RESEARCH BRIEF

How did prekindergarten (pre-K) students perform on the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT) and the Test de Vocabulario en Imagenes (TVIP) in Fall 2012? District wide, Austin Independent School District (AISD) pre-K students' average normal curve equivalent (NCE) score of 37.3 was in the *low average* range on the Peabody (Tables 1 and 2). On average, English language learners (ELLs) scored lower on the Peabody than did non-ELLs.

Each year, the PPVT and the TVIP (i.e., Spanish version of the PPVT) are provided to a sample of pre-K students across all AISD elementary campuses with a pre-K program in the fall and spring semesters. As part of the Texas Literacy Initiative (TLI), all classrooms within the Lanier or Travis vertical teams were tested. The Peabody (i.e., PPVT and TVIP) measures receptive (i.e., hearing) vocabulary ability.

A total of 2,098 pre-K students were tested in Fall 2012. Of those tested, 1,941 students were tested in their home language (i.e., 709 English-speaking non-ELLs, 126 Spanish-speaking non-ELLs, and 1,106 Spanish-speaking ELLs).

Peabody-averaged NCEs for each vertical team and ELL status are presented in Table 1. An interpretation of NCE scores is provided in Table 2. Scores were age-normed based on a national sample of native speakers (i.e., in English for the PPVT and in Spanish for the TVIP).

Table 1. Prekindergarten Peabody Normal Curve Equivalent (NCE) Results, by English Language Learner (ELL) Status and Vertical Team, Fall 2012

Vertical team	All tested students # students tested	Avg. NCE	Non-ELL # students tested	Avg. NCE	ELL # students tested	Avg. NCE
District wide	**1,941**	**37.3**	**838**	**39.7**	**1,106**	**35.5**
Akins	116	40.4	7	39.7	109	40.4
Anderson	60	39.3	60	39.3	-	-
Austin	55	49.1	52	50.3	-	-
Bowie	44	51.0	39	51.0	6	51.2
Crockett	117	44.7	64	42.9	53	46.8
Eastside Memorial	120	45.9	57	35.6	63	55.3
Johnson	105	30.2	74	32.8	31	24.1
Lanier	510	29.4	110	30.6	401	29.0
McCallum	88	38.0	50	44.6	38	29.4
Reagan	216	28.2	23	38.6	193	27.0
Travis	510	43.3	302	40.9	209	46.7

Source. AISD student records, Department of Research and Evaluation

Table 2. Interpretation of Normal Curve Equivalent (NCE) Scores

Range of performance	NCE scores	National percentile
Very low	1–24	1–11
Low	25–35	12–25
Low average	36–44	26–39
Average	45–55	40–60

How did Peabody performance compare across vertical teams? On average, the Lanier, Johnson, and Reagan vertical team elementary schools had the lowest Peabody pretest NCEs across the district, ranging in the bottom quartile in the nation for native language receptive vocabulary ability. Pre-K students in the Austin and Bowie vertical team elementary schools had the highest Peabody pretest NCEs across the district and were at the national average for the Peabody assessment.

Although non-ELLs, in general, scored higher on the Peabody than did ELLs, pre-K non-ELLs in the Eastside Memorial and Travis vertical teams scored significantly[1] lower on the Peabody than did ELLs at those schools. Conversely, ELLs in the Austin,[2] Johnson, McCallum, and Reagan vertical teams scored significantly lower on the Peabody than did non-ELLs at those schools.

How did Peabody performance compare across early childhood centers? Pre-K students at Read, Uphaus, and Dobie[3] scored lower, on average, on the Peabody than did pre-K students district wide, and as a whole, were in the *low* range of Peabody performance. The exception was ELLs at Uphaus, who scored higher than the district average.

Table 1. Peabody Normal Curve Equivalent (NCE) Results, by English Language Learner (ELL) Status and Early Childhood Center, Fall 2012

	All prekindergarten (pre-K) students		Non-ELL		ELL	
	# students tested	Avg. NCE	# students tested	Avg. NCE	# students tested	Avg. NCE
District wide	**1,941**	**37.3**	**838**	**39.7**	**1,106**	**35.5**
Read	424	29.0	92	29.8	333	28.8
Uphaus	103	36.7	43	33.3	60	39.1
Dobie*	145	30.0	14	39.9	131	28.9

Source. AISD student records, Department of Research and Evaluation

* Only Dobie pre-K classrooms dually enrolled with Child, Inc. (i.e., Headstart) were included. Webb Early Childhood Center was not included because only one classroom was tested.

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[1] Significance was based on $p < .05$ for analysis of variance (ANOVA) *t*-tests.
[2] Although Austin had fewer than five ELLs tested, the difference in Peabody scores was significant according to ANOVA *t*-tests.
[3] Only Dobie pre-K classrooms dually enrolled with Child, Inc. (i.e., Headstart) were included.