

PROJECT LITERACY: LEARN, LOVE, LIVE

Harlandale Independent School District

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Funded by: US Department of Education

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Educational Research Institute (ERI) and its Research Team conducted an external evaluation of the **Innovative Approaches to Literacy (IAL) Program**. This grant was awarded to **Harlandale Independent School District (HISD)** and it is directly funded through the U.S. Department of Education (ED).

This grant's primary goal is to support high-quality programs designed to develop and improve literacy skills for students and children from birth to 12th grade. Harlandale ISD chose to target its elementary students in Early Education (EE) through 5th grade. The Department of Education intends to support innovative programs that promote early literacy for young children, motivate older children to read and increase student achievement by using school libraries as partners to improve literacy. Therefore, the main purpose of this evaluation is to measure the overall effectiveness of the grant goals and objectives during its program period.

The report presented will include the outcomes of the initiative which includes the following goals:

- Increase student achievement;
- Reduce the technology gap among low-income students; and
- Increase student and parent access to literacy resources.

In order to measure the effectiveness of the IAL Program at Harlandale ISD, the ERI Research Team has prepared the report presented here consisting of a quantitative (student academics) and qualitative (staff and student input, library records, and budget review) review of the grant's goals as specified in the Innovative Approaches to Literacy (IAL) Program.

The following pages include a summary of the findings collected by the ERI Research Team and will cover areas including:

EVALUATION SECTIONS	DESCRIPTION
Librarian and Teacher Professional Development	Provides the steps taken to help Librarians and Teachers reach the next step in professionalism.
Literacy Training Activities for Parents and Families	Presents all the activities that took place for parents and families to get them involved with their children’s literacy.
Students’ Literacy Development	Provides the improvements the students have made towards their literacy scores.
Library Infrastructure Development and Expansion	Presents the steps being taken to expand and develop the infrastructure of the libraries of the 13 targeted elementary schools.
Program Outcomes	Identifies the qualitative data collected from staff, faculty, administrators, and students. Also, a review qualitative data from school and state reports.
Evaluator’s Comments and Recommendations	Identifies the findings, as well as, a review of data with recommendations to help Harlandale ISD and IAL in continuation years and in future programs.

During an observation made by ERI’s Research Team during an on-site evaluation at Harlandale ISD (HISD), ERI and its Research Team were able to review the overall quality and effectiveness of the IAL Program. After a comprehensive review of the overall quality and effectiveness of this grant the ERI evaluator and research team is providing suggestions on how to increase program capabilities for future funding.

LIBRARIAN AND TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

As stated in the proposal, students who have full-time librarians, are at least twice as likely to have improved writing scores as their counterparts without a full-time librarian. Due to this cause and effect relationship, HISD has had their librarians, as well as, teachers take part in different Professional Development activities. In which all these different trainings helped in teaching them things like, how to help parents engage in reading with their children, how to use

the technology equipment and resources, and how to implement the newly received digital literacy tools and materials.

Just as librarians take an affect to a student's life, teachers supply the same impact. English Language Arts teachers in the grades 1st through 5th have been targeted to improve professional development throughout the term of the three-year program.



Some of the steps taken to do this have included trainings such as reinforcing strategies on how students read, including spoken language, phonemic awareness, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, and word study-skills. The IAL Program allocated funds for substitutes to relieve teachers from their classroom, as well as, summer stipends, which allowed teachers to attend the professional development trainings which included:

- Basics of Teaching Comprehension (3rd -5th Grade);
- Reaching for the “STAARs” Through Rigorous Reading (3rd -5th Grade);
- Guided Reading Basics (1st - 2nd Grade);
- Basics of Teaching Comprehension (1st - 2nd Grade);
- Rocking Revisions (Integrate Revising and Editing While Reading);
- The Cure for Grammmertitis;
- Balanced Literacy Cohort;
- Literature Circles;
- Poetry/Building Fluency;

- Effective Workstations; and
- Close Reading.

In addition, these participating teachers also had the opportunity to view research-based literacy on best-practices and activities, as well as, had the opportunity to share and model lessons and activities with peers. Based on conversations held with the Language Arts/Dyslexia Coordinator, the trainings and collaboration between teachers were successful in helping the campuses create a Balanced Literacy. This approach includes components such as: read aloud, guided reading, shared reading, interactive writing, shared writing, reading workshop, writing workshop and word study.

LITERACY TRAINING ACTIVITIES FOR PARENTS AND FAMILIES

Children in elementary are at a stage of development that mostly relies modeling or imitation for personal growth. Therefore, parents and family members are some of the most significant people that will affect the students’ perspective on life. Most of the trainings provided through the IAL Program were intended to teach parents and family members how to instill a love for learning in their children. During the duration of this grant program, all 13 schools were able to host parent and family activities to approximately 1,203 parents during year 1 and 920 parents during year 2. Even more impressively, out of the total number of events that took place, the district averaged 22 parents per function. The number of parents that attended each schools’ events is presented below:

PARENT ACTIVITIES			
Campus	# of Parents Who Attended Year 1 Activities	# Of Parents Who Attended Year 2 Activities	Total
Adams Elementary	148	55	203
Bellaire Elementary	30	121	151



PARENT ACTIVITIES, CONT'D			
Campus	# of Parents Who Attended Year 1 Activities	# Of Parents Who Attended Year 2 Activities	Total
Carroll Bell Elementary	61	75	136
Collier Elementary	10	15	25
Columbia Heights Elementary	117	103	220
Gilbert Elementary	121	64	185
Gillette Elementary	133	16	149
Morrill Elementary	71	48	119
Rayburn Elementary	87	141	228
Schulze Elementary	158	107	265
Stonewall-Flanders Elementary	99	16	115
Vestal Elementary	37	142	179
Wright Elementary	131	17	148
TOTAL:	1,203	920	2,123

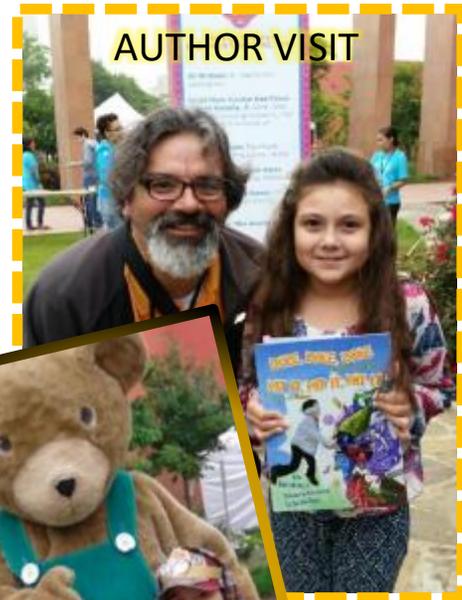
Furthermore, other trainings that took part in this aspect provided parents and families with instructions on how to be affective role models for literacy, and effectively engaging their children in literacy at home. Other district-wide activities provided parents the opportunity to learn how to read to their children with characteristics that in-turn increased their child's interest in reading. Parents were also given strategies for developing life-long learners. The sample list of activities is provided below:

- Author Visit for Literacy;





- Book Festival;
- Book Fiesta;
- I Read to You, You Read to Me;
- Let's Get "Appy";
- Literacy at Home: 25 Literacy Handouts for Parents;
- Little Read Wagon;
- Pajama Party Books and Bears;
- Panther Parents Literacy Fun;
- Plant A Seed and Read;
- "Snowy Day" – Finding Cause and Effect; and
- Super Hero Family Literacy Night.



These activities were each creatively named and planned by the campus Librarians to entice students and their families to attend. As can be noted in the more than 2,100 parents who attended over the 2-year period, campus Librarians were successful in recruiting families to participate in the numerous activities held.



STUDENTS' LITERACY DEVELOPMENT

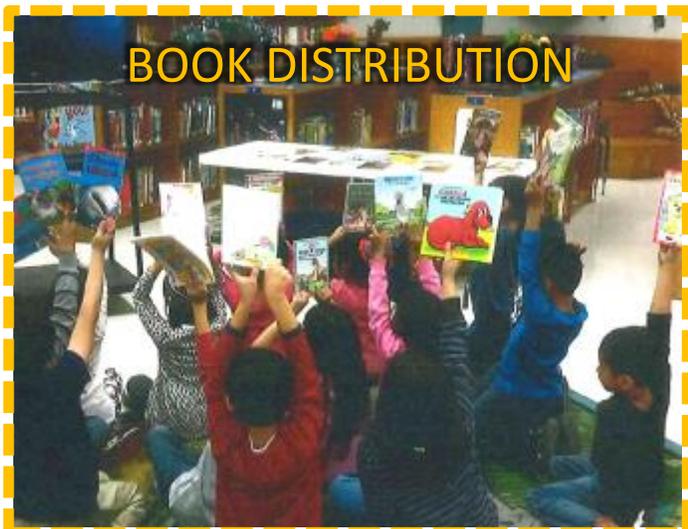


In order to reach students' literacy potential, students were provided age appropriate "Books in a Bag", which had fiction and non-fiction books. An average of 50 bags with 3-5 English and Spanish books in each were distributed per campus each year. Over the two-year period, a total

of 1,300 bags were distributed amongst the 13 campuses with a total of 5,590 books.

The bags also contained a "Reading Per-Pal", where each student had the opportunity to take the bag home at least once during the academic year. Parents also participated in this "Books in a Bag" activity. The district included a letter to the parent(s) that was sent home inside the bag which encouraged them to engage in the literacy activities with their child. Parents were asked to read to their child (ren), as well as, listen as their child(ren) read their assigned books. Another component of this activity included students writing in a journal about of the books included in the bag before returning the book bag for the next student to take home.

After students returned the 'Books in a Bag', teachers then reviewed the journals to make sure that the individual students' comprehension and writing-skill needs were being addressed.



Students who showed a deficiency, would then receive small group assistance or intervention from their teacher.

In addition to the “Book in a Bag”, the campuses were able to distribute books to each student a minimum of 3 times out of the year. This allowed students the opportunity to continue to read at home, as well as, build home libraries in the homes of the children.

LIBRARY INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT AND EXPANSION

Other than providing students with their own libraries at home, HISD extended their library hours which were staffed with certified librarians to offer students’ parents and their families more access to books, literacy resources, eBooks and Internet-based literacy materials. Through the IAL Program, HISD was able to enhance the quality, size, and modality of their library books, resources, and other literacy materials within each campus’s library.

The following table provides the total number of eBooks and Print Books purchased for each campus participating in the IAL Program:

EBOOKS AND PRINT BOOKS PURCHASED		
Campus Name	Number Purchased Per Campus	
	eBooks	Print Books
Adams Elementary	708	446
Bellaire Elementary	708	483
Carroll Bell Elementary	708	414
Collier Elementary	708	349
Columbia Heights Elementary	708	444
Gilbert Elementary	708	425
Gillette Elementary	708	413
Morrill Elementary	708	415
Rayburn Elementary	708	343
Schulze Elementary	708	404
Stonewall-Flanders Elementary	708	393
Vestal Elementary	708	443
Wright Elementary	708	396
GRAND TOTAL	9,204	5,368

To shorten the gap of the digital-divide, HISD was also able to expand access to technology to Internet-based resources at all 13 elementary campuses. The IAL Program has helped bridge this gap completely with the funds to purchase and supply each elementary with two (2) Computers on Wheels (COWs) with classrooms sets of iPads. Each classroom set included 32 iPads for a total of 832 iPads purchased for the 13 campuses.

Moreover, throughout this program, students were given the opportunity to engage in project-based learning activities supported by technology, learn collaborative strategies, and develop learning communities to enhance their academic capacities and literacy skills.

PROGRAM OUTCOMES

As can be noted in the previous pages, Harlandale ISD was successful in carrying out several activities that were geared towards improving the literacy of its students at the elementary level. However, the Innovative Approaches to Literacy (IAL) Program included specific goals and objectives to be measured over the 2-year period. The goals and objectives of the IAL Program have been identified in the table below and include the baseline data, the target, and the actual outcome.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES		
Goal 1. Increase student achievement.		
Objective 1 –By the end of the two-year project period, the number of 3rd grade students who meet or exceed proficiency of the State standardized reading assessment will increase by 15%, using 2013 STAAR outcomes as the baseline.		
BASE	DATA	
	Target	Actual
58% of Students Met or Exceeded Proficiency	15%	1.7%
Evaluation: As per the results from 2015-2016 STAAR tests, the number of 3 rd grade students who met or exceeded proficient, increased by a total of 1.7% from the baseline data of 58%. The district failed to meet the proposed goal of a 15% increase.		



GOALS AND OBJECTIVES, CONT'D

Objective 2 –By end of each project year, target school libraries will host a minimum of 4 parent/family literacy training activities, measured by sign-in sheets.

BASE	DATA	
	Target	Actual
694 Parents/ Guardians Participated in Literacy Activities	Increase of 25% parent participation over 2013 baseline year.	1,214 Parents/Guardians participated in the 106 Activities Offered

Evaluation: A total of 106 activities and field trips to four (4) local library branches were provided for parents to discover library resources and services provided to families outside of the school library. Based on the total number of parents (1,214) served by the end of Year 2, the district met and exceeded the goal of increasing parent participation by 25%.

Objective 3 –By the end of the project period, 90% of students at the target schools/grades will increase literacy activities as measured by book and digital resource title check outs, and program participation activity logs.

BASE	DATA	
	Target	Actual
224,097 Books and Digital Resources Circulated	Increase of 90% over 2013 baseline year	291,354 (30%)
128,782 Student Visits to the Libraries		184,093 (43%)

Evaluation: Although the number of books and digital resources circulated increased by 30% and the number student visits to campus libraries indicated a 43% increase over the baseline year data, the proposed goal of a 90% increase was not met.

Goal 2. Reduce the technology gap among low-income student to foster innovation and augment achievement.

Objective 1 –By the end of the project period, target school/grades students will have increased access to technology and digital literacy resources, as documented by eBook checkout and Computers on Wheels (COWs) usage.

BASE	DATA	
	Target	Actual
5,105 Students Access Technology	90% of target students will have accessed technology and literacy resources by end of project period	68,617 (1,344%)

Evaluation: This objective was exceeded from the baseline data by increasing the accessibility of technology in and out of the classroom, as well as, allowing students to engage in independent reading/writing using iPad applications (apps). To increase accessibility, they purchased a total of two (2) iPad COWs per campus with secured funding. During Year 2, the COWs were circulated to teachers through a developed system for a total of 17,620 times. This system helped the IAL Program exceed its goal by 1,344%.



GOALS AND OBJECTIVES, CONT'D

Objective 2 –By the end of the project period 90% of participating ELA teachers will integrate technology into the literacy curriculum, as measured by lesson plans, observations, and usage of Computers on Wheels (COWs).

BASE	DATA	
	Target	Actual
564 Instances of Technology Used in Curriculum	90% of target ELA teachers will integrate technology into the literacy curriculum by end of year	17,620 (3,124%)

Evaluation: By the end of Year 2, individual iPads and COWs were circulated 17,620 times to the 297 target grade level teachers, for an average of 60 times per teacher. The iPads were utilized for training, use in classroom instruction, as well as, for students to use in the classroom to engage in independent reading and literacy instruction practice using the applications pre-loaded into the iPads.

Objective 3 –By the end of the project period, 70% of English language learners at target campuses will increase reading strategies as measured by the iStation assessment.

BASE	DATA	
	Target	Actual
34.27% of students in grades 1 st – 2 nd met or exceeded expectations on the Tejas Lee	70% of participating English Language Learners (ELL) students develop effective comprehension by end of project period	62%
61.82% of students in grades 3 rd – 5 th met or exceeded proficiency on STAAR		64%

Evaluation: Although students showed significant increase in development their comprehension as indicated by STAAR and Tejas Lee, the district failed to meet the target of 70%. However, the iStation assessment did allowed ELL speaking students to reach effective comprehension skills as indicated in the growth from the baseline data.

Goal 3. Increase student and parent access to literacy resources.

Objective 1 –By the end of each target school year, 98% of participating students will receive at least two free books to take home.

BASE	DATA	
	Target	Actual
17,016 Books	98% of participating students will receive at least three free books	32,174 (189%)



GOALS AND OBJECTIVES, CONT'D

Evaluation: In order to ensure that the participating campuses had enough books to distribute additional books to students at all three distributions, the district purchased the books selection from a vendor who provided additional bonus books at no charge with each order. A total of 32,174 books were distributed free to the target grade level students at all 13 campuses to help students build their home libraries. The distribution of books for 1st through 5th graders was as follows:

- Book Distribution #1: 10,985;
- Book Distribution #2: 8,039; and
- Book Distribution #3: 13,150.

Total: 32,174

Based on the enrollment of 5,672 students in grades 1st through 5th, each student average 5-6 free books; therefore, exceeding the goal of a minimum of 2 books.

Objective 2 –By the end of the project period, student library resource usage will increase by 40%, over the 2013-14 school baseline year, measured by book and digital tool check out, and library visit logs.

BASE	DATA	
	Target	Actual
224,097 Print and Digital Library Resource Title Checkouts	Library resource usage will increase 40% by end of project period	252,642 (12.7%)
128,782 Individual and Class Visits		184,093 (42.9%)

Evaluation: Although the district did not meet the goal of increasing the print and digital library resource title checkouts, it did increase the number by 89,639 (12.7%). However, with the new book and eBook expansion of libraries, students were able to visit the library and access the internet and check out technology and books; thus, increasing the visits by 42.96% and exceeding the target of 40%.

Objective 3 –By the end of the project period, parent participation in school literacy activities will increase by 30%, using 2013-14 parent engagement outcomes as a baseline, and documented by sign-in logs.

BASE	DATA	
	Target	Actual
694 Parent/Guardian Participation	30% increase parent participation in school literacy activities by end of project period	1,214 (74.9%)

Evaluation: By the end of Year 2 of the IAL Program, it is clear that increasing the number of activities and teaching the importance of reading encourages parents to participate in their child(rens) education. This relationship between the campuses and parent(s) is necessary to ensure literacy activities continue at home.

BUDGET

The following table summarizes the expenditures of the IAL Program which supported the activities described in this evaluation report and were previously approved by the US Department of Education (DOE). As can be noted, a total of \$58,223.27 have been encumbered but not expended. However, it is expected that the district will expense these funds by the program end date of September 23, 2017. The figures provided below have been reviewed by ERI Evaluation Team and were previously verified by the district’s Business Office personnel.

IAL PROGRAM BUDGET			
Category	Expended	Encumbered	Total
Personnel	\$131,094.37	\$5,530.77	\$136,625.14
Travel	\$5,000.00	\$0.00	\$5,000.00
Equipment	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Supplies	\$1,038,445.86	\$52,692.50	\$1,091,138.36
Contractual	\$148,642.42	\$0.00	\$148,642.42
Other	\$3,850.25	\$0.00	\$3,850.25
Total Direct Costs	\$1,327,032.90	\$58,223.27	\$1,385,256.17
Indirect Costs	\$100,345.15	\$0	\$100,345.15
Total Expenditures	\$1,427,378.05	\$58,223.27	\$1,485,601.32

Although the district was funded nearly 1.5 million dollars, the district ensured measures were in place to sustain the program beyond the funding period. This includes purchasing a 3-year Apple Care plan to replace broken or lost iPads, as needed, and utilizing the district’s Instructional Material Allotment (IMA) funds to purchase software (i.e. Britannica Image Quest). In addition, all teachers and librarians who attended professional development trainings were also trained utilizing the Train-the-Trainer Model; thus, allowing them to train any new campus librarians and teacher at their respective campuses who did not participate in the IAL Program.

This sustainability plan will allow the district to continue critical components of the IAL Program that have been proven to be successful in increasing students’ literacy skills.

EVALUATOR'S COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The ERI External Evaluation Team has produced the following recommendations and/or comments regarding the **Innovative Approaches to Literacy Program (IAL) Program**:

RECOMMEDATIONS AND/OR COMMENTS				
Topic	Recommendations/Comments	ERI	IAL Program Staff	Parents/Students
Library Access	As can be noted on Goal 3, Objective 2, the increase of print and digital library resource title checkout only increased by 12.7%; therefore, the objective was not met entirely. Because Librarians were changed to block scheduling and put back on a scheduled class rotation, students were limited on the time they could walk-in to the library to check out books. Although it was noted that the district and campus administrators provided tremendous support for the IAL Program, ERI recommends allowing Librarians to dedicate one-day out of the week for students to have open access to the library. This would mean that the campus Librarians would not be on a rotation schedule for at least one day of the week.	✓	✓	
	Since the commencement of the IAL Program, the campus's library schedule was extended for an additional 30 minutes per day, during which students were able to access the library on their own free will; therefore, the district experienced a 42.9% increase in library visits. Based on this data, it is recommended that the district consider sustaining the extended library hours to allow continued access for students and their parents based on this notable increase.	✓	✓	
Technology Use	In order to allow students to use the iPads from home and access Internet-based applications (apps), the district may consider providing hotspots to economically disadvantaged students so that the iPads may be utilized to their full potential. This will allow students to continue to practice their reading and writing skills and ultimately, increase their academics.	✓		



RECOMMEDATIONS AND/OR COMMENTS, CONT'D

Topic	Recommendations/Comments	ERI	IAL Program Staff	Parents/Students
Technology Use	Because the district is a Google immersed district, it was difficult to fully integrate the Apple platform due to the lack of infrastructure. Therefore, in the future, it is recommended that the district’s Technology Director or Specialist be involved before technology is purchased. This will help ensure that the technology purchased can be supported by the district’s infrastructure.	✓		
Student Academics	To encourage writing in the 4 th and 5 th grade students, it is recommended that students be taught to write and submit foundation grants to sustain the IAL Program. This will not only secure funds for future programming, but will also engage students in reading and writing effectively.	✓		
Family Engagement	Although the district has experienced a high family engagement rate, it is recommended that future sessions be considered part of a “Parent or Family University”. Parents attending these sessions would be allowed to earn points and ultimately “graduate” with a certificate once a certain number of sessions are completed. The ultimate goal of the “Parent or Family University” would be to motivate parents to continuously attend sessions that will promote a sense of accomplishment once they graduate.	✓	✓	
	As a result of the IAL Program, the campus Librarians shared that they feel that they are now seen by the campus principals as a valuable resource in holding sessions that engage parents. They also shared that surveys administered after each session, which were completed by the attending parents, also indicated that the sessions conducted by the Librarians were informative and enjoyable. This sense of value and appreciation is important in retaining quality Librarians and promoting use of the library to the campus’s students and their families.		✓	✓
Teacher Collaboration	In order to ensure that teachers learn best practices from one another, it was recommended that teachers be allowed to collaborate amongst each other at least once or twice per year. However, the collaboration should not be only amongst peers in the same grade level. The teachers would like to collaborate with teachers in other grade levels to create a vertical alignment; thus, ensure all teachers are utilizing similar teaching strategies.		✓	



RECOMMEDATIONS AND/OR COMMENTS, CONT'D				
Topic	Recommendations/Comments	ERI	IAL Program Staff	Parents/Students
Public Library	A small focus group was conducted with parents and students who participated and were directly impacted by the IAL Program. During this time, it was recommended that the book give away be sustained beyond grant funding. Although it is understood that the book giveaway is expensive, it was suggested that maybe 1 event be held by the district per year. Parents and students both feel that the books have helped in improving reading skills and would love to see it continue in the future.			✓