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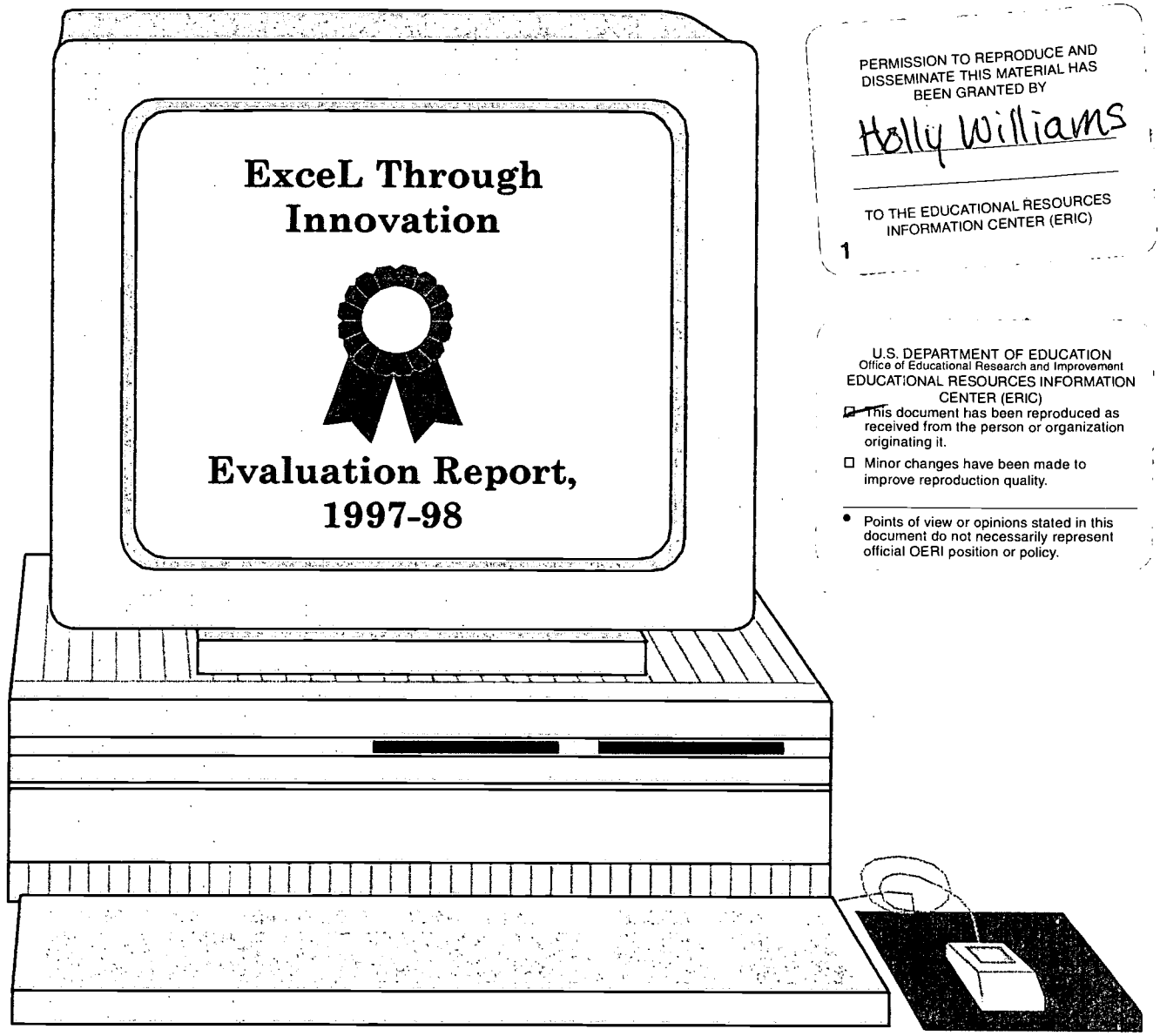
ABSTRACT

The ExceL through Innovation grants program provides funding for elementary campuses to implement 4-year instructional and staff development programs designed to raise student achievement. All 66 campuses of the Austin Independent School District (Texas) received ExceL funding for the 1996-97 and 1997-98 school years, with the funded amount based, in part, on the number of reading and mathematics tests from the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills failed at the campus in 1994-95. In September 1997, the elementary school principals completed a benchmarks survey to clarify their ExceL benchmarks for the 1997-98 school year. Survey responses and the results of site visits were used to develop summaries of the ExceL program at each campus. Most campuses (82%) met some of their benchmarks, and 14% met all of their benchmarks in 1997-98. Campus instructional programs varied greatly in terms of content and degree of innovation, but 64% of programs focused on mathematics, and 55% focused on literacy. Parental involvement was a focus at 52%. Campus staff development programs varied, also reflecting the differences in funding amounts, but 67% of campuses included training in mathematics and 50% included training in literacy. Recommendations for program continuation and improvement include suggestions for competitive grant allocations. Three appendixes contain information on program costs by campus for both school years and the study survey. (SLD)



Austin Independent School District
Department of Accountability
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Overview

AISD's ExceL Through Innovation grants program, begun in 1996-97, provides funding for elementary campuses to implement four-year instructional and staff development programs designed to raise student achievement. In 1996, campuses were asked to apply for the grants after obtaining recommendations to do so from their Campus Advisory Committees. Then, campuses were asked to develop innovative instructional and staff development programs to address the needs of the specific students they served. Campuses were also asked to set four-year, over-arching achievement goals and yearly achievement benchmarks for their programs.

All 66 campuses received ExceL funding for the 1996-97 and 1997-98 school years. Each campus was placed into one of three funding levels on the basis of the number of Reading and Mathematics TAAS tests failed at the campus in 1994-95. Then, each campus received an instructional program funding allocation on the basis of their assigned funding level and the number of students at the campus who failed at least one section of TAAS in 1994-95. Each campus received a professional development funding allocation on the basis of the number of professional staff at the campus in 1994-95. In addition, in 1996-97 only, each campus received a one-time capital outlay allocation, on the basis of the number of Reading and Mathematics TAAS sections failed at the campus in 1994-95.

Methodology

In September 1997, the evaluator administered a benchmarks survey to all elementary principals to clarify their ExceL benchmarks for the 1997-98 school year. Although yearly benchmarks were a part of the original grant proposal submitted by each campus, the benchmarks had changed for many campuses. Then, during October through December of 1997, the evaluator visited each of the 66 campuses and conducted brief interviews regarding 1997-98 ExceL programs. On the basis of all paperwork submitted by the campuses since the beginning of the grant (i.e., original grant application, 1996-97 campus self-evaluations, 1997-98 grant renewal forms, and the benchmarks survey), notes taken at meetings with grant administrators, and, in some cases, campus improvement plans, the evaluator wrote summaries of each campus program including achievement benchmarks, descriptions of instructional programs, and descriptions of staff development activities. The evaluator sent the summaries to the campuses and requested that program administrators verify the information. In addition, the evaluator asked campuses to return quantitative data to address attainment of their non-TAAS benchmarks. The evaluator invited campuses to provide any additional data they had collected regarding their ExceL programs for inclusion in this report.

Major Findings

A total of $2,695,130 were allocated for ExceL instructional programs, staff development and capital outlay in 1996-97; $2,496,005 were allocated for ExceL instructional programs and staff development in 1997-98. Of the 1997-98 funding allocation, 30% of funds were not spent, 24% were used for staff development, 21% were used for salaries, 17% were used for supplies and materials, 4% were used for capital outlay, and 4% were used for other expenses.

On average, campuses set six benchmarks for themselves for the 1997-98 school year, although number of benchmarks at campuses ranged from 1 to 38. Eighty-two percent of campuses met *some* of their benchmarks; 14% met *all* of their benchmarks; 4% met *none* of their benchmarks. Overall, a total of 414 benchmarks were set. Of these, 52% were met *fully*; and 7% were met *partially* (i.e., some campuses included sub-benchmarks within benchmarks; a benchmark was partially met when some, but not all, of the sub-benchmarks were met). Quantitative data were not returned by campuses to address 5% of the benchmarks.

Campus instructional programs varied in terms of content and degree of innovation due, at least partially, to vastly differing funding allocations received (e.g., Gullett's instructional allocation was $2,700; Widen's was $61,950). Sixty-four percent of campus programs focused on mathematics; 55% focused on literacy; 52% focused on parental involvement; 8% focused on behavioral issues and 6% focused on science. Fifty-two percent of programs offered parent workshops and/or family nights; 49% provided TAAS enrichment; 38% used TAAS practice tests and/or software; 36% funded staff positions, and 35% purchased materials.

Some instructional programs included curriculum resources and activities that were not aligned with the district curriculum. However, the district and the campuses are working together to align their curriculum resources with the curriculum.

Campus staff development programs varied in degree of focus and cohesion with other program components. For example, at some campuses, staff development funds supported activities that were clearly focused and directly related to instructional program components and benchmarks. However, at other campuses, funds were used to supplement a wide variety of individual staff development needs, some of which were not directly related to other program components. Sixty-seven percent of campuses included staff development training in mathematics; 50% included training in literacy; 26% included training in assessment; 21% included training in cultural diversity; and 18% included training in technology.

Barrington, Becker, Lee, Williams, and Zilker were selected for Innovative Practices on the basis of area superintendent nomination and degree of program innovation.

Recommendations

1. The ExceL through innovations grants program should be competitive. In order to receive funding, campuses should agree to take responsibility for the following: spending all of their funds, utilizing curriculum resources and instructional methods that are aligned with the district curriculum, fully evaluating their programs, and striving to achieve their yearly benchmarks. Each year, renewed funding should be contingent on fulfillment of this agreement. Alternatively, program administrators and area superintendents could monitor the campuses more closely to ensure that campuses are adhering to the policies of the grants program.
2. Grant policies should be documented and communicated clearly and consistently to the campuses.
3. Year-round campuses should have a separate grant renewal schedule.

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EXCEL THROUGH INNOVATION OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

ExceL Through Innovation (ExceL) is a local funding initiative created to enhance and improve elementary student achievement through innovative programs that have been designed at the campus level to address the needs of the specific students served. This initiative is reflective of the current movement in education reform toward site-based decision-making, which is based on the idea that for reform to be successful, stakeholders must decide what should change as well as how to make the changes (Fullan, 1991). ExceL provides funding for implementation of instructional programs and program-related staff development in the Austin Independent School District (AISD) to increase student achievement, with a special emphasis on closing gaps in achievement among student groups, and to increase the knowledge and skills (i.e., to build the capacity) of campus staffs.

This report begins with historical information regarding the ExceL Through Innovation grants application process and subsequent funding allocation. Summary budget information is presented for 1996-98. Then, a summary of programs across the district is presented, including benchmarks, instructional program components, and staff development activities in 1997-98. Overall results regarding attainment of benchmarks are included, along with information on five schools selected as ExceL Innovative Practices campuses. A summary of results and recommendations made on the basis of the results are presented, followed by information and photographs from the ExceL Showcase. Finally, a description of each campus ExceL program is presented, including campus benchmarks and benchmark attainment results, and detailed information about instructional programs and staff development activities.

History of the ExceL Grants Initiative

On February 19, 1996, the Board of Trustees of the Austin Independent School District (AISD) approved a plan for supporting the ExceL Through Innovation grants initiative through local funds. During the spring of 1996, elementary campuses formed Campus Advisory Committees (CACs) comprised of staff, parents, and community members. Campuses were required to obtain CAC recommendations to apply for ExceL grants. After the recommendations were made, campus grant writing teams were selected to complete ExceL grant applications. Campus grant writing teams attended a grant writing workshop presented by the district where they received instruction on designing their four-year ExceL programs and on setting four-year goals and yearly benchmarks. Afterwards, they completed their ExceL grant applications and submitted them for review. Teams of AISD curriculum personnel and community representatives reviewed the grant applications and awarded the grants in the summer of 1996 for the 1996-97 school year. Although campuses were asked to design four-year programs, funding is approved on a year-by-year basis. All 66 elementary schools received some level of ExceL funding. As proposals were approved, funding was made available in late September.

The campus ExceL programs were first implemented during the 1996-97 school year. At the end of the school year, campuses submitted two-page self-evaluations of their programs. These evaluations were summarized and presented along with TAAS score results in an abbreviated report published by AISD's Office of Program Evaluation, *ExceL Grant Evaluation Report Year I, 1996-97* (Publication number 96.16). Area superintendents reviewed benchmark attainment results with their campuses and discussed making changes to programs at campuses that did not attain their benchmarks. Campuses were free to make changes on the basis of their self-evaluations with the approval of their area superintendents and were required to submit grant application updates outlining any changes to their original programs.

In September 1997, an evaluator was hired to conduct formal evaluations of years two through four of ExceL Through Innovation. Results of the 1997-98 evaluation are contained in this report. In addition, historical and budgetary information from the first year are included, as this information was not documented in the evaluation report for 1996-97.

PROGRAM COSTS

ExceL instructional program fund amounts are based on the number of Reading and Mathematics TAAS tests on which non-special education students failed to meet minimum expectations (failed) in the spring of 1995. Campuses with one or more student groups (student groups ≥ 20% of the total number of students tested) that achieved pass rates below 50% on the Reading or Mathematics TAAS were deemed ExceL I campuses. ExceL I campuses received $210 per failed Reading TAAS test and $210 per failed Mathematics TAAS test. Campuses with one or more student groups that achieved pass rates between 50-75% on the Reading or Mathematics TAAS were deemed ExceL II campuses. ExceL II campuses received $175 per failed Reading TAAS test and $175 per failed Mathematics TAAS test. Campuses with all student groups achieving pass rates of 75% or higher on the Reading and Mathematics TAAS were deemed ExceL III campuses. ExceL III campuses received $150 per failed Reading TAAS test and $150 per failed Mathematics TAAS test. ExceL instructional funding levels for each campus are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Campuses by ExceL Instructional Program Funding Levels, 1996-98

ExceL I Campuses (N=46)			ExceL II Campuses (N=8)	ExceL III Campuses (N=12)
Allan	Govalle	Pecan Springs	Barton Hills	Casis
Allison	Graham	Pillow	Bryker Woods	Davis
Andrews	Harris	Ridgetop	Joslin	Doss
Barrington	Houston	Sanchez	Kocurek	Gullett
Becker	Jordan	Sims	Pleasant Hill	Highland Park
Blackshear	Langford	St. Elmo	Reilly	Hill
Blanton	Linder	Sunset Valley	Williams	Kiker
Boone	Maplewood	Travis	Zavala	Lee
Brentwood	Mathews	Heights		Menchaca
Brooke	Metz	Walnut Creek		Oak Hill
Brown	Norman	Widen		Patton
Campbell	Oak Springs	Winn		Summitt
Cook	Odom	Wooldridge		
Cunningham	Ortega	Wooten		
Dawson	Palm	Zilker		
Galindo	Pease			

In 1996-97 and in 1997-98, in addition to instructional program funds, all campuses received six $50 stipends per professional staff member (based on number of staff members in 1994-95) for staff development. The district provided fringe benefits for staff development

in addition to the staff development allocations. Finally, in 1996-97, one-time awards of $25 per failed Reading TAAS test and $25 per failed Mathematics TAAS test were given to all campuses for initial capital outlay. Total ExceL award amounts by instructional funding level are presented in Table 2 for 1996-97 and in Table 3 for 1997-98. In addition, formulas and information for calculating instructional award amounts (i.e., number of failed TAAS tests), staff development award amounts (i.e., number of professional staff), and initial capital outlay (i.e., number of failed TAAS tests), as well as the award amounts are presented by campus in Appendix A for 1996-97 and in Appendix B for 1997-98.

Table 2: Total ExceL Award Amounts by Instructional Funding Level, 1996-97

Instructional Program Funding Level	Instructional Program Budget	Initial Capital Outlay	Staff Development Budget	TOTAL
ExceL I Campuses (N=46)	$1,379,280	$164,200	$617,400	$2,160,880
ExceL II Campuses (N=8)	$132,125	$18,875	$100,800	$251,800
ExceL III Campuses (N=12)	$96,300	$16,050	$170,100	$282,450
TOTAL	$1,607,705	$199,125	$888,300	$2,695,130

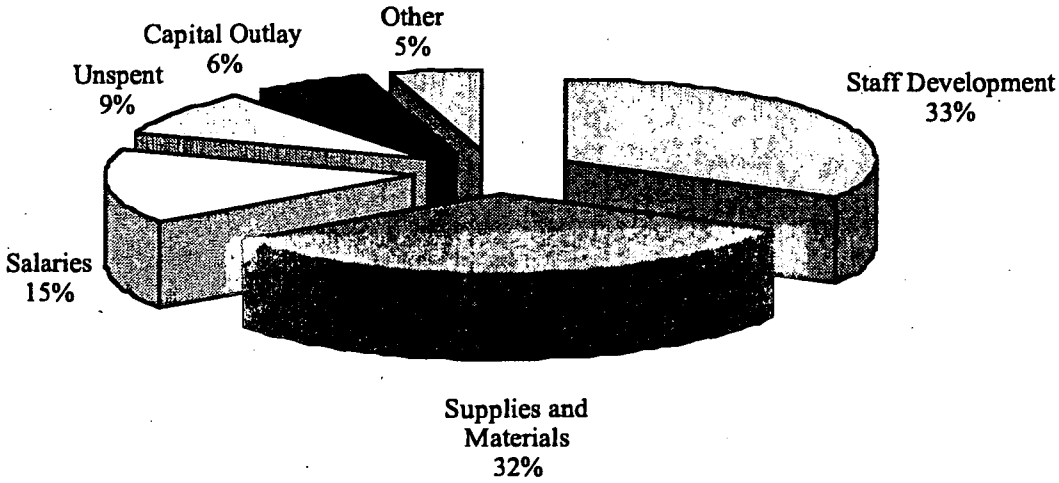
Table 3: Total ExceL Award Amounts by Instructional Funding Level, 1997-98

Instructional Program Funding Level	Instructional Program Budget	Staff Development Budget	TOTAL
ExceL I Campuses (N=46)	$1,379,280	$617,400	$1,996,680
ExceL II Campuses (N=8)	$132,125	$100,800	$232,925
ExceL III Campuses (N=12)	$96,300	$170,100	$266,400
TOTAL	$1,607,705	$888,300	$2,496,005

Although funds were provided to campuses in September 1996 for use during the 1996-97 school year (year one of ExceL), many campuses did not use all of their funds during this time. As a result, some campuses used year one funds during year one *and* during year two of the program. Campus expenditures of year one funds during year one and during year two are presented in Figure 1 on the following page. The expenditures are reported on the basis of the September 1998 campus ExceL budget report, produced by the AISD Department of Financial Services. For the purposes of this report, encumbered funds were considered spent. Also, the "salaries" category includes both salaries and fringe benefits. However, the "staff development" category does not include fringe benefits. Rather, fringe benefits for staff development were paid by the district in addition to the ExceL staff development allocation, and are not included in this report.

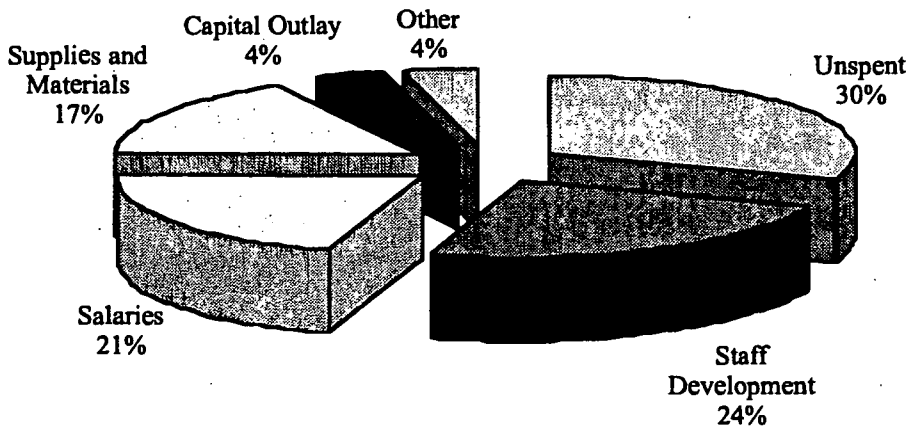
During the 1996-97 and 1997-98 school years, 33% of 1996-97 funds were used for staff development (e.g., to pay substitutes, teacher stipends, workshop fees, travel and registration, supplies and materials for training); 32% were used to purchase supplies and materials (e.g., books, manipulatives, manuals, resource materials); 15% were used to pay salaries (e.g., for teachers, teaching assistants, parent coordinators, behavior specialists, lab technicians); 6% were used to purchase capital outlay items (i.e., items that cost more than $300, e.g., computers, computer network servers, video equipment); 5% were used to pay for other things (e.g., student travel, food, printing, consultant fees, plant maintenance); and 9% were not spent and were rolled forward for use during the 1997-98 school year.

Figure 1: 1996-97 and 1997-98 Expenditures of 1996-97 ExceL Funds



Campus expenditures of 1997-98 ExceL funds during 1997-98 are presented in Figure 2 below and do not include funds rolled over from 1996-97. Funds were provided to campuses in September of 1997. During the 1997-98 school year, 24% of funds were used for staff development (e.g., to pay substitutes, teacher stipends, workshop fees, travel and registration, supplies and materials for training); 21% were used to pay salaries (e.g., for teachers, parent coordinators, and behavior specialists); 17% were used to purchase supplies and materials (e.g., books, manipulatives, manuals); 4% were used to purchase capital outlay items (i.e., items that cost more than $300, e.g., computers, video equipment); 4% were used to pay for other things (e.g., student travel, food, printing, consultant fees, plant maintenance); and 30% were not spent and were rolled over for use during the 1998-99 school year.

Figure 2: 1997-98 Expenditures of 1997-98 ExceL Funds



SUMMARY OF 1997-98 EXCEL PROGRAMS

METHODOLOGY

In September 1997, the evaluator administered a benchmarks survey to ExceL campus principals to ascertain their 1997-98 achievement benchmarks. Then, during October through December of 1997, the evaluator visited each of the 66 ExceL campuses and conducted brief (approximately 30 minute) meetings with each ExceL program administrator, who, in most cases, was the principal. The evaluator used the meetings to gain information regarding 1997-98 ExceL programs and to explain data collection procedures. The data collection portion of the meetings was vital to the evaluation because, although campuses had completed ExceL continuation forms in May of 1997, most of the programs had changed since that time due to staff changes, 1997 TAAS results, and/or decisions by CACs to change the programs in order to better meet student needs.

On the basis of all paperwork submitted by the campuses since the beginning of the grant (i.e., original grant application, 1996-97 campus self-evaluations, 1997-98 grant renewal forms, and the benchmarks survey), notes taken at meetings with grant administrators, and, in some cases, campus improvement plans, the evaluator wrote summaries of each campus ExceL program including achievement benchmarks, descriptions of instructional programs, and descriptions of staff development activities. The evaluator sent the summaries to the campuses and requested that program administrators verify the program information. The evaluator asked the campuses to mark out any part of the description that was inaccurate and to include any information about the ExceL program that was missing from the summary. In addition, the evaluator asked campuses to return quantitative data to address whether their non-TAAS benchmarks were met. (The evaluator was responsible for obtaining all TAAS data for campus achievement benchmarks.) In addition, the evaluator invited campuses to provide any additional data they had collected regarding their ExceL programs for inclusion in this report.

Program Goals and Yearly Benchmarks

Campuses were asked to set over-arching goals and yearly benchmarks for their four-year ExceL programs. Campuses wrote their goals and benchmarks in the formats they determined most appropriate (e.g., by grade level, or by student group). Goals and benchmarks for any aspects of the programs could be included (e.g., parental involvement and staff development), but campuses were strongly urged to include at least one achievement goal with yearly benchmarks relating to TAAS. Overall, for the 1997-98 school year, campuses set a total of 414 benchmarks. The following is a summary of the kinds of benchmarks campuses set for themselves:

- 94% set TAAS benchmarks (i.e., Reading TAAS and/or Mathematics TAAS and/or Writing TAAS),
  - 85% set Reading TAAS benchmarks,
  - 85% set Mathematics TAAS benchmarks,
  - 27% set Writing TAAS benchmarks,
- 44% set parent involvement benchmarks, and
- 46% set other types of benchmarks (e.g., benchmarks related to staff development, ITBS, PALM, and curriculum alignment).

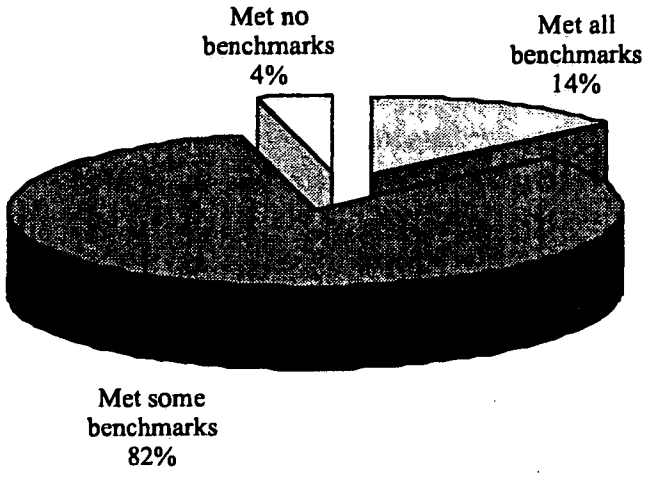
Campuses varied in the number of benchmarks they set for themselves. On average, campuses had six benchmarks. The number of campus benchmarks ranged from 1 (at several campuses) to 38 (at Wooldridge). Campuses also varied in the ways they formatted TAAS-related benchmarks:

- 87% set the benchmarks by grade-level (e.g., "TAAS scores of third grade students will increase 7 percentage points"),
- 15% set the benchmarks by student group (e.g., "TAAS scores of African American students will increase 7 percentage points").

1997-98 benchmark attainment was determined on the basis of TAAS results and other data collected by individual campuses. TAAS Summary Reports, published by the Texas Education Agency were used in determining whether grade-level TAAS benchmarks were met. The AISD TAAS data file was used in determining whether across-grade-level TAAS benchmarks and Texas Learning Index (TLI) benchmarks were met. Both the TAAS Summary Reports and the AISD TAAS data file contain scores of all students at each campus who were not in special education and who completed TAAS. In addition, as described in the Methodology section of this report (see page 9), campuses were asked to provide the evaluator with data to address all non-TAAS-related benchmarks (e.g., benchmarks pertaining to parent involvement and staff development) at the end of the 1997-98 school year. However, 15% of campuses failed to supply adequate quantitative data for determining whether one or more of their benchmarks was met.

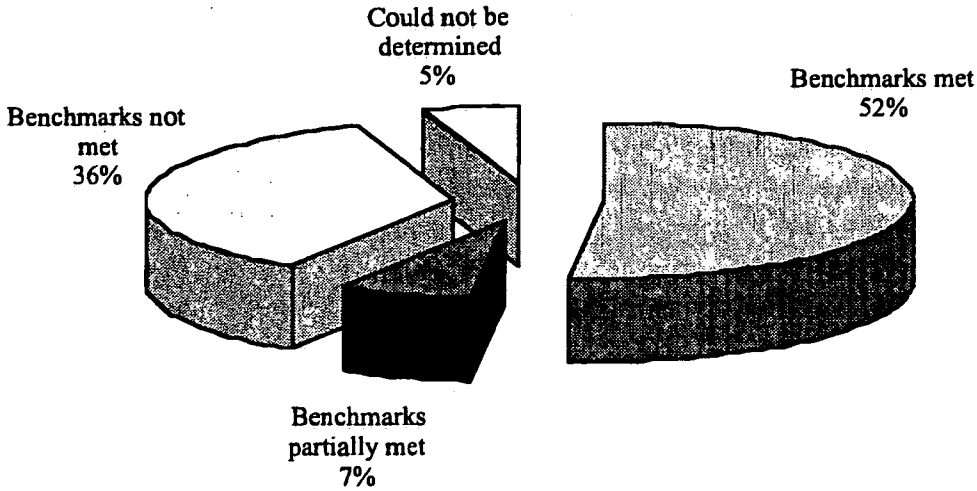
Degree of benchmark attainment varied among campuses. As shown in Figure 3 below, 14% of campuses (Allison, Andrews, Brown, Campbell, Cook, Metz, Ortega, Summitt, and Walnut Creek) met all of their benchmarks; 82% of campuses met some of their benchmarks; and 4% of campuses did not meet any of their benchmarks.

Figure 3: Campus Attainment of ExceL Benchmarks for 1997-98



Overall benchmark attainment results are presented in Figure 4 below. Fifty-two percent of the 414 benchmarks were met fully; 7% of benchmarks were met partially (i.e., some campuses included sub-benchmarks within benchmarks; a benchmark was partially met when some, but not all, sub-benchmarks were met.); and 36% of benchmarks were not met. Quantitative data were not returned by campuses to address 5% of the benchmarks.

Figure 4: Overall Attainment of Campus ExceL Benchmarks for 1997-98



INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS

In 1997-98, campuses continued their ExceL instructional programs, which had been designed in 1996 to address the needs of the specific students served. Campuses were free to make changes to their programs, pending area superintendent approval, if students' needs changed or if original program components were found to be ineffective. Grant administrators placed few constraints on campus instructional programs. Programs were to focus on student learning, with a primary focus on TAAS. ExceL-funded staff positions were to be capacity-building (i.e., campus programs should be able to continue without the staff positions at the end of the ExceL grants program). Campuses focused on one or more academic content area(s) of their choice to address the needs of their students through instructional programs:

- 64% focused on *mathematics*,
- 55% focused on *literacy*, and
- 6% focused on *science*.

In addition, some campuses focused on other areas as follows:

- 52% focused on *parental involvement*, and
- 8% focused on *behavioral issues*.

Campuses promoted academic achievement through methods of their choice, based on student needs and pending area superintendent approval. As a result of this freedom, and as a result of variation among instructional budget amounts (e.g., Gullett received $2,700; Widen received $61,950), campuses used their instructional funds in very different ways. For example, some campuses spent the majority of their instructional budgets on supplies and materials (e.g., books, software, manipulatives); some hired part- or full-time staff (e.g., parent coordinators, teaching assistants, consultants); some used instructional funds for staff development (campuses were free to transfer funds from instructional to staff development accounts and vice versa); and some implemented academic programs for students and/or parents (e.g., afterschool TAAS tutoring, mentoring programs, English as a Second Language, and General Education Development).

Instructional programs also varied in degree of innovation. For example, some campuses used ExceL funds to buy materials to support district-mandated curricula (e.g., Investigations manipulatives), to align their campus curricula, or to supplement an existing program (e.g., Reading Recovery), while others developed new and unique programs (e.g., the Becker Science Center, the Boone Publishing Company, Cunningham's Cobra News and Cobra Cash, the Micro-Society at Kocurek, the Wooten Parent Academy, and CASA Zilker). Most often, however, campuses used ExceL instructional funds for a combination of innovative and traditional activities. According to program descriptions returned by campuses, instructional programs included the following activities:

- 52% offered parent workshops and/or family nights;
- 49% provided afterschool, summer, or intersession TAAS instruction;

- 38% purchased and/or used TAAS preparation tests and/or software;
- 36% paid for half- or full-time positions;
- 35% purchased materials (e.g., books, manuals, manipulatives);
- 29% worked on curriculum alignment;
- 24% provided tutoring and/or mentoring programs;
- 23% created/maintained rooms dedicated to the program (e.g., resource rooms, labs, tutoring centers, or parent rooms);
- 15% purchased technology (e.g., computers and printers);
- 14% provided TAAS incentives (e.g., t-shirts, trips, banquets, etc.); and
- 11% provided English as a Second Language (ESL) and General Education Development (GED) for parents.

Some of the curriculum resources and instructional methods included in 1997-98 campus ExceL instructional programs were not aligned with the district curriculum. However, as the district continues to define and clarify information regarding appropriate curriculum resources and instructional methods, campuses are responding by making adjustments to their programs in order to be aligned with the district curriculum. In fall of 1998, district staff conducted several workshops to educate principals and other campus staff on the appropriate uses of ExceL funds.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT

In 1997-98, six $50 stipends were provided by the ExceL grant for each professional staff member for professional development. (The number of stipends was based on the number of professional staff at each campus in 1994-95.) The district provided fringe benefits in addition to the stipends over and above the ExceL staff development budget. Campuses were free to use staff development funds for activities of their choice to support their instructional programs. However, a maximum of 10% of staff development funds could be used for travel and registration for conferences and to hire consultants.

Campuses varied in the cohesiveness of their staff development programs. For example, at Williams Elementary, all staff received the same staff development at the same time and met afterwards to process the training and to plan ways to implement what they had learned. Similarly, at Ortega Elementary, all staff read the same book, then met twice per month for three hours to discuss what they had read. Each grade level presented one chapter from the book, and then the staff met one Saturday to plan lessons on the basis of what they had learned from their reading and discussions. In addition, at Winn Elementary, staff development focused entirely on continued training in the Exceptional Classroom Learning Environment (ECLE). However, at many campuses, small groups or individuals attended staff development activities on a variety of topics, so that up to 18 or more different activities were attended by at least one staff member from the campus, but few activities were attended by the whole staff.

Based on campus reports, the following percentages of campuses used ExceL staff development funds to provide one or more of their staff members with the staff development activities listed below:

- 67%, training in mathematics;
- 50%, training in literacy;
- 26%, training in assessment (e.g., PALM training);
- 24%, curriculum alignment/planning;
- 21%, training in cultural diversity/behavior/school climate;
- 18%, training in technology;
- 17%, gifted/talented training;
- 17%, training in individual learning styles;
- 15%, training in TAAS administration;
- 12%, local, state, or national conferences;
- 11%, observation at other campuses;
- 11%, training of their choice, related to their campus ExceL instructional program;
- 8%, training in science; and
- 5%, ExceL Showcase.

INNOVATIVE PRACTICES

In April of 1998, each area superintendent was asked to nominate two campuses from his or her area that "captured the essence of the ExceL Through Innovation grants program" during the 1997-98 school year. Then, together, the evaluator and the district grant writer selected one of the two campuses nominated from each area to be an Innovative Practices campus. The principal and three teachers from each of the five campuses selected were asked to complete an open-ended survey regarding the success of their programs.

According to the principals and the teachers, successful ExceL programs exhibit the following characteristics:

- ***Program is based on data-driven needs assessments.***
- ***Staff are very invested in the program because they participated in its development.***
- ***Program is evaluated frequently to assess the need for change.***
- ***Program focuses on what is meaningful and relevant to students, for example, hands-on activities.***
- ***Program provides staff development and staff development materials.***
- ***Curricula, staff development, and student and teacher materials are aligned both horizontally and vertically.***
- ***Program focuses on key issues of the particular students served.***

In addition, the principals and the teachers reported that they would like to change the following about ExceL:

- ***Separate timeline for year-round campuses,***
- ***More money,***
- ***Less paperwork,***
- ***Fewer staff development days and more time for planning and for meeting with team members, and***
- ***More flexibility with staff development and instructional monies.***

Summaries of survey responses by campus are presented on the following pages. The principal and teacher surveys can be found in Appendix C.

Barrington Elementary

ExceL programs should be based on results from data-driven needs assessments, according to the principal at Barrington Elementary. Campuses should make inquiries, conduct research, and experiment with new programs by piloting the programs or elements of them with samples of students. If the piloting is successful, the new programs can be implemented with the entire school. Most staff members will feel invested in the program

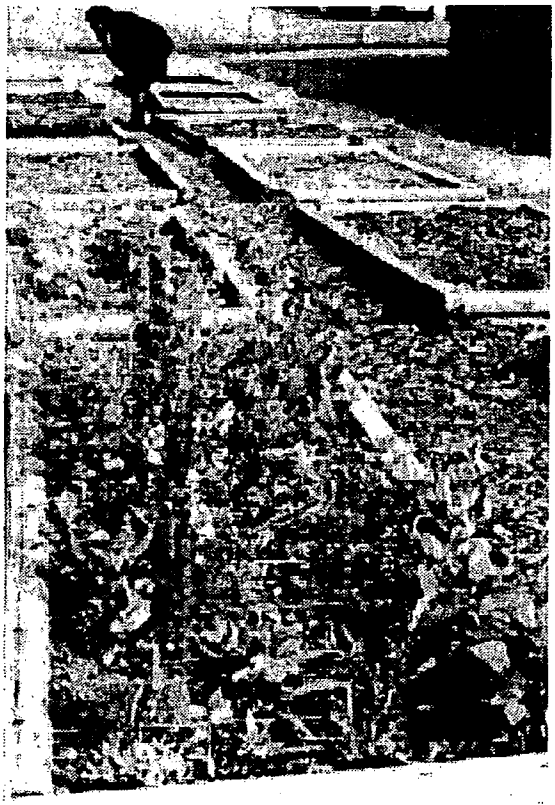
because they participated in its development. Staff members who do not support the program will have plenty of time to consider school assignment changes during the piloting of the new program. In addition, the program should be evaluated often to assess the need for change.

The ExceL program at Barrington Elementary was created on the basis of results of a needs assessment produced through use of the Accelerated School Model of 1996-97. This assessment indicated that Barrington lacked focus in science, mathematics, and parental involvement. Barrington's ExceL program was designed to address these needs. An innovative science program, *Science Links*, was created to provide students with real-world, hands-on activities. *Science Links* included science labs with animal habitats, outdoor classroom gardens, a greenhouse, and instruction in the scientific method for use in the campus and city science fairs. The mathematics program included pilot classes at all levels in Investigations, Mathematics Night, Odyssey of the Mind, and Leadership Homework Club in Mathematics. Parental involvement was encouraged through Family Nights, parent literacy, ESL, and afterschool programs, such as Ballet Folklorico, all of which provided parents with a greater understanding of the academic lives of their children.

Because Barrington is an Accelerated School, the staff, through cadres, was responsible for making inquiries, conducting research, making decisions, and piloting new programs. Data were used to determine staff development needs in the same way that data were used to determine students' needs. In 1997-98, ExceL provided opportunities for professional staff members to receive additional training in science, mathematics, and parental involvement. Teachers were trained to use the science lab, the greenhouse, science kits, and the scientific process. In addition, teachers were trained to implement Investigations and afterschool mathematics activities, competitions and projects. Finally, teachers were trained to teach parents to assist their children with schoolwork.

As a result of the staff development, teachers became self-sufficient and qualified to train others. By preparing teachers to train others, Barrington has built capacity, and the ExceL monies formerly budgeted for outside trainers can be used for the newest data-based ExceL focus, early literacy.

Finally, the principal of Barrington reported that it would be very helpful to have a separate ExceL paperwork timeline for year-round schools. (See p. 35 for additional program description and program benchmarks).



Janie Houck, helping teacher at Barrington Elementary, surveys the outdoor class gardens.

Becker Elementary

Campuses should focus on what is meaningful and relevant to students, according to the principal of Becker Elementary. Similarly, one teacher suggested that campuses should incorporate more hands-on activities to make their ExceL programs successful. The principal believes that hands-on learning helped Becker to become a 1997-98 Texas Education Agency Recognized School (at least 75% of students passed Reading, Mathematics, and Writing TAAS).

The ExceL program at Becker Elementary centered on a science lab that housed a wide variety of animals including parrots, snakes, rabbits, and iguanas. Selected students served as zookeepers who maintained the lab and the animals, with supervision of a lab technician. The lab was designed as a vehicle to make learning meaningful for students. That is, because the students were intellectually and emotionally invested in the animals, they were motivated to learn and to stay out of trouble to maintain their zookeeper status.

The science lab also served as an excellent resource for facilitating curriculum integration. The zookeepers program tied in well with the afterschool program, the fifth

grade science curriculum, field trips, and other school events such as Parent Night and carnivals.

According to the principal, the ExceL program at Becker was innovative because the program was proactive. That is, the program used innovative instructional strategies developed on the basis of how children learn naturally to promote learning initially, rather than remedially, after the children failed to learn.

At the end of ExceL funding, the hands-on learning with animals will be integrated into each classroom and supplemented with technology. Teachers have been trained to conduct the hands-on activities so that they will be able to take over for the lab technician.

Regarding changes to ExceL, the principal suggested that increasing per pupil funding would be useful for continuing and expanding this successful program. (See p. 39 for additional program description and program benchmarks).

Lee Elementary

ExceL funds should be spent on staff development and materials to support staff development, according to the principal of Lee Elementary. Developing personnel, according to the principal, is the most long-lasting and effective strategy for improving student achievement.

In 1997-98, the ExceL program at Lee Elementary focused entirely on staff development including 4MAT individual learning strategies training and training in reading, mathematics, and technology instruction. Teachers became more skillful, were better able to meet the needs of Lee's academically diverse students, and had higher morale, as a result of the staff development they received in 1997-98. Student achievement, in turn, improved as a result of the increased quality of instruction.

The ExceL program at Lee was innovative because it focused entirely on staff development. The ExceL program supported other campus programs by generally increasing teacher effectiveness in a variety of areas, such as reading, mathematics, technology, and learning styles.

The ExceL program at Lee Elementary will have lasting effects beyond the ExceL grant funding period. Teachers from Lee Elementary reported that staff development has helped them to become better teachers and that their students will continue to benefit from their enhanced teaching skills.

As a suggestion, the principal added that it would be helpful to have less paperwork to complete for ExceL. (See p. 92 for additional program description and program benchmarks.)

Williams Elementary

Curricula, staff development, and student and teacher materials must be aligned both horizontally and vertically, according to the principal of Williams Elementary. To achieve this benchmark, teachers participated in the same staff development at the same time, meaning that they all received the same exact instruction. Then, teachers met to process the training, implement it, and align it to meet the needs of Williams' students. Teachers felt

that this was a critical component in making the program successful for students. In addition, teachers participated in a workshop during which they integrated reading, writing, social studies, and science into the curriculum.

Slosson testing was completed in grades one through three to establish an ongoing needs assessment for student achievement. In addition, Investigations was implemented throughout the school in prekindergarten through grade five. Investigations training for all teachers was initiated last summer over a three day period. Investigations training is ongoing through AISD sessions for fourth and fifth grade teachers. A half-day session was spent aligning Investigations with needed TAAS curriculum across all grade levels. Later, another half-day session was spent aligning Investigations curriculum across all grade levels.

The ExceL program at Williams is innovative in that everyone was trained together and used the same methodology to reach students from early childhood through grade five. Consistency in teaching and in learning was provided through curriculum alignment from grade level to grade level. Comparison studies were conducted in reading in grades one through three using Slosson test results from early fall and late spring.

Lasting effects of ExceL on the Williams campus will include staff trained in the same methodologies using the same materials and a curriculum that is aligned both horizontally and vertically. Regarding changes to the ExceL program, the principal reported that more money would be very useful. (See p. 139 for a more complete description of the program and program benchmarks.)

Susan Derrick, the principal of Williams Elementary, presents *Hank the Cowdog* to a crowd of eager listeners.

Zilker Elementary

Campuses should determine the key issues that impact their particular students and address them, according to the principal at Zilker Elementary. In addition, campuses should emphasize building capacity overall, rather than focusing on only one academic area. Finally,

campuses should collaborate with parents and school community members and reach out to students of poverty.

To meet the specific needs of the students at Zilker Elementary, the ExceL program targeted at-risk students for increasing academic achievement through afterschool tutoring. In addition, the program supported staff development and provided materials for teachers. Teachers participated in a study of the book "Children of Poverty." A parent center, Casa Zilker, was established to provide a variety of resources for parents, including bilingual materials and a clothes closet.

The ExceL program at Zilker Elementary is innovative in that it directed funds to parental outreach and community needs. In doing so, the program directly increased parental participation, and, therefore, indirectly affected student achievement.

Casa Zilker and the clothes closet there will continue after ExceL funding has ended. Other lasting effects of ExceL will include the game room in Casa Zilker and instructional materials in the classrooms. Additionally, important contacts have been made with the community.

According to the principal, more flexibility in the use of staff development and instructional monies would be helpful. One teacher added that there are too many staff development days, while additional time is needed for planning and meeting with team members. (See pg. 151 for additional program description and program benchmarks.)

SUMMARY OF RESULTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

The evaluation of the ExceL Through Innovation grants program at AISD has provided information on the instructional programs and staff development carried out at the district's 66 elementary schools through ExceL funding. This report presents an overview, including a description of the grants program and its history, along with application procedures and funding allocation information. The overview is followed by summaries of campus benchmarks and benchmark attainment, instructional programs, and staff development for 1997-98, and a review of five of the most innovative ExceL programs in the district. The remainder of the report includes information on the 1997-98 ExceL Showcase followed by individual campus program descriptions that include budgetary information, benchmarks and benchmark attainment, and detailed descriptions of instructional programs and staff development.

Program Costs

A total of $2,695,130 were allocated for ExceL instructional programs, staff development, and capital outlay in 1996-97; $2,496,005 were allocated for ExceL instructional programs and staff development in 1997-98. Of the 1996-97 funding allocation, 33% of funds were used for staff development; 32% were used for supplies and materials; 15% were used for salaries; 9% were unspent; 6% were used for capital outlay; 5% were used for other expenses. Of the 1997-98 funding allocation, 30% of funds were not spent; 24% were used for staff development; 21% were used for salaries; 17% were used for supplies and materials; 4% were used for capital outlay; 4% were used for other expenses.

Program Benchmarks

As a result of the evaluation efforts, it was determined that, on average, campuses set six benchmarks for themselves, although the actual number of benchmarks ranged from 1 to 38. Almost every campus had a TAAS-related achievement benchmark; most campuses included benchmarks for Reading and/or Mathematics TAAS, and some campuses also had Writing TAAS benchmarks. Almost half of the campuses had parental involvement benchmarks, and almost half of the campuses included a wide variety of additional benchmarks (e.g., benchmarks related to staff development, ITBS, PALM, and curriculum alignment).

Campus benchmark attainment results are as follows:

- *14% of campuses met all of the benchmarks they set for themselves;*
- *82% of campuses met some of the benchmarks they set for themselves;*
- *4% of campuses did not meet any of their benchmarks.*

Overall, a total of 414 benchmarks were set by campuses. Total benchmark attainment results are as follows:

- *52% of benchmarks were fully met;*
- *7% of benchmarks were partially met;*
- *36% of benchmarks were not met;*
- *quantitative data were not returned by campuses to address 5% of benchmarks.*

Instructional Programs

Campus instructional programs varied a great deal in type and in degree of innovation. This variation was due, at least partly, to the differences in funding amounts received. Overall, campus instructional programs focused on the following five areas:

- *64% on mathematics;*
- *55% on literacy;*
- *52% on parental involvement;*
- *8% on behavioral issues;*
- *6% on science.*

Instructional programs included a variety of activities designed to raise student achievement. The following are the five activities most frequently included in campus instructional programs:

- *52% offered parent workshops and/or family nights;*
- *49% provided afterschool, summer, or intersession TAAS instruction;*
- *38% purchased and/or used TAAS preparation tests and/or software;*
- *36% paid for half- or full-time positions (e.g., parent coordinator, curriculum specialist);*
- *35% purchased materials (e.g., books, manuals, manipulatives).*

Some of the programs included curriculum resources and/or instructional methods that were neither aligned with the district curriculum nor endorsed by the district. However, many campuses have adapted, or are in the process of adapting, their programs to be aligned with the district curriculum.

Staff Development

Campus staff development activities varied in degree of focus and cohesion with other program components. For example, at some campuses, staff development funds were used for activities that were clearly focused and directly related to instructional program components and program benchmarks. At other campuses, however, staff development funds were used to supplement a wide variety of individual staff development needs, some of which were not directly related to other program components. Overall, the five most common staff development topics were the following:

- *67% of campuses included training in mathematics,*

- *50% included training in literacy,*
- *26% included training in assessment (e.g., PALM),*
- *21% included training in cultural diversity,*
- *18% included training in technology.*

Innovative Practices

The following five elementary campuses were selected for the Innovative Practices section of this report: Barrington, Becker, Lee, Williams, and Zilker. The campuses were selected in the spring of 1998, on the basis of area superintendent recommendations and degree of program innovation. According to the principals and staff at these campuses, successful ExceL programs exhibit the following characteristics (successful ExceL programs are):

- *based on data-driven needs assessments,*
- *developed by staff who implement the program,*
- *evaluated frequently to assess the need for change,*
- *focused on what is meaningful to students,*
- *inclusive of staff development and staff development materials,*
- *aligned both horizontally and vertically,*
- *focused on key issues of the specific students served.*

In addition, principals and staff gave the following recommendations for improving the ExceL Through Innovation grants program:

- *providing a separate timeline for year-round campuses,*
- *providing campuses with additional ExceL funding,*
- *requiring less paperwork,*
- *including more days for planning and meeting with team members and fewer days of staff development,*
- *allowing more flexibility with staff development and instructional monies.*

RECOMMENDATIONS

Results of the evaluation of the ExceL grants program reveal that the program provides unique opportunities for campuses to implement cutting-edge, research-based programs designed especially for their student populations. The fact that the district has provided these innovative grants is an indication of its dedication to campus-based decision-making with the primary goal of addressing the needs of the specific students served. However, on the basis of results of this evaluation, it is evident that some campuses are not fully benefiting from these opportunities:

- Nine percent of grant funds allocated for year one were neither spent in year one nor in year two. Thirty percent of grant funds allocated for year two were not spent during year two.
- Some campuses used ExceL funds to purchase and/or support curriculum resources and/or instructional methods that were not aligned with the district curriculum.
- Overall, campuses did not return quantitative data to address 5% of the benchmarks they set for themselves, suggesting that some campuses did not fully evaluate their own programs.
- A small percentage of campuses met all of the benchmarks that they set for themselves during the 1997-98 school year.

On the basis of these results, two potential courses of action are recommended. The first course of action is more consistent with the spirit of the original ExceL grants program in that it places more responsibility on the individual campuses:

- The ExceL Through Innovation grants program should be competitive. In order to receive funding, campuses should agree to take responsibility for the following: spending all of their funds, utilizing curriculum resources and instructional methods that are aligned with the district curriculum, fully evaluating their programs, and striving to achieve the yearly benchmarks they set for themselves. Each year, renewed funding should be contingent on fulfillment of this agreement.

- Alternatively, campuses should be monitored more closely, and grant administrators and area superintendents should take measures to ensure that campuses spend all of their grant funds, utilize curriculum resources and instructional methods that are aligned with the district curriculum, fully evaluate their own programs, and strive to achieve the yearly benchmarks they have set for themselves.

Additional results indicate that, in many cases, campus staff were not aware of ExceL grant policies. Therefore, it is recommended that ExceL grant policies be communicated clearly and consistently to campuses. This work has already begun with required attendance of principals at grant policy overview workshops provided by district staff.

- Some campus staff reported a need for additional planning and meeting time and less staff development, yet grant administrators reported that campuses were free to use staff development funds for these purposes.
- Some campus staff reported a need for more flexibility between staff development and instructional funds, yet grant administrators reported that campuses were free to transfer staff development money into instructional funds and vice versa.
- Some campus staff expressed confusion regarding whether ExceL funds could be used to hire staff. ExceL funds can, in certain instances, be used to hire staff.
- Expectations regarding innovation in campus programs have not been documented in policy.

Finally, based on the following finding, a separate deadline should be set for year-round schools to submit their grant renewals.

- Some campus staff expressed concern regarding having to submit ExceL grant renewals for the upcoming school year before their current school year had ended.

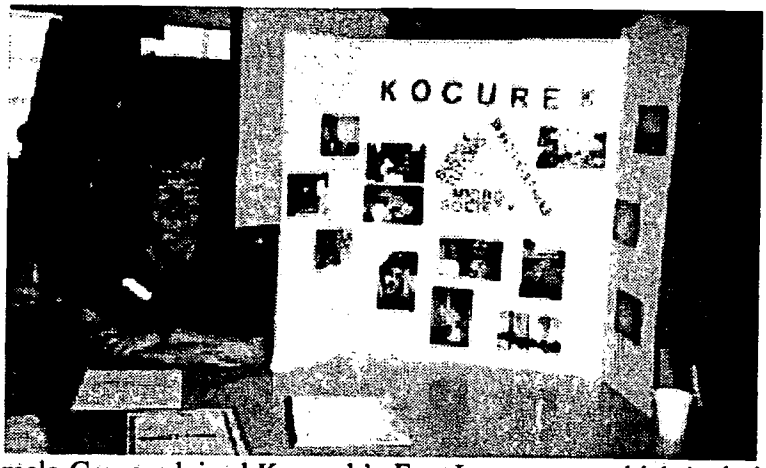
ExceL Showcase

On April 16, 1988, twenty-two ExceL Through Innovation campuses participated in the ExceL Showcase at the Professional Development Academy. Each campus was provided with an approximately 10' X 10' space and tables and chairs. TVs, VCRs, and slide projectors were also available. Campuses were encouraged to include students in their presentations. Door prizes were provided by local merchants including Good Books, Katz's Deli and Bar, Sweetish Hill Bakery, Teacher's Alley, Inc., and Z-Tejas Grill. Members of the School Board, district administrators, elementary staff members, students' families, and campus adopters received invitations to the event; approximately 300 people attended. Some of the Showcase presentations are pictured below and on the next page. The following elementary campuses presented at the ExceL Showcase in 1997-98:

Barrington	***Dawson***	***Oak Springs***	***Sunset Valley***
Becker	***Highland Park***	***Pease***	***Wooldridge***
Blanton	***Kocurek***	***Reilly***	***Wooten***
Brown	***Lee***	***Sims***	***Zavala***
Cunningham	***Linder***	***Summitt***	***Zilker***
Davis	***Maplewood***		

Students enjoyed exploring the ladybugs that Barrington Elementary brought to the ExceL Showcase.

Showcase attendees learned about the reading program at Zavala Elementary.



Pamela Gau explained Kocurek's ExceL program, which includes buddy tutors, Investigations, and a micro-society.

Staff from Summitt Elementary were happy to show off some of the materials used in their "Reach for the Stars" language arts lab, including a large collection of puppets.

ExceL Programs by Campus

ALLAN ELEMENTARY

Total 1996-97 ExceL budget: $47,145 ($47,571 were spent); total 1997-98 ExceL budget: $43,470 ($34,095 were spent). Instructional program included technology-integrated, vertically-aligned curriculum; purchase of books and other materials; and parent workshops. Staff development focused on technology and a wide variety of other topics. Four of five benchmarks were met.

Program Benchmarks and Benchmark Attainment Results

1. Seventy percent of students will pass Reading TAAS.

- Seventy-seven percent of students passed Reading TAAS.

2. Seventy percent of students will pass Mathematics TAAS.

- Sixty-nine percent of students passed Mathematics TAAS.

3. Seventy percent of students will pass Writing TAAS.

- Eighty-seven percent of students passed Writing TAAS.

4. Thirty percent of parents will participate in an ongoing parent training program.

- Approximately 35% of Allan parents attended various activities including Family Literacy Nights, a study trip to San Antonio for parents, Family Math Nights, Computer Literacy for parents, Report Card and Student Recognition Night, and Home Literacy for parents.

5. The parent training program will be expanded to include parents of second through third grade students.

- Invitations to Family Literacy Nights were extended to parents of second through third grade students. Approximately 14 parents of second through third grade students attended the literacy training workshops and participated in the Home Literacy program by checking out books and cassette players to use at home. Several parents of third grade students also participated in the study trip to San Antonio.

Instructional Program

In 1997-98, *Building Blocks to Student Learning*, the ExceL program at Allan Elementary, had four major components: technology-integrated curriculum, materials for students, parent training, and professional development.

A vertically-aligned technology-integrated curriculum was developed and implemented. Teachers planned developmentally appropriate units of study based on a balanced reading program that included giving students multiple opportunities to read books, to independently reread books, to have books read to them, and to have whole class or small group reading lessons in their classrooms. In each unit of study, students had opportunities to

learn mathematics concepts through manipulatives and literature. This was accomplished using the Landmark Mathematics Program, a program that examines the role of language in solving mathematical problems and lends itself to the integration of reading and Mathematics. The intersession curriculum also combined reading, mathematics, and technology, with the fourth grade intersession curriculum including a special emphasis on writing. Intersession activities were designed to extend student growth on required TAAS Reading, Mathematics and Writing objectives through enrichment activities. Supplies and materials were ordered for both the November and March intersessions to allow for the extended year program.

To promote reading, a reading resource room containing books, magazines, and newspapers was developed by the Allan Literacy Committee. Library books were purchased, and books on CD-ROM were made available to all students in the computer lab, the library, and the classrooms. Students in grades three through five began using Accelerated Reader software to enhance their classroom reading. "Texas Bluebonnet Award" books were purchased for intermediate classrooms. A variety of mathematics manipulatives and teacher support materials was ordered, beginning with grades three through five. A mathematics resource room was established to house the manipulatives. Mathematics software was purchased for use with classroom computers. A new file server was purchased for the computer lab along with necessary memory and solution tool kits. CD-ROM drives were purchased for existing computers. Classrooms were provided with software for student research. Two computer video cards were purchased for classroom instruction and for teacher and parent training. Two VCRs were purchased for use with multimedia computers that were purchased with funds from the Academics 2000 Grant, and were used in classrooms to allow students to create video projects and presentations. Internet service was provided for student use in the computer lab. Finally, 100 books for use with the Accelerated Reader Program were purchased in 1996-97, with more copies purchased in 1997-98, allowing students to self-monitor their reading progress.

Parents had multiple opportunities to attend workshops that addressed student needs as indicated by TAAS scores. For example, parents attended "make-it and take-it" workshops where they learned how to make a variety of language and mathematics materials and games. Family Math Nights and Family Literacy Sessions also were held.

Finally, in 1997-98, teachers in grades one through five administered informal pre- and post-reading inventories. Results from the testing indicated that approximately 30% of the students in grades one through five were reading below grade level. The total percent of students reading below grade level was lowest at first grade (22%) and second grade (22%).

Staff Development

Professional staff at Allan participated in a variety of training including two graduate level courses: Computer Literacy (33 teachers attended for one semester) and Reading Methods (11 teachers attended for one semester). In addition, staff members attended computer technology training (33 teachers attended 10 sessions); Accelerated Reader, ClarisWorks, and other software training (2 teachers attended 33 one-hour sessions); PALM training (16 teachers attended for 2 hours); Investigations training (5 teachers attended for 9

days); Mathematics Problem Solving Blueprint training (22 teachers attended for 2 hours on two days); and writing training (22 teachers attended for 2 hours on 3 days). Also, professional materials were purchased for the library.

ALLISON ELEMENTARY

Total 1996-97 ExceL budget: $53,255 ($52,517 were spent); total 1997-98 ExceL budget: $48,930 ($14,029 were spent). Instructional program included phonics instruction, Electronic Bookshelf, reading programs, and TAAS incentives. Staff development focused on reading, writing, and Investigations. All benchmarks were met.

Program Benchmarks and Benchmark Attainment Results

1. Sixty-five to seventy percent of students will pass Mathematics and Reading TAAS.

- Seventy-seven percent of students passed Mathematics TAAS.
- Seventy-seven percent of students passed Reading TAAS.

2. Forty percent of all stakeholders will participate in two parent training activities.

- According to sign-in sheets and teacher records, at least 45% of parents attended two parent meetings.

3. Four parent TAAS meetings will be held.

- Four parent TAAS meetings were held (three evening and one afternoon) and were attended by third through fifth grade parents.

4. Ninety-five percent of parents whose children did not pass TAAS will have a one-on-one meeting with a faculty member.

- Parents of children who failed the TAAS met with teachers. The meetings schedules were closely monitored by campus administrative staff.

Instructional Program

The ExceL program at Allison Elementary focused on reading and mathematics achievement, technology, and parent involvement. Due to low scores on the Writing portion of the TAAS and to teacher observations of deficiencies in students' conventional spelling, it was decided that a school-wide phonics program was needed. A team of teachers researched various phonics programs currently in use in AISD schools and made site visits to observe these programs in action. The team decided that the Spalding Phonics program was most appropriate for Allison. In the fall of 1997, the entire faculty received three days of training in Spalding Phonics to align the phonetic component of the reading program school-wide and to ensure implementation of the program.

According to the principal, although there was an increasing number of students reading on grade level, many upper grade students lacked the motivation and stamina needed to read independently. After brainstorming, the staff decided to look into the Electronic Bookshelf System (EBS). EBS is a reading motivation and management system linking real literature and the computer. Students working below grade level self-select appropriate books

to read from the EBS book list and then take a computer-generated test, formatted like TAAS, on the material they read. Parents were involved with EBS by helping motivate their children to reach their benchmarks, according to the principal.

Parent/teacher conferences emphasized students' TAAS achievement. A parent specialist was available to analyze and discuss TAAS scores with teachers. Teams of teachers trained a core group of parents on how to address TAAS strategies. These parents led a TAAS discussion group for other parents. Four TAAS meetings were held: an introductory meeting, and three meetings with third, fourth, and fifth grade parents separately. Finally, two parent training activities were held: parents made sticker books to use in reading with their primary grade children at home; and parents learned to cut out ads from the newspaper to use in reading with their children at home.

The Early Bird Reading Program was held at 6:45 a.m. each morning, providing reading materials for students to enjoy before class. During this time, students were free to read alone, with other students, or with teachers. Three teachers supervised the students, and some parents participated in the program.

In the Dragon Boosters program, each faculty member "adopted" two third-grade students to mentor during the school year. Mentors spent at least 30 minutes with the pair each week, covering a series of TAAS objectives over the course of the school year. TAAS strategies were reinforced through the Kamico Instructional Media Diagnostic Series. In the Dragon Works program, students wrote books and created and published monthly newspapers. Completed books and newspapers were displayed in the library for check out.

Several school activities focused on math. For example, a consultant was hired to pinpoint the mathematics strategies most lacking among Allison students. Based on these findings, a team of four teachers developed a curriculum that focused on these strategies; this mathematics curriculum was aligned and implemented. In addition, an afterschool Mathematics TAAS club that began in the fall of 1996, continued during 1997-98.

Other ExceL activities included ordering TAAS release tests for administration to students twice before TAAS. Results of the tests were used to pinpoints students' areas of weakness. Investigations manipulatives and materials for the Estrellita Phonics Program were purchased. The technology curriculum was aligned and implemented, and alignment of the writing curriculum was begun.

Finally, the 1997-98 program included a TAAS Encouragement Program. The fourth and fifth graders who passed the TAAS received a t-shirt and were taken to Celebration Station. Students who earned academic recognition also received a trophy.

Staff Development

All professional staff attended TAAS Writing training (one day). TAAS Reading training was provided for prekindergarten through first grade teachers (one half-day), and TAAS Reading training was provided for second through fifth grade teachers (one half-day). Five teachers attended Estrellita training (three hours). All faculty attended a one-day workshop focusing on children with reading difficulties. All faculty also attended One-on-one Reading/Writing Tutoring Strategies training (one day). Finally, some professional staff received follow-up Investigations training.

ANDREWS ELEMENTARY

Total 1996-97 ExceL budget: $50,275 ($41,114 were spent); total 1997-98 ExceL budget: $46,650 ($28,465 were spent). Instructional program included Accelerated Reader and campus mathematics lab. Staff development focused on training of choice, gifted/talented, and language acquisition. All benchmarks were met.

Program Benchmarks and Benchmark Attainment

1. Fourth and fifth grade students will achieve 70% pass rates on the Reading TAAS with no subgroup achieving less than a 40% pass rate.

- Fourth grade students achieved an 85% pass rate on the Reading TAAS.
- Fifth grade students achieved a 74% pass rate on the Reading TAAS.
- No subgroup (African American, Hispanic, White, Other, Low Income, Male, Female) achieved less than a 40% pass rate.

2. The third grade Reading TAAS pass rate will increase 10 percentage points.

- The third grade Reading TAAS pass rate increased 24 percentage points.

3. Fourth and fifth grade students will achieve 70% pass rates on the Mathematics TAAS with no subgroup achieving less than a 40% pass rate.

- Fourth grade students achieved a 76% pass rate on the Mathematics TAAS.
- Fifth grade students achieved a 74% pass rate on the Mathematics TAAS.
- No subgroup achieved less than a 40% pass rate.

4. The third grade Mathematics TAAS pass rate will increase 10 percentage points.

- The third grade Mathematics TAAS pass rate increased 21 percentage points.

Instructional Program

The success of the first year of *Andrews Achievement in Mathematics and Reading*, the ExceL program at Andrews, was demonstrated by Andrews' 1996-97 Mathematics TAAS scores, according to the principal. However, Reading TAAS scores remained stable or declined. As a result, the primary focus of the program was shifted to reading achievement, and the secondary focus became to maintain or to improve mathematics achievement.

A teaching assistant was hired to facilitate expanded use of the Accelerated Reader software program and to implement a student recognition component for improvement in reading comprehension. Students earned points for scoring 60% or higher on Accelerated Reader test questions. Students cashed in their points for prizes at the end of the year. The teaching assistant maintained the six computer servers, all of which had the Accelerated Reader program on them, and installed new Accelerated Reader banks on the computer servers, as needed.

A full-time teaching assistant was hired to staff the mathematics lab and to assist teachers with mathematics materials, literature, and software. The teaching assistant aided in the transition to Investigations. All classes visited the mathematics lab once per week for

approximately one hour While in the mathematics lab, students worked on various projects relating to the TAAS objectives being learned in the classrooms. The mathematics lab included computers with a pilot version of KAMICO software for third graders and it was also used for coordinating Investigations for grades one through five.

Other activities included conducting summer school for 120 students focusing on mathematics and reading. In addition, first and second grade KAMICO materials and second grade Problem-Solving Connections tests (in English and Spanish) were purchased.

Staff Development

Professional staff members were free to choose from national or regional conferences, Professional Development Academy offerings, or workshops at the Region XIII Service Center for three days of their staff development. In addition, all professional staff members participated in the Austin Interfaith Walk for Success (half-day), and Language Acquisition training (half-day). Finally, all professional staff members received two days of training in the areas of ESL or gifted/talented education.

BARRINGTON ELEMENTARY

Total 1996-97 ExceL budget: $45,145 ($27,566 were spent); total 1997-98 ExceL budget: $41,970 ($24,711 were spent). Instructional program included campus science program, KAMICO testing, and parent activities. Staff development focused on cultural diversity, science curriculum alignment, and Investigations. Six of ten benchmarks were met.

Program Benchmarks and Benchmark Attainment Results

1. Mathematics TAAS scores of third, fourth, and fifth graders will increase eight percentage points.

- Mathematics TAAS scores of third graders decreased seven percentage points.
- Mathematics TAAS scores of fourth graders decreased nine percentage points.
- Mathematics TAAS scores of fifth graders increased seven percentage points.

2. Mathematics TAAS scores of sixth graders will remain the same as last year (95% passing).

- Mathematics TAAS scores of sixth graders increased to 100%.

3. Reading TAAS scores of third, fourth, and fifth graders will increase five percentage points.

- Reading TAAS scores of third graders decreased three percentage points.
- Reading TAAS scores of fourth graders increased four percentage points.
- Reading TAAS scores of fifth graders decreased three percentage points.

4. Reading TAAS scores of sixth graders will remain the same as last year (95% passing).

- Reading TAAS scores of sixth graders increased to 100%.

5. Writing TAAS scores of fourth graders will increase eight percentage points.

- Writing TAAS scores of fourth graders increased one percentage point.

6. Parental involvement will increase from 42% to 52%.

- Parental involvement increased by seven percentage points (from 42% to 49%) for PTA and cultural activities.

7. Seventy-five percent of parents will sign and use take-home folders.

- Eighty-seven percent of parents consistently signed and used the school-wide take-home folders.

8. One hundred seventeen parents will attend workshops/family nights.

- Attendance at workshops and family nights ranged from 130-350 parents.

9. At least twenty parents will be enrolled in the parents literacy program each semester.

- Forty-seven parents enrolled in Tuesday/Thursday evening literacy classes.

10. Twenty percent of parents will participate in "Ethnic Heritage" activities.

- Three-hundred and fifty out of nine-hundred students' parents (approximately 20%) attended the International Fair, Cinco de Mayo, Pakistanian Celebrations, and Juneteenth.

Instructional Program

Science Links is the ExceL program developed to address the need among Barrington students to increase non-fiction reading and writing skills. In 1997-98 the program was implemented in all grades, and additional curriculum kits were purchased. A focus on mathematics was added: mathematics curriculum alignment began, and Investigations was implemented.

Science Links was the name given to the set of science-related curricula (e.g., Great Explorations in Math and Science, Science and Technology for Children, Full Option Science System, Activities for Integrating Math and Science) chosen for Barrington students based on extensive TAAS-related testing. The *Science Links* program was designed to increase students' abilities to problem-solve and to read and write non-fiction. Analysis of test results showed that, compared with all other Barrington students, Barrington's African American students were behind in these areas. *Science Links* included opportunities for all students to participate in growing plants from seeds in the school greenhouse, to plant the plants in their outdoor class gardens, and to harvest the plants. The program continued throughout the school year and during the intersession. Barrington's science coordinator was in charge of implementing the program and trained the staff to run the program independently.

In 1997-98, a major portion of the ExceL grant funds were used to purchase Great Explorations in Math and Science (GEMS) units for prekindergarten through fifth grade. Teachers' guides, consumables, and all necessary materials that teachers need to incorporate hands-on experiments and activities into the classroom science curriculum were purchased. The GEMS units combine free exploration, drama, art, and literature with science and mathematics to give children positive and effective learning experiences. Some units

implemented in 1997-98 included Ladybugs (kindergarten), Liquids (first grade), and a Build-it Festival (second grade).

Students were tested every quarter, three times with KAMICO and once with a previously administered TAAS test. Results were used to determine the effectiveness of current programs and to make changes. Intersessions, which were attended largely by African American students, focused on these areas as well.

Daily take-home folders were used to improve school-home communication. Four parent workshops were held. Cultural awareness programs such as an International Fair, a Cinco de Mayo celebration, and Black History events also took place. Parent literacy training was provided for all interested parents. Other parent activities included "Meet and Greet", parent orientation, PTA meetings with conversations, Interfaith Facilitating Team, and Cultural Diversity training.

Staff Development

Professional staff at Barrington received a variety of training including Cultural Diversity Positive Climate for Children, presented by the cultural diversity committee, and Seven Habits of Highly Effective People, presented by the academic achievement cadre. In addition, professional staff attended Science Alignment training. All third through fifth grade teachers and all other grade-level chairpersons attended Investigations training. After the training, the grade-level chairpersons provided training for the other teachers in their grades.

BARTON HILLS ELEMENTARY

Total 1996-97 ExceL budget: $17,100 ($17,125 were spent); total 1997-98 ExceL budget: $15,900 ($11,180 were spent). Instructional program focused on mathematics, integrated curriculum, and community service. Staff development focused on science, mathematics, writing, and learning styles. One of two benchmarks was met; one benchmark was partially met.

Program Benchmarks and Benchmark Attainment Results

1. Students in every grade will achieve a 90% pass rate or above on the Mathematics TAAS.

- Seventy-three percent of third grade students passed the Mathematics TAAS.
- Ninety-three percent of fourth grade students passed the Mathematics TAAS.
- Ninety-eight percentage of fifth grade students passed the Mathematics TAAS.
- Ninety-five percent of sixth grade students passed the Mathematics TAAS.

2. Seventy-five percent of teachers will use the integrated curriculum in the classroom.

- At least seventy-five percent of teachers used the integrated curriculum in the classroom.

Instructional Program

The ExceL program at Barton Hills Elementary School focused on two areas: mathematics and integrated curriculum. A campus decision was made to use the Michael Eaton Mathematics program as a supplemental resource only, rather than as a primary

curriculum resource. Instead, three other primary curriculum resources were used: Mathland in kindergarten through third grade, Investigations in fourth and fifth grade, and Connected Mathematics in sixth grade. Mathland materials, texts, and additional mathematics manipulatives were purchased. In the fall, a Mathematics Information Night was held for parents. One teacher presented an overview of mathematics at Barton Hills to the whole group of parents. Then, parents visited smaller tables where teachers spoke about the mathematics program by grade level.

The Barton Hills tutoring/enrichment center served selected fourth through sixth graders beginning in January 1997. The Campus Advisory Council and the PTA worked together to develop guidelines, training materials, and a plan for recruiting community volunteers. The center provided individual and small group assistance for students with difficulty in mathematics or reading. This year, the center was expanded to include third graders experiencing academic difficulty. Students who scored in the lower quartile on TAAS were invited to a week-long intensive TAAS Summer Camp.

An integrated curriculum called STAR (Serving Together, Accepting Responsibility) was developed and provided all students with opportunities to grow as responsible, productive members of the community. The curriculum focused on problem-solving skills that could be extended to real world situations and learning experiences. The curriculum also focused on the theme of social responsibility. Teachers used in-service days to get training in and/or to develop the integrated curriculum. An innovative grant fund was established for materials and supplies. As part of the STAR program some teachers guided their students, through use of the inquiry process, in deciding which community service organization the class would support.

In 1997-98, a variety of class projects were completed. First grade students visited an assisted living home. The students sang, performed, and talked with residents. Third grade students earned money at their individual homes, then combined their funds and purchased food for a local food bank. Some sixth grade students volunteered at the Humane Society, where they walked, bathed, and played with dogs. Other sixth grade students designed a non-smoking billboard that is currently displayed on South Lamar Boulevard.

The classes chose names and roles for their places in the STAR Galaxy to define the action the classes would take to support their chosen community services. The STAR Galaxy will, by the end of the fourth year, be a place in school where members of the community can come to shop, see artwork and photos, experience children's theater, hear music, etc. relating to the students' community service efforts.

As part of the integrated curriculum, the Star Program focused on a different "STAR Skill" every nine weeks including *respect, responsibility, cooperation*, and *empathy*. Students read books and participated in activities involving the STAR Skills. Students who displayed one of the skills had their name placed on a star, and the star was hung in the Star Galaxy.

Also, as part of the integrated curriculum, a teacher-developed greenbelt focus was implemented. Because Barton Hills is located adjacent to the Barton Creek Greenbelt, it was decided that this natural resource would make an excellent focus for the integrated curriculum. As a result, each class chose an individual focus involving the greenbelt. Students read books and participated in a variety of activities involving the greenbelt.

Staff Development

Professional staff attended Multiple Intelligences training (one day). In addition, staff attended training in mathematics (one day), Authentic Assessment (one day), writing (five days), and science/writing/mathematics at the University of Texas (one day). Finally, some professional staff attended Investigations training at the Professional Development Academy.

BECKER ELEMENTARY

Total 1996-97 ExceL budget: $33,255 ($29,849 were spent); total 1997-98 ExceL budget: $30,930 ($24,118 were spent). Instructional program included the Becker Science Center and zookeeper program, mathematics coordinator, and family mathematics/science nights. Staff development included a variety of training including Investigations, gifted/talented training, and Capital City Writes. Six of eight benchmarks were met.

Benchmarks and Benchmark Attainment Results

1. Third grade students will achieve an 80% pass rate on the Mathematics TAAS.

- Third graders achieved an 87% pass rate on the Mathematics TAAS.

2. Fourth grade students will achieve a 80% pass rate on the Mathematics TAAS.

- Fourth graders achieved a 69% pass rate on the Mathematics TAAS.

3. Fifth grade students will achieve an 80% pass rate on the Mathematics TAAS.

- Fifth graders achieved an 81% pass rate on the Mathematics TAAS.

4. Third grade students will achieve a 80% pass rate on the Reading TAAS.

- Third graders achieved an 87% pass rate on the Reading TAAS.

5. Fourth grade students will achieve a 80% pass rate on the Reading TAAS.

- Fourth grade students achieved an 89% pass rate on the Reading TAAS.

6. Fifth grade students will achieve a 80% pass rate on the Reading TAAS.

- Fifth grade students achieved an 86% pass rate on the Reading TAAS.

7. PTA membership will increase by 25%.

- No data were returned to support attainment of this benchmark.

8. Twenty percent of parents will attend Family Math Nights.

- More than 20% of Becker parents participated in school events including Mathematics Nights.

Instructional Program

During 1996-97, the ExceL program at Becker Elementary focused on increasing mathematics achievement and fostering parent involvement. During the 1997-98 school year, the focus was expanded to all content areas.

The science center at Becker is a free-standing building filled with a wide variety of rescued exotic and domestic animals including, but not limited to, several full-grown iguanas, a three-legged prairie dog, snakes weighing as much as 70 pounds, African spiny mice, and several different kinds of colorful tropical birds. The center presents a variety of exciting learning opportunities for students, parents, community members, and school staff.

A science technician was hired to develop the science center. The technician taught students and community members to calculate the costs of the science center, and helped them to organize fund raisers in support of the center. Students and community members designed and built cages for the animals, and the science technician developed and implemented a system for animal food propagation. In addition, the science technician created a student/parent care system and an animal check-out system. Parents and students learned to teach classes about the animals and to independently maintain the science center so that at the end of the grant, the center can be fully maintained without the science technician.

The science center was used in a variety of ways. Prekindergarten through third grade classes, including bilingual and special education classes, visited the science center for one hour each week. However, fourth and fifth graders were so busy that they did not always have a weekly visit to the science center. Students in third through fifth grades were able to apply to be Zookeepers, who were in charge of feeding and watering the animals. In order to be Zookeepers, students had to obtain parents permission and two teacher recommendations. Sometimes, students who required individual attention received one-on-one instruction at the science center. In these cases, the science center served as a reward, and students were required to maintain acceptable grades to continue their work in the science center.

In 1997-98, the science technician also served as parent trainer and consultant to staff in the utilization of the center. In addition to science center development, the science technician trained Becker community members in water quality studies of nearby Bouldin Creek. Finally, the science technician trained parents in laboratory skills so they could assist with student experiments.

A mathematics coordinator was hired to focus on the integration of mathematics and science using the science center. In 1997-98, mathematics instruction focused on problem-solving. Students were actively engaged in measuring, estimating and forming reasonable conclusions using mathematics and science manipulatives as part of Investigations, which was implemented in grades one through five. Students' inductive thinking skills were developed through mathematics and science journal writing and portfolios, which also are a part of Investigations. Discovery boxes were created for check-out.

Two Family Mathematics/Science Nights took place in 1997-98. Parents took home mathematics kits from the first meeting. These clear plastic boxes included items such as spinners, clock faces, dominoes, packs of cards, tape measures, and number cubes. Parents received incentives for attending these family nights and for returning mathematics kits with

completed tasks. Becker staff invited parents to participate with their children in school-wide fishing and adventure clubs.

Staff Development

All first through fifth grade teachers attended Investigations training (three days). In addition, staff received follow-up support to strengthen interdisciplinary teaching skills. Other staff development funds were used to provide training in Gifted and Talented certification, Making Healthy Choices curriculum, and attendance at the ExceL Showcase. Finally, during the summer of 1998, teachers received stipends for training, such as Capital City Writes.

BLACKSHEAR ELEMENTARY

Total 1996-97 ExceL budget: $62,200 ($51,311 were spent); total 1997-98 ExceL budget: $56,700 ($18,357 were spent). Instructional program included Saturday TAAS enrichment, family activities, and behavior/achievement incentives. Staff development focused on school climate and strategic mastery. Two of six benchmarks were partially met.

Program Benchmarks and Benchmark Attainment Results

1. Third and fourth grade students will maintain last year's pass rates (third=52%, fourth=56%) on the Mathematics TAAS.

- Thirty-one percent of third grade students passed the Mathematics TAAS.
- Fifty-four percent of fourth grade students passed the Mathematics TAAS.

2. Fifth and sixth grade students will achieve a 50% pass rate on the Mathematics TAAS.

- Fifth grade students achieved a fifty-two percent pass rate on the Mathematics TAAS.
- Sixth grade students achieved a forty-eight percent pass rate on the Mathematics TAAS.

3. Third and fourth grade students will maintain last year's pass rates (third=52%, fourth=61%) on the Reading TAAS.

- Fifty-six percent of third grade students passed the Reading TAAS.
- Fifty-nine percent of fourth grade students passed the Reading TAAS.

4. Fifth and sixth grade students will achieve a 50% pass rate on the Reading TAAS.

- Fifth grade students achieved a 47% pass rate on the Reading TAAS.
- Sixth grade students achieved a 44% pass rate on the Reading TAAS.

5. Twenty-five percent of parents will attend Family Math Night.

- This benchmark was not met. On average, 25-50 parents attended family meetings.

6. Twenty-five percent of parents will attend Tuesday night parent educational meetings.

- This benchmark was not met. On average, 25-50 parents attended family meetings.

Instructional Program

The ExceL program at Blackshear focused on mathematics and reading achievement and parent involvement. Family Educational Nights, for example, Family Math Nights, were held once each month. Families were given packets to take home and complete. Also, families were given opportunities to check out mathematics materials throughout the year.

Students identified by teachers as being at-risk for failing TAAS received invitations to Saturday School beginning in January. Saturday School lasted two and one-half hours each week and included mathematics and reading instruction. Students took TAAS practice tests and received a snack. ExceL money purchased supplies and materials for this program.

Other ExceL activities included a recognition club for the A/B Mathematics Honor Roll. In addition, students who exhibited excellent behavior or who (last year) achieved certain levels on the Accelerated Reader program received the opportunity to purchase goods from the School Award Store. Unfortunately, in 1997-98, Accelerated Reader was not functional due to campus construction that interfered with the network. Tuesday night parent/community meetings were held. Parents received donated incentives for continued attendance at these meetings.

Staff Development

Professional staff members attended training in Strategic Mastery (two days) and Creating a Positive School Climate for Children (one day). However, staff were not able to attend scheduled training in Multiple Intelligences because substitute teachers were not obtained.

BLANTON ELEMENTARY

Total 1996-97 ExceL budget: $51,035 ($49,848 were spent); total 1997-98 ExceL budget: $47,010 ($23,557 were spent). Instructional program focused on TAAS enrichment, curriculum support materials, community activities, and TAAS incentives. Staff development included Investigations, balanced literacy, and training of staff members' choice. Fourteen of twenty-one benchmarks were met; data regarding three of the benchmarks could not be presented because they pertained to student groups consisting of five or fewer students.

Program Benchmarks and Benchmark Attainment

1. Mathematics TAAS scores of third grade students will increase 9 percentage points.

- The Mathematics TAAS pass rate of third grade students increased 9 percentage points.

2. Mathematics TAAS scores of fourth grade students will increase 8 percentage points.

- The Mathematics TAAS pass rate of fourth grade students increased 11 percentage points.

3. Mathematics TAAS scores of fifth grade students will increase 7 percentage points.

- The Mathematics TAAS pass rate of fifth grade students increased 12 percentage points.

4. Mathematics TAAS scores of African American third grade students will increase 13 percentage points.

- The Mathematics TAAS pass rate of African American third grade students increased 16 percentage points.

5. Mathematics TAAS scores of Hispanic third grade students will increase 7 percentage points.

- The Mathematics TAAS pass rate of Hispanic third grade students decreased 4 percentage points.

6. Mathematics TAAS scores of White third grade students will increase 7 percentage points.

- The Mathematics TAAS pass rate of White third grade students remained 80%.

7. Mathematics TAAS scores of African American fourth grade students will increase 11 percentage points.

- The Mathematics TAAS pass rate of African American fourth grade students increased 13 percentage points.

8. Mathematics TAAS scores of Hispanic fourth grade students will increase 7 percentage points.

- The Mathematics TAAS pass rate of Hispanic fourth grade students increased 1 percentage point.

9. Mathematics TAAS scores of White fourth grade students will increase 7 percentage points.

- Because there were only four students in this group, the pass rate is not included in this report.

10. Mathematics TAAS scores of African American fifth grade students will increase 7 percentage points.

- The Mathematics TAAS pass rate of African American fifth grade students increased 16 percentage points.

11. Mathematics TAAS scores of Hispanic fifth grade students will increase 7 percentage points.

- The Mathematics TAAS pass rate of Hispanic fifth grade students increased 11 percentage points.

12. Mathematics TAAS scores of White fifth grade students will be maintained above the 90% passing level.

- Because there were only three students in this group, the pass rate is not included in this report.

13. Reading TAAS scores of third grade students will increase 11 percentage points.

- The Reading TAAS pass rate of third grade students increased 13 percentage points.

14. Reading TAAS scores of fourth grade students will increase 4 percentage points.

- The Reading TAAS pass rate of fourth grade students increased 7 percentage points.

15. Reading TAAS scores of fifth grade students will increase 4 percentage points.

- The Reading TAAS pass rate of fifth grade students increased 3 percentage points.

16. Reading TAAS scores of African American third grade students will increase 10 percentage points.

- The Reading TAAS pass rate of African American third grade students increased 22 percentage points.

17. Reading TAAS scores of Hispanic third grade students will increase 15 percentage points.

- The Reading TAAS pass rate of Hispanic third grade students increased 16 percentage points.

18. Reading TAAS scores of White third grade students will increase 3 percentage points.

- The Reading TAAS pass rate of White third grade students remained 80%.

19. Reading TAAS scores of African American fourth grade students will increase 4 percentage points.

- The Reading TAAS pass rate of African American fourth grade students increased 11 percentage points.

20. Reading TAAS scores of Hispanic fourth grade students will increase four percentage points.

- The Reading TAAS pass rate of Hispanic fourth grade students increased 9 percentage points.

21. Reading TAAS scores of African American fifth grade students will increase 3 percentage points.

- The Reading TAAS pass rate of African American fifth grade students increased 1 percentage point.

22. Reading TAAS scores of Hispanic fifth grade students will increase 8 percentage points.

- The Reading TAAS pass rate of Hispanic fifth grade students increased 16 percentage points.

23. Reading TAAS scores of White fifth grade students will be maintained.

- Because there were only three students in this group, the pass rate is not included in this report.

24. Parent participation in school activities will increase to 25% of the parents actively participating by the year 1998.

- According to the principal, this benchmark was met; at least 200 parents participated in community nights.

Instructional Program

Blanton Elementary began its ExceL program by analyzing TAAS results. Staff received intensive training in mathematics and reading instruction, and lesson plans were written each year to include specific TAAS objectives. The staff determined appropriate achievement expectations and benchmarks for each grade. The campus curriculum was aligned with TAAS objectives. Teachers pinpointed techniques that were most successful in teaching specific TAAS objectives, and these techniques were applied in individualized course instruction for targeted students. In 1997-98, *Every Student, Every Day-High Expectations*, the ExceL program at Blanton Elementary, focused on academic support for low-performing students, curriculum support materials, community support, TAAS motivation, and staff development.

An afterschool enrichment program was offered to low-performing students. Counselors contacted families to assure that students who most needed the extra academic support would receive it. Enrichment activities were offered twice per week for an hour each day with a capacity of 150 students per session. Teachers used this time to reinforce concepts taught during the instructional day with games, manipulatives, dramatizations, and small group problem-solving. University of Texas Neighborhood Longhorns provided tutorials in language arts and mathematics biweekly for third through fifth grade students. A TAAS support teacher was hired with campus Title I grant funds to monitor student progress and to work with individuals or small groups on TAAS objectives. The TAAS teacher also provided assistance and monitored the classroom teachers' efforts toward TAAS preparation. The third grade students attended classes that focused on objectives they had failed to master. Training was provided for all staff in classroom management and non-violent crisis intervention either on Saturdays or after school; ExceL Grant stipends were paid for participation. This training helped teachers increase academic focus and decrease classroom disruptions, according to the principal. A citizenship committee developed a school-wide citizenship plan after classroom management training was provided. Common Bonds training was provided to all staff, who were paid for participation. A Balanced Literacy Training Module was taught, and stipends were paid for participation. Four teachers acted as mentor

teachers/trainers and helped other teachers who were having difficulty teaching TAAS objectives.

Materials were purchased to enhance instruction. For example, sets of Gourmet Press, Pathway Press, and KAMICO materials were purchased for each classroom for use with specific TAAS objectives. TAAS release tests were purchased and administered three times during the year at appropriate grade levels. Results were used to develop a plan to increase the rate of success on TAAS. Mathematics manipulatives and language arts materials, including emergent reader books in Spanish and phonics materials, were purchased.

Efforts were made to help parents and community members develop awareness of their critical role in campus success. Invitations were extended to parents and neighborhood residents to attend four community night meetings to discuss the TAAS objectives and the Blanton TAAS performance profile, and to help parents learn how to support their children in reading and mathematics in grades PK-5. Parents learned to use real-life materials to reinforce their children's academic skills by making and taking home materials, and by checking out appropriate learning games and skills-reinforcement materials for use at home. A workshop on how to read to your child was conducted during the first family night. Food was served at the community night meetings that were held in conjunction with the after school enrichment program. Family Learning Night occurred in the spring and included a variety of mathematics games and activities designed to engage children and their families. A newsletter was published to share mathematics and reading ideas with families. Students and classes contributed ideas to the newsletter as well as assisted in its production.

Blanton students in grades three through five were recognized at a TAAS Banquet for passing all parts of the TAAS. The banquet was held at the Doubletree Hotel on the evening of May 30, 1998. Students who passed the TAAS and their parents were invited. A celebrity guest speaker, Ken Harvey of the Washington Redskins, addressed the audience. Students received a TAAS Master t-shirt and a certificate for their accomplishments. In addition, one of the school's adopters photographed the celebrity with each student. Each student received a copy of his or her photograph, autographed by the celebrity and displayed in an attractive holder.

Teachers used a variety of innovative teaching techniques. For example, an especially strong group of fifth grade teachers modeled mathematics teaching techniques for third grade teachers. Two or three days per week, fourth grade classes were taught writing as one large group by an especially strong writing teacher. Then, the students returned to their individual classrooms to complete the lessons. Teachers cooperatively planned thematic units. Teachers also received training in guided reading, running records for identification of students in need, and other strategies to help students become more successful readers. Teachers emphasized providing individualized courses of instruction for students.

Staff Development

Kindergarten and Prekindergarten teachers attended the Kindergarten Summit (one day) and received additional training of their choice in the area of education of young children. First through fifth grade teachers attended Investigations training (five days) and

received one day of training of their choice to support campus initiatives. Finally, some teachers received two days of balanced literacy training.

BOONE ELEMENTARY

Total 1996-97 ExceL budget: $67,430 ($54,745 were spent); total 1997-98 ExceL budget: $61,980 ($25,852 were spent). Instructional program included a publishing company, a reading resource room, and afterschool Mathematics TAAS tutoring. Staff development focused on critical thinking skills, Investigations, and KAMICO. Thirteen of twenty-five benchmarks were met.

Programs Benchmarks and Benchmark Attainment Results

1. Third grade students will achieve an 85% pass rate on the Mathematics TAAS.

- Third grade students achieved an 80% pass rate on the Mathematics TAAS .

2. Fourth grade students will achieve an 84% pass rate on the Mathematics TAAS.

- Fourth grade students achieved an 83% pass rate on the Mathematics TAAS.

3. Fifth grade students will achieve a 78% pass rate on the Mathematics TAAS.

- Fifth grade students achieved an 86% pass rate on the Mathematics TAAS.

4. Third grade African American students will achieve a 70% pass rate on the Mathematics TAAS.

- Third grade students achieved a 40% pass rate on the Mathematics TAAS.

5. Fourth grade African American students will achieve a 58% pass rate on the Mathematics TAAS.

- Fourth grade African American students achieved a 67% pass rate on the Mathematics TAAS.

6. Fifth grade African American students will achieve a 66% pass rate on the Mathematics TAAS.

- Fifth grade African American students achieved a 75% pass rate on the Mathematics TAAS.

7. Third grade Hispanic students will achieve an 84% pass rate on the Mathematics TAAS.

- Third grade Hispanic students achieved a 76% pass rate on the Mathematics TAAS.

8. Fourth grade Hispanic students will achieve an 84% pass rate on the Mathematics TAAS.

- Fourth grade Hispanic students achieved a 91% pass rate on the Mathematics TAAS.

9. Fifth grade Hispanic students will achieve a 77% pass rate on the Mathematics TAAS.

- Fifth grade Hispanic students achieved an 82% pass rate on the Mathematics TAAS.

10. Third grade Low Income students will achieve an 81% pass rate on the Mathematics TAAS.

- Third grade Low Income students achieved a 63% pass rate on the Mathematics TAAS.

11. Fourth grade Low Income students will achieve a 75% pass rate on the Mathematics TAAS.

- Fourth grade Low Income students achieved an 82% pass rate on the Mathematics TAAS.

12. Fifth grade Low Income students will achieve an 83% pass rate on the Mathematics TAAS.

- Fifth grade Low Income students achieved an 80% pass rate on the Mathematics TAAS.

13. Third grade students will achieve an 85% pass rate on the Reading TAAS.

- Third grade students achieved an 88% pass rate on the Reading TAAS.

14. Fourth grade students will achieve an 83% pass rate on the Reading TAAS.

- Fourth grade students achieved an 85% pass rate on the Reading TAAS.

15. Fifth grade students will achieve an 86% pass rate on the Reading TAAS.

- Fifth grade students achieved an 87% pass rate on the Reading TAAS.

16. Third grade African American students will achieve an 83% pass rate on the Reading TAAS.

- Third African American students achieved a 70% pass rate on the Reading TAAS.

17. Fourth grade African American students will achieve a 78% pass rate on the Reading TAAS.

- Fourth grade African American students achieved a 67% pass rate on the Reading TAAS.

18. Fifth grade African American students will achieve an 85% pass rate on the Reading TAAS.

- Fifth grade African American students achieved an 88% pass rate on the Reading TAAS.

19. Third grade Hispanic students will achieve an 83% pass rate on the Reading TAAS.

- Third grade Hispanic students achieved an 82% pass rate on the Reading TAAS.

20. Fourth grade Hispanic students will achieve an 85% pass rate on the Reading TAAS.

- Fourth grade Hispanic students achieved an 89% pass rate on the Reading TAAS.

21. Fifth grade Hispanic students will achieve an 86% pass rate on the Reading TAAS.

- Fifth grade Hispanic students achieved an 87% pass rate on the Reading TAAS.

22. Third grade Low Income students will achieve an 87% pass rate on the Reading TAAS.

- Third grade Low Income students achieved a 75% pass rate on the Reading TAAS.

23. Fourth grade Low Income students will achieve an 84% pass rate on the Reading TAAS.

- Fourth grade Low Income students achieved a 78% pass rate on the Reading TAAS.

24. Fifth grade Low Income students will achieve an 87% pass rate on the Reading TAAS.

- Fifth grade Low Income students achieved an 85% pass rate on the Reading TAAS.

25. Fourth grade students will achieve a 93% pass rate on the Writing TAAS.

- Fourth grade students achieved an 88% pass rate on the Writing TAAS.

Instructional Program

The entire staff of Boone Elementary began the ExceL program with a discussion of what makes good readers and writers. Staff members revisited the campus mission statement in order to develop a school-wide belief statement about language arts. Faculty meetings focused on literacy learning to ensure that the staff was abreast of the latest research in this area. In addition, a vertical team met once a month to align the reading and writing programs for kindergarten through fifth grade, and they developed a philosophy for the program.

Sixteen teachers attended the Summer Literacy Learning in the Classroom Institute. When they returned to campus, the teachers implemented the program in their classrooms with the support of two teacher leaders, who had received a year of training with the program coordinator and the principal. The two teacher leaders received a second year of training to enhance their literacy teaching skills and attended monthly meetings with the program coordinator, teacher leaders from other campuses, and principals. In addition, the two teacher leaders trained 16 more teachers to administer the program in their classrooms at Boone. After all teachers have been trained, the program will continue without the assistance of the teacher leaders.

The benchmark of the school's Boone Publishing Company was to provide real-life experiences for students. Participation in the publishing company allowed students the experience of participating in the whole literacy process from conception to publication.

The company was organized as a business, and gave students opportunities to practice problem-solving in dealing with the day-to-day operations. The company published a variety of written projects including stories, letters, pamphlets, research papers, and biographies. By the end of the 1997-98 school year, a book published by each student was placed in the school library. The school's computer lab served as the company office. CEO's, office managers, clerks, etc. were elected for the company. Each grade presented writings twice a year, and parents and community members were invited to participate in the celebrations. The Steck-Vaughn Company in Austin served as a model for the Boone Publishing Company, and provided training. The Richard Owens Publishing Company in Austin also provided input for organizing the company. Every student at Boone participated in the company. Specific data were kept on African American, Hispanic, and economically disadvantaged students, and students in these subgroups were placed in essential positions at the Boone Publishing Company. Students kept daily journals and monitoring notebooks regarding their participation in the company. Tutors were assigned to students identified as needing extra assistance in reading and writing, and afterschool tutoring programs were specially designed to assist these students.

A resource room was created in 1997-98 at Boone. The room's inventory included a variety of Caldecott Award books and other high-quality, developmentally-appropriate children's literature, oversized books, and instructional reading and writing books.

Austin Community College (ACC) provided a three-year plan to assist Boone staff in teaching mathematical concepts as part of their daily instruction. Dr. Vera Preston of ACC helped to write the plan of action and then assisted in monitoring the achievement of all students, with an emphasis on the achievement of African-American, Hispanic and economically disadvantaged students. The focus of the ACC-Boone collaboration was on closing the achievement gap in mathematics through early intervention. By doing so, the collaborators sought to decrease the future high school dropout rate of the participating students. Early intervention included afterschool one-on-one tutoring for students who failed to master the mathematics TAAS. Vertical teams met monthly to align the mathematics curriculum. The teams also developed Mathematics thematic units.

Staff Development

All professional staff attended training in the Literacy Learning Network and were visited by the program coordinator twice during the school year. First through third grade teachers received Critical Thinking Skills training (one day). Third grade teachers attended Investigations training at the Professional Development Academy (three days). Finally, a KAMICO consultant was paid to assess information for assessment and evaluation.

BRENTWOOD ELEMENTARY

Total 1996-97 ExceL budget: $49,755 ($48,924 were spent); total 1997-98 ExceL budget: $45,930 ($40,017 were spent). Instructional program included parent training in technology, literacy, and English as a Second Language; and family mathematics and literacy activities. Staff development included TRIBES training, Integrated Thematic Instruction, and mathematics software training. Seven of eleven benchmarks were met; no qualitative data were provided for two benchmarks.

Program Benchmarks and Benchmark Attainment Results

1. Third grade students will achieve an 80% pass rate on the Mathematics TAAS.

- Third grade students achieved an 83% pass rate on the Mathematics TAAS.

2. Fourth grade students will achieve an 82% pass rate on the Mathematics TAAS.

- Fourth grade students achieved a 75% pass rate on the Mathematics TAAS.

3. Fifth grade students will achieve an 80% pass rate on the Mathematics TAAS.

- Fifth grade students achieved a 92% pass rate on the Mathematics TAAS.

4. Third grade students will achieve an 80% pass rate on the Reading TAAS.

- Third grade students achieved a 93% pass rate on the Reading TAAS.

5. Fourth grade students will achieve an 85% pass rate on the Reading TAAS.

- Fourth grade students achieved an 88% pass rate on the Reading TAAS.

6. Fifth grade students will achieve an 89% pass rate on the Reading TAAS.

- Fifth grade students achieved a 91% pass rate on the Reading TAAS.

7. All Brentwood teachers and teachings assistants will receive six days of staff development focused on brain based schooling theory.

- All staff development on brain-based schooling theory was completed.

8. An aligned curriculum will be researched and produced by May 1998.

- No curriculum alignment was done because of AISD curriculum guidelines; there was no point in duplicating efforts.

9. Numeros en las Noches will retain an 80% participation rate for Hispanic parents.

- No data were reported regarding this benchmark.

10. Parent participation at school functions will increase 10%.

- According to the principal, "parents attended school functions in mass," and more parents tutored students in 1997-98 than last year. However, the actual percentage increase was not reported.

11. Numeros en las Noches events will be held six times during the year with two of the events being celebrations.

- This benchmark was met.

Instructional Program

An emphasis on literacy was added to Brentwood's ExceL program in 1997-98. Literacy training at Brentwood focused on developing a brain-based campus with an emphasis on literacy from early childhood through adulthood. Planned literacy-related activities included adding four literacy nights to the "Numeros en las Noches" program (described below). In addition, a computer lab technician provided training for parents in the use of computers. The lab technician also maintained the campus writing lab. Training was also provided for parents in literacy and ESL. Other training included Emergent Literacy, and the KLRU literacy program. In addition, computers, computer memory, software and other student resources were purchased to enhance early literacy training.

"Numeros en las Noches" was the centerpiece of the ExceL program at Brentwood. The program was administered by Brentwood staff with assistance from several parent volunteers. To increase participation in 1997-98, the program was held on six separate evenings, each in conjunction with PTA meetings. Four nights were designated for parent/student participation activities related to improving Reading TAAS scores. Two nights, during the spring, were designated for celebrations at which parents, students, and staff participated in cultural fun and ethnic cuisine.

The purpose of "Numeros en las Noches" was to involve parents in developing the Mathematics and reading capabilities of their children by giving students opportunities to practice with materials and problems that have been presented in the classroom. The program was also designed to present a fun and entertaining means of drawing in students who need additional practice and instruction through activities such as mathematics games. A variety of "Numeros en las Noches" learning centers were created to provide traditional instruction and experiential learning opportunities. For instance, computers with Mathematics software were available for student use. In addition, the program incorporated activities from the KAMICO developmental materials, which were purchased with ExceL funds. Small groups and/or individual instruction was made available for identified students. Parents were an integral component of this program and were encouraged to accompany their children to the sessions. Parents also were invited to use the computer lab and the library facilities. Training sessions for parents were held to discuss ways they could assist their children in becoming proficient in Mathematics.

Staff Development

Professional staff received TRIBES training (four days). In addition, staff members attended Integrated Thematic Instruction (three days) and mathematics software training presented by the campus computer lab technician.

BROOKE ELEMENTARY

Total 1996-97 ExceL budget: $35,240 ($36,270 were spent); total 1997-98 ExceL budget: $32,640 ($30,601 were spent). Instructional program included a parent coordinator, family activities, and parent workshops. Staff development included curriculum planning, ROPES, TAAS training, and training in learning differences, mathematics, language arts, and social studies. Nine of fifteen benchmarks were met.

Program benchmarks and Benchmark Attainment Results

1. Third grade students will achieve a 46% pass rate on the Mathematics TAAS.

- Third grade students achieved a 59% pass rate on the Mathematics TAAS.

2. Fourth grade students will achieve a 69% pass rate on the Mathematics TAAS.

- Fourth grade students achieved a 76% pass rate on the Mathematics TAAS.

3. Fifth grade students will achieve an 84% pass rate on the Mathematics TAAS.

- Fifth grade students achieved an 81% pass rate on the Mathematics TAAS.

4. Low Income third grade students will achieve a 51% pass rate on the Mathematics TAAS.

- Low Income third grade students achieved a 52% pass rate on the Mathematics TAAS.

5. Low Income fourth grade students will achieve a 64% pass rate on the Mathematics TAAS.

- Low Income fourth grade students achieved a 70% pass rate on the Mathematics TAAS.

6. Low Income fifth grade students will achieve an 84% pass rate on the Mathematics TAAS.

- Low Income fifth grade students achieved a 79% pass rate on the Mathematics TAAS.

7. Third grade students will achieve a 55% pass rate on the Reading TAAS.

- Third grade students achieved a 64% pass rate on the Reading TAAS.

8. Fourth grade students will achieve a 75% pass rate on the Reading TAAS.

- Fourth grade students achieved an 83% pass rate on the Reading TAAS.

9. Fifth grade students will achieve an 89% pass rate on the Reading TAAS.

- Fifth grade students achieved an 74% pass rate on the Reading TAAS .

10. Low Income third grade students will achieve a 57% pass rate on the Reading TAAS.

- Low Income third grade students achieved a 63% pass rate on the Reading TAAS.

11. Low Income fourth grade students will achieve a 70% pass rate on the Reading TAAS.

- Low Income fourth grade students achieved a 79% pass rate on the Reading TAAS.

12. Low Income fifth grade students will achieve an 85% pass rate on the Reading TAAS.

- Low Income fifth grade students achieved a 74% pass rate on the Reading TAAS.

13. Fourth grade students will achieve an 84% pass rate on the Writing TAAS.

- Fourth grade students achieved an 82% pass rate on the Writing TAAS.

14. Low Income fourth grade students will achieve an 80% pass rate on the Writing TAAS.

- Low Income fourth grade students achieved an 82% pass rate on the Writing TAAS.

15. Twenty-five percent of parents will participate in family involvement.

- Parent attendance ranged from 5 to 76 parents at various parent activities held throughout the year. The most popular activity (76 parents attended) was the Back-To-School program on September 2, 1997 (19%, based on one parent per student; 14%, based on 1.5 parents per student; 11%, based on two parents per student).

Instructional Program

The principal and current members of the Brooke ExceL grant committee recruited representative of Brooke's home, school and community (HSC) to serve on an action team. The action team worked together to develop collaborative relationships among the HSC. The action team met regularly to coordinate and align the collective resources (alliance, restructuring grant, Benchmarks 2000 grant, and ExceL grant) with the benchmarks of the campus improvement plan. An action team member served on the campus advisory committee (CAC) to insure ongoing two-way communication. The action team provided the staff, parents, and community with ongoing opportunities to provide feedback to the process of coordinating and aligning the collective resources. The action team provided the CAC with written progress reports.

The action team met to develop strategies for gathering information from members of Brooke's HSC to determine the needs and issues that were of most concern to them. The action team surveyed members of Brooke's HSC to develop a list of workshop presenters to address selected topics. A catalog of workshops, dates, and times was developed and distributed to Brooke's HSC. Additionally, information was published in local and community newspapers and in parent newsletters.

Prekindergarten parents attended Family Math Nights that focused on supporting and extending children's mathematics skills at home. "Make-and-Take" workshops for prekindergarten parents focused on making mathematics games for use at home. The HSC collected mathematics manipulatives for inclusion in classroom kits. Finally, a group of parents was trained as mentors and co-teachers to work with parents of kindergarten and first grade students next year.

Parents learned prekindergarten training strategies in the area of emergent literacy. At a series of workshops for parents, teachers modeled "grand conversations," looking at books, shared reading, making books, drawing pictures about the story, pretend reading, retelling and acting out stories, and puppetry. Make-and-take workshops were held on a bimonthly basis in order to reinforce at-home literacy skills taught in school. "Easy to read" books for each grade level were purchased to allow children to practice reading strategies independently. Books and media were ordered for the school library to bring the library up to minimum standards in 1996-97 and to an exemplary level by the year 2000. Parents were offered training in the importance of reading regularly with their children, and in the process of accessing books, cassette players, audio cassettes, and video cassettes that accompany the books in the Parent Lending Library. Classroom teachers received printers for use with the computers provided by the Academics 2000 grant to provide children with ongoing opportunities to use computer technology applications as part of the authoring cycle.

A parent coordinator was hired to do the following: assist in recruiting parents; set up training workshops; develop flyers for training; serve as the contact person for consultants offering to conduct workshops at Brooke; make home visits to gather information from parents regarding parents' training needs; provide support to parents in the Living Learning Room as they develop materials to support their children's educational needs; work with the campus action team, Brooke's parent training specialist, and Brooke staff to develop opportunities to increase TAAS scores; serve as a liaison between Brooke's HSC.

Campus staff created an ExceL Room, which parents could use all day with their children for reading. In 1997-98, staff expanded the room for all grade levels and added a computer for parent and student use.

Staff Development

Professional staff members attended the following professional development: ROPES training, training in improving TAAS scores, and Changes (one day each). Most of the staff also attended TAAS Reading and Mathematics training and Literacy training (one day each). Faculty attended a series of preplanning training meetings including the following: Learning Differences, Mathematics, Social Studies, and Language Arts. ExceL staff development days also were taken by teachers for team curriculum planning.

BROWN ELEMENTARY

Total 1996-97 ExceL budget: $26,230 ($23,420 were spent); total 1997-98 ExceL budget: $24,780 ($19,159 were spent). Instructional program focused on implementation of the child-centered classroom and parental involvement. Staff development included making videotapes for parents, discussion of child-centered classroom, visiting other campuses, and training in Investigations, ELIC, and Project Read. All benchmarks were met.

Program Benchmarks and Benchmark Attainment Results

1. Sixty-nine percent of students will pass the Mathematics TAAS.

- Eighty-four percent of students passed the Mathematics TAAS.

2. Twenty-five percent of third grade students will participate in choosing materials and methods for their learning.

- At least 25% of third grade students participated in choosing materials and methods for their learning.

3. Fifteen percent of second through fifth grade students will participate in choosing materials and methods for their learning.

- At least 15% of second through fifth grade students participated in choosing materials and methods for their learning.

4. Fifty-nine teams consisting of parents and children in prekindergarten through first grade will participate in the early intervention parent program.

- More than fifty-nine teams consisting of parents and children in prekindergarten through first grade participated in the early intervention parent program.

Instructional Program

For the 1996-97 school year, the focus of Brown's ExceL program was the child-centered classroom and parental involvement. In 1997-98, two new components were added to the program, videotapes and Investigations.

One teacher from each grade level attended the workshop, "Strengthening Teacher Strategies for Child-centered Classrooms". When they returned, the teachers shared what they had learned with the entire staff. As of January 1998, all teachers were trained in the child-centered classroom model. Teachers at every grade level, with assistance from their students, developed reading, mathematics, and writing learning centers appropriate for the child-centered classroom. Books and films on the child-centered classroom were provided for the teachers. In addition, teachers visited other schools who had implemented the child-centered classroom model.

One benchmark of the ExceL program was to keep parents fully informed about what their children were doing at school. Because many parents work two jobs, it was often difficult for them to come to campus. However, most families had VCRs, so it was decided that videotapes would be a useful way of communicating with parents. Tapes were made of the students in their classrooms as they completed their tasks, and the students viewed the tapes with their parents and explained what they were doing and why. In addition, teachers shared important information with parents through the tapes. Topics included, but were not limited to, the following: Helping Your Child Succeed This Year; Weekly Expectations for Your Child; How I Grade; Our Special Plan for Each Grade Level; Things You Can Do With Your Child During the Holidays; A New Semester, A New Start; Explaining the Report Card and Grading System; How to do This Home Project; What to Expect in the Weekly Folder; Keeping Your Child Reading Over the Summer.

Investigations was implemented in the fifth grade. However, basic mathematics was still emphasized as well. A curriculum specialist was brought into classrooms to work with students who did not have a grasp of basic mathematics concepts. Teachers who had been to Investigations training returned to campus and trained other teachers in the curriculum.

The Accelerated Reader software/book program was used in grades three through five to motivate students to read. Dictionaries and thesauruses were used to encourage students to increase their vocabularies. Instructional materials (e.g., books, software, videos, etc.) were bought for each grade level.

Staff Development

The professional staff used one staff development day to make the videotapes for the program described above. In addition, some staff members attended training in Investigations, ELIC, and Project Read. Two days were used for sharing child-centered classroom successes, and for visiting other child-centered schools. Finally, professional staff attended training on learning styles and modifications for the child-centered classroom.

BRYKER WOODS ELEMENTARY

Total 1996-97 ExceL budget: $14,800 ($14,538 were spent); total 1997-98 ExceL budget: $13,925 ($12,200 were spent). Instructional program included computer upgrades and printers, teacher stipends for TAAS preparation classes, and supplemental support of cooperative discipline and gifted/talented programs. Staff development focused on technology, cooperative discipline, and Investigations. Three of six benchmarks were met; quantitative data were not returned regarding two of the benchmarks.

Program Benchmarks and Benchmark Attainment Results

1. All students will exceed a 90% pass rate on all three sections of TAAS.

- Students achieved a 92% pass rate on all three sections of TAAS.

2. One hundred percent of student in grades K-6 will utilize computers and related technology during the school day in the classroom (not necessarily on a daily basis).

- One hundred percent of classroom have at least two computers. This was achieved by dismantling the computer lab.

3. One hundred percent of students in grades K-6 will be involved in mathematics activities that are hands-on and relevant (Investigations for grades K-5; Connected Mathematics Project for grade six).

- One hundred percent of teachers used Investigations or Connected Mathematics.

4. One hundred percent of teachers will begin working on their competencies and/or will begin learning how to utilize technology in their curricula.

- According to the principal, "teachers continued to work on their competencies." However, no quantitative data were returned regarding the actual percentage of teachers involved in these activities.

5. One hundred percent of teachers will become "competent" in ClarisWorks and related technology/applications.

- According to the principal, teachers continued to work on becoming competent with ClarisWorks. However, no data were returned regarding the actual percentage of teachers that became "competent."

6. One hundred percent of teachers will be trained in Cooperative Discipline by May 1998.

- This benchmark was not met. However, a new benchmark states that one hundred percent of teachers will be trained in Cooperative Discipline by May 1999.

Instructional Program

Originally, *Raising Mathematics Scores through Technology*, the ExceL program at Bryker Woods, included hiring a part-time computer lab teaching assistant. In response to the district's movement toward having computers in classrooms, the staff at Bryker Woods decided to disband the computer lab and to relocate all computers in the classrooms. In 1997-98, instead of funding a teaching assistant, ExceL Grant funds were used to upgrade the computers from the lab. Printers were purchased for the computers.

In addition, ExceL funds were used to pay teacher stipends to three teachers who taught TAAS preparation classes during the six weeks prior to the spring 1998 TAAS administration. Finally, ExceL helped to cover Cooperative Discipline and Gifted and Talented program costs.

Staff Development

Two technology training sessions were held on campus for professional staff members. Eleven teachers attended Cooperative Discipline training at the Professional Development Academy (two days per teacher). Eleven teachers attended Investigations training (for a total of thirty-two days).

CAMPBELL ELEMENTARY

Total 1996-97 ExceL budget: $56,650 ($53,900 were spent); total 1997-98 ExceL budget: $51,900 ($43,355 were spent). Instructional program included hands-on, interactive learning lab; community outreach program; and the Neighborhood Longhorn tutoring program. Staff development included Project Read, gifted/talented training, cooperative learning techniques, and training in the use of manipulatives. All benchmarks were met.

Program Benchmarks and Benchmark Attainment Results

1. The percentage of all students passing the Reading TAAS will increase to 61%.

- The percentage of all students passing the Reading TAAS was 76%.

2. The percentage of all students passing the Mathematics TAAS will increase to 54%.

- The percentage of all students passing the Mathematics TAAS was 73%.

Instructional Program

Kid City is a hands-on interactive lab designed to resemble Austin businesses (e.g., East Side Cafe, NationsBank, Travelfest, Shivers Hospital, H.E.B., and a zoo). The lab provides a backdrop for instruction in mathematics, reading, and writing, all presented under the umbrella of nature and science themes. The primary objective of the lab is to provide engaging hands-on activities including real-life problems that require solutions involving TAAS objectives. The nature of the lab and its equipment (i.e., manipulatives, books, scales, maps, music, and games) provides a unique opportunity to tap into as many learning styles as possible during each lesson. Every class attends Kid City once per week.

The main reason for using the student-centered approach in teaching is to provide students with meaningful connections to their everyday lives. Nature and science themes are a natural and intuitive vehicle for developing these meaningful connections because children are so inquisitive about the world around them. Recognizing this, the Kid City lab at Campbell Elementary included a year long curriculum of nature and science themes to highlight and reinforce the TAAS objectives learned in the classroom. For example, in the Kid City lab, the children learned how each of the six businesses were dealing with the real-world problem of pollution. In the East Side Cafe, the children categorized recyclable items that would be found among the daily trash produced by the cafe. Once the recyclable items were categorized, the children graphed the results of their findings and discussed ways the cafe might begin to recycle.

In 1997-98, Kid City was expanded to include an ecology focus and a wellness and health program supported by local businesses, parents, and the school nurse. Computers were added to the lab to enrich the technology experience and to provide problem-solving opportunities for all students. In addition, a staff member was hired to run the Kid City lab.

In conjunction with the Kid City lab, the East Side Café in Austin sponsored Campbell students in a community outreach program. The partnership involved access to the cafe's gardens, compost piles, and professional gardeners. Students in every grade level worked on mathematics problem-solving objectives in the East Side Cafe's gardens all year.

To support the higher-level mathematical thinking and learning required within Kid City and the classroom, students utilized innovative curriculum to strengthen retention of basic mathematics skills. A program call "Addition and Multiplication the Fun Way" was implemented in all grades, and used visual aids and stories to enhance development of these necessary skills.

In 1997-98, the campus afterschool remediation program was replaced with a University of Texas Neighborhood Longhorn tutoring program held on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Students from the University of Texas came to campus to tutor first graders. This program is especially effective with the children because many of the tutors are athletes, according to the principal.

Staff Development

Seven professional staff members attended Project Read training at the Professional Development Academy (one to two days). In addition, thirty-three staff members attended Gifted/Talented training (two to three days), twelve staff members attended training in

Cooperative Learning Techniques (one to two days), and eighteen staff members attended enrichment training using manipulatives for mathematics, science and social studies (two to three days).

CASIS ELEMENTARY

Total 1996-97 ExceL budget: $24,200 ($13,858 were spent); total 1997-98 ExceL budget: $23,100 ($11,861 were spent). Instructional program included TAAS enrichment activities, a science resource room, and multisensory teaching strategies. Staff development included Investigations and training of staff members' choice. Three of five benchmarks were met; one benchmark was partially met.

Program Benchmarks and Benchmark Attainment Results

1. Pass rates of all students on the Reading and Mathematics TAAS will be maintained.

- Pass rates of all students on the Reading TAAS increased from 98% to 99%.
- Pass rates of all students on the Mathematics TAAS decreased from 97% to 96%.

2. Seventy-five percent of Casis Elementary students will score in the top quartile on the Mathematics and Science portions of the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS).

- More than seventy-five percent of students scored in the top quartile on the Mathematics and Science portions of the ITBS.

3. All teachers will be required to implement two new techniques for teaching multisensory lessons every year.

- All teachers implemented two new techniques for teaching multisensory lessons.

4. At least eight teachers will be trained annually in the 4-MAT system.

- This benchmark was not met.

5. The teachers trained in the 4-MAT system will access the computerized network of 4-MAT trained educators to receive and share effective multisensory lesson plans.

- This benchmark was met during summer of 1998.

Instructional Program

During the first year of the program, teachers identified students who were at risk for failing the Mathematics TAAS. These students completed TAAS practice tests. Teachers provided accelerated learning strategies, such as afterschool tutoring and mathematics homework sheets, to the students prior to their first administration of TAAS. After TAAS administration in the spring, teachers identified students not passing the Mathematics TAAS by at least 75%. Staff analyzed their test scores to determine specific areas of weakness, and developed accelerated learning strategies to address these areas. Specially trained teachers provided these students with accelerated learning strategies in spring 1997 and the subsequent school year.

Small committees, consisting of one teacher from each grade level, were formed to establish benchmarks for mathematics/science competencies. The committees selected six experiments/demonstrations per grade level to assess mathematics/science integration. The materials needed to perform the selected experiments/demonstrations were identified and purchased. A science resource room was created to house the materials; scheduling, staffing, and a system for checking out materials were established. Since its initial establishment, the science resource room was expanded to hold more materials. A parent volunteer staffed and will continue to staff the resource room. A database of community members and parents with careers in mathematics, science, and other areas was developed and distributed to the faculty. The database was updated periodically and placed on the school's computer network. The resource room also included a computer for viewing the room's inventory and a clip board with a grocery list of items needed for the experiments/demonstrations. The parent volunteer was responsible for shopping for the requested items.

Teachers were required to implement two new techniques for teaching mulitsensory lessons each year. Teachers received professional assistance to help meet this expectation. Teachers were asked to submit the two new techniques they planned to implement for approval by the administration.

Although 4-Mat training did not occur in 1997-98, in the future, eight teachers will be designated by the administration to receive basic 4-MAT training each year. In addition, two teachers will be trained in advanced 4-MAT each year. This will continue until everyone has completed advanced 4-MAT training. Casis obtained access to the 4-MAT computerized network of lesson planning. A system was developed for inputting Casis teachers' lesson plans into the system. Also in 1997-98, new 4-MAT training books were ordered.

Staff Development

All fifth grade teachers received Investigations training for five days; second grade teachers received Investigations training for one day. In addition, professional staff received staff development of their choice: one teacher chose to attend a Region XIII workshop for one day; one teacher chose to attend environmental science training at Aquarina Springs for five days; one teacher attended an art workshop for one day.

COOK ELEMENTARY

Total 1996-97 ExceL budget: $58,695 ($45,956 were spent); total 1997-98 ExceL budget: $54,270 ($29,183 were spent). Instructional program included Reading Recovery, Accelerated Reader, a half-time library clerk, and a parent volunteer program. Staff development focused on literacy, including Capital City Writes, Project Read, Reading Recovery, and Accelerated Reader. All benchmarks were met.

Program Benchmarks and Benchmark Attainment

1. Pass rates of students in the third, fourth, and fifth grades will increase five percentage points on the Reading TAAS.

- Pass rates of third grade students increased five percentage points on the Reading TAAS.

- Pass rates of fourth grade students increased five percentage points on the Reading TAAS.
- Pass rates of fifth grade students increased six percentage points on the Reading TAAS.

2. A Reading Recovery teacher will be funded in order to expand early literacy skills of the neediest group of first graders.

- An additional Reading Recovery teacher was funded.

3. An Accelerated Reader program will be provided for students in grades two through five to improve reading skills and TAAS scores.

- The Accelerated Reader program was implemented in grades two through five.

4. A half-time clerk will be funded to help run the Accelerated Reader program and to train teachers, parent volunteers, and students.

- A half-time clerk was funded as planned. Although the original clerk left in January, a new clerk was hired in February with no interruption to the program.

5. Teachers will receive extensive staff development training.

- This benchmark was met. See staff development section below.

Instructional Program

Cook Elementary's *Read Well and ExceL* initiative addressed the expansion of the successful and innovative first grade Reading Recovery program and introduced the Accelerated Reader program in grades two through five. Both of these programs have been shown to increase student achievement in reading.

Readers among the lowest 20% of their first grade class were seen one-on-one for 12-20 weeks (approximately 60 sessions). Upon exiting the program, students in the second and third grades continued to receive support services such as a literacy support groups which were provided in the afternoons. The Reading Recovery teacher also presented strategies to teachers on reading techniques. In 1997-98, an additional Reading Recovery teacher was funded, allowing for expansion of the program. Twenty first grade students received direct Reading Recovery assistance, and 20-24 first grade students received literacy group support. Overall, 40 first grade students were served.

The Accelerated Reader program was implemented in grades two through five. Students took reading comprehension tests and earned points as rewards for their progress. Between 50 and 200 tests and 50-200 points were earned each month by each of the four targeted grade levels. Third graders consistently maintained the highest number of points earned. However, a fifth grade student won the prize for having earned the most points overall. A half-time clerk was funded to help run the Accelerated Reader program and to train teachers in each of the second through fifth grade classrooms. This helped teachers to support the program independently during their scheduled computer lab time and during students' library time. The computer network version of the program, additional software

and books, and two computers were purchased. In addition, in 1997-98, ExceL funds provided the Accelerated Reader Expansion Disk and student site license, which expanded service to over 500 students.

A half-time library clerk was hired to manage the Book Buddies program, and to provide initial and ongoing training for students and staff. Parents volunteered to listen to and read with students for 20 minutes a session as part of the program. Both parents and teachers were trained to handle tutoring and clerical work for the program.

Staff Development

Nine teachers and the principal attended Capital City Writes training for 15 days during the summer of 1997. Twenty-two teachers attended the Early Childhood Summit, and the rest of the staff attended a reading workshop at Cook in July 1997. All prekindergarten through second grade teachers attended PALM training. Eight teachers attended ELIC (Early Literacy in the Classroom), and four teachers received training in Project Read techniques. Accelerated Reader training took place during team meetings in the first two months of school for all teachers in grades two through five. Some teachers also attended state conferences in 1997-98, including four teachers who attended the Reading Recovery Conference in Dallas, and two teachers who attended the Texas Early Childhood Summit.

CUNNINGHAM ELEMENTARY

Total 1996-97 ExceL budget: $47,300 ($46,223 were spent); total 1997-98 ExceL budget: $43,800 ($44,785 were spent). Instructional program included a campus newspaper and an incentive program for behavioral and academic performance. Staff development included a variety of activities such as Investigations training, Writing as a Process, Literacy Backbone training, and Multisensory Teaching Approach. Four of five benchmarks were met; one benchmark was partially met.

Program Benchmarks and Benchmark Attainment Results

1. The yearly increase in the percentage of students in grades three through five passing all sections of TAAS will be: African American - 16, Low Income - 12, Hispanic - 12, White - 7, Male - 8, and Female - 9.

- The yearly increase in the percentage of African American students in grades three through five passing all sections of TAAS was 19 percentage points (from 53% to 72%).
- The yearly increase in the percentage of Low Income students in grades three through five passing all sections of TAAS was 15 percentage points (from 61% to 76%).
- The yearly increase in the percentage of Hispanic students in grades three through five passing all sections of TAAS was 17 percentage points (from 67% to 84%).
- The yearly increase in the percentage of White students in grades three through five passing all sections of TAAS was 3 percentage points (from 80% to 83%).
- The yearly increase in the percentage of Male students in grades three through five passing all sections of TAAS was 7 percentage points (from 74% to 81%).

- The yearly increase in the percentage of Female students in grades three through five passing all sections of TAAS was 10 percentage points (from 74% to 84%).

2. Thirty percent of students will gain hands-on experience in operating a retail business.

- Eighty-eight students were Cobra Cash store helpers (13% of all students).

3. All students will earn Cobra Cash for appropriate social behavior and study habits.

- All students participated in the behavior management program and earned Cobra Cash, according to a teacher survey.

4. All students will receive Certificates of Merit in recognition for Cobra Cash earned.

- All students who participated in the program received certificates of merit, as did Cobra Cash store helpers.

5. Teachers will receive staff development focusing on reading, mathematics, and behavior management.

- This benchmark was met. (See the Staff Development section below.)

Instructional Program

Cunningham's Excel program included two major components: Cobra News, a campus newspaper; and Cobra Cash, a behavior management system. In order to help students achieve a 90% pass rate on the TAAS, students in grades three through five who did not pass the TAAS were targeted and matched with students who performed well on the test. These students were chosen for the editing and publishing teams of the school newspaper and were made responsible for sections of the paper that required critical thinking, reading, and writing skills.

A graduate student from the University of Texas was hired part-time as the newspaper coordinator and worked closely with teachers to involve all students in the writing process. Students in grades prekindergarten through fifth grade were expected to participate in the creation, design, and publication, while the fourth and fifth grade classes focused on editing. The school-wide newspaper, which was published quarterly, integrated the real-world simulation of reading, writing, and mathematics. As a result of working on the paper, students increased their communication and technology skills.

The Cobra Cash reward system was available to students on a daily basis. Students earned Cobra Cash for acceptable behavior and study habits. Cobra Cash was spent at the General Store that was run by students who did not pass the TAAS. Mathematics concepts such as estimating and problem-solving were learned as students earned and spent money. Real-world experiences also were integrated as students learned to develop budgeting and decision-making skills. Third through fifth grade students assisted early childhood through kindergarten students with their purchasing.

Staff Development

All professional staff members participated in Writing as a Process training (five days). In addition, all grade level teachers attended Investigations training at the Professional

Development Academy (three days). Sixteen staff members attended PALM/Early Childhood summit at the Professional Development Academy (two days). One staff member attended Multisensory Teaching Approach training at the Professional Development Academy. Three staff members participated in Literacy Backbone training. The three staff members will train other staff members during the 1998-99 school year.

DAVIS ELEMENTARY

Total 1996-97 ExceL budget: $25,675 ($28,449 were spent); total 1997-98 ExceL budget: $23,850 ($16,150 were spent). Instructional program included a TAAS enrichment program, MARE curriculum, Mathematics Pentathlon, and peer tutoring. Staff development focused on a variety of topics including writing, MARE, curriculum alignment, and Investigations. Two of four benchmarks were met.

Program Benchmarks and Benchmark Attainment Results

1. Pass rates on the Mathematics TAAS will be maintained by all students.

- Pass rates on the Mathematics TAAS decreased 1 percentage point.

2. Pass rates on the Reading TAAS will be maintained by all students.

- Pass rates on the Reading TAAS increased 2 percentage points.

3. The number of students mastering all sections of Mathematics, Reading, and Writing TAAS will increase five to six percent.

- The number of students mastering all objectives of all TAAS taken decreased 11 percentage points.

4. The percentage of parents who assist with ExceL supported activities will increase 10% each year.

- This benchmark was met. According to written records, at least 10 adult volunteers tutored students a total of 94 hours. Because parents often failed to sign-in, this number probably underestimates the actual number of adult tutors.

Instructional Program

Go Achieve the Extreme (GATE), the ExceL program at Davis Elementary was created to ensure that all Davis students master the foundational skills essential for life-long learning and future success in speaking and listening, as well as crucial higher level skills such as problem-solving, creative thinking, and decision-making. The program focused on all student subgroups, with a special emphasis on Hispanic and Low Income students.

A primary component of the GATE Program is high-quality instruction in reading and mathematics for low-performing students outside the regular classroom. GATE classes provide students the additional time needed to practice and internalize skills introduced by the classroom teacher. A part-time teaching assistant (GATE assistant) was hired to target third, fourth, and fifth grade students who achieved borderline scores on TAAS. The GATE assistant analyzed the TAAS results of these students to determine their areas of weakness.

Then, the assistant worked with the students in small groups and kept portfolios on their progress. Specific portfolio entries varied by grade level, but may have included PALM and reading inventory data, TAAS interval testing information, writing samples, and authentic assessments from Mathematics Pentathlon. In 1997-98, 24 third grade students received seven and one-half hours each of small group reading or mathematics instruction, and eight third grade students received both reading and mathematics small group instruction (15 hours total). The students participated in 30 minute lessons for a 15 day period. The GATE assistant position will be phased out by the end of the ExceL grant.

Another essential component of GATE is the implementation of a variety of high-interest, motivational programs in reading, mathematics, and science. These programs are designed to provide hands-on, multisensory experiences that actively engage students in the learning process. Included are Accelerated Reader, Mathematics Pentathlon, Marine Activities Resource Education curriculum (MARE), Junior Great Books, Future Scientists and Engineers Club, and Celebrity Science Presenters. In addition, a schoolwide problem-solving model has been implemented and writing experiences were emphasized across the curriculum, especially in mathematics and science.

As part of the MARE curriculum, each grade level was assigned one type of marine habitat, e.g., rocky seashores, sandy beaches, and open ocean. The school building was transformed into a giant marine habitat. The program provided a multi-disciplinary experience, which culminated in the spring with ocean week.

The GATE program incorporates the belief that a home-school-community partnership is an essential part of the learning process. In 1997-98, parents served as volunteer tutors at the Davis Tutoring Academy. A sign-in book was used to track the number of parent/community volunteers directly involved in GATE activities. Many volunteers were so focused on the tutoring, itself, that they neglected to sign the book. However, staff estimated that 10 parent volunteers tutored 16 students for a total of 94 hours.

The Young Consultant Peer Tutoring Academy is another aspect of GATE. Teacher-nominated fifth grade students provided 45 minutes of tutoring to targeted third grade students after school one day per week. Each third grade student received approximately six hours of assistance with basic mathematics and reading skills. The students also participated in shared reading activities and mathematics practice with high-interest instructional software in the mathematics computer lab. In 1997-98, 16 fifth grade students tutored 20 third grade students a total of 120 hours.

Staff Development

Professional staff attended the Will Davis Writing Institute (three days). In addition, teachers from kindergarten through fifth grade and essential areas attended MARE Guided Practice/Curriculum Development, presented by campus staff members who had attended the MARE Institute during the summer of 1997 (one day). Kindergarten through fifth grade teachers attended Investigations training (one to two days). Kindergarten through second grade teachers attended PALM training (one day). Fourth grade teachers attended Gifted and Talented training (one day). First through fifth grade teachers participated in curriculum

alignment (one day). Kindergarten teachers attended Excursions Mathematics training (one day). Seventeen kindergarten through fifth grade teachers attended "Book Study: Classrooms that Work," (one day). Ten kindergarten through fifth grade teachers attended "Book Study: Beyond Arithmetic" (one day). Ten kindergarten through fifth grade teachers attended "Book Study: Differentiating Instruction in the Regular Classroom". Finally, kindergarten through fifth grade teachers attended various workshops that were chosen by their teams (two to three days).

DAWSON ELEMENTARY

Total 1996-97 ExceL budget: $32,365 ($31,587 were spent); total 1997-98 ExceL budget: $30,390 ($23,395 were spent). Instructional program focused on literacy, mentoring, family activities, and new materials. Staff development included visiting other campuses, gifted/talented training, training in TAAS administration, and writing annual work plans. Three of eight benchmarks were met; qualitative data were not provided for three benchmarks; two benchmarks were not met.

Program Benchmarks and Benchmark Attainment Results

1. Third grade students will achieve a 78% pass rate on the Reading TAAS.

- Third grade students achieved a 74% pass rate on the Reading TAAS.

2. Fourth grade students will achieve a 78% pass rate on the Reading TAAS.

- Fourth grade students achieved an 86% pass rate on the Reading TAAS.

3. Third grade students will achieve a 73% pass rate on the Mathematics TAAS.

- Third grade students achieved a 70% pass rate on the Mathematics TAAS.

4. Fourth grade students will achieve a 73% pass rate on the Mathematics TAAS.

- Fourth grade students achieved a 76% pass rate on the Mathematics TAAS.

5. Seventy-four percent of students will be reading at or above grade level.

- According to the principal, after reviewing the plan to evaluate this benchmark by comparing 1997 and 1998 PALM assessments, the ExceL committee decided the analysis of this information was too time-consuming for teachers and could not be pursued.

6. Seventy percent of students will demonstrate mathematics improvement as measured by PALM.

- After reviewing the plan to evaluate this benchmark by comparing 1997 and 1998 PALM assessments, the ExceL committee decided the analysis of this information was too time-consuming for teachers and could not be pursued.

7. There will be a fifty percent increase in the number of parents participating in Family Math Nights.

- One hundred-seventy parents and grandparents attended "How to Help Your Child Succeed in School Night," according to the principal. However, no data were provided regarding the percentage point increased from 1996-97.

8. At least 76% of the parents who participate in the program will respond positively on parent surveys.

- One-hundred percent of parents responded positively on a survey regarding the Corkie's Club Reading Incentive Program.

Additional evaluation data included the following: 84% percent of parents reported that their children read at least once or twice a week at home. Of those, 33% reported that their child read three nights a week, and 45% reported that their child read every night of the week.

Instructional Program

Corkie the dolphin, is the mascot of Dawson Elementary. In addition, "Corkie" is an acronym for the campus vision: Community of Readers Kindling Interest in Education. The major benchmark of this campus initiative is to involve students, parents, and community members in Corkie's Club. In 1997-98, this schoolwide literacy program immersed children in literature in the classroom, around the campus, and at home. Corkie's Club encompassed the literacy programs described below.

Appropriate and interesting paperback books were purchased for each grade level. Teachers at each grade level rotated sets of books so that there was always a lending library in each classroom and children had opportunities to read all the books in the collection. After selecting books, children read during school and at home and kept nightly reading records that were signed by their parents. Students received prizes based on the number of pages or books they read. At the end of the semester, each child who had read 850 pages or more received a Corkie's Club Super Reader t-shirt. The t-shirts were presented at the Awards Day ceremonies.

The entire school participated in *Drop Everything and Read (DEAR)* immediately following lunch each day. In an effort to increase non-fiction reading across all grades, Scholastic News magazine (in English and Spanish) was purchased for grades prekindergarten through four.

To guard against students choosing books below their reading levels or reading without good comprehension, Electronic Bookshelf software and accompanying books and materials were purchased. In addition, computer memory was purchased to accommodate Electronic bookshelf on two library computers. The software was not used, however, because tech support was not able to install the school's new server that was needed to run the program.

Buddy pairings across grade levels provided individual attention for younger students and allowed older students to use their reading skills in teaching roles. In addition to reading for each other, these paired classes generated their own special activities for sharing what they read through plays, character costumes, puppet shows, recitations, murals, and retellings.

The Spring Literacy Fair included a book character parade, puppet shows, storytellers, and plays presented by the Drama Club and by the actors from Zachary Scott Theater. Members of the theater group gave drama lessons to the children that culminated in the performance of a play.

At Family Literacy Nights, teachers and students presented suggestions, role-plays, and skits to model ways families can share books. The Literacy Nights were fun, interactive affairs with decorations, refreshments, and student presentations. To prepare for the sessions, teachers were trained by KLRU volunteers in a special family literacy approach. Then, teachers tailored the training to Dawson families' needs. Families left the sessions with popular children's books to use in implementing the family reading strategies they learned.

Mentors from Travis High School and St. Edwards University read books with Dawson students. The students and the mentors discussed the books they had read, and the students wrote reports about the books.

In 1997-98, the ExceL program at Dawson was expanded to include an emphasis on mathematics achievement. Investigations was implemented in all fourth and fifth grade classrooms, selected first through third grade classrooms, and in the hands-on learning lab for grades one through five. Approximately $400 per grade level was provided for the purchase of needed mathematics materials, especially those materials recommended by the AISD Mathematics Department as "basic" to every mathematics classroom. To involve families in mathematics instruction, at-home mathematics activities were provided throughout the year, and two schoolwide Family Math Nights were held.

Staff Development

Staff continued aligning the problem-solving curriculum and training teachers in the use of the Problem-solving Blueprint. Approximately 20 professional books related to reading, writing, mathematics, and classroom management were added to the permanent collection of the library. Prekindergarten through third grade teachers attended the Phonological Awareness Institute at the Region XII service center (five days). Fourth and fifth grade teachers attended literacy workshops at the Professional Development Academy. Prekindergarten through second grade teachers attended the AISD Early Childhood Institute at the Professional Development Academy (three days). All teachers in grades four and five, and some teachers in grades one through three, attended Investigations training at the Professional Development Academy.

New teachers attended an orientation at the Professional Development Academy (two days). The principal presented information on TAAS and school procedures to all staff (one day). All staff attended literacy training (two days).

Additional staff development was possible due to the large carry-over of ExceL staff development funds from the 1996-97 school year. These additional staff development activities were selected to address the newly obtained TAAS results, newly hired and early career teachers, and the professional assessment made by the new administration. Thirty percent of staff participated in off-campus visitations to AISD or Central Texas schools to observe language arts instruction. ESL teachers participated in training for the newly adopted

ESL textbooks. Twelve professional staff members attended the Early Literacy Conference in Dallas. Third through fifth grade teachers attended "Analysis and Implications of TAAS Scores." New teachers attended PALM training. Release time was provided for teachers grades kindergarten through five to write annual work plans for language arts. One teacher attended a technology conference in Austin. Finally, new teachers were allotted one day for gifted and talented training.

DOSS ELEMENTARY

Total 1996-97 ExceL budget: $17,375 ($17,255 were spent); total 1997-98 ExceL budget: $16,650 ($13,565 were spent). Instructional program included Mathematics Pentathlon, Investigations, and mathematics software. Staff development focused on computer-based instruction, Investigations, and diversity training. The one benchmark was partially met.

Program Benchmarks and Benchmark Attainment Results

1. Students in each grade will maintain the same pass rate on the Mathematics TAAS.

- The third grade pass rate decreased one percentage point on the Mathematics TAAS.
- The fourth grade pass rate decreased three percentage points on the Mathematics TAAS.
- The fifth grade pass rate increased two percentage points on the Mathematics TAAS.

Instructional Program

Mathematics Pentathlon games and activities were used by all teachers in their classrooms at least twice weekly. In addition, the PTA conducted Mathematics Pentathlon games after school, and all students were invited to attend. Doss continued its partnership with Zavala Elementary as part of the HERBI-35 (How We Erase Racial Barriers Across Interstate Highway 35) program. The Mathematics Pentathlon activities were continued as part of the encounter. Experienced teachers trained new teachers and parents in Mathematics Pentathlon on an ongoing basis.

Investigations was implemented in selected second through fourth grade and in all fifth grade mathematics classrooms in 1997-98. Investigations materials were purchased for all teachers who had been trained in the program. Additionally, Doss Elementary was selected to participate in the ACME Mathematics pilot project conducted by AISD. Beginning in the spring of 1998, all classroom teachers, including special education teachers, received at least two days of Investigations training followed by five more days during early June. Teachers focused on integrating mathematics into other curricular areas and on practicing problem-solving skills through the use of mathematics software including spreadsheets and units of practice. Even kindergarten students learned to use spreadsheet programs to make graphs.

Staff Development

All faculty members, including teaching assistants and administrators, attended at least two days of training in computer-based instruction. In addition, all regular classroom

teachers attended training in Investigations. Finally, all staff members, including teachers, administrators, teaching assistants, and custodial staff, participated in diversity training, presented by campus staff.

GALINDO ELEMENTARY

Total 1996-97 ExceL budget: $61,985 ($47,144 were spent); total 1997-98 ExceL budget: $57,210 ($41,395 were spent). Instructional program focused on Electronic Bookshelf, family literacy, and new materials. Staff development focused on individual training needs. The one benchmark was not met.

Program Benchmarks and Benchmark Attainment Results

1. Third, fourth, and fifth grade students will achieve a 90% pass rate on the Reading TAAS.

- Third grade students achieved a 78% pass rate on the Reading TAAS.
- Fourth grade students achieved an 84% pass rate on the Reading TAAS.
- Fifth grade students achieved an 86% pass rate on the Reading TAAS.

Instructional Program

The principal described Galindo as a "school in transition." As a result, in 1997-98, the ExceL program, *Galindo Students Read*, focused on restructuring and reinforcing the reading program. Major activities included expanding Electronic Bookshelf, home literacy and lending libraries.

Implementation of Electronic Bookshelf was expanded from third grade to all grades. The program has been so successful that a library clerk will be hired during the 1998-99 school year to manage the extensive circulation of books.

Kindergarten staff and families participated in three KLRU home literacy workshops. Books for the Home Lending Library were ordered. Although the order was delayed, the library should be fully functional by the fall of 1998.

The staff focused on developing a philosophy of reading. They discussed what literacy would look like and how they could meet the needs of students by addressing students at their current levels of reading proficiency. Yearly plans were written, and the Campus Improvement Plan was expanded to include writing, speaking, listening, and observing. These discussions led to the decision to buy reading materials for students in all grades.

In 1997-98, the bulk of Galindo's ExceL funds was used to purchase reading materials. Wright group materials, including leveled books, were purchased for independent reading, and novel sets were purchased for students in the higher grades to provide exposure to classic literature. The Wiggle Works software program was purchased to support reading skills of students in prekindergarten through first grade and other students who were reading below grade level. In addition to reading materials, Investigations manipulatives and other manipulatives (e.g., concrete concept-building manipulatives) were purchased, and posters were ordered for Problem-Solving Blueprint.

Staff Development

Because Galindo was in transition during the 1997-98 school year, a formal ExceL staff development plan was not established. With the exception of a few staff members who

used the funds for their individual training needs (e.g., mathematics instruction), staff did not use the funds. However, campus curriculum specialists collaborated with the district's Area III coordinators to determine areas of need (e.g., problem-solving), on the basis of TAAS results and site visit reports. Then, the curriculum specialists and Area III coordinators made presentations regarding these areas at faculty meetings.

GOVALLE ELEMENTARY

Total 1996-97 ExceL budget: $56,490 ($51,187 were spent); total 1997-98 ExceL budget: $52,140 ($15,121 were spent). Instructional program included Mathematics TAAS enrichment, TAAS incentives, family activities, and new materials. Staff development included a wide variety of activities such as Phonics Alive, AIMS, Analyzing TAAS Data, and Frameworks training. One benchmark was partially met.

Program Benchmarks and Benchmark Attainment Results

1. Mathematics TAAS scores of third, fourth, and fifth grade students will increase seven percentage points.

- Mathematics TAAS scores of third grade students decreased 19 percentage points.
- Mathematics TAAS scores of fourth grade students decreased 5 percentage points.
- Mathematics TAAS scores of fifth grade students decreased 6 percentage points.

2. Reading TAAS scores of third, fourth, and fifth grade students will increase seven percentage points.

- Reading TAAS scores of third grade students decreased 9 percentage points.
- Reading TAAS scores of fourth grade students increased 21 percentage points.
- Reading TAAS scores of fifth grade students increased 3 percentage points.

Instructional Program

In 1997-98, the focus of the Govalle ExceL program was broadened from mathematics to include reading and parent involvement.

The Mathematics Focus program for grades four through five continued for students not passing the Mathematics TAAS. Students were rotated through five small groups emphasizing TAAS objectives. Instruction was provided by certified teachers, and students attended two one-hour sessions after school each week. Participation in the 24-week program was rewarded with one $1.00 McDonald's coupon per session and two "Celebration of Accomplishment" field trips.

In an effort to increase parental participation in student mathematics efforts, a variety of events and workshops were held including Family Mathematics Carnival, Parent TAAS Night, and Take the TAAS, Mom and Dad. In addition, many morning, afternoon, and evening workshops on specific mathematics topics were held throughout the year. Educational gift incentives and refreshments were provided to increase parental attendance. All mathematics staff development opportunities were advertised and opened to parents.

Commercial student planners were purchased and distributed to parents of students in third through fifth grades to enable them to better follow special activities, needs, and homework assignments.

A variety of materials were purchased to support the program including the following: mathematics manipulatives, games, resource kits, professional books, mathematics videos, mathematics library books, and TAAS practice test materials. Newspapers and Weekly Readers were provided to all grade levels.

Staff Development

Professional staff attended a variety of training such as Phonics Alive (seven and one-half hours), Improved use of Jostens' Advanced Instructional Management (three and one-half hours), Incorporating Mathematics and Literature into Geography (three and one-half hours), and Effective Reading Strategies (seven and one-half hours). In addition, intermediate staff attended Analyzing TAAS Data and Instructional Implications (six hours) and Frameworks training (nine two-hour afterschool sessions). Primary staff, essential areas, and special education staff attended Primary Instructional Strategies (6 hours). Early childhood through second grade teachers attended Literacy 2000 (eight two-hour afterschool sessions). Kindergarten through fifth grade teachers attended three days of continued training on National Council of Teachers of Mathematics Curriculum (NCTM) and Evaluation Standards. Content Mastery and Resource staff reviewed NCTM professional reading and discussed implementation (three and one-half hours). Prekindergarten through fifth grade staff continued to review the Johnston Mathematics Alignment Document and developed an implementation plan (three and one-half hours). All staff visited other campuses to observe teachers in their fields.

GRAHAM ELEMENTARY

Total 1996-97 ExceL budget: $37,705 ($36,679 were spent); total 1997-98 ExceL budget: $35,130 ($27,798 were spent). Instructional program included an aftershchool enrichment program and TAAS tutoring. Staff development included Literacy Backbone, Test-Taking Skills, and Integration of Curriculum. Two of four benchmarks were met; quantitative data were not provided for one benchmark.

Program Benchmarks and Benchmark Attainment Results

1. Third grade students will achieve an 84% pass rate on the Reading TAAS.

- Third grade students achieved an 87% pass rate on the Reading TAAS.

2. Fourth grade students will achieve an 87% pass rate on the Reading TAAS.

- Fourth grade students achieved a 92% pass rate on the Reading TAAS.

3. Fifth grade students will achieve a 95% pass rate on the Reading TAAS.

- Fifth grade students achieved a 93% pass rate on the Reading TAAS.

4. Eighty percent of parents and community members will participate in significant academic and social activities.

- No data were provided regarding this benchmark.

Instructional Program

An after school enrichment program was made available to all students at Graham. The program included a variety of activities including working at the homework center, making family scrapbooks, cooking, and participating in sports activities. In addition, students at risk of failing TAAS were targeted and required to attend TAAS tutoring classes twice per week. Teacher stipends for tutoring the at risk students were paid through ExceL. Teachers incorporated TAAS objectives into their instructional plans and focused on improving reading comprehension and writing skills in all content areas. ExceL monies were also used to provide bus service for students participating in the afterschool program.

Staff Development

Professional staff attended Literacy Backbone training twice per month for twelve weeks and training in language arts for five sessions. Professional staff also attended Test-Taking Skills (one day). Finally, some staff attended Integration of Curriculum.

GULLETT ELEMENTARY

Total 1996-97 ExceL budget: $13,350 ($10,429 were spent); total 1997-98 ExceL budget: $12,900 ($6,396 were spent). Instructional program focused on Investigations, writing, and PALM. Staff development included curriculum alignment, special education concerns, PALM, technology training, and leveling textbooks for the reading resource room. Four of eight benchmarks were met.

Program Benchmarks and Benchmark Attainment Results

1. Ninety-three percent of all students will pass all sections of TAAS.

- Eighty-nine percent of all students passed all sections of TAAS.

2. One hundred percent of third grade students will pass the Mathematics TAAS.

- Ninety-five percent of third grade students passed the Mathematics TAAS.

3. Ninety-three percent of fourth grade students will pass the Mathematics TAAS.

- Ninety-seven percent of fourth grade students passed the Mathematics TAAS.

4. One hundred percent of fifth grade students will pass the Mathematics TAAS.

- Ninety-eight percent of fifth grade students passed the Mathematics TAAS.

5. One hundred percent of third grade students will pass the Reading TAAS.

- Ninety-eight percent of third grade students passed the Reading TAAS.

6. Ninety-six percent of fourth grade students will pass the Reading TAAS.

- One hundred percent of fourth grade students passed the Reading TAAS.

7. One hundred percent of fifth grade students will pass the Reading TAAS.

- One hundred percent of fifth grade students passed the Reading TAAS.

8. The Texas Learning Index (TLI) for all students on the TAAS will be above 75.

- The TLI for all students on the TAAS was 87.
- The TLI for all students on the Reading TAAS was 89.
- The TLI for all students on the Mathematics TAAS was 84.

Instructional Program

Investigations was implemented at Gullett in 1997-98. ExceL funds were used to purchase kindergarten curriculum units and additional manipulatives for all grade levels. Problem-solving was stressed throughout the curriculum. The decision to change the program to a stronger focus on Investigations was made on the basis of the leadership of district mathematics curriculum specialists. By combining ExceL funds and local campus funds, Gullett was able to implement the curriculum throughout the school, giving students a continuous and integrated Mathematics curriculum.

The writing process has continued to be a focus of the ExceL program at Gullett. Writing processes were practiced on a daily basis in all classrooms. In addition, ExceL funds were used to provide teachers with time for planning and scoring PALM assessments.

Staff Development

Each classroom teacher received two staff development days for working on curriculum alignment and revising yearly work plans. All returning teachers attended two days of Investigations follow-up training. Special area teachers attended two days of special area concerns related to the campus improvement plan, and special education teachers attended the Special Education Inclusion Conference (two days). Kindergarten through second grade teachers were trained on scoring the PALM Language Demand Assessment (one day). Third through fifth grade teachers attended technology training for writing implementation (1 day). Finally, staff were given time to level textbooks for the Reading Resource Room.

HARRIS ELEMENTARY

Total 1996-97 ExceL budget: $76,385 ($70,733 were spent); total 1997-98 ExceL budget: $70,110 ($39,403 were spent). Instructional program included extended-day TAAS enrichment, Investigations, a home literacy component, and Accelerated Reader. Staff development included a variety of activities such as PALM training, Mortensen Mathematics training, and Montessori Mathematics training. Two of four benchmarks were met; one benchmark was partially met; quantitative data were not provided for one benchmark.

Program Benchmarks and Benchmark Attainment Results

1. TAAS scores will increase 10 percentage points across all grades on all TAAS.

- Third grade Mathematics TAAS scores increased 5 percentage points.
- Fourth grade Mathematics TAAS scores increased 7 percentage points.
- Fifth grade Mathematics TAAS scores increased 15 percentage points.
- Third grade Reading TAAS scores increased 19 percentage points.
- Fourth grade Reading TAAS scores increased 12 percentage points.
- Fifth grade Reading TAAS scores increased 23 percentage points.

- Fourth grade Writing TAAS scores increased 10 percentage points.

2. Students in prekindergarten through second grade will demonstrate mastery of skills on the PALM.

- According to the principal, students in prekindergarten through second grade demonstrated significant gains in the mastery of skills on PALM student profile checklists in mathematics and language. However, no quantitative data regarding this benchmark were provided.

3. Students in grades three through five will demonstrate passing scores on all mathematics and reading sections of the KAMICO and released copies of the TAAS test.

- According to the principal, "students in grades three through five passed reading and mathematics practice tests at the 50% level or better on KAMICO and released copies of the TAAS test."

4. All staff new to Harris will receive staff development and clinical supervision in Investigations, mathematics best practices, Frameworks, Literacy Backbone, and Individualized Language Arts Montessori training.

- All teachers and staff new to Harris received intensive mathematics and literacy instruction through participation in Investigations, Mortensen Mathematics, Montessori Mathematics, Frameworks, Literacy Backbone, and Individualized Language Arts Montessori training.

Instructional Program

To address the needs of Hispanic students whose TAAS scores dropped in 1996-97, the ExceL program at Harris was expanded to include literacy as well as mathematics. Staff designed the literacy component of the program on the basis of a balanced literacy approach to instruction and proposed a literature-based, phonics-supported program for all grade levels. The program included a home literacy component, an in-school tutorial program, Accelerated Reader software and reading materials, and a literacy center that emphasized the Reading Recovery program. Every nine weeks, students completed TAAS practice tests, and teachers administered informal reading inventories in the fall and spring.

Investigations was implemented at all grade levels beginning in the 1996-97 school year. Staff continued to focus on restructuring the mathematics program. Students in grades three through five who were considered "bubble kids" (i.e., very close to being able to pass TAAS) received extended-day instruction from sixteen staff members during February, March, and April. All students completed practice mathematics tests every nine weeks, and staff used the results to pinpoint areas of growth for each student. Teachers at all grade levels received Investigations, Montessori, and Mortensen mathematics materials.

Staff Development

Thirty-five professional staff members attended Montessori Mathematics training (one day). Ten staff members attended Honorarium-Individual Learning Activities Introduction (one day). Fifteen staff members attended a PALM presentation (one day).

Two staff members attended Mathematics Pentathlon training (three days). Nineteen staff members participated in Investigations training during the summer of 1997. One staff member attended Reading Recovery training (seven days). Two staff members attended the Early Childhood Summer Summitt. Twenty-one staff members attended Investigations training. Four staff members attended Mortensen Mathematics training (one day). One staff member attended Out of Control, Out of the Ordinary, sponsored by the Region XIII service center (one day). One staff member attended the Creative Education Institute Conference (four days).

HIGHLAND PARK ELEMENTARY

Total 1996-97 ExceL budget: $16,525 ($16,407 were spent); total 1997-98 ExceL budget: $16,050 ($14,330 were spent). Instructional program focused on professional development in technology and alternative approaches in mathematics instruction. Staff development included Intergrade, Multimedia, Advances KidPix/SlideShow, Investigations, and technology training. One of five benchmarks was met; three benchmarks were partially met; one benchmark was not met.

Program Benchmarks and Benchmark Attainment Results

1. Students in third through fifth grades will maintain Mathematics TAAS pass rates of 90% or above.

- Students in third grade achieved a Mathematics TAAS pass rate of 96%.
- Students in fourth grade achieved a Mathematics TAAS pass rate of 95%.
- Students in fifth grade achieved a Mathematics TAAS pass rate of 100%.

2. One hundred percent of teachers and administrators will use the internet and/or Intranet in instructional or administrative activities.

- This benchmark was partially met. The focus on Intranet was dropped due to the district's pilot program that was never implemented. The emphasis on use of the Internet was a focus and will continue as a focus for 1998-99.

3. Ninety-five percent of all students will successfully meet standards established by the Highland Park Technology Scope and Sequence Checklist.

- Fifty percent of this benchmark was achieved. A Highland Park Technology Scope and Sequence Checklist was developed and approved by the Technology Committee. It was distributed to teachers during the 1997-98 school year for formal implementation in 1998-99.

4. In technology, all teachers will receive training in one or more advanced uses of the Internet and in accessing, using, and creating materials for the Highland Park Intranet.

- The utilization of the Intranet was dropped due to the district's pilot program that was never implemented. The focus shifted from Internet utilization to training for the technology competencies. Ninety percent of Highland park's faculty completed and passed all portions of the competencies.

5. Through proper teacher training, students will benefit by improving their learning through the creation and delivery of a greater variety of approaches utilizing interactive technology.

- This benchmark was implemented on an individual teacher basis. Several teachers pursued utilizing interactive technology within the classroom. This benchmark will be modified to include the development of UOP's in either science or social studies by all Highland Park teachers.

Instructional Program

Highland Park's ExceL project for 1997-98 had two benchmarks. The main benchmark focused on professional development in technology, while the secondary benchmark focused on alternative approaches in mathematics instruction.

All professional staff received training in technology, and ninety percent completed and passed all portions of the competencies. In addition, staff developed a scope and sequence checklist for technology skills. In the future, the ExceL program will provide teachers with more formal collaborative sessions, rather than requiring them to work with partners on their own time. This change will provide more structure and allow technology coordinators and committee members to support the teachers more efficiently.

To support the Highland Park Campus Improvement Plan (CIP) objective of increasing and/or maintaining mathematics achievement, teachers of all grade levels received training in new mathematics resources and teaching strategies. The mathematics curriculum specialist, a Highland Park teacher who acted as a liaison and resource for all grade levels in mathematics, conducted two half-day training afterschool sessions. The curriculum specialist also spearheaded the Curriculum Alignment Committee designated by the CIP to align the mathematics curriculum units at each grade level with the district mathematics curriculum requirements. The curriculum specialist focused on sharing innovative materials and manipulative methods. Identification of special needs and their solutions was ongoing for the mathematics curriculum specialist, who sought input from grade level team leaders and the principal on useful topics for training sessions.

Staff Development

Kindergarten through fifth grade teachers attended Intergrade and Multimedia sessions (one day for each presentation). Kindergarten through second grade teachers attended Advances KidPix/Slide Show (one day). Kindergarten through fifth grade teachers attended Austin ISD Technology Competencies (one to two days). Kindergarten through third grade teachers attended Investigations training (two days).

HILL ELEMENTARY

Total 1996-97 ExceL budget: $21,925 ($18,528 were spent); total 1997-98 ExceL budget: $20,850 ($13,766 were spent). Instructional program included a TAAS learning lab, portfolio assessment, and parent volunteers. Staff development included learning lab training, portfolio training, and training on the use of volunteers. Three of six benchmarks were met.

Program Benchmarks and Benchmark Attainment Results

1. Ninety percent of students moving from the third to the fourth grade will maintain or improve their TLI in reading.

- Ninety-four percent of students moving from the third to the fourth grade maintained or improved their TLI in reading.

2. Ninety percent of students moving from the fourth to the fifth grade will maintain or improve their TLI in reading.

- Eighty-seven percent of students moving from the fourth to the fifth grade maintained or improved their TLI in reading.

3. Ninety percent of students moving from the third to the fourth grade will maintain or improve their TLI in mathematics.

- Eighty percent of students moving from the third to the fourth grade maintained or improved their TLI in mathematics.

4. Ninety percent of students moving from the fourth to the fifth grade will maintain or improve their TLI in mathematics.

- Seventy-seven percent of students moving from the fourth to the fifth grade maintained or improved their TLI in mathematics.

5. Ninety-five percent of fourth grade students will pass the Writing TAAS.

- Ninety-seven percent of fourth grade students passed the Writing TAAS.

6. Twenty-four parents will be trained as facilitators for the book club and for writing conferences.

- According to the principal, more than 24 parent volunteers assisted students in kindergarten through fifth grade in 1997-98. There were more than 10 parent volunteers for the fifth grade alone.

Instructional Program

In 1997-98, learning lab assistance was provided for the following: students who did not master one or more portions of TAAS; LEP students; students identified for special education; and, on a limited basis, students identified for Section 504 services. A full-time teacher's aid was hired to staff the learning lab. Some teachers sent small groups of students to the lab, and some students came to the lab on an as-needed basis. The lab contained various equipment and materials for learning including manipulatives and listening centers. Money was spent to stock the lab with additional equipment and supplies. Various teaching methods were employed in the lab. For example, teachers brought small groups in to pre-teach difficult upcoming concepts. Goals for the lab include making the lab into a venue for a full continuum of service and housing a certified Gifted and Talented specialist. In 1997-98, however, cluster services for Gifted and Talented learners were created in first through fifth

grade classrooms to provide opportunities for students to collaborate with their intellectual peers on a weekly basis.

Last year, a cadre of parents was recruited and trained in conferencing skills to assist students in classrooms. The cadre provided at least two parent volunteers per grade level. These parents were involved in holding conferences with students regarding their written compositions, and the selection and self-assessment of items for inclusion in their portfolios. In 1997-98, these parents assisted in training additional parent mentors for the purpose of providing feedback with the benchmark of having at least one parent mentor per classroom who could assist in writing and portfolio conferences.

Parents were involved in their children's education through parent-run book clubs. In addition, parents volunteered in kindergarten and first grade classrooms for center activities. Parents also led afterschool mathematics enrichment.

The implementation of expanded portfolio assessment at Hill allowed students to utilize knowledge and multiple skills to solve complex problems, and allowed teachers to assess students' abilities to address real-life challenges and situations. Students were trained by teachers to develop and view their individual portfolio collections as reflections of the processes, progress, and benchmarks that they had individually selected, as well as class and grade-level benchmarks. The fourth and fifth grades piloted electronic portfolios at Hill in 1996-97. An additional computer network file server was purchased so that students could save portfolio pieces and access their work years later. Each students will produce a HyperStudio piece by the time they reach fifth grade.

Staff Development

All team members attended two days of grade-level and vertical team curriculum planning. Professional staff also attended training in use of the Hill Learning Lab, and in modification and differentiation of the curriculum for students with special needs, which was presented by the special education team (one day total). Hill teachers and administrators presented information on student portfolios (one day) and on designing and using performance-based tasks (one day). Teachers attended training on utilizing volunteers in the instructional setting (one day). Some staff attended other appropriate workshops throughout the year if the content matched the benchmarks of the ExceL grant (i.e., meeting the diverse needs of learners). More often than not, this was in the form of hiring a substitute teacher so that the teacher could attend a conference or activity.

HOUSTON ELEMENTARY

Total 1996-97 ExceL budget: $48,980 ($47,550 were spent); total 1997-98 ExceL budget: $45,780 ($35,592 were spent). Instructional program included parents workshops, parent resource room, parent training specialist, and instructional facilitator. Staff development included Capital City Writes, PALM, ESL, Early Literacy, and team planning. benchmarks were met. One of three benchmarks was partially met.

Program Benchmarks and Benchmark Attainment Results

1. Students in grades three through five will achieve a 75% pass rate on the Mathematics TAAS.

- Students in grade three achieved a 53% pass rate on the Mathematics TAAS.
- Students in grade four achieved a 62% pass rate on the Mathematics TAAS.
- Students in grade five achieved a 63% pass rate on the Mathematics TAAS.

2. Students in grades three through five will achieve a 75% pass rate on the Reading TAAS.

- Students in grade three achieved a 64% pass rate on the Reading TAAS.
- Students in grade four achieved a 77% pass rate on the Reading TAAS.
- Students in grade five achieved a 66% pass rate on the Reading TAAS.

3. Fifty percent of parents will attend a parent workshop or check out materials from the parent lending library.

- Approximately 30% of parents attended a parent workshop or checked out materials from the lending library. The Parent and Community Committee is reviewing the data to develop strategies to increase participation in the Parent Resource Program. The parents who have participated overwhelmingly support the program.

Instructional Program

The *Parent Resource Program*, the ExceL program at Houston Elementary, gave parents opportunities to develop their skills to help their students with reading and mathematics at home. The Parent Resource Program was managed by the parent training specialist, who was a staff member at Houston before the program began. The parent training specialist conducted weekly workshops with parents.

The Parent Resource Room/Lending Library was stocked with materials and supplies that allowed parents to make instructional materials. Commercial instructional materials and books also were made available for parent check out. A computer and software, including word-processing software, basic office software, and storybook maker, were purchased for the room to help parents develop language and technology skills. A sign-in sheet was placed in the room to track usage.

Workshops were held on a weekly basis to teach parents how to work with their children. Parents of students who failed TAAS were especially encouraged to participate. Workshop topics included the following: Helping Your Child Read, Family Mathematics Series, Computer Literacy, and KLRU Family Reading Workshops. Parents who attended the workshops had opportunities to check out materials for use at home. The parent workshops were very popular with parents, so much so that workshops had to be held in the school cafeteria in order to accommodate all of the participants. Parents from other campuses expressed interest in attending as well. In addition to the support groups and workshops offered by the parent training specialist, Houston Elementary partnered with the Even Start program to offer General Equivalency Development (GED) and English as a Second Language (ESL) classes to the parents.

All staff members were trained in best practice strategies for mathematics and language arts, and they received support from a fellow staff member who became an instructional facilitator. Specifically, the facilitator supported staff in implementing Investigations, Capital City Writes, Full Option Science System, and PALM. In doing so, the facilitator built staff capacity. The facilitator will return to the classroom at the end of the grant.

Staff Development

Ten staff members attended training in Capital City Writes (15 days), and twenty-five professional staff members attended a Capital City Writes planning retreat (two days). Other staff development included the following: PALM training (32 staff members, one day), Mathematics overview (15 staff members, one day), ESL training (16 staff members, one day), and Early Literacy training (16 staff members, one day). All staff participated in team planning (one day).

JORDAN ELEMENTARY

Total 1996-97 ExceL budget: $51,860 ($41,330 were spent); total 1997-98 ExceL budget: $47,460 ($39,784 were spent). Instructional program included a curriculum/technology specialist, parent education programs, and KAMICO. Staff development included a variety of training including Classroom Management Strategies, Analysis of TAAS Data, and New Jersey Writing Project: Ideas to Stimulate Writing Across the Curriculum. One of five was met; two benchmarks were partially met; quantitative data were not provided for two of the benchmarks.

Program Benchmarks and Benchmark Attainment Results

1. Mathematics TAAS scores of third through fifth grade students will increase by five to seven percentage points.

- Mathematics TAAS scores of third grade students decreased 1 percentage point.
- Mathematics TAAS scores of fourth grade students decreased 3 percentage points.
- Mathematics TAAS scores of fifth grade students increased 26 percentage points.

2. Reading TAAS scores of third through fifth grade students will increase by five to seven percentage points.

- Reading TAAS scores of third grade students increased 26 percentage points.
- Reading TAAS scores of fourth grade students increased 4 percentage points.
- Reading TAAS scores of fifth grade students increased 25 percentage points.

3. There will be a 15-20% increase in parent attendance at workshops.

- Between 8-10% of parents attended the workshops. No data were provided regarding the percent increase from last year.

4. There will be a 15-20% increase in the number of parent and community volunteers.

- Parent and community volunteers increased by 20%. An increase in the number of volunteers from Huston-Tillotson College and the inclusion of the LBJ High School "Pals."

5. There will be a 25-30% increase in the number of parents participating in educational activities designed to support their children's' curriculum objectives.

- Between 8-10% of parents participated in educational activities. No data were provided regarding the percent increase from last year.

Instructional Program

In 1996-97, staff aligned language arts and mathematics curricula to reflect local, district, state, and national standards. In 1997-98, cross-grade-level teams met on a weekly basis to align science and social studies curricula objectives. Current test results were analyzed for use in instructional planning. Staff developed early intervention strategies for students who scored below the median on campus, district, and state assessments. The strategies included tutorials, extended-day classes, summer school, computer-assisted programs, and cooperative learning. A school-wide behavior modification/uniform discipline code was also implemented. Staff created incentive programs to recognize student achievement that was tracked using classroom progress charts.

Last year, a computer lab teacher was hired to coordinate, assist, plan, and implement instructional objectives using technology. Computer software was upgraded, and staff attended computer workshops to enhance their skills and to increase computer usage in the classrooms. In 1997-98, the computer lab teacher position was expanded into a curriculum/technology specialist position. The curriculum/technology specialist was responsible for building greater capacity for the staff in the area of curriculum. The specialist's duties included the following: coordinate school-wide curriculum projects; coordinate tutors; conduct curriculum and technology workshops for parents; attend curriculum workshops and train staff; provide teachers assistance in developing curriculum modifications for resource students; assist gifted/talented teachers in implementing the program; assist in quarterly assessments program; provide assistance in the analysis of test data; model the use of computer and technology competencies for the staff; provide for teacher and classroom assistance on the computer; assist in coordination of instructional purchases; align curriculum within vertical teams; assist grant writing team; assist in establishing relationships with staff and community resources to produce speakers, study groups, academic mentors, or special instructional activities; and develop a plan for utilizing technology to support instructional programs.

A community school program was established on the basis of input from parents. Staff formed parent education programs and support groups to address student needs. Staff made an effort to improve communication with parents about their children's progress, and school district policies, programs, and procedures. Staff developed programs to help working parents interact with schools during the work day. Parents participated with their children in setting school and program benchmarks and in making plans for their attainment. Parents

and community members received English as a Second Language (ESL) training. Staff supported parents in their roles as decision-makers, advisors, and advocates. Parent volunteers encouraged all parents to work at school or to attend and support events and meetings.

Parents were surveyed regarding their needs, and most parents responded that they wanted to know how to help their children complete homework. As a result, parent involvement activities focused on training parents to work with their children. Staff conducted all parent classes in English and Spanish.

Students completed KAMICO assessments every nine weeks to develop their test-taking endurance. Teachers learned to read KAMICO results and to use the results to develop instructional programs. Staff implemented skills-based instruction (i.e., when children mastered one concept, they moved on to the next concept).

Staff Development

Professional staff received training in the following: Classroom Management Strategies (one day); Time Management (one day); Classroom and Instructional Modifications for Special Education Students: Accommodating Individual Student Needs (one day); Analysis of TAAS Data for Instructional Planning Approaches for 1997-98 (one day); Campus Technology: Infusing Technology Into Curriculum Practices (three hours); and New Jersey Writing Project: Ideas to Stimulate Writing Across the Curriculum (three hours).

JOSLIN ELEMENTARY

Total 1996-97 ExceL budget: $24,700 ($22,823 were spent); total 1997-98 ExceL budget: $23,075 ($20,574 were spent). Instructional program included an afterschool enrichment program, and family activities. Staff development included Investigations, Early Childhood Summer Summit, TAAS Problem-Solving Blueprint, and a variety of other activities. Five of nine benchmarks were met.

Program Benchmarks and Benchmark Attainment Results

1. The Mathematics TAAS scores of third grade students will increase 6 percentage points.

- Mathematics TAAS scores of third grade students increased 2 percentage points.

2. The Mathematics TAAS scores of fourth grade students will increase 5 percentage points.

- Mathematics TAAS scores of fourth grade students decreased 1 percentage point.

3. The Mathematics TAAS scores of fifth grade students will increase 9 percentage points.

- Mathematics TAAS scores of fifth grade students increased 14 percentage points.

4. The Reading TAAS scores of third grade students will increase 4 percentage points.

- Reading TAAS scores of third grade students increased 1 percentage point.

5. The Reading TAAS scores of fourth grade students will increase 3 percentage points.

- Reading TAAS scores of fourth grade students increased 3 percentage points.

6. The Reading TAAS scores of fifth grade students will increase 8 percentage points.

- Reading TAAS scores of fifth grade students 21 percentage points.

7. Seventy percent of targeted third grade students will pass both the Reading and Mathematics TAAS.

- Fifty percent of targeted third grade students passed the Reading TAAS.
- Forty-three percent of targeted third grade students passed the Mathematics TAAS.

8. Sixty-five percent of parents of targeted at-risk students will attend both parent/teacher conferences.

- Eighty-five percent of parents of targeted at-risk students attended both parent/teacher conferences.

9. Fifteen percent of parents of targeted at-risk students will volunteer at Joslin an average of one hour per week.

- Thirty percent of parents of targeted at-risk students volunteered at Joslin an average of one hour per week.

Additional data:

- Eighty percent of targeted at-risk students were reading on grade level.
- Sixty percent of parents of targeted at-risk students attended Family Math Night and SMART Night.

Instructional Program

Staff designed the Joslin afterschool enrichment program to enhance mathematics and reading skills of students who were deemed at-risk academically. The program took advantage of out-of-school student time, ordinarily allocated to watching TV or unsupervised street activities. Staff conducted the program in the school library and cafeteria, and sessions were conducted for one hour twice per week from November through April. Staff integrated a program designed to assist parents in promoting their children's academic and social skills with the instructional program for students. In order to serve a larger population of at-risk students in 1997-98, the grant eliminated kindergarten students and added fourth and fifth grade students. (The kindergarten students were served by the Optional Extended Year Program instead.) The program included bus transportation and snacks for all students.

The student program focused on the development of basic academic skills in mathematics and reading. Staff identified at-risk students for the program and divided students into small groups for instruction. Students were free to enter and leave the program on the basis of their academic needs, as assessed by their teachers.

The hour-long sessions were broken into highly focused instruction modules lasting approximately twelve minutes, with a minute transition in between the modules. Modules included tutoring, story time, teacher-directed learning, and games in reading and

mathematics. At the end of the day, five minutes were used to reward students, to summarize what had been learned, and to clean up.

Students were evaluated after each session. Staff administered TAAS release tests to assess mathematics progress. Individual reading inventories from classroom teachers were used to evaluate progress in reading.

Staff conducted Family Math Night and SMART Night to provide parents with opportunities to create instructional games and hands-on support materials. Parents learned to use the games and materials at home with their children.

Staff Development

Because Joslin is an Austin Collaborative for Mathematics Education (ACME) pilot school, all teachers in first through fifth grades and special education teachers attended Investigations training. In addition, seven staff members attended the Early Childhood Summer Summit; four staff members attended TAAS Problem-Solving Blueprint training; two staff members attended Mathematics Pentathlon training; three staff members attended the Early Literacy Conference; two staff members attended the Reading Summit; two staff members attended Junior Great Books; two staff members attended The Triad of Thinking Skills. Finally, one staff member attended each of the following: Developing Visuals for Students-Autism; Dyslexia Screening; Kinder/TAAS Art Connection; Strategies for TAAS Success; Spanish Primary Literacy; Yes, There is Magic in Literature; EXCEL Workshop-Using Music to Teach Mathematics/Reading; Project Read-Phonology; Differentiation of Curriculum; and Home Sweet Home-Interdisciplinary Unit.

KIKER ELEMENTARY

Total 1996-97 ExceL budget: $34,250 ($34,215 were spent); total 1997-98 ExceL budget: $32,100 ($17,557 were spent). Instructional program included an integrated curriculum that emphasized mathematics, science, and critical thinking; extended-day activities; and parent education. Staff development included curriculum alignment; training of choice in hands-on mathematics, science, and/or critical thinking; and Explorations training. Two of five benchmarks were met; one benchmark was partially met.

Program Benchmarks and Benchmark Attainment Results

1. One hundred percent of all third, fourth and fifth grade students will pass the Mathematics TAAS.

- Ninety-four percent of third grade students passed the Mathematics TAAS.
- Ninety-three percent of fourth grade students passed the Mathematics TAAS.
- Ninety-seven percent of fifth grade students passed the Mathematics TAAS.

2. Seventy-five percent of third through fifth grade students will master all objectives on the Mathematics TAAS.

- Sixty-two percent of third grade students mastered all objectives on the Mathematics TAAS.

- Fifty-nine percent of fourth grade students mastered all objectives on the Mathematics TAAS.
- Forty-seven percent of fifth grade students mastered all objectives on the Mathematics TAAS.

3. Hispanic students will achieve a 90% pass rate on the Mathematics TAAS.

- Hispanic third grade students achieved a 73% pass rate on the Mathematics TAAS.
- Hispanic fourth grade students achieved a 92% pass rate on the Mathematics TAAS.
- Hispanic fifth grade students achieved a 95% pass rate on the Mathematics TAAS.

4. Other students will achieve a 90% pass rate on the Mathematics TAAS.

- Third grade Other students achieved a 100% pass rate on the Mathematics TAAS.
- Fourth grade Other students achieved a 100% pass rate on the Mathematics TAAS.
- Fifth grade Other students achieved a 100% pass rate on the Mathematics TAAS.

5. Continue parent education and increase attendance at parent conferences.

- Staff held 14 parent education meetings for monolingual Hispanic parents. One hundred percent of parents of at-risk students attended the spring evaluation conferences and the final PTA meeting at the school.

Instructional Program

ExceL with Explorations, the ExceL program at Kiker Elementary, included an integrated curriculum that emphasized mathematics, science, and critical thinking; extended-day activities for economically disadvantaged Hispanic students; and parent education for monolingual Spanish speakers.

To increase student achievement, staff implemented an active and integrated curriculum that used mathematics and science resources as a springboard to incorporate all content areas. Staff implemented Investigations and Explorations curricula in all grades, and ExceL funds purchased manipulatives for these programs. The Explorations curriculum included carefully selected units from Full Option Science System (FOSS), Great Explorations in Math and Science (GEMS), Science and Technology for Children (STC), and Activities for Integrating Math and Science (AIMS). Staff established a science lab and increased the use of science manipulatives that were related to the mathematics curriculum.

Staff used critical thinking skills to improve the achievement of low performing students. Through the Voyager program, disadvantaged Hispanic students participated in extended day activities. The program served twelve students per semester. Some of the students had participated in the program previously, while others had not. In addition, the Voyager program served kindergarten students during the intersession. The program extended instruction from the classroom with hands-on curricular enrichment in science and

mathematics through thematic units. In addition, college students worked with the Voyager students. Homework was a regular part of the program.

Staff held fourteen parent education meetings with monolingual Hispanic parents throughout the school year. The at-risk counselor conducted the meetings, with assistance from a consultant, in the homes of participating parents. The meetings focused on parenting skills and on getting parents involved with the school. By the end of the school year, 100% of participating parents attended spring evaluation conferences with their children and teachers, as well as the end-of-the-year PTA meeting and program at the campus. A consultant translated at each meeting. Staff established a bilingual hotline that parents could call for weekly updates on upcoming events and announcements.

Staff Development

Professional staff participated in three days of curriculum needs assessment and realignment. In addition, staff received two days of training of their choice in hands-on mathematics, science, and/or critical thinking. Finally, professional staff spent two days in Explorations training, which incorporated the integration of mathematics and science curricula using new mathematics and science kits.

KOCUREK ELEMENTARY

Total 1996-97 ExceL budget: $58,300 ($55,017 were spent); total 1997-98 ExceL budget: $53,225 ($43,591 were spent). Instructional program included afterschool TAAS tutorials, peer tutoring, and a micro-society. Staff development included Investigations, early literacy training, and the National Council of Mathematics Conference. Two of three benchmarks were partially met.

Program Benchmarks and Benchmark Attainment Results

1. Mathematics TAAS pass rates of third through fifth grade students will increase by 5-7%.

- Mathematics TAAS pass rates of third grade students decreased 4 percentage points.
- Mathematics TAAS pass rates of fourth grade students increased 6 percentage points.
- Mathematics TAAS pass rates of fifth grade students decreased 5 percentage points.

2. Reading TAAS pass rates of third through fifth grade students will increase by 5-7%.

- Reading TAAS pass rates of third grade students increased 5 percentage points.
- Reading TAAS pass rates of fourth grade students increased from 6 percentage points.
- Reading TAAS pass rates of fifth grade students increased 2 percentage points.

3. The average TLI will increase by 4%.

- The average TLI increased one percentage point (from 81 to 82).

Instructional Program

Tutorials were offered to the following: students who did not master TAAS objectives on the 1996-97 TAAS test or 1997-98 pretests administered in fall or winter; students who were not mastering grade level objectives; and students identified as at-risk by staff, district, or state criteria. Staff held the tutorials twice a week for two 10-week sessions, with each session lasting 45 minutes. Staff addressed appropriate objectives, as identified by student at-risk plans. ExceL funds provided teacher stipends for afterschool tutoring.

Teachers selected students from every third, fourth, and fifth grade classroom to serve as buddy tutors for selected prekindergarten through second grade students. Mathematics and language arts teachers developed a special tutoring curriculum and timeline for each grade level on the basis of objectives of the TEKS and the TAAS. The curriculum designated specific academic objectives to be taught each month, and the tutors received training throughout the year on working successfully with their buddies. Teachers in prekindergarten through second grade selected five students from their classrooms who would benefit most from one-on-one assistance. Tutors and buddies were matched on the basis of their needs. Buddy tutoring occurred twice a week in 20-30 minute sessions during the second and third nine weeks of school. One session covered the mathematics curriculum objectives for the month, and the other covered the language arts objective. After administration of the TAAS, sessions resumed on a once a week basis to build the relationship and self-esteem of students. The ExceL grant paid to train tutors and to purchase tutoring materials, such as mathematics manipulatives and emergent readers.

The Investigations program was implemented in grades one through five. Three ExceL training days were used to provide training to teachers in grades one through four, while training for fifth grade teachers was provided by the district.

A micro-society was developed to provide students with real-life experiences to increase their problem-solving skills. For example, the Kocurek Chronicle, the school newspaper, was expanded into a publishing company this spring. The publishing company gave Kocurek authors and illustrators experiences in the world of publishing and print. Students planned, researched, wrote, and then published their works with the help of student editors, book binders, illustrators, etc.

A third grade teacher initiated the post office and postal system. Students designed and produced stamps for sale, and mail was delivered. Staff encouraged students to write to a variety of individuals as they learned and refined their writing skills.

The micro-society also included a school garden and a greenhouse that had been converted from a aviary. Students grew flowers, herbs, and vegetables in the greenhouse and gardens, and then sold their produce. The students determined the direction of the business on the basis of research and marketing principles. They selected the produce to be grown and allocated the garden plots to the various grade levels.

Staff Development

First through fifth grade teachers attended four days of Investigations follow-up training. In addition, prekindergarten and kindergarten teachers participated in early literacy training. Four teachers representing prekindergarten, first, third, and fourth grades attended

the National Council of Mathematics Conference in Washington D.C. These teachers presented information to school staff upon their return.

LANGFORD ELEMENTARY

Total 1996-97 ExceL budget: $56,555 ($51,447 were spent); total 1997-98 ExceL budget: $52,230 ($27,005 were spent). Instructional program focused on parental involvement and teacher work sessions. Staff development included Writing Curriculum Alignment, planning committee meetings, writing team committees, FOSS training, Investigations, and Capital City Writes. Six of ten benchmarks were met; one of the benchmarks (#9) appears to have changed.

Program Benchmarks and Benchmark Attainment Results

1. Third grade students will achieve a 68% pass rate on the Mathematics TAAS.

- Third grade students achieved a 51% pass rate on the Mathematics TAAS.

2. Fourth grade students will achieve a 44% pass rate on the Mathematics TAAS.

- Fourth grade students achieved a 71% pass rate on the Mathematics TAAS.

3. Fifth grade students will achieve a 68% pass rate on the Mathematics TAAS.

- Fifth grade students achieved a 58% pass rate on the Mathematics TAAS.

4. Third grade students will achieve a 69% pass rate on the Reading TAAS.

- Third grade students achieved a 74% pass rate on the Reading TAAS.

5. Fourth grade students will achieve a 55% pass rate on the Reading TAAS.

- Fourth grade students achieved a 78% pass rate on the Reading TAAS.

6. Fifth grade students will achieve a 77% pass rate on the Reading TAAS.

- Fifth grade students achieved a 67% pass rate on the Reading TAAS.

7. Fifteen to twenty volunteers will work at the school in 1997-98.

- According to the principal, approximately 20-25 volunteers from the Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority volunteered at Langford one day per month. The total number of volunteers increased from 15 to 79, for a total of 500 hours of volunteer work.

8. Two curriculum seminars per grade level for parents will be completed.

- Each grade level had one parent meeting each semester. Attendance was quite good, according to the principal.

9. Ten faculty meetings will be held for alignment of the writing curriculum.

- According to the principal, approximately 30 staff members attended the following staff development activities: writing curriculum alignment (four days),

planning committee meetings (two days), and writing team committees (two days).

10. A committee will monitor the alignment of the social studies curriculum.

- Curriculum committees met on a monthly basis.

Instructional Program

In 1997-98, the ExceL program at Langford emphasized working with parents to increase student achievement as measured by TAAS, and included parental involvement activities and multi-grade teacher work sessions. Staff used ExceL funds to purchase supplies for Family Mathematics and Science Nights, which were held in the fall and spring.

Teachers from all grade levels participated in a series of curriculum work sessions. The teachers identified objectives that needed emphasis and developed strategies to address these objectives. Teachers worked to eliminate gaps and unnecessary overlaps in the curriculum. Teachers across grade levels shared identified writing objectives. Four faculty meetings focused on how writing objectives build across the grades. Staff received a published document on developing the writing curriculum on the basis of TEKS. Staff formed a committee to monitor the implementation and revision of the writing curriculum. In addition, one faculty meeting focused on the implementation of the aligned social studies curriculum.

A curriculum specialist focused on the following tasks: work with teachers on annual work plans; work with teachers in locating resources to enhance curricula; model lessons; coordinate staff development training; inventory and process all materials ordered; conduct daytime and evening parent workshops related to curricula; observe lessons and provide feedback; compile and place purchase orders; attend staff development and train staff; coordinate a writing program; assist teachers in planning; provide information on field trips, workshops, and conference; provide feedback on teacher writing samples; help develop and utilize a variety of assessment tools; work with technology as a tool in the classroom; participate in grant writing activities; and chair the curriculum committee.

Staff Development

Each staff member received a book about poverty. Approximately 30 staff members attended Writing Curriculum Alignment (four days), planning committee meetings (two days), and writing team committees (two days). All staff attended Full Option Science System (FOSS) training (one day). All fifth grade teachers participated in Investigations training (five days). Six teachers attended Capital City Writes in summer 1997 (16 days), and eleven teachers attended Capital City Writes in summer 1998.

LEE ELEMENTARY

Total 1996-97 ExceL budget: $13,050 ($10,744 were spent); total 1997-98 ExceL budget: $12,300 ($3,518 were spent). Instructional program focused on staff development. Staff development included gifted/talented training, 4MAT review, technology training, Mathematics Pentathlon training, Hands-On Algebra review, and three days of staff development in mathematics and/or reading training of choice. Four of ten benchmarks were met.

Program Benchmarks and Benchmark Attainment Results

1. Third grade students will achieve a 96% pass rate on the Mathematics TAAS.

- Third grade students achieved a 95% pass rate on the Mathematics TAAS.

2. Fourth grade students will achieve a 95% pass rate on the Mathematics TAAS.

- Fourth grade students achieved a 94% pass rate on the Mathematics TAAS.

3. Fifth grade students will achieve a 96% pass rate on the Mathematics TAAS.

- Fifth grade students achieved a 96% pass rate on the Mathematics TAAS.

4. Sixth grade students will achieve a 95% pass rate on the Mathematics TAAS.

- Sixth grade students achieved a 95% pass rate on the Mathematics TAAS.

5. Third grade students will achieve a 100% pass rate on the Reading TAAS.

- Third grade students achieved a 100% pass rate on the Reading TAAS.

6. Fourth grade students will achieve a 100% pass rate on the Reading TAAS.

- Fourth grade students achieved a 98% pass rate on the Reading TAAS.

7. Fifth grade students will achieve a 100% pass rate on the Reading TAAS.

- Fifth grade students achieved a 98% pass rate on the Reading TAAS.

8. Sixth grade students will achieve a 100% pass rate on the Reading TAAS.

- Sixth grade students achieved a 96% pass rate on the Reading TAAS.

9. Ninety-five percent of students will master all objectives on TAAS.

- Forty percent of students mastered all objectives on all TAAS taken.

10. All teachers will participate in common staff development experiences including 4MAT, Project Read, Gifted and Talented, Technology, TAAS strategies, and Mathematics strategies.

- All teachers participated in the identified staff development.

Instructional Program

Professional development was the sole focus of the ExceL program at Lee Elementary in 1997-98. (See Staff Development below. Also, see Lee Elementary in the Innovative Practices Section of this report.)

Staff Development

Professional staff attended gifted and talented training (one day); 4MAT Review presented (one day); technology training (one day); Mathematics Pentathlon training presented; and Hands-On Algebra review. In addition, staff received three days of staff development for mathematics and/or reading training of their choice.

LINDER ELEMENTARY

Total 1996-97 ExceL budget: $64,790 ($64,156 were spent); total 1997-98 ExceL budget: $59,940 ($42,040 were spent). Instructional program included the Early Literacy Inservice Course (ELIC), Project Read/Language Circle, Frameworks, curriculum alignment, Computer Curriculum Corporation (CCC), development of student computer competencies, writing workshops, and PALM. Staff development included monthly planning, and a variety of other activities including training in Problem-Solving Blueprint, Critical Thinking, and PALM. Two of three benchmarks were met; one benchmark was partially met.

Program Benchmarks and Benchmarks Attainment Results

1. The pass rates of third, fourth, and fifth grade students will increase seven percentage points on the Mathematics TAAS.

- The pass rates of third grade students remained the same on the Mathematics TAAS.
- The pass rates of fourth grade students increased 7 percentage points on the Mathematics TAAS.
- The pass rates of fifth grade students decreased 2 percentage points on the Mathematics TAAS.

2. The pass rates of third, fourth, and fifth grade students will increase seven percentage points on the Reading TAAS.

- The pass rates of third grade students increased 11 percentage points on the Reading TAAS.
- The pass rates of fourth grade students increased 16 percentage points on the Reading TAAS.
- The pass rates of fifth grade students increased 9 percentage points on the Reading TAAS.

3. All prekindergarten through fifth grade students will receive age-appropriate computer instruction specified in the Linder computer technology competencies, such as keyboarding to increase reading and mathematics.

- According to the principal, campus-wide training on computer competencies was conducted. Eighty-five percent of students mastered keyboarding skills.

Instructional Program

To address the need to improve early literacy, the community of learners at Linder Elementary chose to implement the Early Literacy Inservice Course (ELIC), Project READ, Frameworks, and curriculum alignment in order to integrate reading, mathematics, and the Computer Curriculum Corporation (CCC). In 1997-98, the original ExceL program continued with a greater focus on campus-wide training related to ESL and reading.

ELIC was specifically designed to examine the concept of emergent literacy, young children's knowledge about reading and writing, and the development of knowledge and literacy practices. In each training session, teachers learned a new strategy to implement in their classrooms the following week. At the next training, teachers shared their experiences of teaching the strategy.

Project READ/Language Circle is a multi-sensory language curriculum used to provide a strong foundation for English grammar. First through third grade staff implemented Project READ. The ExceL grant provided funds for classroom literacy materials and for substitutes so that teachers could receive Project READ training.

Frameworks is an extension of ELIC for grades three through eight that provides a model for examining how intermediate children expand their literacy abilities and provides strategies to build on students' current skills. Intermediate teachers received stipends for attending training in strategies that could be implemented immediately. Frameworks training followed the same procedures as the ELIC training described above.

Curriculum alignment began in 1995 and was ongoing to improve achievement scores. Campus-wide training was aligned with the staff development calendar. Faculty were surveyed regarding staff development needs in the area of curriculum alignment. As a result, campus-wide training focused on designing annual plans and thematic unit building. Staff aligned the curriculum vertically and horizontally, and created rubrics and appropriate assessment tools for use with theme units. Competencies were discussed. Student profiles incorporating students' progress across the elementary grade levels were finalized and implemented.

All Campus Technology Leadership Team (CTLT) teachers received computer training and passed their competencies. Then, campus-wide training on computer competencies was conducted. Consultants were paid through ExceL to train staff in the use of the Computer Curriculum Corporation (CCC) software programs and management system. Additional computers and software licenses were purchased for the classrooms. Prekindergarten and kindergarten students visited the computer lab. Parents attended a multi-media presentation including picture scans and video. Staff introduced keyboarding skills to third graders and developed plans to use the internet with fourth and fifth graders. Accelerated Reader, Heartbeeps, and other software that complimented the selected curricula were purchased.

The CTLT developed student computer competencies for all grade levels and began development of units of practice. The CTLT assessed and recommended software and surveyed staff regarding computer competencies and their integration of technology into instruction. Classrooms received additional computers.

Third through fifth grade students attended writing workshops. Teachers developed annual writing plans and conducted several school-wide writing activities. Teachers used

holistic scoring to assess students' writing. "We Deliver," a school-wide writing program, continued.

All trained teachers used the PALM to assess students and to develop annual plans. The teachers compiled the assessment data at the end of the school year. Teachers received color-coded PALM profiles, in English and Spanish, and other resources to promote use of the authentic assessment. The PALM process was systematized. Prekindergarten and kindergarten teachers attended PALM workshops and correlated PALM indicators to TAAS skills and concepts.

Teachers measured reading progress consistently throughout the school year, and incorporated higher-level thinking strategies, such as Lee Hannel's "Seven Steps to Critical Thinking," into classroom instruction. Teachers developed annual plans for language arts. ExceL funds paid for additional English and Spanish readers, for kindergarten and first grade, and for classroom library books. Reading books were found in the adoption program, and teachers assessed them for reading level. Barbara Riojas was hired to implement a long-term literacy staff development program designed on the basis of "Classrooms that Work." The program included classroom follow-up and cross-grade level planning.

Due to additional funding for Optional Extended Year, provided by Project Help and Region XIII, 132 students were able to attend. Teachers provided challenging hands-on lessons for students involving thematic units, parent participation, and mathematics and reading curricula (e.g., Investigations). Only two students failed to meet the mastery requirement.

Staff Development

All professional staff members planned together once per month and at the beginning and end of the school year to develop annual plans. Fifty teachers attended workshops in mathematics instruction including Problem-Solving Blueprint. Thirty teacher attended Critical Thinking. Professional staff also attended Reading Strategies (one day) and a series of classroom follow-up presentations on the same topic. Prekindergarten through second grade staff attended PALM assessment training (one day), and campus training during cross-level training (one day). All staff attended Authentic Assessment training (one evening). Staff also attended a variety of district workshops related to TAAS strategies, technology, and literacy.

MAPLEWOOD ELEMENTARY

Total 1996-97 ExceL budget: $27,290 ($27,183 were spent); total 1997-98 ExceL budget: $25,440 ($23,665 were spent). Instructional program included family nights, parent-teacher-student conferences, portfolios, Accelerated Reader, Mathematics Pentathlon, and behavioral management. Staff development included the Literacy Fair and training in the areas of Mathematics Pentathlon, Accelerated Reader, and student portfolios. Four of eleven benchmarks were met; one benchmark was partially met.

Program Benchmarks and Benchmark Attainment Results

1. The Mathematics TAAS pass rate of third grade students will increase four percentage points.

- The Mathematics TAAS pass rate of third grade students decreased 1 percentage point.

2. The Mathematics TAAS pass rate of fourth grade students will increase 11 percentage points.

- The Mathematics TAAS pass rate of fourth grade students decreased 1 percentage point.

3. The Mathematics TAAS pass rate of fifth grade students will increase seven percentage points.

- The Mathematics TAAS pass rate of fifth grade students increased 11 percentage points.

4. The Mathematics TAAS pass rate of sixth grade students will increase twenty-two percentage points.

- The Mathematics TAAS pass rate of sixth grade students increased 10 percentage points.

5. The Reading TAAS pass rate of third grade students will remain above 90%.

- The Reading TAAS pass rate of third grade students decreased to 88%.

6. The Reading TAAS pass rate of fourth grade students will increase 11 percentage points.

- The Reading TAAS pass rate of fourth grade students increased 17 percentage points.

7. The Reading TAAS pass rate of fifth grade students will remain above 90%.

- The Reading TAAS pass rate of fifth grade students remained above 90%.

8. The Reading TAAS pass rate of sixth grade students will increase 11 percentage points.

- The Reading TAAS pass rate of sixth grade students increased 6 percentage points.

9. A schoolwide literacy portfolio assessment will be in place.

- Schoolwide literacy portfolios are in the beginning stages and several assessments are in place, including student reflective assessments and PALM connections.

10. Three-way conferences between parent, student, and teacher will be focused around the communication data within each child's portfolio.

- This benchmark was not met.

11. Parents Literacy Nights in Science, Mathematics, Language Arts and Cultural Arts will be attended by 25% of Maplewood parents.

- Attendance by parents at educational events exceeded 40% in all curricular areas.

Instructional Program

The major benchmark of the ExceL grant at Maplewood is to build a literate community through parent participation, student portfolios, cooperative learning experiences, and staff development. At Family Literacy/Outing Nights, parents learned techniques to use with their children at home. The activities emphasized parents and children working together for a literate community and worked toward building self-esteem. Parents and students shared books with others through reading dramatization. They dressed as storybook characters and made their own books. Three Family Literacy/Outing Nights were held in 1997-98; one focused on literacy, one on mathematics, and one on music.

Parents, teachers, and students participated in three-way conferences, based on the Round Rock model. On the basis of this model, parents and students filled out questionnaires regarding the student and discussed their answers with each other.

When each student entered Maplewood, they purchased a portfolio to use during their educational career there. Teachers assisted students in selecting their most prized work for inclusion in the portfolio. Students, parents, and teachers used the portfolios during three-way conferences to discuss student growth, assess student strengths and weaknesses, and set benchmarks for future educational plans.

Students in third through sixth grades read award-winning literature as part of the Accelerated Reader program. Students completed tests of their knowledge of the literature and received rewards on the basis of the number of books that they read.

Students in kindergarten learned to picture-read award-winning literature. Funds were used to publish an "Emerging Literacy" brochure guide that teachers sent home each month. This guide suggested a story of the week to read to children with questions and follow-up activities. Students and parents checked out child-operated tape recorders overnight to record stories at home. Parents recorded the names of stories read to students and teachers kept records of the stories. Students received positive reinforcement for reading stories.

Students participated in the Mathematics Pentathlon. Three practice games were held before each tournament.

Staff implemented the Increase the Peace model of behavior management that focuses on expectations and encourages people to work in teams and to keep their composure. Staff conducted Peace Fest each month for individual classrooms and for the whole school.

Staff Development

Professional staff members attended Mathematics Pentathlon training (three days). In addition, some staff members attended Accelerated Reader training, portfolio training for teachers, and Literacy Fair.

MATHEWS ELEMENTARY

Total 1996-97 ExceL budget: $30,985 ($20,302 were spent); total 1997-98 ExceL budget: $28,710 ($14,270 were spent). Instructional program included TAAS camp, Heartbeeps software, TAAS practice software, new computers, and computer upgrading. Staff development included Investigations, gifted/talented training, and self-selected training in mathematics and/or technology. The one benchmark was partially met.

Program Benchmarks and Benchmark Attainment Results

1. The Mathematics TAAS pass rates of third, fourth, fifth, and sixth grade students will increase by five percentage points.

- The Mathematics TAAS pass rates of third grade students increased 8 percentage points.
- The Mathematics TAAS pass rates of fourth grade students decreased 7 percentage points.
- The Mathematics TAAS pass rates of fifth grade students increased 2 percentage points.
- The Mathematics TAAS pass rates of sixth grade students increased 23 percentage points.

Instructional Program

Approximately 40 students who scored 50% or below on Mathematics and/or Reading TAAS were invited to attend TAAS camp. Twenty-nine students attended the 10-day camp, and their parents were required to attend at least three of the days. In addition, staff invited African American, Hispanic, and Low Income parents to attend meetings once per month to discuss TAAS. Staff also encouraged these parents to work with their children at home and to attend TAAS camp. Teachers began TAAS tutoring by dividing the students into instructional cohorts. Then, they provided small group instruction focused on the areas of need.

The TAAS preparatory software program, Heartbeeps, was purchased and implemented with students in grades one and two. Additional software was purchased to provide students with TAAS-like items, allowing teachers to evaluate their students' progress on TAAS objectives. Computers were purchased so that each classroom had one computer. Teachers selected technology software for the computer lab and for the classrooms. The computer lab was updated to accommodate the new software.

Staff Development

Professional staff used ExceL funds for Investigations training and to purchase Investigations manipulatives for trained teachers. Teachers received staff development days for self-selected training in the areas of technology and mathematics. Some staff also attended gifted/talented training.

MENCHACA ELEMENTARY

Total 1996-97 ExceL budget: $29,650 ($29,623 were spent); total 1997-98 ExceL budget: $27,600 ($27,556 were spent). Instructional program focused on mathematics and included family mathematics activities, mathematics portfolios, student service plans for students who failed Mathematics TAAS, and Mathematics Pentathlon. Staff development included 4MAT Fundamentals, curriculum alignment, and mathematics workshops. Two of three benchmarks were met.

Program Benchmarks and Benchmark Attainment Results

1. Seventy percent of students in the third through fifth grades will achieve mastery of objectives on the Mathematics TAAS.

- Fifty-five percent of students in the third grade achieved mastery of objectives on the Mathematics TAAS.
- Fifty-nine percent of students in the fourth grade achieved mastery of objectives on the Mathematics TAAS.
- Fifty-one percent of students in the fifth grade achieved mastery of objectives on the Mathematics TAAS.

2. By the end of 1997-98, the Mathematics curriculum alignment document will be implemented.

- Curriculum alignment documents were updated and implemented in all subject areas, including mathematics. They were revised again in May 1998.

3. By the end of 1997-98, at least one enrichment program will be implemented.

- An enrichment program was implemented in 1997-98. Mathematics Pentathlon was offered in two sessions throughout the year to interested kindergarten through fifth grade students.

Instructional Program

Teachers implemented successful strategies learned from staff development activities in their daily lessons. Campus administrators devised a walk-through checklist to be used during mathematics instruction. The checklist focused on observed successful strategies, manipulative use, and mathematics journal use. Regular administrative walk-throughs were completed on each teacher during the mathematics period. Formal observations were scheduled during each teachers' mathematics period during the implementation of *ExceL Menchaca*.

Teachers shared PALM and/or demand assessment results and mathematics portfolios with parents during parent conferences. Then, parents evaluated the conferences through conference survey forms. In general, parents responded favorably on the forms. In addition, the Assistant Principal prepared monthly parent mathematics newsletters to provide information and strategies for parents to use at home with their children.

The counselor provided a list of students who failed the most recent Mathematics TAAS. Teachers and campus administrators developed Students Service Plans for each of these students. Teachers reviewed the plans with parents during fall and spring conferences and on other occasions, when necessary. The fall and spring conference evaluation form included a section for feedback on the service plan discussion.

The primary and intermediate Family Mathematics Nights were attended by over 150 parents and students. These sessions allowed parents and children to work together on manipulative activities, practicing the necessary skills/concepts frequently missed by Menchaca students on the Mathematics TAAS. Evaluation forms on the Family Mathematics Night were completed for documentation and planning purposes.

Manipulatives were ordered through *ExceL Menchaca*, PTA, and adopter funds. The items were inventoried upon receipt. The Apple IIGS Lab was upgraded during 1996-97, enabling all students to use the campus mathematics software.

The school realigned the mathematics curriculum across grade levels. Each grade level produced curriculum alignment plans for mathematics in nine-week intervals. Campus administrators reviewed the alignment documents to ensure all items were included from all necessary standards and frameworks.

The campus administration, with Campus Advisory Council input, determined required mathematics portfolio entries. Grade level teams determined if any optional portfolio entries should be included. The Assistant Principal secured portfolio folders for each student. The mathematics portfolio was discussed at the fall and spring parent conferences and on other occasions, as necessary. Campus administrators developed a conference feedback form that included an evaluation of the mathematics portfolio discussion.

The Assistant Principal organized school-wide participation in Mathematics Pentathlon activities and University Interscholastic League (UIL) mathematics activities. Mathematics Pentathlon was offered in two sessions throughout the year to interested kindergarten through fifth grade students. Teachers were paid stipends to facilitate these afterschool sessions. Two-hundred and thirty students participated in afterschool Mathematics Pentathlon training, and there was still a waiting list. Eighty children participated in campus UIL events.

The Assistant Principal presented information to the CAC on the possibility of providing pre-Advanced Placement (AP) mathematics courses of study. However, training of fifth grade teachers in pre-AP was postponed due to Investigations training. At the conclusion of 1997-98, the CAC decided not to undertake pre-AP activities. The item was deleted from the Campus Improvement Plan.

Staff Development

All teachers attended 4MAT Fundamentals (three days). In addition, all teachers participated in curriculum alignment (one day). Further curriculum alignment training was presented for all teachers in two three-hour sessions. Most of the faculty attended Mathematics Manipulatives, Mathematics Journals, and TAAS Help (one day). All teachers (except special areas) attended four three-hour 4MAT update sessions (two days). Special

area teachers attended two full-day workshops designated by their curriculum specialists that included mathematics instruction.

METZ ELEMENTARY

Total 1996-97 ExceL budget: $51,220 ($38,206 were spent); total 1997-98 ExceL budget: $46,920 ($25,938 were spent). Instructional program included literacy groups, afterschool and intersession literacy enrichment, home literacy activities, Accelerated Reader software, and a mathematics consultant. Staff development included a wide variety of activities in the areas of literacy, mathematics, writing, and TAAS administration. Eight of eight benchmarks were met.

Program Benchmarks and Benchmark Attainment Results

1. Mathematics TAAS scores of third grade students will increase by six percentage points.

- Mathematics TAAS scores of third grade students increased 7 percentage points.

2. Mathematics TAAS scores of fourth grade students will increase by fifteen percentage points.

- Mathematics TAAS scores of fourth grade students increased 26 percentage points.

3. Mathematics TAAS scores of fifth grade students will increase by eighteen percentage points.

- Mathematics TAAS scores of fifth grade students increased 34 percentage points.

4. Mathematics TAAS scores of sixth grade students will increase by thirteen percentage points.

- Mathematics TAAS scores of sixth grade students increased 25 percentage points.

5. Reading TAAS scores of third grade students will increase by six percentage points.

- Reading TAAS scores of third grade students increased 11 percentage points.

6. Reading TAAS scores of fourth grade students will increase by fifteen percentage points.

- Reading TAAS scores of fourth grade students increased 24 percentage points.

7. Reading TAAS scores of fifth grade students will increase by nine percentage points.

- Reading TAAS scores of fifth grade students increased 9 percentage points.

8. Reading TAAS scores of sixth grade students will increase by seven percentage points.

- Reading TAAS scores of sixth grade students increased 9 percentage points.

Additional data:

- Fourth grade pass rates on the Writing TAAS increased from 62% to 84%.

- Approximately 30% of fourth grade students read the maximum number of books allowed by the Earning by Learning program.

Instructional Program

Literacy for All, the ExceL program at Metz, was designed to supplement currently existing reading programs by targeting students in grades two through four who scored below grade level in language arts. Teachers identified students for literacy groups on the basis of low test results, below grade-level reading competency, and poor reading strategies. Thirty students were identified for participation in the fall semester; another 30 students were identified in the spring. A master teacher, trained in Reading Recovery methods, assessed these identified students to determine the appropriate reading instructional levels. Students were placed into literacy groups of five students or less with other students at similar reading levels.

The master teacher provided individualized and focused instruction on a daily basis for approximately 30 minutes per day for 12-18 weeks. The literacy groups focused on motivating students to read through creative Reading Recovery strategies, such as cross-checking, self-monitoring, choral groups, re-reading, and orchestrating meaning. Additionally, interest in verbal language fluency was sparked through active student participation in dramatics readers' theater activities and group projects. Participants also attended afterschool and intersession courses, which included dramatic productions aimed at increasing verbal language skills.

Teachers kept running records on students' reading progress. A home reading program was implemented in which students kept a log of books read at home over the school year. At the end of the school year, more than 150 students were recognized for their reading accomplishments. In the fourth grade program, Earning by Learning, approximately 30% of students read the maximum books allowed in the program. Books in English and Spanish were made available for students to check out. Early readers were purchased, and teachers used the readers as models for students to use in writing their own books. The Accelerated Reader program supplemented regular classroom instruction. Students read books and took a computerized test. They had to score at least 70% on the test in order to receive credit for the book.

An emphasis on mathematics was added to the ExceL program in 1997-98. ExceL money was used to pay for a mathematics consultant to meet with teachers regarding student achievement on TAAS.

Staff Development

Teachers received extensive training in the following areas: literacy, dual language, mathematics, and TAAS. Literacy training included the Balanced Literacy Program (one day), Running Records (one day), Guided Reading (one-half day), Making Words Work (one-half day), Literacy Backbone (12 weeks), and Comprehension. Dual Language training included ADAPTA-Mathematics (three days) and ILA-Language (two days). Mathematics training included Problem-Solving Format (one-half day) and Mathematics Manipulatives Number Concepts (one-half day). TAAS training included Writing (shared workshop with Mathews Elementary) and TAAS Strategies. Smaller groups of teachers attended the

following: a three-day multi-age workshop; Capital City Writes; Investigations; Connected Mathematics; and Full Option Science System (FOSS) training; The principal reported that one of the greatest benefits from the ExceL grant has been the renewed enthusiasm for literacy and learning on the campus. Few of the training activities were mandatory, yet attendance was high, and evaluations were superb, according to the principal.

NORMAN ELEMENTARY

Total 1996-97 ExceL budget: $40,660 ($41,187 were spent); total 1997-98 ExceL budget: $37,260 ($24,591 were spent). Instructional program included a full-time parent training specialist, GED and ESL classes for parents, and parent workshops. For students, the instructional program focused on literacy and technology. Staff development focused on literacy and behavioral issues: Four of nine benchmarks were met.

Program Benchmarks and Benchmark Attainment Results

1. Mathematics TAAS scores of third grade students will increase 20 percentage points.

- Mathematics TAAS pass rates of third grade students increased 25 percentage points.

2. Mathematics TAAS scores of fourth grade students will increase 10 percentage points.

- Mathematics TAAS pass rates of fourth grade students decreased 6 percentage points.

3. Mathematics TAAS scores of fifth grade students will increase 10 percentage points.

- Mathematics TAAS pass rates of fifth grade students increased 9 percentage points.

4. Reading TAAS scores of third grade students will increase 20 percentage points.

- Reading TAAS pass rates of third grade students increased 35 percentage points.

5. Reading TAAS scores of fourth grade students will increase 10 percentage points.

- Reading TAAS scores of fourth grade students decreased 2 percentage points.

6. Reading TAAS scores of fifth grade students will increase 10 percentage points.

- Reading TAAS pass rates of fifth grade students increased 22 percentage points.

7. Writing TAAS scores of fourth grade students will increase 14 percentage points.

- Writing TAAS pass rates of fourth grade students decreased 6 percentage points.

8. Parental involvement in all school-wide activities will increase 40%.

- Overall, parental involvement increased 54%, as a result of Norman's collaboration with the Austin Interfaith's Alliance Schools Project. Attendance rates at specific events were as follows:

Activity	1996-97 Attendance	1997-98 Attendance	% Increase
Back to School Night	137	221	61%
Octoberfest Carnival	93	148	60%
School Dances	n/a	58	n/a
Donuts for Dads	49	77	58%
Holiday Performance	50	171	240%
Career Day	10	25	150%
Soul Food Tasting Night	73	114	57%
Science Fair	28	42	54%
Cinco de Mayo	77	132	71%
Muffins for Moms	66	98	47%

9. At least 40 parents will participate on a bi-weekly basis in the GED and/or ESL programs.

- Average class attendance for ESL was 28 parents. GED program attendance decreased to between 3 and 10 students because the "popular and trusted" teacher was reassigned.

Instructional Program

A full-time parent training specialist was hired to coordinate parent workshops and GED and ESL classes. The parent training specialist surveyed parents regarding their ideas for future workshops. On the basis of the parental surveys, the parent training specialist designed workshops to involve parents in the planning, implementation, and facilitation of training. The parent training specialist conducted parental workshops to "agitate" parent action in school and community events. Activities included Community Issues-House Meeting I (100 parents attended), Community Action-House Meeting II (49 parents attended), Community Resolution-House Meeting III (43 parents attended), and School Boundaries-House Meeting IV (68 parents attended).

The parent training specialist developed parent reading/mathematics classes that were offered on Saturdays and included an English as a Second Language (ESL) component, one-on-one tutoring in reading and mathematics, and outreach trips throughout the Austin community. Some of the parents conducted training sessions. Austin Community College provided tutors, General Education Development (GED) materials, and career counseling. Children also participated in some of these activities. In 1997-98, ESL classes continued to attract and maintain parent and community participation: average class attendance was 28 students. Participants in ESL learned fundamental standard English, planned celebrations to expand written and oral language, and presented reports. Enrollment in the GED program decreased because the "popular and trusted" teacher was reassigned unexpectedly.

In 1997-98, students used technology to create compositions, spreadsheets, graphs, and projects for class reports. Staff developed technology benchmarks and purchased software for the ESL program. This software provided low English-proficient students with opportunities to master language skills at their own pace. Staff assessed participants'

technology proficiency throughout the program. The lab specialist charted student progress and reported accomplishments to parents.

Monthly parent workshops were conducted by the parent training specialist or by outside presenters. Workshop topics were chosen on the basis of a parent survey and included the following: Early Literacy, Parent Involvement Practices, Volunteerism, ADHD Children, Transition into Sixth Grade, EYS: Extended year Services, and GED/ESL Programs.

Norman continued to implement and expand their "Early Literacy" program. Title I funds were used to hire a reading specialist to serve potential "non-readers" in kindergarten through third grade. The specialist assessed reading deficiencies, planned remediation strategies, and connected the remediation strategies with classroom instruction. After working with the reading specialist, 22 of the 65 students returned to the regular classroom successfully.

Staff Development

Twenty-two teachers attended the Capital City Writes program in the summer of 1997. In addition, the entire professional staff attended Conflict Resolution (one day), Student Modifications (one day), and Student Expectations (one day). All teachers participated in Phonics/Phonemics (one day); TEKS training (one day), and TAAS Writing Techniques (one day).

OAK HILL ELEMENTARY

Total 1996-97 ExceL budget: $28,400 ($27,681 were spent); total 1997-98 ExceL budget: $26,700 ($18,522 were spent). Instructional program focused on extended-day and regular-day tutoring, parental involvement, and conflict resolution. Staff development included training in Investigations, Systems Learning and Skill Streaming; two days for grade-level planning; and free-choice of training related to CIP benchmarks. One of two benchmarks was met.

Program Benchmarks and Benchmark Attainment Results

1. Mathematics and Reading TAAS pass rates of third through fifth grade students will increase five to seven percentage points.

- The Mathematics TAAS pass rate of third grade students increased three percentage points.
- The Mathematics TAAS pass rate of fourth grade students increased one percentage point.
- The Mathematics TAAS pass rate of fifth grade students decreased three percentage points.
- The Reading TAAS pass rate of third grade students remained the same.
- The Reading TAAS pass rate of fourth grade students increased one percentage point.
- The Reading TAAS pass rate of fifth grade students increased one percentage point.

2. Bus and classroom referrals to the office will be reduced by 10%.

- Bus referrals were reduced by 12% and classroom referrals by 11%.

Instructional Program

Originally, the ExceL program at Oak Hill Elementary included partial funding of an ExceL coordinator. However, the person hired as coordinator later became a full-time teacher at Oak Hill, and the principal was unable to find a suitable replacement. As a result, in November of 1997, the focus of the ExceL program was changed from the ExceL coordinator to extended-day teaching conducted by Oak Hill teachers.

An extended-day and regular-day tutoring program began on February 4, 1998, and was implemented with the help of teachers, volunteers, and parents. Teachers identified students to participate in the program through TAAS scores, Reading Inventories, and PALM results. Teachers used the Learning Lab for extended-day teaching after school, and volunteers used the Learning Lab for tutoring during the day. The Lab was equipped for a variety of learning styles. Tutoring for third through fifth graders focused on literacy skills and problem-solving, while tutoring for second graders focused on literacy skills.

Because Oak Hill is not a neighborhood school, parents provided transportation for extended-day tutoring. Staff emphasized parental involvement in the program. Parents checked-out materials from the Learning Lab, and a staff member kept the materials organized.

Staff conducted a separate Mathematics Nights for each grade level. Teachers, parents, and children attended. Each family received a packet of games designed to increase problem-solving skills. Parents and children took the packets home at the end of the evening.

School staff received training in conflict resolution. Then, they provided training to all students. Parents also receiving training in applying five simple strategies to resolve conflicts.

In order to help new students become familiar with the rules and ways of Oak Hill Elementary, staff initiated the "buddy program." This program matched new students with students who were familiar with the campus. In addition, communication was increased with parents of new students to assure a smooth transition from their previous campuses.

Families received books, in English and Spanish, and other learning materials, such as mathematics games. Donations of books and money were solicited from the community, and some ExceL money was used for the Bookstore/Reward System. Students earned points and could use them to purchase books from the store. However, this part of the program was discontinued after the ExceL coordinator left.

Staff Development

Fifth grade teachers attended Investigations training (eight days). All staff participated in Systems Learning training (one day), and Skill Streaming (one day). All teachers received two grade-level planning days. In addition, teachers attended training directly related to CIP benchmarks, such as PALM, reading readiness, Project Read, curriculum alignment, technology training, and training in problem-solving.

OAK SPRINGS ELEMENTARY

Total 1996-97 ExceL budget: $38,465 ($33,677 were spent); total 1997-98 ExceL budget: $35,490 ($15,416 were spent). Instructional program included Saturday School, Project Read, Mathematics Pentathlon, and student compacts. Staff development included training in the following: Mathematics Pentathlon, TAAS/TLI, Project Read, Multiple Intelligences and classroom Success, and Building Dreams. One of four benchmarks was met; one benchmark was partially met.

Program Benchmarks and Benchmark Attainment Results

1. Mathematics TAAS scores of third through fifth grade students will increase by seven percentage points.

- Mathematics TAAS scores of third grade students decreased 35 percentage points.
- Mathematics TAAS scores of fourth grade students remained the same.
- Mathematics TAAS scores of fifth grade students increased 7 percentage points.

2. Reading TAAS scores of third through fifth grade students will increase by seven percentage points.

- Reading scores of third grade students decreased 3 percentage points.
- Reading scores of fourth grade students increased 4 percentage points.
- Reading scores of fifth grade students decreased 3 percentage points.

3. A minimum of 50% of the students in third through fifth grade and their parents will attend Saturday TAAS classes at least six times per year.

- A total of 41% of third through fifth grade students attended Saturday School. Specifically, 48% of third grade, 40% of fourth grade, and 35% of fifth grade students attended.

4. Parents compacts will be signed and centrally filed by September 24, 1997.

- All parent compacts were signed and filed accordingly.

Instructional Program

Open enrollment was held for Saturday TAAS classes. Students in all grades and their parents and extended family members attended the classes. Students received three hours of instructional time per Saturday session. Students in grades prekindergarten through second reviewed skills in reading and mathematics, and often worked cooperatively on assignments. Students in third through fifth grades reviewed TAAS objectives, and students in fourth and fifth grades reviewed objectives that they did not master on previous TAAS tests. During the last three weeks of the session, all TAAS objectives were reviewed. Parents of Saturday School students attended parent-teacher conferences. The purpose of the conferences was to provide parents with information on helping their children learn at home. In addition, the parents learned to work with students at home on TAAS skills.

All faculty members completed Project Read training and implemented the visual, auditory, kinesthetic, and tactile approaches of Project Read daily.

The Oak Springs Elementary Mathematics Pentathlon program was created in 1996-97 to provide second grade students with extra educational support in the area of mathematics. Second grade students were invited to participate in an afterschool enrichment program where skills were developed and strategies perfected. Twenty-four students met twice a week with two second grade teachers to learn and master the five games. All second and third grade Mathematics Pentathlon students in the afterschool program participated in an exchange with second and third grade students from Maplewood Elementary. The two schools met on three occasions to practice the games, as well as to make new friendships. This became especially important when they competed at the Tournament. From this group, a team of eight students was chosen to participate in the first annual Austin Mathematics Pentathlon Tournament. The students were challenged to each of the games by students from other Austin schools, as well as schools as far away as Dallas.

During the 1997-98 school year, the Mathematics Pentathlon program evolved in many ways. Third grade students were added to the formal interscholastic exchanges. Approximately, 16 second and third graders represented Oak Springs at the Second Annual Austin Tournament. The exchange also expanded with the additional participation of Davis Elementary and Elgin Primary School. A total of 80 students met for three exchanges from December to February.

As mandated by Title I, parent and student compacts were developed, with the assistance of parental input, to bridge the gap between home and school. A parent and student compact is an agreement between school and home indicating that parents will be dedicated to their children's success. Each parent received a compact that listed the camps expectations and benchmarks. All pertinent parties signed the compacts, and the compacts were filed centrally on the campus.

Staff Development

Seven teachers attended Mathematics Pentathlon training (three days). Twenty-nine teachers attended TAAS/TLI training (one day). Nine teachers attended Project Read training (one day). Twenty-two teachers attended Multiple Intelligences and Classroom Success (one day). Four teachers attended Building Dreams (one day). The principal attended all of the training sessions.

ODOM ELEMENTARY

Total 1996-97 ExceL budget: $56,635 ($56,505 were spent); total 1997-98 ExceL budget: $52,110 ($47,718 were spent). Instructional program included purchase of materials, computer software and hardware; development of a technology plan, technology training for parents and staff; a campus computer teaching assistant; afterschool tutorials; and parental involvement. Staff development included a variety of activities in the areas of mathematics, literacy, technology, curriculum, and assessment. One of five benchmarks was met; two benchmarks were partially met.

Program Benchmarks and Benchmark Attainment Results

1. Eighty percent of third, fourth, and fifth grade students will pass the Mathematics TAAS.

- Sixty-four percent of third grade students passed the Mathematics TAAS.

- Seventy-two percent of fourth grade students passed the Mathematics TAAS.
- Seventy-eight percent of fifth grade students passed the Mathematics TAAS.

2. Eighty percent of third, fourth, and fifth grade students will pass the Reading TAAS.

- Eighty-three percent of third grade students passed the Reading TAAS.
- Ninety-one percent of fourth grade students passed the Reading TAAS.
- Seventy-six percent of fifth grade students passed the Reading TAAS.

3. Eighty-five percent of students and staff will use instructional technology effectively.

- Surveys indicated that 88% of staff felt they were working with students effectively using instructional technology.

4. Ninety-five percent of parents and staff will demonstrate positive support and/or involvement in Odom's computer literacy training.

- Surveys indicated that 88% of staff and 75% of parents felt that computer instruction was effective.

5. Students will be taught reading, writing, mathematics, and computer literacy based on site-developed rubrics aligned with TAAS specifications.

- Reading, writing, mathematics, and technology rubrics were developed for assessment in thematic units. More consistent use of rubrics aligned with grade-level TAAS expectations is the next step.

Additional data:

- Ninety-one percent of fourth graders passed the Writing TAAS.

Instructional Program

Read, Research, and Problem-solve for Success, the ExceL program at Odom Elementary, had four main benchmarks: to increase student achievement in language arts; to increase student achievement in mathematics; to use technology to improve students' academic skills and thinking skills, with a parent involvement component; and to demonstrate increased student achievement in academic skills, thinking skills, and technological literacy, based on TAAS test results and site-based assessments. In order to achieve these benchmarks, the program included the major components described below.

Staff were trained in the use of instructional technology, in teaching methods in mathematics and language, and in a model for integrating curriculum to increase staff and student motivation and achievement. Staff development was provided through whole-group and individualized training sessions. (See Staff Development section below for a list of specific activities.)

Additional literature, mathematics texts and manipulatives, and supplemental computer software and hardware were purchased with ExceL funds to expand learning opportunities for students. These materials were used to prepare students in the academic

areas tested on the TAAS and to develop students' academic and thinking skills on projects using instructional technology.

Odom staff developed a technology plan for prekindergarten through fifth grade students. The plan included a variety of competencies including keyboarding skills, word processing, and internet usage. As part of this plan, computer hardware and software were purchased to supplement existing programs. ExceL funds were used to purchase software to promote early literacy, to expand the library of printed and electronic tests, to purchase software for TAAS preparation in mathematics, to purchase software to provide students with additional reference materials and internet resources, and to purchase software that allows students to produce multi-media projects and classroom presentations.

The campus computer teaching assistant held weekly training sessions with parents and teachers. The assistant also coordinated the activities in the two computer labs that contain Apple and IBM computers and maintained the computers so that the school did not require outside support. In 1997-98, there was virtually no computer down-time. All students worked on the computers three times per week with direct instruction from the computer teaching assistant.

Afterschool tutorials were held on Mondays and Wednesdays for at-risk students who needed additional support in reading, writing, and mathematics. The tutorials focused on TAAS-related skills. Parents and staff attended technology tutorials on Tuesdays, were presented by the computer teaching assistant and by technology team teachers. In the future, the program will be run by volunteers and/or university mentors.

Other parent involvement activities included parent nights during the spring semester and a technology fair at which student work was displayed. The PTA helped to develop a parent room to encourage parents to come to the school and volunteer. Parents completed surveys regarding their knowledge of computers and software, access to computers, attitudes about computers and, especially, computers in education. The results of the survey were used to determine parent needs in terms of technology training.

Staff Development

All staff attended Integrated Curriculum Sessions I and II (two days) and curriculum design sessions (one to two days, depending on grade level). Prekindergarten through second grade staff and special education teachers attended Literacy Training (one day). The ExceL computer teaching assistant provided weekly afterschool technology training to all staff. The training was attended by groups of four to six staff members at a time. Five fourth and fifth grade teachers attended Investigations training (four to seven days), and first through third grade teachers attended Investigations training for four days. Eight teachers attended multi-age training (one day), and two of the teachers attended an additional day of the training. All prekindergarten to second grade teachers received PALM orientation and follow-up coaching at least two times after school, and several teachers attended a full day of PALM training at the Professional Development Academy.

ORTEGA ELEMENTARY

Total 1996-97 ExceL budget: $29,900 ($25,109 were spent); total 1997-98 ExceL budget: $27,900 ($13,181 were spent). Instructional program included funding a HOST teacher. Staff development focused on *Best Practice*. Two of two benchmarks were met.

Program Benchmarks and Benchmark Attainment Results

1. Increase literacy achievement and prepare kindergarten through second graders for language acquisition.

- According to the principal, seventy-three percent of all students who took the Reading TAAS passed all objectives. This reflects a 6% increase from 1996-97.
- According to the principal, students who participated in the HOSTS program gained 27.8 percentage points on the Survey of Developmental Tasks; kindergarten students gained 23.9 percentage points; first grade students gained 21.6 percentage points.
- According to the principal, all first grade students who participated in HOSTS gained .79 year on their individual reading inventories; second grade students gained 1.4 years.
- According to the principal, ninety percent of prekindergarten through second grade students mastered PALM objectives.

2. Study best practice strategies and implement such instructional strategies school-wide.

- All faculty members participated in the faculty study of Best Practice.

Instructional Program

ExceL funds were used to hire a Host teacher. The Host Program incorporates a community mentor philosophy that provides identified students with a mentor who tutors the child on specific, individualized reading skills.

Staff Development

The faculty of Ortega read *Best Practice*. Then, they met twice a month for three hours after faculty meetings and discussed best practice topics, including reading, writing, mathematics, planning, social studies, science, urban schools, and exemplary schools. Each grade level presented a chapter from the book. In addition, the faculty met on one Saturday to plan lessons, units, and annual work plans using the strategies described in the book.

PALM ELEMENTARY

Total 1996-97 ExceL budget: $51,010 ($48,344 were spent); total 1997-98 ExceL budget: $46,860 ($46,207 were spent). Instructional program focused on a Reading Styles Inventory, a half-time parent representative, and parental involvement. Staff development focused on reading styles, parental involvement, and grade-level planning. Quantitative data were not provided for two of three benchmarks; one benchmark was not met.

Program Benchmarks and Benchmark Attainment Results

1. Seventy-five percent of students in grades three through five will pass the Reading TAAS.

- Fifty-five percent of students in grade three passed the Reading TAAS.
- Sixty-three percent of students in grade four passed the Reading TAAS.
- Sixty-six percent of students in grade five passed the Reading TAAS.

2. All parents will participate in the reading styles initiative in some capacity.

- ExceL grant funds paid for .5 of a parent involvement representative to help bring parents into school and assist with parent education, according to the principal. No data were reported regarding percentage of parental participation.

3. Fifty percent of parents will understand reading styles and promote reading at home.

- According to the principal, at an Open House, teachers provided a reading styles inventory to parents and explained the model and strategies for reading styles. The function was well attended. In addition, Palm Elementary held a Reading Language Arts Curriculum Night and Read-In. No quantitative data were reported regarding this benchmark.

Program Benchmarks and Benchmark Attainment Results

Last year, six days of staff development were provided on use of a learning styles inventory. Teachers administered reading style inventories (RSIs) to students. Data from the inventories were analyzed and interpreted, and teachers created classroom environments to address students' needs as indicated by the data. Teachers implemented the strategies learned in the training sessions, such as evaluating and recording basal stories, ordering and recording literature, designing centers, and adapting basal readers and other reading materials to fit different reading styles.

In 1997-98, six additional days of staff development were provided to enhance the program initiated last year and to educate any new staff members in reading instruction. Parent, staff, and student surveys were administered to collect feedback on the effectiveness of last year's implementation. The reading styles inventory was administered to students, and the data produced was analyzed and interpreted. Teachers continued to adapt their classroom environments to fit students' needs and implement appropriate instruction, using the results of the inventory, survey feedback, campus and longitudinal TAAS assessment, and TAAS scores. In addition, teachers pursued more strategies to challenge and actively engage students, such as developing a literature bank of games and recordings, continuing to record texts, varying centers, utilizing cooperative learning techniques, and incorporating reading program strategies into the different subject areas such as social studies, science, language arts, and mathematics.

A parent representative was hired to conduct meetings to inform parents about individual RSI reading styles and to provide suggestions for involvement at home and at school. The parent representative provided on-going training opportunities to help the parents work with their children at home. Individual conferences were scheduled between teachers, parents, and students on a regular basis to discuss student progress and parent

concerns. Parents were invited to visit the classrooms and were offered opportunities to be involved. Parents received detailed profiles of TAAS results with 'Parent TAAS Reports.' The report provided step by step instructions for parents to help their children at home and ideas for activities to address their children's needs.

Eight computers were purchased for teachers to use in inputting and analyzing the RSI data. Computers and printers were purchased to give children opportunities to use computers for reading and writing, and so that RSI results could be printed out and sent to parents.

A restructuring process in 1997-98 allowed teachers in all grades to plan together vertically. Teachers were given opportunities to align the curriculum and to do annual work plans, as well as unit designs, vertically and by grade level. Curriculum specialists assisted teachers in their specialty areas and helped them to meet the benchmark of the CIP.

Staff Development

All professional staff received technical assistance with reading styles and integration of curriculum (two days). In addition, new staff were provided with reading styles information and, the information was reviewed with returning staff (one day). All staff participated in Make It-Take It Day, working with parents to make materials for implementing reading styles at home. Content cadres met to align curriculum, and specialists assisted teachers with vertical teaming and grade-level unit designs and work plans on a monthly basis.

PATTON ELEMENTARY

Total 1996-97 ExceL budget: $34,175 ($32,135 were spent); total 1997-98 ExceL budget: $31,950 ($14,145 were spent). Instructional program included daily reading, including sustained silent reading; reading software; reading incentives; developmentally appropriate reading materials; mathematics journals; and Mathematics Pentathlon. Staff development included a variety of activities focusing on mathematics, brain research, and communicating with parents. Five of seventeen benchmarks were met.

Program Benchmarks and Benchmark Attainment Results

1. Third grade students will achieve a 94% pass rate on the Mathematics TAAS.

- Third grade students achieved a 92% pass rate on the Mathematics TAAS.

2. Fourth grade students will achieve a 95% pass rate on the Mathematics TAAS.

- Fourth grade students achieved a 99% pass rate on the Mathematics TAAS.

3. Fifth grade students will achieve a 93% pass rate on the Mathematics TAAS.

- Fifth grade students achieved a 95% pass rate on the Mathematics TAAS.

4. Third grade students will achieve a 97% pass rate on the Reading TAAS.

- Third grade students achieved a 96% pass rate on the Reading TAAS.

5. Fourth grade students will achieve a 97% pass rate on the Reading TAAS.

- Fourth grade students achieved a 99% pass rate on the Reading TAAS.

6. Fifth grade students will achieve a 97% pass rate on the Reading TAAS.

- Fifth grade students achieved a 95% pass rate on the Reading TAAS.

7. Seventy percent of third grade students will master all objectives on the Mathematics TAAS.

- Sixty-three percent of third grade students mastered all objectives on the Mathematics TAAS.

8. Eighty-four percent of third grade students will master all objectives on the Reading TAAS.

- Seventy-six percent of third grade students mastered all objectives on the Reading TAAS.

9. Seventy-four percent of fourth grade students will master all objectives on the Mathematics TAAS.

- Seventy-one percent of fourth grade students mastered all objectives on the Mathematics TAAS.

10. Seventy-five percent of fourth grade students will master all objectives on the Reading TAAS.

- Seventy-five percent of fourth grade students mastered all objectives on the Reading TAAS.

11. Seventy-five percent of fourth grade students will master all objectives on the Writing TAAS.

- Sixty-two percent of fourth grade students mastered all objectives on the Writing TAAS.

12. Sixty-six percent of fifth grade students will master all objectives on the Mathematics TAAS.

- Fifty percent of fifth grade students mastered all objectives on the Mathematics TAAS.

13. Seventy percent of fifth grade students will master all objectives on the Reading TAAS.

- Sixty percent of fifth grade students mastered all objectives on the Reading TAAS.

14. All students will passing the Reading Comprehension objective #3 on the Reading TAAS.

- Eighty-five percent of third grade students passed objective #3 on the Reading TAAS.
- Eighty-eight percent of fourth grade students passed objective #3 on the Reading TAAS.
- Seventy-nine percent of fifth grade students passed objective #3 on the Reading TAAS.

15. Students and staff will read 8 million minutes.

- Students and staff read at least 8 million minutes.

16. Ninety percent of third and fifth grade students will score above the 50th percentile on the Reading and Mathematics sections of the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS).

- Eighty-eight percent of third grade students scored above the 50th percentile on the Reading section of the ITBS.
- Eighty percent of fifth grade students scored above the 50th percentile on the Reading section of the ITBS.
- Seventy-nine percent of third grade students scored above the 50th percentile on the Mathematics section of the ITBS.
- Eighty percent of fifth grade students scored above the 50th percentile on the Mathematics section of the ITBS.

17. No third nor fifth grade students will perform in the bottom quartile on ITBS.

- Four third grade students (2%) performed in the bottom quartile on the Reading section of the ITBS.
- Ten fifth grade students (5%) performed in the bottom quartile on the Reading section of the ITBS.
- Sixteen third grade students (9%) performed in the bottom quartile on the Mathematics section of the ITBS.
- Twenty-two percent of fifth grade students (11%) performed in the bottom quartile on the Mathematics section of the ITBS.

Instructional Program

The Patton ExceL project, *Reading...Do It!* continued with an additional emphasis on mathematics instruction and the writing connection. Students read books appropriate for their reading levels. Then, students took tests on networked computers, either in the library, classroom, or computer lab. Students received their tests results immediately. The test results reflected students progress in relation to their class and to the whole school.

Everyday at Patton, the principal, faculty, staff, and students participated in at least 15 minutes of sustained silent reading. This tradition demonstrated "the life-long love of reading" as a critical life skill.

Teachers, other campus personnel (i.e., principal, helping teacher, counselors, librarian, special education teachers, secretaries, and volunteers), and parents praised students for their reading accomplishments. Teachers, students, the librarian, and volunteer guest readers read to younger readers in the classrooms and in the library. Staff formed reading groups with mixed grade level and ability students using the established buddy system. When the younger/beginning readers became successful, they received a celebration and Independent Reading Certificates. Later, they progressed to the advanced reading level, marking another milestone. Teachers displayed weekly classroom performance totals on the "Map To Fame," which became a major center of attention for all students at the school.

Everyone at Patton read daily for 30 minutes. This reading took the form of listening to someone read, shared reading, and independent reading. In 1997-98, students read for eight million minutes. Students were motivated to improve their reading proficiency through access to a variety of books at appropriate reading levels. Teacher facilitation, immediate feedback, and multiple reading strategies encouraged students to read longer, harder books. Classroom, library, and at-home collections of reading materials were expanded.

In addition, in 1997-98, students kept mathematics journals. Some students also participated in Mathematics Pentathlon games.

Staff Development

Some professional staff members attended ExceL Mathematics (three days). In addition, the Patton 4MAT team presented six half-days of training focused on brain research and practical applications of specific brain-based strategies. The sessions were led by teachers and included book studies such as *Making Connections* and *Guided Reading*. Information about communicating with students and parents, especially regarding the shift to the use of Investigations, was presented to professional staff members.

PEASE ELEMENTARY

Total 1996-97 ExceL budget: $22,150 ($21,362 were spent); total 1997-98 ExceL budget: $20,400 ($15,793 were spent). Instructional program included balanced literacy instruction, purchase of literature and manipluatives, parent training, assessment of learning styles, and curriculum alignment. Staff development included training in the following: Investigations, Connected Mathematics, Capital City Writes, PALM, Thematic Instruction, and gifted/talented instruction. Two of eight benchmarks were met.

Program Benchmarks and Benchmark Attainment Results

1. *The Mathematics TAAS scores of third grade students will increase to a 76% pass rate.*
   - Mathematics TAAS scores of third grade students decreased to a 64% pass rate.

2. *The Mathematics TAAS scores of fourth grade students will increase to a 74% pass rate.*
   - The Mathematics TAAS scores of fourth grade students increased to a 67% pass rate.

3. *The Mathematics TAAS scores of fifth grade students will exceed the 90% pass rate.*
   - The Mathematics TAAS scores of fifth grade students increased to a 88% pass rate.

4. *The Mathematics TAAS scores of sixth grade students will exceed the 90% pass rate.*
   - The Mathematics TAAS scores of sixth grade students decreased to a 87% pass rate.

5. *The Reading TAAS scores of third grade students will increase to a 77% pass rate.*
   - Reading TAAS scores of third grade students increased to a 76% pass rate.

6. The Reading TAAS scores of fourth grade students will increase to a 83% pass rate.

- The Reading TAAS scores of fourth grade students increased to an 84% pass rate.

7. The Reading TAAS scores of fifth grade students will exceed the 90% pass rate.

- The Reading TAAS scores of fifth grade students decreased to an 88% pass rate.

8. The Reading TAAS scores of sixth grade students will exceed the 90% pass rate.

- The Reading TAAS scores of sixth grade students exceeded the 90% pass rate.

Instructional Program

Pease Elementary's ExceL project, *Literacy for All*, included a variety of activities in the areas of reading, writing, and mathematics. Teachers conducted two and one-half hour language arts blocks, including a balanced reading program in every class at every grade level. Staff purchased literature to supplement basal readers. Students logged their reading and writing for the year and participated in campus and district-wide Young Author's Conferences. "Peace" was the name of the Pease writing initiative.

Teachers taught ninety-minute mathematics blocks, and staff purchased Investigations manipulatives. Norma Jost, the Area III mathematics specialist, observed, coached, monitored, and assessed instruction. In addition, she provided campus professional development and parent training sessions.

Parents and adopters served as resources to the integrated thematic units taught. Teachers devised a method for regularly communicating with parents about the mathematics and language arts curricula and the instruction thereof.

Flexible grouping was provided for each student, including large, small, heterogeneous, and homogeneous groupings. Teachers assessed students' learning styles and addressed them in each unit of study. Instruction included assessment on an ongoing basis. Teachers conducted pre-, mid-, and post-assessments in each unit. Teachers provided students with differentiated curricula upon demonstrated mastery of the core curricula. Vertical and horizontal teams met regularly to align the curriculum. The Campus Advisory Committee monitored the level of implementation of ExceL each nine weeks.

Staff Development

Fifteen staff members attended Investigations training and follow-up training (one-half day to four days). One staff member attended Connected Mathematics training (five days). One staff member attended Capital City Writes (15 days). Five staff members attended PALM training (two hours to two days). Three staff members attended Integrated Thematic Instruction (one to three days). Fourteen staff members attended a variety of gifted and talented instruction (one-half to one day). Eighteen teachers attended the ExceL Showcase (one-half day). Two staff members attended the Early Childhood Summit (two days). One staff member attended the Reading Summit (one day).

PECAN SPRINGS ELEMENTARY

Total 1996-97 ExceL budget: $50,695 ($40,630 were spent); total 1997-98 ExceL budget: $46,770 ($32,596 were spent). Instructional program included a mathematics lab, a student store, implementation of Investigations in grades one through five, performance incentives, and parental involvement. Staff development included Investigations, Cooperative discipline, Cooperative Learning, Improving TAAS, and Mathematics Strategies for Problem-Solving. Neither of two benchmarks was met.

Program Benchmarks and Benchmark Attainment Results

1. The pass rate of third, fourth, and fifth grade students will increase ten percentage points on the Mathematics TAAS.

- The pass rate of third grade students decreased 5 percentage points on the Mathematics TAAS.
- The pass rate of fourth grade students increased one percentage point on the Mathematics TAAS.
- The pass rate of fifth grade students increased seven percentage points on the Mathematics TAAS.

2. Parent and community involvement will increase to 30%.

- According to the principal, twenty-five to thirty parents were consistently involved, and more parents seem to be taking responsibility for their children's education. However, data were not returned to address percentage of parental involvement.

Instructional Program

Pecan Springs Elementary School continued the ExceL program, *Mathematicians Attaining Their Highest,* begun in October, 1996. The program was expanded to include Investigations during 1997-98.

Staff designed a Mathematics lab to be a collaborative learning environment for students, parents, community members. The lab included manipulatives and an aligned prekindergarten through fifth grade mathematics curriculum, which was to serve as a catalyst for change. Leaders from each grade level and special education, the parent training specialist, community members, and the grant writers selected supplies, set up schedules, aligned the Mathematics curriculum, and established the order of the Mathematics strands to be taught. Some parents volunteered to help in the mathematics lab. Students attended the mathematics lab once per week. The mathematics lab was opened once per month before PTA meetings for visitation and for lending of materials. This allowed parents and community members opportunities to support students' mathematical progress. In addition, parents were invited to check-out materials from the lab during school days.

A school store was developed to provide students with opportunities to purchase basic school supplies and student incentives, such as pencils and rulers. Students in third through fifth grades managed the store on a rotating basis and experienced real-life dealings with

money, supply and demand, percentages, fractions, and more. Parents volunteered to help with the store.

Students took field trips to Pecan Springs community businesses such as Applied Materials and Texas Disposal Systems. Staff created school-wide contests in which third through fifth graders were able to practice mathematics concepts, such as estimation and problem-solving, in cooperative and competitive ways. Winning classes and individual students received incentives. Kindergarten through fifth grade students kept journals for vocabulary, concept development, review, research, and discovery learning. Third through fifth grade students received DynaMath periodicals to reinforce mathematics skills/concepts.

Investigations was implemented in grades one through five. Manipulatives were purchased for grades one through four, and all staff utilized Investigations in conjunction with mathematics text books.

Staff held Family Math Night three times during the school year. Teachers presented grade level activities for student and parent participation. Childcare was provided for two through four year olds, and light refreshments were served. Staff shared tips for parental involvement at home and discussed TAAS test examples.

Approximately 25-30 parents were actively and consistently involved at the campus. Parents attended PTA meetings, Family Math Night, conferences, and Alliance meetings. The principal reported that parents were more visible in day to day activities on campus than they have been in the past.

Staff Development

First through fifth grade staff attended three days of Investigations training. In addition, representatives from second through fourth grades attended an Investigations training update/Make-and-Take (one day). Because first grade Investigations curriculum materials were on back order when the training update was scheduled, first grade representatives did not participate. All faculty attended Cooperative Discipline (one day), Cooperative Learning and Cooperative Learning Update (one day each), Improving TAAS (one day), and Mathematics Strategies for Problem-Solving (one day).

PILLOW ELEMENTARY

Total 1996-97 ExceL budget: $38,020 ($37,075 were spent); total 1997-98 ExceL budget: $35,220 ($31,155 were spent). Instructional program included an afterschool mathematics lab, regular-day tutoring/mentoring, and family activities. Staff development included training in Investigations, curriculum alignment, and visits to other campuses. One of two benchmarks was partially met.

Program Benchmarks and Benchmark Attainment Results

1. Students in third through fifth grade will achieve a 90% pass rate on the Mathematics and Reading TAAS.

- Students in third grade achieved a 69% pass rate on the Mathematics TAAS.
- Students in fourth grade achieved a 74% pass rate on the Mathematics TAAS.
- Students in fifth grade achieved an 80% pass rate on the Mathematics TAAS.

- Students in third grade achieved a 73% pass rate on the Reading TAAS.
- Students in fourth grade achieved an 87% pass rate on the Reading TAAS.
- Students in fifth grade achieved a 90% pass rate on the Reading TAAS.

2. *Ninety mentors will be available for partnering with students.*
   - Forty-five mentors were available for partnering with students.

Instructional Program

Show Me Excellence Through Problem-Solving, the ExceL program at Pillow Elementary, continued in the same manner as last year with the addition of Investigations manipulatives. To support the implementation of daily hands-on problem-solving activities, Investigations materials were purchased for the fourth grade.

Vertical teams developed and aligned the mathematics curriculum. The curriculum included hands-on problem-solving activities to be introduced to students in kindergarten. To monitor student progress, each vertical team designed assessment checklists and rubrics to record mastery/non-mastery of the problem-solving targets. Practice tests for TAAS and PALM were also used as on-going running records. Each vertical team member received two substitute days through ExceL, in addition to the six stipend days provided for staff development. On the first of these days, the aligned mathematics instruction plan was updated. The second day was used to support shifts in the CIP to more emphasis on literacy alignment. During the spring, vertical teams worked to align the language arts curriculum.

Vertical teams established resource centers in the campus content mastery center, and staff catalogued all resource materials. Each vertical team elected a member to serve on the campus committee for mathematics problem-solving excellence. This committee monitored use of manipulatives and curricula in daily instruction. A volunteer was paid (non-ExceL funds) to establish and monitor the volunteer resource room.

Students who failed to pass the Mathematics TAAS last year or who were identified as being in danger of not passing in 1997-98 attended an afterschool mathematics lab. Mathematics lab offerings were increased in 1997-98. Teachers began the lab sessions with problem-solving warm-up exercises. Then, students participated in interactive, hands-on activities. Snacks were served. Students came to the lab twice per week for one hour. Additional mathematics lab time was provided for students for one hour per week during the regular school day. Parent permission was required for student participation, and parents provided transportation after the mathematics lab.

Motivational and enriching activities, such as MARE and Family Math Nights, were developed to extend problem-solving curriculum and instruction. Family Math Nights were held twice during the school year, and generated positive comments from staff and parents. Family Math Nights were a non-threatening way to share campus mathematics strategies with parents. Celebrations of learning, occurred each nine weeks to promote success in student performance, and emphasized publishing to promote success with writing.

Staff established a daytime tutoring schedule to provide additional reading support for students. In 1997-98, tutoring/mentoring time was increased, and small study groups were held each week.

Staff Development

Some professional staff members attended Investigations training. In addition, each vertical team member received two days for curriculum alignment. Some staff members used staff development days for visiting other campuses.

PLEASANT HILL ELEMENTARY

Total 1996-97 ExceL budget: $33,900 ($34,132 were spent); total 1997-98 ExceL budget: $31,500 ($20,807 were spent). Instructional program included a balanced reading and writing program, and new materials to support the program. Staff development included training in Capital City Writes, Balanced Reading, and Instructional Equity. The one benchmark was partially met.

Program Benchmarks and Benchmark Attainment Results

1. Students in third through fifth grades will achieve 85% pass rates on the Reading TAAS.

- Students in third grade achieved an 80% pass rate on the Reading TAAS.
- Students in fourth grade achieved an 88% pass rate on the Reading TAAS.
- Students in fifth grade achieved a 75% pass rate on the Reading TAAS.

Additional data:

- Eighty-one percent of third graders including bilingual, LEP, and special education students were reading on or above grade level. At the beginning of the grant (1996-97) over 50% of the students were reading below grade level, according to anecdotal records.

Instructional Program

During the 1996-97 school year, the faculty of Pleasant Hill researched "best practices" in reading, writing, and mathematics. They compared these practices to their own and determined what needed to be done in order to ensure that all students mastered the core competencies. As a result, in 1997-98, the focus of *Learning Through Literacy*, the ExceL program at Pleasant Hill, became the implementation of a balanced reading and writing program. The program was implemented in all grades in order to enhance early literacy in prekindergarten through second grades and to accelerate literacy in third through fifth grades.

A variety of materials were purchased including guided reading books, books for the early literacy library, sets of books for the classrooms, instructional supplies, and copies of the book, *Invitations*, which was studied by the entire faculty.

Staff Development

The majority of ExceL funds were used to pay stipends for the ninety percent of teachers who attended Capital City Writes for three weeks during the summer. All teachers participated in a campus retreat (one day), Balanced Reading training (one day) and Instructional Equity training (one day).

REILLY ELEMENTARY

Total 1996-97 ExceL budget: $22,900 ($16,705 were spent); total 1997-98 ExceL budget: $21,200 ($18,693 were spent). Instructional program included Investigations in grades one through five, PALM, and computers for each classroom. Staff development focused on Investigations, PALM, and multi-cultural issues. Two of three benchmarks were partially met.

Program Benchmarks and Benchmark Attainment Results

1. Pass rates of students in all grades will increase by four percentage points on the Mathematics TAAS.

- Pass rates of students in the third grade decreased twenty-seven percentage points on the Mathematics TAAS.
- Pass rates of students in the fourth grade increased eleven percentage points on the Mathematics TAAS.
- Pass rates of students in the fifth grade decreased twenty percentage points on the Mathematics TAAS.

2. The gap between sub-groups will be reduced to three percentage points or less on the Reading TAAS.

- Achievement gaps were not reduced to three percentage points or less between any student groups in any grade level on the Reading TAAS.

3. The gap in student achievement on Mathematics, Reading, and Writing TAAS will decrease a minimum of ten percentage points.

- The achievement gap decreased a minimum of ten percentage points in the following five pairs of student groups:
  - Third grade Male and Female students on the Mathematics TAAS (gap reduced from 26 percentage points to 10 percentage points)
  - Third grade Hispanic and White students on the Mathematics TAAS (gap reduced from 53 percentage points to 27 percentage points)
  - Fourth grade Economically Disadvantaged and Non-economically Disadvantaged students on the Mathematics TAAS (gap reduced from 25 percentage points to 15 percentage points)
  - Fifth grade Male and Female students on the Mathematics TAAS (gap reduced from 23 percentage points to six percentage points)

Instructional Program

Reilly Elementary used its ExceL Grant funds to purchase Investigations materials for grades one through four, while fifth grade materials were purchased by AISD. Investigations will gradually replace Michael Eaton's Mathematics That Works; Investigations will be implemented in all grades by the fall of 1998.

Teachers assessed students in prekindergarten through second grades using PALM, an authentic assessment of language arts and mathematics skills. The assessment included portfolios and students' classroom work. Teachers completed checklists on each student who was assessed.

Parent training, as described in the original grant proposal, was not successful due to poor parent attendance. As a result, in 1997-98, staff dealt with parents on an individual basis.

Previously, students had access to computers only in the computer lab that they visited once a week. To provide better access to technology, part of the ExceL budget was set aside for the purchase of additional computers. Through ExceL and other funding sources, every classroom received between one and four computers. Technology was used to supplement and enhance the mathematics and other curricula.

Staff Development

Teachers received training in ESL and multi-cultural issues to address the achievement gap between student sub-groups. The campus mathematics curriculum specialist provided an orientation to the new Investigations manipulatives, and fourth and fifth grade teachers attended Investigations training. Prekindergarten through second grade teachers attended PALM training.

RIDGETOP ELEMENTARY

Total 1996-97 ExceL budget: $16,285 ($14,317 were spent); total 1997-98 ExceL budget: $15,510 ($6,275 were spent). Instructional program and staff development were not implemented. The two benchmarks were partially met.

Program Benchmarks and Benchmark Attainment Results

1. The pass rates of all students on the Mathematics TAAS will increase by 10 percentage points.

- Pass rates of third grade students decreased 13 percentage points on the Mathematics TAAS.
- Pass rates of fourth grade students increased 47 percentage points on the Mathematics TAAS.
- Pass rates of fifth grade students increased 16 percentage points on the Mathematics TAAS.

2. The rate of students mastering all objectives on the Mathematics TAAS will increase five percentage points.

- Mastery rate of third grade students on the Mathematics TAAS decreased 31 percentage points.
- Mastery rate of fourth grade students on the Mathematics TAAS decreased 20 percentage points.
- Mastery rate of fifth grade students on the Mathematics TAAS increased 5 percentage points.

Instructional Program

Due to the long-term absence of the principal during the 1997-98 school year, the ExceL program was not implemented. During the 1998-99 school year the program will focus on mathematics and literacy achievement for students in early childhood through fifth grade.

Staff Development

ExceL staff development was not implemented.

ST. ELMO ELEMENTARY

Total 1996-97 ExceL budget: $35,110 ($29,195 were spent); total 1997-98 ExceL budget: $32,460 ($13,225 were spent). Instructional program included Investigations, Project Read, intersession TAAS enrichment, and parental involvement. Staff development included training in Investigations and Literacy Backbone. One of three benchmarks was met; quantitative data were not returned to address the other two benchmarks.

Program Benchmarks and Benchmark Attainment Results

1. Pass rates of third through fifth grade Academy students will increase five to ten percentage points on the Mathematics, Reading, and Writing TAAS.

- Identification numbers of Academy students data were not provided for this benchmark.

2. All Academy students will experience at least a one month growth.

- Eighty-five percent of Academy students experienced at least one month's growth, based on pre- and post-test results, according to the principal.

3. The number of parents involved in the St. Elmo ExceL Academy will increase by 10 percentage points.

- According to the principal, a total of approximately 27 parents attended three meetings regarding the Academy and mathematics and reading skills-building (average attendance per meeting was approximately 9-10 parents). No data were returned regarding the percentage point increase.

Instructional Program

The 1997-98 ExceL program at St. Elmo focused on mathematics and literacy through the implementation of Investigations and balanced literacy. Staff implemented Investigations in grades one through five. Teachers received training in Literacy Backbone, then returned to campus to train other teachers. ExceL funds purchased a Literacy Backbone kit and supplementary Reading Recovery materials. Project Read continued as part of the language arts curriculum; new teachers were trained as needed.

A CCC-Success Maker lab was established on the St. Elmo campus. CCC-Success Maker is a learning tool that provides diagnostic information for each student. CCC lab students were given pre- and post-tests, and the program allowed students to work on mathematics and reading skills at their own pace, based on their test scores.

Grade-level teams selected students for participation in the *ExceL Academy*, based on previous TAAS performances, at-risk criteria, and teacher recommendations. Staff implemented instructional activities that focused on TAAS objectives, including CCC software, CCC lab-generated support materials, and self-esteem-building activity materials. The ExceL Academy lasted three hours and fifteen minutes each day and took place for two weeks during the November intersession.

Parents received opportunities for training in early literacy development strategies through sessions sponsored by KLRU in collaboration with prekindergarten through first grade classroom teachers. ExceL funds purchased instructional materials to support reading and math, including magnetic easels, magnetic letters, pocket charts, books, overhead projectors, and carts. Second grade students completed TAAS release tests and received incentives based on their performance.

Staff Development

Professional staff received training from the district in Investigations and Literacy Backbone. Three staff members attended the International Reading Conference in Orlando, Florida and will present information to other staff during the 1998-99 school year. Professional books were purchased for book studies in the area of literacy.

SANCHEZ ELEMENTARY

Total 1996-97 ExceL budget: $35,760 ($39,081 were spent); total 1997-98 ExceL budget: $33,360 ($11,228 were spent). Instructional program included curriculum alignment. Staff development focused on literacy, including training in guided reading and running records; Capital City Writes; and PALM. Three of nine benchmarks were met.

Program Benchmarks and Benchmark Attainment Results

1. *Mathematics TAAS scores of third grade students will increase to a pass rate of 59%.*
   - Mathematics scores of third grade students increased to 69%.

2. *Mathematics TAAS scores of fourth grade students will increase to a pass rate of 73%.*
   - Mathematics TAAS scores of fourth grade students decreased to 41%.

3. *Mathematics TAAS scores of fifth grade students will increase to a pass rate of 70%.*
   - Mathematics TAAS scores of fifth grade student increased to 67%.

4. *Mathematics TAAS scores of sixth grade students will increase to a pass rate of 89%.*
   - Mathematics TAAS scores of sixth grade students decreased to 79%.

5. *Reading TAAS scores of third grade students will increase to a pass rate of 76%.*
   - Reading TAAS scores of third grade students increased to 81%.

6. *Reading TAAS scores of fourth grade students will increase to a pass rate of 85%.*
   - Reading TAAS scores of fourth grade students decreased to 67%.

7. Reading TAAS scores of fifth grade students will increase to a pass rate of 67%.

- Reading TAAS scores of fifth grade students increased to 59%.

8. Reading TAAS scores of sixth grade students will increase to a pass rate of 81%.

- Reading TAAS scores of sixth grade students decreased to 65%.

9. The language arts curriculum for all grades will be fully aligned with district curriculum documents, TAAS objectives, and the CIP.

- This benchmark was met.

Instructional Program

The entire faculty received the equivalent of six days of staff development for curriculum alignment activities designed by the Instructional Technology Coordinator and the Helping Teacher. The training emphasized instructional technology and curriculum alignment.

In 1997-98, the language arts curriculum was aligned (last year the Mathematics curriculum was aligned). The faculty discussed what literacy should look like as a campus and looked at running records in depth. As a result of the realignment, teachers worked with the bottom five students in their classes by keeping running records on them throughout the school year. Teachers attended inservice training regarding literacy groups, and groups were created for student participation. Teachers visited Travis Heights Elementary to observe their language arts activities. Work plans for the language arts curriculum were finished in January and were revised during the spring. Finally, the faculty began aligning the writing curriculum.

Staff Development

Professional staff used all six staff development days to examine how literacy is acquired and can be promoted. Staff spent two of the days on guided reading and one day on running records. Vertical and grade level teams met for two to discuss literacy. Teachers received stipends to attend Capital City Writes. Substitutes were provided so that the kindergarten and teachers could complete PALM training, while first and second grade teachers felt they could complete PALM training without substitutes.

SIMS ELEMENTARY

Total 1996-97 ExceL budget: $42,775 ($28,902 were spent); total 1997-98 ExceL budget: $39,150 ($33,539 were spent). Instructional program included a full-time behavioral specialist, Positive Action curriculum, and Super Star Mentor program. Staff development included a wide variety of activities including Positive Action training, CIP workshop, and a staff retreat. One of three benchmarks was met; one benchmark was partially met.

Program Benchmarks and Benchmark Attainment Results

1. Eighty percent of third, fourth, and fifth grade students will pass the Mathematics and Reading TAAS.

- Eighty-one percent of third grade students passed the Mathematics TAAS.

- Fifty-two percent of fourth grade students passed the Mathematics TAAS.
- Seventy-four percent of fifth grade students passed the Mathematics TAAS.
- Forty-seven percent of third grade students passed the Reading TAAS.
- Fifty-six percent of fourth grade students passed the Reading TAAS.
- Sixty-five percent of fifth grade students passed the Reading TAAS.

2. Student discipline referrals will be reduced 80% during the 1997-98 school year.

- Students discipline referrals decreased approximately 85%.

3. Community involvement will increase by 80% with 100% participation by Sims families.

- Community involvement increased approximately 75% with about 95% participation by Sims families.

Additional data:

- Eighty-seven percent of teachers agreed that the Positive Action curriculum (described below) decreased behavioral problems at Sims;
- Thirteen percent of the teachers were unable to judge.
- Ninety-five percent of teachers agreed that the Positive Action curriculum improved school climate;
- Five percent of teachers were unable to judge.
- One hundred percent of teachers agreed that the Positive Action curriculum should be continued.
- Of those students randomly questioned about the Positive Action curriculum, 100% said they had learned to behave better and to interact better with others.
- Eighty-seven percent of teachers agreed that the Super Star Mentor Program (described below) decreased behavior problems;
- Nine percent of teachers were unable to judge;
- Four percent of teachers said that it did not decrease behavior problems.
- Ninety-five percent of teachers agreed that the mentor program increased student achievement;
- Five percent of teachers were unable to judge.
- One hundred percent of teachers agreed that the mentor program should be continued.
- Of those students randomly questioned concerning the program (n=80), one hundred percent reported enjoying having a mentor, learning from their mentor, and wanting a mentor next year.

Instructional Program

Efforts to increase academic achievement included implementation of Investigations and Accelerated Reader and assistance from a full-time mathematics specialist. In addition, many teachers implemented sustained silent reading for one hour per day.

A full-time behavior specialist was hired to improve the overall school climate by working with students to create a feeling of safety, by making referrals, and by helping

teachers to create discipline plans for students. Other discipline strategies included calling parents when serious transgressions took place, discussing behavioral actions, encouraging parents to include consequences at home, discussing cases with the school counselor, and providing in-school suspension.

Teachers started their classes with fifteen minutes of the Positive Action curriculum each day. Positive Action includes eight integrated units, such as "Health," "Self-concept," and "Responsibility." New units were introduced at regularly scheduled campus spirit days. The Positive Action curriculum can be used for years because it builds on itself each year starting with kindergarten. (Sims staff has modified the curriculum for prekindergarten students.) Students learned to value the rules, and teachers stressed vocabulary development.

Some students with discipline and academic problems participated in the Super Star Mentor Program. College students spent at least one hour per week with their elementary students talking, playing educational games, and doing TAAS and other required academic activities.

Staff Development

Twenty-two professional staff members attended Positive Action training (one day); 15 attended a CIP workshop (one day); 14 attended Learning to Deal with Poverty (one day); 12 attended New Laws in Special Education (one day); 11 attended This is Your Brain on Poverty (one day); eight attended Common Bonds (one day); seven attended a staff retreat (one day); six attended The Clearer the Focus, the Greater the Achievement (one day); five attended Investigations training (three days); four attended Project Read training (one to two days); two attended Kindergarten Teachers of Texas (one day); and two attended Positive Parenting Practices (one day).

In addition, a variety of training activities and conferences were attended by one professional staff member and included the following: Reading Recovery Conference (two days); Open Court Phonics training (one day); Creating World Class Readers (one day); Invent Austin (one day); Hosts National Conference (three days); Physical Education Regional Workshop (one day); National Black Educators Association (three days); and others.

SUMMITT ELEMENTARY

Total 1996-97 ExceL budget: $23,875 ($20,159 were spent); total 1997-98 ExceL budget: $22,350 ($18,638 were spent). Instructional program included language arts lab for kindergarten through second grade students, a volunteer program, and materials for the lab and for teacher check-out. Staff development included a wide variety of activities such as Guided Reading and Writers Workshop, Demand Assessment Made Easy, and Guided Reading Book Talk. Two of two benchmarks were met.

Program Benchmarks and Benchmark Attainment Results

1. Fifty percent of students who have been in the ExceL program will be reading on the appropriate grade level, as assessed by TAAS.

- Sixty-six percent of third grade students who were served by the ExceL program during 1996-97 (as second graders) passed the Reading TAAS, indicating that they were reading on or above grade level.

2. Fifty percent of students enrolled in the ExceL program will be reading on grade level, as assessed by PALM.

- Forty-eight percent of first and second grade students enrolled in the program in 1997-98 were reading at or above grade level, as assessed by PALM. (Fifty-two percent of these students were reading on grade level when the five special education students were removed from the analysis.)

Instructional Program

The *Reach for the Stars* program was created two years ago to give kindergarten through second grade students extra language arts support. Program students visited a lab equipped with a large variety of multi-sensory materials and moved in a sequential, self-paced manner. Program staff emphasized a multiple intelligences approach to learning.

The program began in early September when the second grade teachers identified students who were not performing on grade level in any of the language arts areas. The students were interviewed individually by the lab supervisor. Then, students were matched with a volunteer, who worked with them two to three times each week in twenty minute sessions. First grade students were added in early October, and kindergarten students were added in November. At the beginning of the program, teachers assessed students using PALM, portfolios, and observations. At the end of the year, teachers re-evaluated students through similar methods. Leveled books also were used in the assessment of students progress.

Volunteers spent at least one day observing in the lab, and practiced using the materials. Then, the volunteers, many of whom were Summitt parents, were matched with students. Additional volunteers were recruited from the surrounding neighborhood through advertisements in a monthly neighborhood newsletter. In 1997-98, Lotus adopters also volunteered in the lab and some fifth grade students worked with kindergarten students in the lab once per week.

Teachers had opportunities to check-out materials from the *Reach for the Stars* lab. Teachers observed the students using the materials and were asked to make a "wish list." Manipulatives were ordered for prekindergarten through second grade teachers. Next year, additional materials will be ordered so that parents can check them out for use at home. A tracking system was implemented for students who completed the *Reach for the Stars* program. The tracking system will permit evaluation of the *Reach for the Stars* program.

In 1997-98, the *Reach for the Stars* program served 51 first through second grade students and nine kindergarten students. All of the students will be able to return to the program in early fall 1998. Teachers reported that the program helped students in language arts and in social/emotional development.

Staff Development

All primary teachers attended the following: Introduction to Guided Reading and Writers Workshop (two hours); Demand Assessment Made Easy (two hours); Guided Reading Book Talk (three hours); and the Early Childhood Summer Summit (two days). One staff member attended the Texas Council of Social Studies (two days). Six staff members attended the Early Literacy Conference (two days). Five staff members attended Using Music to Teach Reading and Mathematics (one day). One staff member attended the National Association for the Education of Young Children conference (three days). Five staff members visited Pillow Elementary to observe guided reading and writing (one-half day). Six staff members attended the Texas Association of Gifted and Talented Teachers Conference (one day). Two staff members attended advanced gifted/talented training (one day). Six staff members attended the Society of Developmental Education-Guided Reading (one day). Five staff members attended technology competency training classes.

SUNSET VALLEY ELEMENTARY

Total 1996-97 ExceL budget: $43,045 ($39,418 were spent); total 1997-98 ExceL budget: $39,870 ($26,849 were spent). Instructional program included afterschool TAAS camp, afterschool Spanish camp, summer TAAS camp, summer ESL camp, parent center, half-time parent involvement representative, and parent training. Staff development included planning and curriculum alignment, leadership training, and training in Authentic Assessment and variety of other topics. Four of eight benchmarks were met.

Program Benchmarks and Benchmark Attainment Results

1. Third grade students will achieve an 85% pass rate on the Mathematics TAAS.

- Third grade students achieved a 77% pass rate on the Mathematics TAAS.

2. Fourth grade students will achieve an 88% pass rate on the Mathematics TAAS.

- Fourth grade students achieved a 75% pass rate on the Mathematics TAAS.

3. Fifth grade students will achieve an 85% pass rate on the Mathematics TAAS.

- Fifth grade students achieved an 88% pass rate on the Mathematics TAAS.

4. Third grade students will achieve an 85% pass rate on the Reading TAAS.

- Third grade students achieved a 90% pass rate on the Reading TAAS.

5. Fourth grade students will achieve an 85% pass rate on the Reading TAAS.

- Fourth grade students achieved an 86% pass rate on the Reading TAAS.

6. Fifth grade students will maintain a pass rate above 90% on the Reading TAAS.

- Fifth grade students achieved an 86% pass rate on the Reading TAAS.

7. Fifty percent of parents will attend training sessions and/or volunteer through the Parent Center.

- Fifty percent parent participation was achieved: 175 parents attended the Education Carnival; 80 parents attended "Show & Tell;" 70 parents attended the "Giant House Meeting." Training sessions at the Parent Center were attended by 15-20 parents per session.

8. Five percent of low income parents will participate with their children in the Early Intervention Teaching Center (EITC).

- Because of personnel difficulties with the EITC, it was not possible to invite parents to work with their children in the EITC in 1997-98. However, parents will be invited during the 1998-99 school year.

Additional data:

- As a result of their greatly improved 1997 TAAS scores, Sunset Valley received a "Texas Successful Schools Award" from the Texas Education Agency.

Instructional Program

Sixty-nine third through fifth graders identified as at-risk for failing TAAS attended afterschool TAAS Camp. (Although the Camp was expanded in 1997-98, attendance was only about 70% because Sunset Valley offered other extra-curricular camps at the same time. The timing of the camps will be adjusted for the 1998-99 school year.) Certified teachers taught the camp two afternoons a week during the twenty-four weeks prior to TAAS administration. Students received snacks, then teachers provided small group instruction on TAAS objectives and test-taking strategies. Teachers assigned students real-world problems that had been submitted by Sunset Valley adopters and required application of TAAS skills and objectives. Students received group recognition on the basis of creative solutions to the problems. Teachers invited adopters to participate in the group recognition.

Eight monolingual Spanish-speaking students attended afterschool Spanish camp in 1997-98. Certified teachers taught the two afternoons a week. Students received snacks, then teachers provided intensive English language instruction through real-life experience-based activities, such as field trips to places in the neighborhood including grocery stores, libraries and restaurants. Teachers invited adopters to host the field trips.

Sunset Valley low-income students were given extra time to engage in accelerated learning through summer TAAS Camp. Third, fourth, and fifth grade students who failed to pass TAAS were invited to participate in the camp. The parent involvement representative notified parents of their children's need to attend the camp and strongly encouraged the parents to have their children attend. The camp was taught by certified teachers and was offered for half-day sessions during four weeks of the summer. For two half-hour sessions each day, the students received small group instruction on TAAS objectives and test-taking strategies. A summer TAAS camp had been offered for the last four years at Sunset Valley, based on tuition. ExceL grant funds made it possible for low income students to participate in the camp.

Monolingual Spanish students were given extra time to develop their English language skills through the ESL summer camp. The parent involvement representative engaged in an aggressive campaign to notify parents early on that their children needed to participate and provided assistance to ensure that the children would attend the sessions. The camp, which was taught by certified teachers, was offered for half-day sessions during four weeks of the summer. For one hour each day, mixed age groups chose projects, researched and developed them, and then presented them completely in English, using multi-media. All of the presentations were video-taped for self-evaluation. ExceL grant funds made it possible for monolingual Spanish students to participate in the ongoing tuition-based summer TAAS camp. All students were integrated into the mixed-age, hands-on enrichment activities of the summer TAAS camp.

A parent center was established to provide parents with an environment for training and support in a variety of areas. A survey was developed to assess parent needs and to form a parent skills/experience database. Parent education and training was organized by a half-time parent involvement representative (PIR), in conjunction with the Family Focus Committee and the school counselor. The PIR also created a community information center for parents and encouraged and organized parent involvement activities including ESL and SSL classes and sessions on "How to Talk so Kids Will Listen and How to Listen so Kids Will Talk." In order to develop capacity, the PIR trained a Parent Advisory Council of interested parents and community members that is now a functioning body for the Parent Center. This council will assume responsibility for the parent center by the end of the fourth year of the ExceL Grant.

The Sunset Valley Early Intervention Teaching Center (EITC) is a component of the parent center that was designed as an on-site childcare center for teachers in the Crockett High School Vertical Team. The EITC provides on-site training for parents of children from birth to four years old. Because of personnel difficulties in 1997-98, plans to invite parents to come and work with their children in the EITC were postponed. The tuition-based child care center will continue on-site training for parents after the ExceL grant has ended.

According to the principal, because the initial Investigations training provided through AISD was not well organized, that it was not possible for all teachers to attend the training sessions. Sunset Valley decided to wait until AISD was able to supply the training through their grant to send members to be trained in the curriculum. However, teachers at every grade level utilized Investigations and materials throughout the year.

To address the issue of reading readiness among kindergarten students, ExceL funds were used to train teachers, to purchase materials, and to pay teachers to provide phonemic awareness instruction to students who demonstrated a need in this area. The lessons were provided from February through April and were held after school two days per week for forty-five minutes. PALM was used to assess student achievement in phonemic awareness.

To address the issue of primary students reading below grade level when they enter third grade, guided reading texts were purchased. Kindergarten through second grade teachers learned to use the texts, and assessed student achievement in the guided reading program through PALM.

Staff Development

The school-wide retreat that was planned for the summer was canceled because AISD scheduled so many summer sessions that were required or that teachers wanted to attend. Staff development days were used for team planning of school-wide annual work plans and curriculum alignment during the school year. One half-day was used for teacher leadership training. In addition, all teachers attended Authentic Assessment (one day), and Computer Skills (two days). Kindergarten through second grade teachers and resource staff attended guided reading training (one day). Selected third through fifth grade teachers attended special areas curriculum integration (one day).

TRAVIS HEIGHTS ELEMENTARY

Total 1996-97 ExceL budget: $45,420 ($46,933 were spent); total 1997-98 ExceL budget: $42,120 ($15,385 were spent). Instructional program included a summer mathematics academy, mathematics and reading tutoring, TAAS practice tests, family activities, and parent training. Staff development included a variety of activities such as team building, Investigations training, and national conferences. One of four benchmarks was met; one benchmark was partially met.

1997-98 TAAS Benchmarks

1. Third, fourth, and fifth grade students will achieve a 68% pass rate on the Mathematics TAAS.

- Students in third grade achieved a 50% pass rate on the Mathematics TAAS.
- Students in the fourth grade achieved a 51% pass rate on the Mathematics TAAS.
- Students in the fifth grade achieved a 65% pass rate on the Mathematics TAAS.

2. Third, fourth, and fifth grade students will achieve a 75% pass rate on the Reading TAAS.

- Students in the third grade achieved a 83% pass rate on the Reading TAAS.
- Students in the fourth grade achieved a 77% pass rate on the Reading TAAS.
- Students in the fifth grade achieved a 70% pass rate on the Reading TAAS.

3. Twenty-five percent of LEP parents will attend Family Math Night.

- At least 25% of LEP parents attended Family Math Night.

4. TEKS in-service will be provided for the staff.

- This benchmark was not met because the principal determined that curriculum alignment training was needed first. The TEKS in-service will continue when staff works on alignment and annual plans. Assessment reports will be aligned with PALM, primary progress indicators, benchmarks, and TEKS.

Instructional Program

Kindergarten through fifth grade students who needed extra help with mathematics attended a Summer Mathematics Academy. Students worked in primary and intermediate

groups. Teachers incorporated cooperative learning, peer tutoring, and community building strategies in their classrooms. At the end of each week, teachers sent home letters describing the week's activities along with suggestions for activities at home. Teachers also provided short weekly progress notes on students. The Summer Mathematics Academy culminated in a family cookout and awards ceremony. The academy was staffed by four teachers who taught three hours per day and received thirty minutes of preparation time. After completion of the course each teacher received one half-day to evaluate and assess the effectiveness of the program and the progress of the students.

Travis Heights worked with Communities In Schools (CIS) to sponsor an ABC Literacy Conference for parents. Thirty-five parents attended.

Teacher-selected students received tutoring on Mathematics and Reading TAAS skills. The tutors, who were from St. Edward's University, the Veteran's Administration data center, and IKON, received training by Alice Moore, CIS program manager. Tutors met with students for one hour per week for a minimum of six weeks. Tutors read with younger student and practiced TAAS skills with the older students using released TAAS tests and mathematics manipulatives.

All students completed released TAAS for practice. On the basis of the test results, teachers emphasized areas of weakness in their instruction. Teachers graded practice writing samples holistically, and results were interpreted to students and teachers.

Staff held two Family Math Nights to promote parental involvement and to encourage parents to work with students at home. All classroom teachers provided manipulatives for the students to show their parents how mathematics is taught at Travis Heights. Additional Investigations kits and manipulatives were purchased.

Staff provided increased opportunities for parents of LEP students to become involved in a wide variety of activities at Travis Heights. A translator was present at every program and meeting. Bilingual teachers taught parents how to work with their children at home.

Staff Development

ExceL money was used to advance literacy, mathematics, and technology instruction in 1997-98. Three prekindergarten and kindergarten teachers attended a Wright Group Conference. They purchased emergent readers and received training that they applied directly to their classroom instruction. Several teachers attended a workshop on multi-age instruction in literacy sponsored by the Society for Developmental Education. In the future, Travis Heights will work with the society to plan a conference that the whole staff can attend. Because Travis Heights is part of the NEA Learning Lab, they sent teachers to a national conference to network with other educators. The teachers used storytelling to tie together staff development opportunities.

Four staff members attended the Early Literacy Conference in Dallas. When they returned, they shared what they had learned with the other primary staff members. They also used the material as part of their Action Research and book study group. All staff members attended one day of team building and five days of Investigations training. Four staff members attended the NCTM national conference for four days.

WALNUT CREEK ELEMENTARY

Total 1996-97 ExceL budget: $49,190 ($28,828 were spent); total 1997-98 ExceL budget: $45,840 ($28,695 were spent). Instructional program included curriculum alignment and one micro-grant. Staff development included mathematics training and TAAS administration training. The one benchmark was met.

Program Benchmarks and Benchmark Attainment Results

1. Students in desegregated groups will achieve pass rates of 40% or more on each TAAS test.

- Third grade African American students achieved a pass rate of 68% on the Mathematics TAAS.
- Third grade Hispanic students achieved a pass rate of 55% on the Mathematics TAAS.
- Third grade White students achieved a pass rate of 69% on the Mathematics TAAS.
- Third grade Asian students achieved a pass rate of 93% on the Mathematics TAAS.
- Third grade Low Income students achieved a pass rate of 64% on the Mathematics TAAS.
- Third grade Male students achieved a pass rate of 63% on the Mathematics TAAS.
- Third grade Female students achieved a pass rate of 69% on the Mathematics TAAS.
- Fourth grade African American students achieved a pass rate of 50% on the Mathematics TAAS.
- Fourth grade Hispanic students achieved a pass rate of 82% on the Mathematics TAAS.
- Fourth grade White students achieved a pass rate of 100% on the Mathematics TAAS.
- Fourth grade Asian students achieved a pass rate of 94% on the Mathematics TAAS.
- Fourth grade Low Income students achieved a pass rate of 77% on the Mathematics TAAS.
- Fourth grade Male students achieved a pass rate of 84% on the Mathematics TAAS.
- Fourth grade Female students achieved a pass rate of 80% on the Mathematics TAAS.
- Fifth grade African American students achieved a pass rate of 73% on the Mathematics TAAS.
- Fifth grade Hispanic students achieved a pass rate of 76% on the Mathematics TAAS.

- Fifth grade White students achieved a pass rate of 93% on the Mathematics TAAS.
- Fifth grade Asian students achieved a pass rate of 89% on the Mathematics TAAS.
- Fifth grade Low Income students achieved a pass rate of 80% on the Mathematics TAAS.
- Fifth grade Male students achieved a pass rate of 88% on the Mathematics TAAS.
- Fifth grade Female students achieved a pass rate of 74% on the Mathematics TAAS.
- Third grade African American students achieved a pass rate of 58% on the Reading TAAS.
- Third grade Hispanic students achieved a pass rate of 71% on the Reading TAAS.
- Third grade White students achieved a pass rate of 71% on the Reading TAAS.
- Third grade Asian students achieved a pass rate of 93% on the Reading TAAS.
- Third grade Low Income students achieved a pass rate of 68% on the Reading TAAS.
- Third grade Male students achieved a pass rate of 73% on the Reading TAAS.
- Third grade Female students achieved a pass rate of 71% on the Reading TAAS.
- Fourth grade African American students achieved a pass rate of 44% on the Reading TAAS.
- Fourth grade Hispanic students achieved a pass rate of 79% on the Reading TAAS.
- Fourth grade White students achieved a pass rate of 93% on the Reading TAAS.
- Fourth grade Asian students achieved a pass rate of 100% on the Reading TAAS.
- Fourth grade Low Income students achieved a pass rate of 74% on the Reading TAAS.
- Fourth grade Male students achieved a pass rate of 71% on the Reading TAAS.
- Fourth grade Female students achieved a pass rate of 86% on the Reading TAAS.
- Fifth grade African American students achieved a pass rate of 91% on the Reading TAAS.
- Fifth grade Hispanic students achieved a pass rate of 62% on the Reading TAAS.
- Fifth grade White students achieved a pass rate of 87% on the Reading TAAS.
- Fifth grade Asian students achieved a pass rate of 78% on the Reading TAAS.
- Fifth grade Low Income students achieved a pass rate of 76% on the Reading TAAS.
- Fifth grade Male students achieved a pass rate of 75% on the Reading TAAS.
- Fifth grade Female students achieved a pass rate of 83% on the Reading TAAS.
- Fourth grade African American students achieved a pass rate of 63% on the Writing TAAS.
- Fourth grade Hispanic students achieved a pass rate of 79% on the Writing TAAS.
- Fourth grade White students achieved a pass rate of 100% on the Writing TAAS.
- Fourth grade Asian students achieved a pass rate of 100% on the Writing TAAS.

- Fourth grade Low Income students achieved a pass rate of 79% on the Writing TAAS.
- Fourth grade Male students achieved a pass rate of 79% on the Writing TAAS.
- Fourth grade Female students achieved a pass rate of 88% on the Writing TAAS.

Instructional Program

Partially because of the large number of new staff members at Walnut Creek in 1997-98, the principal decided that the emphasis of the ExceL program should be on curriculum alignment. Staff aligned the curriculum across prekindergarten through fifth grades. Teachers attended staff development to align curriculum and met over the summer to continue work on this project.

In addition, teachers planned real-life projects using TAAS skills. One group of teachers submitted a micro-grant to purchase and use Full Option Science System (FOSS) kits. The Wee Deliver program was continued to encourage writing between students and faculty.

Staff Development

Professional staff attended a variety of training including mathematics training, Test-Taking, and individual/small group curriculum and TAAS sessions.

WIDEN ELEMENTARY

Total 1996-97 ExceL budget: $91,825 ($64,129 were spent); total 1997-98 ExceL budget: $84,450 ($96,183 were spent). Instructional program included Marie Carbo's Reading Styles Inventory, materials for the literacy program, a curriculum specialist, parent training, and family activities. Staff development included a variety of activities such as curriculum alignment, attendance at reading conferences, and training in center development. One of two benchmarks was met; one benchmark was partially met.

Program Benchmarks and Benchmark Attainment Results

1. Students in grades three through five will achieve or exceed a pass rate of 80% on the Reading TAAS.

- Third grade students achieved a pass rate of 69% on the Reading TAAS.
- Fourth grade students achieved a pass rate of 80%.
- Fifth grade students achieved a pass rate of 80%.

2. Every parent activity will show an increase of 15% in parent involvement.

- In 1996, 70 parents attended Family Reading Night; in 1997, 152 parents attended (+117%). In 1997, 45 parents attended Family Math Night; in 1998, 106 parents attended (+136%). In 1998, 20 parents attended all three sessions of KLRU Family Reading Workshops; 1997-98 was the benchmark year for collecting data for this activity.

Additional data:

- Of the parents who attended the Family Reading Night, 87% reported that the workshop was excellent;

- Ninety-eight percent found the materials and activities helpful;
- One hundred percent got ideas to use at home;
- Eighty-two percent of parents said the workshop was fine as it was;
- Twelve percent made suggestions on improving the timing and organization of the event;
- The majority of the parents felt that the content of the workshop offered was good.
- Sixty-eight percent of parents who attended Family Math Night found the workshop to be excellent;
- One-hundred percent found the materials and activities helpful;
- Ninety-six percent got ideas to use at home;
- Seventy-thee percent said that the workshop needed no improvement;
- Twenty-six percent made suggestions for logistical changes to improve the event.

Instructional Program

Teachers learned to identify individual learning behaviors through Marie Carbo's Reading Styles Inventory (RSI) that is part of the National Reading Styles Program. The RSI assesses students' global and/or analytical needs. By clearly defining and diagnosing students' needs, teachers were able to accelerate the learning process by building on students' strengths. A variety of strategies and methods were provided to meet students' visual, auditory, tactile, kinesthetic, and psychomotor behaviors.

In 1997-98, parent, staff, and student surveys and RSI's were administered. Results were analyzed and interpreted and used to plan instruction and to group students. Additional materials were ordered for the program. Staff developed materials and strategies including a literature bank of games and recordings, thematic centers for communication arts, record-keeping devices, skills bank, classroom work areas, small-group and cooperative learning techniques, management strategies, peer tutoring techniques, and holistic methods. Finally, teachers incorporated the materials and techniques into instruction.

A curriculum specialist was hired to complete the following tasks: informal observation/assistance focusing on reading, writing, technology and mathematics; mentor teachers new to Widen; schedule and conduct Reading Styles, Accelerated Schools Process, Parent Conferences, and Best Practices trainings with new staff members; coordinate Reading Styles training with NRSI, Widen, and PALM; provide training and assistance on curriculum alignment and planning; chair the language arts committee; model lessons and discuss Best Practices; fill-in for teachers who were observing at other campuses; plan parent workshops in reading and mathematics with the parent facilitator; assist with purchase orders and bid processes for Academics 2000 Grant purchases and ExceL purchases; attend grade level team planning sessions; attend workshops/conferences and provide training as needed; assist with Book Talk sessions throughout the year.

Family Reading and Mathematics Nights were held. For Family Reading Night, everyone dressed as a storybook character. Approximately 300 people attended Family Reading Night. Parents were given opportunities to learn about hands-on activities to do with their children at home. Parents also received instruction on reading to their children at

home. Parents volunteered to work in classrooms. Four reading workshops were held for parents. The workshops were presented by the Reading Recovery teachers and parents whose children were not reading on grade level were especially encouraged to attend. The workshops focused on reading at home. Parents received a book to take home and read with their children. An additional parent workshop was held to discuss the RSI, and reading styles were discussed at parent/teacher conferences. KLRU program books were purchased with ExceL funds.

Staff Development

All staff participated in the following activities: two days of curriculum alignment, one-half day of curriculum team planning, one day of training on learning center development, and three hours of training in technical assistance. Six staff members attended the Reading Styles Conference (three days), and selected staff members attended the Reading Recovery Conference (two days). Selected staff members attended Authentic Assessment training (one day). Finally, intersession staff attended Planning Programs with Reading Styles for Acceleration (four hours).

WILLIAMS ELEMENTARY

Total 1996-97 ExceL budget: $56,500 ($48,108 were spent); total 1997-98 ExceL budget: $52,025 ($45,438 were spent). Instructional program included the Reading Academy and the Master's Academy, both of which focused on Project Read and the Alphabetic Phonics/Multisensory Teaching Approach. Reading readiness was also a focus of the instructional program. Staff development included a wide variety of activities such as training in Investigations, Literacy Backbone, and technology. Four of six benchmarks were met.

Program Benchmarks and Benchmark Attainment Results

1. Mathematics TAAS scores of third grade students will increase to a pass rate of 82%.

- Third grade students achieved a 72% pass rate on the Mathematics TAAS.

2. Mathematics TAAS scores of fourth grade students will increase to a pass rate of 79%.

- Fourth grade students achieved an 83% pass rate on the Mathematics TAAS.

3. Mathematics TAAS scores of fifth grade students will increase to a pass rate of 88%.

- Fifth grade students achieved a 97% pass rate on the Mathematics TAAS.

4. Reading TAAS scores of third grade students will increase to a pass rate of 87%.

- Third grade students achieved a pass rate of 86% on the Reading TAAS.

5. Reading TAAS scores of fourth grade students will increase to a pass rate of 85%.

- Fourth grade students achieved a pass rate of 92% on the Reading TAAS.

6. Reading TAAS scores of fifth grade students will increase to a pass rate of 84%.

- Fifth grade students achieved a 95% pass rate on the Reading TAAS.

Instructional Program

Last year, Williams Elementary successfully implemented the Reading Academy in grades one through three. All teachers who had not been previously trained received training in Project Read or Alphabetic Phonics/Multisensory Teaching Approach (AP/MTA). In 1997-98, the Academy continued.

Project Read and AP/MTA were at the core of the Reading Academy. Project Read is a multisensory method used to teach students reading and writing skills using their cognitive abilities, rather than rote memory. AP/MTA is a phonetic program that utilizes visual, auditory and kinesthetic techniques. Students in grades one through three were given the Slosson Diagnostic Screening Test: Reading (SDSTR) to establish baseline information. Once student needs were established, a one-hour skills block was implemented four days a week in which students were taught phonics skills using either Project Read or AP/MTA. Skills groups also were established to meet the needs of gifted and talented, bilingual, and special education students.

Skills blocks consisted of instruction in reading readiness, phonology and word attack, and kinesthetic/tactile strategies. Students transferred these skills to instructional-level reading selections. Teachers homogeneously grouped students for the skills block only, and students remained in the regular heterogeneous classroom for the rest of the day. Special education students received instruction outside of the one-hour skills block in the regular classroom or in a special education classroom as determined by the Individual Education Plan.

Teachers provided language arts instruction in the homeroom class. The instruction consisted of literature, reading comprehension, listening comprehension, oral language development, vocabulary development, written expression and spelling. Staff implemented additional programs including Buddy Readers, the Celebrated Authors Society Program, Drop Everything and Read, the Texas Readers Club, and adult/mentor readers.

Staff members committed to integrating reading throughout the curriculum. In addition to computation skills, mathematics instruction incorporated integrated language arts skills that included problem-solving, higher order thinking skills, and journal writing. Students used reading and writing skills during social studies, science, and health instruction.

In the evaluation of the ExceL Grant for the 1996-97 school year, prekindergarten, kindergarten, and early childhood staff expressed the need to begin the reading process earlier than first grade. In 1997-98, in order to encourage students to become interested in reading, prekindergarten through second grade teachers coordinated their literacy programs using the Literacy Backbone program and reading readiness activities that correlate with Project Read. As the Reading Academy began to include the younger grades, additional training for teachers in Project Read and reading readiness was encouraged. To transition children from the learning stage to the application stage between the Reading Academy and the Masters Academy, staffing changes and continued opportunities for fourth and fifth grade teachers to train in the reading programs were encouraged.

In the Master's Academy, students integrated their reading skills in to mathematics, science, and technology. Additional staff development was available in the areas of mathematics and technology, and mathematics manipulatives were purchased for grades four

and five. Teachers implemented Investigations in all grades to provide consistency across the grade levels in mathematics instruction.

Staff Development

All staff attended Investigations training (three days) and technology training (three two-hour sessions). Prekindergarten through second grade teachers, special education teachers, and teaching assistants attended Literacy Backbone (thirteen weeks, two hours per week). Teachers of third through fifth grades, special education teachers, and teaching assistants attended Hands-on Mathematics (one day). Prekindergarten through second grade teachers attended the Reading Writing Workshop (one day). Third through fifth grade teachers, special education teachers, and teaching assistants attended Activities for Integrating Math and Science (AIMS) (one day). Third grade teachers attended Investigations Regroup and Alignment (two days), Mathematics TAAS training (one day), and curriculum alignment (one day).

WINN ELEMENTARY

Total 1996-97 ExceL budget: $55,160 ($44,499 were spent); total 1997-98 ExceL budget: $50,760 ($45,968 were spent). Instructional program focused on the Exceptional Classroom Learning Environment (ECLE), parent training, and English- and Spanish-speaking parenting awareness leaders. Staff development included continued training in ECLE. One of two benchmarks was met; one benchmark was partially met.

Program Benchmarks and Benchmark Attainment Results

1. Pass rates of third through fifth grade students will increase seven percentage points on the Reading TAAS.

- Third grade pass rates increased thirteen percentage points on the Reading TAAS.
- Fourth grade pass rates increased ten percentage points on the Reading TAAS.
- Fifth grade pass rates increased eight percentage points on the Reading TAAS.

2. The number of parents on decision-making committees will increase from one parent representative to at least three parent representatives.

- There were three parent representatives on the Discipline Committee. This benchmark was not met for other committees.

Instructional Program

The Exceptional Classroom Learning Environment (ECLE) program is a pre-reading/language development program for ages birth to four years. The program focuses on intervening with very young children and their parents to teach parents ways to stimulate their children so that the children will begin connecting sounds, movement, and other stimuli with language and pre-reading skills. Parents also received instruction in the computer labs to develop their reading and language skills and to attain GED certifications.

One English-speaking aide and one Spanish-speaking aide were hired to be Parenting Awareness Leaders (PALs). The aides received training in the ECLE program. The program

taught the aides to go into homes and teach parents how to teach their children pre-literacy skills necessary for success. The PALs also were trained in the Rosetta Stone and GED software in the campus Essential Learning Systems (ELS) computer lab. Eventually, the aides will work with parents and staff to train volunteers in ECLE and ELS. As a result, their positions will become volunteer positions and will not require funding.

The PALs had two primary responsibilities. First, they visited all early childhood, prekindergarten, and kindergarten students and their parents at home. Second, they were responsible for holding parent computer classes after school hours. PALs also trained staff to work with parents and children in their homes. On their home visits, the PALs provided parents with information and demonstrations on how to teach their children the necessary literacy skills. PALs also targeted parents of first and second grade students who showed delayed achievement for the home visits.

PALs recruited parents to participate in weekly ELS computer lab sessions and scheduled monthly parenting classes for large groups of parents. At the meetings, parents shared successes, PALs answered commonly asked questions, and parents received support. Parents who received PAL visits at home were required to attend the meetings, and all other parents were strongly urged to attend.

Staff Development

All staff attended Continuing Development of ECLE program (six days).

WOOLDRIDGE ELEMENTARY

Total 1996-97 ExceL budget: $65,965 ($62,294 were spent); total 1997-98 ExceL budget: $60,990 ($43,627 were spent). Instructional program included afterschool TAAS enrichment, TAAS preparation software, NCS ABACUS Instructional Management System software for tracking student progress, and one-half funding of a Reading Recovery teacher. Staff development included a variety of activities such as GEMS training, Believe and Achieve, and KLRU workshops. Twenty-five of thirty-eight benchmarks were met; quantitative data were not provided to address one of the benchmarks.

Program Benchmarks and Benchmark Attainment Results

1. The Mathematics TAAS scores of third grade students will increase to a pass rate of 72%.

- Mathematics TAAS scores of third grade students increased five percentage points to 69%.

2. The Mathematics TAAS scores of fourth grade students will increase to a pass rate of 76%.

- The Mathematics TAAS scores of fourth grade students increased to a pass rate of 78%.

3. The Mathematics TAAS scores of fifth grade students will increase to a pass rate of 80%.

- Mathematics TAAS scores of fifth grade students increased to a pass rate of 81%.

4. The Mathematics TAAS scores of African American third graders will increase by 15 percentage points.

- The Mathematics TAAS scores of African American third graders increased by 16 percentage points.

5. The Mathematics TAAS scores of Hispanic third graders will increase by 6 percentage points.

- The Mathematics TAAS scores of Hispanic third graders decreased by 15 percentage points.

6. The Mathematics TAAS scores of White third graders will increase by 6 percentage points.

- The Mathematics TAAS scores of White third graders increased by 7 percentage points.

7. The Mathematics TAAS scores of low income third graders will increase by 11 percentage points.

- The Mathematics TAAS scores of low income third graders increased by 5 percentage points.

8. The Mathematics TAAS scores of African American fourth graders will increase by 10 percentage points.

- The Mathematics TAAS scores of African American fourth graders increased by 10 percentage points.

9. The Mathematics TAAS scores of Hispanic fourth graders will increase by 8 percentage points.

- The Mathematics TAAS scores of Hispanic fourth graders increased by 12 percentage points.

10. The Mathematics TAAS scores of White fourth graders will increase by 4 percentage points.

- The Mathematics TAAS scores of White fourth graders decreased by 3 percentage points.

11. The Mathematics TAAS scores of low income fourth graders will increase by 7 percentage points.

- The Mathematics TAAS scores of low income fourth grades increased by 5 percentage points.

12. The Mathematics TAAS scores of African American fifth graders will increase by 11 percentage points.

- Mathematics TAAS scores of African American fifth graders decreased by 1 percentage point.

13. The Mathematics TAAS scores of Hispanic fifth graders will increase by 4 percentage points.

- Mathematics TAAS scores of Hispanic fifth graders increased by 12 percentage points.

14. The Mathematics TAAS scores of White fifth graders will remain above 90%.

- Mathematics TAAS scores of White fifth graders remained above 90%.

15. The Mathematics TAAS scores of low income fifth graders will increase 5 percentage points.

- Mathematics TAAS scores of low income fifth graders increased 1 percentage point.

16. The Reading TAAS scores of third grade students will increase to a 65% pass rate.

- Reading TAAS scores of third grade students increased to an 83% pass rate.

17. The Reading TAAS scores of fourth grade students will increase to a pass rate of 78%.

- Reading TAAS scores of fourth grade students increased to a pass rate of 82%.

18. The Reading TAAS scores of fifth grade students will increase to a pass rate of 80%.

- Reading TAAS scores of fifth grade students increased to a pass rate of 87%.

19. The Reading TAAS scores of African American third graders will increase by 17 percentage points.

- Reading TAAS scores of African American third graders increased by 41 percentage points.

20. The Reading TAAS scores of Hispanic third graders will increase by 12 percentage points.

- Reading TAAS scores of Hispanic third graders increased by 19 percentage points.

21. The Reading TAAS scores of White third graders will increase by 9 percentage points.

- Reading TAAS scores of White third graders increased by 28 percentage points.

22. The Reading TAAS scores of low income third graders will increase by 15 percentage points.

- The Reading TAAS scores of low income third graders increased by 32 percentage points.

23. The Reading TAAS scores of African American fourth graders will increase by 15 percentage points.

- Reading TAAS scores of African American fourth graders increased by 32 percentage points.

24. The Reading TAAS scores of Hispanic fourth graders will increase 2 percentage points.

- Reading TAAS scores of Hispanic fourth graders decreased 4 percentage points.

25. The Reading TAAS scores of White fourth graders will increase by 3 percentage points.

- Reading TAAS scores of White fourth graders increased 6 percentage points.

26. The Reading TAAS scores of low income fourth graders will increase by 7 percentage points.

- Reading TAAS scores of low income fourth graders increased 11 percentage points.

27. The Reading TAAS scores of African American fifth graders will increase by 4 percentage points.

- Reading TAAS scores of African American fifth graders decreased by 4 percentage points.

28. The Reading TAAS scores of Hispanic fifth graders will increase by 9 percentage points.

- Reading TAAS scores of Hispanic fifth graders increased 27 percentage points.

29. The Reading TAAS scores of White fifth graders will remain above 90%.

- Reading TAAS scores of White fifth graders remained above 90%.

30. The Reading TAAS scores of low income fifth graders will increase by 7 percentage points.

- Reading TAAS scores of low income fifth graders increased by 11 percentage points.

31. The Writing TAAS scores of African American fourth graders will increase by 6 percentage points.

- Writing TAAS scores of African American fourth graders increased by 13 percentage points.

32. The Writing TAAS scores of Hispanic fourth graders will increase by 2 percentage points.

- Writing TAAS scores of Hispanic fourth graders decreased by 8percentage points.

33. The Writing TAAS scores of White fourth graders will increase by 3 percentage points.

- Writing TAAS scores of White fourth graders increased by 6 percentage points.

34. The Writing TAAS scores of low income fourth graders will increase by 4 percentage points.

- Writing TAAS scores of low income fourth graders increased by 5 percentage points.

35. The percent of students passing all sections of the TAAS will increase to 79%.

- The percent of students passing all sections of the TAAS increased to 69%.

36. There will be a 30% reduction in discipline referrals for low achieving students.

- Eleven percent of students received discipline referrals. No data were provided regarding percent change in referrals for low achieving students.

37. Forty-eight percent of students will make the Honor Roll.

- Thirty-nine percent of students made the Honor Roll.

38. School-wide attendance of 97% will be maintained.

- School-wide attendance was 97%.

Instructional Program

The *Believe and Achieve* program was an afterschool program designed for those students not passing TAAS. The program introduced students to TAAS objectives through direct teaching, manipulatives, and computers. Staff designed the program to reach low-achieving students by addressing one objective per two-hour session. A rotation was designed so that 30 minutes of direct teaching was followed by 30 minutes in a learning center with manipulatives to reinforce the objectives. Students then rotated for 30 minutes to the computer lab where they used TAAS prep software by SLEEK to work on the objective for the day. These group activities were designed to enhance social skills, self-esteem, and physical development. Each grade level, third through fifth grade, attended on different days of the week.

A major component of the *Believe and Achieve* program was using SLEEK software to reinforce TAAS objectives. There are three ways to implement the software. First, classroom teachers can use the computer and overhead to directly teach an objective to the entire class. Second, individual students can work independently on specific objectives in the computer lab. Finally, the program can be used in the classroom as a tutorial program. Results can be printed and reported to teachers, parents and students.

Another major component of the *Believe and Achieve* program is the NCS ABACUS Instructional Management System Software. The system tracks all students and evaluates class, grade level, and school-wide progress. It provides a quick and up-to-date picture of student performance to help improve teaching and learning.

In 1997-98, efforts in early intervention in literacy were intensified through the Reading Recovery Program. This program offered early intervention for those students who were having the most difficulty learning to read. ExceL funded one-half of a Reading Recovery teacher's salary.

Staff Development

Thirty-three staff members attended Believe and Achieve. Twenty-nine staff members attended Great Explorations in Math and Science (GEMS) training. Twenty-seven staff members attended PALM training. Eleven staff members attended training in Building Mathematics Demand Assessment. Seven staff members attended technology training. Six

staff members attended KLRU workshops. Five staff members attended Running Records to the Rescue. Four staff member attended Beam Up for the Language Arts Demand Assessment. Four staff members attended Spotlight on Portfolios. Three staff members attended Investigations training. Three staff members attended the Early Childhood Summer Summit. Other staff members attended a variety of activities including, but not limited to, gifted/talented training, Reading Recovery Conference, ExceL Showcase, Project Read Training, and TAAS Problem-Solving Blueprint.

WOOTEN ELEMENTARY

Total 1996-97 ExceL budget: $38,905 ($33,001 were spent); total 1997-98 ExceL budget: $36,330 ($6,742 were spent). Instructional program included parent training, family activities, Investigations, and TAAS practice tests. Staff development included Spalding Phonics, TAAS Mathematics Strategies, Improving TAAS Scores, and Investigations training. Two of seven benchmarks were met.

Program Benchmarks and Benchmark Attainment Results

1. Third grade students will achieve a 67% pass rate on the Mathematics TAAS.

- Third grade students achieved a 39% pass rate on the Mathematics TAAS.

2. Fourth grade students will achieve a 90% pass rate on the Mathematics TAAS.

- Fourth grade students achieved a 68% pass rate on the Mathematics TAAS.

3. Fifth grade students will achieve a 73% pass rate on the Mathematics TAAS.

- Fifth grade students achieved an 89% pass rate on the Mathematics TAAS.

4. Third grade students will achieve an 88% pass rate on the Reading TAAS.

- Third grade students achieved a 49% pass rate on the Reading TAAS.

5. Fourth grade students will achieve an 85% pass rate on the Reading TAAS.

- Fourth grade students achieved an 84% pass rate on the Reading TAAS.

6. Fifth grade students will achieve a 70% pass rate on the Reading TAAS.

- Fifth grade students achieved a 74% pass rate on the Reading TAAS.

7. Sixty parents will be actively involved in the educational process as measured by participation in daytime classrooms, school-wide activities, and evening classes.

- Parent involvement continued to be a challenge that Wooten will address during 1998-99 by exploring ways to actively and consistently increase parent participation.

Instructional Program

The short-term benchmark of Wooten Parent Academy was to impact directly parents' skills, knowledge, and self-confidence through participation in reading, mathematics,

technology, parenting, and ESL classes. The long-term benchmarks were to increase the number of parents and community members actively involved at Wooten, and to develop partnerships that afford parents and community members with a wide variety of opportunities to positively impact student achievement. In 1997-98, the Wooten Parent Academy was expanded to both the fall and spring semesters for six weeks each semester, as a direct result of a parent survey that was completed at the conclusion of the 1996-97 Academy.

The Wooten Parent Academy is a technology-based program that provided parents with hands-on computer experiences while teaching them skills that enable them to reinforce TAAS objectives with their children. Parents were able to work side by side with their children. The Academy was held two times a week for two hour sessions. Initially, parents were given an interpretation of their children's TAAS results and an overview of TAAS objectives. Then, they were provided with information on how teachers at Wooten address TAAS objectives. Thereafter, sessions were devoted to the use of software to learn TAAS skills and to provide opportunities for parents to become computer-literate. Social skills and parenting issues were addressed as well.

The Academy also provided parents the opportunity to develop English language skills by participating in an ESL program. Translators were provided at all school functions, and all written material was provided in English and Spanish. Childcare was provided during all school functions.

The Wooten Mathematics Carnival was a culminating celebration of the mathematics knowledge that Wooten students attained in preparation for the TAAS Test. The innovative carnival activities challenged Wooten students to solve mathematics problems while reinforcing content knowledge and real-life problem-solving skills. TAAS objectives and essential elements were addressed in booth activities throughout the carnival. Parents, teachers, and students joined together in the design and operation of all booths at the carnival.

All students in prekindergarten through fifth grade had opportunities to participate in the carnival. Students were divided into heterogeneous grade level teams of approximately ten students, with each homeroom represented. Each team began at an assigned booth and proceeded to the next booth after ten minutes when a musical signal was played. Two identical sets of booths were set up to facilitate small groups with maximum participation by all students.

In 1997-98, Investigations was expanded to include kindergarten and first grade students. In addition, all first through fifth grade students completed KAMICO TAAS Assessment Tests twice during the year.

Staff Development

All professional staff members attended Spalding Phonics (two days), TAAS Mathematics Strategies (one day), and Improving TAAS Scores (one day). Fifth grade teachers attended follow-up Investigations training.

ZAVALA ELEMENTARY

Total 1996-97 ExceL budget: $23,600 ($21,056 were spent); total 1997-98 ExceL budget: $22,075 ($10,727 were spent). Instructional program included library-based reading motivation programs for students, reading motivation programs for parents and preschoolers, programs to increase students' non-fiction reading, and project-based learning using the Big Six process. Staff development included gifted/talented training and Big Six project planning. Four of five benchmarks were met.

Program Benchmarks and Benchmark Attainment Results

1. Third grade students will achieve an 88% pass rate on the Reading TAAS.

- Third grade students achieved an 80% pass rate on the Reading TAAS.

2. Fourth grade students will achieve a 78% pass rate on the Reading TAAS.

- Fourth grade students achieved an 83% pass rate on the Reading TAAS.

3. Fifth grade students will achieve an 88% pass rate on the Reading TAAS.

- Fifth grade students achieved an 88% pass rate on the Reading TAAS.

4. Sixth grade students will achieve an 86% pass rate on the Reading TAAS.

- Sixth grade students achieved a 100% pass rate on the Reading TAAS.

5. Twenty-five percent of the reading done by third, fourth, fifth, and sixth graders will be non-fiction.

- At least 25% of reading done by third through sixth graders was of none-fiction material.

Instructional Program

In 1997-98, *Accelerated Literacy*, the ExceL program at Zavala Elementary, included the following components: library-based reading motivation programs for students, reading motivation programs for parents and preschoolers, programs to increase students' non-fiction reading, increased project-based learning using the Big Six process, and gifted/talented training for all Zavala staff.

The computer software program used for monitoring students' reading was inoperable from August through October due to an incompatibility of the new upgrade of the software and the campus' older computers. As a result, scheduled reading motivation programs did not begin until November. Third through sixth grade students participated in short reading programs during November and December and had pizza and ice cream parties at the end of the semester, rather than going to Malibu Grand Prix, as was originally planned.

During the spring semester, first graders participated in Mustang Readers...On the Home Stretch! and received Blue Ribbon pencils as a reward. Second graders participated in Author Fan Clubs and the Dewey Read program. They received badges, bookmarks, and pencils for prizes. All third through sixth graders participated in "reading programs without names" and went to Celebration Station or GattiTown. Fourth through sixth graders participated in the Texas Bluebonnet Award reading program.

To prepare their young children to become good readers, parents participated in programs that encouraged them to read with their children. Prekindergarten through second grade children and their parents built snow creatures, ate snow cones, and read winter stories together on Reading is Cool Day in January. Parents of prekindergarten and kindergarten students were encouraged to visit the library to check out packets of books to read to their children. The packets contained age-appropriate books for children from birth through six year of age and were available in English and in Spanish. After parents came to the library eight times to check out the packets of Superkids books, they earned a t-shirt for their child that was inscribed in English and Spanish, "I'm a Zavala Superkid! My family reads to me!"

To become better readers of non-fiction, third through sixth grade students were required to increase the percent of non-fiction books read. The Electronic Bookshelf assessment was used, beginning in November, to monitor reading for the rest of the year. Non-fiction titles were purchased for the school library, and an emphasis was placed on selecting materials that supported topics of study chosen by the staff during summer workshops.

Finally, students at all grade levels participated in Big Six research projects in 1997-98. Prekindergarten through second grade students completed at least on Big Six project, and third through sixth grade students completed at least two projects in 1997-98.

Staff Development

Four days of staff development were used for gifted/talented training. The entire staff will be certified to teach gifted/talented students by the beginning of the 1998-99 school year.

Teachers met together as grade-level teams to plan Big Six projects, to learn Reading Recovery techniques, and to plan Science Day independent and group projects. Substitutes were provided for the teachers on these days. There were no presenters for these days of planning; teachers knew what they needed to work on together, and they had time to do it. All teachers had received training in the Big Six last year, and they needed no additional training in it in 1997-98.

Prekindergarten teachers met in February and in May to work on their Science Day "Little Three" projects. (Children in prekindergarten and kindergarten use a three-step process, rather than the Big Six approach.) Kindergarten teachers met in December to work on their Little Three projects. First grade teachers planned their "Living and Non-Living things" Big Six project in February. Second grade teachers met in March to work on their Big Six project plans. Third grade and fourth grade teachers met together two days in March to plan their Big Six Science Day project and to get Reading Recovery support training.

One of the Reading Recovery teachers took three ExceL days to visit and observe school and literacy methods in India.

ZILKER ELEMENTARY

Total 1996-97 ExceL budget: $33,685 ($28,251 were spent); total 1997-98 ExceL budget: $31,410 ($26,114 were spent). Instructional program included a parenting center, parent training, afterschool tutoring, a half-time clerk, community outreach, the Mountain Mathematics program, and a variety of new materials. Staff development included training of staff members' choice at the PDA, training in the Curry and Samara Unit Writing Model, and the National Bilingual Conference. Four of eleven benchmarks were met; no quantitative data were reported to address one of the benchmarks.

Program Benchmarks and Benchmark Attainment Results

1. The Mathematics TAAS pass rate of third grade students will increase to 88%.

- The Mathematics TAAS pass rate of third grade students increased to 84%.

2. The Mathematics TAAS pass rate of fourth grade students will increase to 88%.

- The Mathematics TAAS pass rate of fourth grade students remained at 81%.

3. The Mathematics TAAS pass rate of fifth grade students will increase to 85%.

- The Mathematics TAAS pass rate of fifth grade students increased to 93%.

4. The Mathematics TAAS pass rate of sixth grade students will increase to 87%.

- The Mathematics TAAS pass rate of sixth grade students increased to 85%.

5. The Reading TAAS pass rate of third grade students will increase to 88%.

- The Reading TAAS pass rate of third grade students remained at 83%.

6. The Reading TAAS pass rate of fourth grade students will increase to 85%.

- The Reading TAAS pass rate of fourth grade students increased to 86%.

7. The Reading TAAS pass rate of fifth grade students will increase to 85%.

- The Reading TAAS pass rate of fifth grade students increased to 89%.

8. The Reading TAAS pass rate of sixth grade students will increase to 88%.

- The Reading TAAS scores of sixth grade students increased to 96%.

9. Fifty percent of Hispanic and Low Income parents will participate in all parent activities.

- According to the principal, parental involvement increased 10-15%, based on sign-in sheets and parent surveys, and 10% more parents signed and returned weekly folders. However, no data were returned to indicate what percentage of Hispanic and Low Income parents participated in parent activities.

10. Staff interaction with targeted families will increase by twenty-five percentage points.

- Staff interaction with targeted families has increased 10-15%, based on sign-in sheets and parent surveys.

11. Involvement of non-Spanish speaking families will increase by twenty-five percentage points.

- Parental involvement has increased 10-15%, based on sign-in sheets and parent surveys. Ten percent more parents signed and returned weekly folders.

Instructional Program

The Zilker ExceL project, *Mi Escuela, Su Escuela* involved the creation of a parenting center, Casa Zilker. The center served as a meeting place for parents and housed a multi-media computer; a variety of games, puzzles, books, and other educational materials; refreshments; a telephone; parenting information; and a clothes closet. Casa Zilker was also used for English as a Second Language (ESL) classes, parenting classes, parent meetings, afterschool tutoring, toddler storytime and as a school game room.

Afterschool tutoring was held five days a week at Casa Zilker and included bilingual instruction. Students were referred to the program by teachers and parents. Tutoring was conducted by teachers and teaching assistants. The teacher and the teaching assistant alternated days of tutoring students. Most of the tutoring was done one-on-one or in small groups for one hour after school.

A half-time ExceL clerk was hired to do outreach, maintain the clothes closet, stamp all new materials, and set-up the casa so that it would be ready for use by teachers, students, and parents. Parent coffees, parent classes, community meetings, resources, and displays of literature were all organized and presented by the ExceL clerk at Casa Zilker.

Bilingual parenting classes were provided through Communities in Schools. In addition, parent support groups were conducted once a month at Casa Zilker.

A program was developed to welcome newborn babies into the school community. Each new baby born in the Zilker community was given a copy of *Goodnight Moon.*

The Mountain Mathematics Program was purchased for all mathematics classes. The program involved using classroom bulletin boards daily for a ten minute review of mathematics concepts. Students sat on the floor and teachers asked questions before the regular mathematics lesson to prepare students for the upcoming lesson and to build students' mathematics language skills. The Mountain Language Program was piloted in first grade classrooms.

The mathematics/science vertical team compiled a list of materials needed for grade-level science tubs. A parent volunteer put the tubs together. The tubs contained non-consumable materials for each grade level and were stored in the library.

Funds were used for the purchase of Spanish/bilingual materials to support literacy efforts. Additional games to support reading and mathematics instruction were purchased for Casa Zilker, and Mathland enrichment materials and calculators were purchased as well.

Staff Development

Teachers received two days of training of their choice through the Professional Development Academy. All training was required to focus on achievement and be approved

by the principal. These free choice days provided opportunities for individual training needs to be met. ExceL funds paid for substitutes on these days.

In addition, the staff was trained in the Curry and Samara Unit Writing Model. This complimented district curriculum alignment training. Each grade level completed one unit of study. ExceL funds paid for the substitute teachers during this training.

Representatives of the bilingual vertical team attended the National Bilingual Conference. Upon their return, they presented information obtained at the conference to the staff. ExceL funds were pooled to support attendance at this conference.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: EXCEL PROGRAM COSTS BY CAMPUS, 1996-97

The table below contains information used in calculating campus ExceL budgets for 1996-97. The specific formulas used in the calculations are explained in the notes following the table.

Campus Name	Total TAAS Failed in 1994-95	Initial Capital Outlay (in $)	Amount Paid per Test Failed (in $) /ExceL Funding Level	Instructional Budget (in $)	Number of Professional Staff in 1994-95	Staff Development Budget (in $)	Total 1996-97 Budget (in $)
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Allan	147	3,675	210/I	30,870	42	12,600	47,145
Allison	173	4,325	210/I	36,330	42	12,600	53,255
Andrews	145	3,625	210/I	30,450	54	16,200	50,275
Barrington	127	3,175	210/I	26,670	51	15,300	45,145
Barton Hills	48	1,200	175/II	8,400	25	7,500	17,100
Becker	93	2,325	210/I	19,530	38	11,400	33,255
Blackshear	220	5,500	210/I	46,200	35	10,500	62,200
Blanton	161	4,025	210/I	33,810	44	13,200	51,035
Boone	218	5,450	210/I	45,780	54	16,200	67,430
Brentwood	153	3,825	210/I	32,130	46	13,800	49,755
Brooke	104	2,600	210/I	21,840	36	10,800	35,240
Brown	58	1,450	210/I	12,180	42	12,600	26,230
Bryker Woods	35	875	175/II	6,125	26	7,800	14,800
Campbell	190	4,750	210/I	39,900	40	12,000	56,650
Casis	44	1,100	150/III	6,600	55	16,500	24,200
Cook	177	4,425	210/I	37,170	57	17,100	58,695
Cunningham	140	3,500	210/I	29,400	48	14,400	47,300
Davis	73	1,825	150/III	10,950	43	12,900	25,675
Dawson	79	1,975	210/I	16,590	46	13,800	32,365
Doss	29	725	150/III	4,350	41	12,300	17,375
Galindo	191	4,775	210/I	40,110	57	17,100	61,985
Govalle	174	4,350	210/I	36,540	52	15,600	56,490
Graham	103	2,575	210/I	21,630	45	13,500	37,705
Gullett	18	450	150/III	2,700	34	10,200	13,350
Harris	251	6,275	210/I	52,710	58	17,400	76,385
Highland Park	19	475	150/III	2,850	44	13,200	16,525
Hill	43	1,075	150/III	6,450	48	14,400	21,925

Campus Name	Total TAAS Failed in 1994-95	Initial Capital Outlay (in $)	Amount Paid per Test Failed (in $) /ExceL Funding Level	Instructional Budget (in $)	Number of Professional Staff in 1994-95	Staff Development Budget (in $)	Total 1996-97 Budget (in $)
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Houston	128	3,200	210/I	26,880	63	18,900	48,980
Jordan	176	4,400	210/I	36,960	35	10,500	51,860
Joslin	65	1,625	175/II	11,375	39	11,700	24,700
Kiker	86	2,150	150/III	12,900	64	19,200	34,250
Kocurek	203	5,075	175/II	35,525	59	17,700	58,300
Langford	173	4,325	210/I	36,330	53	15,900	56,555
Lee	30	750	150/III	4,500	26	7,800	13,050
Linder	194	4,850	210/I	40,740	64	19,200	64,790
Maplewood	74	1,850	210/I	15,540	33	9,900	27,290
Mathews	91	2,275	210/I	19,110	32	9,600	30,985
Menchaca	82	2,050	150/III	12,300	51	15,300	29,650
Metz	172	4,800	210/I	36,120	36	10,800	51,220
Norman	136	3,400	210/I	28,560	29	8,700	40,660
Oak Hill	68	1,700	150/III	10,200	55	16,500	28,400
Oak Springs/Rice	119	2,975	210/I	24,990	35	10,500	38,465
Odom	181	4,525	210/I	38,010	47	14,100	56,635
Ortega	80	2,000	210/I	16,800	37	11,100	29,900
Palm	166	4,150	210/I	34,860	40	12,000	51,010
Patton	89	2,225	150/III	13,350	62	18,600	34,175
Pease	70	1,750	210/I	14,700	19	5,700	22,150
Pecan Springs	157	3,925	210/I	32,970	46	13,800	50,695
Pillow	112	2,800	210/I	23,520	39	11,700	38,020
Pleasant Hill	96	2,400	175/II	16,800	49	14,700	33,900
Reilly	68	1,700	175/II	11,900	31	9,300	22,900
Ridgetop	31	775	210/I	6,510	30	9,000	16,285
St. Elmo	106	2,650	210/I	22,260	34	10,200	35,110
Sanchez	96	2,400	210/I	20,160	44	13,200	35,760
Sims	145	3,625	210/I	30,450	29	8,700	42,775
Summitt	61	1,525	150/III	9,150	44	13,200	23,875
Sunset Valley	127	3,175	210/I	26,670	44	13,200	43,045
Travis Heights	132	3,300	210/I	27,720	48	14,400	45,420
Walnut Creek	134	3,350	210/I	28,140	59	17,700	49,190
Widen	295	7,375	210/I	61,950	75	22,500	91,825
Williams	179	4,475	175/II	31,325	69	20,700	56,500

Campus Name	Total TAAS Failed in 1994-95	Initial Capital Outlay (in $)	Amount Paid per Test Failed (in $) /ExceL Funding Level	Instructional Budget (in $)	Number of Professional Staff in 1994-95	Staff Development Budget (in $)	Total 1996-97 Budget (in $)
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Winn	176	4,400	210/I	36,960	46	13,800	55,160
Wooldridge	199	4,975	210/I	41,790	64	19,200	65,965
Wooten	103	2,575	210/I	21,630	49	14,700	38,905
Zavala	61	1,525	175/II	10,675	38	11,400	23,600
Zilker	91	2,275	210/I	19,110	41	12,300	33,685

Initial Capital Outlay (Column B) = Total Reading and Mathematics TAAS failed (Column A) x $25.00. Initial Capital Outlay was given in 1996-97 only.

Instructional Budget (Column D) = Total Reading and Mathematics TAAS failed (Column A) x funding level/amount paid per student (Column C).

Staff Development Budget (Column E) = Number of professional staff in 1994-95 (Column E) x $50.00 per day x 6 days.

Total 1996-97 Budget (Column G) = Instructional Budget (Column D) + Staff Development Budget (Column E).

APPENDIX B: EXCEL PROGRAM COSTS BY CAMPUS, 1997-98

The table below contains information used in calculating campus ExceL budgets for 1997-98. The specific formulas used in the calculations are explained in the notes following the table.

Campus Name	Total TAAS Failed in 1994-95	Amount Paid per Test Failed (in $) / ExceL Funding Level	Instructional Budget (in $)	Number of Professional Staff in 1994-95	Staff Development Budget (in $)	Total 1997-98 Budget (in $)
	A	B	C	D	E	F
Allan	147	210/I	30,870	42	12,600	43,470
Allison	173	210/I	36,330	42	12,600	48,930
Andrews	145	210/I	30,450	54	16,200	46,650
Barrington	127	210/I	26,670	51	15,300	41,970
Barton Hills	48	175/II	8,400	25	7,500	15,900
Becker	93	210/I	19,530	38	11,400	30,930
Blackshear	220	210/I	46,200	35	10,500	56,700
Blanton	161	210/I	33,810	44	13,200	47,010
Boone	218	210/I	45,780	54	16,200	61,980
Brentwood	153	210/I	32,130	46	13,800	45,930
Brooke	104	210/I	21,840	36	10,800	32,640
Brown	58	210/I	12,180	42	12,600	24,780
Bryker Woods	35	175/II	6,125	26	7,800	13,925
Campbell	190	210/I	39,900	40	12,000	51,900
Casis	44	150/III	6,600	55	16,500	23,100
Cook	177	210/I	37,170	57	17,100	54,270
Cunningham	140	210/I	29,400	48	14,400	43,800
Davis	73	150/III	10,950	43	12,900	23,850
Dawson	79	210/I	16,590	46	13,800	30,390
Doss	29	150/III	4,350	41	12,300	16,650
Galindo	191	210/I	40,110	57	17,100	57,210
Govalle	174	210/I	36,540	52	15,600	52,140
Graham	103	210/I	21,630	45	13,500	35,130
Gullett	18	150/III	2,700	34	10,200	12,900
Harris	251	210/I	52,710	58	17,400	70,110
Highland Park	19	150/III	2,850	44	13,200	16,050
Hill	43	150/III	6,450	48	14,400	20,850

Campus Name	Total TAAS Failed in 1994-95	Amount Paid per Test Failed (in $) /ExceL Funding Level	Instructional Budget (in $)	Number of Professional Staff in 1994-95	Staff Development Budget (in $)	Total 1997-98 Budget (in $)
	A	B	C	D	E	F
Houston	128	210/I	26,880	63	18,900	45,780
Jordan	176	210/I	36,960	35	10,500	47,460
Joslin	65	175/II	11,375	39	11,700	23,075
Kiker	86	150/III	12,900	64	19,200	32,100
Kocurek	203	175/II	35,525	59	17,700	53,225
Langford	173	210/I	36,330	53	15,900	52,230
Lee	30	150/III	4,500	26	7,800	12,300
Linder	194	210/I	40,740	64	19,200	59,940
Maplewood	74	210/I	15,540	33	9,900	25,440
Mathews	91	210/I	19,110	32	9,600	28,710
Menchaca	82	150/III	12,300	51	15,300	27,600
Metz	172	210/I	36,120	36	10,800	46,920
Norman	136	210/I	28,560	29	8,700	37,260
Oak Hill	68	150/III	10,200	55	16,500	26,700
Oak Springs/Rice	119	210/I	24,990	35	10,500	35,490
Odom	181	210/I	38,010	47	14,100	52,110
Ortega	80	210/I	16,800	37	11,100	27,900
Palm	166	210/I	34,860	40	12,000	46,860
Patton	89	150/III	13,350	62	18,600	31,950
Pease	70	210/I	14,700	19	5,700	20,400
Pecan Springs	157	210/I	32,970	46	13,800	46,770
Pillow	112	210/I	23,520	39	11,700	35,220
Pleasant Hill	96	175/II	16,800	49	14,700	31,500
Reilly	68	175/II	11,900	31	9,300	21,200
Ridgetop	31	210/I	6,510	30	9,000	15,510
St. Elmo	106	210/I	22,260	34	10,200	32,460
Sanchez	96	210/I	20,160	44	13,200	33,360
Sims	145	210/I	30,450	29	8,700	39,150
Summitt	61	150/III	9,150	44	13,200	22,350
Sunset Valley	127	210/I	26,670	44	13,200	39,870
Travis Heights	132	210/I	27,720	48	14,400	42,120
Walnut Creek	134	210/I	28,140	59	17,700	45,840
Widen	295	210/I	61,950	75	22,500	84,450

Campus Name	Total TAAS Failed in 1994-95	Amount Paid per Test Failed (in $) /ExceL Funding Level	Instructional Budget (in $)	Number of Professional Staff in 1994-95	Staff Development Budget (in $)	Total 1997-98 Budget (in $)
	A	B	C	D	E	F
Williams	179	175/II	31,325	69	20,700	52,025
Winn	176	210/I	36,960	46	13,800	50,760
Wooldridge	199	210/I	41,790	64	19,200	60,990
Wooten	103	210/I	21,630	49	14,700	36,330
Zavala	61	175/II	10,675	38	11,400	22,075
Zilker	91	210/I	19,110	41	12,300	31,410

Instructional Budget (Column C) = Total Reading and Mathematics TAAS failed (Column A) x funding level/amount paid per student (Column B).

Staff Development Budget (Column E) = Number of professional staff (Column D) x $50.00 per day x 6 days.

Total 1996-97 Budget (Column F) = Instructional Budget (Column C) + Staff Development Budget (Column E).

APPENDIX C: EXCEL INNOVATIVE PRACTICES SURVEYS

ExceL
Innovative Practices
Principal Survey

1. How does your ExceL program meet the needs of the students you serve?

2. How does your ExceL program meet the needs of the staff at your campus?

3. How has ExceL lead to an improvement in student achievement?

4. What will be the lasting effects of ExceL on your campus?

5. How is your ExceL program innovative? What does it provide that is different from mandated programs?

6. How does ExceL tie in with or support your other campus programs?

7. What advice do you have for other campuses regarding making their ExceL programs successful and increasing student achievement?

8. What would you change about the ExceL grants program if you could?

ExceL
Innovative Practices
Teacher Survey

1. How has ExceL impacted your daily teaching experience.

2. How has ExceL impacted the daily experiences of the students you teach?

3. How has ExceL improved student achievement?

4. Did you receive as much staff development as you wanted this year? If not, what additional staff development would you like to attend? What prevented you from receiving this additional staff development this year?

5. How has ExceL improved your teaching skills?

6. Does [illegible] administration support use of innovative instructional strategies?

7. How does ExceL support the instructional strategies you were already using?

8. What advice do you have for other teachers about making their ExceL programs successful and increasing student achievement?

9. What would you change about ExceL Through Innovation if you could?

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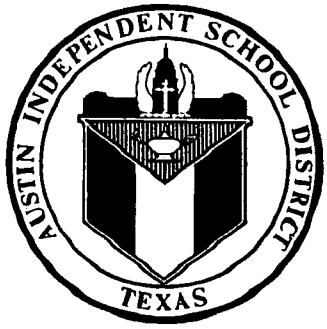

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