,000 children in 844 of the state's 1,057 school districts at a cost of $267 million annually, making the program the third largest in the nation behind California and New York (Education Week,

January 10, 2002). Along with the money invested in prekindergarten in Texas, there is an accountability system in place to hold all schools to the same standards for student achievement. Senate Bill 4, passed by the 76th Texas Legislature in 1999, increased the urgency for students to read on grade level by the end of third grade by requiring grade 3 students to pass TAKS (*Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills*) reading to be promoted to grade 4 beginning in 2003. As students, teachers, and school districts will be held to a passing standard on the more stringent state assessment, it is important to ask the question, "How is prekindergarten in Texas helping students meet the new and more stringent requirements?"

Long-Term Impact - 2002 Grade 3 TAAS Analysis

To examine the effects of prekindergarten attendance on TAAS performance in AISD, an analysis was completed for students in grade 3 during 2001-02 who took TAAS reading and TAAS mathematics. Students who took grade 3 TAAS in 2001-02 were divided into two groups: 1) students who attended the AISD prekindergarten program, and 2) students who did not attend AISD prekindergarten. These students were four-years old in 1997-98 and were the appropriate age to attend prekindergarten. The analyses include comparisons for all students, LEP students, low-income students, and low-income LEP students. When reviewing the districtwide test data for all students, it can be seen in Figure 15 that the percentage of students passing TAAS reading and TAAS mathematics was 11 to 12 percentage points higher for the group of students who did not attend AISD prekindergarten. (This includes all students in the district regardless of ethnicity, low-income status, or language. There is also no knowledge of whether there was preschool experience outside of AISD for those students who did not attend AISD prekindergarten.)

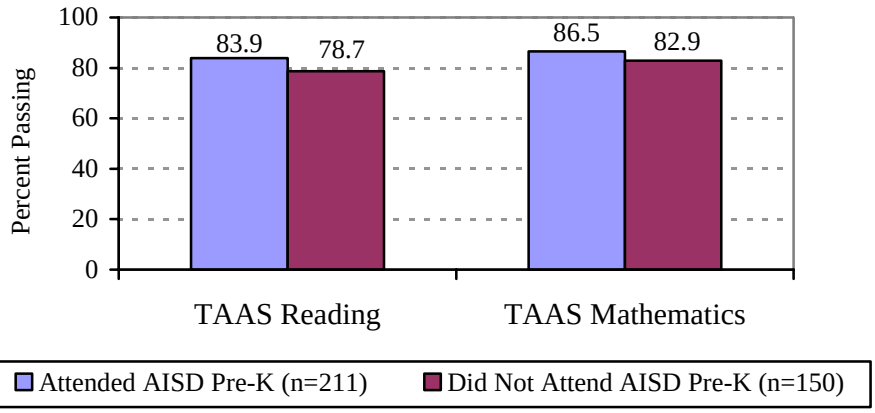
Figure 15: Percentage of Grade 3 Students Passing TAAS 2002
by Prekindergarten Attendance



However, as shown in Figures 16-18, when the TAAS passing rates for grade 3 low-income and LEP students are examined, the students who attended AISD prekindergarten have the higher passing rates in every case except TAAS reading for low-income students.

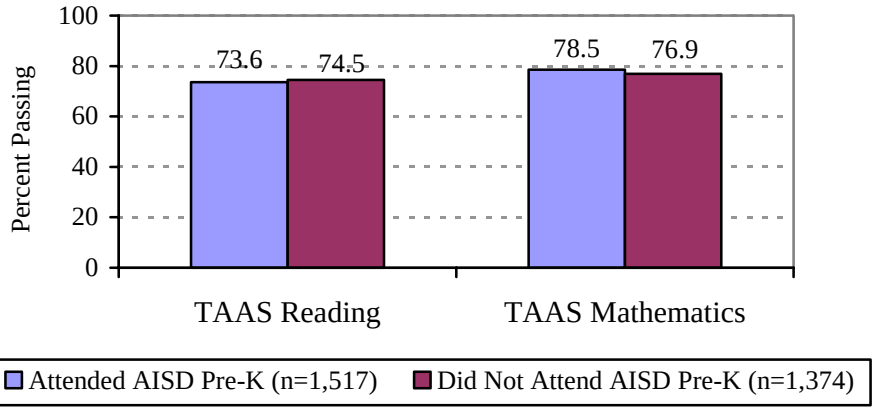
Figure 16 shows the 2002 TAAS passing rates for LEP students. **When examining the data by LEP status the percentage of grade 3 LEP students passing TAAS was four to five percentage points higher in both reading and mathematics for students who attended AISD prekindergarten.**

Figure 16: Percentage of AISD Grade 3 LEP Students Passing TAAS 2002 by Prekindergarten Attendance



The grade 3 TAAS results for low-income students were similar for both groups of students. The percentage of low-income students passing TAAS reading was slightly higher for the non-prekindergarten group while percentage passing TAAS mathematics was slightly higher for the prekindergarten group. Figure 17 shows that the percentage of low-income students who passed grade 3 TAAS reading and TAAS mathematics for both groups of students.

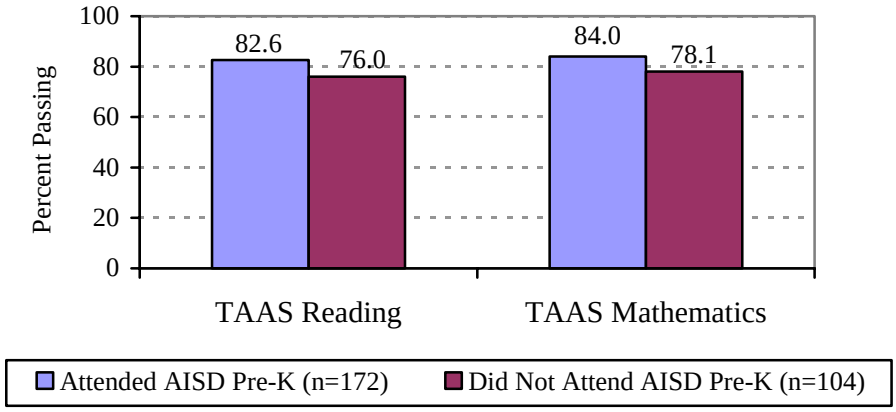
Figure 17: Percentage of AISD Grade 3 Low-Income Students Passing TAAS 2002 by Prekindergarten Attendance



Some students qualify for prekindergarten by meeting both the low income and LEP requirements. Figure 18 shows the TAAS percentage passing comparison for students who met both low income and LEP criteria. **The percentage of grade 3 low-income LEP students who passed TAAS reading and mathematics was six percentage**

points higher for students who attended AISD prekindergarten than those who did not attend AISD prekindergarten.

Figure 18: Percentage of AISD Grade 3 Low-Income LEP Students Passing TAAS 2002 by Prekindergarten Attendance



Because there have been four years of instruction since these grade 3 students were in prekindergarten, it is not possible to say that prekindergarten enrollment was responsible for the higher passing rates for those students who attended prekindergarten. However, it seems that prekindergarten enrollment has made an impact on TAAS achievement for this group of low income and LEP grade 3 students.

With 15% (n=956) of all AISD grade 3 students not passing 2002 TAAS reading, it is clear that the district has a challenge to help all students meet the state requirements at grade 3 beginning in 2003. Over the past few years, the state initiated programs and funding to support systemic change in professional development and assessment tools at the early grades. AISD has also initiated programs to improve academic success by aligning the curriculum with the TEKS and providing for consistency of instruction from campus to campus. Prekindergarten is an important part of the early elementary effort to help all students meet the academic standards.

Short-term Impact of the Prekindergarten Program

The prekindergarten program manager, Anita Uphaus, and the early childhood mathematics specialist, Brian Mowry, were interviewed about the goals, strengths, and challenges of the district's prekindergarten program. According to Mrs. Uphaus, the areas of focus for the prekindergarten program in 2001-02 were:

1. the continued support for daily language and literacy instruction in all pre-K classes; and
2. an increased awareness of the importance of sound mathematics instruction through the availability of relevant, hands-on, research-based teacher training.

The 2001-02 school year was the third year that AISD received the *Prekindergarten Expansion Grant* from the state. Mrs. Uphaus indicated that the grant "has had a significant impact on the ability to provide a high quality program" for prekindergarten students in AISD. The benefits include additional instructional time for full-day students, more students served by the program, and increased

opportunities for professional development. She added, "The added instructional time has given the teachers the opportunity to enrich and reinforce individual learning."

Strengths of the Program

According to Mr. Mowry, one of the main strengths of the pre-K program is the "leadership provided by Anita Uphaus, who has lobbied for maintaining developmentally appropriate practices in districtwide instruction at the pre-K level." He added that Mrs. Uphaus is "well liked and respected by all of the teachers."

A second strength of the pre-K program, according to both the program manager and the mathematics specialist, is the quality of the prekindergarten teachers. As Mrs. Uphaus states, the pre-K program has "quality, caring teachers who are dedicated to providing a positive first year of public school for all of their students." Mr. Mowry added that, "The pre-K teachers in this district have been consistent in attending staff development and implementing their new pedagogical knowledge in the classrooms."

Another strength of the program is the advantage of having full-day classes at most of the campuses. According to Mr. Mowry, "The full-day pre-K programs provide teachers and students the opportunity to cover instructional material and content with more depth and consistency. In the half-day setting there is not enough time for teachers to give equal attention to mathematics instruction. Often, teachers make literacy their instructional priority and get to mathematics only as time allows. Consequently, the full-day pre-K program provides greater opportunities for success in mathematics."

Areas for Program Improvement

According to Mr. Mowry, the quality of mathematics instruction could improve if teachers were equipped with adequate materials. He says, "Often, there are not enough resources in the form of books and manipulative materials for teachers to implement the new, more rigorous instructional standards they are learning in their staff development."

In addition, Mrs. Uphaus added, "The quality of instruction can continue to improve through increased teacher participation in professional development sessions and follow-up coaching at the local campus."

The good news is that there is a districtwide initiative to align curriculum to state requirements during 2002-03. As part of this initiative, the *Prekindergarten Curriculum Guidelines* have been incorporated into a prekindergarten through grade 12 document that addresses the TEKS for all grade levels and all subject areas. Instructional planning guides will be provided to all teachers to promote consistency across the district. All professional development sessions will address implementation in the areas of language and literacy, mathematics, science, and social studies. According to Mr. Mowry, "This effort will help pre-K teachers provide educational experiences that will prepare their students for success in kindergarten to high school."

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As AISD moves to full-day prekindergarten programs for eligible four-year-olds in 2002-03, a look at the full-day and half-day language and literacy achievement supports the benefit for students attending pre-K for a full day of instruction. The schedules of pre-K teachers at the observation schools indicated that full-day students had an additional 74 minutes of scheduled core academic learning activities each day than had half-day students. This represents an additional 223 hours during the school year.

In addition, full-day students outperformed half-day students on the *Peabody Picture Vocabulary-III* (PPVT-III) and the *Test de Vocabulario en Imágenes Peabody* (TVIP) in 2001-02. In three out of four comparisons, the gains from pretest to posttest for full-day students were significantly greater than for half-day students. Spanish LEP students seem to benefit most from the extra half day of instruction. Full-day Spanish LEP students showed significantly greater gains than half-day students in Spanish and English.

While the prekindergarten enrollment increased by 10% from 2000-01 to 2001-02 (from 3,441 to 3,823), the LEP pre-K enrollment increased by 24% (from 1,442 to 1,901). This increase in the number of AISD students who have limited English acquisition and the more stringent state standards provides support for the idea that pre-K students need to attend school all day to be prepared for TAKS in grade 3.

Preparing students for kindergarten in a developmentally appropriate manner is a goal of the pre-K program. The acquisition of language and literacy skills in preparation for reading is also an important goal of prekindergarten. Although 100 is the national average score on the PPVT-III and the TVIP, there is an average range of 85-115 standard score points. The assumption is that students who advance to the average range in the test of their native language will be ready to accelerate future literacy learning in kindergarten. In review, when the 2001-02 PPVT-III and TVIP scores were examined, 80% of all students tested scored in the average range (85-115 standard score points) at the posttest when tested in their native language.

The 2002 grade 3 TAAS scores for students who had attended AISD prekindergarten showed that the percentage of grade 3 students passing TAAS mathematics was higher for low-income and LEP students who had attended pre-K than for students who had not attended pre-K. In addition, the percentage of grade 3 students passing TAAS reading was higher for LEP and low-income/LEP students who had attended pre-K than for students who had not attended pre-K. The results for low-income students were similar for both groups on TAAS reading.

Classroom observations revealed that pre-K teachers are implementing the districtwide initiatives. Evidence of the use of balanced literacy includes Read Aloud, Shared Reading, Independent Reading, Shared Writing, and Independent Writing. *Principles of Learning* strategies are modified for the young child with pictures on the criteria chart to show students samples of good work. Clear expectations and academic rigor are also evident. In the district's urgency to have all students reading on grade level at the end of third grade, there is a need for caution to ensure that instruction is developmentally appropriate for these young children.

The quality of professional development was praised by pre-K teachers, especially the TEXTEAMS mathematics training. Training for pre-K teachers is optional, but 49% of the pre-K teachers attended TEXTEAMS for which teacher substitutes were hired. Training was focused on the curriculum and the *Prekindergarten Curriculum Guidelines*.

In 2002-03, AISD is implementing a uniform curriculum that mirrors state standards to ensure consistent, quality education throughout the district. The curriculum department has created a written document for pre-K through grade 12 that will align the curriculum horizontally and vertically. In addition, there will be an AISD designed prekindergarten mathematics assessment to be piloted at several schools in 2002-03. The PPVT-III and TVIP testing will continue to be an important part of the pre-K evaluation for 2002-03 as it is the only formal assessment of pre-K.

Recommendations

The following recommendations for 2002-03 are offered to district decision makers for their consideration:

- Insist on developmentally appropriate practices for prekindergarten while supporting the academic rigor required for pre-K students to close the gap.
- Implement consistent expectations for teaching and learning for prekindergarten (e.g., curriculum, timeline of instruction, schedules, and assessment).
- Redesign the *Prekindergarten Report to Parents* with a scale that is defined with standards and clarify expectations for student performance in each nine-week reporting period.
- Develop districtwide prekindergarten assessments in literacy and mathematics for 2003-04 to ensure that instruction is aligned with the *Prekindergarten Curriculum Guidelines*.
- Refine the mathematics assessment that will be piloted in prekindergarten in 2002-03 and consider its use districtwide for the assessment of progress in mathematics for prekindergarten students.
- Provide quality language/literacy and TEXTEAMS professional development for prekindergarten teachers to ensure consistency and quality in curriculum and instruction even in the face of a limited budget.

In 2002-03, AISD will implement a uniform curriculum that mirrors state standards to ensure consistent, quality education throughout the district. The AISD curriculum department staff has created a written document for pre-K through grade 12 that will align the curriculum across all subjects and all grades. Pre-K teachers will be a part of the district's effort to provide educational experiences that will prepare their students for further success in kindergarten through high school.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Prekindergarten Expansion Grant, Cycle 5
Program Evaluation Plan for Austin ISD

1. *How will the program demonstrate evidence of gains in cognitive development, especially in pre-reading and language, and mathematics?*

   Language Arts/Pre-Reading - Program effectiveness for prekindergarten language arts will be determined by gains on the English language *Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test-III* (PPVT-III) and the Spanish language *Test de Vocabulario en Imágenes Peabody* (TVIP). The PPVT-III and TVIP measure knowledge of receptive (hearing) vocabulary. To measure achievement gains for prekindergarten students, the PPVT-III and the TVIP will be administered in the fall and in the spring to a random sample of students in each prekindergarten classroom (both full-day and half-day programs). Gains will be calculated based on the pre- and posttest scores. All students are tested in English; Spanish LEP students are also tested in Spanish. Comparisons to be reported in the evaluation will include half-day and full-day programs on the PPVT-III for English monolingual, Spanish LEP, and all students; and on the TVIP for Spanish LEP students. For schools that are completing their first year in a full-day program, gains for 2001-02 will be compared with previous years to determine effectiveness of the full-day program. A three-year longitudinal study of prekindergarten achievement also will be included in the evaluation.
   Mathematics and Social Skills – Academic performance and personal development for pre-K students are reported to parents four times during the school year. The beginning and end of year reports will be reviewed and reported for pre-K students at the AISD Focus Schools to assess growth in academic performance and personal development.

2. *How will the program demonstrate the effectiveness of activities of the expanded full-day prekindergarten in achieving the aims of the program?*

   Language Arts - Full implementation of the English language curriculum, *Building Language for Literacy* (BLL), will take place in 2001-02. This curriculum was purchased to supplement instruction in the full-day prekindergarten classes. Monthly staff development will be offered to full-day prekindergarten teachers throughout the school year to discuss activities for curriculum instruction. Teachers will be surveyed to examine if the curriculum is beneficial to students and if the training was helpful with implementation of the curriculum. Observations of activities associated with the extended full-day program will be documented.
   Mathematics - Professional development in mathematics is offered to pre-K teachers throughout the school year. AISD mathematics staff collaborates with the Charles Dana Center at the University of Texas to provide TEXTEAMS professional development. At the pre-K level, the TEXTEAMS training is correlated to the *Prekindergarten Curriculum Guidelines* and emphasizes five content areas of the

guidelines. Pre-K teachers will be surveyed for evidence that the training is beneficial to the understanding of mathematics for pre-K students. Elementary math specialists will be surveyed about the effectiveness of math instruction in the pre-K classrooms.

3. *How will the program determine the impact, short-term and long-term, of the activities of the expanded full-day prekindergarten on the participants?*

   Longitudinal TAAS reading, mathematics, and writing results for former prekindergarten students will be compared with TAAS results for students at those schools who did not attend prekindergarten to determine if there is an effect of attending prekindergarten by grade 3 when students first participate in TAAS testing. This will help us determine if there are any student groups (e.g., English-speaker, Spanish-speaker, or ESL student) that benefit most from a full-day program.

Appendix B: 2001-02 AISD Pre-K Programs

School	Number of Students Served	Half-Day Pre-K	Full-Day Pre-K	Title I Elementary School	Pre-K Expansion Grant Funding
Allan	73		x	x	x
Allison	47		x	x	x
Andrews	81		x	x	x
Barrington	96		x	x	x
Becker	43		x	x	x
Blackshear	46		x	x	x
Blanton	72	x		x	
Boone	20	x			
Brentwood	46		x		x
Brooke	42		x	x	x
Brown	82		x	x	x
Campbell	65		x	x	x
Casey	51		x		x
Casis	18	x			
Cook	92	x		x	
Cunningham	38		x		x
Dawson	49		x	x	x
Galindo	112		x	x	x
Govalle	74		x	x	x
Graham	74		x	x	x
Harris	87		x	x	x
Hart	53	x		x	
Houston	119		x	x	x
Jordan	100		x	x	x
Joslin	35	x		x	
Kocurek	47		x		x
Langford	89		x	x	x
Linder	94		x	x	x
Maplewood	34		x	x	x
Mathews	49		x	x	x
McBee	60	x		x	
Menchaca	18		x		x
Metz	66		x	x	x
Norman	76		x	x	x
Oak Hill	36		x		x
Oak Springs	47		x	x	x
Odom	62	x		x	
Ortega	42		x	x	x
Palm	53		x	x	x
Patton	20	x			
Pecan Springs	90		x	x	x
Pickle	91		x	x	x

School	Number of Students Served	Half-Day Pre-K	Full-Day Pre-K	Title I Elementary School	Pre-K Expansion Grant Funding
Pillow	39	x			
Pleasant Hill	50	x		x	
Reilly	40		x	x	x
Ridgetop	29		x	x	x
Rodriguez	70	x		x	
St. Elmo	64	x		x	
Sanchez	57		x	x	x
Sims	50		x	x	x
Summitt	56		x		x
Sunset Valley	68		x	x	x
Travis Heights	60		x	x	x
Walnut Creek	136		x	x	x
Widen	97		x	x	x
Williams	41	x			
Winn	73		x	x	x
Wooldridge	90		x	x	x
Wooten	89		x	x	x
Zavala	61		x	x	x
Zilker	34		x		x
Total	3,823	14	47	48	47

Schools without pre-K programs in 2001-02 were Baranoff, Barton Hills, Bryker Woods, Cowan, Davis, Doss, Gullett, Highland Park, Hill, Kiker, Lee, Mills, and Pease.

Source: AISD Office of Program Evaluation Pre-K Student Files

Appendix C: Average PPVT-III and TVIP Pretest, Posttest, and Gain Scores by AISD School, 2001-02

School	Average Pretest PPVT-III	Average Posttest PPVT-III	Average Gain PPVT-III	Average Pretest TVIP	Average Posttest TVIP	Average Gain TVIP
Allan	76.0	81.7	5.7	85.3	98.2	12.9
Allison	71.8	83.0	11.2	87.3	97.3	9.9
Andrews	63.8	69.0	5.2	84.0	99.6	15.6
Barrington	75.1	81.1	6.0	86.3	94.3	8.3
Becker	76.8	86.1	9.3	62.2	76.3	14.2
Blackshear	67.1	79.4	12.3	86.7	106.3	19.6
Blanton	64.0	70.6	6.6	85.4	93.6	8.1
Boone	88.7	98.1	9.3	88.0	90.7	2.7
Brentwood	76.6	81.9	5.3	78.3	87.8	9.5
Brooke	78.6	88.9	10.3	77.1	90.7	13.6
Brown	68.2	71.7	3.4	88.8	90.5	1.7
Campbell	86.3	87.9	1.6	84.9	90.2	5.3
Casey	86.1	91.9	5.8	84.0	93.0	9.0
Casis	78.3	90.6	12.2	125.3	120.7	-4.7
Cook	66.9	72.5	5.6	86.7	94.1	7.4
Cunningham	92.7	97.1	4.4	81.5	78.5	-3.0
Dawson	76.0	80.5	4.5	90.7	96.4	5.8
Galindo	77.5	80.8	3.2	87.1	91.1	4.1
Govalle	75.9	87.6	11.8	84.0	90.8	6.8
Graham	70.2	76.0	5.8	84.4	98.3	13.9
Harris	61.6	71.1	9.5	87.5	92.6	5.2
Hart	74.1	81.7	7.6	86.8	98.8	12.1
Houston	68.7	75.8	7.1	83.6	96.1	12.5
Jordan	83.0	87.7	4.7	79.9	89.4	9.5
Joslin	85.0	90.9	5.9	88.0	90.0	2.0
Kocurek	79.2	85.2	6.0	95.8	95.2	-0.2
Langford	75.4	82.5	7.1	85.5	93.2	7.6
Linder	70.6	75.8	5.2	84.0	88.9	4.9
Maplewood	80.8	90.1	9.4	91.0	88.0	-3.0
Mathews	88.9	93.9	4.9	104.3	98.0	-6.3
McBee	66.4	74.4	7.9	82.3	94.5	12.1
Menchaca	90.3	95.3	4.9	68.0	66.0	-2.0
Metz	72.6	81.0	8.3	81.8	90.6	8.8
Norman	64.0	76.0	12.0	87.4	94.6	7.2
Oak Hill	82.5	92.9	10.4	94.0	101.3	7.3
Oak Springs	78.8	85.9	7.1	82.0	85.4	3.4
Odom	80.3	83.6	3.6	84.3	90.0	5.7
Ortega	75.5	87.2	11.7	81.8	98.5	16.3
Palm	79.9	82.1	2.2	89.0	93.5	4.5
Patton	92.7	91.8	-0.9	-	-	-
Pecan Springs	82.1	97.3	5.2	93.9	102.9	9.1
Pickle	70.8	69.4	-1.5	94.5	97.9	3.4

School	Average Pretest PPVT-III	Average Posttest PPVT-III	Average Gain PPVT-III	Average Pretest TVIP	Average Posttest TVIP	Average Gain TVIP
Pillow	88.5	93.2	4.7	46.7	73.7	27.0
Pleasant Hill	73.1	81.2	8.1	86.8	94.3	7.6
Reilly	69.4	78.3	8.8	82.8	93.4	10.7
Ridgetop	70.5	76.8	6.3	88.5	103.8	13.4
Rodriguez	69.3	72.5	3.2	85.1	90.5	5.5
St. Elmo	83.2	84.7	1.5	87.6	98.4	10.8
Sanchez	80.7	86.1	5.4	87.6	96.5	8.9
Sims	75.0	79.4	4.4	74.5	95.2	20.6
Summitt	92.8	95.2	2.3	101.8	105.6	3.8
Sunset Valley	74.6	82.0	7.3	88.6	98.5	9.9
Travis Hts.	79.2	89.0	9.8	81.1	94.2	13.1
Walnut Creek	71.8	81.1	9.4	92.3	99.9	7.6
Widen	75.9	81.8	5.9	91.2	104.5	13.3
Williams	88.0	90.3	1.7	85.6	95.6	10.0
Winn	77.0	81.9	4.9	89.8	100.3	10.5
Wooldridge	64.3	68.3	4.0	83.6	90.2	6.6
Wooten	66.0	68.9	2.9	86.9	97.7	10.8
Zavala	74.2	83.5	9.4	72.3	80.0	7.7
Zilker	81.7	86.4	4.7	86.7	90.8	4.1
Total	75.1	81.1	6.0	86.3	94.6	8.3

Source: AISD Office of Program Evaluation Pre-K Student Files

Appendix D: AISD Pre-K Teacher Response to the Evaluation of Language and Literacy Training in 2001-02

Question	% Agreed or Strongly Agreed	Average Scale Score Value*
Content		
1. The objectives of the training were clear. (n=59)	100	3.8
2. The training content matched objectives. (n=58)	100	3.8
3. The environment was conducive to learning. (n=58)	100	3.8
Instructor		
4. The instructor was organized. (n=59)	100	3.8
5. The instructor was knowledgeable. (n=58)	100	3.8
6. The instructor used effective training techniques. (n=59)	100	3.8
Application		
7. The training is applicable to my work. (n=59)	100	3.8
8. The length of this session was sufficient to cover coursework. (n=59)	100	3.8
9. I would like follow-up training to support my new skills. (n=59)	94	3.5
Implementation		
10. I have begun to implement this training into my classroom. (n=32)	97	3.5
11. My teaching skills improved because of this training. (n=39)	100	3.6
12. This training has had a positive impact on my classroom. (n=37)	100	3.6
13. I would like ongoing training to support my new skills. (n=41)	95	3.6

Note: Scale is as follows: 1=Strongly Disagree; 2=Disagree; 3=Agree; 4=Strongly Agee
Any value of 3.0 and above indicates agreement with the statement.

Source: AISD Office of Program Evaluation Pre-K Teacher Surveys, 2001-02

Appendix E: AISD Pre-K Teacher Response to the Evaluation of Mathematics Training in 2001-02

Question	% Agreed or Strongly Agreed	Average Scale Score Value*
Content		
1. The objectives of the training were clear. (n=118)	98	3.9
2. The training content matched objectives. (n=131)	98	3.9
3. The environment was conducive to learning. (n=132)	97	3.9
Instructor		
4. The instructor was organized. (n=134)	99	4.0
5. The instructor was knowledgeable. (n=131)	100	4.0
6. The instructor used effective training techniques. (n=131)	100	4.0
Application		
7. The training is applicable to my work. (n=133)	98	3.9
8. The length of this session was sufficient to cover coursework. (n=131)	93	3.7
9. I would like follow-up training to support my new skills. (n=131)	98	3.8
Implementation		
10. I have begun to implement this training into my classroom. (n=131)	97	3.7
11. My teaching skills improved because of this training. (n=129)	99	3.8
12. This training has had a positive impact on my classroom. (n=130)	99	3.8
13. I would like ongoing training to support my new skills. (n=128)	99	3.8

Note: Scale is as follows: 1=Strongly Disagree; 2=Disagree; 3=Agree; 4=Strongly Agee
Any value of 3.0 and above indicates agreement with the statement.

Source: AISD Office of Program Evaluation Pre-K Teacher Surveys, 2001-02

Appendix F: Comments from Prekindergarten Teacher Survey

Districtwide pre-K teachers whose students had greater than average gains on the PPVT-III and the TVIP in 2001-02 were asked for feedback on what types of instruction and/or activities they use in the classroom to help accelerate the vocabulary skills of their students. Teachers used a wealth of materials and strategies to keep learning interesting. This is a partial list of their suggestions:

- Spoke to students using high level vocabulary;
- Encouraged students to use proper and high level words;
- Used a variety of genre to read aloud;
- Selected high level vocabulary books and explained meaning of unknown words;
- Used computer games such as Sticky Bear, Milly Playhouse;
- Sent books home with children several times each week for homework;
- Incorporated the BLL units into plans and completed pre- and posttest assessments;
- Used Read Alouds several times each day;
- Utilized every minute (e.g., waiting in line, walking down the hall, on the playground) for some type of learning;
- Used Accountable Talk to reinforce what and why;
- Used poetry, music, games, finger plays, dramatizations daily; and
- Encouraged all children to participate in discussions.

Teachers of full-day pre-K students were asked how they used the *Prekindergarten Guidelines* in their classrooms. The following is a list followed by the number of responses for each method used:

1. Planning classroom instruction (100);
2. Assessing students (89);
3. Reporting to parents (84);
4. Planning with grade level team (78); and
5. Other (13) including: creating a list of expectations per nine weeks; creating bulletin boards; aligning with literature; writing objectives and goals; creating criteria charts; making games and other materials; conducting parent conferences; setting benchmarks; and developing annual plans.

Professional development is optional to teachers except for scheduled in-service days. There were 11 respondents who indicated that they did not attend pre-K training in 2001-02. The combined total of workshops attended by the full-day teachers who responded to the survey was 181. The length of training sessions was 2-7 hours depending on the topic. Training that full-day teachers reported attending during 2001-02 and the number of responses include the following:

1. TEXTEAMS Mathematics (59);
2. BLL/Prekindergarten Guidelines (27);
3. DLM/Prekindergarten Guidelines (39);
4. Phonemic Awareness in Young Children (19); and

5. Other (37) including: LEER MAS; Science kits; Balanced literacy; New teacher orientation; Bilingual training; NAEYC National Conference; Math Investigations; English in My Pocket; Literacy centers in pre-K classrooms; Literacy centers in the bilingual classroom; ESL; High Scope; Six traits of writing; Shared reading; Estrellita; GEMS/AIMS science; Tejas Lee; Preidea; and Conflict resolution for preschoolers.

Appendix G: 2001-02 AISD Prekindergarten Classroom Observation

Campus _____ Date of Observation _____
Teacher _____ Observation Time: From _____ To: _____
Language(s) of Instruction_____ Observer _____

I. Classroom Context

A. Total number of students _____

B. Print environment: Abundant ____ Adequate ____ Poor _____

C. What learning centers are available in the classroom?

- Ç Book Center/Library
- Ç Block Center
- Ç Listening Center
- Ç Computer Center
- Ç Writing Center
- Ç Dramatic Play
- Ç Art
- Ç Science/Discovery
- Ç Math/Manipulatives
- Ç Water/Sand
- Ç Puzzles
- Ç Housekeeping Center
- Ç Other _____

C. Is there evidence of balanced literacy opportunities in classroom?

- Ç Read Aloud
- Ç Shared Reading
- Ç Independent Reading
- Ç Shared Writing
- Ç Independent Writing

D. Are there examples of student work displayed in the classroom? What content areas does the work reflect?

Content Area	Description of Student Work Displayed
1.	
2.	

E. What content areas were explored during the visit?
- Ç Language Arts/Pre-Reading
- Ç Mathematics
- Ç Social Studies
- Ç Science
- Ç Fine Arts
- Ç Health and Safety
- Ç Physical Development
- Ç Technology Applications

II. Teacher and Student Participation

A. Is there evidence of the following?
- Ç Accountable Talk (Principles of Learning)
- Ç Clear Expectations (Principles of Learning)
- Ç Children showing interest in language and literacy (looking at books, drawing pictures, writing, expressing ideas)
- Ç Children demonstrating creativity, using imagination, and expressing themselves (arts, drama, story telling)
- Ç Teachers observing children and documenting what they have learned about the children
- Ç Teachers facilitating learning and involving small groups of children in cooperative tasks
- Ç Teachers asking open-ended questions designed to encourage children to think and express their ideas; accepting more than one answer; and encouraging individual thinking

B. Describe classroom activities during your visit.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

C. Attach Classroom Schedule

Appendix G Continued: Prekindergarten Classroom Observation Activity Sheet

Time	Group Size	Activity	Teacher Participation	Student Participation	Skills of Focus	Instructional Strategies

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AUSTIN INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Division of Accountability and Information Systems
Joy McLarty, Ph.D.

Office of Program Evaluation
Holly Williams, Ph.D.
Martha Doolittle, Ph.D.

Author
Janice Curry

Programmer
Veda Raju

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