TEXAS LITERACY INITIATIVE STAFF SURVEY SUMMARY, ADMINISTRATORS' RESPONSES, SPRING 2014

Background. The Texas Literacy Initiative (TLI) is currently implemented in Austin Independent School District (AISD) within the LBJ, Travis, and Lanier vertical teams.[1] The purpose of TLI is to improve school readiness and success in the areas of language and literacy for students in AISD. 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, and partners eligible educational organizations (e.g., prekindergarten [pre-K], elementary, middle, and high schools) with their associated early childhood education (ECE) providers, who may include Early Head Start, Head Start, public or private or nonprofit licensed child care providers, and public pre-K programs. In Spring 2014, staff in AISD's Department of Research and Evaluation (DRE) worked with TLI grant management staff to create and administer a survey to campus administrators (principals and assistant principals), teachers, and TLI reading specialists/coaches at all TLI campuses. This report summarizes responses from administrators at TLI campuses.

Respondents. An electronic survey was sent to 48 principals and assistant principals within the TLI vertical teams. The survey was also sent to directors of three early childhood centers that receive professional development opportunities from TLI staff. Of the 39 administrators who responded (76% response rate), the majority (95%) worked at prekindergarten (pre-K)/elementary schools and 5% worked at secondary schools.

Administrators' ratings. Administrators' responses to questions related to the TLI grant are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Administrators' Ratings of the Texas Literacy Initiative (TLI) (*n* = 39)

	% Strongly agree	% Agree	% Disagree	% Strongly disagree	% N/A/Not sure
Generally, teachers have reported being well supported by TLI staff.	41	56	3	0	0
TLI funded staff members (i.e., teachers, reading specialists or coaches) are improving student literacy on campus.	54	41	3	0	3
TLI-funded teachers or reading specialists/coaches use their time effectively.	59	36	0	0	5
I receive the support I need from TLI central office staff.	31	54	5	0	10

Source. TLI Spring 2014 Staff Survey

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[1] Vertical teams refer to the elementary and middle schools that feed into a high school.

Coach/specialist activities. Administrators were asked to estimate the percentage of time during a typical work week that their TLI coach spent working with teachers on their campuses. Table 2 summarizes the administrators' responses to this question. These results mirror the TLI grant staffing: the majority of coaches are placed in kindergarten to Grade 2 (one per campus), while other coaches are shared across schools and grade levels. Administrators also reported that their coaches spent 13% of their week completing administrative/other duties.

Table 2. Administrators' Responses About Their Texas Literacy Initiative (TLI) Coach's Typical Weekly Time Working With Teachers (*n* = 39)

Activities	Average % of time per week
Working with prekindergarten teachers/students	14
Working with kindergarten–grade 2 teachers/students	56
Working with grades 3–5 teachers/students	11
Working with grades 6–8 teachers/students	0
Working with grades 9–12 teachers/students	6

Source. TLI Spring 2014 Staff Survey

Table 3: What specific support from Texas Literacy Initiative (TLI) central office staff has been beneficial? The types of beneficial support that administrators cited most often were data analysis meetings, professional development trainings for teachers and coaches, and resources/materials.

Types of support	% Administrators (*n* = 39)
Data analysis meetings	82
Professional development trainings for teachers	73
Resources/materials	67
Professional development trainings for coaches	64
Paying for substitutes	55
Bringing awareness of the importance of early childhood literacy	39
Environmental walk throughs	33
Academic walk throughs	30
Lesson modeling	27
Selection of curriculum materials	9
Other (please specify)	3

Source. TLI Spring 2014 Survey

Administrators were also asked to indicate types of additional support they would like to receive from TLI central office staff. Table 4 displays the responses from 39 administrators. Administrators were able to select more than one type of support. Workshops for teachers and parents was the type of support mentioned most often (64%).

Table 4. Administrators' Needs for Additional Support (*n* = 39)

Types of additional support needed	% Administrators
Workshops for parents and teachers	64
Kindergarten–grade 2 intervention strategies	58
Model classroom visits	44
Videos/web based resources of best literacy practices	44
Other (please specify)	11

Source. Texas Literacy Initiative Spring 2014 Survey

Administrators specified the following as other types of additional support they would like to receive:

- "More regular visits."
- "Raise the percentage for students that you serve. It's too low. Minimal numbers are supported at this passing standard."
- "Additional fulltime reading/specialist staff."

Benefits as a result of TLI. Administrators (n = 32) stated the benefits they had seen as a result of the TLI grant. Some of their responses are listed below:

- "Teachers in PK [pre-K] to 2 are better equipped to know their students' reading needs and to have ideas on what to do to address those needs."
- "Data-driven meetings for the lower grades. Lots more accountability."
- "Data day meetings to review and analyze reading data have been beneficial in tracking the growth of our struggling readers. The information is providing good feedback to assist our teachers and specialist in interventions and guided reading groups."
- "Teachers are spending more time talking with each other about academic gains and gaps. TLI has afforded teachers the time and opportunity to improve their practice."
- "A higher awareness of the importance of early literacy."
- "Our school has increased in the number of students developed on TPRI/Tejas Lee in comparison to last year. Our school is making steady gains in working towards meeting TLI goals."
- "We were able to provide more support for our teachers. Students came in at 44% passing STAAR [State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness] through our grant funding we were able to raise that to 70%."
- "The teachers on my campus are really digging into their students' data from progress monitoring. They are having beneficial conversations about what is working and not working in their classrooms, and they are sharing ideas and better aligning themselves horizontally within their grade level teams, as well as vertically."
- "Bringing the focus back to the primary grades and explicitly looking at primary data has supported the need for shared responsibility on our campus. In the past, mainly the teachers in the intermediate grades carried the weight of accountability. Under the TLI grant, we have been able to

maintain shared responsibility and accountability across every grade level resulting in high expectations for students at every grade level."

Suggestions for TLI grant improvement. Campus administrators (*n* = 29) provided suggestions for improving the effectiveness of the TLI grant:

- "The weekly lessons are paced way too fast for our campus. We are unable to implement them as quickly as the plans expect. Once we complete an assignment we need time to share it with the campus, plan for implementation, etc."
- Provide allocations for more teachers to receive summer training.
- "Continue support from the Vaughn-Gross Center. This has been unbelievable. They have modeled lessons, done walk throughs, data analysis and feedback to teachers. Their support has been consistently aligned with what the campus has needed."
- "The passing percentage needs to be raised to support a greater number of scholars at the lower ends of the passing end."
- "More face to face training."
- "Modeling lessons."
- More teacher support using online webinar/resources/videos
- "An ongoing cadre of teachers should be formed at each site and then at a district level. These cadres should meet on a bi-monthly basis to examine progress and plan next steps."
- We could use additional staff support for our struggling learners.
- "The teachers would benefit from more in class support from the TLI literacy specialist."
- "I think it would be helpful for campuses to have more autonomy in the area of resources and materials. Our campus needs didn't always match up to the vertical team/district needs."

Suggestions for improving campuses' reading and writing. Campus administrators (*n* = 22) provided suggestions for improving reading and writing skills at their campuses:

- "We need district support for the use of a structured, systematic phonics program."
- "We need to incorporate writing more consistently with reading. Mentor texts need to be used and students need to create writing pieces modeled after the structure of the mentor texts."
- We need more PDs [professional development trainings] for our teachers who have struggle readers and how to help them. Also, align our reading and writing from the primary grades to intermediate grades.
- "Have more PD [professional development training] for how to teach reading and writing together."
- Continue with the support we are currently receiving
- "We need PD [professional development trainings] aimed at teachers working with students in PK/K [pre-K/kindergarten]. We will need some resources for improving vocabulary in PK since this is an area of need for our campus."
- More modeling and videos for guided reading and writing instruction."
- "More research based professional development [training]."
- "I believe that we need to take a careful look at how much time the students have to read, and build in more opportunities across subject areas. I believe that our students should have more

opportunities to write, and within our staff, we need to revisit vertically aligning our expectations for writing."

- "More visual literacy is necessary to expand children's ability to read and write about their creative thinking."