

FIELD-BASED SCIENCE INSTRUCTION

CAMPUS

Decatur Intermediate School
Recognized 2005-06

DISTRICT

Decatur ISD

INITIAL IMPLEMENTATION

2003-04

PROGRAM SUMMARY

The **goal** of Decatur Intermediate’s program is to improve student performance in science.

Key strategies include the development of a day-long science field camp and the use of inquiry-based lessons and activities in the classroom.

Outcomes include an increase in the percentage of students passing science TAKS.

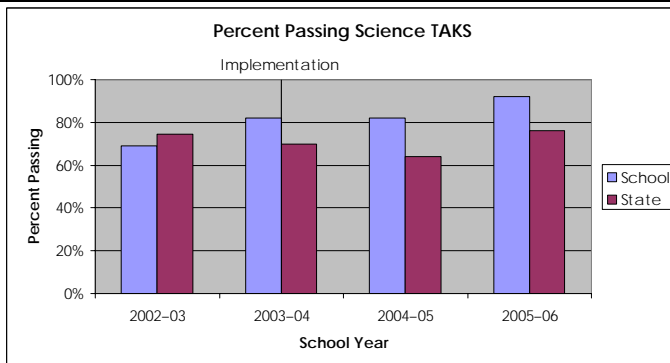
EFFECTIVENESS

Before

Prior to program implementation, in 2002-03, the percentage of grade 5 students passing science TAKS was 69%, compared to the state average of 75%.

After

After implementation, the percentage of grade 5 students passing science TAKS improved, with 90% passing in 2005-06, compared to the state average of 76%.



Source: AEIS

CONTEXT/IMPLEMENTATION

Demographics (2005-06)

Grade Levels Served		3-6		Campus Enrollment		419	
Ethnic Distribution				Economically Disadvantaged		153	36.5%
African American	6	1.4%	Limited English Proficient (LEP)		38	9.1%	
Hispanic	115	27.4%	At-risk		145	34.6%	
White	294	70.2%	Mobility (2004-05)		54	11.1%	

Source: AEIS

Background

- Staff reported that Decatur Intermediate students did not have strong science backgrounds and little applied knowledge of science as most science instruction occurred only in a classroom setting.
- Because the campus was in a rural community, students did not have easy access to scientific exhibits or museums.
- Funds were not available to send students to a science immersion camp, so the campus created Science Day to provide field experiences for students.

Procedures

- Teachers applied for and received a \$5,000 foundation grant to develop a day-long science camp dedicated to field investigation. The grant was used to purchase materials, including microscopes, wading boots, and other supplies.
- The nearby National Grasslands was selected as the location for the camp.
- Teachers created TEKS-based learning stations where students collected data, recorded findings, and packaged data for future study in the classroom using science equipment, such as aqua scopes, soil testing tools, insect collection containers, and solar boxes.
- Teachers, parents, and local experts (geologists and firemen) were engaged to staff the field stations at the camp and met the day before to receive instructions.
- The community provided lunch for all participants.
- Teachers designed follow-up lessons around the camp experiences.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each new TEKS objective was introduced in the classroom with a “real-life” question related to a science concept. • The class then collected facts about the concept being studied, and the teacher guided students through the experimental process. • Students were also required to write in a daily journal based on a question relevant to the topic for the day, develop a response, and relate the answer to the science concept through classroom discussion. 		
	<p>CAMPUS/DISTRICT STAFF</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td data-bbox="533 591 1073 764"> <p>Dewayne Tamplen, Principal Decatur Intermediate School Decatur ISD 1200 Eagle Drive Decatur, TX 76234 940-393-7400</p> </td> <td data-bbox="1073 591 1929 764"> <p>Dr. Gary Gindt, Superintendent Decatur ISD 501 Collins Street Decatur, TX 76234 940-393-7100</p> </td> </tr> </table>	<p>Dewayne Tamplen, Principal Decatur Intermediate School Decatur ISD 1200 Eagle Drive Decatur, TX 76234 940-393-7400</p>	<p>Dr. Gary Gindt, Superintendent Decatur ISD 501 Collins Street Decatur, TX 76234 940-393-7100</p>
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The Texas Education Agency (TEA) is seeking feedback about the best practice summaries.

Please take one minute to answer the feedback survey (six questions).

[Best Practices Feedback Survey](#)