



# Austin Independent School District

## Department of Program Evaluation

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### **PREKINDERGARTEN EXPANSION GRANT EVALUATION REPORT, 2005-2006**

Early childhood education, with an emphasis upon school readiness, has been a recent focus of state and federal legislation. At the state level, the 78<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature passed Senate Bill 76 in May 2003, designating CIRCLE as the State Center for Early Childhood Development. This legislation represented a first step toward the integration of prekindergarten (pre-K) programs, Head Start, and childcare in the state of Texas by providing a high-quality early childhood education program that coordinates pre-K resources. CIRCLE designed an exemplary training model for the professional development of early childhood teachers. At the federal level, one of the goals of the 2001 No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) is to have all students reading on grade level by third grade. In addition, NCLB focuses on accountability, requiring that 100% of Texas students pass the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) in reading and



## Teacher Information

There were 287 pre-K teachers in 2005-2006, with an average of 9.0 years of teaching experience (compared with 7.9 in 2004-2005). The majority (53%) of the pre-K teachers in AISD had six or more years of teaching experience. This represented a 14% increase from 2004-2005 to 2005-2006 with respect to the number of teachers with six or more years of experience. All AISD pre-K teachers met the highly qualified criteria for NCLB. To be deemed highly qualified by NCLB, teachers must have a bachelor's degree and full state certification or licensure.

## METHODOLOGY

### Evaluation Questions

The evaluation questions for the *Prekindergarten Expansion Grant* include the following:

- How did the program demonstrate evidence of gains in cognitive development, especially in pre-reading and language, and mathematics?
- How did the expanded, full-day pre-K program demonstrate the effectiveness of its activities in achieving its aims?
- How did the expanded, full-day pre-K program determine its impact, both short-term and long-term, on the participants?

### Data Collection

Department of Program Evaluation (DPE) staff collected quantitative and qualitative data to determine program effectiveness, as well as areas in need of improvement. A description of the types of data collected and the method(s) used to collect them follows.

- **Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test-III:** Student performance gains from

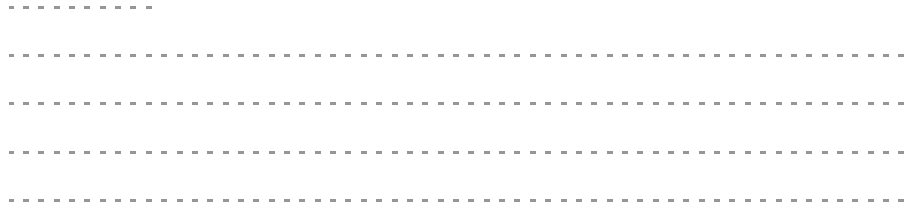
pretest to posttest on the English-language *Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test-III* (PPVT-III) and the Spanish-language *Test de Vocabulario en Imágenes Peabody* (TVIP) determined the effectiveness of language and literacy learning in the pre-K program. The PPVT-III and TVIP measure knowledge of receptive vocabulary in English and in Spanish, respectively. In fall 2005 and spring 2006, the PPVT-III and TVIP were administered to a random sample of pre-K students in all AISD schools with pre-K programs. The testing sample was designed to closely match the demographic characteristics of students tested to the overall AISD pre-K population.

- **Prekindergarten Gradebook:** The *Prekindergarten Assessment Rubric* was used districtwide to report student performance in academic areas in 2005-2006. Scores were recorded on the *Prekindergarten Gradebook* form each 9 weeks and submitted to DPE for data entry and analysis. The district's Prekindergarten Assessment Task Force developed the assessment rubric, piloted it in 2004-2005, and refined the instrument during 2005-2006.
- **Teacher Surveys:** Pre-K teachers were asked to respond to an online survey to give feedback about the strengths of the program and areas for improvement. Specific topics included professional development opportunities, curriculum and materials, effectiveness of the *Prekindergarten Assessment Rubric*, district support of the pre-K program, and parental involvement.

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Figure 1: Average Pretest and Posttest Scores for AISD English-Language  
Pre-K Students Tested on PPVT-III, 2001-2002 through 2005-2006





The TAKS results for the 2001-2002 pre-K cohort are even more impressive because the pre-K cohort included more low-income and LEP students than did the district totals. Low-income students comprised 88% of the pre-K cohort and 63% of the AISD grade 3 student group that took TAKS reading; LEP students comprised 59% of the pre-K cohort and 34% of the AISD grade 3 student group. Although it is not possible to compare low-income students in the pre-K cohort in 2005 to low-income students in the AISD grade 3 student group in 2005, the pre-K cohort in 2005 had a higher percentage of low-income students than the AISD grade 3 student group in 2005.











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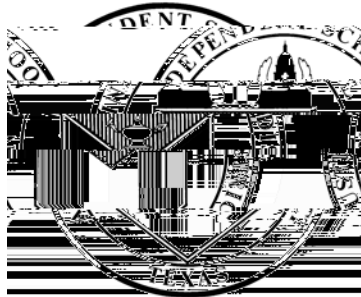
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