Austin Independent School District
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Janice Curry
Evaluation Specialist

AISD K–7 Accelerated Reading and Mathematics Instruction Evaluation Report, 2006–2007

The Student Success Initiative (SSI) was created by the 76th Texas Legislature (1999) to ensure that all students receive the instruction and support they need to be academically successful in reading and mathematics (math). For SSI grade advancement during the 2006–2007 school year, students were required to pass the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) grade 3 reading test to be promoted to grade 4 and to pass the grade 5 reading and math tests to be promoted to grade 6. The SSI requirements will be phased in for the grade 8 reading and math tests beginning in 2007–2008 (TEA, 2006b). The state funding sources established to support SSI are the Accelerated Reading Instruction (ARI) and Accelerated Mathematics Instruction (AMI) entitlements (TEA, 2006a). In 2006–2007, the ARI and AMI funds were available for school districts to provide intensive, targeted instruction for students in kindergarten through grade 7 (K–7) who have been identified as at risk for reading or math difficulties (TEA, 2006c).

In 2006–2007, the ARI/AMI allocation for Austin Independent School District (AISD) was $3,450,977, representing an 18% increase from the 2005–2006 allocation of $2,912,669. The distribution of grant funds was as follows: 50% supplies and materials, 45% payroll costs, 3% other operating costs, and 2% professional and contracted services. The ARI and AMI funds supported the federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB, 2001) accountability requirement that 100% of Texas students pass TAKS in reading and math by 2013–2014.

Program Description

The AISD educational plan describes a three-tiered approach to intervention for struggling learners: in the classroom (Level I), in a small group outside the classroom (Level II), and in summer school (Level III) (AISD, 2005). Elementary school principals decided how to use ARI and AMI funds at their campuses, but they were encouraged to serve first those students in grades 3 and 5 who were subject to the SSI grade advancement requirements. At the middle school level, the reading and math intervention efforts targeted students who were promoted to grade 6 in fall 2006 even though they had failed to meet the passing standard on one or more 2006 grade 5 TAKS tests, as well as grade 7 students who needed accelerated instruction.

The ARI and AMI school-year intervention program provided Level II intervention services to groups of 5 to 10 students for 2 to 3 hours per week (AISD, 2006). Although most intervention classes met after school, some intervention classes were held before school or on

Saturdays. Fall and spring sessions were offered at most schools. The program design also included a special session for students in grades 3 and 5 who did not pass the first administration of TAKS, and a summer school session (Level III) for students who did not pass the second administration of TAKS. Specific curricula and materials were provided for intervention classes, and teachers participated in professional development opportunities. At the elementary school campuses, funds were available for a mentor teacher to support ARI and AMI teachers for up to two hours per week. The middle school programs had a contact person (e.g., assistant principal, instructional coach) who served as a liaison with program staff.

To supplement the ARI/AMI entitlement, campus staff used other resources (e.g., local funds and such grant funds as Reading First, Optional Extended Year Program [OEYP], 21st Century, Title I, Prime Time, and Account for Learning [AFL]) to support interventions for students in grades K–7 who were identified as being at risk for reading or math difficulties. This report summarizes information reported to the Texas Education Agency (TEA) about all K–7 reading and math interventions provided at AISD campuses during 2006–2007.

METHODOLOGY

Evaluation Questions

The evaluation questions for the AISD reading and math intervention programs included the following:

- How many K–7 students participated in ARI, AMI, and other reading or math intervention programs?
- How many students in grades 3–7 who participated in reading and/or math interventions passed TAKS in the subject of accelerated instruction?
- How many SSI students met the passing standard on TAKS reading (grades 3 and 5) and TAKS mathematics (grade 5)?
- What feedback did ARI and AMI teachers have about the program's effectiveness?

Data Collection

Department of Program Evaluation (DPE) staff collected quantitative and qualitative data to determine program effectiveness. A description of the types of data collected and the methods of collecting the data follows.

- **AISD K–7 accelerated reading and math monitoring instruments**. ARI and AMI teachers completed a progress monitoring form for each student receiving intervention and submitted the forms to DPE at the end of each session.
- **AISD K–7 other reading and other math intervention reporting instruments.** Teachers of students who participated in a reading or math intervention funded by a source other than ARI or AMI reported student information to DPE each semester.
- **2007 TAKS.** The 2007 TAKS reading and TAKS mathematics tests were used to determine the effectiveness of the AISD reading and math intervention programs. Cumulative results for the three administrations of TAKS reading (grades 3 and 5) and TAKS mathematics (grade 5) were analyzed.

- **Teacher surveys.** School-year and summer-school ARI and AMI teachers, mentor teachers, and contact persons were asked to respond to an online survey to give feedback about program effectiveness.

Student Demographics

During the 2006–2007 school year, 19,531 AISD K–7 students participated in reading or math interventions, regardless of funding source. This unduplicated count represents a 21% increase in the number of students served, compared with the number in 2005–2006 (n = 16,092). According to AISD student records, demographic and enrollment information for K–7 reading and math intervention students in 2006–2007 included the following:

- Slightly more than half (n = 10,387 or 53%) were male students.
- Eighty-three percent (n = 16,259) were from low-income families.
- Forty-four percent (n = 8,560) were English language learners (ELLs).
- Hispanic students comprised the largest ethnic group (n = 14,111, or 72%); followed by African American (n = 2,809, or 14%); Anglo/Other (n = 2,201, or 12%); and Asian (n = 308, or 2%) students.
- The grade distribution for intervention students was 13% kindergarten, 11% grade 1, 9% grade 2, 18% grade 3, 15% grade 4, 15% grade 5, 9% grade 6, and 10% grade 7.
- Seventy-seven percent of accelerated instruction was provided in English, 17% in Spanish, and 6% in a combination of English and Spanish.

Intervention Services

According to AISD's beginning-of-year benchmark test data and 2006 TAKS scores, 36% (n = 18,387) of all AISD K–7 students were eligible for reading intervention and 41% (n = 14,999) of students in grades 2–7 were eligible for math intervention in 2006–2007. Students were selected for participation in an intervention if they failed the previous year's TAKS test(s) or were designated as high needs, based on district benchmark tests. The highest need students were selected for interventions funded by ARI or AMI.

Principals used other funding sources, when available, to extend this intervention opportunity to other students at risk for reading or math difficulties. (Note: Attendance in the extended-day intervention was not mandatory. A parent could decline this intervention opportunity.)

Of the 19,531 K–7 students who received accelerated reading or math instruction outside of the regular classroom, 5,412 (28%) students participated in both reading and math interventions, for a total of 24,943 intervention services during 2006–2007. Of the total number of K–7 interventions provided, eligibility and participation information included the following:

- Sixty-five percent (n = 16,213) of interventions were for reading and 35% (n = 8,730) were for math.
- Eighty-eight percent of students eligible in reading and 58% of students eligible in math received interventions.
- ARI provided funding for 34% of reading interventions.
- AMI provided funding for 64% of math interventions.

- Fifty-four percent (n = 10,544) of K–7 intervention students participated in more than one intervention opportunity. The average number of intervention opportunities per student served was 2.1.
- The grade level with the smallest percentage of eligible students served was grade 7, with 66% eligible for reading served and 54% eligible for math served.

Table 1 presents a duplicated count of students comprising the total number of interventions provided. Numbers are unduplicated within a subject (i.e., a student could be counted in reading and in math). For example, if a student participated in ARI and other reading interventions, that student was counted only in the ARI category. The same was true for math intervention students. Thus, students could be counted once in reading and/or once in math interventions.

Table 1: AISD K–7 Accelerated Reading and Mathematics Instruction Participants, by Grade Level and Type of Intervention, 2006–2007

	Students Served by Type of Intervention				
Grade	**# ARI**	**# AMI**	**# Other Reading**	**# Other Math**	**Total**
K	44	19	2,493	29	2,585
1	51	23	2,042	50	2,166
2	89	77	1,683	182	2,031
3	1,828	1,344	1,387	556	5,115
4	1,105	1,257	1,117	616	4,095
5	1,393	1,846	733	289	4,261
6	547	549	663	569	2,328
7	423	486	615	838	2,362
Totals	**5,480**	**5,601**	**10,733**	**3,129**	**24,943**

Source: DPE ARI/AMI/other intervention participation records, 2006–2007
Note: Numbers are unduplicated within subject, but a student could be counted in both subjects.

STUDENT ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

End-of-Year Assessments for K–2

Reading. In fall 2006, 7,131 (33%) of all AISD students in grades K–2 were identified for reading intervention. Ninety percent of all identified K–2 students received reading interventions: 184 in the ARI program and 6,218 in a program funded by a source other than ARI (e.g., AFL, bilingual summer school, local reading specialists, Reading First, and Title I). Reading levels for intervention students in grades K–2 were determined by using one or more of the following state-approved tests: Texas Primary Reading Inventory (TPRI), El Inventario de Lectura en Español de Tejas (Tejas LEE), and the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA). Of the students in grades K–2 who received reading interventions and had end-of-year assessments, 43% (n = 2,737) were considered to be on grade level in reading by May 2007.
Mathematics. AISD developed benchmark math tests for students in grades 2–12 to aid in diagnosing student math difficulties, based on the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) curriculum. Of the 1,635 grade 2 students identified on the benchmark test as being at risk for

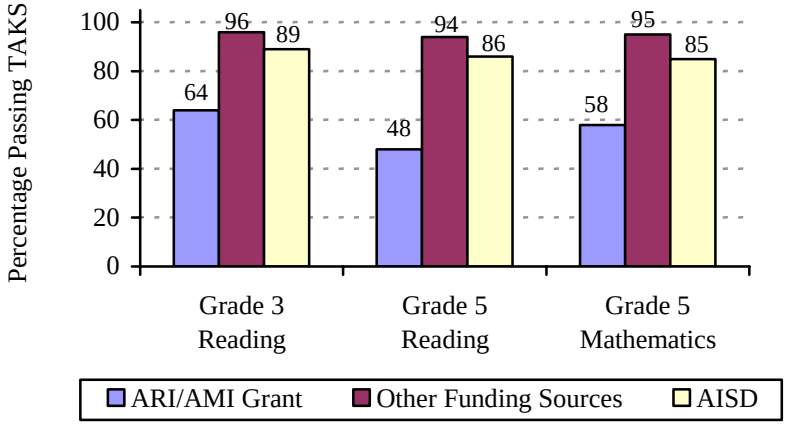
math difficulties, 259 (16%) students participated in math interventions outside the classroom: 77 in the AMI program and 182 in a program funded by a source other than AMI (e.g., AFL, local math specialists, and Title I). Twenty-seven percent (n = 71) of the intervention students had a score at or above 70% on the end-of-year benchmark test. No district or state math assessments exist for students in grades K–1.

TAKS at Grades 3–5

SSI students had three opportunities in 2007 to pass the grade 3 TAKS reading, grade 5 TAKS reading, or grade 5 TAKS mathematics tests. A Grade Placement Committee (GPC) was convened for a grade 3 or 5 student who failed a TAKS test (TEA, 2006a). The committee consisted of the student's principal, parent or guardian, and reading or math teacher. After reviewing all facts, circumstances, and local school board standards, the GPC could promote the student if members concluded by unanimous decision that the student was likely to perform on grade level, given additional accelerated instruction during the next school year. According to the SSI grade advancement requirements, students must receive accelerated instruction the following year, whether retained or promoted.

Overall, the cumulative percentages of SSI intervention students who passed TAKS were greater for grade 3 reading intervention students than for grade 5 reading or grade 5 math intervention students. As shown in Figure 1, SSI students in other reading and math interventions had greater passing percentages on TAKS than did ARI or AMI students, which may be due in part to ARI and AMI serving the highest need students.

Figure 1: 2007 TAKS Reading (Grades 3 and 5) and TAKS Mathematics (Grade 5) Passing Percentages for Intervention Students and AISD Students



Source: DPE ARI/AMI/other intervention participation records, 2006–2007 and 2007 TAKS files

Fifty-four percent of all K–7 intervention funds were concentrated on reading and math interventions in grades 3–5. The 2007 TAKS results revealed that 68% (76% in 2005–2006) of all reading intervention students in grades 3–5 passed 2007 TAKS reading, and 58% (63% in 2005–2006) of all math intervention students in grades 3–5 passed TAKS mathematics. For the SSI intervention students, the overall TAKS passing percentage was 69%: 77% passed grade 3 reading, 63% passed grade 5 reading, and 62% passed grade 5 mathematics.

Intervention students in the grades and subjects for which SSI requirements did not apply, highlighted in Table 2, had passing percentages from 40% to 60% after one administration of TAKS. Grade 7 students had the lowest percentages passing on TAKS reading (40%) and TAKS mathematics (41%) of all the grade levels that participated in interventions during 2006–2007.

Table 2: Numbers and Percentages of Reading and Math Intervention Students in Grades 3–7 Who Passed 2007 TAKS

Grade	# Tested Reading	# Passed Reading	% Passed Reading	# Tested Math	# Passed Math	% Passed Math
3	2,897	2,244	77%	1,739	868	50%
4	1,964	1,170	60%	1,699	1,016	60%
5	1,898	1,193	63%	1,963	1,222	62%
6	893	496	56%	896	389	43%
7	754	302	40%	1,122	459	41%
Total	8,406	5,405	64%	7,419	3,954	53%

Source: DPE ARI/AMI/other intervention participation records, 2006–2007 and 2007 TAKS files
Note: Highlighted percentages were not subject to SSI grade advancement requirements.

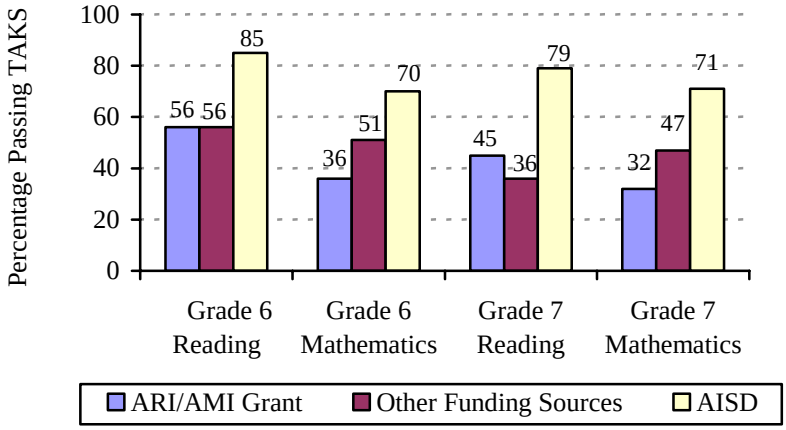
TAKS at Grades 6 and 7

In 2006–2007, students in grades 6 and 7 were eligible for reading and/or math interventions if they had failed 2006 TAKS reading or TAKS mathematics, or had been identified by poor performance on beginning-of-year benchmark tests. In summer 2006, elementary school GPCs met and decided to promote 818 students who failed one or more 2006 grade 5 TAKS tests: 309 (38%) in reading only, 236 (29%) in math only, and 273 (33%) in both reading and math. Middle school intervention teachers reported that 72 (9%) of these students participated in reading and/or math interventions outside of the regular classroom during 2006–2007. At the middle school level, academic classes were scheduled during the regular school day targeting students who needed additional instructional time in reading or math. TAKS results for students who participated in intervention courses during the day are included in the other reading and other math categories in Figure 2.

Of the 1,828 grade 6 students who received accelerated instruction outside of the regular classroom, 500 (27%) participated in both reading and math interventions, for a total of 2,328 intervention services during 2006–2007. Of the 1,872 grade 7 students who participated in accelerated instruction outside of the classroom, 489 (26%) participated in both reading and math interventions.

As shown in Figure 2, the TAKS passing percentages were especially low for AMI students. The percentages of students passing grade 6 or grade 7 TAKS mathematics for the district (70% and 71%, respectively) indicates a districtwide need for improvement in the area of math achievement.

Figure 2: 2007 TAKS Reading and TAKS Mathematics Passing Percentages for Grade 6 and 7 Intervention Students and AISD Students



Source: DPE ARI/AMI/other intervention participation records, 2006–2007, and 2007 TAKS files

The overall TAKS results for intervention students in grades 6 and 7 showed that 48% passed TAKS reading and 42% passed TAKS mathematics (see Table 3). It should be noted that some of the middle school students participated in summer school after failing one or both TAKS tests in 2007. Table 3 shows the TAKS reading and TAKS mathematics passing percentages for students who participated in reading and/or math interventions from fall 2006 through June 2007.

Table 3: Numbers and Percentages of Reading and Math Intervention Students in Grades 6 and 7 Who Passed 2007 TAKS

Grade	# Tested Reading	# Passed Reading	% Passed Reading	# Tested Math	# Passed Math	% Passed Math
6	893	496	56%	896	389	43%
7	754	302	40%	1,122	459	41%
Total	**1,647**	**798**	**48%**	**2,018**	**848**	**42%**

Source: DPE ARI/AMI/other intervention participation records, 2006–2007, and 2007 TAKS files
Note: Some of the middle school interventions were conducted during the summer.

SUMMER SCHOOL 2007

Summer school 2007 student data were included in the aggregated reading and math intervention data presented previously. This summary of Level III intervention data includes summer school enrollment and attendance, and the June 2007 TAKS results.

Eight elementary summer school sites hosted 1,601 students (599 in grade 3 and 1,002 in grade 5) for reading and/or math instruction to prepare them for the third administration of TAKS. This count includes 13 out-of-district students who attended the AISD summer school. Prior to the start of summer school, 168 teachers (61 in grade 3 and 107 in grade 5) participated in a day and a half of professional development sessions specific to summer school curricula and teaching strategies.

Grade 3 students participated in reading instruction only. Grade 5 students participated in the following daily instruction: 303 (30%) in reading only, 341 (34%) in math only, and 358 (36%) in reading and in math.

The summer school program lasted 17 days for math and 18 days for reading, including a day for each TAKS test. The average number of students attending daily for ARI/AMI summer school was 1,426 in the morning session and 291 in the afternoon session. Note that this is a duplicated count because 358 grade 5 students attended both sessions. The average number of attendance days per summer school student was 15.8 for grade 3 reading, 14.8 for grade 5 math, and 15.9 for grade 5 reading students.

June 2007 TAKS for SSI Students

The third and final opportunity for grade 3 students to pass TAKS reading and for grade 5 students to pass TAKS reading and/or TAKS mathematics came at the end of summer school. A total of 1,868 TAKS tests (566 grade 3 reading, 638 grade 5 reading, and 664 grade 5 math) were taken by intervention students during the June testing.

Overall, 30% (n = 569) of the summer school students who took TAKS in June 2007 passed, compared with 28% (n = 484) in June 2006 (Curry, 2006). Table 4 shows the numbers and percentages of summer school students who took and passed TAKS in June 2006 and June 2007. Although the overall percentages of grade 3 and grade 5 students passing TAKS reading increased from June 2006 to June 2007, the percentage of grade 5 students passing TAKS mathematics decreased from 2006 to 2007. The highlighted percentages represent the highest percentages passing for each year for each grade and language. Note: The number of grade 5 students is duplicated because students can take both tests.

Table 4: Numbers and Percentages of Summer School Students Who Took and Passed TAKS Reading and/or TAKS Mathematics, in June 2006 or June 2007

Grade and TAKS Subject	June 2006 TAKS # Tested	June 2006 TAKS # Passing	June 2006 TAKS % Passing	June 2007 TAKS # Tested	June 2007 TAKS # Passing	June 2007 TAKS % Passing
Grade 3 Reading						
English	256	85	33%	334	130	39%
Spanish	166	68	42%	232	78	34%
Total	**422**	**153**	**36%**	**566**	**208**	**37%**
Grade 5 Reading						
English	593	130	22%	560	172	31%
Spanish	59	9	15%	89	21	24%
Total	**652**	**139**	**21%**	**649**	**193**	**30%**
Grade 5 Math						
English	596	178	30%	543	158	29%
Spanish	79	14	18%	121	14	12%
Total	**675**	**192**	**28%**	**664**	**172**	**26%**
Summer School Total	**1,749**	**484**	**28%**	**1,868**	**569**	**30%**

Source: TAKS confidential list of students' results, June 2007, and DPE 2007 summer school files
Note: Highlighted percentages represent the highest percentages for the grade and language.

June 2007 TAKS for Grade 5 Students

In summer 2006, grade 5 students who needed to pass both reading and math tests received their instruction during the morning only, with 2 hours of instruction in each subject. In June 2007, AISD implemented a plan to extend instructional time to 4 hours per subject to provide more support to the students who would take both tests. During the 2007 elementary summer school, 342 (34%) grade 5 students attended full-day summer school and took TAKS reading and TAKS mathematics tests at the end of the session.

Table 5 shows the numbers and percentages of 2007 grade 5 summer school students who took and passed TAKS reading and/or TAKS mathematics by the subject of instruction provided. Students who needed to pass both TAKS tests in June generally did not do as well as students who needed instruction in only one area. Twenty (6%) grade 5 students passed both TAKS Reading and TAKS Mathematics in June 2007.

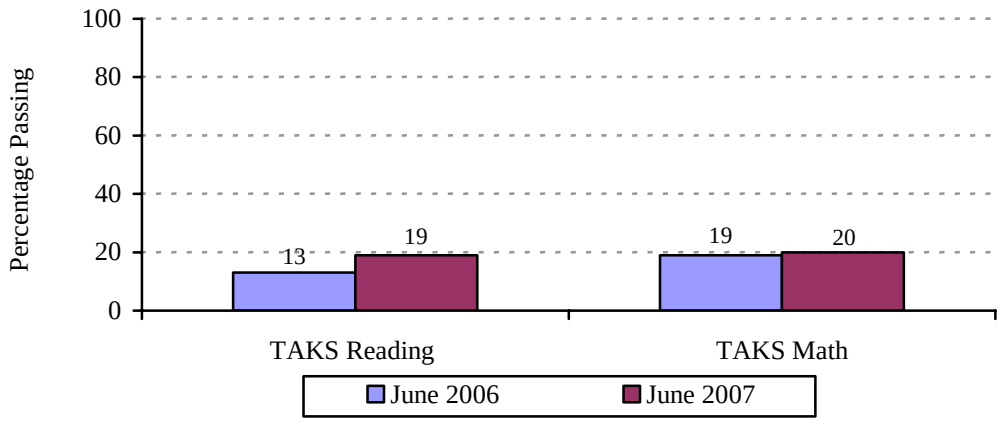
Table 5: Passing Percentage for Grade 5 Students Who Took TAKS Reading and TAKS Mathematics During 2007 Summer School

Summer School Participation	TAKS Reading			TAKS Mathematics		
	# Took	# Passed	% Passed	# Took	# Passed	% Passed
Reading only	307	129	42%	-	-	-
Math only	-	-	-	322	104	32%
Reading and math	342	64	19%	342	68	20%
Total	**649**	**193**	**30%**	**664**	**172**	**26%**

Source: DPE summer 2007 records and TEA's June 2007 confidential list of students' results

Figure 3 compares June 2006 and June 2007 TAKS passing percentages for grade 5 students who took both TAKS tests. In June 2007, 19% of grade 5 students who took both tests passed TAKS reading, compared with 13% in June 2006. In addition, 20% of these students passed TAKS mathematics in June 2007, compared with 19% in June 2006. In the 2007 summer school, 4 hours of instruction per subject area appears to have had more impact in reading than in math.

Figure 3: Passing Percentages for Summer School Students Who Took Grade 5 TAKS Reading and TAKS Mathematics, June 2006 and 2007



Source: DPE summer records and TEA's confidential list of students' results. June 2006 & 2007

Scale Score Gains for Summer School Students

Although the goal is for students to pass TAKS at the end of the summer session, it is important to know how many of the students made gains during this final attempt to pass TAKS. To find out if growth occurred during the summer program, an examination of June 2007 TAKS reading scale scores for grade 3 and grade 5 students who attended summer school and who had a prior scored February or April TAKS test was conducted. The same analysis was completed for grade 5 students on TAKS mathematics. The TAKS passing scale score is 2100.

While only 30% of all students in grade 3 and 5 who attended summer school passed the June TAKS test(s), 71% of all students made gains on their June TAKS scale score from their prior scale score. For grade 5 TAKS mathematics, the percentage of students making gains from the prior TAKS score was 78%. Table 6 gives summary scale score data for 2007 summer school students who had a prior scored TAKS document.

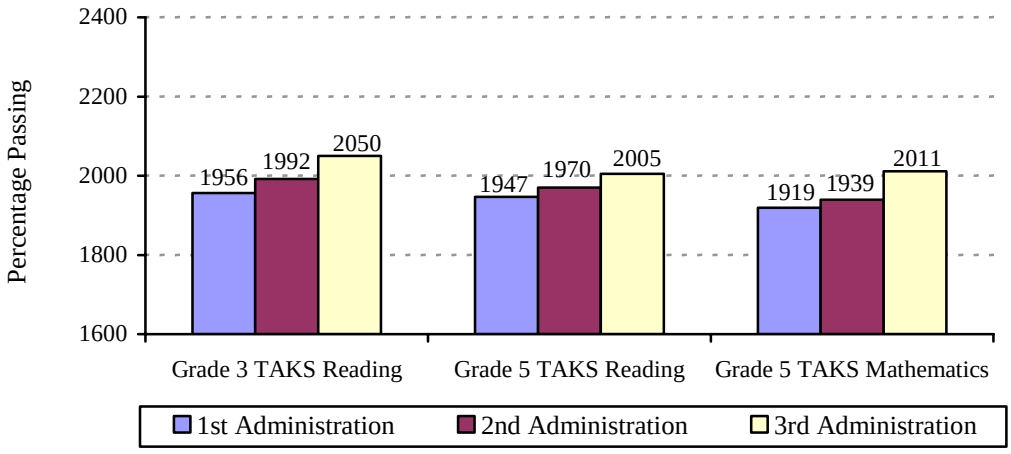
Table 6: Summary of 2007 TAKS Scale Score Data for Summer School SSI Students

Grade and TAKS Subject	# Students	# Passed TAKS	% Passed TAKS	% Made Gains
Grade 3 TAKS Reading	563	206	36	70
Grade 5 TAKS Reading	636	189	30	64
Grade 5 TAKS Mathematics	661	171	26	78
Total	1860	566	30	71

Source: AISD 2007 TAKS files

Not only did a large majority of these summer school students make gains from the 2nd to the 3rd TAKS test, the average scale scores for the three tests increased with each administration for this group of students. Figure 4 shows the average scale score for each administration by subject and grade level for 2007 summer school students.

Figure 4: Average Scale Scores for Each Administration of TAKS for SSI Grades and Subjects for 2007 Summer School Students



Source: AISD TAKS files

PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS

In April 2007, all K–7 ARI and AMI teachers, mentor teachers, and contact persons were asked to respond to an online survey about the school-year reading and math intervention programs. Specific topics on the survey included professional development opportunities, curricula and materials, challenges and strengths of the program, and suggestions for improvements to the program. The ARI and AMI professional staff responding to the surveys included 51 teachers and 13 contact persons at middle schools, and 115 teachers and 65 mentor teachers at elementary schools.

Challenges of the Middle School Program

Middle school ARI and AMI teachers and contact persons were asked to respond to the question, "What do you think are the major challenges for AISD to provide reading and math intervention to middle school students who are at risk of failing TAKS?" Challenges associated with providing reading and math interventions for K–7 students are summarized for all respondents.

Student attendance (n = 29). According to middle school ARI and AMI teachers, student attendance was one of the major challenges for the intervention program. Motivating students to attend and stay focused at the end of the day was difficult when other activities competed with the intervention. Many teachers indicated that students would benefit more from electives that provided intervention during the school day than they would from interventions after school or on weekends. According to one teacher,

> The biggest challenge for AISD is finding a way to service the students' academic needs during the school day. Once students are on campus, they are a captive audience. Only 1 in 4 students who need help will come in on Saturdays.

Promotion to grade 6 without passing grade 5 TAKS (n = 12). According to some teachers, a major challenge at the middle school level was the promotion of students to grade 6 after they failed to meet the passing standard on one or more grade 5 TAKS test. Only 23% of ARI/AMI middle school teachers agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, "Grade 6 students who were promoted after failing grade 5 TAKS test(s) kept pace with grade 6 academic learning." Similarly, only 19% of middle school respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, "Grade 7 students who were promoted after failing grade 6 TAKS test(s) kept pace with grade 7 academic learning." One teacher expressed frustration as follows: "I failed nine boys last year because they wrote not one word all year. Yet they went to the 8th grade."

Strengths of the ARI and AMI Program

Although challenges occurred for the ARI and AMI program, 94% of middle school intervention teachers agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, "My campus has an effective plan to provide additional instructional time for all students in grades 6 and 7 who are struggling in reading and/or math."

Similarly, at the elementary level, 95% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, "At my campus, students in grades 3–5 who need additional instruction time receive intervention outside of the classroom." Many mentor teachers stated that students were more

likely to pass TAKS after attending interventions. According to one mentor teacher, "Two fifth-grade students who have never passed the math test, passed this year!"

Campus/program support (n = 49). According to elementary and middle school respondents, the program's teachers, administrators, and support staff were dedicated to working together to help students be academically successful.

Small group instruction (n = 27). According to teachers, students benefited from individualized instruction in a small group setting at the participating elementary and middle schools. Intervention students received personalized instruction and individual attention.

Curricula/materials (n = 21). Teachers appreciated the curricula and materials available for the program. According to one teacher, the strength of the ARI/AMI program is the "variety of resources to choose from so that needs of students are met."

Areas for Program Improvement

Although ARI and AMI teachers, mentor teachers, and contact persons praised the efforts of the district to offer support for students at risk of reading or math difficulties, they made the following suggestions to improve the intervention program:

Professional development (n = 49). Many elementary mentors and teachers agreed that offering teachers more professional development opportunities focused on strategies for struggling students would be helpful. One mentor teacher said it would be helpful to observe "best practices modeled in an intervention setting." Other suggestions made by staff for training topics or sessions included alternative strategies to reteach skills, problem-solving strategies, use of manipulatives and appropriate assessments, effective strategies for ELL students, and methods for teaching specific TAKS objectives.

Focus on early intervention (n = 37). Elementary teachers emphasized the need to expand the program to reach more students, particularly K–2 students. The least percentage of agreement (40% agreed or strongly agreed) among respondents was to the statement, "My campus has an effective plan to provide intervention to struggling K–2 students." One mentor teacher said,

> Ensure that students receive intensive expressive and receptive language interventions in pre-K through grade 3 and not wait to address speaking, listening, processing, writing issues when it is too late. Critical time to acquire language is by the age of 6 and no later than 10.

The K–2 students who needed additional instruction time were not the focus of most intervention programs because they were not subject to the SSI grade advancement requirements.

Curricula/materials (n = 27). Teachers requested more Spanish materials and more educational computer software, and a wider variety of interesting materials.

Summer School Feedback

Elementary summer school teachers (n = 169), mentor teachers (n = 22), and principals (n = 7) responded to surveys to evaluate the 2007 summer school ARI/AMI program. According to those who responded, the major challenges of the 2007 summer program included the following: curriculum and materials (n = 75), the schedule and structure of the program (n = 45), student motivation and focus (n = 35), incorrect student information (n = 33), and behavior (n = 30).

The strengths of the summer school program reported by teachers, mentor teachers, and principals included the following: curriculum and the wealth of materials (n = 93), outstanding teacher and staff support (n = 88), program organization (n = 34), and the small class size (n = 18).

Summer school staff gave specific recommendations for improving the 2008 summer school program, which were shared with the program staff. The two areas discussed most often concerned the curriculum and materials, and the schedule and structure of the program, both of which were on the lists of strengths and challenges.

SUMMARY

Each year, the ARI and AMI intervention programs face new challenges as another grade is added in preparation for the SSI grade advancement requirement that will be effective for grade 8 students in 2007–2008. Due to limited resources and increased demand, offering intervention services to all students who could benefit from additional small group instruction has become extremely difficult.

AISD's 2006–2007 ARI/AMI entitlement for AISD of $3,450,977 was supplemented by funds from other grants or programs (e.g., Reading First, OEYP, 21st Century, Title I, Prime Time, AFL). Although ARI/AMI and other funds were utilized for interventions, not all students who were eligible participated; 88% of K–7 students eligible in reading and 58% eligible in math participated in interventions.

Of the 19,531 K–7 students who participated in reading or math interventions in 2006–2007, 28% participated in both. SSI students had three opportunities to pass TAKS during 2006–2007. TAKS results for SSI intervention students indicated that 77% of grade 3 and 63% of grade 5 intervention students passed TAKS reading, and 62% of grade 5 intervention students passed TAKS mathematics. For reading and math intervention students not in grades subject to SSI grade advancement requirements, the percentages of students passing TAKS ranged from 40% to 60%.

Of the 1,828 grade 6 students who received accelerated instruction outside of the regular classroom, 500 (27%) participated in both reading and math interventions. Of the 1,872 grade 7 students who participated in accelerated instruction outside of the classroom, 489 (26%) participated in both reading and math interventions. The overall TAKS results for intervention students in grades 6 and 7 showed that 48% passed TAKS reading and 42% passed TAKS mathematics.

Although much has been accomplished through the district's reading and math intervention programs, much remains to be done. It is critical that (a) classroom teachers have skills to assist struggling students (professional development opportunities), (b) parents must cooperate with teachers in efforts to provide academic support to their students (parental involvement), and (c) students must have early and frequent opportunities to succeed (early intervention).

RECOMMENDATIONS

The need for reading and math interventions is great among AISD students. In the 2006–2007 school year, 36% of all K–7 students were eligible for reading interventions, and 41% of students in grades 2–7 were eligible for math interventions. The following recommendations to improve the K–8 intervention programs in 2007–2008 are offered to district decision makers for consideration.

- Provide teacher training to expand knowledge and increase effective use of classroom-based reading and math intervention strategies, and to support intervention programs outside the classroom.
- Provide more intervention opportunities during the school day to reach more students without compromising instruction in other core content areas—especially at middle school, where intervention teachers report that extended-day and extended-week interventions are poorly attended.
- Closely monitor reading and math interventions at the middle school level while the grant is being expanded to include grade 8 students.
- Explore development and/or acquisition of new materials to provide additional instructional support for students having difficulties in reading and/or math.
- Provide SSI summer school teachers with the tools that they need to maximize time and effort in the students' last attempt to pass TAKS: 1) an analysis of the previous TAKS test(s) by scale scores and objectives; 2) pertinent student information (e.g., LEP [limited English proficient] status, special education status) at the beginning of summer school; 3) materials and strategies used successfully in summer school by other Texas school districts to increase passing percentages on the final administration of TAKS; and 4) professional development on skills development and learning strategies for struggling students.
- Continue to maximize intervention funds by coordinating ARI and AMI instruction efforts with other entitlement and grant programs at the campus and district level to provide interventions for all K–8 students who have been determined to be at risk for reading and/or math difficulties.

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AUSTIN INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS
Pascal D. Forgione, Jr., Ph.D.

OFFICE OF ACCOUNTABILITY
Maria Whitsett, Ph.D.

DEPARTMENT OF PROGRAM EVALUATION
Holly Williams, Ph.D.
Martha Doolittle, Ph.D.

AUTHOR
Janice Curry

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