Department of
Research and
Evaluation
AUSTIN INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Background. The Texas Literacy Initiative (TLI) is currently implemented in Austin Independent School District (AISD) within the LBJ, Travis, and Lanier vertical teams.[1] The purpose of TLI is to improve school readiness and success in the areas of language and literacy for students in AISD, including associated early childhood education (ECE) providers. To do this, AISD uses the Literacy Lines model, which provides instructional and programming alignment for language, pre-literacy, and literacy development to ease the transition for children across their entire learning careers. A Literacy Line is a vertical collaborative among feeder-pattern campuses within the district, partnering eligible educational organizations (e.g., prekindergarten [pre-K], elementary, middle, and high schools) and their associated ECE providers, which may include Early Head Start, Head Start, public or private or nonprofit licensed child care providers, and public pre-K programs. In Fall 2014, staff in AISD's Department of Research and Evaluation (DRE) worked with TLI grant management staff to create and administer a survey to campus administrators (principals and assistant principals), teachers, and TLI reading specialists/coaches at all TLI campuses. This report summarizes responses from administrators at TLI campuses.

Respondents. An electronic survey was sent to principals and assistant principals within the TLI vertical teams and directors of three ECE centers that receive professional development opportunities from TLI staff. Of the 39 administrators who responded, the majority (85%) worked at pre-K/elementary schools and 15% worked at secondary schools.

Administrators' ratings. Administrators' responses to questions related to the TLI grant are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Administrators' Ratings (*n* = 34)

Statement	% Strongly agree	% Agree	% Disagree	% Strongly disagree	% Not sure/NA
Generally, teachers have reported being well supported by TLI staff.	51	46	0	0	3
TLI funded staff members (i.e., teachers, reading specialists or coaches) are improving student literacy on campus.	57	43	0	0	0
TLI-funded teachers or reading specialists/coaches use their time effectively.	66	34	0	0	0
I receive the support I need from TLI central office staff.	44	56	0	0	0

Source. TLI Fall 2014 Staff Survey

---

[1] Vertical teams refer to the elementary and middle schools that feed into a high school.

Coach/specialist activities. Administrators were asked to estimate the percentage of time during a typical work week that their TLI coach spent working with teachers on their campuses. Table 2 summarizes the administrators' responses to this question. These results mirror the TLI grant staffing: the majority of coaches were placed in kindergarten through grade 2 (one per campus), while other coaches were shared across schools and grade levels. Administrators also reported that their coaches spent 13% of their week completing administrative/other duties.

Table 2. Administrators' Responses About Their Texas Literacy Initiative (TLI) Coach's Typical Weekly Time Working With Teachers (*n* = 35)

Activity	Average % of time per week
Working with pre-K teachers/students	6
Working with grades K–2 teachers/students	60
Working with grades 3–5 teachers/students	3
Working with grades 6–8 teachers/students	7
Working with grades 9–12 teachers/students	13
Administrative/other duties	10

Source. TLI Fall 2014 Staff Survey

Note. Pre-K is prekindergarten. K is kindergarten.

Support. The types of beneficial support that administrators cited most often were resources/materials, paying for substitutes, and professional development activities for teachers.

Table 3. Support From Texas Literacy Initiative (TLI) Central Office Staff That Administrators Found Beneficial (*n* = 34)

Type of support	% Administrators
Resources/materials	76
Paying for substitutes	74
Professional development for teachers	71
Data analysis meetings	65
Professional development for coaches	65
Bringing awareness of the importance of early childhood literacy	35
Academic walk throughs	24
Selection of curriculum materials	18
Lesson modeling	12
Environmental walk throughs	9
Other (please specify)	6

Source. TLI Fall 2014 Survey

Administrators were also asked to indicate types of additional support they would like to receive from TLI central office staff. Table 4 displays the responses from 39 administrators. Administrators were able to select more than one type of support. Modeling classroom visits was mentioned most often (50%).

Table 4. Administrators' Needs for Additional Support (*n* = 34)

Type of additional support needed	% Administrators
Model classroom visits	50
Workshops for parents and teachers	47
Videos/web based resources of best literacy practices	38
K–2 intervention strategies	29
Other (please specify)	9

Source. Texas Literacy Initiative Fall 2014 Survey

Note. K is kindergarten.

Administrators specified the following as other types of additional support they would like to receive:

- "Self-selected resources/materials."
- "Paying for subs on non-data-meeting days."
- "Actual modeling of strategies/interventions by TLI staff."

Benefits as a result of TLI. Administrators (*n* = 25) stated the benefits they had seen as a result of the TLI grant. Some of their responses are listed below:

- "More focused instruction for the struggling students as a result of the data analysis."
- "The literacy training for teachers was excellent and motivating in the summers. Having the Six Traits [professional development training] over three summers allowed teachers to continue to grow in their learning of literacy and literacy instruction!"
- "More students on or above level."
- "A knowledgeable coach to work with and develop teachers in areas of need and to push early literacy focus in all classrooms."
- "Students are able to participate in small-group interventions/tutoring where they would otherwise be in larger groups."
- "Teacher collaboration and student-focused lessons and excited students eager to learn."
- "Our primary grades have the support of a coach that is knowledgeable and willing to assist however needed."

Suggestions for TLI grant improvement. Campus administrators (*n* = 23) provided suggestions for improving the effectiveness of the TLI grant. Most responded that they were satisfied with the current level of support and/or did not have any suggestions for additional support. Additional responses are below:

- "Provide full-day subs during data analysis for more time."
- "Even more [professional development activities] for teachers, complete with videos and checklists to be used as guides for classroom instruction."

- "[The area] I need assistance with is vocabulary development."
- "Support to teachers to assess with sustaining systems in place after the TLI grant ends."
- "Videos of master teachers utilizing best instructional strategies to teach all of the components of reading."

Suggestions for improving campuses' reading and writing. Campus administrators (*n* = 22) provided suggestions for improving reading and writing skills at their campuses:

- "Provide additional strategies to incorporate in elective classes."
- "District alignment of writing interventions. We have a high mobility rate on our campus and students that come from other schools don't always have the same strategies prior to 4th grade."
- "We need to align our writing process for K through 5. The student expectations still continue to vary in spite of our vertical meetings."
- "We need to do a better job as a campus aligning our practices and increasing teacher skills at the same time."
- "Understand and align bilingual/dual language program."
- "The writing component being more aligned with the dual language expectation."
- "School-wide improvement plan with TLI."