BALANCED LITERACY

CAMPUS
Hidden Forest
Elementary School
Exemplary 2006–07

DISTRICT
North East ISD

INITIAL IMPLEMENTATION
2002–03

PROGRAM SUMMARY

The **goal** of Hidden Forest Elementary's program is to improve student performance in reading.

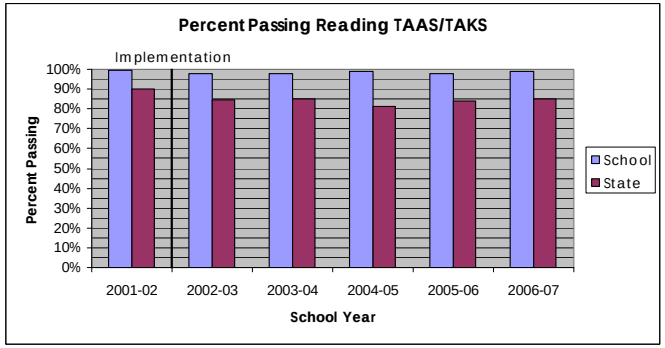
Key strategies include implementation of a balanced literacy model and creation of an instructional interventionist teacher position for reading.

Outcomes include continued high performance on reading TAKS and an increased percentage of students performing at the Commended level in reading.

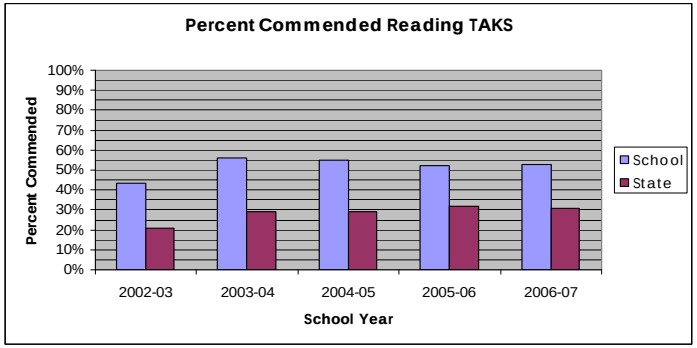
EFFECTIVENESS

Before
Prior to program implementation, in 2001–02, more than 99% of Hidden Forest students passed the reading portion of TAAS, compared to the state average* of 90%. Commended-level performance was not tracked at that time. With the introduction of TAKS in 2002–03, 98% of students passed the reading portion of TAKS, compared to the state average of 84%, and 43% of students performed at the Commended level, compared to the state average of 21%.

After
After implementation, reading performance remained high. In 2006–07, 99% of Hidden Forest students passed reading TAKS, compared to the state average of 85%, and 53% performed at the Commended level, compared to the state average of 31%.



Source: AEIS; TAAS Statewide Performance Results - 2002; TAKS Statewide Performance Results - 2003-2008



Source: AEIS; TAKS Statewide Performance Results - 2003-2008

* State averages are weighted averages based on the grade level(s) of the practice.

CONTEXT/IMPLEMENTATION

Demographics (2006–07)

Grade Levels Served	K–5	Campus Enrollment	594

Ethnic Distribution			Economically Disadvantaged	38	6.4%
African American	12	2.0%	Limited English Proficient (LEP)	14	2.4%
Hispanic	132	22.2%	At-risk	53	8.9%
White	426	71.7%	Mobility (2005–06)	59	11.7%
Asian/Pacific Islander	23	3.9%			

Source: AEIS

Background

- Hidden Forest Elementary's reading program was part of a district balanced literacy initiative that began in 2002–03. The program was based on a four-part literacy approach that included working with words, self-selected reading, guided reading, and writing.
- Each of the district's elementary schools hired an instructional interventionist reading teacher to support program implementation. A district literacy specialist also provided training and assistance with scope and sequence of the reading curriculum.
- Prior to implementation in 2002–03, reading curriculum and instruction was not coordinated campus-wide, and instructional decisions were left to individual classroom teachers.
- Hidden Forest was named a U.S. Blue Ribbon school in 2006–07.

Procedures

- During the first six weeks of school, the instructional interventionist teacher analyzed student reading ability at all grade levels through review of TAKS scores, in-class tests and quizzes, and benchmark tests. This information was used to initially group students for guided reading and tutoring. In addition, the instructional interventionist observed classrooms to identify teacher strengths and weaknesses.
- Student progress was regularly assessed through the Texas Primary Reading Inventory (TPRI), Basic Reading Inventory (BRI), and Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI). Grade-level teams disaggregated data from classroom exams to identify student needs and plan instruction.
- All data were used on an ongoing basis to respond to student needs and provide additional training for teachers. In addition, the principal, teachers, and instructional interventionist teacher met by grade level during an extended planning time every nine weeks to review students' strengths and weaknesses.

- Implementation of each block of the balanced literacy program was designed to allow students to work at their own reading level. For instance, students were grouped according to reading level for guided reading. In self-selected reading, students were allowed to select books based on their individual reading skills and interests.
- Whole group and small group instruction during regular instructional time were used to reinforce TEKS reading objectives at all grade levels.
- Strategies used to enrich the reading curriculum included phonics work, literature stations, literature circles, and a writing program.
- To serve students with limited English proficiency, all teachers were trained in the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP), which provides strategies to strengthen students' listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills.
- In January of each school year, students who were identified as struggling began using a commercial literacy program for intensive literacy instruction that involved repetition of key concepts.
- Struggling students also were assigned to a group led by the instructional interventionist teacher for a sustained silent reading block. In addition, the instructional interventionist teacher had the option to pull out small groups of five to seven students during social studies instruction once a week for 30 minutes of additional reading support.
- Classroom instruction was monitored to ensure that teachers were using higher order thinking and questioning stems. The principal conducted three-minute walkthroughs of every classroom throughout the year to record types of questions teachers asked and share campus trends with faculty. Teachers used these example questions for group discussion of how to improve questioning techniques.
- The instructional interventionist teacher worked closely with individual teachers who requested additional help. All meetings were held within 24 hours of a request for assistance.
- The instructional interventionist teacher, principal, district literacy specialist, and other district staff identified training and information for teachers on dyslexia.
- Reading assignments were integrated into art, physical education, and music classes.
- The school implemented a reading buddy program in which older students were paired with younger students. Teachers coordinated joint class reading times: grade 5 worked with grade 2, grade 4 worked with grade 1, and grade 3 worked with kindergarten.
- The campus held mandatory parent conferences twice a year after the results of benchmark assessments were available. Students were encouraged to participate in these meetings so that they could see results and identify strategies and learning goals with the teacher and parents.

- The campus PTA also coordinated a parent reading volunteer program. The PTA appointed a grade-level chair who contacted parents for each classroom to set up a weekly schedule of classroom parent readers for the year.
- The campus teaching staff (including art, music, and physical education teachers) participated as a group in 950 hours of staff development in balanced literacy and other reading approaches through training provided by the campus, district, and regional education service center and external workshops conducted by consultants.
- The district provided regular training to the instructional interventionist teacher. The interventionist teacher also met regularly with her counterparts from the district's other elementary schools. These meetings were facilitated by the district's literacy specialists to share successful practices and to address individual campus needs.

CAMPUS/DISTRICT STAFF

Tamara Van Cleave, Principal
Hidden Forest Elementary
North East ISD
802 Silver Spruce
San Antonio, TX 77232-2700
210-491-8425

Dr. Richard Middleton, Superintendent
North East ISD
8961 Tesoro Drive
San Antonio, TX 78217
210-804-7000

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