

Background. The Texas Literacy Initiative (TLI) was first implemented in Austin Independent School District (AISD) during the 2012–2013 school, within the Travis and Lanier vertical teams. 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 Spring 2013, staff in AISD’s Department of Research and Evaluation (DRE) worked with TLI grant management staff to create and administer a survey to principals, teachers, and TLI reading specialists/coaches at all TLI campuses. This report summarizes responses from teachers at TLI campuses.

Grade levels taught. An electronic survey was sent to 199 teachers within the Travis and Lanier vertical teams. Of the 185 teachers who responded, the majority (75.0%) worked with students in kindergarten through 5th grade; the next greatest percentage (22.7%) of respondents worked with students from birth to 4-years-old. Less than 10% of respondents worked with 9th-through 12th-grade students.

Teachers’ ratings of reading specialists/coaches. Teachers were asked a number of questions related to the reading specialists/coaches assigned to their campuses. Table 1 shows their responses.

Table 1. Rating of Reading Specialists/Coaches (n = 185)

Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Not sure/NA
I have seen improvement in the students that the Texas Literacy Initiative (TLI) reading specialists/coaches helped.	23.2%	55.1%	7.6%	1.6%	12.4%
The TLI reading specialists/coaches have improved the overall educational environment on my campus.	22.2%	54.6%	6.5%	2.2%	14.6%
The TLI reading specialists/coaches are important to the success of my students.	30.8%	45.9%	7.6%	2.7%	13.0%
There is a mutual respect between the TLI reading specialists/coaches and teachers.	34.1%	50.3%	5.4%	2.2%	8.1%
I collaborate with the TLI reading specialists/coaches to meet the needs of my students.	34.1%	48.1%	7.0%	2.2%	8.6%
The TLI data meetings helped me to drive my instruction to support the needs of my students.	33.0%	52.4%	6.5%	2.2%	5.9%

Source. TLI Spring 2013 Staff Survey

Teachers provided optional comments regarding their reading specialists/coaches assigned to their campus and the data meetings led by the specialists/coaches. The following are comments that primarily highlighted positive aspects of working with a reading specialist or coach.

- “Our coach is very accessible and works with our team weekly to ensure students get what they need to succeed.”
- “The support I got from TLI coaches was indirect. They did not see my students for any direct instruction, but helped analyzing data from CPALLS [CIRCLE-Phonological Awareness, Language, & Literacy System], and even more importantly, provided training on instructional strategies.”
- “[Our campus coach] is an excellent resource for the campus. Her students have shown lots of progress.”
- “At the start of the school year, I had push in groups daily, which benefited my students. I saw great strides being made in the students’ academic achievement. However, during the second semesters the TLI coaches were no longer coming to my classroom on a daily basis. They gave priority to the STAAR testing grades and worked with them. As a result, the students at [my school] did not get the ‘double dip’ that was in their intervention plan.”
- “Phenomenal success with TPRI [The Texas Primary Reading Initiative] scores, and I increased my own understanding of how to teach literacy skills to students.”
- “She is the best!”
- “The coaches were respectful and willing to be flexible to meet the needs of as many students as possible. I felt that on the part of some of the teachers, we could have been a little more flexible and open to what the TLI coaches were trying to do.”
- “It was also extremely helpful to have new eyes to look at data and give encouragement! I liked being able to practically divide my class into groups, and begin to plan what skills were necessary for each group to succeed.”
- “The coaches were helpful; our reading specialist not so much. If questions above [were] only about [the district], coaches answers would have been more agree.”

Teachers also provided feedback about aspects of working with reading specialists and coaches as well as the data meetings led by the specialists/coaches that could be improved. Those comments were as follows:

- “I always analyze my own data to drive instruction, so I did not need a meeting to do this.”
- “I received little to no data about my students until after the test.”
- “In regard to the ‘mutual respect’ question: The reading specialist could improve communication techniques/styles to increase respect. Often it seems as if she is abrasive or inflexible and in a rush when communicating with teachers. It also would help if she seemed a little more like she is part of the ‘team.’”
- “One of the TLI specialists was not very approachable and made me feel uncomfortable.”
- “I feel that my TLI coach received much training, which made her never available to me. On top of that, I never actually saw the results of any of her training.”
- “I did not have much interaction in pre-K with our campus reading specialist.”
- “The data day is a waste. All teachers are constantly assessing their students in a myriad of ways.”
- “Need more support for struggling students.”

- “I am a teacher and I feel the TLI specialist at my school tells me what to do and gives me more work. She does not really help and seems more of an administrator looking down at us. I am not sure what work she does with my students even though she comes in my room to help. Everything revolves around her schedule and making sure she has everything she needs to satisfy the grant. I feel that she rarely asks what we teachers need.”
- “I did not interact with TLI in my grade level this year.”
- “It would be better to pull out rather than ‘push in’ due to noise level and distractions. Having two people try to teach at once was very difficult.”
- “Can meetings be focused on other areas that students are struggling with and not just from data collected from the TPRI?”
- “We need continuous monitoring for implementation in the lower grades. Reading is important, but monitoring writing to support interventions [is] also important. We need to keep records for teacher assessment and interventions in kindergarten and 1st-grade levels.”

Teacher’s use of progress monitoring tools. Teachers were asked to select all progress monitoring tools and/or measures they used during the 2012–2013 school year. Most teachers indicated that they used the TPRI (Texas Primary Reading Inventory) or El Inventario de Lectura en Español de Tejas (Tejas Lee); the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) was the second measure used most often (Table 2).

Table 2. Progress Monitoring Tools Used by Teachers (n = 180)

Progress monitoring tools	Percentage
TPRI or Tejas LEE	82.2
DRA	76.7
DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills)	<10
AIMSweb ¹	17.2
SRI (Scholastic Reading Inventory)	<10
Other (please specify)	22.2

Source. TLI Spring 2013 Staff Survey

Teachers listed the following other progress monitoring tools they used:

- CPALLS
- PAPM
- Texas Treasures Monitoring Tools
- PRE-LAS
- CST
- AISD rubrics
- Tango

¹ AIMSweb is a benchmark and progress monitoring system for grades kindergarten through eighth. For more information, go here: <http://www.pearsonassessments.com/HAIWEB/Cultures/en-us/Productdetail.htm?Pid=aimso1&Mode=summary>

- Pre-k on going assessment, report cards rubrics, teacher observations
- RBM
- Read Naturally
- Brigance, IEP progress monitoring.
- Reading Counts
- McMillian Fluency
- Treasures and Great Leaps Fluency checks
- Teacher observation and teacher made monitoring measure

Data monitoring frequency. Teachers responded to the question “How often do you review progress monitoring data and/or measures?” More than 60% of respondents stated that they reviewed progress monitoring data several times a month or several times a semester.

Table 3. Review of Progress Monitoring Data (n = 180)

Frequency of reviewing progress monitoring data	Percentage
Daily	<10
Several times a week	31.1
Several times a month	40.0
Several times a semester	23.3
Once or twice a year	<10
Never	0

Source. TLI Spring 2013 Staff Survey

Support. Teachers were asked to indicate all types of support they received from the TLI reading specialists/coaches during the school year. Of the 177 teachers who responded to this survey question, most indicated they received some type of support (Table 4).

Table 4. Types of Support Received from TLI Reading Specialists/Coaches (n = 177)

Support type	Percentage
Classroom observations	63.3
Professional development	61.6
Planning for instruction	67.2
Feedback on my classroom instruction	52
Help with students who need extra assistance in reading	58.2
Other (please specify)	<10

Source. TLI Spring 2013 Staff Survey

Teachers mentioned the following as other types of support received from TLI reading specialists/coaches:

- “Help with students who need extra assistance in fine motor skills.”
- “Wasn't really [professional development] came to campus to explain data.”
- “Supplies.”
- “Materials Day.”

- “Testing assistance.”
- “Ideas on vocabulary development.”
- “Push-in[s] are working.”

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