

Background. The Texas Literacy Initiative (TLI) in Austin Independent School District (AISD) is currently implemented within the Johnson, Travis, and Lanier vertical teams of schools, grades prekindergarten (pre-K) through 12. The purpose of TLI is to improve school readiness and success in the areas of language and literacy for students in AISD, including associated early childhood education (ECE) providers. To do this, AISD uses the Literacy Lines model, which provides instructional and programming alignment for language, pre-literacy, and literacy development to ease the transition for children across their entire learning careers. A Literacy Line is a vertical collaborative among feeder-pattern campuses within the district, partnering eligible educational organizations (e.g., pre-K, elementary, middle, and high schools) and their associated ECE providers, which may include Early Head Start, Head Start, public or private or nonprofit licensed child care providers, and public pre-K programs. In Fall 2013, staff in AISD’s Department of Research and Evaluation (DRE) worked with TLI grant management staff to create and administer a survey to principals, assistant principals, teachers, and TLI reading specialists/coaches at all TLI campuses. This report summarizes responses from reading coaches/specialists at TLI campuses.

Respondents. An electronic survey was sent to 58 literacy coaches and reading specialists within the TLI vertical teams. Of the 51 coaches/specialists who responded (88% response rate), the majority (90%) worked at elementary-grade levels, and 10% worked at secondary-grade levels.

Coaches/Specialists’ ratings. Coaches/specialists’ responses to questions related to the TLI grant are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Coaches/Specialists’ Ratings (n = 48)

Statement	% Strongly agree	% Agree	% Disagree	% Strongly disagree	% Not sure/NA
I have been supported by the principal of my campus.	73	21	2	0	4
Teachers on my campus are willing to work with me and implement my suggestions.	27	67	0	0	6
I receive the support I need from Texas Literacy Initiative (TLI) central office staff.	48	35	2	0	15
I have enough time to complete my current job duties.	10	35	21	4	29

Source. TLI Fall 2013 Staff Survey

Coach/Specialist Activities. Coaches/specialists were asked to indicate all types of activities they had typically completed during the week so far during the school year. Table 2 summarizes the types of activities reported by coaches/specialists (staff could select more than one activity). The three most common activities coaches/specialists reported (82% each) were planning instruction with teachers, accessing student data, and communicating with campus administration about their work.

Table 2. Typical Weekly Activities by Texas Literacy Initiative (TLI) Reading Coaches/Specialists (n = 51)

Weekly activity type	% Coaches/Specialists
Planning instruction with teachers	82
Accessing student data (e.g., test results, benchmarks)	82
Communicating with campus administration about your work	82
Doing administrative paperwork, data entry, etc.	80
Providing intervention to students	76
Observing instruction and providing feedback to teachers	73
Providing professional development to teachers	69
Modeling effective instructional strategies for teachers	65
Leading data meetings with teachers	55
Managing campus-based literacy teams (Project Share)	39
Co-teaching in a classroom	33

Source. TLI Fall 2013 Staff Survey

Coaches and specialists were asked to suggest additional professional development opportunities they would like to receive. The following are examples of those suggestions (n = 27): guided reading, vocabulary development, six syllables, phonics, graphophonemic knowledge, read aloud, modeling shared reading, lesson planning, Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling (LETRS) training, strategies for vertical and horizontal grade-level alignment in instruction, coaching strategies to build strong relationships with teachers, supporting all content areas, and use of technology.

Coaches and specialists (n = 29) mentioned the following as beneficial support they had already received from TLI central office staff:

- “Setting up training for staff and myself. Curriculum clarification. Payroll/healthcare. Textbook adoption information.”
- “Data analysis grade level meeting. Professional development: Dr. Hasbrouck, and Heggerty [trainings]. Also TLI coordinators monthly meetings are always supportive and thoughtfully planned to meet the needs of coaches and students.”
- “Data meetings.”
- “They respond quickly to questions and concerns.”
- “[The TLI central office staff for middle schools] is available to help on campus with a variety of teachers and serving as mentor for teachers/coaches on campus.”
- “[The TLI central office staff for high schools] has been amazing. She has provided resources in a very quick timeline and has committed to supporting our campus one day a week. She is a great resource and always willing to help with anything I [and] other teachers need.”
- “The physical presence of [the TLI central office staff for elementary schools] on my campus has been extremely helpful in helping me navigate an entirely new role on a new campus. They provide real-time answers, suggestions, and support that I can immediately implement on my campus.”
- “[The TLI central office staff for early/prekindergarten] has emailed me a few times to check in and has been trying to organize training for my staff.”

Coaches and specialists (n =20) also responded with the following suggestions for additional support they would like to receive from central office staff:

- “Expectations of the grant and personnel roles communicated to specialists and administration; administration attendance at TLI trainings.”
- “I would like to see explicit support (modeling, co-teaching) with the core area teachers in literacy development strategies.”
- “Lesson planning meetings, strategies and ideas to make it more effective.”
- “Information about additional resources teachers may use with students in need of extra support.”
- “Strategies training to facilitate alignment vertically and horizontally.”
- “Opportunities for teachers to observe each other.”
- “More campus-based or grade-level PD [professional development].”
- “Training about how to use the Treasures and Tesoros.”

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