The Student Success Initiative: 2009-2010 Biennium Evaluation Report

A Report to the 82nd Texas Legislature

Submitted in fulfillment of
Rider 69 (81st Texas Legislature) by the
Texas Education Agency
Office for Planning, Grants and Evaluation

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Prepared by
Texas Education Agency
Office for Planning, Grants and Evaluation

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Acronyms

AMI	Accelerated Math Instruction
AR	Algebra Readiness
ARI	Accelerated Reading Instruction
AU	Academically Unacceptable
CARS	Center for Academic Reading Skills
CCRS	College and Career Readiness Standards
CLASS-S	Classroom Assessment Scoring System – Secondary
CLI	Children's Learning Institute
CTE	Career and Technology Education
ELA	English language arts
ELAR	English language arts and reading
ELL	English language learner
ELPS	English Language Proficiency Standards
EOC	End of course
EOCS	EOC Success
ERC	Education Research Center
ESC	Education service center
FY	Fiscal year
GAA	General Appropriations Act
HB	House Bill
IMI	Intensive Math Instruction
IRI	Intensive Reading Instruction
KTRA	Kindergarten Teacher Reading Academies
LEP	Limited English proficient
LMT	Learning Math for Teachers
MSTAR	Middle School Students in Texas: Algebra Ready initiative
NSD	Nonstandard dialect
OTRA	Online Teacher Reading Academies
PD	Professional development
PDRS	Professional Development Research Study

PLC	Professional Learning Community
PSM	Propensity Score Matching
RLA	Intensive Reading or Language Acquisition
RtI	Response to intervention
SB	Senate Bill
SEL	Standard English learner
SLAR	Spanish language arts and reading
SSI	Student Success Initiative
SSIG	Student Success Initiative Grant
STAAR	State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness
TAAS	Texas Assessment of Academic Skills
TAB	Technical advisory board
TAKS	Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills
TALA	Texas Adolescent Literacy Academies
TEA	Texas Education Agency
TEC	Texas Education Code
TEKS	Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills
TIMES	Texas Institute for Measurement, Evaluation, and Statistics
TMA	Teacher Math Academies
TMSFA	Texas Middle School Fluency Assessment
TOT	Training-of-trainers
TPRI	Texas Primary Reading Inventory
TRA	Teacher Reading Academies
TTLA	Texas Turnaround Leadership Academies
TxRCFP	Texas Response to Curriculum Focal Points
VGC	Vaughn Gross Center for Reading and Language Arts

Executive Summary

Purpose of the Report

This report is presented in fulfillment of a reporting requirement under Rider 69 (81st Texas Legislature) that required the Texas Education Agency (TEA) to prepare an evaluation report on the impact of the Student Success Initiative (SSI). This report explores the legislative, programmatic, and funding history of SSI and presents recent evaluation findings related to SSI programs that are currently or have recently been implemented, embedded within the historical and chronological framework of SSI. Finally, this report will briefly explore the future SSI initiatives forthcoming from TEA with emphasis on those initiatives that are related to professional development (PD).

Legislative Context of SSI

SSI was originally launched in 1999 with Senate Bill (SB) 4, during the 76th Legislative Session. The Rider 42 (General Appropriations Act [GAA], Article III, 81st Texas Legislature) PD Academies are the primary focus of recent SSI legislation. They were created and implemented as one of the latest in a series of steps by TEA and the Texas Legislature since 1999 to focus efforts (both in dollars and in programming) on better supporting districts in educating all of their students and ensuring students meet or exceed standards of proficiency in English language arts (ELA), mathematics, science, social studies, Career and Technical Education (CTE), and the English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS). Large portions of state funding dollars appropriated to TEA have recently been focused on the creation and implementation of PD Academies under the umbrella of SSI.

The majority of earlier SSI programming and funding was targeted to districts through the Accelerated Reading/Math Instruction grant programs (ARI/AMI). The purpose of those grants was to provide districts with additional financial resources to provide immediate, targeted instruction to students who demonstrated difficulty in reading and/or math. Later, the Intensive Reading Instruction (IRI) and Intensive Mathematics Instruction (IMI) grants were created under SSI to provide further support for student achievement in campuses that had failed to improve students' Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) Reading and Math scores.

Since these initial student-focused efforts, SSI has shifted to focus on statewide teacher PD programs. This began in 2007, when the 80th Texas Legislature passed House Bill (HB) 2237 and authorized the Texas Adolescent Literacy Academies (TALA) under SSI umbrella. In 2009, the 81st Texas Legislature, through Rider 42, appropriated nearly $152 million each fiscal year for SSI with a particular emphasis on PD for middle school and high school teachers. Rider 42 provided for the development, implementation, and evaluation of the Rider 42 PD Academies and an online platform, Project Share, that extends teacher PD opportunities. Rider 42 also provided for the Algebra Readiness (AR) grant program, the Texas Turnaround Leadership

Academies (TTLA), the Student Success Initiative Grant (SSIG), and directed a study on developing PD and instructional best practices for teachers of students with nonstandard dialects (NSDs) of English. All of these programs, including recent evaluation findings, are described in depth within the report.

Key Findings

Since the introduction of TALA, TEA, in collaboration with the regional education service centers (ESCs), has provided training across a variety of content areas to approximately 61,000 teachers and administrators from summer of 2008 to August of 2010, with approximately 74% of that population trained during the summer of 2010. This figure indicates that there has been high participation in PD from educators within the state. As the convenience of access to PD increases with the introduction of Project Share, it is expected that participation levels will continue to broaden over time.

The evaluation of TALA during the 2009–10 school year found that the materials developed for TALA were of high quality and the training was well implemented. Respondents who attended the training reported positive perceptions of the training and felt prepared to implement the practices but requested ongoing support after the training to better utilize what was learned. Observations of the teachers in practice found that, although there was variability in the extent of implementation across campuses, teachers were including TALA instructional strategies in their classroom practices to some extent, with ELA teachers utilizing TALA strategies more frequently than content area teachers.

The impact of TALA on student outcomes, however, was limited. Some evidence suggested there was greater effect on student achievement at those campuses that had been implementing TALA for two consecutive years than those that had been implementing only one year. Additionally, Grade 8 students had better outcomes than Grade 6 or 7 students. Although increased implementation time and clarifying the teacher-student connection could potentially lead to better outcomes, increasing the availability of ongoing support, through online training courses offered through Project Share after the initial training, for example, may be paramount to widening the effect on student achievement through the TALA program.

An evaluation of the Rider 42 PD Academies, although still ongoing, will be the state's first opportunity to examine the delivery of PD both face-to-face and through an online environment. Early findings suggest that, over a short time period, PD developers were successful in preparing PD programs in the core content areas of math, science, and ELA that were well aligned with national standards PD, best practices for content instruction, and Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) and national standards. In addition, TEA and regional ESC staff successfully recruited and trained large numbers of regional trainers, creating the capacity to continue to deliver PD across the state. These trainers reported high levels of satisfaction with the training they received and reported that they were well-prepared to deliver the training to teachers. Observations of training delivery confirmed these perceptions with overall high ratings of quality and fidelity across all observations. Teacher survey responses also indicate the

training was delivered well, covered key content, and impacted teachers to a moderate or great extent. Increased usage of Project Share is underway, and evaluation findings of the usage and impact of Project Share as well as the impact of the PD Academies are expected in August 2011.

Offering increased campus and district level supports may be important to creating a lasting impact of PD on student achievement. Programs such as the TTLA, funded under the umbrella of SSI (Rider 42, GAA, Article III, 81st Texas Legislature), may help improve district and campus administrator leadership practices through a focus on those leadership practices that can lead to turning around underperforming campuses. Likewise, research supported through SSI (Rider 42(l), GAA, Article III, 81st Texas Legislature) finds that developing an understanding of the best practices in instruction and PD that can help increase teachers' capacity and awareness in working with students who speak second dialects of English may help create an environment that promotes academic success for all students. As the evaluation of the TTLA and Rider 42 PD Academies continues through August 2011, the type of campus supports that may lead to positive changes in teacher practices and ultimately student outcomes will be further explored.

Future Initiatives

With the goal of making training accessible to as many teachers as possible, as funding remains available, TEA will continue to support the objective of the current Rider 42 PD Academies as well as to develop new and follow-up training courses for Project Share in response to teachers' needs. Working with the ESCs, TEA will ensure that Texas teachers who have not yet participated in the current Rider 42 PD Academies will continue to have multiple opportunities to do so, either through face-to-face sessions or online through Project Share. TEA also envisions conducting and using results from needs assessments to structure follow-up training courses in order to best meet the needs of teachers over time. Together, these efforts will provide Texas teachers with ongoing access to high-quality PD resources that evolve based on their needs.

An online PD platform can offer all teachers ongoing and continual access to proven, high-quality training. As TEA evolves PD opportunities offered though Project Share, and plans additional face-to-face trainings (pending funding), it will be important to continue to evaluate how PD programs such as those funded through SSI can be improved from both an implementation and content perspective. Additionally, it is important to continue to explore what the immediate and long range impacts of SSI PD programs are on student outcomes and how the usage of an online medium for delivery can contribute to improving those outcomes.

The Student Success Initiative 2009–2010 Biennium Evaluation Report

Introduction

This report is presented in fulfillment of a reporting requirement under Rider 69 (General Appropriations Act [GAA], Article III, 81st Texas Legislature) that required the Texas Education Agency (TEA) to prepare an evaluation report on the impact of the Student Success Initiative (SSI). This report explores the legislative, programmatic, and funding history of SSI and presents recent evaluation findings related to SSI programs that are currently or have recently been implemented, embedded within the historical and chronological framework of SSI. Finally, this report will briefly explore the future SSI initatives forthcoming from TEA with emphasis on those initiatives that are related to professional development (PD).

Historical Framework of the Student Success Initiative

This section presents an overview of SSI and details the legislative and programmatic history of SSI, including a discussion of the funding history of SSI and its component programs. Where relevant, recent evaluation findings are also included for programs such as Texas Adolescent Literacy Academies (TALA) that were initiated during the implementation of SSI prior to the 81st Legislative session as well as those programs such as the Intensive Reading Language Arts Pilot (RLA) that arose in response to SSI legislation.[1]

Overview of the Student Success Initiative

The Rider 42 (GAA, Article III, 81st Texas Legislature) PD Academies are the primary focus of recent SSI legislation. They were created and implemented as one of the latest in a series of steps by TEA and the Texas Legislature since 1999 to focus efforts, both in funding and in programming, to improve support for districts in educating all of their students and ensuring students meet or exceed standards of proficiency in English language arts (ELA), mathematics, science, social studies and the English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS). Large portions of state funding dollars appropriated to TEA have recently been focused on the creation and implementation of these PD academies under the umbrella of SSI. This represents a shift in spending of SSI dollars from student-intervention programs, such as the Accelerated Reading and Math Instruction grants (ARI/AMI), to provide training opportunities to teachers statewide with the intention of assisting teachers in helping students to succeed. In the early years of SSI (1999–2003), considerable resources were dedicated to teacher PD (particularly in reading strategies, and to a lesser degree for math instruction) to help ensure that teachers were equipped with the tools and resources for students to be successful on the state assessments in reading and math. However, after this initial emphasis on teacher PD, there was a lull in state-

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[1] See http://www.tea.state.tx.us/index4.aspx?id=2926&menu_id=949 for additional information including previously published evaluation findings on historical SSI programs including Accelerated Reading and Math Instruction grants (ARI/AMI).

supported teacher training activities in Texas until the 80th Legislature funded the implementation of TALA in 2007.

Along with other funding sources and support structures, including House Bill (HB) 1144 (77th Texas Legislature, 2001) and HB 2237 (80th Texas Legislature, 2007), which along with other provisions included statutory language that related directly to teacher PD, SSI has been a state funding mechanism through which substantive programs have been implemented toward the goal of meeting students' basic academic proficiency targets. The following sections detail the development of SSI programming over the past decade in order to provide a context for understanding the landscape within which the current SSI funded programs are being implemented. Evaluation findings are also included to illustrate the impact of SSI in meeting its programmatic goals.

Programmatic and Funding History of the Student Success Initiative

Over the past decade, TEA has launched many grant programs and initiatives to support the needs of struggling learners. Table 1 provides a timeline for the implementation of programs designed specifically to support the academic success of students through SSI from 1999 to the present.

Table 1. Timeline of SSI-Related Programs by Year

School Year(s)	Program
1999–2000 to 2002–03	Teacher Reading Academies (K–3)
1999–2000 to 2008-09	Accelerated Reading Instruction
2000–01 to 2001–02	Teacher Math Academies (Grades 5–7)
2003–04 to 2008–09	Accelerated Math Instruction
2003–04 to 2008–09	Intensive Reading Instruction
2005–06 to 2008–09	Intensive Mathematics Instruction
2007–08 to present	Texas Adolescent Literacy Academies
2009–10	Intensive Reading or Language Acquisition Intervention Pilot*
2009–10 to present	Student Success Initiative Grants**
2009–10 to present	Rider 42 Professional Development Academies
2009–10 to present	Algebra Readiness Grant

*Note: From the funds appropriated for SSI and from state and Federal funds to support English as second language (ESL)/limited English proficient (LEP) initiatives, the RLA program was authorized to be implemented through HB 1270 (80th Texas Legislature), modifying Texas Education Code (TEC) §29.094, and further authorized through Rider 68 (GAA, Article III, 80th Texas Legislature).
**Note: The Student Success Initiative Grants (SSIG) provided transitional financial assistance to Texas public school districts and open-enrollment charters as post-ARI/AMI funding to provide interventions for struggling students in Grades K-12 during the 2009–10 and 2010–11 school years.

SSI Funding History: 1999–2011

Since the inception of SSI in 1999, the Texas Legislature has appropriated nearly $1.5 billion to fund the initiative. SSI funding for the 1999–2000 school year was approximately $66 million when the first cohort of kindergarten students was impacted by new programs, and funding reached a peak level of $158 million per year during the biennium covering fiscal years (FY) 2005-06 and 2006-07. Table 2 provides an overview of state appropriations for SSI over the history of the initiative and denotes the grades impacted by the program in each year.

Table 2. History of State Appropriations for the Student Success Initiative

School Year	Funding Level	Grades Impacted
1999–2000	$65.99 million	Kindergarten
2000–01	$107.29 million	Kindergarten–Grade 1
2001–02	$110.28 million	Kindergarten–Grade 2
2002–03	$120 million	Kindergarten–Grade 3
2003–04	$82.35 million	Kindergarten–Grade 4
2004–05	$82.35 million	Kindergarten–Grade 5
2005–06	$158.01 million	Kindergarten–Grade 6
2006–07	$158.01 million	Kindergarten–Grade 7
2007–08	$154.50 million	Kindergarten–Grade 8
2008–09	$154.50 million	Kindergarten–Grade 8
2009–10	$152 million	Kindergarten–Grade 12
2010–11	$152 million	Kindergarten–Grade 12

Source: Texas Legislative Budget Board, 2010
Note: The funding figures represented in this table are representative of the amounts that were appropriated each year for SSI; however, these amounts may have been impacted by budget reduction requests.

The Student Success Initiative: Targeted Student Intervention (1999–2010)

Beginning in 1997, during the 75th Texas Legislative session, the Governor's Reading Initiative sparked the beginning of a statewide focus on improving early reading skills through the design and implementation of reading diagnostic tools, as well as teacher PD related to research-based reading strategies. The goal of these initiatives was to increase and improve the quality of direct interventions aimed at struggling students. The Governor's Reading Initiative called for the development and dissemination of diagnostic reading assessments (the Texas Primary Reading Inventory [TPRI]) in early grades to provide a tool by which to measure student progress and

ensure that students were meeting basic levels of reading proficiency. This effort was expanded in 1999, during the 76th legislative session, with Senate Bill (SB) 4, which launched SSI and provided performance requirements for grade promotion and provided standards for the provision of academic supports to students and PD for teachers.

SSI provided the legislative framework to ensure that all students in Texas receive the instruction and support required to be academically successful in reading and mathematics at grade level. The initial legislation required that TEA execute the following mandates:

1. Implement requirements that students meet the following standards to qualify for promotion to the next grade (beginning with the first cohort of students entering kindergarten during the 1999–2000 school year):

   - Pass Grade 3 TAKS-Reading to be promoted to Grade 4 (first applied to the Grade 3 class of 2002–03).[2]

   - Pass Grade 5 TAKS in Reading and Math to be promoted to Grade 6 (first applied to the Grade 5 class of 2004–05).

   - Pass Grade 8 TAKS in Reading and Math to be promoted to Grade 9 (first applied to the Grade 8 class of 2007–08).

2. Create research-based reading diagnostic assessments (i.e., the TPRI and its Spanish equivalent, Tejas Lee) to determine students' progress toward K–2 reading standards.

3. Develop and implement high-quality PD academies (supported by teacher stipends) to ensure that K–3 teachers were knowledgeable about scientifically based reading strategies and scientifically validated instructional practices.

4. Develop and implement high-quality PD Academies (supported by teacher stipends) to ensure that Grade 5–6 and Grade 7–8 teachers were knowledgeable about best practices in mathematics instruction.

5. Provide additional funding for school districts to provide the necessary resources and supports for students struggling in reading and math (through ARI/AMI grant programs).

Given the scope of these changes, programs and standards developed under SSI were designed and implemented to support that first cohort of students entering kindergarten in 1999–2000, which would then be impacted by changes in grade promotion standards (beginning in spring 2003 with the first administration of the TAKS). Thus, the first group of students for which new grade promotion standards applied was the Grade 3 class of 2002–03. District support (ARI/AMI funding) and teacher PD were designed to follow that first cohort of students and the subsequent cohorts of students. In other words, programs impacted kindergarten students and their teachers in 1999–2000, kindergarten and Grade 1 students and teachers in 2000–01, kindergarten and Grades 1 and 2 students and teachers in 2001-02, and so on until 2007–08 and 2008–09 in which students in kindergarten through Grade 8 were

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[2] HB 3 (81st Texas Legislature) revised this requirement to eliminate the passage of Grade 3 TAKS as a requirement for grade advancement to Grade 4.

served in both years. Beginning with 2009–10, the program expanded to include students in kindergarten through Grade 12.

Because of the timing aspect of the implementation of programs and standards, it was expected that the 1999 legislation was only the beginning of sweeping changes. Thus, SSI provided an umbrella under which additional funding streams and academic programs would seek to meet its goals over time. Over the ensuing years, SSI funding was supplemented and further expanded, both by House and Senate bills that created programs, and by Article III appropriation riders that funded SSI programs. An SSI rider in the GAA provided a funding stream and has been used since 1999 to accomplish the goals first laid out in 1999.

SSI Grade Promotion Requirements

As mentioned above, the initial SSI legislation created new standards for grade promotion. Specifically, these standards dictated that students in Grades 3, 5, and 8 must pass TAKS (Reading only in Grade 3, Reading and Math in Grades 5 and 8) in order to be promoted to the next grade. In order to closely monitor student progress, if a student continued to fail the state assessment after two attempts, a grade placement committee was required to be established. This grade placement committee was then charged with: a) determining the student interventions necessary to help the student perform up to grade level, and b) deciding whether or not to promote the student to the next grade if he or she continued to fail the state assessment after the third attempt. Districts could administer an alternative assessment (approved by the commissioner of education) on the third try, and those students could be promoted if they performed at grade level on the alternate assessment instrument. SSI standards were to be applied to all students taking the TAKS in English or Spanish, and those taking the then State-Developed Alternate Assessment II (SDAA II), which was replaced in 2008 by the TAKS-Modified (TAKS-M) and the TAKS-Alternative (TAKS-Alt).

Among students failing to meet state standards at certain grade levels, promotion to the next grade had to be determined through a systematic process, the default of which was grade retention. If the grade placement committee unanimously determined that the student was likely to perform at grade level if promoted, they were given the authority to promote the student.

Since the initial SSI legislation in 1999, recent legislation has further modified the grade advancement requirements initiated under SSI. SB 1031 (80th Texas Legislature) required that end-of-course (EOC) assessments replace TAKS exit-level assessments. This change will first impact students starting in the 2011–12 school year.[3] Additionally, HB 3 (81st Texas Legislature) eliminated passing Grade 3 TAKS as a requirement for grade advancement to Grade 4.

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[3] The State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR™) will replace TAKS, which has been in place since 2003. STAAR™ includes the 12 EOC assessments mandated by SB 1031 in 2007 (80th Texas Legislature) and the new grade 3–8 assessments mandated by HB 3 in 2009 (81st Texas Legislature). The new tests will be implemented in the 2011–2012 school year.

In this way, over time, SSI created more rigorous standards of academic achievement for Texas districts. The implementation of these high-stakes grade promotion requirements was supported by a number of programs designed to ensure school districts and teachers had the necessary resources to enable students to meet state standards on the grade and content-specific tests subject to grade promotion requirements. Programs included the creation and dissemination of diagnostic assessment tools, PD programs for teachers, and intervention programs for students. These supports are described in further detail below. While some of these support structures were created in 1999 with the initial SSI legislation, others were added in later years with different funding streams, but still created under the umbrella of SSI.

Diagnostic Assessments

In order to assist districts in identifying struggling K–3 students long before they were at risk of failing the Grade 3 TAKS, Texas school districts were provided with their choice of diagnostic instruments from the Commissioner's List of Early Reading Instruments to determine student needs and monitor progress toward passing the Grade 3 TAKS-Reading, as specified in TEC §28.006. These assessments were made available to school districts at no cost, and were started as early as kindergarten. Although other assessment tools are available to school districts, the TPRI is currently used by the majority (approximately 75%) of school districts in Texas to assess the reading abilities of K–3 students (TEA, 2009).

The TPRI was the first diagnostic instrument created through Texas Reading Initiative funding to support SSI grade promotion requirement monitoring. The TPRI assesses K–3 students on their progress toward attaining grade-level reading standards and was developed based on suggestions by the National Reading Panel,[4] which identified five essential components of reading instruction considered to be critical for students to develop the skills necessary to become successful life-long readers. This instrument, demonstrated to be reliable and valid,[5] is designed to be administered one-on-one by the classroom teacher to determine if a student is on track for meeting minimum reading standards by the end of the school year.

At all four grade levels, the TPRI consists of both a screening section and an inventory section. Screening provides an easy way to identify students who have mastered critical reading skills for that grade level so that time can be focused on gathering more detailed information for the student who may not have mastered these skills at the appropriate pace to be considered reading "on grade level." The inventory engages the student with inviting tasks and entertaining stories, while giving the teacher an opportunity to gather more data to help match reading instruction with specific student needs. Once each student's needs have been identified, the Intervention Activities Guide gives the teacher effective instructional activities appropriate for each student, based on a student's unique needs.

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[4] This national panel was convened at the direction of Congress in 1997, to assess the effectiveness of different approaches used to teach children to read. For more information see http://www.nationalreadingpanel.org
[5] For technical information see http://www.tpri.org/Researcher_Information/

The Spanish language counterpart to the TPRI, the Tejas Lee, was also developed through Texas Reading Initiative funding to support SSI. Tejas Lee, again demonstrated to be reliable and valid, measures a student's reading and comprehension skills in Spanish. The instrument is designed for use with K–3 students who receive primary instruction in Spanish. Just as the TPRI is intended to be used, the Tejas Lee allows teachers to identify early reading difficulties or risks for reading difficulties in Spanish at an early age (Grades K–3) so that appropriate interventions can be developed to meet their unique needs.

To assist districts in preparing all Grade 8 students to be successful on TAKS Reading, HB 2237 (80th Legislature) provided for the statewide implementation of a reading assessment to be administered at the beginning of Grade 7 to students who did not demonstrate reading proficiency on the Grade 6 TAKS-Reading. A school district may use the Texas Middle School Fluency Assessment (TMSFA) and/or an alternate diagnostic reading instrument that must be submitted to the agency for approval. Beginning in fall 2008, the administration of TMSFA during the first six weeks of school to Grade 7 students who failed the TAKS-Reading as Grade 6 students became mandatory (TEC §28.006(c-1), as added by HB 2237, 80th Texas Legislature, 2007). The Grade 7 diagnostic reading assessment focuses on the specific skill deficiencies students have in word analysis and fluency that are affecting their comprehension. The results of this assessment provide diagnostic information that districts can use to offer reading intervention to these students based on their specific needs.

Professional Development for K–4 Teachers in Reading, 1999–2003

While SSI legislation in 1999 outlined the need for programs that provide PD to teachers in reading and math, that legislation would not have provided funding for such programs until September of 1999. Recognizing the need to provide teachers with adequate supports to meet the new grade promotion requirements, the 76th Legislature passed SB 472, which provided emergency funding to implement the first Teacher Reading Academies (TRA) in summer 1999 for kindergarten teachers. Teacher PD was an essential support for the original SSI legislation, ensuring that teachers received necessary training on research-based instructional strategies that could be utilized in the classroom to improve student performance in reading and math. Additional grade level TRA were also developed and implemented for Grade 1–3 teachers, while a Grade 4 TRA was developed but not implemented due to a lack of funding at that time.[6] Teacher Math Academies (TMAs) were also developed but were not fully implemented due to funding constraints.

The first TRA in summer of 1999 was made available to kindergarten teachers who would be providing instruction to the first cohort of SSI students (i.e., the first group of students who would be required to pass the Grade 3 TAKS-Reading). The TRAs were expanded one grade each year, to include Grade 1 teachers in the summer of 2000, Grade 2 teachers in the summer of 2001, and Grade 3 teachers in the summer of 2002. Over the 1999–2002 period, over 60,000

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[6] See the "Student Success Initiative: Teacher Reading and Math Academies and Science Teacher Quality Grants" report at http://www.tea.state.tx.us/index4.aspx?id=2914&menu_id=949 for additional information.

teachers were trained in scientifically based instructional reading strategies. Each of these Academies is described briefly below. The TRAs were based on scientific research-based reading instruction shown to be effective with all types of learners, including the following five essential components of reading:[7]

- Phonemic awareness: Recognizing the sounds in spoken language and how they can be segmented, blended, and manipulated

- Phonics and word study: Identifying the letters of the alphabet, understanding that the sequence of sounds in a spoken word is represented by letters in a written word, and understanding phonics elements (letter-sound correspondence, spelling patterns, syllables, and meaningful word parts)

- Fluency: Reading text with speed, accuracy, and prosody (the rhythm of spoken language, including stress and intonation)

- Vocabulary: Understanding word meanings

- Comprehension – Understanding information presented in written form

Kindergarten TRA

TEA Office of Statewide Initiatives, the Texas Center for Reading and Language Arts at the University of Texas at Austin (renamed the Vaughn Gross Center for Reading and Language Arts at the University of Texas at Austin [VGC]), and the regional education service center (ESC) 13 collaborated to create the Kindergarten Teacher Reading Academies (KTRAs). The KTRAs provided kindergarten teachers throughout the state with the knowledge and activities that promote early reading success. Vocabulary and oral language development, phonological awareness, alphabetic understanding, print awareness, read alouds, listening comprehension and writing were all topics covered in the KTRAs.

Grades 1 and 2 TRAs

Again, TEA and VGC were involved in the development of the Grades 1 and 2 TRAs, along with the Center for Academic and Reading Skills (CARS) at the University of Texas Health Science Center, the Center for Improving the Readiness of Children for Learning and Education at the University of Texas at Houston Health Science Center (now the Children's Learning Institute (CLI)) and ESC 13.

The Grade 1 TRA was established in summer 2000, and provided knowledge and activities designed to prevent reading difficulties in children who may be struggling to learn to read. Its second purpose was to vertically align the kindergarten and Grade 1 teacher Academies' scientific research-based content so that Texas children received reading instruction presented in an explicit, systematic continuum. The Academy content included current information on scientifically research-based practices developed around English language learners (ELLs),

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[7] National Reading Panel, 2000; Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998

features of effective instruction, identification of dyslexia, phonological awareness, alphabetic principle (understanding that there are systematic and predictable relationships between written letters and spoken sounds), phonics, spelling, fluency, wide reading opportunities, vocabulary, comprehension, and written expression.

The Grade 2 TRA was initiated in summer 2001 and enhanced teachers' knowledge of scientific research-based practices for teaching students who are struggling to learn to read. It focused on effective intervention instruction for all students and particularly those who continued to have difficulty learning to read. This TRA emphasized vocabulary development, comprehension, fluency, word study and spelling, foundations of reading, writing, wide reading opportunities, grouping for instruction, and planning effective lessons.

Grade 3 TRA

TEA, ESC 13, ESC 4, and CARS collaborated on the development of the Grade 3 TRA. The training was first offered to Grade 3 teachers in summer 2002. The contents of the Grade 3 TRA were based on scientific research-based reading instruction shown to be effective with all types of learners.

Grade 4 TRA

The Grade 4 TRA was developed by TEA, VGC, ESC 13 and ESC 4 in 2003. Grade 4 TRA content focused on instructional practices that can help students move from "learning to read" to using "reading to learn." Grade 4 TRA training materials were developed but funding was not available to conduct the Academies as intended during summer 2003. These materials became the foundations for the Online TRA (OTRA) for Grade 4 teachers in Texas.[8]

Professional Development for Grades 5–7 Teachers in Mathematics

Parallel to the reading initiative, the Texas Legislature also recognized the need to address student learning needs in math, as the 1999 cohort of students would be required to pass the Grade 5 TAKS-Math in spring 2005. The creation and implementation of the math Academies came later, as the first cohort of SSI students was not required to meet math proficiency standards under SSI until Grade 5. Thus, HB 1144, passed by the 77th Legislature in 2001, still under the umbrella of SSI, created the Texas Math Initiative program, providing math teachers with best practices and research-based models for mathematics instruction, and a clear understanding of math skills expected of students and instructional strategies to improve student performance. TMAs were delivered in summer 2002 for teachers in Grades 5 and 6, and in summer 2003 Grade 7 teachers were added.

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[8] For more information on OTRA http://www.meadowscenter.org/vgc/otra

Interventions for Districts to Assist Students Struggling in Reading and Mathematics

Accelerated Reading/Math Initiative

Charged with providing school districts with the necessary resources and supports for students struggling in reading and math, TEA created the ARI/AMI grant programs beginning in 1999. The purpose of these grants was to provide districts with additional financial resources to provide immediate, targeted instruction to students who demonstrate difficulty in reading and/or math. This targeted instruction was to be delivered as one-on-one, small group, or large group tutoring sessions, before, during, or after school.

Since the launch of SSI in 1999, the Texas Legislature has appropriated funding to TEA to support district-led programs for struggling reading students through ARI grants and struggling math students through AMI grants. During the first year of ARI implementation (1999–2000 school year), only kindergarten students were provided with accelerated instruction in reading. With each successive year, an additional grade was added to the program. Funding levels were based on student performance on the first administration of the state assessment (TAKS or Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS), depending upon the year) in reading for Grade 3, with districts receiving a specified amount based on the number of Grade 3 students failing the state assessment, and the total amount of funding available for the program. For the first four years of the program, 1999–2000 through 2002–03, funds were used only to address the needs of struggling readers.

In 2003–04, AMI was implemented, serving students in Grades K–4. Similar to reading, with each successive year, an additional grade was added to the program and more and more students were being served. AMI funding was based on student performance on the first administration of the state assessment (TAKS or TAAS, depending upon the year) in math for Grade 3 or Grade 5, with districts receiving a specified amount for each Grade 3 or Grade 5 student who failed to meet state standards on the state assessment for mathematics. While funding was calculated separately for districts based on the number of students failing the state assessment in reading and math, beginning in 2003–04, a single ARI/AMI grant award was made to school districts which could allocate the resources toward either reading or math services, depending upon local needs. Funding for ARI/AMI continued in this manner through the 2008–09 school year.

Table 3 in conjunction with the figures reported in Table 2 reflects how ARI and AMI have accounted for the vast majority of SSI funds over the history of the initiative.

Table 3. State Appropriations for ARI/AMI by School Year

School Year	ARI/AMI Funding Level*	Grades Served
1999–2000**	$65.2 million	Kindergarten
2000–01**	$57.5 million	Kindergarten–Grade 1
2001–02**	$106.4 million	Kindergarten–Grade 2
2002–03**	$75.1 million	Kindergarten–Grade 3
2003–04	$80.9 million	Kindergarten–Grade 4
2004–05	$144.1 million	Kindergarten–Grade 5
2005–06	$149.5 million	Kindergarten–Grade 6
2006–07	$144.2 million	Kindergarten–Grade 7
2007–08	$124.9 million	Kindergarten–Grade 8
2008–09	$123.3 million	Kindergarten–Grade 9

Source: Texas Education Agency, 1999–2009.
*Note that the funding levels from the 1999–2000 school year through the 2005-06 school year were obtained from previously published ARI/AMI evaluation reports. The funding levels from the 2006–07 through the 2008–09 school year were obtained from funding budgeted amounts authorized by TEA management.
**Note: ARI funding only.

Intensive Reading Instruction/Intensive Math Instruction

Four years after SSI was authorized in 1999, the 78th Texas Legislature (Rider 51, GAA, Article III) set aside $12 million for intensive reading instruction programs for schools that had failed to improve student performance in reading. The legislation stated that the commissioner would, upon determining which schools had achieved the least gains in reading performance, require those schools to submit a reading improvement plan detailing proposed efforts to improve reading performance as a condition of receiving funding. The reading improvement plan was required to establish the performance outcome of complete literacy among its student population and outline specific steps that would be taken to achieve that goal.

Thus, the Intensive Reading Instruction grant (IRI) (and later the Intensive Mathematics Instruction (IMI) grant) was created under SSI to provide further support for student achievement. IRI (and later IMI grants) funded the purchase of proprietary, stand-alone programs (from a list of commissioner-approved programs identified through a request for qualifications process) designed to provide intensive support to struggling readers and to students having difficulty with mathematics in Grades 4–7.

During the next two legislative sessions, the 79th (2006–2007 biennium, Rider 48, GAA, Article III) and 80th (2008–2009 biennium, Rider 44, GAA, Article III) Texas Legislatures continued to fund the initiative by appropriating funds for both IRI ($15 million) and IMI ($5 million) programs in campuses that had failed to improve students' TAKS reading and mathematics scores. The IRI/IMI program was not funded by the 81st Legislature in 2009.

Intensive Reading or Language Acquisition Intervention Pilot

RLA was created by Rider 68 (GAA, Article III, 80th Texas Legislature) and funded by Rider 44 (GAA, Article III, 80th Texas Legislature). RLA was not further funded by the 81st Texas Legislature. Generally, RLA is closely related to IRI/IMI regarding grant eligibility and the purpose of the program. The purpose of RLA was to provide intensive intervention in reading or language acquisition as a supplement to standard reading classes during the school day by using neuroscience-based, scientifically validated interventions or instructional tools proven to accelerate learning, cognitive ability, and English language proficiency.[9] The RLA intervention targeted students in Grades K–2 who were at risk of not passing the Grade 3 TAKS-Reading to provide assistance to students with the goal of successfully meeting the TAKS-Reading passing standard in Grade 3, where grade advancement was tied to having met the standard on TAKS-Reading.

A recent evaluation of the RLA pilot was conducted during the 2009–10 school year. (See Appendix A for the full report.) Across the 12 grantees, implementation of the selected intervention program lasted for approximately 4.3 months for kindergarten students, 5.6 months for Grade 1 students, and 5.1 months for Grade 2 students. Results indicated that the percentage of students who mastered English or Spanish language reading concepts, as measured by the TPRI/Tejas LEE, increased from the beginning to the end of the school year across all grade levels. For nearly every inventory, at least 75% of students had mastered the concept by the end of the year. Also, with the exception of one listening comprehension concept on the kindergarten TPRI assessment, the average reading and listening comprehension scores increased across administration periods for students in all grades on both assessments. Given TPRI and Tejas LEE are based on developmental measures, it is not possible to isolate the potential effects of RLA from the effects of normal reading and language development and regular classroom instruction.

It should be noted that, although the percentage of students who had mastered each reading or language concept increased for all grade levels across the school year, the outcomes indicated that some students—as many as 30%—were still struggling with reading or language concepts at the end of the year. It is likely that these students will require additional services or instruction in order to acquire and maintain grade-appropriate reading skills.

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[9] For more information about RLA see http://www.tea.state.tx.us/index2.aspx?id=2147487680

Shifting Focus: Away from Student Interventions toward Teacher PD Programs and Targeted Campus Support Programs—2006 to 2011

During the first eight years of SSI, the majority of SSI funding was distributed directly to districts by TEA through the ARI grant program and later the ARI/AMI grant program in an effort to provide direct intervention services to struggling students. The implementation of TALA and the precursors leading up to development of TALA represented a key shift in the focus on meeting the goals of SSI away from direct student intervention services toward the use of SSI funding to provide supports for teachers and administrators through the implementation of statewide teacher PD programs. To some extent, as with SSI PD that occurred from 1999 to 2003, this shift back to PD with TALA represented a focus on prevention of student failure rather than intervention following failure.

Because TALA is a relatively recent SSI PD program, but one that has been in place long enough to be assessed reliably, this historical framework chapter concludes with coverage of TALA and its evaluation, leading into the succeeding chapter on SSI Rider 42 PD Academies authorized by the 81st Texas Legislature. Thus, the following sections detail the legislative, programmatic, and funding history of TALA. Additionally, recent evaluation findings (December 2010) are included which assess the effectiveness of TALA, particularly on teachers and on student outcomes.

Development and Funding of Texas Adolescent Literacy Academies

After the initial TRAs were implemented over the 1999–2003 period and the TMAs were implemented during the summers of 2002 and 2003, the 78th legislative appropriations riders that funded SSI activities did not call for any major teacher PD activities until 2007. In 2005, the Adolescent Literacy Initiative (Rider 48b[10], GAA, Article III, 79th Texas Legislature) authorized the development of a supplemental diagnostic screening instrument (the TMSFA) and intensive reading instruction programs for students determined at risk of failing to perform at proficient levels on the Grade 8 TAKS-Reading. At the same time, HB1 (79th Texas Legislature) provided the requirement that Grade 7 students at risk of failing Grade 8 TAKS-Reading be assessed in order to assist schools in intervening appropriately.

In this context, TEA entered into a contract with VCG and The Texas Institute for Measurement, Evaluation, and Statistics (TIMES) to create PD materials that would eventually be used for TALA as well as to develop the TMSFA. One aspect of TALA would be to guide teachers on using the TMSFA and prepare them to intervene with struggling students appropriately. In 2007, the 80th Texas Legislature passed HB 2237, which provided explicit direction for the development and implementation of TALA (TEC §21.4551) and funded TALA under the SSI umbrella (Rider 44, GAA, Article III) in order to implement TALA statewide. The general intention of HB 2237 was similar to SSI but focused specifically on the development of programs

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[10] Rider 48 (GAA, Article III, 79th Texas Legislature) was the Student Success Initiative Rider.

that would help improve high school success and increase college and career readiness in Texas public schools.[11]

TALA was created to provide PD for teachers who provide instruction to students in Grades 6–8. TALA is based on the concept that "students who can read effortlessly with comprehension are better equipped to understand literature, science, social studies, and mathematical word problems."[12] In other words, developing students' basic reading skills will assist in their overall understanding of what is being read in the content areas. Conversely, students who struggle in content areas such as math and science may be doing so because of limitations related to their literacy skills. Students in Grades 6 through 8 are often expected to learn some content from reading textbooks and other materials on their own, creating real challenges for students who have literacy skill deficits.

Through Rider 44 (GAA, Article III, 80th Legislature), from the funds appropriated for SSI, $18 million was allocated in both FY 2008 and FY 2009 for the TALA program. Rider 42 (GAA, Article III, 81st Texas Legislature) provided an additional $11.15 million for the 2009–2010 biennium. As shown in Table 4, all funds, along with the content development funds from the 79th Texas Legislature have been used to develop and administer TALA training, from summer 2007 through fall 2012. Content development funds were used to create training materials and the TMSFA, revise materials following the first two years of statewide implementation, revise and conduct additional field testing for the TMSFA, and begin the conversion of TALA training to the state's online platform (Project Share).[13] Funds for the implementation of TALA training were provided to ESC 13 to conduct TALA regional training-of-trainers (TOTs). This model provided the capacity for TEA to implement TALA statewide through the 20 ESCs.

Funds to provide TALA training, including teacher stipends, were awarded to all 20 ESCs based on the number of teachers in each region eligible to attend TALA. Specifically, TOTs for TALA Grade 6 regional trainers occurred in spring 2008 followed by TALA training of Grade 6 teachers primarily in summer 2008 but continuing into fall 2008. TOTs for TALA Grades 7–8 regional trainers occurred in spring 2009 followed by TALA training of Grades 7 and 8 teachers primarily in summer 2009 but continuing into fall 2009. Additional TALA Grade 6 training also continued throughout this time frame. Based on numbers provided by the ESCs, 16,341 teachers completed the TALA PD in the first two years of the program (through December 2009). Funds allocated for the implementation of TALA training are being used by the 20 ESCs to continue providing TALA training sessions for teachers through December 2012. Table 4 illustrates the history of the allocated budget amounts for TALA by fiscal year.

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[11] A second teacher PD program, Mathematics Instructional Coaches Pilot Program, was also authorized by HB 2237. Evaluation findings related to this program and other HB 2237 grant programs can be found at http://www.tea.state.tx.us/index4.aspx?id=2904&menu_id=949.
[12] http://www5.esc13.net/literacy/TALA Reading Academies.html
[13] See also www.projectshare.org for additional information.

Table 4. History of Allocated Budget Amounts for TALA by Fiscal Year

Fiscal Year (Grant/Project Period)	Purpose	Funding Level*	Grades Impacted
FY2006 and FY2007 (9/1/05 to 8/31/07)	Content Development	$4,000,000	Grades 6–8
FY2006 and FY2007 (9/1/05 to 8/31/07)	**TOTAL**	**$4,000,000**	
FY2008 (9/1/07 to 8/31/08)	Content Development	$817,923	Grade 6
FY2008 (9/1/07 to 8/31/08)	Training of Trainers Model	$941,325	Grade 6
FY2008 (9/1/07 to 8/31/08)	Teacher Training	$11,126,250**	Grade 6
FY2008 (9/1/07 to 8/31/08)	**TOTAL**	**$12,885,498**	
FY2009 (9/1/08 to 8/31/09)	Content Development	$1,144,732	Grades 7–8 (new), Grade 6 (continuing)
FY2009 (9/1/08 to 8/31/09)	Training of Trainers Model	$1,181,625	Grades 7–8 (new), Grade 6 (continuing)
FY2009 (9/1/08 to 8/31/09)	Teacher Training	$18,593,000	Grades 7–8 (new), Grade 6 (continuing)
FY2009 (9/1/08 to 8/31/09)	**TOTAL**	**$20,919,357**	
FY2010 (9/1/09 to 8/31/10)	Content Development	$902,000***	Grades 6–8
FY2010 (9/1/09 to 8/31/10)	Training of Trainers Model	$0	Grades 6–8
FY2010 (9/1/09 to 8/31/10)	Teacher Training	$4,423,000	Grades 6–8
FY2010 (9/1/09 to 8/31/10)	**TOTAL**	**$5,325,000**	
FY2011 (9/1/10 to 8/31/11)	Content Development	$996,192	Grades 6–8 (combined, including online)
FY2011 (9/1/10 to 8/31/11)	Training of Trainer Model	$15,000	Grades 6–8 (combined, including online)
FY2011 (9/1/10 to 8/31/11)	Teacher Training	$4,314,000	Grades 6–8 (combined, including online)
FY2011 (9/1/10 to 8/31/11)	**TOTAL**	**$5,325,192**	

Source: Rider 48 (GAA, Article III, 79th Texas Legislature), TEA funding records, and TEA Report on Implementation of HB 2237 (March 1, 2010)

*Note: An additional $1,247,669 was expended during FY 08 and FY 11 to conduct the evaluation of TALA presented to the 82nd Legislature in December of 2010.

**Note: This total includes funding for the development of teacher training sessions as well as the distribution of assessment materials to district personnel.

***Note: This total includes funding ($500,000) to conduct a validation study of the TMSFA and to continue support and maintenance of the TALA teacher website as required for the completion of the online training component. Additionally, this total includes funding ($402,000) to continue the development of online materials, specifically the conversion of Grades 6–8 TALA training materials to digital format and to complete the preparation of online teacher reading academies (OTRAs) for integration into online PD platform (Project Share).

TALA Design and Implementation

TALA provides PD for ELA/reading and content area teachers in the use of scientifically based literacy practices to improve academic literacy. The TALA approach is a three-tier model of reading intervention, which is consistent with a response to intervention (RtI) approach. Tier I applies to all students and includes general education instructional strategies. Tier II, named "Strategic Intervention" in TALA content, is designed for students with reading difficulties that cannot be addressed in Tier I. Tier III, referred to as "Intensive Intervention," is designed for students with severe reading difficulties. By focusing on improving teaching, TALA's goal is ultimately to benefit students. Although TALA training is provided to individual teachers, it was anticipated that in order to have a maximum impact, a school-wide approach to implementation of TALA would occur. Schools were encouraged to send all Grade 6 through 8 ELA/reading and content area teachers to TALA training. The legislative requirements (HB 2237) were that the program must provide training in:

- Strategies to be implemented in ELA and other subject areas for multi-syllable word reading, vocabulary development, and comprehension of expository and narrative text
- An adaptation framework that enables teachers to respond to differing student strengths and needs, including adaptations for students of LEP or students receiving special education services
- Collaborative strategies to increase active student involvement and motivation to read; other areas identified by the commissioner as essential components of reading instruction
- Administration and interpretation of the reading instrument and scientific research-based strategies for effective reading instruction, and for long-term intensive intervention to target identified student needs in word recognition, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension
- Strategies for incorporating reading instruction into the curriculum for the subject area taught by the teacher (for content area teachers)

From 2008 to 2010, there were two separate TALA strands for teachers of students in Grades 6–8: 1) the ELA academy for ELA and reading teachers, and 2) the Content Area Academy for teachers of mathematics, science, and social studies. HB 2237 required teachers who teach reading, mathematics, science, or social studies at campuses that are Academically Unacceptable (AU) in reading to attend TALA. All other Grades 6 through 8 teachers attended voluntarily. In 2011, TALA Grade 6 and TALA Grades 7–8 materials will be combined into a single TALA for Grades 6–8. In addition, the TALA materials will be converted into online courses for the OTRAs that will be integrated into Project Share. The ELA academy focused on content literacy strategies, intensive intervention strategies, and training on utilizing the TMSFA to inform instruction/intervention (strategies in all three tiers). The content area academy focused on content literacy strategies within each specific subject (Tier 1 strategies). ELA academies consisted of three days of face-to-face training, followed by a one-day online practicum follow-up; content area academies consisted of a day and a half of face-to-face training, followed by a half-day online practicum. Each teacher participating in an ELA academy

could potentially receive a $500 stipend: $250 after attending all three days of the face-to-face and the additional $250 after completing and submitting assignments for the online follow-up session. Participants in content area academies could potentially receive a $250 stipend, similarly divided between participation in face-to-face and online training. Beginning in 2011, TALA Grade 6 and TALA Grades 7–8 materials will be combined into a single TALA for Grades 6–8. In addition, the TALA materials will be converted into online courses for the OTRAs that will be integrated into Project Share.

It is important to note that the TALA ELA Academy provides training on the administration and use of the TMSFA, a diagnostic and progress monitoring instrument for Grades 6–8 students who do not meet the standard, or score below 2100, on TAKS-Reading. Beginning in 2008, Texas school districts and open-enrollment charters were required to administer a diagnostic instrument such as TMSFA to Grade 7 students who did not meet passing standards on the TAKS-Reading as Grade 6 students. The administration of TMSFA is mandatory during the first six weeks of the school year, but districts are also encouraged to administer the TMSFA at the middle and end of the school year. Additionally, districts are required to provide intensive instruction and intervention to these students based on the results of the diagnostic instrument. Given the timing of TALA relative to this requirement, ESCs provided separate training specifically on TMSFA in summer 2008 and continue to provide follow-up support to districts as educators learn to administer the TMSFA, analyze results, and make instructional decisions based on those results.

Summary of Findings from the Evaluation of TALA

TEA contracted with a third-party vendor to publish three evaluation reports related to the evaluation of TALA.[14] An initial interim report focusing on activity through summer 2008 was published in May 2009. A second interim report focusing on activity through summer 2009 and the final evaluation report regarding TALA activity through the 2009–10 school year were published in December 2010. The first interim evaluation report focused on TALA training related to Grade 6 teachers. The second interim evaluation report focused on TALA training related to Grade 7 and Grade 8 teachers and on Grade 6 teachers' implementation of TALA during the 2008–09 school year. The final evaluation report provides the final set of evaluation findings related to TALA activity through the 2009–10 school year, student achievement through the 2009–10 school year, an analysis of the cost-effectiveness of TALA, and final conclusions based on the overall TALA evaluation. This report provides a high level summary of TALA evaluation findings. Readers interested specifically in TALA are encouraged to read the evaluation reports for additional information.

Quality of TALA Training

A review of the TALA training materials by a technical advisory board (TAB) panel of experts indicated that TALA materials were of high quality and reflective of best practices. Based on

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[14] See http://www.tea.state.tx.us/index4.aspx?id=2914&menu_id=949 for the TALA evaluation reports.

observations, the evaluators suggested that TALA training at all levels was of high quality and well implemented. TALA trainers, the teachers who attended TALA training, and campus administrators also rated TALA training materials and delivery of TALA training highly, although ELA/reading respondents were generally slightly more positive than content area respondents. While the range of respondents had positive perceptions of TALA, one of the most consistent critiques/suggestions was the need for TALA to provide ongoing supports for those interested in utilizing what they had learned in TALA. The majority of teachers attended TALA training during the summer. Providing opportunities for support during the school year was a perceived need. TEA began working on this need with the 2010 and 2011 TALA grants, in which ESCs were explicitly requested to use TALA funds for follow-up support and re-training as needed and requested, not just for initial training. Current activities related to creating opportunities to participate in TALA through Project Share also suggest that TEA may be on a path to meet this need.

Classroom Implementation of TALA and Campus Support of TALA Implementation

Following attendance at TALA, teachers reported that they felt prepared to effectively teach "new" reading/writing instructional routines to students. TALA teachers' confidence translated into new lesson designs and implementation of TALA instructional routines and strategies in classrooms. TALA teachers self-reported that they were incorporating TALA general strategies and instructional routines into their lessons. Data collected across time points from the online follow-up and teacher survey indicated that teachers implemented the TALA instructional routines and strategies and that the patterns of use were somewhat consistent across time and similar across grades. Teachers who participated in the TALA online follow-up training reported that the lessons they implemented as part of the practicum were highly successful regardless of whether they were developed for Tier I or Tier II/III interventions.

Based on discussions with teachers and administrators as well as classroom observations during site visits, the evaluation concluded that there were varied levels of TALA implementation in classrooms/schools. For example, at one school, teachers reported that TALA had not been discussed since training. At other schools, administrators led the TALA initiative by changing school policies, promoting school-wide implementation, and encouraging TALA inclusion in weekly lesson planning, and providing opportunities for teachers to talk about how to implement TALA strategies best. Classroom observers specifically noted that teachers were fostering student engagement and providing feedback (TALA instructional strategies). Teachers were most often observed implementing vocabulary instructional routines, followed by implementing comprehension instructional routines. ELA/reading teachers were observed implementing TALA strategies to a greater extent than did content area teachers. Reported barriers to TALA implementation included time, buy-in, and lack of training, while facilitators to TALA implementation included the provided resources (TALA manual), helpful strategies, training, and support from other teachers.

Relationship between Teacher Participation in TALA and Student Outcomes

The evaluation looked at student outcome data (TAKS-Reading, Math, Science and Social Studies) in several different ways. In general, findings were mixed regarding the relationship between TALA participation and student achievement on TAKS.

Evidence for the following findings was found:

- Teachers and administrators predominately perceived that TALA was having a positive impact on students and teachers as evidenced by survey responses as well as data collected during site visits to TALA participating campuses.
- An examination of general trends over time on TAKS suggests that TALA participating campuses (high, medium and low participation rates) generally mirrored overall state achievement trends. However, this analysis was based on general campus trends rather than linking student achievement on TAKS to having a teacher who participated in TALA.
- Based on data from eight case study sites which provided teacher-student linking data, TALA appears to be related to positive outcomes on TAKS-Reading (Grades 6, 7, and 8) and TAKS-Social Studies (Grade 8). Both TALA and non-TALA Grade 6 and Grade 7 students experienced a decrease in the percentage of students who met or exceeded the TAKS-Reading standard from 2008–09 to 2009–10. However, the observed decline was greater for the non-TALA students at both grade levels (4.4 percentage points greater at Grade 6 and 5.1 percentage points greater at Grade 7). In Grade 8, the percentage of non-TALA students to meet the standard on TAKS-Reading decreased by 0.8 percentage points from 2009 to 2010 as compared to an increase of 12.4 percentage points among TALA students (a difference of 13.2 percentage points favoring the TALA students). For Grade 8 TAKS-Social Studies, the percentage of students who met or exceeded the TAKS passing standards was significantly higher among students who were taught social studies by a TALA teacher (93%) than the students who were taught social studies by a non-TALA participating teacher (89%).These statistically significant differences remained after controlling on student demographics.
- Across the grade levels in 2009–10, special education students at TALA campuses outperformed the state average for special education students on TAKS-Reading and Math, LEP students at TALA campuses outperformed the state average for LEP students on TAKS-Reading, and economically disadvantaged students at TALA campuses outperformed the state average for economically disadvantaged students on TAKS-Reading.

TALA Cost-Effectiveness Outcomes

Generally, the evaluation team suggested there was evidence that TALA was a relatively cost-effective program. Further evidence clarifying the relationship between TALA participation and

student outcomes would be needed to make a clear determination on cost-effectiveness, as ultimately the program can only be cost effective if desired student outcomes occur. The following findings regarding cost effectiveness were included in the final report:

- Overall, 16,341 teachers completed the TALA PD in the two years of the program (through December 2009), The average cost per academy was larger for ELA academies than it was for content area academies across grade level and fiscal year (see Table 5), however, the ELA academies were longer than the content area academies. Cost varied across academies, grade served, and fiscal years due to differences in attendance, the grade level of the academy, and the stipend amounts offered.[15]

Table 5. Average TALA Expenditures Across ESCs by Fiscal Year and Academy

Fiscal Year	Expenditures Per Teacher	Expenditures Per Academy	Grades Served and Academy
FY 2008	$799	$18,093	Grade 6 ELA (*n* = 4,373)*
FY 2008	$761	$11,192	Grade 6 Content Area (*n* = 2,590)
FY 2009	$1,256	$17,554	Grade 6 ELA (*n* = 700)
FY 2009	$952	$19,272	Grades 7–8 ELA (*n* = 4,842)
FY 2009	$2,263	$12,131	Grade 6 Content Area (*n* = 446)
FY 2009	$982	$13,325	Grade 7–8 Content Area (*n* = 3,390)

Source: Evaluation of TALA: Final Report (December, 2010). See http://www.tea.state.tx.us/index4.aspx?id=2914&menu_id=949 for more information.
*Note: Participation counts reported were associated with evaluation time lines and may not reflect total participation.

- Based on estimates, the cost of providing TALA PD to teachers in the eight case study sites was $135,992, and the implementation of the program led to 314 additional students meeting or exceeding the passing standard on TAKS-Reading beyond what were expected to pass. Using these numbers, the cost per additional student meeting or exceeding the standard on TAKS-Reading beyond what were expected to pass was $433. Assuming continued success under TALA, the cost per additional student meeting or exceeding the standard on TAKS-Reading would be $232 by FY 2011 and would continue to decrease over time. That is, teachers who are successful at implementing TALA strategies in ways that increase the likelihood of student success would presumably continue to impact students for at least several years.

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[15] During summer 2008, Grade 6 teachers were strongly encouraged to attend, and were the only grade level that could attend. In summer 2009, the primary focus was on Grade 7 and 8 teachers, however additional Grade 6 academies continued to be offered. http://www.tea.state.tx.us/index4.aspx?id=2914&menu_id=949

Recommendations Based on Evaluation Findings

The evaluation team made several recommendations related to the future of TALA, including the following:

- TALA developers should continue to seek ways to fully engage content area teachers so that it is clear how they might connect TALA literacy strategies with their work in the classroom. Additional support and/or training may also be needed in order for ELA teachers to become proficient with the TMSFA. Finally, TEA should consider developing a TALA Administrator training that has a face-to-face component as well as additional content relevant to administrators.

  One idea for providing TALA participants with additional supports would be to have TALA trainers visit classrooms, observe and provide feedback, although this may be cost-prohibitive. Similarly, ESCs may want to consider providing follow-up training so that teacher participants can share their successes and seek feedback to overcome any barriers to implementing TALA they have encountered. Finally, and likely most realistic relative to costs, would be to provide a forum for teachers who are engaging in TALA strategies to communicate with one another as well as with TALA trainers on an ongoing basis. While outside the scope of the TALA evaluation, TEA Leadership has communicated that they are currently involved in creating such an opportunity through the new online environment, Project Share.
- Continue to collect statewide participation data and look at trends in student achievement related to teacher participation in TALA. Consider the possibility of intensive demonstration site studies where TALA is implemented school wide in order to identify potential best practices for implementing TALA.

Summary of the Historical Aspects of the Student Success Initiative

This chapter presented an overview of the historical framework of SSI including the legislative, programmatic, and funding history of the programs developed under the SSI umbrella with emphasis on those programs developed and implemented prior to the 81st Texas Legislature. During the first eight years of SSI, the majority of SSI funding was distributed directly to districts through the ARI/AMI grant program. The implementation of TALA represented a key shift in the focus on meeting the goals of SSI away from direct student intervention services toward the use of SSI funds to provide supports for teachers and administrators through the implementation of statewide PD programs. The allocation and focus of SSI funds to support statewide PD endured into the 81st Texas Legislature with the continuation of TALA and the expansion of statewide PD opportunities through the development and implementation of the Rider 42 PD Academies. The next chapter explores the Rider 42 PD Academies in more detail and includes a discussion of interim findings from an evaluation of the implementation and impact of these academies. Additionally, other initiatives funded through SSI, both directly and indirectly evaluated, are

discussed, including Algebra Readiness (AR), SSIG, the Middle School Students in Texas: Algebra Ready initiative (MSTAR), the nonstandard dialect (NSD) research study, and TTLA. Finally, this chapter includes a discussion of the most recent and future PD initiatives being offered by TEA, including the expansion of online PD offerings through Project Share.

81st Legislature, Article III of the General Appropriations Act, Rider 42: Professional Development Academies and Campus Supports

Efforts that began with the development of TALA to focus efforts on strengthening classroom instruction to all students through PD to teachers and administrators were continued during the 81st legislative session, not just with additional funding for TALA, but also with the creation of the programs resulting from the direction of Rider 42 (GAA, Article III, 81st Texas Legislature) including the Rider 42 PD Academies. The general framework for Rider 42 PD Academies is based on the TALA model in several ways, from the goals, materials, and diagnostic assessments, to the statewide implementation framework flowing through the 20 ESCs. Moreover, the design of the Rider 42 PD Academies also benefited from lessons learned from TALA. The next section provides more specifics on Rider 42, followed by a description of each of the initiatives resulting from Rider 42, including the Rider 42 PD Academies. Additionally, recent research and evaluation findings are included throughout this chapter where relevant for SSIG, TTLA, and NSD. This chapter concludes with an overview of interim findings from an ongoing evaluation of the Rider 42 PD Academies.

Overview of Rider 42

The 81st Legislature continued support for SSI by appropriating nearly $152 million in each year of the biennium (FY 2010 and FY 2011) with a consistent focus on reading, math, and postsecondary readiness. However, unlike previous SSI appropriation riders, Rider 42 (GAA, Article III, 81st Legislature) placed a strong emphasis on middle school and high school PD and campus support initiatives. The following initiatives represent the major components of Rider 42 as detailed in the GAA Article III:

- As described above, continuation of TALA for teachers in Grades 6–8 who have not previously attended, and training in teaching reading across content areas for Grades 6–8 math, science and social studies teachers ($11.15 million appropriated for the 2010–2011 biennium).[16]

- Development and implementation of what has come to be known collectively as the Rider 42 PD Academies, including:

    - Creation of math Academies for Grades 5–8, which TEA named the MSTAR Academy I and II for Grades 5–6 and the MSTAR Academy I and II for Grades 7–8 ($10.1 million in each year of the 2010–2011 biennium).

    - Establishment of the following Teacher PD Academies: Algebra I and Algebra II EOC Success Academy, Geometry EOC Success Academy, Science Academies for Grades 5–8, Science Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) Overview for Grades K–12, Biology EOC Success Academy, Physics EOC Success

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[16] Funding amounts listed in this section are appropriated maximums.

Academy, Chemistry EOC Success Academy, English I, II, and III EOC Success Academy, Social Studies TEKS Overview Academy for Grades K–12, US History EOC Success Academy, World History EOC Success Academy, and World Geography EOC Success Academy.[17] In addition, an online instructional component (Project Share) to provide ongoing support during the school year for those teachers who complete the face-to-face Academies was created through a partnership with Epsilen ($50 million for the 2010–2011 biennium).[18] Beginning in December 2010, teachers who did not complete face-to-face Academies have the ability to complete online training provided through Project Share.

- Establishment of teacher academies to provide all content area teachers, not just bilingual/ESL, with PD in ELPS, which outline English language proficiency level descriptors and student expectations for ELLs and instructional practices ($10 million for the 2010–2011 biennium).

- Development of a supplemental diagnostic screening instrument to help diagnose and develop interventions for students not performing well in Grades 5–8 math, which TEA named the MSTAR Universal Screener Grades 5–8, also known as the Math Supplemental Diagnostic Screening Instrument ($1.7 million in each year of the 2010–2011 biennium).

- Creation of a competitive grant program aimed at improving student achievement in mathematics and preparing students to meet the Algebra I EOC standard for local education agencies with students identified as unlikely to meet the EOC standard in Algebra I. Through these funds, TEA created the Algebra Readiness Grant Program, which provided funding to 176 campuses in 62 districts across Texas ($50 million for the 2010–2011 biennium).

- Creation of technology-based supplementary math instruction programs for students in Grades 5–8 ($1.5 million in each year of the 2010–2011 biennium).

- Creation of a program to provide targeted assistance to promote student success and close achievement gaps at campuses with disproportionately high numbers of students who have been identified as unlikely to achieve college readiness standards by the end of Grade 11, including technical assistance from individuals with demonstrated expertise in improving student college readiness among academically struggling students and students with historically lower college success rates. Through these funds, TEA developed the College Readiness Initiative for Middle School Students and awarded grants to 81 districts serving 116 campuses ($25 appropriated million for the 2010–2011 biennium).

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[17] Not all Academies were intended to be created and implemented at once. Some were chosen for development and implementation for summer 2010, while the others will be developed for and implementation in summer 2011. Those academies implemented during the summer of 2010 were the focus of the independent evaluation of the Rider 42 PD Academies.

[18] Epsilen is a private company that provides an integrated collaboration and eLearning environment for educational institutions seeking to increase student achievement, streamline integration with other systems, and reduce costs.

- Provision of direct support to districts through SSIG funding ($44.2 million for 2009–10 and $44.4 million for the 2010–11 school year).[19]

- Conduct research to determine best practices in curriculum adjustments, instructional strategies, and PD for teachers related to second dialects of English speakers ($500,000 appropriated for the 2010–2011 biennium).

- Creation of School Leadership Academies for Grades K–12 to develop and provide PD trainings to district and campus leadership regarding the best ways to evaluate campus and classroom needs, monitor instruction, implement campus and classroom improvement activities, ensure fidelity in implementation of strategies learned through PD, and support their teachers and their needs for success in the classroom ($5 million for the 2010–2011 biennium).

Independently Evaluated Components of the Student Success Initiative

A number of initiatives rose out of Rider 42 (GAA, Article III, 81st Texas Legislature) that were complementary to the current goals of SSI but varied in their degree of focus on PD. These initiatives, including SSIG, NSD and TTLA, each received an independent evaluation during the 2010–2011 biennium. An overview of these initiatives and their full evaluation reports are detailed in the following section and corresponding appendices.

Student Success Initiative Grant Program

In the 2009–10 school year the ARI/AMI program, the mechanism by which TEA had allocated most of SSI funding to school districts over the past decade, transitioned into the SSIG program. While funding for direct services to students was maintained through the establishment of the SSIG program, it is no longer the primary vehicle for expenditure of SSI funding. During the 2009–10 school year, SSIG provided transitional financial assistance to Texas public schools districts and open-enrollment charters for post-ARI/AMI funding to provide interventions for struggling students in Grades K–12 during the 2009–10 and 2010–11 school years. Funding for this program was greatly reduced from the previous ARI/AMI funding, which ranged from around $80 million to $149 million per year over the 2003–04 to 2008–09 periods covering the combined ARI/AMI funding, to just over $44 million for SSIG in 2009–10 and 2010–11.

Although the ARI/AMI funding stream allowed districts to provide intensive one-on-one, small group, or whole class instruction to students struggling with reading or math, grantees were limited to using those funds for Grades kindergarten – Grade 8 in the areas of math and reading. Historically, school districts used the vast majority of their ARI/AMI funding on four primary budget items (supplemental curriculum, teacher pay, tutor pay, and other supplies and materials) and focused their efforts on small group instruction. SSIG provided the districts with much more flexibility in how funds could be used. Grantees had the option of using the funds in

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[19]SSIG funding amounts are budgeted amounts.

the areas that they saw the greatest need including the four core content areas of math, reading, science and social studies across Grades kindergarten – Grade 12. Additionally, SSIG grantees were provided expanded access to PD opportunities and asked to track attendance at the various PD offerings at the district level.

For the 2009–10 school year, the funding provided to qualifying districts through SSI provided direct assistance to aid campuses in meeting SSI goals through the SSIG program. In a recent evaluation of the SSIG program (see Appendix B for the full report), an examination of reported program expenditures showed that grantees expended $38.6 million of the funds awarded for SSIG. Of these funds, over 90% were used for payroll or supplies and materials. In particular, teacher and tutor pay comprised half of all SSIG expended funds during the 2009–10 school year. Supplemental instructional programs and other supplies and materials made up 28% of the budget. About 1% of total program expenditures were used for PD training, which focused on the four content areas—reading, mathematics, science, and social studies.

After less than one year of SSIG implementation, the effects of the program on students, teachers, and administrators cannot be fully assessed. In the short term, some student performance gains were found, although these outcomes cannot be directly attributed to SSIG. For example, TPRI outcomes improved throughout the year. However, early reading assessments would be expected to show signs of improvement to some extent, even without the assistance of SSI grants.

An evaluation of expenditure reports showed that participating students received additional instruction, as evidenced by the supplemental pay for teachers and tutors. The long-term effects of the program on student achievement in the core content areas remain unknown. Due to delayed funding, grantees were not required to submit TAKS results for 2009–10, and therefore these data were not available for evaluation purposes.

Non-Standard Dialects of English

As directed by Rider 42(l) (GAA, Article III, 81st Texas Legislature), in 2009 TEA contracted with the Texas Education Research Center (TERC) at the University of Texas at Austin for the purpose of conducting research to determine best practices in curriculum adjustments, instructional strategies, and PD for teachers of students who speak second dialects of English speakers, termed standard English learners (SELs).[20] A comprehensive report of this study was published in January 2011.[21]

This study was undertaken to explore the needs of the SEL population and to determine how Texas might meet those needs more effectively through curricula and PD recommendations as

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[20] The term SEL was selected and recommended for use at the direction of an expert panel convened for the purposes of this study to review current literature and make recommendations for this population. SELs are students whose home language is English and who use language varieties which differ from standard or mainstream English.
[21] The comprehensive report can be found at http://www.tea.state.tx.us/index2.aspx?id=2147495222&menu_id=949 The conclusions of this research conducted by TERC do not necessarily reflect the opinions or official position of TEA, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, or the State of Texas.

their needs may not be addressed within the current system. It is important to understand how to support these students within the system as they may come to the classroom underperforming linguistically. A review of the existing literature suggested that there is a paucity of research related to effective instructional practices with this population, although there is some evidence in the literature to suggest that the instructional practice of "contrastive analysis/code switching" may hold some promise in improving academic outcomes for SEL students. [22] (See Wheeler and Swords [2010] for a review of the efficacy research.) An assembled panel of experts in the field further reviewed the literature and offered the following recommendations regarding the best practices for working with SEL students:

- Recognize SELs as a group with unique linguistic and instructional needs
- Build educators' awareness of language varieties and their impact on student academic achievement through PD
- Assist SELs in building their knowledge of standard English by implementing contrastive analysis and code-switching instructional strategies
- Implement a language variety awareness curriculum
- Take steps to create a thoughtful and tolerant environment that ensures the acceptability of these proposed changes to all stakeholder groups

TERC concluded that before the expert panel's recommendations are implemented the consequences of implementation must be fully recognized from a policy perspective. Any efforts to recognize and respond uniquely to the needs of SELs must be considered in a context of competing priorities for limited resources.

The way in which the state recognizes SELs as a group with unique educational needs, should the aforementioned recommendations be implemented, is a major consideration. If SELs are defined as a subgroup in the TEC, this may have accountability and fiscal implications. Beyond recognizing SELs, the panel recommended that language variety awareness instruction be provided to all students. Ultimately, policymakers may need to consider fully the fiscal and practical costs and benefits of any efforts to recognize and serve the SEL population.

Texas Turnaround Leadership Academies

In 2009, the 81st Texas Legislature funded the development of TTLA through Rider 42(g) (GAA, Article III). The TTLA program was created under the leadership of ESC 13 and through the combined efforts of TEA, the Texas Center for District and School Improvement, the School Improvement Resource Center, and the Texas Turnaround Center. TTLA was designed to (a) establish a cadre of school leaders with the skills to turnaround historically underperforming schools, (b) encourage school administrator preparation programs across the state to intensify

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[22] Contrastive analysis is the instructional practice of contrasting the grammatical structure of one variety of English with the grammatical structure of another variety (presumably the Standard) in order to add the Standard dialect to the students' linguistic toolbox (Wheeler, 2006). Contrastive analysis instruction is typically paired with instruction and practice in code-switching; that is, changing a sentence or passage presented in one variety of English to another (Wheeler, 2008).

their requirements and coursework, and (c) build a knowledge base for ESCs providing support for underperforming schools in Texas. The goals of the TTLA program are to provide ongoing PD and coaching to district and campus leadership members regarding the best ways to evaluate campus and classroom needs, monitor instruction, implement campus and classroom improvement activities, ensure fidelity in implementation of strategies learned through PD, and support their teachers and their needs in the classroom to be successful. Texas is currently piloting the TTLA program in five districts within the state that have historically underperforming campuses. Results of this pilot program will inform the viability of a state-wide expansion of the program.

TEA contracted with Texas A&M University Education Research Center (ERC) in 2009 to conduct an evaluation to determine the degree to which the PD provided through the TTLA program is translated into district and campus leadership practices, identify the most effective methods for supporting the PD and the leadership during the school year, and provide constructive feedback to improve the quality and effectiveness of the PD. [23] Comprehensive findings from this evaluation will be available August 31, 2011; however, preliminary findings (see Appendix C) indicate that principals who attended the summer PD institute planned to emphasize student performance within in their strategic plan which suggests that principals understood that the desired result of the school turnaround process is improved student performance. Initial site visits to TTLA campuses in the five participating districts revealed that TTLA school leadership teams demonstrated strengths in the areas of communication, school culture, and organization. Through the evaluation, researchers also noted that several of the strengths and weaknesses that were observed during site visits referenced the themes that emerged from their strategic 90-day action plans that were developed during the summer PD institute. This is an early indication that participants may be implementing practices gained through the PD they received.

Indirectly Evaluated Components of the Student Success Initiative

Other initiatives that resulted from Rider 42 (GAA, Article III, 81st Texas Legislature) were more directly focused on supporting teacher PD within the context of the Rider 42 PD Academies. These initiatives included the AR grant program; the MSTAR Universal Screener, a formative assessment that is part of the AR initiative; and targeted support frameworks introduced at the Academies including the Texas College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS), RTI framework, and ELPS. These components were indirectly evaluated in conjunction with the comprehensive evaluation of the Rider 42 PD Academies during the 2010–2011 biennium.

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[23] The conclusions of this research conducted by State of Texas Education Research Center at Texas A&M University do not necessarily reflect the opinions or official position of the Texas Education Agency, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, or the State of Texas.

Algebra Readiness Grant Program

To prepare teachers and students for the transition to an EOC exam in Algebra I, the AR grant program is designed to deliver an intensive PD and campus support program to middle schools eligible due to a history of low math achievement (Rider 42, GAA, Article III, 81st Texas Legislature). AR Cycle 1 grants were awarded to 32 districts that are serving math teachers at a total of 73 campuses, with funding beginning in January 2010 and lasting through May 2012. Cycle 1 of the AR grant program provides funding to middle schools which had 65% or fewer students in Grades 7 and 8 who met the passing standard for the math portion of the TAKS over the preceding three school years. AR Funding may be used for any of the following activities:

- Extended learning time for mathematics
- Instructional coaching
- Common planning time
- Effective supplemental resources
- Effective PD
- Administrator training
- Appropriate technology
- Active ongoing student engagement
- Guidance and communication with parents

As part of this grant program, math teachers in these schools are required to participate in the appropriate face-to-face and online Rider 42 PD Academies, including the Algebra I EOC Success Academy, and the MSTAR Academy for Grades 5–6 or MSTAR Academy for Grades 7–8. In addition to Cycle 1 grants, TEA has awarded Cycle 2 grants to approximately 76 campuses representing 41 school districts, as well as 21 grants to 27 campuses representing 22 school districts through the Algebra Readiness for Small and Rural Schools grant competition.

MSTAR Universal Screener Grades 5–8 (Math Supplemental Diagnostic Screening Instrument)

The MSTAR Universal Screener is a formative assessment system administered to Grades 5–8 students to support instructional decisions. Information about this screener is integrated in the MSTAR Academies for Grades 5–6 and Grades 7–8 and is part of the AR initiative. The purpose of the MSTAR Universal Screener is to help guide instructional decisions in relation to students' readiness for algebra. Results from the MSTAR Universal Screener can be used to help teachers determine if students are on track or at risk for meeting curricular expectations in algebra and for pre-algebra. Results from the MSTAR Universal Screener also help teachers determine the intensity of the instructional support students might need if they have been

identified as at risk for not meeting curricular expectations in algebra and for underdeveloped algebra readiness skills. Teachers will be able to monitor students' risk status by administering comparable forms of the MSTAR Universal Screener in fall, winter, and early spring.

The MSTAR Universal Screener Overview, an online Project Share course, assists participants in understanding how to interpret the results obtained from the screener to make instructional decisions. The MSTAR Universal Screener Overview emphasizes the screener's ability to help teachers identify students who might not be ready for algebra and identify the intensity of support needed for students who might be at risk for not meeting expectations in algebra. The course has detailed lessons for both teachers and administrators.

In a related project funded by the Meadows Foundation, the Institute for Public School Initiatives at the University of Texas, along with the Meadows Center for the Prevention of Educational Risk, has supported the MSTAR Intervention Project. The goal of the MSTAR Intervention Project is to create sample intervention lessons for use in teaching students who need extra support in Grades 5–8 mathematics. These sample lessons are being placed in the Project Share platform for use by all Texas teachers. Phase two of the continuing MSTAR Academies will include an introduction to the MSTAR Universal Screener as well as an overview of the MSTAR Intervention lessons.

Targeted Instructional Strategies

The Rider 42 PD Academies included targeted instructional strategies designed so that teachers could better support every student in Texas, and help those students achieve success in core academic subject areas. These strategies include the integration of three sets of standards and support frameworks: the CCRS, RtI, and the ELPS.

Texas College and Career Readiness Standards

The 79th Texas Legislature passed HB 1, "Advancement of College Readiness in Curriculum," establishing section 28.008 of the TEC, to increase the number of students who are college and career ready when they graduate from high school. The CCRS that resulted from that legislation were developed and assessed by vertical teams composed of secondary and postsecondary faculty across the content areas of English/language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. Vertical teams used a multi-level framework that focuses on subject matter and the way it is organized and presented in the classroom.

The CCRS emphasize secondary-level content knowledge that stimulates students to engage in deeper levels of thinking. Incorporation of CCRS into the TEKS was a multi-year process and was based on a series of gap analyses conducted by TEA.

- There was a gap analysis completed on the English Language Arts/Reading (ELAR) CCRS and ELAR TEKS in 2008, and the CCRS are addressed in those TEKS.

- The gap analysis of the CCRS and math TEKS resulted in a revision of the math TEKS in 2009.

- The gap analyses of CCRS and science and social studies TEKS were completed as part of the TEKS review process, and the CCRS were incorporated into the science and CTE TEKS in 2009 and the social studies TEKS in 2010.

The framework of the CCRS recognizes that at a postsecondary level, students must (1) have core foundational knowledge of a discipline and be able to use that knowledge with facility and fluency, and (2) be able to understand the vertical structure of a discipline and how knowledge expands from the initial study of a topic.[24]

Response to Intervention

RtI is an instructional approach that integrates assessment and intervention within a multi-level prevention system to maximize student achievement and to reduce behavior problems. With RtI, schools identify students at risk for poor learning outcomes and monitor individual student progress. In addition, schools provide evidence-based interventions and adjust the intensity and nature of those interventions depending on a student's responsiveness. RtI also helps schools identify students with learning disabilities or other disabilities.[25]

English Language Proficiency Standards

The ELPS outline English language proficiency level descriptors and student expectations for ELLs. School districts are required to implement the ELPS as an integral part of each subject in the required curriculum. The ELPS are published along with the TEKS for each subject in the required curriculum.[26] The required curriculum includes both foundation and enrichment subjects (TEC §28.002). The importance of the ELPS is further highlighted by the fact that they are not only included as one of the key support frameworks of the Rider 42 PD Academies, but also as standalone ELPS Academies focusing on the four core content areas.

Student Success Initiative Teacher Professional Development Components in the Rider 42 Professional Research Development Study

During the 2010–2011 biennium, teacher PD-focused components of Rider 42 (GAA, Article III, 81st Texas Legislature) were included in varying degrees in a comprehensive evaluation of the Rider 42 PD Academies. These included the ELPS Academies, Project Share, and the content-specific PD Academies. Although the main focus of the Rider 42 PD Research Study (Rider 42 PDRS) is on the implementation and impact of the content-specific PD Academies, the influence of attending the ELPS and using Project Share are investigated as well. A description of these

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[24] Source: Biology EOC Success Academy documentation from TEA.
[25] Source: National Center on Response to Intervention, http://www.rti4success.org/.
[26] Source: Texas Education Agency, http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/curriculum/biling/elps.html.

components, including each of the PD Academies implemented during the summer of 2010 which are included in the PDRS, is included in the following section.

English Language Proficiency Standards Academies

Within the context of the evaluation of the Rider 42 PD Academies, participation in the ELPS Academies in conjunction with participation in one of the content-specific Rider 42 PD Academies will be reviewed as a potential contributing factor to final study outcomes. As such, a description of the ELPS Academies is being provided in this section.

The ELPS Academies are geared toward teachers in specific subject areas (ELPS ELA, ELPS math, ELPS science, and ELPS social studies), but all ELPS Academies have common purposes and activities. In the ELPS Academies, participants explore ways to increase achievement for ELLs using the ELPS. The ELPS require specific focus on developing academic language in the content areas through four domains – reading, writing, speaking, and listening – in Grades K–12. In these Academies, participants examine the ELPS and use them to practice writing language objectives using the four domains. The resources contain specific strategies that enable teachers to incorporate the ELPS in their classrooms. Eligible participants, including K–12 teachers, bilingual/ESL and special education teachers, and administrator/coordinators, who were unable to attend training sessions at ESCs will have the opportunity to complete ELPS Academy training and related follow-up courses through Project Share. The online courses will provide Texas teachers and administrators with online resources and follow-up activities through the state's online interactive platform. Educators will also have opportunities to build online professional learning communities (PLCs) for further development and growth. Training in both face-to-face and online formats will continue to be offered through the 20 ESCs into the 2012–13 school year. While the ELPS PD Academies were initially "taught" separately, it is TEA's intent to take this content to the next level and make it an automatic component of all statewide teacher PD.

Project Share

In coordination with the development of the PD Academies, and along with the AR grant program, TEA has partnered with Epsilen (an e-learning platform) and the New York Times Knowledge Network to develop and implement Project Share. Project Share is a collection of Web 2.0 tools and applications that will provide high quality PD in an interactive and engaging learning environment. Project Share leverages existing and new PD resources for K–12 teachers across the state and will serve as a mechanism for building PLCs where educators can collaborate and participate in online learning opportunities. In this online environment, teachers can access digital content repositories (e.g., the *New York Times*, PBS Digital Learning Library, Smithsonian Education, etc.) that include articles, videos, images, podcasts and other interactive features as well as access state-adopted instructional materials. This platform facilitates online content delivery through teaching, collaboration, and networking.[27] Project

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[27] Source*:* Texas Education Agency, http://tea.epsilen.com/Public/Home.aspx.

Share is being utilized to deliver ongoing PD courses and to facilitate online PLCs for participants in all Rider 42 PD Academies.

As of the end of 2010, approximately 250,000 Project Share teacher accounts had been created. Many of those teachers with Project Share accounts were introduced to the system and joined the online platforms after attending face-to-face PD Academies during summer 2010. Teachers across the state are taking the "Texas Tour," an online presentation that introduces new Project Share members to the online platform.

TEA has developed a timeline for the 2010–11 school year related to the launch of online courses in Project Share. Over the October–December 2010 period, a total of 11 online courses in the math content were launched, with 12 additional courses (e.g., science, math, English I and II, ELPS) scheduled for launch in January and February 2011. The English I and II EOC Success online course is scheduled for a January 2011 launch and will address expository reading and writing in high school. The first participants will be ESC ELA specialists and possibly ELA coordinators from the largest districts. After ESC participants complete the course, they will receive training in how to facilitate online courses, and then they will be asked to turn the online training around to eligible teachers in their region. The course is designed to be a facilitated course so that ESC specialists can provide feedback and additional information as participants discuss and ask questions. Going forward, TEA plans to continue online course development through the life of the content development grants (ending February 2013), and they will work with ESCs to distribute and advertise courses.

Rider 42 Professional Development Academies

The first of the Rider 42 PD Academies developed by TEA in spring 2010 included the MSTAR Academy I for Grades 5–6, the MSTAR Academy I for Grades 7–8, the Algebra I EOC Success Academy, the Science Academy for Grades 5–8, the Science TEKS Overview Academy for Grades K–12, the Biology EOC Success Academy, and the English I and II EOC Success Academy. [28] These Academies were designed to provide teachers with in-depth training in mathematics, English language arts, and science instruction. The goals of the PD include helping teachers to:

- Facilitate the appropriate use of data to drive instructional planning.
- Align instruction to the TEKS.
- Accelerate instruction or provide interventions for struggling students.
- Transition into an online environment for future PD opportunities.
- Incorporate research-based strategies to improve the academic language skills of ELLs.

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[28] Additional Rider 42 PD Academies that will be developed in spring 2011 for implementation beginning in summer 2011 include: the Geometry EOC Success Academy, the Algebra II EOC Success Academy, the Physics EOC Success Academy, the Chemistry EOC Success Academy, the English III EOC Success Academy, the Social Studies TEKS Overview K-12, the U.S. History EOC Success Academy, the World History EOC Success Academy, and the World Geography EOC Success Academy.

In addition, the PD Academies are designed to help teachers understand the new high school EOC assessments that will be administered beginning in 2011–12. A detailed description of each of the Academies listed above follows.

MSTAR Academy I for Grades 5–6

The goal of the MSTAR Academy I for Grades 5–6 is to improve overall mathematics instruction and student achievement in order to meet EOC Algebra I standards in Grade 9/high school and to ensure postsecondary readiness.[29] In the initial three days of Academy I, participants examine the "big ideas" in the Grades 5–6 math TEKS and learn strategies to prepare students for success in algebra. Participants explore hands-on, student-centered lessons designed to provide connections to, and strengthen participants' knowledge of, the middle-school mathematics that is critical for success in algebra, the CCRS, ELPS, and RtI. Participants practice applying ELPS- and RtI-based instructional strategies to promote student success at working with fractions and ratios. These two topics, critical for success in algebra, were identified by TEA and the Academy developers as topics that needed to be addressed in terms of improving teachers' instruction and students' understanding.

Participants discuss what it means for a student to be ready for algebra, investigate the Texas Response to the Curriculum Focal Points (TxRCFP), [30] and become familiar with some recommendations for improving student success in algebra (e.g., the National Math Advisory Panel recommendations). Participants also have the opportunity to learn (a) the relationship of the MSTAR Universal Screener to the TxRCFP and algebra readiness, (b) the purpose of the MSTAR Universal Screener, and (c) the knowledge representations used in the MSTAR Universal Screener.

This Academy provides Texas teachers and administrators with an overview of Project Share, which allows educators to continue to learn about math instruction and to build online PLCs for further development and growth.[31]

The MSTAR Academy I for Grades 5–6 training materials were developed in early 2010. The MSTAR Academy I for Grades 5–6 consisted of an initial three days of face-to-face training, and teachers started participating in this training in June 2010. An online version of the MSTAR Academy I for Grades 5–6 is also available through Project Share. Face-to-face training is being followed by online follow-up training (using Project Share) that began in fall 2010.

MSTAR Academy I for Grades 7–8

The goals, structure, framework, and objectives of the initial three days of MSTAR Academy I for Grades 7–8 are identical to the MSTAR Academy I for Grades 5–6. Participants examine the "big ideas" in the Grades 7–8 math TEKS and learn strategies to prepare students for success

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[29] *Source:* PD Academy materials from TEA
[30] For more information see: http://txar.org/docs/txcfps_final_2_1_10.pdf
[31] *Source:* Texas Education Agency (May 2010). *Curriculum Update* (Newsletter), Issue I, Volume 1.

in algebra. Participants explore hands-on, student-centered lessons designed to provide connections to and strengthen participants' knowledge of the middle-school mathematics that is critical for success in algebra, the CCRS, ELPS, and RtI. Activities with the MSTAR Universal Screener and Project Share were identical to those in MSTAR Academies for Grades 5–6.

The major difference between MSTAR Academy I for Grades 7–8 and MSTAR Academy I for Grades 5–6 is the content of the activities on the second two days of the training. MSTAR Academy I for Grades 7–8 focuses on proportionality, and spends more time on the development of teachers' content knowledge on this topic. On day two, participants discuss how and when proportional reasoning is taught; articulate the concepts of ratio, rate, and proportionality (focal point and content); and trace the proportionality focal point through Grades 7 and 8.[32] Then participants learn to differentiate between proportional situations versus situations that are not proportional, discuss algebraic thinking and tie in student errors, identify the structure of word problems, and review research connections with RtI and ELPS. Participants practice debugging faulty thinking regarding percent and proportionality and make connections using hands-on activities focused on geometric probability, geometry and measurement, and connecting ratio and proportion to geometric probability.

On day three of Academy I, participants gain experience connecting geometry to proportionality; explore multiple representations of percentages, percent change, and proportionality; and explore proportionality by solving problems, reviewing conclusions from the research, and posing final questions regarding proportionality.

The MSTAR Academy I for Grades 7–8 training materials were developed in early 2010. The MSTAR Academy I for Grades 7–8 consisted of an initial three days of face-to-face training, and teachers started participating in this training in June 2010. An online version of the MSTAR Academy I for Grades 7–8 is also available through Project Share. Face-to-face training is being followed by online follow-up training (using Project Share) that began in fall 2010.

Algebra I EOC Success Academy

In the Algebra I EOC Success Academy, participants examine the concepts in the Algebra I TEKS and learn strategies to prepare students for success on the Algebra I EOC assessment based on the blueprint for this assessment that shows the five objectives of the assessment.

The Algebra I EOC Success Academy also provides connections to and strengthens participants' knowledge of CCRS, ELPS, and RtI. Project Share is discussed and participants are given an orientation to the online system and the follow-up activities in which they can participate. Participants explore hands-on, student-centered lessons.[33] The focus of this two-day training is on having participants investigate students' understandings and

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[32] On day two of the MSTAR I Academy for Grade 5-6 participants focus on the fraction/decimal focal point in Grade 5, and on day three, participants investigate the instructional progression for ratio and rate in Grade 6 and explore multiplicative thinking and proportional reasoning.
[33] While the developer created two lessons for each EOC objective, only one was presented during the PD Academies, while the others may be put on Project Share for future trainings.

misunderstandings of specific objectives, and build a conceptual understanding and address misunderstandings and obstacles for student understanding of these objectives. Ultimately, this is to help them build awareness of differentiation and enrichment strategies within Tier 1 instruction of the RtI support framework. Objectives that are addressed included functional relationships, linear functions, the properties and attributes of functions, linear equations and inequalities, and quadratic and other nonlinear functions.

The Algebra I EOC Success Academy materials were developed in early 2010. The Algebra I EOC Success Academy consists of two days of face-to-face training, and teachers started participating in this training in June 2010. An online version of the Algebra I EOC Success Academy is also available through Project Share. Face-to-face training is being followed by online follow-up training (using Project Share) that began in fall 2010. In the online follow-up course, Algebra I EOC Success: Additional Lessons, participants review a lesson study model developed to support implementation of the six lessons from the face-to-face PD and the four additional lessons found within the online course. Participants apply this lesson study model to one of the additional lessons and analyze archival student data.

Science Academies for Grades 5–8

In the Science Academies for Grades 5–8, participants experience a total immersion into the new 2010 science TEKS for Grades 5–8. During the academies, participants engage in a close examination of the new TEKS and learn that the new science standards, especially those for the middle school grades, have greater specificity, depth, and complexity. Participants also learn that the strands (categories within the standards) have titles that connect concepts across grade levels.

The Science Academies include activities that provide connections to and strengthen participants' knowledge of CCRS, ELPS, and RtI. Participants explore four hands-on, student-centered lessons (one for each grade level) that are framed in the research-based 5E instructional model (Engage, Explore, Explain, Elaborate, Evaluate), each with a focus on integrating the three support frameworks (CCRS, ELPS, and RtI). Specifically, the four lessons are:

1. **Grade 5 Lesson: "Constant Changes":** A sample lesson on Earth's changing surface using the 5E model while helping participants understand how ELPS can be incorporated into a science lesson

2. **Grade 6 Lesson: "Moving and Shaking":** A sample lesson on plate tectonics and earthquakes/ volcanoes using the 5E model to show how the RtI framework can help support instruction and student learning in the science classroom

3. **Grade 7 Lesson: "Texas, Our Texas":** A sample lesson on the various ecoregions in Texas using the 5E model to demonstrate how the RtI framework can help support instruction and student learning in the science classroom

4. **Grade 8 Lesson: "An Elevated View":** A sample lesson on interpreting topographic maps using the 5E model and exploring how the lesson components relate to CCRS in the science classroom

The Science Academies for Grades 5–8 materials were developed in early 2010. The Science Academies for Grades 5–8 consisted of three days of face-to-face training, and teachers started participating in this training in June 2010. The original face-to-face training has been converted to an online course and will be made available to educators in February 2011. Eligible participants, including Grades 5-8 science teachers, applicable bilingual/ESL and special education teachers, and administrator/coordinators, who were unable to attend training sessions at ESCs will have the opportunity to complete Science Academies for Grades 5–8 through Project Share. The online courses will provide Texas teachers and administrators with online resources and follow-up activities through the state's online interactive platform. Educators will also have opportunities to build online PLCs for further development and growth. Training in both face-to-face and online formats will continue to be offered through the 20 ESCs into the 2011–12 school year.

Science TEKS Overview K–12

In the Science TEKS Overview K–12, participants examine the new 2010 science TEKS while strengthening their knowledge of the CCRS, RtI, and ELPS in this one-day training. Participants explore models of vertical alignment that strengthen their knowledge of science concepts and processes. This training also provides an opportunity for participants to garner professional support from other educators through shared resources and ongoing academic networking through Project Share. Specific activities include:

- **Types of Investigations:** Participants define types of scientific investigations (descriptive, comparative, and experimental), describe key words used to differentiate each type of study, practice identifying types of investigations, and identify the types of investigations included in the 2010 TEKS.

- **Integration of Tools and Equipment:** Participants investigate the grade levels at which tools and equipment are first introduced in the science classroom.

- **Support Frameworks:** Trainers deepen participants' understanding of Support Frameworks (CCRS, ELPS, and RtI) for student success by providing opportunities to review information on the frameworks, discuss the frameworks, and to understand how the frameworks support student success using student profiles.

- **Rigor/Relevance Analysis:** Participants use the Rigor/Relevance Framework to analyze the concept student expectations of the science TEKS.

- **Assessments:** Trainers provide information about the new state assessments (STAAR and EOCs).

The Science TEKS Overview K–12 materials were developed in early 2010. The Science TEKS Overview K–12 Academy consisted of one day of face-to-face training. The original face-to-face

training has been converted to an online course and will be made available to educators in February 2011. Eligible participants, including K–12 science teachers, applicable bilingual/ESL and special education teachers, and administrator/coordinators, who were unable to attend training sessions at ESCs will have the opportunity to complete the Science TEKS Overview offered through Project Share. The online courses will provide Texas teachers and administrators with online resources and follow-up activities through the state's online interactive platform. Educators will also have opportunities to build online PLCs for further development and growth. Training in both face-to-face and online formats will continue to be offered through the 20 ESCs into the 2011–12 school year.

Biology EOC Success Academy

In the Biology EOC Success Academy, participants examine the concepts in the new 2010 science TEKS for Biology and learn strategies to prepare students for success on the Biology EOC assessment. This Academy also provides connections to and strengthens participants' knowledge of CCRS, ELPS, and RtI. Trainers lead participants through an analysis of the science TEKS by looking at specific changes between the 1998 TEKS and the 2010 TEKS. Participants examine the introductory statements and concept statements, the process skills, and the order in which the investigations are introduced. Trainers discuss implications for classroom instruction and student learning. Participants explore hands-on, student-centered lessons framed in the research-based 5E instructional model. Specific lessons include:

- **Lesson: The Role of Enzymes:** A sample lesson on the role of enzymes using the 5E model

- **Lesson: Energy and Matter in Ecosystems:** A sample lesson on energy and matter in ecosystems using the 5E model

- **Lesson: Evidence for Evolution:** A sample lesson on evidence for evolution using the 5E model

- **Lesson: Energy and Matter in Cells:** A sample lesson on energy and matter in cells using the 5E model

The Biology EOC Success Academy materials were developed in early 2010. The Biology EOC Success Academy consists of three days of face-to-face training. The original face-to-face training has been converted to an online course and will be made available to educators in February 2011. Eligible participants, including biology teachers, applicable bilingual/ESL and special education teachers, and administrator/coordinators, who were unable to attend training sessions at ESCs will have the opportunity to complete the Biology EOC Success training offered through Project Share. Training in both face-to-face and online formats will continue to be offered through the 20 ESCs into the 2011–12 school year.

English I & II EOC Success Academy

In the English I and II EOC Success Academy, participants receive an overview of the English I and II EOC assessment and see the integration of the TEKS for ELAR, ELPS, and the CCRS. Sessions also provide participants with an orientation to Project Share and follow-up activities that are available. In addition, participants are able to start building online PLCs for further development and growth, as well as create an e-portfolio that can be added to throughout their careers. The majority of the time is spent providing teachers with the opportunity to investigate how the ELAR TEKS align and correlate with the English I and II EOC assessments based on the blueprint for this assessment.

The English I and II EOC Success Academy was developed in early 2010 and was presented to teachers as a one-day training. During the training, teachers received an overview of the English I and II EOC assessments as well as an introduction to the Project Share/Epsilen platform.

During the first half of training, participants examined the proposed structures for future English I and II EOC assessments and discussed what was known about the preliminary design. (During initial training, the English EOC assessments were still under development.) Participants also reviewed the K–12 ELAR and K–6 Spanish Language Arts and Reading (SLAR) vertical alignment and related ELPS as well as the CCRS from the perspective of how the standards and assessments are related. The training emphasized what students will need to know and be able to do in order to succeed on the EOC assessments.

During the second half of the training, participants were introduced to the Epsilen platform, created personal accounts and began work on ePortfolios. To ensure that further information about the English I and II EOC assessments is distributed in a timely manner, state-level trainers were invited into the ELA EOC Success (EOCS)Trainers' Group in Project Share/Epsilen and joined a state-level English Language Arts PLC.   Revisions to training materials, announcements and answers to questions have been posted in the ELA EOCS Trainers' Group folders. There are currently 240 members in the ELA EOCS Trainers' Group. Teachers who participated in training at any of the 20 ESCs were also invited to join regional online PLCs so that they can continue to communicate, share resources and receive updates following face-to-face training. Currently, online courses for English I and II EOCS are being developed and will be available through Project Share in early spring 2011.

Summary of the Rider 42 Professional Development Academies

Table 6 provides summary information for each of the Rider 42 PD Academies implemented during the summer of 2010, including the ELPS Academies, and the Academies which are under development for implementation in 2011. Included in Table 6 is information regarding the targeted grade levels, partners that developed Academy materials, and timelines for the development of the training materials, regional TOTs, and PD implementation. Detailed descriptions of the 2011 Academies are discussed in the future initiatives chapter.

Table 6. Professional Development Programs Developed Under Rider 42

PD Subject	Targeted Grade Levels	Vendor	Development Timeline	TOT Timeline	PD Timeline
Mathematics					
MSTAR Academy I for Grades 5–6 (Algebra Readiness)	5–6	ESC 13 (while ESC 13 contracted with writers from various other entities, ESC 13 received the grant for all math academies)	October 02, 2009 to April 20, 2010	April 20, 2010 to May 30, 2010	June 01, 2010 to May 31, 2012
MSTAR Academy I for Grades 7–8 (Algebra Readiness)	7–8	ESC 13	October 02, 2009 to April 20, 2010	April 20, 2010 to May 30, 2010	June 01, 2010 to May 31, 2012
Algebra I (EOC Success Academy; Readiness for higher level math courses)	MS/HS	ESC 13	October 02, 2009 to April 20, 2010	April 20, 2010 to May 30, 2010	June 01, 2010 to May 31, 2012
MSTAR Academy I (Part B – Completion)	5-8	ESC 13	September 2010 to March 2011	April 2010 to May 2011	June 1, 2011 to May 31, 2011
MSTAR Academy II for Grades 5–8 (Algebra Readiness)	5-8	ESC 13	September 2010 to March 2011	April 2011 to May 2011	June 1, 2011 to May 31, 2013
Geometry EOC Success Academy	HS	ESC 13	August 01, 2010 to April 20, 2011	April 20, 2011 to May 30, 2011	June 01, 2011 to May 31, 2013
Algebra II EOC Success Academy (College Readiness)	HS	ESC 13	August 01, 2010 to April 20, 2011	April 20, 2011 to May 30, 2011	June 01, 2011 to May 31, 2013
English Language Arts (ELA)					
English I EOC Success Academy	HS	Institute of Public School Initiatives, University of Texas System	September 02, 2009 to April 20, 2010	April 20, 2010 to May 05, 2010	June 01, 2010 to May 31, 2012
English II EOC Success Academy	HS	Institute of Public School Initiatives, University of Texas System	October 02, 2009 to April 20, 2010	April 20, 2010 to May 30, 2010	June 01, 2010 to May 31, 2012
English III EOC Success Academy (College Readiness)	HS	Institute of Public School Initiatives, University of	September 2010 to March 2011	March 28, 2010 to April 27, 2010	June 1, 2011 to May 31, 2013

PD Subject	Targeted Grade Levels	Vendor	Development Timeline	TOT Timeline	PD Timeline
		Texas System			

Science

PD Subject	Targeted Grade Levels	Vendor	Development Timeline	TOT Timeline	PD Timeline
K–12 Science TEKS Overview (including earth and space science, environmental and aquatic science, life, earth and physical sciences in K–5 and 6–8)	K–5, 6–8	ESC 4	September 05, 2009 to April 20, 2010	April 20, 2010 to May 05, 2010	June 01, 2010 to May 31, 2012
Biology EOC Success Academy	HS	ESC 4	September 05, 2009 to April 20, 2010	April 20, 2010 to May 05, 2010	June 01, 2010 to May 31, 2012
Science Academies for Grades 5-8	5-8	ESC 4	September 2009 to March 2010	April 2010 to May 2010	June 1, 2010] to May 31, 2013
Chemistry EOC Success Academy	HS	ESC 4	August 01, 2010 to April 20, 2011	April 20, 2011 to May 05, 2011	June 01, 2011 to May 31, 2013
Physics EOC Success Academy	HS	ESC 4	August 01, 2010 to April 20, 2011	April 20, 2011 to May 05, 2011	June 01, 2011 to May 31, 2013

Social Studies

PD Subject	Targeted Grade Levels	Vendor	Development Timeline	TOT Timeline	PD Timeline
K–12 Social Studies TEKS Overview	K–12	ESC 6	September 2010 to March 2011	April 2011 to May 2011	June 1, 2011 to May 31, 2013
Grade 8 Social Studies	8	ESC 6	September 2010 to March 2011	April 2011 to May 2011	June 1, 2011 to May 31, 2013
US History EOC Success Academy	HS	ESC 6	September 2010 to March 2011	April 2011 to May 2011	June 1, 2011 to May 31, 2013
World History EOC Success Academy	HS	ESC 6	September 2010 to March 2011	April 2011 to May 2011	June 1, 2011 to May 31, 2013
World Geography EOC Success Academy	HS	ESC 6	September 2010 to March 2011	April 2011 to May 2011	June 1, 2011 to

PD Subject	Targeted Grade Levels	Vendor	Development Timeline	TOT Timeline	PD Timeline
					May 31, 2013
Bible Literacy (Special Social Studies Topic)	HS	ESC 6	September 2010 to March 2011	April 2011 to May 2011	June 1, 2011 to May 31, 2013
English Language Proficiency Standards					
English Language Proficiency Standards (math, ELA, science, social studies)	K–12	ESC 20	September 05, 2009 to April 10, 2010	April 8 to June 17, 2010	June 1, 2010 to May 31, 2013

Evaluation of the Rider 42 Professional Development Academies

Background of the Study

An evaluation of the Rider 42 PD Academies is currently being conducted by the University of Texas at Dallas Education Research Center (UTD-ERC) and its associates under contract with TEA .[34] The PDRS is funded through Rider 42 (GAA, Article III, 81st Texas Legislature), which provided guidance to TEA on what should be included in and accomplished through this study.

This evaluation is being conducted in three phases. Phase I of the evaluation began in February 2010 and concluded with the development of a comprehensive evaluation plan in May 2010. Phases II and III involve execution of the project plan, with Phase II beginning in April 2010 and concluding at the end of August 2011 with a report on the impact of the FY 2010 PD Academies on changes in teacher instructional practices and on student achievement results. Contingent upon additional funding, Phase III will begin in September 2011 and continue through August 2013. A summary of the interim report, including preliminary findings for Phase II of the evaluation, follows. An interim report for Phase II of the evaluation was published in January 2011 and a final report for Phase II will be published by August 31, 2011.[35]

 In response to the legislative guidance, the contract for this study requires that the evaluation:

1. Determine the degree to which the each PD program is translated into classroom practice.

2. Determine the most effective method for supporting each PD during the school year.

3. Provide constructive feedback to improve the quality and effectiveness of each PD.

4. Determine the effectiveness of each PD to positively affect student achievement outcomes.

The PDRS is a comprehensive formative and summative evaluation of the seven PD Academies first developed by TEA under Rider 42: MSTAR Academy for Grades 5–6, MSTAR Academy for Grades 7–8, Science 5–8, Algebra I EOC Success, Biology EOC Success, English I and II EOC Success, and Science TEKS Overview, K–12. The formative component of the evaluation describes the development and implementation of each Academy in terms of quality and fidelity and the summative component seeks to determine the effectiveness of each PD in terms of positively impacting teacher practices and student achievement outcomes. Additionally, the evaluation seeks to identify district and campus supports, including those funded by the AR Grant program, which may contribute to positive changes in teacher practices and student outcomes. The evaluation also includes an examination of the use of Project Share, and the

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[34] The conclusions of this research conducted by the UTD-ERC do not necessarily reflect the opinions or official position of the Texas Education Agency, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, or the State of Texas.
[35] The comprehensive interim report can be found at http://www.tea.state.tx.us/index4.aspx?id=2914&menu_id=949.

implementation of the three support frameworks introduced at the Academies (RTI, CCRS, and the ELPS).

Research Objectives and Questions

The ultimate goal of the PD Academies is to positively impact student achievement in core subject areas. In order to measure the impact of the PD on student achievement results, the evaluation team proposed a research design that includes five research objectives:

1) Objective 1: Assess the content of, delivery of, and participation in face-to-face PD Academies.

2) Objective 2: Assess the content of, delivery of, and participation in online PD through Project Share.

3) Objective 3: Assess the impact of PD on teacher knowledge, changes in instructional practices, and changes in collaborative behavior.

4) Objective 4: Determine the impact of PD received on student achievement outcomes.

5) Objective 5: Determine the impact of district and campus supports on teacher knowledge, changes in instructional practices, changes in collaborative behavior, and ultimately student achievement outcomes.

The interim report focuses only on Objective 1: assessing the content of, delivery of, and participation in face-to-face PD Academies offered in summer 2010. More specifically, under Objective 1 the evaluation assesses the quality of PD delivered to regional trainers at TOT sessions, the quality of training that was turned around and delivered to teachers, and the fidelity with which each of the Rider 42 PD Academies was delivered, according to its statewide training model. In addition, Objective 1 provides for the examination of teacher participation levels, and the extent to which district and campus supports impacted teacher participation rates in face-to-face PD. Ten specific research questions are addressed in Objective 1:

1A. What types of content and activities were included as part of each level of training (i.e., training of state and regional trainers, as well as training of teachers)?

1B. To what extent does the content of each Academy reflect best practices for teacher PD?

1C. To what extent does the content of each Academy reflect best practices for instruction in respective subject areas?

1D. To what extent is the content of each Academy aligned with national and state standards in respective subject areas?

1E. What is the quality of the training provided to the regional trainers?

1F. What are the professional characteristics of the regional trainers?

1G.   In what ways, and to what extent, was each Academy promoted to teachers across Texas?

1H.   What is the quality of the training provided to teachers?

1I.   To what extent is the PD training implemented with fidelity to teachers across the ESCs?

1J.   What are the professional characteristics of the teachers who participated in face-to-face training?

Preliminary Findings

The evaluation results indicated that, over a short time period, the PD developers were successful in preparing PD programs in the core content areas of math, science, and ELA that were well aligned with national standards for PD, best practices for content instruction and TEKS, and national standards. From the expert reviews, it is evident that, across all Academies, the content of the PD was of good quality, would engage teachers with the presenters and with each other, and would enhance teaching. If combined with well-trained trainers and subsequent quality delivery to teachers, it was concluded by experts that the PD offered through these Academies could positively impact teachers' classroom practices.

In addition to developing quality PD content over a short time period, TEA and regional staff successfully recruited and trained large numbers of highly qualified regional trainers who delivered the PD to over 19,000 teachers across the state.[36] These PD participants represented approximately one-quarter or more of the number of 2009–10 teachers within the state. There were particularly high rates of participation in the MSTAR Academies for Grades 5–8 (38%) and in the Science Academies for Grades 5–8 (40%). Additional efforts will be needed to increase the participation of high school teachers, particularly for the ELA EOC Success PD.[37]

Across all Academies the majority of the regional trainers reported high levels of satisfaction with the quality and fidelity with which they delivered the training. Observations of training delivery confirmed these perceptions with overall high ratings of quality and fidelity across all observations. Teacher survey responses also indicate the training was well-delivered, covered key content and impacted teachers' knowledge and instructional practices to a moderate or great extent. An overwhelming majority of respondents indicated high levels of satisfaction with the training delivery (≥ 90% across all Academies) and with instructor competence (86% for English I and II EOC and ≥ 90% for all other Academies). These findings provide additional support for the conclusion that the trainers were well qualified and well prepared to deliver the face-to-face trainings. Of reported concern were lower levels of satisfaction and preparedness

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[36] As of August 6th, 2010, over 19,000 participants attended one of the seven subject-specific Academies offered by TEA during summer of 2010 that were primarily targeted in the research study. Teachers across the state also participated in other SSI-related Academies such as TALA that were not part of this evaluation.
[37] TEA is continuing to provide information on training sessions to the field as soon as it becomes available and is continuing to respond to the field's requests for additional training as specific problem areas are identified. For example, TEA is currently preparing an online course for "Reading and Writing Expository Texts" in response to a survey following initial face-to-face training.

to train others reported by ELA and MSTAR 7–8 regional trainers and the lower levels of satisfaction and impact reported by ELA teacher participants in which 43% to 55% of participants indicated that the PD had no impact or minimal impact on their teaching. The authors suggested that lower ratings reported by the ELA participants may be due to the fact that the ELA summer session was meant to be a launching pad for future online ELA courses through Project Share rather than a more extensive content-oriented training. With the rollout of Project Share, it was concluded that TEA staff should be able to provide the content and depth needed to impact teachers' practices. Of additional reported concern was the lack of evidence that the CCRS standards were implemented with fidelity in the PD training. Being able to teach to these higher standards is increasingly important not only because of the higher accountability standards coming with the new statewide tests but also because of the increasing need for students to be better prepared for the changing college and career challenges. With the increasing use of Project Share for online PD, authors concluded that TEA staff will have additional opportunity to provide specific reinforcements and support in these areas.

As TEA plans new training for summer 2011 and supplements the current training through the rollout of Project Share, the evaluation results highlight a critical need to prepare trainers to facilitate teachers' use of Project Share. The regional trainers reported that they do not have much experience in facilitating online PD and that they received lower levels of preparation in this area than in the delivery of face-to-face PD. From multiple sources, it was also clear that the training delivered to teachers did not provide much information about Project Share, nor did it generate high interest in using Project Share. However, it should be noted that at the time of the evaluation and during the training Project Share was still under development These findings were shared with TEA and developers early, and they were able to provide more information during later sessions to participants as the Project Share program matured and detailed instructions about its use were developed and could be shared statewide. Since then Project Share has been widely promoted to teachers across Texas.

Additional recommendations for future training from the authors stem from the high capacity for delivering PD that TEA has achieved through this initiative. With only 46% of the TOT regional training participants actually conducting a face-to-face training in summer 2010 and given the costs associated with training so many regional trainers, it was suggested that TEA and ESC staff determine how best to recruit more teacher participants, and tap into this group of trainers to deliver more face-to-face trainings. TEA expects to maintain a pool of effective trainers and reports that many of the trainers returned to their districts to conduct their own trainings as well. Results from the ESC administrator survey also suggested that staff are already considering ways to increase teacher participation, including starting promotion efforts earlier in the year and utilizing social networking media to reach more participants. With additional training in the delivery of online PD, it was recommended that TEA and ESC staff could also utilize these trainers to provide more support for the use of Project Share in districts across the state. In addition to ensuring that these trainers can facilitate Project Share, it was recommended that TEA and ESC staff develop new recruitment methods for teacher participation in both online and face-to-face training and utilize these trainers to reach even more teachers. Particular attention should be paid to increasing high school teacher participation rates in anticipation of

the coming shift to EOC exams. The roll out of Project Share, already in progress, will provide an opportunity for increased teacher participation without having to wait for another series of summer sessions.

Continuing Evaluation Activities

As noted earlier, the PDRS interim report presents findings related to Research Objective 1, answering research questions addressing the content of, delivery of, and participation in the seven PD Academies implemented during the summer of 2010. This is, however, just the first step in the execution of the overall evaluation of the Rider 42 PD Academies for Texas teachers. As described below, research activities to be conducted by UTD-ERC and its partners over the coming months will more comprehensively address the first research objective regarding the teacher Academies, and new activities will commence that address the remaining research objectives.

Research Objective 1: Assess the content of, delivery of, and participation in face-to-face PD Academies

Further activities addressing Research Objective 1 will include the collection and analysis of PD participant (teacher) survey data in spring 2011 for a continued assessment of the extent to which the Rider 42 PD has impacted teacher practices and collaboration. The research team will also continue to collect and analyze PD participant data for teachers attending Rider 42 PD Academies offered after August 5, 2010. Finally, as required by the contract between TEA and the UTD-ERC, data will be collected for the 2011 PD Academies (e.g., Geometry, Algebra II, English III, Chemistry and Physics EOC Success Academies) to ensure that the appropriate data are available for the continuation of the Rider 42 PDRS should the 82nd Legislature appropriate funds for future PD implementation and evaluation activities into the next biennium.

Research Objective 2: Assess the content of, delivery of, and participation in online PD through Project Share

To assess the content and delivery of Project Share, the research team will conduct a document review and analysis of Project Share planning and implementation materials and engage an expert panel for review of the online training materials and assessment of the quality of the online PD experience. These reviews will focus on the content of the training materials and appropriateness of the materials for online training (specifically across content areas represented by each Academy). The content and quality of Project Share will also be examined in conjunction with the fall 2010 regional trainer and teacher survey data and with additional questions on the spring 2011 teacher survey addressing the access, usability and perceived impact of the online system. Spring district and campus administrator surveys will address administrator support for Project Share. Finally, to assess teacher participation in Project Share, the research team will collect and analyze a common set of usage data (e.g., number of log-ins, time online, content areas accessed, courses completed) available through the online system.

Research Objective 3: Determine the impact of PD received on teacher knowledge, changes in instructional practices, and changes in collaborative behavior

The spring 2011 teacher survey will address teachers' perceptions of their teaching knowledge and practices after they have had the opportunity to implement instructional strategies taught in the PD Academies and participate in online PD and collaborative activities through Project Share. The research team will also collect and analyze measures of teacher behavior in the classroom through direct classroom observations of teachers who attended the Rider 42 PD Academies and comparable teachers who did not attend PD. Trained and certified observers will use the Classroom Assessment Scoring System-Secondary (CLASS-S) observation tool to assess classroom and instructional quality across four primary domains: emotional support, instructional support, classroom organization, and student outcomes. A final measure of change in teacher knowledge, practices, and behavior will come from a comparison of scores on the Learning Math for Teaching (LMT) assessment between middle school math teachers who have attended PD and those who have not.[38]

Research Objective 4: Determine the impact of PD received on student achievement outcomes

Statistical analyses will be employed to determine the extent to which teacher participation in training (both online and face-to-face) impacted student achievement as measured by 2011 student TAKS scores and science course grade data for Grades 6 and 7 where no TAKS data are available. For each Academy a hierarchical linear modeling approach will be employed to examine the relationship between type and amount of PD and student achievement, controlling for student, teacher and school characteristics. In addition, a multi-level propensity-score matching design (PSM) will be used to match participating teachers to similar non-participating teachers and compare student outcomes for PD participant and non-participant groups for each of the seven PD Academies.

Research Objective 5: Determine the impact of district and campus supports on teacher knowledge, changes in instructional practices, changes in collaborative behavior, and ultimately student achievement outcomes.

A variety of factors could influence the extent to which the PD impacts teacher practices and student achievement. Using data collected from sources previously described, including participant data, classroom observation data, teacher surveys and district and campus administrator surveys, statistical analyses will be used to examine the extent to which various factors, such as the presence or absence of particular campus or district supports, increase or decrease the effectiveness of participating in PD. These analyses will be exploratory in nature but are expected to provide important insights into the contexts within which PD is most likely to positively affect instructional practice and student outcomes.

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[38] The LMT is an online assessment designed to assess mathematical knowledge.

Future Professional Development Initiatives from TEA

During the past two legislative sessions, there has been a renewed focus on the quality of instruction and campus-level teacher supports (coaching, extended learning time) as evidenced by the establishment of statewide teacher PD programs, such as TALA and the various Rider 42 funded content-specific PD Academies, and large scale grant programs like the AR Grant Program designed to deliver intensive PD and campus support. In addition, the way in which SSI-related teacher training is implemented will be changing with the advent of Project Share. Teachers will have unlimited opportunities to engage in interactive online PD and become active participants in PLCs (providing them with the ability to interact with and share information with other teachers across the state) through Project Share.

With the goal of making training accessible to as many teachers as possible, as funding remains available, TEA will continue to support the objective of the current Rider 42 PD Academies as well as develop new and follow-up training courses for Project Share in response to teachers' needs. Working with the ESCs, TEA will ensure that teachers within the state who did not participate yet in the current Rider 42 PD Academies will continue to have multiple opportunities to do so, either through face-to-face sessions or online through Project Share. Additionally, new Rider 42 PD Academies are under development during the spring of 2011 and will be implemented during the summer of 2011. Pending funding, these Academies would also be included in future phases of the Rider 42 PDRS. A description of each of these upcoming PD opportunities follows.

Future Rider 42 PD Academies

MSTAR Academy I (Part B Completion)

In addition to the initial three days of face-to-face training for the MSTAR Academy I (Part B Completion for Grades 5–6 and 7–8, online follow-up courses (using Project Share) and an additional day of face-to-face training are being developed. The online PD is designed to provide continued engagement in the topics introduced in the MSTAR Academy I for Grades 5–6 and 7–8. These online courses prepare participants for engagement in the MSTAR Academy II for Grades 5–8. The online courses will provide Texas teachers and administrators with online resources and follow-up activities through the state's online interactive platform. Educators will have opportunities to build online PLCs for further development and growth.

These online courses, which were made available in fall 2010, include the MSTAR Universal Screener Overview; MSTAR Academy I: Review and Needs Assessment; MSTAR Academy I: Fraction/Decimal Relationships and Operations; MSTAR Academy I: More About RtI Tier II for the Math Learner; MSTAR Academy I: Addressing the G/T Math Learner through RtI; MSTAR Academy I: Addressing the CCRS in Math; MSTAR Academy I: Lesson Study Model Implementation; Texas English Language Learner Instructional Tool (TELLIT): Math Cognitive Learning Environment; TELLIT: Math Linguistic Learning Environment; and TELLIT: Math Affective Learning Environment.

The MSTAR Academy I Part B Completion for Grades 5–8 consists of one day of face-to-face training where participants will be trained in the use of data-driven decision-making within the MSTAR Lesson Study model in order to plan, review, and refine Tier I mathematics instruction. Participants will review important sources of data on student knowledge and thinking related to algebra readiness, connect each of these sources of student data to its appropriate types of decisions, and design a data-driven action plan for improving some aspect of algebra-readiness–related instruction during the next year. Participants will bring student work samples and instructional artifacts from their classrooms and from the online follow-up courses. The MSTAR Academy Part B Completion training materials were developed in fall 2010. Teachers will begin participating in this training in summer 2011.

MSTAR Academy II for Grades 5–8

The goal of the MSTAR Academy II for Grades 5–8 is to improve Tier II mathematics instruction in order to increase student achievement. This training builds on the knowledge participants gained at the MSTAR Academies for Grades 5–6 and 7–8 and delves deeper into instructional strategies for Tier II instruction. The MSTAR Academy II for Grades 5–8 emphasizes research-based Tier II strategies from the Institute of Education Sciences Practice Guide for Struggling Students and engages participants in how to identify students needing Tier II support in mathematics and meet their instructional needs. Participants will learn how to interpret results of the MSTAR Universal Screener; use the screener results and other forms of data to make instructional decisions; and provide practical strategies for implementing evidence-based interventions for students receiving Tier II mathematics support.

Sample Tier II lessons from the MSTAR Intervention Project, funded by the Meadows Foundation and developed by the Institute of Public School Initiatives at UT and the Meadows Center for the Prevention of Educational Risk, will be integrated into this training.

The MSTAR Academy II for Grades 5–8 training materials were developed in winter 2010. The MSTAR Academy II for Grades 5–8 consists of two days of face-to-face training, and teachers will begin participating in this training in summer 2011. An online version of the MSTAR Academy II for Grades 5–8 will also be available through Project Share in fall 2011 as funding remains available.

Algebra II EOC Success Academy

The Algebra II EOC Success Academy has a goal of improving overall mathematics instruction and achievement in order to ensure student success on the Algebra II EOC Exam. The training will allow participants to examine the concepts in the Algebra II TEKS and learn strategies through the exploration of hands-on, student-centered lessons designed to provide connections to and strengthen participants' knowledge of CCRS, ELPS, and RtI. The Algebra II EOC Success Academy will provide Texas teachers and administrators with online resources and

follow-up activities through Project Share, as well as allow educators to build online PLCs for further development and growth.

The Algebra II EOC Success Academy training materials were developed in winter 2010. The Algebra II EOC Success Academy consists of three days of face-to-face training, and teachers will begin participating in this training in summer 2011. Face-to-face training will be followed by online follow-up training (using Project Share). An online version of the Algebra II EOC Success Academy will also be available through Project Share in fall 2011 as funding remains available.

Geometry EOC Success Academy

The Geometry EOC Success Academy has a goal of improving overall mathematics instruction and achievement in order to ensure student success on the Geometry EOC Exam. The training will allow participants to examine the concepts in the Geometry TEKS and learn strategies through the exploration of hands-on, student-centered lessons designed to provide connections to and strengthen participant knowledge of CCRS, ELPS, and RtI. The Geometry EOC Success Academy will provide Texas teachers and administrators with online resources and follow-up activities through Project Share, as well as allow educators to build online PLCs for further development and growth.

The Geometry EOC Success Academy training materials were developed in winter 2010. The Geometry EOC Success Academy consists of two days of face-to-face training, and teachers will begin participating in this training in summer 2011. Face-to-face training will be followed by online follow-up training (using Project Share). An online version of the Geometry EOC Success Academy will also be available through Project Share in fall 2011 as funding remains available.

Chemistry EOC Success Academy

Beginning in late spring 2011, the 20 ESCs will offer training in both face-to-face and online formats for the Chemistry EOC Success Academies as funding remains available. Just as with the Biology EOC Success Academy, participants will learn strategies to prepare students for success on the EOC assessment and examine the interrelatedness of the content area TEKS, CCRS, ELPS, and RtI. Trainers will lead participants through an analysis of the Chemistry TEKS and discuss implications for classroom instruction and student learning. Participants will also explore hands-on, student-centered lessons framed in the research-based 5E instructional model. Following each academy, participants will be invited to join the Project Share online community so that they may continue to engage in conversations and share resources as they prepare for the EOC assessments. Participants will also be invited to join follow-up online courses (through Project Share) as future training needs are identified. Training in both face-to-face and online formats will continue to be offered through the 20 ESCs into the 2012–13 school year as funding remains available.

Physics EOC Success Academy

Beginning in late spring 2011, the 20 ESCs will offer training in both face-to-face and online formats for the Physics EOC Success Academies as funding remains available. Just as with the Biology EOC Success Academy, participants will learn strategies to prepare students for success on the EOC assessment and examine the interrelatedness of the content area TEKS, CCRS, ELPS, and RtI. Trainers will lead participants through an analysis of the Physics TEKS and discuss implications for classroom instruction and student learning. Participants will also explore hands-on, student-centered lessons framed in the research-based 5E instructional model. Following each academy, participants will be invited to join the Project Share online community so that they may continue to engage in conversations and share resources as they prepare for the EOC assessments. Participants will also be invited to join follow-up online courses (through Project Share) as future training needs are identified. Training in both face-to-face and online formats will continue to be offered through the 20 ESCs into the 2012–13 school year as funding remains available.

English III EOC Success (College Readiness)

Beginning in late spring 2011, the 20 ESCs will offer training in both face-to-face and online formats for the English III EOC Success Academies as funding remains available. Just as with the English I & II EOC Success Academy, participants will learn strategies to prepare students for success on the EOC assessment and examine the interrelatedness of the content area TEKS, CCRS, ELPS, and RtI. Trainers will lead participants through an analysis of the English III TEKS and discuss implications for classroom instruction and student learning. Following each academy, participants will be invited to join the Project Share online community so that they may continue to engage in conversations and share resources as they prepare for the EOC assessments. Participants will also be invited to join follow-up online courses (through Project Share) as future training needs are identified. Training in both face-to-face and online formats will continue to be offered through the 20 ESCs into the 2012–13 school year as funding remains available.

Social Studies TEKS Professional Development

In August 2010, TEA posted the revised social studies TEKS to be implemented starting in the 2011–2012 school year. TEA is currently in the development stages for the PD scheduled to roll out in spring and summer 2011. An advisory committee met in January 2011 to discuss the details for the trainings. As funding remains available, TEA will work with ESCs and experts from across the state to develop the training materials. All training will be delivered in two formats - online courses offered through Project Share and face-to-face trainings provided through the ESCs. The trainings under development are as follows.

Social Studies TEKS Overview K–12

As funding remains available, eligible participants, including K–12 social studies teachers, applicable bilingual/ESL and special education teachers, and administrator/coordinators, will be invited to attend face-to-face training sessions at ESCs or complete online training offered through Project Share. Participants will engage in activities to examine the organization of the new social studies TEKS, identify changes to the new standards, and determine how the revised standards will affect classroom instruction and assessment.

Grade 8 Academy

As funding remains available, eligible participants, including Grade 8 social studies teachers, applicable bilingual/ESL and special education teachers, and administrator/coordinators, will be invited to attend face-to-face training sessions at ESCs or complete online training offered through Project Share. Participants will learn strategies to prepare students for success on the Grade 8 assessment and examine the interrelatedness of the content area TEKS, CCRS, ELPS, and RtI. Trainers will lead participants through an analysis of the Grade 8 TEKS and discuss implications for classroom instruction, student learning, and assessment. The Grade 8 Academy will provide Texas teachers and administrators with online resources and follow-up activities through Project Share.

US History EOC Success Academy

As funding remains available, eligible participants, including US History teachers, applicable bilingual/ESL and special education teachers, and administrator/coordinators, will be invited to attend face-to-face training sessions at ESCs or complete online training offered through Project Share. Participants will learn strategies to prepare students for success on the EOC assessment and examine the interrelatedness of the content area TEKS, CCRS, ELPS, and RtI. Trainers will lead participants through an analysis of the US History TEKS and discuss implications for classroom instruction, student learning, and assessment. The US History EOC Success Academy will provide Texas teachers and administrators with online resources and follow-up activities through Project Share.

World History EOC Success Academy

As funding remains available, eligible participants, including World History teachers, applicable bilingual/ESL and special education teachers, and administrator/coordinators, will be invited to attend face-to-face training sessions at ESCs or complete online training offered through Project Share. Participants will learn strategies to prepare students for success on the EOC assessment and examine the interrelatedness of the content area TEKS, CCRS, ELPS, and RtI. Trainers will lead participants through an analysis of the World History TEKS and discuss

implications for classroom instruction, student learning, and assessment. The World History EOC Success Academy will provide Texas teachers and administrators with online resources and follow-up activities through Project Share.

World Geography EOC Success Academy

As funding remains available, eligible participants, including World Geography teachers, applicable bilingual/ESL and special education teachers, and administrator/coordinators, will be invited to attend face-to-face training sessions at ESCs or complete online training offered through Project Share. Participants will learn strategies to prepare students for success on the EOC assessment and examine the interrelatedness of the content area TEKS, CCRS, ELPS, and RtI. Trainers will lead participants through an analysis of the World Geography TEKS and discuss implications for classroom instruction, student learning, and assessment. The World Geography EOC Success Academy will provide Texas teachers and administrators with online resources and follow-up activities through Project Share.

Bible Literacy as taught through Special Topics in Social Studies

As funding remains available, eligible participants will be invited to complete online training through Project Share. Texas teachers and administrators will have access to online resources and will also have opportunities to build online PLCs for further development and growth.

Future Needs Assessment

Pending funding, TEA also envisions conducting and using results from needs assessments to structure future follow-up training courses in order to meet the needs of teachers over time. Taken together with the future PD initiatives, these efforts will provide teachers within Texas ongoing access to high quality PD resources that evolve based on their needs.

Conclusions

SSI was originally launched in 1999 to support districts in educating students to meet basic standards of proficiency in English language arts, mathematics, and science. Early SSI programming and funding were targeted directly to teachers and districts primarily through the early teacher training academies, TRA and TMA, as well as grant programs (e.g., ARI/AMI) designed to provide direct intervention services to struggling students. Since these initial efforts, the most significant of which were student-focused efforts, SSI evolved to focus more directly on statewide teacher PD programs such as TALA. Most recently (2009), the 81st Texas Legislature, through Rider 42 (GAA Article III), appropriated nearly $152 million to further evolve SSI with a particular emphasis on PD for middle school and high school teachers supported by complementary standards-based support frameworks. Additionally, the most recent incarnation of SSI includes a forward-looking focus on extending teacher PD opportunities and access through the online platform, Project Share.

Since the introduction of TALA, in collaboration with the ESCs, TEA has provided training across a variety of content areas to approximately 61,000 teachers and administrators from summer of 2008 to August of 2010, with approximately 74% of that population trained during the summer of 2010. Some individuals may have attended multiple training opportunities available through TALA and the Rider 42 PD Academies (including the ELPS, CTE and TEKS Academies). There has been high participation in PD from educators within the state. As the convenience of access to PD increases with the introduction of Project Share, it is expected that participation levels will continue to broaden over time.

Although in recent years the support provided through SSI has shifted to reach a broader range of students through PD programs aimed at increasing teacher knowledge and performance, results indicate that supplemental intensive intervention delivered directly to students at risk of academic failure can still be successful. An evaluation of the RLA program designed to provide teachers access to intensive reading intervention programs for K–2 students at risk for not passing Grade 3 TAKS, found that even in a short period of time, such intensive intervention can contribute to improved outcomes. Results demonstrated that across all grades and concepts measured the percentage of students who mastered English or Spanish reading concepts increased from the beginning of the year.

Even in light of these findings, the ability to reach substantially more students at risk of academic failure through providing PD to teachers to increase their use of scientifically based practices in the classroom could have profound impacts. In order to determine if any PD program has an impact on student academic performance, it is important to first establish that the PD materials as well as the training that teachers receive are of high quality and reflective of best practices. It is then equally as important to demonstrate that teachers implement the content and practices learned through the training with fidelity. Once these conditions are met, then student achievement can be validly measured to determine the impact of the training on student outcomes. It is still too early within the implementation cycle to determine the full impact

of the range of the Rider 42 PD programs funded in 2009 through SSI, however, an examination of the findings from the TALA program can provide an early indication of the impact focusing support on teacher PD through SSI has had on student achievement.

The evaluation of TALA during the 2009–10 school year found that the materials developed for TALA were of high quality and the training was well implemented. Respondents who attended the training reported positive perceptions of the training and felt prepared to implement the practices, but requested ongoing support after the training to better utilize what was learned. Observations of the teachers in practice found that, although there was variability in the extent of implementation across campuses, observed teachers were including TALA instructional strategies in their classroom practices to some extent, with ELA teachers utilizing TALA strategies more frequently than content area teachers. The impact of TALA on student outcomes, however, was limited. Some evidence suggested there was greater effect on student achievement at those campuses that had been implementing TALA for two consecutive years. Additionally, Grade 8 students had better outcomes than Grade 6 or 7 students. Although increased implementation time and clarifying the teacher/student connection could potentially increase researchers' ability to detect positive outcomes, increasing the availability of ongoing support, through online training courses offered through Project Share after the initial training, for example, may be paramount to strengthening the effect on student achievement through the TALA program.

The evaluation of the Rider 42 PD Academies, although still ongoing, will be the state's first opportunity to examine the delivery of PD both face-to-face and through an online environment. Early findings suggest that, over a short time period, PD developers were successful in preparing PD programs in the core content areas of math, science and English language arts that were well aligned with national standards PD, best practices for content instruction, and TEKS and national standards. In addition, TEA and regional ESC staff successfully recruited and trained large numbers of regional trainers creating the capacity to continue to deliver PD across the state. These trainers reported high levels of satisfaction with the training they received and reported that were well-prepared to deliver the training to teachers. Observations of training delivery confirmed these perceptions with overall high ratings of quality and fidelity across all observations. Teacher survey responses also indicate the training was delivered well, covered key content, and impacted teachers to a moderate or great extent. Increased usage of Project Share is underway and evaluation findings on the usage and impact of Project Share as well as the impact of the PD Academies are expected in August 2011.

Offering increased campus and district level supports may be important to creating a lasting impact of PD on student achievement. Programs such as TTLA may help to improve district and campus leadership practices through a focus on those leadership practices that can lead to turning around underperforming campuses. Likewise, research supported through SSI recommends that developing an understanding of best practices in instruction and PD that can help increase teachers capacity and awareness in working with students who speak second dialects of English may help create an environment that promotes academic success for all students. As the evaluation of the TTLA and Rider 42 PD Academies continues through August

2011, an examination of the type of campus supports which may lead to positive changes in teacher practices and ultimately student outcomes will be further explored.

An online PD platform can offer all teachers ongoing and continual access to proven, high-quality training. As TEA evolves PD opportunities offered though Project Share, and plans additional face-to-face trainings, it will be important to continue to evaluate how PD programs such as those funded through SSI can be improved both from both an implementation and a content perspective. Additionally, it will be important to continue to explore the immediate and long range impacts of SSI PD programs on student outcomes and how the usage of an online medium for delivery can contribute to improving those outcomes.

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Appendices

Appendix A – Intensive Reading or Language Acquisition

Introduction

This appendix provides an evaluation of the Intensive Reading or Language Acquisition (RLA) pilot grant program. The purpose of RLA was to provide intensive intervention in reading or language acquisition as a supplement to standard reading classes during the school day using neuroscience-based, scientifically validated interventions or instructional tools proven to accelerate learning, cognitive ability, and English-language proficiency.[39] Through a competitive grant process, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) selected eleven eligible campuses to participate in this pilot program during the 2009–10 school year. The eligibility criteria were as follows:

(1) Percentage of students meeting or exceeding the Grade 3 Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS)-Reading (English and Spanish) passing standards in 2007–08 was below the state average
(2) Percentage of students meeting or exceeding the Grade 3 TAKS-Reading (English and Spanish) passing standards in 2008–09 was below the state average
(3) 2008–09 TAKS results were less than or equal to 2007–2008 results
(4) Average of the 2007–08 and 2008–09 Grade 3 TAKS-Reading passing rate was 85% of the state average passing rate or lower

The RLA intervention targeted students in Grades K–2 who were at risk of not passing Grade 3 TAKS-Reading, and emphasized the following goals: (1) assist qualifying local educational agencies (LEAs) in increasing the proficiency of students in reading or language acquisition, and (2) assist qualifying LEAs in helping students meet the grade advancement requirements for the reading component of the Student Success Initiative (SSI).[40] Specifically, the RLA program was intended to provide students at participating campuses with intensive reading or language intervention to assist them in successfully meeting the TAKS-Reading passing standard in Grade 3, where grade advancement was tied to having met the standard on TAKS-Reading.[41]

The program required that each of the participating campuses select one of the following three intervention programs, which had been vetted by an external review panel: (1) Scientific Learning Fast ForWord, (2) Sopris West Read Well, and (3) SRA-McGraw Hill Early Interventions in Reading. The grant required that all program services be delivered during the school day and serve as a supplement to regular reading or language arts classroom curriculum. In addition, each program had to include the following components:

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[39] For more information about RLA, see http://www.tea.state.tx.us/index2.aspx?id=2147487680
[40] For 2009–10, SSI requirements tied grade promotion to performance on state-mandated assessments in reading and mathematics at grades 5 and 8.
[41] At the time that RLA was piloted, Grade 3 promotion was linked to passing TAKS-Reading. This requirement was no longer in place during the 2009–10 school year.

(1) Needs and Objectives: Participating LEAs were required to develop a plan that included program objectives that focused on meeting student needs by filling academic gaps in reading or language acquisition.

(2) Project Management: The LEA principals or designees were required to monitor program implementation to ensure fidelity of the intervention and compliance with program requirements.

(3) Curriculum and Instruction: LEAs were required to choose one of three programs—as identified by TEA—to implement as an intervention during the 2009–10 school year and to ensure adequate staffing for implementation.

(4) Professional Development: Participating LEAs were required to ensure adequate professional development (PD) required for effective program implementation and intervention fidelity.

(5) Performance Assessment and Evaluation: Participating LEAs were required to conduct pre-test and post-test assessments using Texas Primary Reading Initiative (TPRI) or El Inventario de Lecture en Español de Tejas (Tejas LEE)—the former, an English-language assessment tool, and the latter, a Spanish-language assessment tool—and program benchmarks to measure improvements. LEAs were to provide required data to TEA for evaluation.

Description of Selected Intensive Reading Intervention Programs

Scientific Learning: Fast ForWord (www.fastforword.com)
According to the developer, Fast ForWord is a series of education software products that focuses on developing "phonological awareness" (or awareness of sound structure) in order to develop and enhance students' cognitive awareness. Scientific Learning Corporation reports that the system strengthens memory skills, attention, processing rate, and sequencing abilities in children. It is currently marketed for children with a broad range of reading problems, and relies on computerized exercises in which students identify computer-generated speech sounds. For best results, Scientific Learning recommends that students use the product for 30 to 100 minutes a day, five days a week, for four to 16 weeks.

Sopris West: Read Well (www.soprislearning.com)
According to the developer, Sopris West created the Read Well program to help students in Grades K–2 acquire language and reading skills. Using a research-validated approach, Read Well's goal is to ensure that students develop and retain the appropriate reading skills before progressing to the next stage of instruction. Ongoing assessment, progress monitoring, and aptitude-based small groups are intended to assure that students' needs are met regardless of skill level. Flexible 30-minute lessons correspond to each of the Read Well units and may be executed in small groups or with the entire class.

SRA-McGraw Hill: Early Interventions in Reading
(https://www.mheonline.com/program/view/1/1/132/0076041077/)
According to the developer, SRA Early Interventions in Reading is designed to work in conjunction with traditional reading programs, providing supplemental instruction to low-level readers who require additional help to meet grade-level expectations. The program is also intended to help teachers identify struggling readers in Grades K–3 and to provide teachers with lessons that help students master the following key language skills: phonemic awareness, letter-sound correspondences, word recognition and spelling, fluency, and comprehension.

Reading or Language Acquisition Issues in the US and Texas

As state and federal policies continue to emphasize the early acquisition of language and reading skills, educators and researchers alike have become increasingly interested in early intervention programs, particularly for at-risk students. Early intervention programs are designed to affect positively language and literacy abilities in children ages 0–8. Longitudinal studies (Strickland, Ganske, & Monroe, 2002) show that students who are poor readers in Grade 1 have a 90% chance of also being poor readers in Grade 4 and a 75% chance of remaining poor readers in high school. After Grade 3, reading problems become increasingly resistant to intervention and treatment (Pool & Johnson, 2010). Nationwide, nearly 40% of Grade 4 students are unable to read at a basic level, while 68% do not read at a proficient level (National Center for Learning Disabilities, 2009). Therefore, the early primary grades are critical for establishing the appropriate skills and providing interventions to students who are likely to encounter reading or language difficulties in later years.

The language issues confronting Texas are twofold. First, the Texas Center for the Advancement of Literacy and Learning (2009) indicates that 19% of adult Texans are unable to read the newspaper. Not only are a relatively large percentage of Texas adults illiterate, but results from the 2009 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) reading test, which was administered to US students in grades 4 and 8, indicated that Texas students ranked 34th among 52 states and jurisdictions. Second, according to 2006 Texas Learns statistics, 6.5 million residents—or 38.6% of the Texas population—speak a language other than English at home, which is almost double the national average. During the 2004–05 school year, about 15.6% of Texas students in Grades K–12 were classified as Limited English Proficiency (LEP) (TEA, 2010a). By the 2009–10 school year, this figure had increased to 16.9% (TEA, 2010b), representative of the increasing percentage of non–English-language speakers throughout the state.

The following section, Data and Methods, describes the data sources and outcome assessment instruments used in the RLA evaluation. Next, in the Results section, evaluation outcomes are presented as: (1) descriptive comparisons of students' reading and language assessments across three test administration periods, and (2) teachers' and on-site program coordinators' reports of the RLA program implementation and activities on their campuses. Finally, a summary of the evaluation findings is presented at the end of this appendix.

Data and Methods

This section outlines the research questions that were used to guide the SSIG program evaluation. Additionally, it describes the data sources that were utilized to collect the information used to assess the implementation and effectiveness of the RLA program.

Evaluation Purpose and Method

TEA conducted the evaluation of the RLA program as part of a legislatively mandated requirement to evaluate SSI. The purpose of the evaluation of the RLA program was to assess the program's impact on participating students during the 2009–10 school year. To that end, the evaluation focused on how the program was implemented across campuses, the relationships between RLA and student outcomes, and teachers' or coordinators' assessment of RLA's usability and value. To address these goals, evaluation activities were guided by the following research questions:

(1) What was the relationship between RLA intervention programs and student achievement in reading and English?
(2) To what extent were the RLA intervention programs implemented across campuses and grade levels?
(3) What were the barriers and facilitators to program implementation, as well as grantee capacity to overcome identified barriers?
(4) How did campuses monitor participating students' reading and language achievements?

Data Sources

Data sources used for the evaluation included the following:

(1) Assessment data (i.e., TPRI and Tejas LEE) were collected by grantees for each participating student twice during each school year (once prior to participation in RLA and once following participation in RLA) and submitted to TEA.[42] TEA collected the assessment data at the end of the school year via student uploads from grantees.
(2) Progress reports were completed and submitted by teachers or project coordinators at participating campuses at the end of the 2009–10 school year. These reports included assessments of the extent to which the RLA program was developed, as well as barriers and facilitators to successful program implementation.
(3) Student-level data from the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) included students' status in the following areas: at risk of dropping out of school, economically disadvantaged, Limited English Proficiency (LEP), migrant, and special education status.

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[42] For full descriptions of the skills assessed in the TPRI and Tejas LEE, please refer to the following websites: http://www.tpri.org/resources/researchers-resources.html#ScreeningDevelopment and http://www.tejaslee.org/About/SkillsAssessed.html.

TPRI and Tejas LEE Assessment Instruments

Changes in students' reading and language acquisition skills throughout the 2009–10 school year were measured by the TPRI and Tejas LEE assessment tools. The TPRI is a research-based testing instrument that provides a comprehensive picture of students' reading and language arts development in kindergarten, Grade 1, Grade 2, and Grade 3. Both assessments were designed to be administered on a one-to-one basis to students by their classroom teachers.

Both TPRI and Tejas LEE begin with a screening process that was designed to determine if students have mastered essential reading concepts relevant to their grade level. Those who meet the criteria are identified as *Developed* (TPRI) or *Desarrollado* (Tejas LEE), while students who are found to have difficulty with specific reading concepts are classified as *Still Developing* (TPRI) or *Nivel Esperado* or *Nivel de Intervención* (Tejas LEE).[43] Students classified as *Developed* or *Desarrollado* are considered to have mastered the reading concepts specific to their grade level. Students who are *Still Developing* are inventoried at greater depth in the areas in which they are found to be struggling.

Since the TPRI is administered in English only, the Tejas LEE is recommended for students enrolled in "Spanish/English bilingual education programs who received instruction in Spanish, and students in dual-language/two-way bilingual programs who received instruction in Spanish." Tejas LEE is not a Spanish language translation of the TPRI, and, in fact, does not assess exactly the same set of reading skills as the TPRI. Instead, Tejas LEE attempts to identify significant skills and stages in the development of Spanish reading. This instrument tests students' reading and comprehension skills in Spanish, and includes only inventory tasks. For this reason, it is not possible to compare directly results from the TPRI with results from Tejas LEE.

Students who participated in the RLA program during the 2009–10 school year were assessed at the beginning-of-year (BOY), middle-of-year (MOY), and end-of-year (EOY) with either the TPRI or Tejas LEE. Both the TPRI and Tejas LEE assessed students in terms of whether they had developed specific reading, listening, and/or comprehension skills. Once students earned a passing score on a concept, they were no longer tested on that particular concept during the subsequent administration periods. For example, if a student is classified as *Developed* on initial blending substitution for BOY assessment, he or she is not tested on this skill at MOY or EOY. If a student is classified as *Still Developing* on TPRI or Tejas LEE, he or she continues to be assessed on that skill in MOY. If the student reaches *Developed* status on the task at that point, no further testing on that skill will be conducted. If the student does not reach *Developed* status, the student will be retested on the skill at EOY. Additionally, students' scores on particular

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[43] According to Tejas LEE references (www.tejaslee.org/about/studentperformancelevels.html), the *Nivel Esperado* classification indicates "The student has not yet mastered the skill, but is well on his/her way to mastery and does not need to be targeted for intervention." *Nivel de Intervención* indicates that the student is "performing in the lowest 25% of the population on this skill at this time point and additional attention is recommended." For clarity and consistency, students who are classified as *Desarrollado* will be referred to as *Developed* in this report, while earning *Nivel Esperado* or *Nivel de Intervención* statuses will be referred to as *Still Developing*.

screening or inventory tasks may determine which additional tasks are administered. Since the assessments are tailored to the students' particular needs, not all students are given the same inventory tasks during each administration period.

To assess the potential relationship between RLA and student outcomes, results of these screening and/or inventory tasks were compared across BOY, MOY, and EOY. Specifically, this evaluation examined the percentage of students who were classified as *Developed* for specific concepts at each administration period and changes in students' comprehension scores, including number of errors, fluency, explicit and implicit understanding, and vocabulary recognition.

Data Limitations

Due to the TPRI and Tejas LEE screening processes, students were not necessarily assessed on every reading or language skill at each administration period. Likewise, due to natural shifts in student population due to students entering and leaving campuses, the number of students tested at the beginning of the year may have varied from the number tested at the end of the year. Additionally, some students in the participating grades may have transitioned from Tejas Lee to TPRI during the 2009–10 school year. For these reasons, the number of students tested at BOY, MOY, and EOY on each test may vary. For consistency, assessment data were retained only for those students who were assessed with TPRI or Tejas LEE during at least two of the three administration periods.

Additionally, there was no clear comparison group against which the RLA students could be evaluated. The TPRI and Tejas LEE assessments were reported at the student level and provided to TEA via student uploads. Similar student-level data for students not participating in RLA were not available. Furthermore, TPRI and Tejas LEE are based on developmental measures, so it is not possible to distinguish change due to typical development (i.e., expected knowledge growth), change due to learning that occurs in regular classrooms and at home, and change due specifically to participation in RLA. Therefore, while data reported here may indicate that students' reading skills improved over the course of the year that RLA occurred, the nature of the evaluation evidence is insufficient to justify attributing all such improvement solely to RLA.

Results

Characteristics of Students Participating in RLA Program

During the 2009–10 school year, 2,466 students in 11 schools participated in the RLA program and received supplemental instruction from one of the three designated intensive reading or language acquisition intervention programs. Table A1 below indicates the percentage of these

students who were classified as at risk of dropping out of school,[44] economically disadvantaged,[45] LEP, migrant, or enrolled in special education classes. For comparison purposes, the state averages—based on students in Grades K–2 who were enrolled in Texas public schools in 2009–10—are also presented.

The demographic characteristics of RLA participants, which were measured at the student level, tended to vary from the state-level averages for these grades (K through 2). Across the five measures shown in Table A1, the percentage of migrant students in the RLA program was relatively similar to the state average, at 0.2% and 0.7%, respectively. However, the other four measures showed greater variation. About 78% of students participating in RLA met at least one of TEA's criteria for at-risk status, compared to the state average of 51%. While 95% of RLA participants were classified as economically disadvantaged, only 63% of public school students in Texas fell into this category. Similarly, 62% of the students in the RLA program were identified as LEP learners, compared to the state average of 28%. Finally, while 7% of students in Texas were enrolled in special education courses, only about 5% of those in the RLA program were identified as such.

These figures indicate that the students in the RLA program are more likely to be classified as at risk of dropping out of school, economically disadvantaged, and LEP than average public school students in Grades K–2 in Texas. Conversely, they show lower levels of migrant or special education students compared to the state average. Although all grantees reported that at least 80% of their participating students were economically disadvantaged, the other demographic variables showed more variability across campuses.

Table A1. Demographic Characteristics of RLA Participants Compared to the State Averages

Population Averages	% At-Risk	% Econ. Disadv.	% LEP	% Migrant	% Special Ed	Total # Students
RLA Participants	77.8	94.6	61.5	0.2	4.9	2,466
State[1]	50.8	63.4	27.9	0.7	6.6	1,127,522

Source: RLA participating students identified through student upload from grantees. Data from 2009–10 PEIMS data.
[1] The figures in this row are based on 2009–10 Texas public school data for students in Grades K–2.

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[44] In accordance with Texas Education Code (TEC) §29.081(d), a "student at risk of dropping out of school" includes each student who is under 21 years of age and who meets the criteria listed in the following document: http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/aea/2010/manual/Appendix14.pdf

[45] "Economically disadvantaged" refers to students eligible for free or reduced-price meals or (1) from a family with an annual income at or below the official federal poverty line, (2) eligible for Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) or other public assistance, (3) received a Pell Grant or comparable state program of need-based financial assistance, (4) eligible for programs assisted under Title II of the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA), or (5) eligible for benefits under the Food Stamp Act of 1977.

RLA Program Implementation

Each campus that participated in the RLA program completed and submitted a progress report to TEA on or before June 1, 2010. This progress report contained data regarding the implementation of the RLA program. This section will address the extent to which RLA programs were implemented across campuses and grade levels, barriers and facilitators to implementation, and program monitoring strategies.

Level of RLA Program Implementation

Table A6 presents the extent to which the RLA program was implemented, by grade level, as of May 10, 2010. As shown in the table, all 11 campuses served students in Grade 1, while 10 campuses served students in Kindergarten and 10 campuses served students in Grade 2. Across all campuses, RLA intervention programs were in place for approximately 4.3 months for Kindergarten students, 5.6 months for Grade 1 students, and 5.1 months for Grade 2 students. The number of months that students were served by the RLA program varied from less than one month to nine months. By May 10, 2010, near the close of the 2009–10 school year, most participants reported that RLA intervention programs had been in place for at least four months and were fully implemented across all participating grades (see Figure A1). When asked how the quality of implementation of the selected intervention program changed over time since teachers began participating in the RLA program, all 11 grantees indicated that the quality had improved for all grade levels served.

Table A6. Level of RLA Program Implementation by Grade, as of May 10, 2010

Level of Implementation	Number of Campuses: Grade K	Percentage of Campuses: Grade K	Number of Campuses: Grade 1	Percentage of Campuses: Grade 1	Number of Campuses: Grade 2	Percentage of Campuses: Grade 2
Fully Implemented	8	72.7	9	81.8	7	81.8
Mostly Implemented	0	0.0	1	9.1	1	9.1
Somewhat Implemented	2	18.2	1	9.1	2	18.2
Did Not Serve	1	9.1	0	0.0	1	9.1
Total # Campuses	10	--	11	--	10	--
Average Number of Months Served	**4.3**	**--**	**5.6**	**--**	**5.1**	**--**
Range of Number of Months Served	**(<1 to 8)**	**--**	**(<1 to 9)**	**--**	**(<1 to 9)**	**--**

Source: Data from 2009–10 RLA program End-of-Year Progress Report, Texas Education Agency

Figure A1. Level of RLA Program Implementation by Grade, as of May 10, 2010
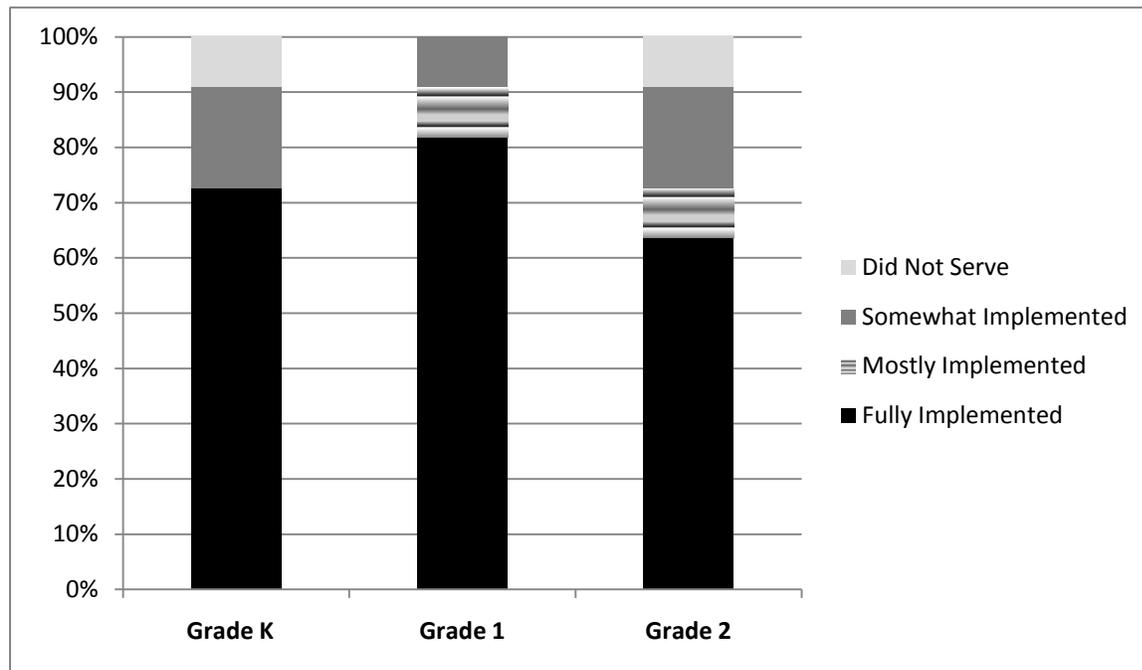
Source: Data from 2009–10 RLA program End-of-Year Progress Report, Texas Education Agency

Facilitators to RLA Program Implementation

Grant participants were asked to describe briefly any factors that facilitated the successful implementation of the RLA program on their respective campuses. As shown in Table A3, one grantee listed "None," while participants from the other ten campuses listed one or more factors that aided in the implementation of program requirements. These facilitators included non-material resources, such as training and support, as well as concrete items.

The most frequently listed facilitator was competent consultants or trainers, with over half of participants reporting training received from program-specific consultants, on-site staff members, or their local school district as beneficial when implementing the RLA program (n=6, 55%). One grantee stated that, "The [selected RLA program] training was excellent and was received enthusiastically by the teachers." Another indicated that "training sessions modeled by team members" were helpful for ensuring successful program implementation.

Just over one-third of participants (n=4, 36 %) reported program consistency and teacher and/or administrative support as program catalysts. Program consistency was defined as both "daily instructional schedule and implementation" within classrooms and "consistent use of the program" across classrooms. "One-hundred percent teacher and administrative participation" and support was also valued.

Two participants (18%) mentioned materials and supplies as important components in implementing the RLA program. One participant listed "[Selected RLA program] supplies on campus to ensure teachers had a hands-on opportunity during the training" as a facilitator. Another discussed the "small group" areas and materials made available to all participating teachers on his/her campus.

Table A3. Facilitators to RLA Program Implementation

RLA Program Facilitators	Number of Campuses that Reported[1]	Percentage of Campuses that Reported
Competent consultants or trainers:	6	54.5
Program staff	5	45.5
School members (teachers or administrators)	3	27.3
School district	1	9.1
Consistency in program application	4	36.4
Teacher and/or administrative support	4	36.4
Teaching materials	2	18.2
None	1	9.1

Source: 2009–10 RLA End-of-Year Progress Report
[1] Some campuses reported more than one facilitator to RLA program implementation, so percentages do not sum to 100.

Barriers to RLA Program Implementation

Participants were asked to describe any factors that impeded the successful implementation of the RLA program requirements (see Table A4). For each barrier, grantees were asked what was done to overcome its impact. Four participants (36%) noted that they did not encounter any barriers. Seven other grant recipients listed one or more factors that hindered the implementation of program requirements. These barriers included timing of training, program initiation, program delivery, technical difficulties, and language issues.

For those participants that listed barriers to facilitation, timing issues were the most commonly listed barriers, with 27% (*n*=3) of participants reporting that delays in program commencement, timing of training, and daily scheduling requirements served as barriers when implementing the RLA program. One grantee stated that, "[The] program was ideally designed for 45 minutes of scheduling, however, district requirements prevented us from using the entire 45 minutes." Others indicated that a "late start to the program" and training that took place after the school year began were program impediments. To overcome these barriers, campuses worked with the software providers to create shorter modules and used supplemental materials until their program supplies arrived.

Two participants (18%) reported that technical difficulties obstructed their implementation efforts. One representative stated that implementation of the program was delayed due to technical difficulties. Another noted that "people involved with [selected RLA program] at the

school level need quite a bit more of hands-on training to become totally familiar with the program." This participant added, "[G]eneral barriers include…constant computer freezing, multimedia components not supported, several programs reinstalled, and a couple [of] computers and programs [don't] work at all times." In order to overcome these barriers, participants noted that they worked closely with the program vendors and held team meetings while working through technical difficulties.

Finally, one participant mentioned the late delivery of program materials and another listed student-teacher language barriers as program impediments. To offset these difficulties, both participants stated that they used supplemental materials while either waiting for material to arrive or to serve students with particular language issues.

Table A4. Barriers to RLA Program Implementation

RLA Program Barriers	Number of Campuses that Reported[1]	Percentage of Campuses that Reported
None	4	36.4%
Timing issues	3	27.3%
Timing of program initiation	2	18.2%
Timing of training	1	9.1%
Daily time requirements	1	9.1%
Technical difficulties	2	18.2%
Difficulties setting up program	2	18.2%
Difficulties running program	1	9.1%
Late delivery of program materials	1	9.1%
Student-teacher language barriers	1	9.1%

Source: 2009–10 RLA End-of-Year Progress Report
[1] Some campuses reported more than one program barrier, so percentages do not sum to 100.

RLA Program Monitoring Strategies

RLA program participants were asked to describe how implementation of the selected RLA intervention program was monitored on their campus by grade level (see Table A5). Based on responses, monitoring strategies were identical across all participating grades. Classroom observation by campus administrators was the most frequently listed program monitoring method (n=5, 46%). Three participants (27%) mentioned on-site program coordinators. One participant noted that "[The] RLA Program Coordinator monitored each small group daily. She made sure each teacher/teacher assistant had necessary materials and was available for any questions they might have." Other campuses reported computer-based tracking systems (n=3, 27%), team meetings (n=2, 18%), and results from BOY, MOY, and EOY TPRI and Tejas LEE assessments (n=2, 18%).

Table A5. RLA Program Monitoring Strategies

RLA Program Monitoring Strategies	Number of Campuses that Reported[1]	Percentage of Campuses that Reported
Classroom observation	5	45.5
On-site program coordinator	3	27.3
Program-specific, computer-based tracker	3	27.3
Team meetings	2	18.2
TPRI and Tejas LEE benchmarks	2	18.2

Source: 2009–10 RLA End-of-Year Progress Report
[1] Some campuses reported more than one program monitoring method, so percentages do not sum to 100.

Evaluation of the Effects of RLA Intervention Programs: Changes in Percentage of Students Classified as "Developed" by Grade and Task

This section describes the changes in the percentage of students who achieved *Developed* status on either TPRI or Tejas LEE for specific reading concepts over the course of the 2009–10 school year. The outcomes are separated by assessment—either TPRI or Tejas LEE—and grade level. Although any improvements in the percentages of students earning *Developed* status cannot be directly attributable to RLA, the outcomes provide an indication of the patterns of change in RLA participants' reading and language development.

TPRI Outcomes

Students who were instructed in English were administered the TPRI at three points during the school year: BOY, MOY, and EOY. Tables A6, A7, and A8 present the results of these assessments by grade and task for all students who received supplemental reading or language acquisition instruction through the RLA program. Specifically, the tables identify the number and percentage of students who were classified as *Developed* at each administration period. The percentage of students is a more appropriate comparison than the number of students, since the number of students tested at each period shifted due to natural student mobility patterns, as well as TPRI and Tejas LEE assessment rules. Changes in the percentage of students who acquired this classification over the year are shown in the last column of each table. Screening tasks were not administered during MOY period and were only completed at EOY for Kindergarten and Grade 1 students; the outcomes of these tests were generally used to select the inventory tasks at the beginning of the year and then guide the assessments throughout the rest of the year.

Kindergarten

Table A6 shows the percentage of Kindergarten students in the RLA program who had mastered a particular reading concept, as indicated by *Developed* status on the TPRI, at each of the three administration periods. Across both screening tasks and inventory tasks, the percentage of students achieving *Developed* status increased from BOY to EOY. Within the inventory tasks, the largest increase was shown for *Phonemic Awareness: Deleting Final Sounds*, wherein 29% of students had mastered the concept at the beginning of the year, while 78% had mastered it by the end of the year; this represented in an increase of 49 percentage points. However, these results indicate that 22% of students still had not mastered this concept by the end of the year and may require further intensive reading and language instruction. While there is no comparison group to determine whether this outcome is standard based on student demographics, these results raise questions about the efficacy of RLA for aiding all students. Participants reported using the program for an average of less than six months. Due to the late start of the program on some campuses, these results may indicate that the program was not implemented for long enough to show consistently positive effects.

The smallest improvement was shown in *Phonemic Awareness: Blending Phonemes* (25 percentage points). However, during BOY administration period, the largest percentage (70%) of students achieved *Developed* status on this task, indicating that a large number of students were already proficient in this area. By the end of the year, 95% of students were classified as *Developed* in this skill, an increase of 25 percentage points. In general, each inventory task was mastered by at least 75% of participating Kindergarten students by EOY.

Grade 1

As with Kindergarten students, the percentage of RLA participants in Grade 1 earning *Developed* status increased across all screening and inventory tasks over the course of the year (see Table A7). By EOY, each inventory task had been mastered by at least 78% of Grade 1 students, with most concepts mastered by at least 95% of those in the program. Nearly 99% of students had become proficient with *Initial Consonant Substitution* by EOY, marking it as the task for which students were most likely to be classified as *Developed.* The largest change in percentage of *Developed* students was for *Deleting Initial Sound*, from 25% at BOY to 78% at EOY (an increase of 53 percentage points). Again, these figures indicate that 22% of students had not yet mastered the concept by the end of the year and would likely require additional instruction during the following school year in order to meet Grade 2 reading standards.

Grade 2

Participating students in Grade 2 were administered only one screening task and one Inventory task. The screening task (word reading) was given only during BOY period and was administered to determine which story the students would need to read for their story-based

scores. Most of the Grade 2 TPRI assessment focused on students' reading accuracy, fluency, and comprehension. This combination of assessments is the standard way that TPRI is used in Grade 2 and does not represent an adaptation of the tool for the RLA program. These outcomes are reviewed in the Results section, which focuses on assessments in these areas across all three grade levels. These results are separately presented since they are based on raw scores, rather than *Developed* or *Still Developing* statuses.

The sole inventory task assessed students' spelling skills. Sixty-four percent of participating students had developed this concept at the beginning of the year, compared to 92% at the end of the year, an improvement of 28 percentage points. (See Table A8.)

Table A6. TPRI, Grade K: Percentage of Students Classified as Developed by Task and Administration Period

TPRI Tasks [1]	Percentage of Students Achieving Developed Status, BOY	Number of Students Tested, BOY	Percentage of Students Achieving Developed Status, MOY[2]	Number of Students Tested, MOY[3]	Percentage of Students Achieving Developed Status, EOY[2]	Number of Students Tested, EOY[3]	Difference in Percentage of Students Achieving Developed Status from BOY to EOY
Screening Tasks:							
1. Graphophonemic Knowledge: Letter Sound	49.9	475	--	--	84.6	487	+34.7
2. Phonemic Awareness: Blending Onset-Rimes and Phonemes[4]	9.2	249	--	--	33.3	72	+24.1
Inventory Tasks:							
1. Phonemic Awareness: Rhyming	35.7	456	63.4	492	82.7	485	+47.0
2. Phonemic Awareness: Blending Word Parts	49.1	163	75.8	310	92.6	391	+43.5
3. Phonemic Awareness: Blending Phonemes	70.0	80	90.9	232	95.2	355	+25.2
4. Phonemic Awareness: Deleting Initial Sounds	37.5	56	73.0	211	82.6	327	+45.1
5. Phonemic Awareness: Deleting Final Sounds	28.6	21	57.8	154	77.6	259	+49.0
6. Graphophonemic Knowledge: Letter Name Identification	60.1	456	87.5	502	96.3	515	+36.2
7. Graphophonemic Knowledge: Letter to Sound Linking	57.3	274	87.5	432	94.6	480	+37.3

Source: Data from 2009–10 TPRI submitted via student uploads.

[1] Due to the screening process, students were not necessarily assessed on every task at every administration period. Numbers may vary by period.

[2] Once a student earned *Developed* status for a particular concept, the task was not administered in subsequent administration periods. For MOY administration period, the percentages reported in each column were based on the numbers of students who were classified as *Developed* during BOY or MOY administration periods. For EOY administration period, the percentages reported in each column were based on the numbers of students who were classified as *Developed* during BOY, MOY, or EOY administration periods.

[3] For MOY administration period, the number of students tested included: (1) the number of students who were classified as *Developed* at BOY or MOY and (2) the number of students who were still classified as *Still Developing* at MOY. For EOY administration period, the number of students tested includes: (1) the number of students who were classified as *Developed* at BOY, MOY, or EOY and (2) the number of students who were still classified as *Still Developing* at EOY.

[4] This screening task was only administered to students who were classified as *Still Developing* on Screening Task #1.

Table A7. TPRI, Grade 1: Percentage of Students Classified as Developed by Task and Administration Period

TPRI Tasks[1]	Percentage of Students Achieving Developed Status, BOY	Number of Students Tested, BOY	Percentage of Students Achieving Developed Status, MOY[2]	Number of Students Tested, MOY[3]	Percentage of Students Achieving Developed Status, EOY[2]	Number of Students Tested, EOY[3]	Difference in Percentage of Students Achieving Developed Status from BOY to EOY
Screening Tasks:							
1. Graphophonemic Knowledge: Letter Sound	77.4	491	--	--	--	--	--
2. Word Reading	30.5	383	--	--	67.5	477	+37.0
3. Phonemic Awareness: Blending Phonemes[5]	37.9	375	--	--	40.6	155	+2.7
Inventory Tasks:							
1. Phonemic Awareness: Blending Word Parts	70.1	452	93.7	492	98.4	496	+28.3
2. Phonemic Awareness: Blending Phonemes	73.5	317	91.4	451	96.8	472	+23.3
3. Phonemic Awareness: Deleting Initial Sounds	25.2	234	57.2	390	78.0	423	+52.8
4. Phonemic Awareness: Deleting Final Sounds	59.3	59	76.2	223	89.8	325	+30.5
5. Phonemic Awareness: Initial Consonant Substitution	88.3	452	96.7	508	98.5	521	+10.2
6. Graphophonemic Knowledge: Final Consonant Substitution	86.3	400	96.5	486	98.2	505	+11.9
7. Graphophonemic Knowledge: Middle Vowel Substitution	72.4	344	90.3	453	97.0	467	+24.6
8. Graphophonemic Knowledge: Initial Blending Substitution	46.6	249	80.2	394	91.4	428	+44.8
9. Graphophonemic Knowledge: Blends in Final Position	72.4	116	85.4	314	96.1	388	+23.7

Source: 2009–10 TPRI.

[1] Due to the screening process, students were not necessarily assessed on every task at every administration period. Numbers may vary by period.

[2] Once a student earned *Developed* status for a particular concept, the task was not administered in subsequent administration periods. For MOY administration period, the percentages reported in each column were based on the numbers of students who were classified as *Developed* during BOY or MOY administration periods. For EOY administration period, the percentages reported in each column were based on the numbers of students who were classified as *Developed* during BOY, MOY, or EOY administration periods.

[3] For MOY administration period, the number of students tested included: (1) the number of students who were classified as *Developed* at BOY or MOY and (2) the number of students who were still classified as *Still Developing* at MOY. For EOY administration period, the number of students tested includes: (1) the number of students who were classified as *Developed* at BOY, MOY, or EOY and (2) the number of students who were still classified as *Still Developing* at EOY.

[4] This screening task was only administered to students who were classified as *Developed* on Screening Task #1.

[5] This screening task was only administered to students who were classified as *Still Developing* on Screening Task #1 or Screening Task #2.

Table A8. TPRI, Grade 2: Percentage of Students Classified as Developed by Task and Administration Period

TPRI Tasks[1]	Percentage of Students Achieving Developed Status, BOY	Number of Students Tested, BOY	Percentage of Students Achieving Developed Status, MOY[2]	Number of Students Tested, MOY[3]	Percentage of Students Achieving Developed Status, EOY[2]	Number of Students Tested, EOY[3]	Difference in Percentage of Students Achieving Developed Status from BOY to EOY
Screening Tasks:							
1. Word Reading	55.7	379	--	--	--	--	--
Inventory Tasks:							
1. Graphophonemic Knowledge: Spelling	63.7	490	86.2	520	92.1	544	+28.4

Source: 2009–10 TPRI.

[1] Due to the screening process, students were not necessarily assessed on every task at every administration period. Numbers may vary by period.

[2] Once a student earned *Developed* status for a particular concept, the task was not administered in future administration periods. For MOY administration period, the percentages reported in each column were based on the numbers of students who were classified as *Developed* during BOY or MOY administration periods. For EOY administration period, the percentages reported in each column were based on the numbers of students who were classified as *Developed* during BOY, MOY, or EOY administration periods.

[3] For MOY administration period, the number of students tested included: (1) the number of students who were classified as *Developed* at BOY or MOY and (2) the number of students who were still classified as *Still Developing* at MOY. For EOY administration period, the number of students tested includes: (1) the number of students who were classified as *Developed* at BOY, MOY, or EOY and (2) the number of students who were still classified as *Still Developing* at EOY.

Comparison of TPRI Assessments across Grades K–2

In general, a greater percentage of students in Grade 1 than in Kindergarten achieved *Developed* status during the BOY administration period. Likewise, the average percentage of students who had developed specific reading skills by EOY was higher for students in Grade 1 than for those in Kindergarten. This pattern may have been a result of overlapping reading skills assessed, such as *Letter Sound* and *Blending Word Parts*. This suggests that students in Grade 1 may have retained reading or language lessons that they learned in Kindergarten. Similarly, students in both Grades 1 and 2 were tested on *Word Reading*, and the percentage of students in Grade 2 that were considered *Developed* during the screening process was higher than in Grade 1 (56% vs. 31%, respectively).

Although these results indicate an overall positive trend, it is unclear whether the outcomes are indicative of RLA's success or representative of students' natural reading and language development. Furthermore, the results on some assessments indicate the relatively large percentages of students—up to 22% in Grade 1—had not mastered particular concepts by EOY. If these students are advanced to the next grade, they will likely begin the following school year without the grade-appropriate set of reading and language skills.

Tejas LEE Outcomes

Students participating in RLA who received primary instruction in Spanish were typically administered the Tejas LEE instead of the TPRI. As with the TPRI, students were assessed at three points during the school year. Tables A9, A10, and A11 present the results of the Tejas LEE evaluations by grade and reading concept. Specifically, the tables identify the number of students who were classified as *Developed*—or had earned a score that indicated a particular reading skill had been mastered—at each administration period (BOY, MOY, and EOY). Changes in the percentage of students who acquired this classification from BOY period to EOY period are shown in the last column of each table. The Tejas LEE assessment does not include screening tasks and is based solely on inventory tasks.

Kindergarten

Table A9 shows the percentage of Kindergarten students in the RLA program who mastered specified reading concepts, as indicated by *Developed* status on the Tejas LEE, at each of the three administration periods. Across all seven inventory tasks, more than 50% of students improved from *Nivel Esperado* or *Nivel de Intervención* status at the beginning of the year to *Developed* status at the end of the year. The greatest improvement, based on the change in percentage of students, was shown for *Knowledge of Sounds*, with an increase of 66 percentage points. By EOY, *Blending Syllables* was the most commonly mastered task (97%), while the fewest students had become proficient in *Word Recognition* (69%). The low percentage of students who had mastered the Word Recognition concept indicates that about 30% of students would be entering Grade 1 without the reading or language knowledge required to meet grade-specific standards.

Grade 1

As shown in Table A10, the percentage of RLA program participants in Grade 1 earning *Developed* status increased across all tasks over the course of the year. By the end of the year, each Tejas LEE inventory task had been mastered by at least 89% of Grade 1 students. The largest percentage increase in students classified as *Developed* was in the blending and separation of sounds task, with 54% of students reaching *Developed* status at BOY and 91% at EOY, for an increase of 37 percentage points. *Identification of Initial Sounds* was the task most frequently mastered by EOY (99%).

Grade 2

Like Grade 2 students taking the TPRI, Grade 2 students who were administered the Tejas LEE were assessed on only one inventory task (see Table A11). Most of the Grade 2 Tejas LEE assessment focused on students' Spanish language reading accuracy, fluency, and comprehension. These outcomes are reviewed in the next Results section. The sole inventory task assessed students' dictation skills. While 29% of students had mastered this concept during BOY period, the percentage increased to 57% by the end of the year. While this was an improvement of 28 percentage points, it still indicates that over 40% of students would be progressing to Grade 3 without mastery of this skill. Furthermore, most of the change appears to have occurred by the middle of the year, with relatively few students achieving *Developed* status from MOY to EOY.

Comparison of Tejas LEE Assessments across Grades K–2

In general, a greater percentage of students in Grade 1 than in Kindergarten achieved *Developed* status during BOY administration period. Some of these tasks, such as knowledge of sounds, were assessed in both grades, which suggests that students in Grade 1 may be building on the previous year's lessons. Similarly, the average percentage of students who had earned *Developed* status across grade-level reading skills by the end of the year was higher for students in Grade 1 than for those in Kindergarten. Ultimately, however, by the end of Grade 2, there remained a significant group of students (40%) who were tested in Spanish and will be entering Grade 3 without the grade-appropriate reading skills.

Table A9. Tejas LEE, Grade K: Percentage of Students Classified as Desarrollado by Task and Administration Period

Tejas LEE Inventory Tasks	Percentage of Students Achieving Developed Status, BOY[1]	Number of Students Tested, BOY[2]	Percentage of Students Achieving Developed Status, MOY[1]	Number of Students Tested, MOY[2]	Percentage of Students Achieving Developed Status, EOY[1]	Number of Students Tested, EOY[2]	Difference in Percentage of Students Achieving Developed Status from BOY to EOY
1. *Conocimiento de la Letra Impresa* (Knowledge of the Printed Letter)	31.0	252	82.1	235	94.1	256	+63.1
2. *Identificación de las Letras* (Identification of Letters)	36.5	252	78.1	247	94.6	257	+58.1
3. *Conocimiento de los Sonidos* (Knowledge of Sounds)	28.2	252	73.0	241	93.8	256	+65.6
4. *Unión de las Sílabas* (Blending Syllables)	41.7	252	79.0	243	96.9	261	+55.2
5. *Segmentación de las Sílabas* (Separating Syllables)	40.1	252	81.2	239	94.5	256	+54.4
6. *Identificación del Sonido Inicial* (Identification of Initial Sounds)	41.3	252	81.6	245	93.3	255	+52.0
7. *Reconocimiento de las Palabras* (Word Recognition)	7.9	252	34.7	236	69.0	255	+61.1

Source: 2009–10 Tejas LEE.

[1] Once a student earned *Desarrollado* status for a particular concept, the task was not administered in future administration periods. For MOY administration period, the percentages reported in each column are based on the numbers of students who were classified as *Desarrollado* during BOY or MOY administration periods. For EOY administration period, the percentages reported in each column are based on the numbers of students who were classified as *Desarrollado* during BOY, MOY, or EOY administration periods.

[2] For MOY administration period, the number of students tested includes: (1) the number of students who were classified as *Desarrollado* at BOY or MOY and (2) the number of students who were still classified as *Nivel Esperado* or *Nivel de Intervención* at MOY. For EOY administration period, the number of students tested includes: (1) the number of students who were classified as *Desarrollado* at BOY, MOY, or EOY and (2) the number of students who were still classified as *Nivel Esperado* or *Nivel de Intervención* at EOY.

Table A10. Tejas LEE, Grade 1: Percentage of Students Classified as Desarrollado by Task and Administration Period

Tejas LEE Inventory Tasks	Percentage of Students Achieving Developed Status, BOY[1]	Number of Students Tested, BOY[2]	Percentage of Students Achieving Developed Status, MOY[2]	Number of Students Tested, MOY[3]	Percentage of Students Achieving Developed Status, EOY[2]	Number of Students Tested, EOY[3]	Difference in Percentage of Students Achieving Developed Status from BOY to EOY
1. *Conocimiento de los Sonidos* (Knowledge of Sounds)	68.8	263	90.2	265	98.1	258	+29.3
2. *Unión y Segmentación de las Sílabas* (Blending and Separation of Syllables)	77.9	263	94.8	268	97.4	269	+19.5
3. *Omisión de la Sílaba Inicial* (Deleting Initial Syllables)	52.7	205	74.5	247	89.2	251	+36.5
4. *Omisión de la Sílaba Final* (Deleting Final Syllables)	73.1	108	87.4	183	93.1	218	+20.0
5. *Identificación del Sonido Inicial* (Identification of Initial Sounds)	81.4	263	96.6	268	98.9	271	+17.5
6. *Unión y Segmentación de los Sonidos* (Blending and Separation of Sounds)	53.7	214	72.6	252	90.9	252	+37.2
7. *Omisión del Sonido Inicial* (Deleting Initial Sound)	71.3	115	90.7	182	92.1	227	+20.8
8. *Omisión del Sonido Final* (Deleting Final Sound)	80.5	82	93.9	165	97.6	209	+17.1

Source: 2009–10 Tejas LEE

[1] Due to the inventory task process, students were not necessarily assessed on every task at every administration period. Numbers may vary by period.

[2] Once a student earned *Desarrollado* status for a particular concept, the task was not administered in future administration periods. For MOY administration period, the percentages reported in each column are based on the numbers of students who were classified as *Desarrollado* during BOY or MOY administration periods. For EOY administration period, the percentages reported in each column are based on the numbers of students who were classified as *Desarrollado* during BOY, MOY, or EOY administration periods.

[3] For MOY administration period, the number of students tested includes: (1) the number of students who were classified as *Desarrollado* at BOY or MOY and (2) the number of students who were still classified as *Nivel Esperado* or *Nivel de Intervención* at MOY. For EOY administration period, the number of students tested includes: (1) the number of students who were classified as *Desarrollado* at BOY, MOY, or EOY and (2) the number of students who were still classified as *Nivel Esperado* or *Nivel de Intervención* at EOY.

Table A11. Tejas LEE, Grade 2: Percentage of Students Classified as Desarrollado by Task and Administration Period [1]

Tejas LEE Inventory Tasks	Percentage of Students Achieving Developed Status, BOY[1]	Number of Students Tested, BOY[2]	Percentage of Students Achieving Developed Status, MOY[1]	Number of Students Tested, MOY[2]	Percentage of Students Achieving Developed Status, EOY[1]	Number of Students Tested, EOY[2]	Difference in Percentage of Students Achieving Developed Status from BOY to EOY
1. *Dictado*: Dictation	28.6	199	53.0	202	56.5	207	+27.9

Source: 2009–10 Tejas LEE

[1] Once a student earned *Desarrollado* status for a particular concept, the task was not administered in future administration periods. For MOY administration period, the percentages reported in each column are based on the numbers of students who were classified as *Desarrollado* during BOY or MOY administration periods. For EOY administration period, the percentages reported in each column are based on the numbers of students who were classified as *Desarrollado* during BOY, MOY, or EOY administration periods.

[2] For MOY administration period, the number of students tested includes: (1) the number of students who were classified as *Desarrollado* at BOY or MOY and (2) the number of students who were still classified as *Nivel Esperado* or *Nivel de Intervención* at MOY. For EOY administration period, the number of students tested includes: (1) the number of students who were classified as *Desarrollado* at BOY, MOY, or EOY and (2) the number of students who were still classified as *Nivel Esperado* or *Nivel de Intervención* at EOY.

Evaluation of the Effects of RLA Intervention Programs: Changes in Students' Listening and Reading Comprehension Scores

In addition to being tested on particular reading concepts, which were scored in terms of skill mastery, students were tested on reading and listening comprehension skills. These outcomes are presented separately from the previous set of student assessments because they are based on raw scores rather than *Developed* or *Still Developing* statuses. The skills on which students were tested varied by grade and tended to include a greater number of assessments as grade level increased. The tables below present the average scores reported for each assessment, separated by assessment—TPRI or Tejas LEE—and grade level. The last column of each table shows the change in students' scores. For all tasks except *Story: Number of Errors*, a positive number indicates improvement. For the aforementioned concept, the number of errors that a student made while reading were counted. For these results, a negative number indicates that the average number of reading or listening errors decreased over the year, which suggests improvement.

TPRI Outcomes

Table A12 shows changes in students' English language reading and listening comprehension scores for students in Grades K–2 from BOY to EOY. The range of possible scores is shown for each task. For *Story: Number of Errors* and *Story: Fluency* assessments, there is not a specified range of scores.[46] *Fluency* refers to the number of correct words read per minute. Across all reading and comprehension tasks and all grades, reading and listening comprehension scores either improved or remained the same. For participating Kindergarten students, *Listening Comprehension: Implicit* scores did not change. Explicit comprehension improved across all grades. In particular, the percentage of Grades 1–2 students who mastered reading comprehension concepts—including implicit and explicit understanding, as well as vocabulary recognition—improved from BOY to EOY. Likewise, the number of errors decreased while students' reading fluency increased.

Tejas LEE Outcomes

As shown in Table A13, students' reading and listening comprehension scores improved across all grade levels from BOY to EOY. The range of possible scores is shown for each task. As with the TPRI, there was no specified range for the *Story: Number of Errors* and *Story: Fluency* assessments. Grades K–2 students who participated in RLA showed improvements over the year in the all tasks. Furthermore, for students in Grades 1 and 2, the average number of errors spoken when reading a short story in Spanish decreased from BOY to EOY.

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[46] *Story: Number of Errors* is the actual number of errors made by the student while reading a short story. *Story: Fluency* is measured as follows: ((# Words in Story-Errors)/Total # of Seconds Story Read) * 60

Summary of TPRI and Tejas LEE Outcomes Across Grade Levels

Results from TPRI and Tejas LEE reading and comprehension assessments indicate that students' fluency increased from Grade 1 to Grade 2, while the average number of errors while reading tended to increase. The increase in the average number of errors from the Grade 1 assessments to the Grade 2 assessments may reflect the increasing difficulty of the assessments from one grade to the next. Across all grades, the average scores on each assessment tended to improve from BOY to EOY, suggesting students were developing the appropriate reading or language skills.

Table A12. TPRI: Changes in Students' Reading and Comprehension Scores by Grade, Task, and Administration Period

Reading and Comprehension Tasks by Grade (Scoring Range)[1]	Average Score, BOY	Number of Students Tested, BOY	Average Score, MOY	Number of Students Tested, MOY	Average Score, EOY	Number of Students Tested, EOY	Difference in Average Score from BOY to EOY
Kindergarten							
1. Listening Comprehension: Explicit (0–3)	1.8	475	2.2	496	2.1	487	+0.3
2. Listening Comprehension: Implicit (0–2)	1.3	475	1.7	496	1.3	487	0.0
Grade 1							
1. Story: Number of Errors	5.5	178	4.4	284	4.0	296	-1.5
2. Story: Fluency (correct words read per minute)	38.8	225	44.7	399	56.6	432	+17.8
3. Reading Comprehension: Explicit (0–3)	2.0	480	2.3	485	2.7	476	+0.7
4. Reading Comprehension: Implicit (0–3)	1.5	480	2.1	485	2.4	476	+0.9
5. Reading Comprehension: Vocabulary (0–2)	1.0	225	1.2	399	1.4	432	+0.4
Grade 2							
1. Story: Number of Errors	9.9	353	9.3	348	8.4	364	-1.5
2. Story: Fluency (correct words read per minute)	46.4	469	54.4	484	63.7	499	+17.3
3. Reading Comprehension: Explicit (0–3)	2.0	496	2.3	496	2.5	506	+0.5
4. Reading Comprehension: Implicit (0–3)	1.8	496	2.0	496	2.1	506	+0.3
5. Reading Comprehension: Vocabulary (0–2)	1.0	469	1.1	484	1.1	499	+0.1

Source: 2009–10 TPRI.

[1] Due to the screening process, students were not necessarily assessed on every task at every administration period. Numbers may vary by period.

Table A13. Tejas LEE: Changes in Students' Reading and Comprehension Scores by Grade, Task, and Administration Period

Reading and Comprehension Tasks by Grade (Scoring Range)[1]	Average Score, BOY	Number Tested, BOY	Average Score, MOY	Number Tested, MOY	Average Score, EOY	Number Tested, EOY	Difference in Average Score from BOY to EOY
Kindergarten							
1. Listening Comprehension: Explicit (0–4)	2.1	252	2.3	232	3.3	251	+0.8
2. Listening Comprehension: Implicit (0–2)	0.8	252	0.7	232	1.2	251	+0.4
Grade 1							
1. Story: Number of Errors	4.5	150	3.9	194	2.8	196	-1.7
2. Story: Fluency (correct words read per minute)	27.2	152	38.6	212	54.2	215	+27.0
3. Reading Comprehension: Explicit (0–4)	2.5	263	3.2	256	3.7	234	+1.2
4. Reading Comprehension: Implicit (0–2)	0.7	263	1.1	256	1.2	234	+0.5
Grade 2							
1. Story: Number of Errors	7.5	175	4.9	175	4.5	186	-3.0
2. Story: Fluency (correct words read per minute)	45.3	175	57.4	186	72.3	196	+27.0
3. Reading Comprehension: Explicit (0–4)	3.0	194	3.2	197	3.5	201	+0.5
4. Reading Comprehension: Implicit (0–2)	1.4	194	1.5	197	1.6	201	+0.2

Source: 2009–10 Tejas LEE.

[1] Due to the screening process, students were not necessarily assessed on every task at every administration period. Numbers may vary by period.

Summary of Findings

Although grantees participated in RLA for an average of only four to six months, representatives from all eleven campuses reported that the quality of implementation improved over the year for all grades served. Grantees attributed students' improved TPRI and Tejas LEE scores over the course of the year to RLA. Across all grades, the percentage of students who mastered English- or Spanish-language reading concepts increased from the beginning to the end of the year. However, there was no similar set of students to which the RLA students' outcomes could be compared. Since TPRI and Tejas LEE are based on developmental measures, it is not possible to isolate the potential effects of RLA from the effects of normal reading and language development and regular classroom instruction.

For nearly every inventory task, at least 75% of students had mastered the concept by the end of the year. Also, with the exception of one listening comprehension concept on the Kindergarten TPRI assessment, the average reading and listening comprehension scores increased across administration periods for students in all grades on both the TPRI and Tejas LEE. Evidence of cumulative learning was evident when comparing tasks that were assessed in two or more grades. For example, reading fluency was evaluated in Grades 1 and 2 on both the TPRI and Tejas LEE. On both tests, greater percentages of students at BOY were classified as proficient on that task in Grade 2 than in Grade 1. This pattern was apparent in other tasks, such as *Word Reading* or *Knowledge of Sounds* that were administered to more than one grade level. As previously stated, the general improvements in skills cannot be directly attributed to the supplemental instruction that students may have received via intensive reading or language acquisition programs, but the results indicate that students who were part of the RLA program showed definite improvements in the content area in which they were instructed.

It should be noted that although the percentage of students who had mastered each reading or language concept increased for all grade levels across the school year, the outcomes indicated that some students—as many as 30%—were still struggling with reading or language concepts at the end of the year. It is likely that these students will require additional services or instruction in order to acquire and maintain grade-appropriate reading skills. Given that the RLA program was implemented for an average of five to six months on each participating campus, the full effects of the program may not be apparent after such a limited implementation time. If the program were continuously implemented with struggling students as they progressed from Grades K–2, the percentage of students who had developed each reading or language task at BOY and EOY might be considerably higher than shown in this set of results.

In general, teachers and on-site coordinators expressed enthusiasm for the RLA program and considered it a success on their respective campuses. They cited support and training from program staff, administrators, and teachers as important factors in their programs' successful implementation. Participants reported delayed implementation and technical difficulties as two of the more common barriers to successful implementation, but nearly every listed impediment was also accompanied by a successful strategy that was used to overcome it. If campuses were

provided the opportunity to use intensive reading or language acquisition programs for an entire school year, with reduced technical difficulties but with ongoing support, there may be greater improvements in students' TPRI and Tejas LEE assessments. A clear comparison group would be necessary to evaluate this effectively.

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Appendix B – Student Success Initiative Grants

Introduction

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) conducted the evaluation of the Student Success Initiative Grants (SSIG) as part of the overall assessment of SSI (Rider 69, General Appropriations Act (GAA), Article III, 81st Texas Legislature). The purpose of the SSIG evaluation was to determine its effectiveness during the 2009–10 school year. To that end, this SSIG evaluation report focuses on SSIG funded activities on student reading and language outcomes, PD opportunities, and program expenditures.

Legislative and Programmatic History

Created by the 76th Texas Legislature in 1999 and modified by the 81st Texas Legislature in 2009, the purpose of the Student Success Initiative (SSI) is to offer a system of academic support programs to help ensure that every student in Texas performs on grade level in reading and mathematics. Specifically, SSI programs are designed to address the grade advancement guidelines adopted by the Texas Legislature in 1999 and most recently revised in 2009 by House Bill 3 (81st Texas Legislature).

The updated directive tied grade promotion to performance on state-mandated assessments in reading and mathematics at Grades 5 and 8.[47] As specified by these requirements, a student in these grades may advance to the next grade level only by passing these tests or by unanimous decision of his or her grade placement committee that the student is likely to perform at grade level after additional instruction. A student who does not meet Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS)-Math or TAKS-Reading passing standards and who is promoted from Grade 5 or Grade 8 to the next grade level must complete accelerated instruction before placement in the next grade level. A student in Grade 5 or Grade 8 who fails to complete required accelerated instruction may not be promoted.

In the 2009–10 school year the Accelerated Reading Instruction/Accelerated Math Instruction (ARI/AMI) program, the mechanism by which TEA had allocated most of the SSI funding to school districts over the past decade, transitioned into the SSIG program.[48] During the 2009–10 school year, SSIG provided transitional financial assistance to Texas public schools districts and open-enrollment charters for post-ARI/AMI funding to provide interventions for struggling students in Grades K–12 during the 2009–10 and 2010–11 school years.

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[47] The SSI grade advancement requirements were modified by the 81st Texas Legislature in 2009. Previously, meeting the TAKS-Reading passing standard in Grade 3 was associated with promotion to Grade 4.
[48] ARI/AMI grant funding was provided from 1999-2000 to 2008-09 (school years). For an evaluation related to ARI/AMI funding, please see The Student Success Initiative evaluation report (2009), available at http://www.tea.state.tx.us/index4.aspx?id=2926&menu_id=949.

Purpose and Eligibility Requirements of the Student Success Initiative Grants

SSIG provided direct financial assistance to Texas public school districts and open-enrollment charter schools to meet SSI mandates through programs that provide intensive, targeted interventions for students in Grades K–12 who have been identified as at risk for academic difficulties in the core content areas (per Texas Education Code (TEC) §28.006(g) and §28.0211(a-1)).

The goal of SSIG was to ensure that all students receive the instruction and support they need to be academically successful in reading and mathematics. This effort depends greatly on schools, parents, and community members working in partnership to meet individual student needs. The purposes of SSIG, which supports SSI goals, are as follows:

(1) To provide financial assistance to Texas public school districts and open-enrollment charters as they meet the accelerated instruction requirements of the TEC §28.006(g);[49] and

(2) To provide financial assistance to Texas public school districts and open-enrollment charters as they meet accelerated instruction requirements mandated by TEC §28.0211(a-1).[50]

For the 2009–10 school year, local education agencies (LEAs) [51] that reported students not meeting passing standards for the first administration of the 2009 TAKS-Reading in Grade 3 or TAKS-Math in Grade 5 were eligible to apply for these grants. TEA selected 1,074 eligible LEAs to participate in SSIG.

Funding of the Student Success Initiative Grants

Funding for SSIG was appropriated through Rider 42 funds (GAA, Article III, 81st Texas Legislature) that were not distributed to other SSI programs. For the 2010–11 biennium, $152 million was appropriated for SSI and from that appropriation funding in the amount of $44.2

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[49] A school district shall notify the parent or guardian of each student in kindergarten or first or second grade who is determined, on the basis of reading instrument results, to be at risk for dyslexia or other reading difficulties. The district shall implement an accelerated reading instruction program that provides reading instruction that addresses reading deficiencies to those students and shall determine the form, content, and timing of that program. The admission, review, and dismissal committee of a student who participates in a district's special education program under Subchapter B, Chapter 29, and who does not perform satisfactorily on a reading instrument under this section shall determine the manner in which the student will participate in an accelerated reading instruction program under this subsection.

[50] A school district shall provide each student who fails to perform satisfactorily as determined by the commissioner under section 39.0241(a) on an end-of-course assessment instrument with accelerated instruction in the subject assessed by the assessment instrument.

[51] Throughout this section, all references to local educational agencies include public school districts and open-enrollment charter schools

million was allocated to support struggling students in Grades K-12 in the 2009-10 school year.[52]

SSIG recipients were funded through non-competitive grants awarded on a formula basis. For the 2009–10 school year, districts were awarded approximately $465 for each Grade 3 student who did not meet the passing standard on the first administration of the TAKS-Reading assessment in the 2008-09 school year, and the same amount for each Grade 5 student who did not meet the passing standard on the first administration of the TAKS-Math assessment in the 2008–09 school year. Districts could use funds to provide interventions to students in Grades K–12 who did not meet TAKS passing standards, who were at risk of not meeting TAKS passing standards, and those who previously had not met TAKS passing standards but were promoted to the next grade based on other factors. Funding could also be used to pay for accelerated instruction in any core content area, including reading, mathematics, science, and social studies. In order to identify students who were at risk of not meeting grade-level standards, school personnel were required to use diagnostic instruments.

Although ARI/AMI had allowed districts to use funding to provide intensive one-on-one, small group, or whole class instruction to students struggling with reading or math, grantees were limited to using these funds for Grades kindergarten–8 in the areas of math and reading. Historically, school districts used the vast majority of their ARI/AMI funding on four primary budget items (supplemental curriculum, teacher pay, tutor pay, and other supplies and materials) and focused their efforts on small group instruction. SSIG provided the districts with much more flexibility in how funds could be used. Grantees had the option of using the funds in the areas that they saw the greatest need including the four core content areas of math, reading, science and social studies across Grades kindergarten–12. Additionally, SSIG grantees were provided expanded access to PD opportunities through the Rider 42 PD Academies offered during the summer of 2010. Although districts could choose how to use SSIG funds, TEA's 2009–10 Application Guidelines suggested the following key practices:

- **Uninterrupted/extended blocks of instructional time**: Provide instruction that allows the teacher and student(s) adequate time to engage in focused, comprehensive instruction and learning. This may have included instruction beyond traditional school hours such as extended day or extended year programs.

- **Effective professional development (PD) and teacher support**: Promote PD aligned to the goals of the program and designed to improve instructional effectiveness of teachers and school leaders who work with struggling students. Teachers who provide instruction beyond traditional school hours or who work primarily with struggling students in intensive interventions may have been further supported by stipends provided through grant funds.

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[52] Additional funds for SSIG were awarded during 2010-11 school year, but are beyond the scope of this evaluation report.

- **Instructional coach/coaching model**: Provide opportunities for teachers and school leaders to participate in coaching sessions (e.g., classroom observations, peer coaching, professional learning communities (PLC)). This may have included hiring or designating an instructional coach/content mentor to provide additional support for teachers who work with struggling students.

- **Research-based interventions:** Implement interventions that are scientifically research-based and supported by evidence that they are effective in improving the academic skills of struggling students.

The key practices listed above were intended to serve as recommendations and were not meant to limit an LEA's decisions regarding use of funds.

Evaluation of the Student Success Initiative Grants

SSIG Evaluation activities are guided by the following research questions:

(1) To what extent did SSIG serve students struggling in core content areas, including reading, mathematics, science, and social studies, with SSIG funds?
(2) What types of PD opportunities did grantees pursue, and what was the level of participation?
(3) How did outcomes on the Texas Primary Reading Inventory (TPRI), an early reading and language intervention assessment tool, change over the year?
(4) How were SSIG funds used by grantees to improve student achievement in core content areas, including reading, mathematics, science, and social studies?

Data Sources

As part of the 2009-10 grant requirements, grantee campuses were expected to submit by September 31, 2010 a completed SSI Consolidated Report, which included the number of students in the district, the number of students served by grade level and content area, district-level PD participation, and grantee expenditure reports. Data were submitted from the participating districts to TEA through TEA's eGrants system, a web application used to transmit securely information. Data for the evaluation were downloaded on November 7, 2010, and include complete Consolidated Reports from 996 districts. This represents 93% of the 1,074 districts that were selected to receive grants.

Data Limitations

Data for this evaluation were limited, as the SSI Consolidated Report for 2009–10 did not permit the identification of program participants' TAKS scores. SSIG funds were awarded to districts in

January 2010, giving grantees a relatively limited time to pursue SSIG objectives.[53] For this reason, districts were not required to submit 2009–10 TAKS scores. Districts that receive SSIG in 2010–11 will be required to submit TAKS results.

Evaluation Strategy

In order to evaluate the SSIG program, TEA first identified the number of students served through SSIG funds, and then summarized (1) how funds were used to pursue SSI objectives, (2) district-level PD participation, and (3) students' early reading and language assessment outcomes

Results

To address each of the research objectives, the information reported in the grantees' Consolidated Reports was summarized to indicate general trends. This section presents the number of students identified and served through SSIG funds, describes the extent to which participants completed PD programs and spent grant funds, and illustrates the impact the program had on struggling students' improvements in one of the core content areas.

Students Identified and Served through SSIG Funds

During the 2009–10 school year, grantees reported that over 779,000 students in Grades K–12 were served with SSIG funds (see Table B1).[54] This represents approximately 18% of all students in participating districts who submitted a SSI Consolidated Report. During the 2009–10 school year, SSI requires students to pass TAKS-Reading and TAKS-Math tests in Grades 5 and 8 to be promoted to the next grade. Until 2008–09, students in Grade 3 were also required to pass TAKS-Reading tests in order to advance to Grade 4. Given this, it is not surprising that districts appear to be targeting students in those three grades. As shown in Table B1, students in Grades 3, 5, and 8 had the highest levels of participation, with 28%, 31%, and 29%, respectively, of students in these grades served with SSIG funds.

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[53] Prior to the grant award dates, grantees were informed of the level of funding they should expect to receive. While some grantees may have spent funds—and therefore begun pursuing SSI objectives—prior to January 2010, others may have waited until they received the funds.

[54] Although 1,074 districts were selected to receive SSIG funds, only 996 submitted a valid SSI Consolidated Report. For this reason, the figures presented in all tables do not reflect data from all grantees. Throughout this section—unless otherwise specified—the terms "participating districts" and "participating grantees" refer to grant recipients who submitted SSI Consolidated Reports.

Table B1. District-Level Data by Grade for SSIG Program Participants

Grade Level	Total Student Enrollment	Number of Students Served with SSIG Funds	Percentage of Students in Grade Served with SSIG Funds
K	353,633	56,815	16%
1	367,409	67,535	18%
2	358,925	68,184	19%
3	358,221	101,599	28%
4	353,200	95,371	27%
5	346,863	107,536	31%
6	336,484	73,007	22%
7	335,742	72,065	21%
8	331,061	95,750	29%
9	370,561	13,957	4%
10	317,141	11,360	4%
11	290,943	11,275	4%
12	274,300	4,957	2%
Total	4,394,483	779,411	18%

Source: eGrants Database, SSI Consolidated Report, 2009–10, TEA
n=996 districts

Uses of SSIG Funds

Grantees had discretion to determine how SSIG-funded services were used and could coordinate the allocation of funding in the manner they chose. SSIG funded expenditures were those that directly addressed the needs of the identified students, usually in one of the following categories: extended hours, additional personnel, instructional materials for direct instruction, or targeted PD. This section provides an overview of how grantees utilized SSIG funds within specified budget categories (e.g., payroll, supplies and materials).

Figure B1 shows the distribution of SSIG expenses by primary budget item category for the 2009–10 school year. Of the $38.6 million reported on grantee expenditure reports submitted to TEA prior to November 7, 2010, over 90% of funds were used to support payroll or supplies and materials.[55] The payroll category included payroll costs for teachers and support staff under contract with the district who provided services before, during, or after school; who served as mentors/coaches for other teachers; who provided additional services on Saturdays or during

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[55] Since some grantees did not submit SSI Consolidated Reports, the actual expenditures may have been higher than the figure reported in this appendix.

the summer; and/or who were assigned additional duties as a result of the SSIG program. The supplies and materials category included funds used to purchase instructional programs and/or materials used for the SSIG program.

The largest percentage of funds—approximately 61%—were used for payroll purposes, while supplies and materials comprised about 31% of total expenses. Professional and contracted services (4%), other operating costs (3%), and capital outlay (2%) each made up less than 5% of expenses. PD training was included under professional and contracted services.

Figure B1: Distribution of District-Level SSIG Program Expenditures
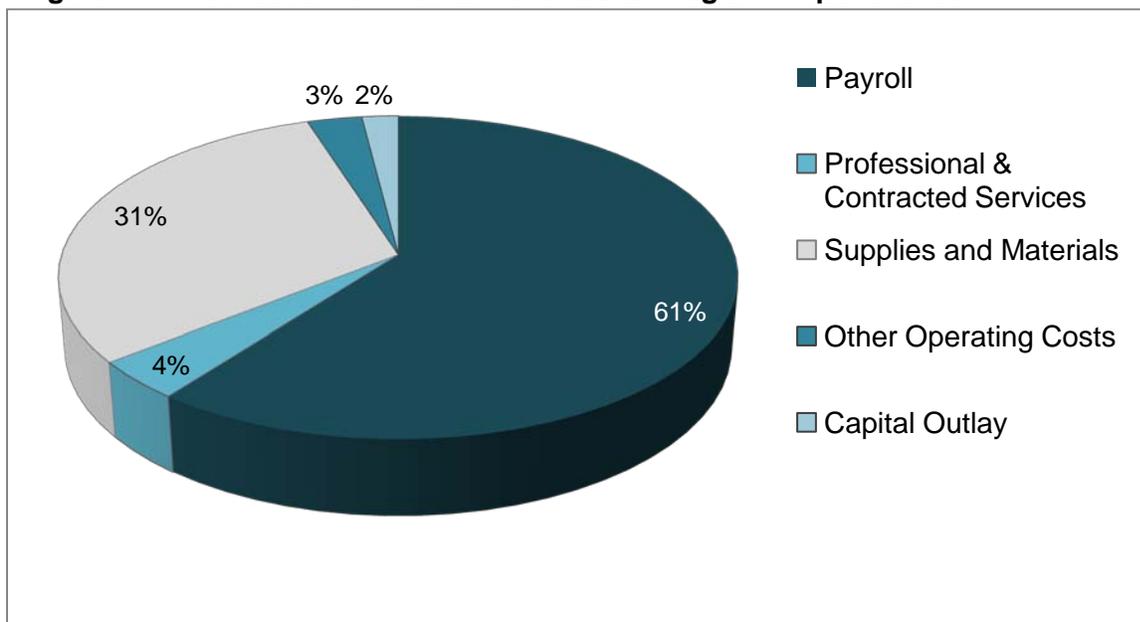
Source: eGrants Database, SSI Consolidated Report, 2009–10, Texas Education Agency

Table B2 provides a more detailed breakdown of district-level SSIG program expenditures by budget category, including dollar amount and percentage of total SSIG program expenditures, as well as the percentage of grantees who reported expenses in each category. This table summarizes the district-level expenditures reported by grantees. The figures in the table are based on complete SSI Consolidated Reports, which included expenditures that were submitted prior to November 7, 2010; these figures do not include all grant recipients' expenditures. During the 2009–10 school year, 1,074 districts and 3,076 campuses were awarded SSIG funds; 996 districts reported expenditures. For those that reported how funds were used, campus-level expenditures, which are included in district-level budgets, summed to approximately $20.6 million, or 53% of the overall budget.

Within the payroll category, teacher pay comprised 30% of the overall district-level budget. This was the largest expense, at approximately $11.5 million. Tutor pay was the second largest expense, making up 20% of the budget and totaling about $7.9 million. At $6 million, supplemental instructional programs made up 15% of the total budget and were the third largest

expense. Other supplies and materials totaled about $5 million or 13% of the budget. With the exception of other payroll costs ($2.8 million, 7%), all other expenses amounted to less than 5% of the overall budget.

Table B2. District- and Campus-Level Expenditures for 2009–10 [1]

District Level Expenditures (*n*=996)	Dollar Amount	% of Total Expenditures	% of Grantees Reporting
Payroll			
Teacher Pay	11,447,389	30%	46%
Tutor Pay	7,867,286	20%	28%
Substitute Teacher Pay	700,544	2%	8%
Classroom Aide	578,802	2%	9%
Other Payroll Costs	2,782,245	7%	18%
Subtotal	23,376,266	61%	68%
Professional and Contracted Services			
Professional Development Training	327,215	1%	7%
Consultants	418,947	1%	5%
Other Professional and Contracted Services	657,700	2%	8%
Subtotal	1,403,862	4%	15%
Supplies and Materials			
Supplemental Instructional Programs	5,984,939	15%	39%
Additional Assessment Materials	1,075,272	3%	11%
Other Supplies and Materials	4,927,677	13%	34%
Subtotal	1,1987,888	31%	62%
Other Operating Costs			
Stipends	37,906	<1%	1%
Before/After Hours Tutorials	307,913	1%	4%
Summer School	519,778	1%	6%
Other Operating Costs	329,324	1%	9%
Subtotal	1,194,921	3%	16%
Capital Outlay			
Computer/Equipment	670,712	2%	2%
Subtotal	670,712	2%	2%
District-Level Expenditures: Total			
Number of Districts Awarded SSIG Funds	1,074	--	
Total Amount of SSIG Funds Expended	38,633,649	100%	
Total Amount of SSIG Funds Allocated	42,437,629	--	
Campus-Level Expenditures: Total			
Number of Campuses Receiving SSIG Funds	3,076	--	
Total Campus SSIG Funds Spent	20,578,219	53%	

Source: eGrants Database, SSI Consolidated Report, 2009–10, Texas Education Agency
[1] The data in this table are based on SSIG recipients who reported expenditures, by type of expense.

As shown in Table B2, payroll and "supplies and materials" were the two areas in which the largest percentages of grantees reported using SSIG funds. Over two-thirds (68%) of grantees used SSI grants for payroll purposes, with approximately 46% of grantees indicating that funds were used for teacher pay. About 28% of grantees reported using funds for tutor pay. Likewise, about 62% of grantees reported using funds to acquire supplies and materials, with 39%

purchasing supplemental instructional programs. About 34% of grantees purchased other supplies and materials using grant funds. Fewer grantees used funds to pursue professional and contracted services (15%) or to cover other operating costs (16%). Only about 2% of grantees used SSIG funds for computers or equipment.

Participation in State-Level Professional Development Programs

As part of Rider 42 funding, 14 state-level PD programs were offered at no cost to participants—with some programs, such as Texas Adolescent Literacy Academies (TALA), offering stipends—during Summer 2010 (see Table B3 for list). Although most of these trainings were not funded by SSIG, grantees were asked to indicate whether the district had any personnel (i.e., teachers, administrators, or other personnel) who participated in each of the 14 PD programs during the 2009–10 school year. If personnel within a district completed PD trainings other than these 14 programs, grantees were asked to enter separately the name of the training, as well as a brief description. Nearly half the districts (43%) indicated that teachers or administrators had completed at least one other PD program that was not on the list. Some districts listed more than one other program, but for the purposes of this report, such districts were only counted once. Table B3 presents the number and percentage of districts with SSIG participants who participated in PD programs. Note that the figures reported in this table do not reflect the actual number of teachers or administrators who attended PD programs.

Table B3. District Attendance at State-Level PD Programs

State-Level PD Program	Number of Participating Districts with Staff that Attended PD[a]	% of Responding Districts with Participating Staff (n=996)[b]
New Science Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) K–12	747	75%
English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS) for Mathematics K–12	738	74%
English I and II End-of-Course Success Academy	596	60%
English Language Arts (ELA)/Reading TEKS K–12	533	54%
Science Academies Grades 5–8	513	52%
Algebra I End-of-Course Success Academy	511	51%
Biology End-of-Course Success Academy	504	51%
Math Academies Grades 5–6	428	43%
Spanish Language Arts/Reading TEKS K–6	410	41%
ELPS for Social Studies K–12	389	39%
ELPS for Science K–12	353	35%
Texas Adolescent Literacy Academies Grades 6–8	314	32%
ELPS for ELA K–12	306	31%
Mathematics Academies Grades 7–8	212	21%
Other [c]	427	43%

Source: eGrants Database, SSI Consolidated Report, 2009–10, Texas Education Agency
[a] Districts indicated yes or no that any staff attended the given PD, but did not report number of attendees.
[b] Although 1,074 districts received SSIG funds, only 996 submitted SSI Consolidated Reports.
[c] This figure represents the number of districts who reported one or more "other" PD programs, not the total number of "Other" programs listed on the SSI Consolidated Report.

The New Science TEKS K–12 PD (75%) and the English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS) for Mathematics K–12 PD (74%) were the PD trainings to which the greatest percentage of SSIG districts sent personnel during the 2009–10 school year. The Texas Adolescent Literacy Academies Grades 6–8 PD (32%), ELPS for ELA K–12 PD (31%) and Mathematics Academies Grades 7–8 PD (21%) were attended by personnel from the least percentage of SSIG districts during the 2009–10 school year.

TPRI Outcomes

Although performance on TAKS is the primary outcome of interest related to SSIG, TEA also collected data from participating districts regarding specific reading diagnostic assessments.[56] Districts use various reading assessment tools across grades and even across campuses, but there is greater uniformity in the assessment tools administered in early grades (i.e., Grades K–2). An examination of student performance on these assessment tools in Grades K–2 may give some indication of SSIG program effectiveness.

For 2009–10, grantees who served students in Grades K–2 were asked to report students' performance on the TPRI.[57,58] The TPRI begins with a screening process that is designed to determine if students have mastered essential reading concept relevant to their grade level. Those who meet the criteria are identified as "developed," while students who are found to have difficulty with specific reading concepts are classified as "still developing." Those students who are deemed "still developing" are inventoried at greater depth in the areas in which they are found to be struggling; these students may have been recipients of accelerated reading instruction provided by SSIG.

Grantees that used the TPRI were asked to report the following on the CRI, for both the beginning of year and end of year: (1) number of students assessed with the tool, (2) number of students considered "developed" according to screening, and (3) number of students meeting a variety of important reading concepts.[59] Because TPRI is a diagnostic screening tool regularly used in classrooms, these data represent all students who were tested in reading, not just those served through the SSIG program. Table B4 shows the change in the number and percentage of students identified as developed from the beginning of the year to the end of the year.

Compared with the total number of students in Grades K–2 in each district (see Table B1), the figures in Table B4 indicate that not all students were assessed with TPRI. Specifically, about 55% of students in Grade K, 56% of students in Grade 1, and 57% of students in Grade 2 were

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[56] In order to receive SSIG funds, districts were required to administer reading evaluations. TEA did not ask grantees to provide outcomes for all reading assessments; only certain outcomes were requested. As discussed in the Data and Methods section, grantees were not asked to submit TAKS outcomes due to the late distribution of grant awards.
[57] Not all participating LEAs served students in Grades K-2.
[58] Data were not collected from grantees regarding students' beginning-of-year and end-of-year Spanish-language reading performances. In order to assess fully the potential impact of SSI grants on all participating students, it is recommended that future evaluations include this information.
[59] It is possible for students to be classified as "developed" during screening, but "still developing" on specific reading tasks.

assessed with this tool. Some districts may have selected to administer the TPRI only to those students about whom they had academic concerns. Additionally, across all grades, the number of students who were classified as "still developing" at the beginning of the year exceeded the number of students that districts reported serving using SSIG funds (see Table B1). For example, 42% of kindergarteners were classified as "still developing" at the beginning of the year. This translates to approximately 81,876 students, which is larger than the reported 56,815 kindergarteners served by SSIG funds. This suggests that additional criteria may have been used to determine which students were served by SSIG and/or districts may not have had adequate funding to serve all students who needed it.

For all grades, the percentage of students classified as developed on screening increased from beginning of year to end of year.[60] On the first administration of TPRI, 58% of kindergarteners were considered developed; by the end of the year, 90% of students had earned this label—an increase of 32 percentage points. Likewise, 59% of Grade 1 students were developed at the beginning of the year, with 81% developed by the end of the year, indicating an increase of 22 percentage points. Grade 2 students were not rescreened at the end of the year.[61]

For oral reading accuracy, reading fluency, and reading comprehension tasks, the level of improvement in percentage of students reaching developed status ranged from 10 percentage points (Grade 2 oral reading accuracy) to 39 percentage points (Grade 1 reading comprehension). Although these figures represent all students who were assessed with the reading tool and the improvements in skills cannot be directly attributed to the SSIG program, the results indicate that students in districts that received SSIG funds showed definite improvements in participating students' reading skills over the course of the 2009–10 school year. Although TPRI outcomes focus only on reading development in Grades K–2, these results may also reflect the effectiveness of the SSIG program across a broader range of grades and content areas.

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[60] Across all grades, the number of students tested at the end of the year was higher than the number of students tested at the beginning of the year. The reasons for this are unknown.
[61] For Grade 2, TPRI Screening assessments are administered only at the beginning of the school year.

Table B4. TPRI Outcomes[a]

Participating District Data (*n*=980) [b]	Kindergarten: Beginning of Year	Kindergarten: End of Year	Grade 1: Beginning of Year	Grade 1: End of Year	Grade 2: Beginning of Year	Grade 2: End of Year[d]
Number of Students Within District Assessed with TPRI[c]	194,905	199,679	205,327	208,791	205,394	208,245
Percentage of Students Considered "Developed" According to Screening	58%	90%	59%	81%	65%	--
Oral Reading Accuracy: Percentage of Students Reading Stories Instructionally or Independently	--	--	57%	83%	77%	87%
Reading Fluency: Grade 1, Percentage of Students Reading Approximately 60+ Words Correctly per Minute	--	--	13%	47%	--	--
Reading Fluency: Grade 2, Percentage of Students Reading Approximately 90+ Words Correctly per Minute	--	--	--	--	8%	30%
Reading Comprehension: Percentage of Students Considered "Developed" on Reading Comprehension (or Listening Comprehension for Kindergarten)	49%	65%	37%	76%	40%	69%

Source: eGrants Database, SSI Consolidated Report, 2009–10, Texas Education Agency
[a] "--" indicates that students were not assessed on that particular skill.
[b] Some districts or charters included in this evaluation did not serve students in Grades K–2.
[c] This figure includes all students within participating districts who were tested, not just those who were served by SSIG funds.
[d] For Grade 2, TPRI Screening assessments are administered only at the beginning of the school year.

While the percentage of students who mastered early reading concepts improved across the year, it should be noted that none of the beginning-of-year assessments was mastered by more than 60% of students. This indicates that many students in participating campuses began the school year without the appropriate grade-level skills. If students do not maintain the skills they

learned in the previous grade, relatively high levels of low-performing students might continue to confront grant participants, particularly at the beginning of the school year.

Conclusion

During the 2009–10 school year, TEA awarded $44.2 million in SSIG funding to 1,074 LEAs for services to a large population of students in Grades K–12 who were struggling in reading, mathematics, science, and/or social studies. Based on the 996 (93%) grantees that submitted CRIs, at least 779,000 students were served by SSIG funds. Based on the percentage of students in each grade served by SSIG funds, grantees appeared to have particularly targeted students in Grades 3, 5, and 8. Teachers and administrators also benefited from PD opportunities, some of which were provided by other SSI funds. Grantees reported personnel attending a broad range of professional PD trainings that may enhance their practices in the classroom. SSIG funding allowed grantees to pursue a wide variety of instruction. For example, participants were able to receive PD training in general science and biology, in addition to more traditional reading and mathematics offerings.

While TAKS results were not available or appropriate as outcome measures due to the delayed distribution of grants, a comparison of grantees' beginning-of-year and end-of-year TPRI scores showed the students in Grades K–2 improved across all measured tasks. Across all grades, the percentage of students who were classified as "developed"—or having mastered grade-specific reading concepts—increased from the beginning to the end of the year. Likewise, the percentage of students achieving developed status on particular oral reading, reading fluency, or reading comprehension tasks improved across all grades during this period. Although these improvements in skills cannot be directly attributed to the SSIG–funded services that students received, the results indicate that students in participating districts showed distinct improvements in reading abilities over the course of the year. It is worth noting, however, that none of the beginning-of-year assessments was mastered by more than 60% of students, which indicates that SSIG participants may continue to be challenged with large numbers of struggling students—some of whom may not have maintained their previous year's skills—at the beginning of the school year.

An examination of reported program expenditures showed that grantees expended $38.6 million and of the funds awarded for SSIG. Of these funds, over 90% were used for payroll or supplies and materials. In particular, teacher and tutor pay comprised half of all SSIG expended funds during the 2009–10 school year. Supplemental instructional programs and other supplies and materials made up 28% of the budget. About 1% of total program expenditures were used for PD training.

The largest percentage of participants used grants to supplement their payrolls (68%) and to purchase supplies and materials (62%). In particular, teacher pay was a grant expenditure for 28% of grantees. Other operating costs (16%) and professional and contracted services (15%) were less common expenditures, as were computer and equipment purchases (2%).

After less than one year of SSIG implementation, the effects of the program on students, teachers, and administrators cannot be fully assessed. In the short term, some student performance gains were found, although these outcomes cannot be directly attributable to SSIG. For example, TPRI outcomes improved throughout the year. However, early reading assessments would be expected to show signs of improvement to some extent, even without the assistance of SSI grants.

An evaluation of expenditure reports showed that participating students received additional instruction, as evidenced by the supplemental pay for teachers and tutors. The long-term effects of the program on student achievement in the core content areas remain unknown. Due to delayed funding, grantees were not required to submit TAKS results for 2009–10, and therefore these data were not available for evaluation purposes. In future years, TAKS data will be collected from SSIG recipients. Further research and analysis, involving the collection of longitudinal data, are necessary to determine whether the accelerated instruction provided with SSIG funds is sufficient to support struggling students, not only within the boundaries of one academic year, but also over time as they progress through the education system.

Appendix C – Texas Turnaround Leadership Academies

The Texas Turnaround Leadership Academies (TTLA) were created under the leadership of Education Service Center (ESC) 13 and through the combined efforts of the Texas Education Agency (TEA) and the Texas Center for District and School Improvement, the School Improvement Resource Center, and the Texas Turnaround Center. Funded by the legislature under Rider 42(g) of the General Appropriations Act of the 81st Texas Legislature in 2009, the program was conceived to (1) establish a cadre of school leaders with the skills to turn around historically underperforming schools, (2) encourage school administrator preparation programs across the state to intensify their requirements and coursework, and (3) build a knowledge base for ESCs that provide support for underperforming schools in Texas.

The characteristics of the TTLA program include a focus on immediate, dramatic action by school leaders and an emphasis on identifying, developing, and placing school leaders who have the skills and ability to engage in consistent behaviors that can accomplish a turnaround in an underperforming school. The program design includes a partnership with the Darden-Curry School of Executive Leadership at the University of Virginia (UVA), whose nationally recognized Turnaround Specialist Program was adapted to fit the unique contexts and challenges of Texas schools.

Participants for the TTLA program were chosen by TEA in collaboration with ESC 13 with consideration given to a district's geographical location, district size, diversity in student ethnicity, and certain specific district characteristics, such as an academically unacceptable rating for multiple years and stability in district leadership. Five districts and 29 schools were identified and invited to participate in the TTLA program: Fort Worth ISD (four elementary, four middle, and three high schools), Austin ISD (five middle and two high schools), Ector County ISD (three middle and two high schools), Waco ISD (three middle and two high schools), and Bastrop ISD (one middle school).

In 2009 the State of Texas Education Research Center (TERC) at Texas A&M University was commissioned by TEA to design and implement a two-year external evaluation of the TTLA program and report on its success.[62] The evaluation employs a mixed-methods, quasi-experimental design and is designed to determine the degree to which the professional development (PD) provided by the TTLA program is translated into district and campus leadership practices; identify the most effective methods for supporting the PD and the leadership during the school year; and provide constructive feedback to improve the quality and effectiveness of the PD.

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[62] The conclusions of this research conducted by State of Texas Education Research Center at Texas A&M University do not necessarily reflect the opinions or official position of the Texas Education Agency, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, or the State of Texas.

The TTLA program is currently in the first year of its two-year cycle. Professional development activities implemented in this time period include a readiness meeting held in Austin in June of 2010 and an eight-day summer institute for turnaround principals and district leaders held at UVA in July of 2010. The evaluation activities undertaken during the first year include the collection of descriptive school-level and student-level data regarding TTLA participants from the data warehouse at the Texas Education Research Center (ERC); an analysis of the first-90-day action plans developed collaboratively by TTLA principals, professional service providers (PSPs), and district shepherds at the summer institute; and a review of findings from site visits conducted by UVA in the fall of 2010.

A content analysis of the first-90-day action plans indicated a strong focus on "student performance" throughout all domains of the action plans, which suggests that principals understand that the desired result of the school turnaround process is improved student performance. The finding that the "human resources" theme was most frequently included within the "strategies" domain suggests that principals view their role as primarily one of leadership and that they view district employees as their greatest strategic tools.

The site visits revealed that many of the participating schools showed strengths in the areas of communication, school culture, and organization. The use of assessment information for data-driven decision making, however, was often cited as an area of both strength and weakness. In comparing the UVA site visit feedback to the first-90-day action plans created by the principals and district shepherds, researchers noted that several of the observed strengths and weaknesses referenced the same themes that emerged from the first-90-day action plans: assessment, classroom management, communication, data, PD, and school culture. Data collection, for example, was heavily mentioned throughout the action plans, especially in the context of strategies to achieve the goals. The action plans, however, contained very little information about how data analysis procedures would be conducted or how the collection of data or the use of the data would translate into changes within the classroom or within student learning. This may explain why the UVA site visits indicated that data-driven decision making was the only topic that was frequently cited as both an area of strength and a suggested area of improvement within the same school. On a theoretical level, participants recognized the importance of data as a tool in informing campus decision-making, but on a practical level, acknowledged that actual implementation of data-based decision making is an area in which the schools are still lagging. As a result of the information gathered from this site visit, the TTLA January 2011 Mid-Year Retreat dedicated time for (1) identifying strategies for using data to understand and acknowledge schools' current reality, and (2) determining what specific data should be collected to address particular issues. In addition, site-specific PD related to data use was provided for districts that requested it.

In the second year of the cycle, evaluators will compare the treatment turnaround campuses and districts to similar academically unacceptable schools and districts (based on 2008–2009 academic ratings) matched by school variables such as socioeconomic status, percent minority, teacher characteristics, student graduation, and college-going rates. Variables that will be considered in matching principals from comparison schools with principals from treatment

schools include prior background, professional training, education, and leadership experiences. Qualitative measures will be used to address the questions focusing on principals' leadership practices and school change, while quantitative measures will primarily be used to address questions focusing on dissimilarities between the turnaround and comparison principals and for examining connections between identified leadership practices and teacher and student outcomes. The data warehouse at the ERC will be used to examine descriptive school-level and student-level data. Finally, researchers will develop mini case studies of up to four selected turnaround schools in order to gather in-depth information regarding the perceptions of administrators, teachers, and staff members regarding the experience of working in a turnaround school.