Portals to Literacy II

Final Evaluation Report

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Submitted by:

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Final Evaluation Report

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ORGANIZATION OF EVALUATION REPORT

This report begins with a summary evaluation of the quality and impact of the *Portals to Literacy II* project. This summary is based on an analysis of both the process and product of the project. This summary is followed by a detailed evaluation of each grant objective. The eight objectives of the *Portals to Literacy II project* were:

Objective 1: Reading scores on the Texas state assessment for participating 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade students, and writing scores for participating 4th grade students, will meet or exceed the comparable state reading scores by 2016;

Objective 2: Grains will be observed in participating PK-Grade 2 students' early reading assessment results. Gains will be observed in participating 4-year-old children's oral language skills;

Objective 3: Student access to high quality literacy resources and materials will be increased;

Objective 4: Students' motivation to read will be increased in Grades 4 and 5;

Objective 5: Participating library staff members' and teachers' knowledge and use of research-based strategies to support student literacy and the quality and quantity of technology integration with the curriculum will be increased;

Objective 6: Collaboration will be increased between administrators, teachers, and library staff in integrating library literacy activities with the curriculum; and

Objective 7: The quality of and attendance at parent/guardian-child literacy events will be increased.

Objective 8: Best practices for early literacy, emphasizing technology integration and hands-on learning, will be developed on a rigorous, comprehensive 4-year evaluation in diverse educational settings.

SUMMARY OF EVALUATION

After careful analysis of data from multiple sources, it is determined that the *Portals to Literacy Project II* was somewhat successful at implementing its' activities and having a positive impact on emergent and developing literacy in the schools where it was implemented.

The overall goal of the *Portals to Literacy Project II* was to improve and develop literacy skills of participating students through the integration of scientifically based, innovative tools and strategies to enhance school districts' library and literacy programs. To realize this goal, eight objectives were established (see page 3). To accomplish the objectives of the project, an action plan was written which included a variety of activities and a time line for implementing those activities in eight high-need rural schools serving early education (EE) through Grade 5 in South Texas. Ms. Tandiwe Greene served as Project Director during Year 1 of the project and Ms. Karen Turner served as Project Director during Year 2 of the project.

The *Portals to Literacy II* project sought to improve the literacy of students in Grades 3, 4 and 5 as measured by Texas state reading and writing standardized exams (STAAR). Activities implemented to realize this objective included (a) increasing quality family involvement, (b) effective use of e-readers and iPads, (c) use of academic databases, and (d) implementation of School-Wide Reading Initiatives in Grades 4-5. Results from participants' STAAR test show that the passing rate for project participants improved slightly (+2%); however, the project failed to achieve projected increases in pass rates on the STAAR reading and writing tests. West Oso Grade 4 was the only sub-group of students in this project to match the state reading pass rate (77%). Some increases in the passing rates of individual school districts and grade levels were realized. Mathis and West Oso saw increases in writing test passing rates from 2014 to 2016. Most of the reading pass rate increases were seen in Grade 4. Project-wide there was a 14% increase in the reading test passing rate for Grade 4; however, the pass rate of 69% was 8% below the state-wide pass rate.

The *Portals to Literacy II* project also sought to increase early (EE-Grade 2) literacy assessment results. Activities implemented to achieve this objective included (a) participation in the Early Scholars Academy and (b) use of e-readers. Based on the assessments used, grant activities had a positive impact on preschool children but did not significantly impact Kindergarten through Grade 2 students. The overall percentage of primary grade students in

participating schools meeting expectations for literacy growth has not changed since 2014. There were three sub-groups of students within the project (Mathis Grade 1, Mathis Grade 2, and Robstown Grade 1) that did realize gains in scores. Data show that preschool students realized significant gains in important oral language concepts, especially those attending the Mathis ISD.

Increasing student access to high quality literacy resource and materials was a high priority in the *Portals to Literacy II* project. The project was highly successful at getting books and other literacy resources into the hands of children and teachers. The project had several activities to realize this objective: (a) academic online databases, (b) Early Scholars Academy, (c) Toddler Reading Time, and (d) family literacy events.

The *Portals to Literacy II Project* targeted students' motivation to read. This objective pertained specifically to the Grade 4-5 School-Wide Reading Initiatives which aimed to improve reading motivation through (a) interesting reading resources, (b) regularly scheduled reading time, (c) social interaction around reading, and (d) student choice in reading materials. Student motivation was not measured directly; however, teachers' opinions regarding issues of student motivation were collected pre and post-project. Positive responses to survey questions saw only slight increases. The School-Wide Reading Initiative was delayed in implementation until the middle of Year 2 of the project. Greater increases in reading motivation would likely have been realized if the activities had been implemented earlier in the project.

Realizing the importance of educator professional development, the *Portals to Literacy II* Project sought to increase educator knowledge of research-based strategies to support student literacy. It also sought to ensure the knowledge and skills gained through professional development opportunities were applied in the respective educational settings. This is a multifaceted objective that included five different activities and several ways to access whether or not the objective was met. The following activities are associated with this objective: (a) Early Scholars Academy, (b) iPad use and integration, (c) E-readers, (d) School-Wide Reading Initiative, and (e) Toddler Reading Time. Participating library staff's and teachers' knowledge and use of research-based strategies to support student literacy was increased. Substantial increases in the quality and quantity of technology integration with the curriculum was realized. However, due to slow implementation of professional development the application of knowledge was likely not fully realized within the project's time frame.

The *Portals to Literacy II Project* also aspired to increase the collaboration between administrators, teachers, and library staff in integrating library literacy activities with the curriculum. The project included multiple opportunities for the library staff, teaching staff, and campus administrators to collaborate. An analysis of survey data shows that collaboration has not yet become a routine aspect of these school environments. However, during this two-year project, collaboration was increased between administrators, teachers, and library staff in integrating library literacy activities with the curriculum.

Finally, the *Portals to Literacy II Project* sought to increase the quality of and attendance at parent/guardian-child literacy events. Two project activities were planned to address this objective: (a) Toddler Reading Time and (b) Family Literacy Events. Both activities were implemented in Year 2 and successful at increasing family involvement.

Examining implementation processes gives insight into project effectiveness. Teacher trainings were not effectively implemented in Year 1 likely resulting in unrealized gains in Year 2. Also, grant activities were slow to be implemented in Year 2. Some Family Literacy Events took place well after May 2016 student assessments (STARR, TPRI, and Bracken). The School-Wide Reading Initiatives did not get into full swing until a few months before student assessments and may have been short-changed because of test preparation. Responses to teacher pre/post survey questions about school-wide reading initiatives to improve reading motivation saw only slight increases.

There were areas of weaknesses in project implementation that grant administrators effectively addressed in Year 2. For example, when results of the mid-project survey showed that only 30% of teachers were integrating iPads into at least 3 planned classroom lessons (a goal of the project), grant administrators responded with additional teacher training and on-site follow-up. The post-survey showed that 58% were integrating iPads into at least 3 lessons. Survey data were backed up with lesson plans submitted by the teachers.

In conclusion, project objectives 2-8 were achieved or partially achieved. The project increased students' access to quality literacy resources and technology. Collaboration between library staff, teachers, and administrators is stronger. School-home connections were strengthened. Also, during the project period, preschool students' oral language, Grade 4 reading, Grade 4 writing (West Oso, Mathis), Grade 1 reading (Mathis, Robstown) and Grade 2 Reading (Mathis) saw improvement in the percentage of students meeting expectations.

EVALUATION OF GRANT OBJECTIVES

An evaluation was conducted to determine whether or not project objectives were met. A discussion of each project objective follows a similar format: (1) summary of objective and assessment procedures, (2) results, (3) analysis of data, and (4) conclusions.

Evaluation of Objective 1

Objective 1 of the *Portals to Literacy II* project was: Reading scores on the Texas state assessment for participating third, fourth, and fifth grade students, and writing scores for participating fourth grade students, will meet or exceed the comparable state reading scores by 2016. The intent of this objective was to improve the reading skills and academic achievement of Grade 3-5 students through (a) increasing quality family involvement, (b) effective use of e-readers and iPads, (c) academic databases, and (d) implementation of a School-Wide Reading Initiatives. To determine if the project resulted in improved reading skills and academic achievement for Grade 3-5 students, the Texas 2014 STAAR pass rates are compared to 2016 STAAR pass rates. Passing rates are also compared to comparable state reading passing rates.

Results

Table 1 and Table 2 present the results of the 2014 and 2016 STAAR tests for all schools participating in the *Portals to Literacy* II Project and state-wide pass rates. The tables show the change in pass rate for participating schools from 2014 to 2016. They also display how these selected schools compared to districts state-wide. The last column reveals (yes or no) whether or not each school's pass rate was at or above the State comparable pass rate.

Table 1. Grade 4 Writing STAAR Passing Rates

District	2014 # tested	2014 # passed	2014 Project Writing Passing Rate	2014 Texas Pass Rate	2016 # tested	2016 # passed	2016 Project Writing Passing Rate	2016 Texas Pass Rate	Chg. 2014/ 2016
Mathis	152	75	49%	73%	116	69	59%	69%	+10
West Oso	142	82	58%	73%	150	95	63%	69%	+5
Robstown	184	120	65%	73%	208	104	50%	69%	-15
ALL	478	277	**58%**	**73%**	474	268	**57%**	**69%**	**-1**

Table 2. Grade 3-5 Reading STAAR Passing Rates

District	Gr.	2014 # test	2014 # pass	2014 STAAR Read Passing Rate	2014 TX State Pass Rate	2016 # test	2016 # pass	2016 STAAR Read Pass Rate	2016 TX State Pass Rate	Chg. 2014/ 2016
Mathis ISD	3	136	80	59%	76%	148	65	44%	74%	-15%
	4	152	61	40%	74%	116	67	58%	77%	+18%
	5	102	58	57%	76%	134	70	52%	75%	-5%
West Oso ISD	3	145	83	57%	76%	142	80	56%	74%	-1%
	4	143	86	60%	74%	150	115	**77%**	**77%**	+17%
	5	128	79	62%	76%	108	68	63%	75%	+1%
Robstown ISD	3	216	136	63%	76%	228	162	71%	74%	+8%
	4	186	110	59%	74%	206	134	65%	77%	+6%
	5	206	140	68%	76%	187	109	58%	75%	-10%
ALL	3	497	299	60%	76%	518	307	59%	74%	-1%
ALL	4	481	257	53%	74%	472	316	69%	77%	+14%
ALL	5	436	277	64%	76%	429	247	58%	75%	-6%
ALL	3-5	1414	833	**59%**		1419	870	**61%**		**+2%**

Analysis of Data

Results from the STAAR test show that the passing rate for project participants improved slightly (+2%) in reading but project school districts did not meet or exceed the state pass rate in reading or writing. Project-wide the Grade 3 reading pass rates for 2016 was 59%, a 1% decrease since 2014. Project-wide the Grade 5 reading pass rate for 2016 was 58%, a 6% decrease since 2014. Also, project-wide Grade 4 writing pass rate for 2016 was 57%, a 1% decrease since 2014.

Some increases in passing rates of individual school district and grade levels were realized. Most notably, the Mathis writing test pass rate increased 10%. Project-wide the passing rate of the 4th grade reading test increased 14%, but remains 12% below state-wide passing rate.

Conclusions: Objective 1

Grant activities failed to achieve projected increases in pass rates on the STAAR test. Overall the pass rate increased 2%. However, these South Texas schools with predominately minority students from low-income families continue to perform below the average of all Texas schools. **Objective 1 of this project was not achieved.**

Evaluation of Objective 2

Objective 2 of the *Portals to Literacy II* project was: Grains will be observed in participating PK-Grade 2 students' early reading assessment results. Gains will be observed in participating 4-year-old children's oral language skills. The intent of this objective was to improve early literacy skills and academic achievement of Grade EE-2 students through (a) participation in the Early Scholars Academy and (b) use of e-readers. To determine if the project resulted in improved early literacy skills for EE-2 children, the Texas Primary Reading Inventory (TPRI) assessment results for 2014 end-of year (EOY) were compared to 2016 EOY results. The TPRI consists of both a screening and inventory section. The screening section quickly helps teachers to confidently identify students who may be at risk for reading difficulty. The inventory section of the assessment is a diagnostic tool which provides teachers with specific information about students' strengths and weakness in the following areas: (1) book and print awareness (2) phonemic awareness, (3) graphophonemic knowledge and word reading, (4) reading accuracy, (5) reading fluency, (6) listening comprehension, and (7) reading comprehension. The TPRI helps Texas teachers provide targeted literacy instruction. Additionally, the Bracken School Readiness Assessment (BSRA-3) was used to assess the oral language skills of PK4 students. The BSRA-3 is a school readiness screener. This assessment instrument includes five subtests to assess basic concepts related to school readiness: 1) colors, 2) letters, 3) numbers/counting, 4) size/comparison, and 5) shapes. In Year 1, teachers received training on how to administer the assessment and grant administrators tested 10 students as part of the training. The Bracken School Readiness Assessment was implemented in Year 2 of the project to access strengths, needs, and monitor yearly progress.

TPRI Results

Table 3 displays the comparison between EOY 2014 results and EOY 2016 results in the percentage of Grade K-2 students who "met or exceeded" grade level expectations. Those students that are not meeting grade level expectations are considered "at risk".

Table 3. Grade K-2 TPRI/IStation Results

District	Gr.	EOY 2014 # tested	EOY 2014 # ≥ criteria	EOY 2014 % ≥ criteria	EOY 2016 #tested	EOY 2016 # ≥ criteria	EOY 2016 % ≥ criteria	Change Pre/Post 2014-2016
Mathis	K	121	109	90%	111	86	78%	**-12%**
	1	148	92	62%	111	92	83%	**+21%**
	2	151	114	75%	128	108	84%	**+9%**
	K-2	420	315	75	350	286	82	**+7%**
West Oso	K	129	96	75%	149	100	67%	**-8%**
	1	136	91	67%	147	83	56%	**-11%**
	2	144	105	73%	148	104	70%	**- 3%**
	K-2	409	292	71%	444	287	65%	**-6%**
Robstown	K	206	161	78%	202	152	75%	**-3%**
	1	275	188	68%	207	149	72%	**+4%**
	2	230	181	79%	204	150	74%	**-5%**
	K-2	711	530	75%	613	451	74%	**-1%**
Totals	**K-2**	**1540**	**1137**	**74%**	**1407**	**1024**	**73%**	**-1%**

Bracken Results

The target goal for the Bracken assessment is that at least 70% will receive a score indicating they are on target for beginning a successful kindergarten experience. During Year 1 of the project, 10 students were tested. All ten students satisfactorily performed on this assessment; however, this sample was not representative of the project population. Table 4 displays the results of the November, 2015 (Year 2) and May, 2016 (Year 2) administrations of the Bracken School Readiness Assessment. November, 2015 pass rates are compared to the pass rates obtained from the May, 2016 administration.

Table 4. Grade PK Bracken Results

District	Gr.	Fall 2015 # tested	Fall 2015 # ≥ criteria	Fall 2015 % ≥ criteria	5/16 #tested	5/16 # ≥ criteria	5/16 % ≥ criteria	Change
Mathis	PK	78	50	64%	79	78	99%	+35%
West Oso	PK	61	45	74%	62	51	82%	+8%
Robstown **(sample)**	PK	40	31	78%	40	34	85%	+7%
Totals	PK	179	126	70%	181	163	90%	+20%

Analysis of Data

There were some gains in TPRI pass rates from 2014 to 2016 (Mathis Grade 1, Mathis Grade 2, and Robstown Grade 1). However, the project overall did not see an increase in the pass rate on the TPRI from 2014 to 2016.

Results from the pre/post 2015-2016 school year Bracken assessment show a 20% project gain in the number of PK students who scored on target for their age in oral vocabulary concepts related to colors, letters, numbers/counting, size/comparison, and shapes.

Conclusions: Objective 2

Data reveal that the overall percentage of K-2 students in participating schools meeting expectations for literacy growth has not changed since 2014. Even though three individual school grade levels did see some improvement, it is unlikely grant project activities had a significant impact on preschool (K-2) student early literacy growth. Data from the Bracken show that PK students realized significant gains in important oral language concepts, especially in Mathis ISD. **Therefore, based on data collected and analyzed, Objective 2 was partially realized.**

Evaluation of Objective 3

Objective 3 of the *Portals to Literacy II* project was: Student access to high quality literacy resources and materials will be increased. The project had several activities to realize this objective: (a) academic online databases, (b) Early Scholars Academy, (c) Toddler Reading Time, and (d) family literacy events. It was decided by grant managers that books and other resources would be purchased in Year 1 for use in Year 2 of the project. In order to determine if the project increased students' access to high quality literacy resources and material purchase and distribution data was collected and analyzed.

Results

Several activities within the Portals to Literacy II Project included the distribution of books to students. Quality literacy resources were purchased and made available to participating schools though a wide-range of high-quality literacy-promoting activities. Based upon information received from participating schools, books were distributed to children.

Conclusions: Objective 3

The Portals to Literacy II Project increased student's access to high quality literacy resources and materials. **Objective 3 was met.**

Evaluation of Objective 4

Objective 4 of the *Portals to Literacy II Project* was: Students' motivation to read will be increased in Grades 4 and Grade 5. This objective pertains specifically to the School-Wide Reading Initiative which aimed to target reading motivation with such activities as interesting reading resources, regularly scheduled reading time, social interaction around reading, and student choice in reading materials. Questions 15, 16, 17, 18, 19 and 20 on the *Portals to Literacy II Survey* were used to ascertain students' motivation to read and determine if motivation to read increased during the project period.

Results

The *Portals to Literacy II Survey* was issued in February 2015 to serve as a pre-assessment for the grant project. Thirty-five (35) grant participants completed questions 15-20. Fifty-seven (57) participants responded to May 2016 summative survey. Table 4 presents the results of the pre- and post-project survey for questions 15-20. The last column on the table shows the amount of change realized from the beginning to the end of the project period.

Table 6 Portals to Literacy II Survey (Questions 15-20)

Questions	Pre Project Survey	Target	Post Project Survey	Target	Target change
15. At this school, Grade 4-6 students are motivated to read.					
Strongly disagree	5.71%		0%		
Disagree	11.43%		5.26%		
Somewhat agree	11.43%		22.81%		
Agree	22.86%		40.35%		
Strongly agree	48.57%	71.43%	31.58%	71.93%	+.5%
16. This school promotes Grade 4-6 students' interest and motivation to read by providing a regularly scheduled reading time.					
Strongly disagree	8.57%		0%		
Disagree	8.57%		10.53%		
Somewhat agree	14.25%		14.04%		
Agree	28.57%		31.58%		
Strongly agree	40.00%	68.57%	43.86%	75.44%	+6.87%
17. This school promotes Grade 4-6 students' interests and motivation to read by providing access to a variety of motivational and self-selected reading materials.					

Strongly disagree	5.71%		0%		
Disagree	5.71%		3.57%		
Somewhat agree	8.57%		12.50%		
Agree	37.14%		46.43%		
Strongly agree	42.86%	80%	37.50%	83.96%	+3.93%
18. This school promotes Grade 4-6 students' interest and motivation to read by providing opportunities for students to discuss their reading choices with peers and adults.					
Strongly disagree	5.71%		0%		
Disagree	20.00%		5.26%		
Somewhat agree	8.57%		21.05%		
Agree	42.86%		47.37%		
Strongly agree	22.86%	65.72 %	26.32%	73.69%	+7.97%
19. At this school, reading motivation and interest is viewed as a school-wide responsibility.					
Strongly disagree	2.78%		0%		
Disagree	0.00%		3.45%		
Somewhat agree	16.67%		15.52%		
Agree	27.76%		46.55%		
Strongly agree	52.78%	80.54%	34.48%	81.03%	+.49%
20. This school has a literacy-rich culture. Grade 4-6 students have access to a variety of motivating reading material. Students receive reading instruction that creates an interest in more complex reading material.					
Strongly disagree	2.86%		0%		
Disagree	8.57%		1.72%		
Somewhat agree	11.43%		18.97%		
Agree	42.86%		46.55%		
Strongly agree	34.29%	77.15%	32.76%	79.31%	+2.16%

Analysis of Data

What is desired is that the percentage of respondents who agree with statements regarding student motivation is greater at the end of the project when compared to the beginning of the project. Specifically, a higher percentage of participants who "agree" or "strongly agree" with each statement on the post-assessment indicates reading motivation was impacted by grant activities. Increases in the percentage of participants who "agreed" or "strongly agreed" with statements pertaining to reading motivation at their schools ranged from .49% to 7.97%. An overall 3.65% increase was seen in those responding "agree" or "strongly agree" to the six questions on the survey pertaining to reading interest and motivation.

Conclusions: Objective 4

Promoting reading motivation among adolescent students is no easy task. The School-Wide Reading Initiative was delayed in implementation. The training for the School-Wide Reading Initiatives was postponed until Year 2. The actual implementation of initiatives for this objective was delayed until mid-year of project Year 2. Greater increases in perceived student reading motivation would likely have been realized if the activities had been implemented earlier in the two-year project. Two important reading motivation strategies, discussing books and regularly scheduled reading time, did realize modest increases (7.97% and 6.87% respectively). **Objective 4 was partially met.**

Evaluation of Objective 5

Objective 5 of the *Portals to Literacy II* project was: Participating library staff members' and teachers' knowledge and use of research-based strategies to support student literacy and the quality and quantity of technology integration with the curriculum will be increased. This is a multifaceted objective that includes five different activities and several ways to access whether or not the objective was met. The following activities are associated with this objective: (a) Early Scholars Academy, (b) iPad use and integration, (c) E-readers, (d) School-Wide Reading Initiatives, and (e) Toddler Reading Time. In order to determine if the project increased library staff members' and teachers' knowledge of research-based strategies to support student literacy, including the use of technology to support literacy, several assessments were utilized. First, technology additions to each school reflect the degree of implementation. Next, questions 3, 4, and 6-11 on the *Portals to Literacy II Survey* were linked to this objective. Also, progress narratives written and submitted by district educators provided insight. Finally, pre and post-knowledge tests issued during training sessions helped to determine whether an increase in knowledge of research-based literacy strategies occurred.

Results: Knowledge of Research-Based Strategies

Early Scholars Academy Pre/Post Literacy Knowledge Test Results

Approximately 30 teachers and library staff attended training for the Early Scholar's Academy. Participants completed a knowledge test before and after training. The knowledge test contained 6 multiple-choice questions. The average raw score on the pre-test was 3.7 (62%) and the average raw post-test was 3.3 (55%). Therefore, this test *did not demonstrate knowledge was gained* as a result of the training.

IPad Training Pre/Post Literacy Knowledge Test

Eleven teachers attended iPad training on February 1, 2016 during Year 2 of the project. The knowledge test contained 5 multiple-choice questions. The average raw score on the pre-test was 2.4 (48%) and the average raw post-test was 3.5 (70%). Therefore, this test did demonstrate *knowledge was gained* as a result of the training.

E-Reading Training Pre/Post Literacy Knowledge Test

Eleven teachers attended e-Reader training on February 1, 2016 during Year 2 of the project. The knowledge test contained 7 multiple-choice questions. The average raw score on the

pre-test was 4.2 (60%) and the average raw post-test was 5.9 (85%). Therefore, this test did demonstrate *knowledge was gained* as a result of the training.

Toddler Reading Time Training Pre/Post Literacy Knowledge Test

Four (4) participants took part in the Toddler Reading Time training. They were given a pre/post knowledge test to determine knowledge gained from the training. The average score on the pre-test was 85% and the average post-test was 75%. Two participants scored the same on the pre and post-tests. Two participants scored lower on the post-test as compared to pre-test. Therefore, the data *do not reveal knowledge was gained* as a result of the training.

School-Wide Reading Training Pre/Post Literacy Knowledge Test

This training was postponed until Year 2 of the project. In November of Year 2, fifteen participants received training on concepts and research related to school-wide reading initiatives that motivate Grade 4-5 students to want to read. There were six questions on the knowledge test. The average raw score on the pre-test was 4.07 (68%) and the average raw score on the post-test was 4.13 (69%). demonstrating a *slight knowledge gain* as a result of the training.

Family Literacy Events Training Pre/Post Literacy Knowledge Test

This training was postponed until Year 2 of the project. In November of Year 2, fifteen participants received training on concepts related to family literacy and effective school-sponsored literacy events. There were six questions on the knowledge test. The average raw score on the pre-test was 4.1 (68%) and the average raw score on the post-test was 5.1 (85%), demonstrating substantial *knowledge was gained* as a result of the training.

Analysis of Data: Knowledge of Research-Based Strategies

Based on analysis of these results, knowledge of research-based strategies for promoting literacy was gained from participation in teacher training activities. Participants gained valuable knowledge of how to use iPads and e-readers in their literacy instruction. They also gained knowledge of the importance of family involvement in literacy attainment and how to promote it.

Data revealed weaknesses in training. There was a lack of understanding by some participants of:

- the benefits of reading to toddlers;
- effective methods for reading to toddlers;
- the role of student choice in the promotion of reading motivation and engagement;

- studies showing external rewards not to be the most effective method for long-lasting motivation to read for many adolescent students;
- the importance of library staff and teacher collaboration and liberal student library access policies; and
- methods for creating quality lessons that incorporate iPads.

Results: Technology Integration and Use of Research-Based Strategies

Technology Additions

Participating schools received technology in the form of e-readers, tablets (iPads), computers, and accessories for these devices. Table 7 displays the technology provided by this project.

Table 7 Technology Additions

	Kindle HD6	iPad2	e-books	Online Databases
West Oso			X	1 yr. subscription
Robstown			X	1 yr. subscription
Mathis			X	1 yr. subscription
Totals	102	430		1 yr. subscription

Analysis of Data

Each district received a set of Kindle HD 6's to support early reading strategies and build reading opportunities for students. A total of 102 e-readers were provided with screen protectors. Each school was provided interactive e-Books with supportive tools. Each campus was provided with 50 iPad 2 tablet computers with headphones and cases. A total of 430 iPads were given out to enrich the experiences young learners have both in the library and classroom. Each program was supported with iTune applications to enrich what can be offered in the campus library. Additionally, each school was provided a year subscription to an on-line database to support library deliverance for literacy experiences.

Portals to Literacy II Survey

To evaluate the success at realizing Objective 5, questions 3, 4, and 6-11 on the *Portals to Literacy II Survey* were used to compare participants' pre-project and post-project perceptions of the quality and quantity of technology integration with the literacy curriculum. Results of pre-project survey (n= 110) and post-project survey (n = 138) are presented in Table 8.

Table 8. Portals to Literacy II Survey (Questions 3, 4, 6-11)

Questions	Pre-Project Survey	Target	Post-Project Survey	Target	Target Change
3. To what degree are tablet computers (iPads) being integrated into planned classroom lessons each school year?					
0 planned lessons	60.00%		13.04%		
1 planned lesson	10.91%		13.77%		
2 planned lessons	5.45%		15.22%		
3 planned lessons	.91%		10.14%		
more than 3 planned lessons	22.73%	23.64%	47.83%	57.97%	+34.33%
4. How often are e-readers (Kindle, Nook, etc.) being used in reading instruction for struggling readers?					
Routinely (at least weekly)	2.73%	10.00%	31.16%	46.38%	+36.38%
Often (several times per month)	7.27%		15.22%		
Occasionally (monthly)	3.64%		15.22%		
Seldom (less than monthly)	16.36%		13.77%		
Never	70.00%		24.64%		
6. To what degree is literacy promoted in the school library?					
Never	2.73%		1.45%		
Little	11.82%		3.62%		
Somewhat	13.64%		13.04%		
Much	21.82%		26.81%		
A great deal	50.00%	71.82%	55.07%	81.88%	+10.06%
7. Tablet computers (iPads, etc.) are effectively integrated into planned lessons.					
Strongly disagree	33.64%		6.52%		
Disagree	23.64%		7.97%		
Somewhat agree	22.73%		27.54%		
Agree	11.82%		39.13%		
Strongly agree	8.18%	20.00%	18.84%	57.97%	+37.97%
8. E-book readers (Kindle, etc.) are effectively used to provide reading intervention for struggling readers.					
Strongly disagree	48.18%		8.70%		
Disagree	24.55%		20.29%		
Somewhat agree	17.27%		29.71%		
Agree	8.18%		29.71%		
Strongly agree	1.82%	10.00%	11.59%	41.30%	+31.30%
9. Technology (e-book readers/tablet computers/online academic databases) is effectively used in collaborative student learning activities.					
Strongly disagree	20.00%		3.62%		

Disagree	13.64%		6.52%		
Somewhat agree	24.55%		24.64%		
Agree	32.73%		42.03%		
Strongly agree	9.09%	41.82%	23.19%	65.22%	+23.40%
10. Academic online databases (Encyclopedia Britannica, World Book, EBSCO or Gale) are effectively used with desktop computers and portable devices to promote literacy and student learning.					
Strongly disagree	18.18%		7.25%		
Disagree	23.64%		13.77%		
Somewhat agree	25.45%		32.61%		
Agree	27.27%		32.61%		
Strongly agree	5.45%	32.72%	13.77%	46.38%	+13.66%
11. Library staff effectively uses research-based strategies to support student literacy.					
Strongly disagree	8.18%		2.90%		
Disagree	13.64%		8.70%		
Somewhat agree	27.27%		26.09%		
Agree	31.82%		42.75%		
Strongly agree	19.09%	50.91%	19.57%	62.32%	+11.41%

Artifacts

Written reports and lesson plans constructed by district personnel were also used to assess quality and quantity of technology integration with the curriculum.

Analysis of Data

An analysis of artifacts showed that teachers were effectively integrating iPads into lessons and using e-Readers to support struggling readers. The lesson plans showed that teachers were implementing innovative ideas and effective practices in their integration of iPad technology.

Conclusions Regarding Objective 5:

Participating library staff members' and teachers' knowledge and use of research-based strategies to support student literacy was increased. Substantial increases in the quality and quantity of technology integration with the curriculum was realized. **Objective 5 was met.**

Evaluation of Objective 6

Objective 6 of the *Portals to Literacy II* project was: Collaboration will be increased between administrators, teachers, and library staff in integrating library literacy activities with the curriculum. The project included multiple opportunities for the library and teaching staff and campus administrators to collaborate. A survey was used to assess collaboration.

Results

Portals to Literacy II Survey

Questions 5, 12, 13, and 14 on the Portals to Literacy II Survey assessed collaboration. Table 9 displays the results from the pre-project (n=111) and post-project (n = 138) administration of the survey.

Table 9. Portals to Literacy II Survey (Questions 5, 12, 13, 14)

Questions	Pre Project Survey	Target	Post Project Survey	Target	Target Change
5. How often, approximately, do teachers and library staff get together for the purpose of planning the integration of technology and library literacy activities with the curriculum?					
Routinely (at least weekly)	11.82%	27.28%	6.52%	44.20%	+16.92%
Often (several times per month)	3.64%		13.77%		
Occasionally (monthly)	11.82%		23.91%		
Seldom (less than monthly)	34.55%		33.33%		
Never	38.18%		22.46%		
12. There is a strong collaborative relationship between teachers, library staff, and school administrators in regards to the integration of library literacy activities and technology into the curriculum.					
Strongly disagree	7.27%		3.62%		
Disagree	20.00%		10.14%		
Somewhat agree	28.18%		32.61%		
Agree	30.00%		42.03%		
Strongly agree	14.55%	44.55%	11.59%	53.62%	+9.07%
13. School administrators provide support for collaboration among teachers and library staff to improve integration of library activities and technology with the curriculum.					
Strongly disagree	9.09%		5.80%		
Disagree	17.27%		9.42%		

Somewhat agree	33.64%		31.16%		
Agree	27.27%		41.30%		
Strongly agree	12.73%	40.00%	12.32%	53.62%	+13.62%
14. Which of the following BEST describes the current level of collaboration between administrators, teachers, and library staff in integrating library literacy activities and technology with the curriculum?					
Level 4 Full Collaboration	10.00%	28.18%	7.97%	36.96%	
Level 3 Partial Collaboration	18.18%		28.99%		+8.78%
Level 2 Some Collaboration	39.09%		41.30%		
Level 1 No/Very Little Collaboration	32.73%		21.74%		

Analysis of Data

Survey responses showed increases in participants' perceptions of collaboration at their schools. Seventy-eight percent of respondents reported that some collaboration was occurring compared to 62% at the beginning of the project. There was 17% increase in those that reported collaborative meetings taking place 3-4 per month. There was a 9% increase in those that agreed that their school had a strong collaborative relationship between teachers, library staff, and school administrators in regards to the integration of library literacy activities and technology into the curriculum. Also, the survey showed a 14% increase in those that felt that school administrators provide support for such collaboration.

Data also reveal less than ideal outcomes. More than 50% of participants responded that teachers and library staff do not regularly get together for the purpose of planning the integration of technology and library literacy activities with the curriculum. About 14% of participants have little confidence that there is a strong collaborative relationship between teachers, library staff, and school administrators in regards to the integration of library literacy activities and technology into the curriculum. About 63% of participants rate the level of collaboration at their campuses between administrators, teachers, and literacy staff less than partial. Although collaboration has increased, the level of collaboration remains somewhat weak with 8% of participants rating the collaboration as Level 4: Full Collaboration, 29% rating the collaboration as Level 3 Partial Collaboration, 41% rating the collaboration as Level 2: Some Collaboration, and 22% as Level 1: No/Very Little Collaboration.

Conclusions Regarding Objective 6

Although not ideal or routine, collaboration was increased between administrators, teachers, and library staff in integrating library literacy activities with the curriculum. Therefore, **Objective 6 was met**.

Evaluation of Objective 7

Objective 7 of the *Portals to Literacy II* project was: The quality of and attendance at parent/guardian-child literacy events will be increased. Two project activities were planned to address this objective: (a) Toddler Reading Time and (b) Family Literacy Events. Both activities were implemented in Year 2. There was professional training for Toddler Reading Time and Family Literacy Events (see objective 5)

Results: Toddler Reading Time

To assess quantity and quality of Toddler Reading Time events the following assessment measures were used: (a) attendance records and (b) parent surveys. Table 9 displays a summary of attendance at Toddler Reading Time sessions. Figure 1 and Figure 2 present results of the Toddler Reading Time Survey.

Table 10: Attendance Record for Toddler Reading Time Events

| Year	Date	District	Participants	Session
2	9/17/15	Robstown	11	Brown Bear, Brown Bear
2	9/23/15	West Oso	3	Brown Bear, Brown Bear
2	10/9/15	Mathis	6	Brown Bear, Brown Bear
2	10/10/15	West Oso	5	Itsy Bitsy Spider
2	10/15/15	Robstown	7	Green Sheep
2	11/12/15	Robstown	5	The Mitton
2	12/2/15	West Oso	7	The Mitton
2	2/11/16	Robstown	4	Itsy Bitsy Spider
2	2/17/16	West Oso	6	Green Sheep
2	3/31/16	Robstown	5	Hungry Caterpillar
2	5/13/16	Mathis	9	Hungry Caterpillar
2	5/16/16	Mathis	7	The Mitten
2	5/23/16	Mathis	4	Green Sheep
2	5/24/16	Mathis	5	Itsy Bitsy Spider
2	5/26/16	West Oso	3	Hungry Caterpillar

At the end of each Toddler Reading Time session, participants were asked to complete a survey. There were eighty-seven (87) parents/caregiver responses to this survey. First, parents were asked: How useful was today's session at increasing your awareness of early learning? Parents rated the usefulness of the attended session as 4 = very useful, 3 = useful, 2 = somewhat useful, or 1 = not useful at increasing their awareness of early literacy. The average ratings for each district and the overall project for Question 1 are presented in Figure 1. The average ratings for each school indicated that participants felt the sessions were useful. The average rating across the project was 3.72 on a 4 point scale.

Figure 1. Parent Survey Toddler Reading Time Question 1
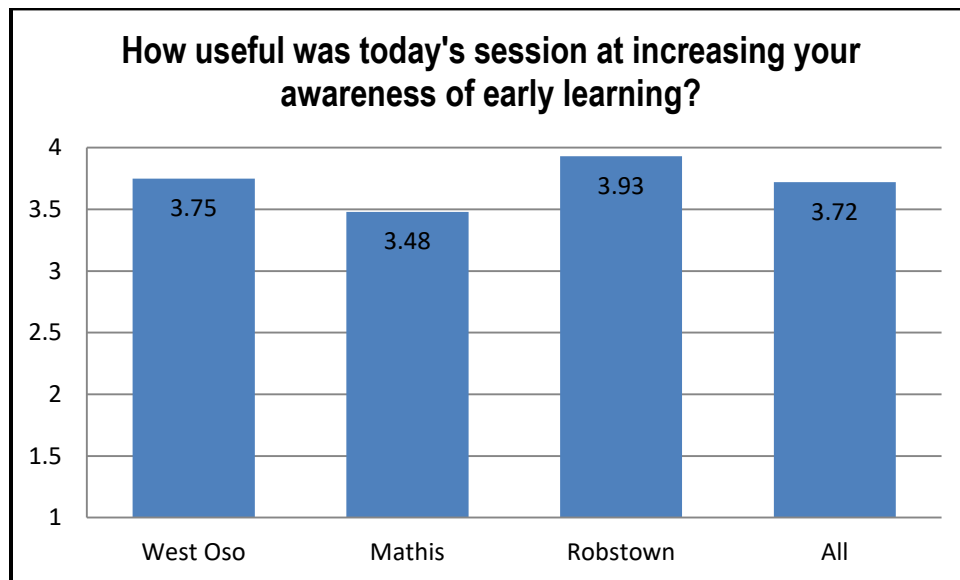
Next, parents were asked: How useful was today's session at increasing your knowledge of how to promote your child's literacy? Eighty-seven parents rated the usefulness of the attended sessions as 4= very useful, 3 = useful, 2 = somewhat useful, or 1 = not useful at increasing their knowledge of how to promote their child's literacy. The average ratings for Question 2 are presented in Figure 2 and indicate that participants felt the sessions were useful. The average ratings for each school district were at least 3 (useful). The average rating across the project was 3.72 using a 4-point scale.

Figure 2. Parent Survey Toddler Reading Time Question 2

How useful was today's session at increasing your knowledge of how to promote your child's litearcy?

West Oso: 3.79
Mathis: 3.54
Robstown: 3.84
All: 3.72
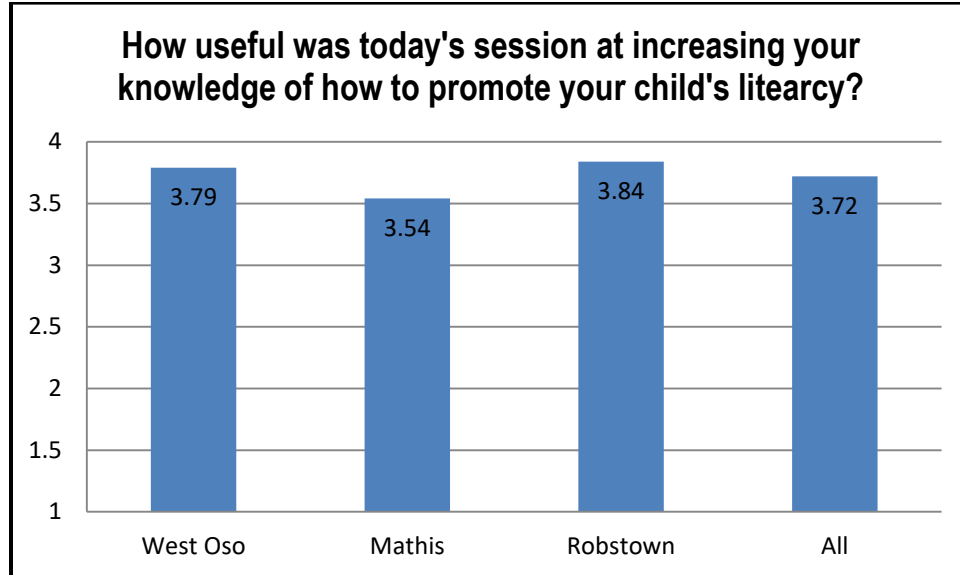
The next question on the survey asked parents/caregivers to answer "Yes" or "No" to the following question: Do you plan to use what you've learned today in literacy activities at home? All parent/caregiver responses to this survey question were "Yes".

Lastly, parents were asked to respond to the following statement after having attended at least one session prior to the one they were attending. Parents were asked to rate their agreement as 4= strongly agree, 3 = agree, 2 = disagree, and 1 = strongly disagree to the following statement: The Toddler Reading Time program has positively influenced the literacy activities in our home. Results showed that parents strongly agreed (3.98) with this statement.

Results: Family Literacy Events

To assess quantity and quality of Family Literacy Events the following assessment measures were used: (a) attendance records and (b) parent surveys. Attendance records show that approximately 800 parents/adult caregivers attended Family Literacy Events from September 2015 through September 2016 at the participating schools. Parents and adult family members who attended Family Literacy Events were asked to complete a survey. They were asked to rate their agreement as 5= strongly agree, 4 = agree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 2= disagree, and 1 = strongly disagree with the following three statements:

1. I am satisfied with the information I receive in today's session.

2. The session was organized, planned, and presented well.

3. The ideas presented in today's session were practical and useful to me, as a parent, now or in the future.

Table 9 displays the overall project results for survey questions 1-3. Tables 10-12 show the results for each survey questions by event. These three tables provide information that could identify the characteristics (e.g., size, campus-based/district based) of the most successful literacy events.

Table 11. Parent Survey: Family Literacy Events

Survey Question	# Surveys	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral or Disagree
Q1: I am satisfied with the information I received in tonight's session.	759	89%	10%	1%
Q2: The session was organized, planned, and presented well.	759	86%	12%	2%
Q3: The ideas presented in tonight's session were practical and useful to me, as a parent, now and/or in the future.	759	88%	10%	2%

Table 12. FLE Results by Event and Survey Question 1

Event	Date	# of Surveys	# Strongly Agree	# Agree	# Neutral or Disagree
Mathis (3-5)	9/22/15	43	41	2	
West Oso (K)	10/14/15	7	7		
Mathis (PK-2)	10/15/15	29	26	3	
Robstown (district-wide)	10/26/15	19	16	3	
Robstown (4-5)	3/1/16	109	88	18	3
Robstown (district-based, PK-3)	4/12/16	167	144	21	2
West Oso (3-5)	4/15/16	10	8	2	
West Oso (PK-2)	5/19/16	72	65	6	1
Mathis (3-5)	5/23/16	74	63	7	4
Mathis (PK-2)	6/1/16	34	31	3	
Mathis (3-5)	9/26/16	58	55	3	
Robstown (district-wide)	9/27/16	137	128	8	

Table 13. FLE Results by Event and Survey Question 2

Event	Date	# of Surveys	# Strongly Agree	# Agree	# Neutral or Disagree
Mathis (3-5)	9/22/15	43	40	3	
West Oso (K)	10/14/15	7	7		
Mathis (PK-2)	10/15/15	29	26	3	
Robstown (all schools)	10/26/15	19	17	2	
Robstown (4-5)	3/1/16	109	91	14	4
Robstown (PK-3)	4/12/16	167	125	35	7
West Oso (3-5)	4/15/16	10	9	1	
West Oso (PK-2)	5/19/16	72	67	4	1
Mathis (3-5)	5/23/16	74	63	8	3
Mathis (PK-2)	6/1/16	34	31	3	
Mathis (3-5)	9/26/16	58	52	6	
Robstown (district-wide)	9/27/16	137	127	9	

Table 14. FLE Results by Event and Survey Question 3

Event	Date	# of Surveys	# Strongly Agree	# Agree	# Neutral or Disagree
Mathis (3-5)	9/22/15	43	42	1	
West Oso (K)	10/14/15	7	7		
Mathis (PK-2)	10/15/15	29	26	3	
Robstown (all schools)	10/26/15	19	17	2	
Robstown (4-5)	3/1/16	109	86	18	5
Robstown (PK-3)	4/12/16	167	141	24	2
West Oso (3-5)	4/15/16	10	8	2	
West Oso (PK-2)	5/19/16	72	67	4	1
Mathis (3-5)	5/23/16	74	60	11	3
Mathis (PK-2)	6/1/16	34	31	3	
Mathis (3-5)	9/26/16	58	52	6	
Robstown (district-wide)	9/27/16	137	130	6	

Parents were also asked to respond to these open-ended questions:

      1. What did you like best about the Family Literacy Event?

      2. What suggestions do you have for future Family Literacy Events?

      3. How to you think these activities will promote literacy or reading at home?

      4. Other comments.

Parents' comments were overwhelming positive. Just a few comments include:

- *These activities will really help the children to identify the importance of reading.*
- *The faculty was kind and helpful.*
- *The teachers seemed to really care.*
- *All the students and teachers did a great job. Loved the creativity!*
- *It's a great way to bring families together.*
- *I really liked the free books.*

Suggestions for improvement on the survey included: better planning, more food, more space (district-wide event), better advertisement of events, better organization of events, and the need for more scheduled events.

Analysis of Data

      Family literacy events were well received by those attending. Results indicate that the school districts who implemented the Toddler Reading Time program were successful at increasing parents' knowledge and skill with promoting literacy. Parents reported that sessions were applicable to their efforts to promote their toddlers' literacy. Likewise, survey respondents from the Family Literacy Events were overwhelming positive.

Conclusions Regarding Objective 7

      The quality of and attendance at parent/guardian-child literacy events was increased through grant activities. **Objective 7 was met.**

Objective 8

Objective 8 of the *Portals to Literacy II* project was: Best practices for early literacy, emphasizing technology integration and hands-on learning, will be developed on a rigorous, comprehensive 4-year evaluation in diverse educational settings.

IDENTIFICATION OF BEST PRACTICES: PORTALS TO LITERACY I & II

The *Portals to Literacy I Project* (2012-2014) and *Portals to Literacy II Project* (2014-2016) were implemented in different schools in South Texas. Overall the projects were successful at meeting most of their objectives. However, they were not able to realize the impact on state standardized literacy test scores and early literacy assessments as they projected.

Table 15. Project I and II Comparison

Project	Obj1	Obj2	Obj3	Obj4	Obj5	Obj6	Obj7
Portals to Literacy I Project (2012-2014)	NO	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Portals to Literacy II Project (2014- 2016)	NO	PARTIALLY	YES	PARTIALLY	YES	YES	YES

Data form these projects tend to support the following conclusions:

1. <u>Teacher training is critically important to the implementation of best practices</u>. Teacher trainings were slow to be implemented and less effectively implemented in the *Portals to Literacy II Project*. This clearly delayed successful implementation of grant activities. It also demonstrated the importance of well-designed professional education to the success of literacy initiatives.

2. <u>Family Literacy Night activities can be implemented in such a way as to be well received and attended by adult caregivers</u>. Family Literacy Night events were very well received. When some events saw low attendance survey responses seemed to indicate that there was little advance notice of the event and little planning. Also, the needs of parents in

regards to scheduling may not have been given sufficient importance. However, parents overwhelming appreciated efforts made by schools to hold such events.

3. <u>School-Wide Literacy Initiatives have the potential to be effective</u>. The *Portals to Literacy Project I* demonstrated that if there is full buy-in from educators and activities are implemented throughout the school year students' motivation to read is likely increased. Unlike the *Portals to Literacy I Project*, which saw great gains in teachers' perceptions of student motivation, positive responses to survey questions with the *Portals to Literacy II Project* saw only slight increases. This is likely due to delayed professional development, lack of buy-in from educators, and delayed implementation.

4. <u>Additional initiatives may be needed to close the literacy achievement gap</u> of minority low socioeconomic preschool and elementary children attending South Texas schools. Although the true impact of project activities may not be realized until years after implementation, it does not appear that the activities implemented in these projects are sufficient alone to significantly improve literacy.