



# Spring 2015 Peabody Test Results, by Head Start Enrollment Status

## Purpose

This report examines prekindergarten (pre-K) students' achievement on the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test-IV (PPVT) and Test de Vocabulario en Imagenes Peabody (TVIP) in Spring 2015, compared with their performance in Fall 2014.

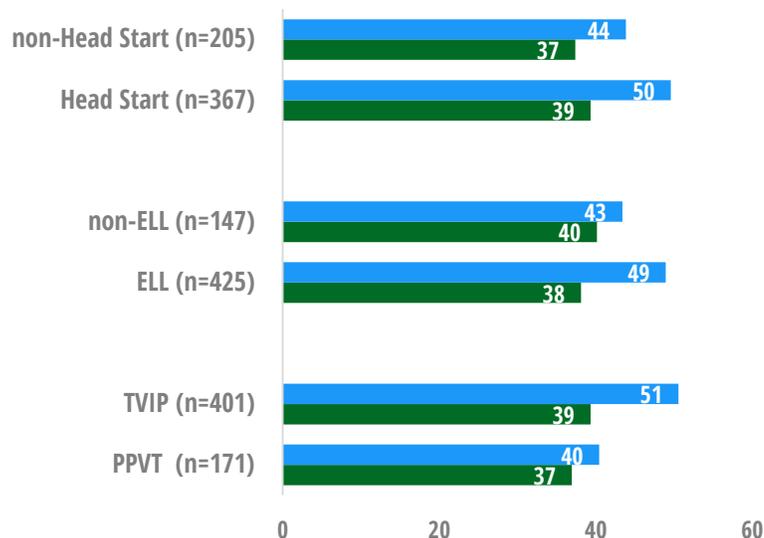
In 2014–2015, Department of Research and Evaluation staff administered the PPVT and TVIP at Dobie Prekindergarten Center, Lucy Read Prekindergarten Demonstration School, Anita Uphaus Early Childhood Center, and Widen Elementary. A total of 572 students were tested in both semesters in 44 classrooms, of which 24 were Head Start classrooms.

## AISD pre-K advances students to the national average in receptive vocabulary.

In Fall 2014, tested pre-K students (n = 572), on average, had a normal curve equivalent (NCE) score of 39, which was below the national mean score of 50. In Spring 2015, pre-K students' average NCE of 47 was slightly below the national mean, but still in the average range of performance. Of the tested students, non-Head Start students, Head Start students, English Language Learners (ELLs), and TVIP test takers experienced a 7 to 12 percentage point increase from Fall 2014 to Spring 2015 (Figure 1).

Figure 1

Average **spring** NCE scores were higher than **fall** NCE scores. ELLs, dual-enrolled Head Start students<sup>1</sup>, and TVIP test takers experienced the greatest gains.



Source. AISD student records, Department of Research and Evaluation

<sup>1</sup> The Early Childhood Department at Austin Independent School District (AISD) collaborates with Head Start provider, Child Inc., to provide dual enrollment for families who qualify for Head Start and pre-K.

## Changes in Range of Performance from Fall 2014 to Spring 2015

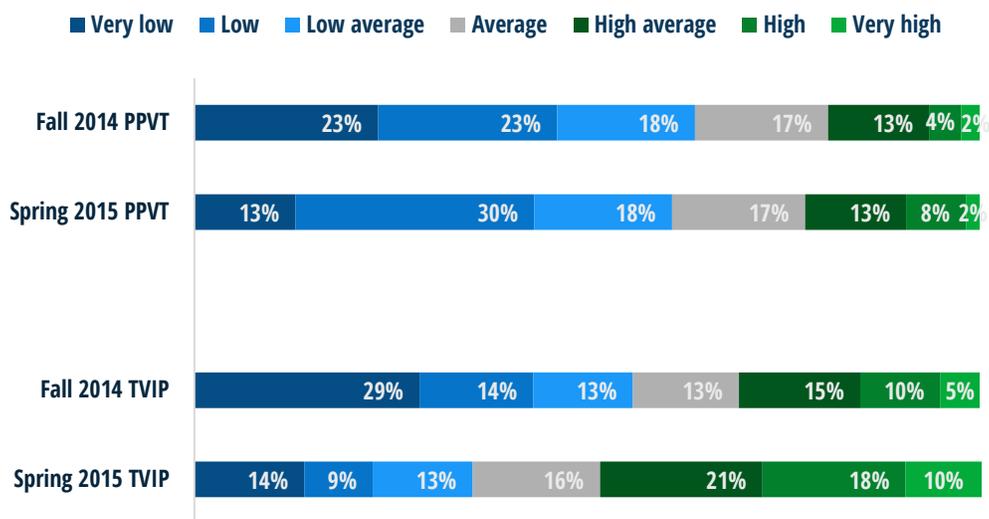
In Fall 2014, 36% of students who took the PPVT and 43% of students who took the TVIP scored in the average range or higher. By Spring 2015, 40% of PPVT test takers and 65% of TVIP test takers scored in the average range or higher (Figure 2).

PPVT test takers who scored in the very low range in Fall 2014 either moved to the low or high range by Spring 2015. The PPVT range of performance changed very little from Fall 2014 to Spring 2015. On the other hand, the TVIP range of performance changed distinctly from Fall 2014 to Spring 2015. Notably, a 6 to 8 percentage point increase occurred in the high average to very high ranges for TVIP test takers.

It is unclear what accounts for the marked difference between the ranges of performance for both tests. The difference could be attributed to the fact that more than twice as many students took the TVIP than took the PPVT, thus allowing for a more accurate representation of range. It is difficult to parse out an explanation without additional information regarding classroom- and school-level contexts.

Figure 2

In the fall, the majority of PPVT and TVIP test takers were in the very low to low average performance ranges. By Spring 2015, more TVIP test takers than PPVT test takers had moved into the average to very high range.



Source. AISD student records, Department of Research and Evaluation

Note. PPVT, n = 171; TVIP, n = 401

## Interpretation of NCE Scores

The standard scores for the PPVT and TVIP are based on age norms from samples of native speakers in English and Spanish, respectively. The tests are best interpreted in the native language of the student.

To make group comparisons and estimates of students' gains and losses, standardized scale scores were converted into NCE scores. The national normal distribution of NCE scores has a mean of 50 and a standard deviation of 21.06 points.

Range of performance	NCE scores	National percentile
Very low	1-24	1-11
Low	25-35	12-25
Low average	36-44	26-39
Average	45-55	40-60
High average	56-64	61-74
High	65-75	75-88
Very high	76-99	89-99

## Recommendations

Overall, the data show that students who attended the AISD pre-K program experienced growth in receptive vocabulary, and the majority (65%) of children who took the TVIP were in the average range or higher by Spring 2015. However, PPVT test takers did not experience as much growth, and many of them only moved from the very low to low range of performance, instead of moving into the average range or higher.

Program staff should explore providing vocabulary instruction and support for implementation with students who are instructed in English. This exploration should not be isolated to pre-k, but should also take place in the primary grades (kindergarten to grade 2) to ensure that students receive the support they need. This is especially important because vocabulary recognition is a precursor to the development of reading skills, and students who have difficulty learning to read in the earliest years of schooling have been found to continue having difficulty over time (Scarborough, 2001; Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998).

## References

- Scarborough, H. S. (2001). Connecting early language and literacy to later reading (dis)abilities: Evidence, theory, and practice. In S. B. Neuman & D. K. Dickinson (Eds.), *Handbook of early literacy research* (pp. 97–110). New York, NY: Guilford Press.
- Snow, C. E., Burns, M. S., & Griffin, P. (1998). *Preventing reading difficulties in young children*. Washington, DC: National Research Council, National Academy.



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