

Longitudinal Project Read Study 1994 - 2001

Goose Creek School District

Baytown, TX

Goose Creek Consolidated Independent School District is committed to “closing the gap” between student groups based on race, gender and low-income status. Beginning in 1994, the district began looking closely at the data reported in the Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) developed by the state of Texas for reporting student data and ensuring accountability. The disparity between the subpopulations was glaring. Comparisons of 1994 test scores to last year show the results of focused, intentional efforts.

| All Tests Taken | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Percent of Students Passing | 1994 | 2001 |
| White | 68% | 90% |
| Hispanic | 45% | 83% |
| African American | 38% | 78% |

The changes in demographics are outlined below.

| Percent | 1994 | 2001 |
|---------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| White | 52 | 40 |
| Hispanic | 31 | 41 |
| African American | 16 | 18 |
| Other | 1 | 1 |
| Economically Disadvantage | 41 | 52 |

The scope of the monumental task included the following components to alleviate the deficit facing our district eight years ago:

- Horizontal and vertical alignment of curriculum.
- Scheduled formative and summative assessments.
- Focused campus and district improvement planning.
- Quality, on-going staff development and classroom support.

Project Read began in the spring of 1991 in GCCISD as a program to help children who were struggling in Language Arts. The first teachers to receive the training were regular education language arts instructor and dyslexia specialists. After the initial training, teachers and administrators concluded that Project Read would benefit all children. Due to the success of the students in classrooms where Project Read was implemented, Project Read was integrated into the grade level expectations and mandated in all elementary classrooms in 1994.

The curriculum guides for each grade level in elementary school reflect the Project Read skills and concepts for the particular grade level. Included in the curriculum guides are grade level expectations, a scope and sequence for each six weeks, instructional calendars for each six weeks, and objectives. This enables teachers to know the skills and concepts previously taught and effectively access prior knowledge.

The multi-sensory strategies and the graphic organizers, such as the Report Form skeleton, are also consistent from grade level to grade level and classroom to classroom. Project Read Phonology is embedded in our district spelling program. The Daily Skills Review is done everyday and is designed to check for understanding of the skills and concepts previously taught in all the components of Project Read.

Many science and social studies teachers are using Report Form. The Social Studies department developed reports using information from the currently adopted Social Studies textbooks. Each Social Studies teacher was given a copy of the material with the answer key using Report Form strategies at the beginning of the 1999 school year. The Science department is currently following the pattern of the Social Studies department.

Since assessment must drive the curriculum, the district determined to test what we teach. Project Read concepts and skills are an integral part of spelling tests, unit tests, benchmarks and district developed mid-year assessments. These assessments are given on a predetermined schedule. Student reading and writing rubrics are completed by the teacher at beginning and end of the year giving the teacher and the student information on deficit skills, checking for application and transfer, and showing progress over time. The state assessment is administered in third through eighth grade and the tenth grade exit exam. During district team leader meetings and campus faculty meetings teachers examine the data from the benchmarks and state tests to determine objectives each student needs to continue progress. Most of the objectives are directly related to one or more strands of Project Read. For example, summarization is the most difficult objective for students on the state assessment. Report and Story Form teach summarization for expository and narrative text.

The district improvement plan (DIP) reflects the staff development needed to implement the required curriculum. The DIP is derived from the school board goals and the data from the state assessments. The data from the state assessment is disaggregated by race and low-income status. From this data, each campus develops a campus improvement plan (CIP) that is aligned with the DIP. In order to receive a recognized or exemplary rating from the state, the subpopulations must perform commensurate with the Anglo students that are above the poverty line. As the campus improvement plans are designed, the following criteria are used:

- Campus data from the state test.
- The demographics of the school.
- The new teachers on campus.
- The district improvement plan.

The objectives in the CIP and DIP are measurable and have a stated time frame for completion. The Assistant Superintendent for Instruction reviews the CIP plan with each principal to determine the level of implementation for each objective. Project Read is an integral part of the CIP and the DIP. Each component of Project Read is required and the new teachers are given two years to complete the training. Experienced teachers are required to renew their training every three to four years.

Twice a year the district publishes a staff development booklet. The offerings in the booklet include all the components of Project Read. One day Project Read updates are offered for teachers who have previously taken the courses. Two to three days of exchange time is granted for attendance after school hours or on Saturdays. Because of the changes in the state curriculum and the state test, teachers are required to take Project Read courses during the next year for exchange time. An important part of the staff development model is classroom demonstrations. The Staff Development and Language Arts Director, reading specialists and myself do demonstration lessons for teachers who need assistance.

The district grant writer, the Language Arts Director, and Language Arts Leadership Team have worked together to apply for grants offered by the Texas Education Agency. These grants are being used to pay for the materials and some stipends for teachers who choose not to accrue exchange time. The grants require extensive evaluations and accountability.

In the State of Texas, each school district is compared with nineteen other schools of similar demographics and size. In 1994, Goose Creek CISD was twentieth in the percentage of students passing in all three subject areas in the comparison group. In 2001, Goose Creek was second in writing, third in math, and fifth in reading among the comparison districts.

The overall passing rate on the state test has improved each year beginning in 1994 when Project Read was mandated as a major part of the Language Arts curriculum.

Percentage of Students Passing

| Year | Reading | Math | Writing |
|-------------|----------------|-------------|----------------|
| 1994 | 77% | 61% | 78% |
| 1995 | 79% | 66% | 85% |
| 1996 | 81% | 75% | 85% |
| 1997 | 86% | 82% | 86% |
| 1998 | 86% | 86% | 88% |
| 1999 | 88% | 89% | 90% |
| 2000 | 89% | 90% | 91% |
| 2001 | 90% | 93% | 91% |

Closing the gap is not a “quick fix.” Goose Creek CISD has yet to achieved the goal of which 95% of all students passing all areas on the state assessments. Currently, secondary teachers are seeing the power of accessing the knowledge, skills and strategies the students bring with them from the elementary school. Many secondary teachers are realizing the value of Linguistics, Report Form, Written Expression and Story Form. In order for all students to be successful, the curriculum, planning, staff development and assessment must be one seamless fabric. Various forms of Project Read have provided continuity in Goose Creek.

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