



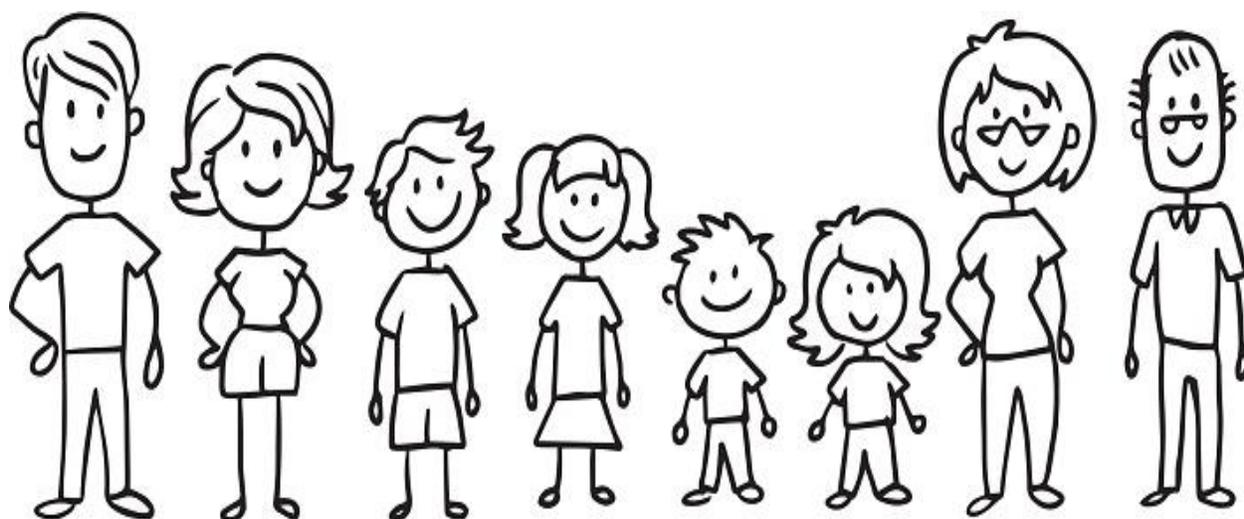
ALLEN

INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Early Childhood

Program Evaluation Overview

2016-2017



Introduction of Highly-Qualified Pre-Kindergarten Grant Program:

Pre-Kindergarten program requirements are in Texas Education Code (TEC) §29.167 – 29.171 and are consistent with the provisions of TEC Chapters 41 and 42. These requirements include use of a curriculum aligned with the Texas Pre-Kindergarten Guidelines, increased Pre-Kindergarten teacher training and/or qualifications, implementation of student progress monitoring, increased digital learning opportunities for students, program evaluation and development of a family engagement plan. Further details of these requirements are outlined below.

Allen ISD applied for the Highly Qualified Pre-Kindergarten Grant in the spring of 2016. The grant was awarded to the district in the summer of 2016. Specific requirements were outlined if the district accepted the grant funding.

Overview of Allen ISD Pre-Kindergarten Program

Allen ISD currently has a state funded prekindergarten program. Only children that meet the state qualifications can participate in the program. Updated program requirements were provided on July 25th, 2017. The following state requirements determine eligibility for participation of the Pre-Kindergarten program within the district.

- Be unable to speak and comprehend the English language
- Be educationally disadvantaged, which means a student eligible to participate in the national free or reduced-price lunch program
- Be homeless, as defined by 42 United States Code (U.S.C.) Section 1143a, regardless of the residence of the child, of either parent of the child, or of the child's guardian or other person having lawful control of the child
- Be the child of an active duty member of the armed forces of the United States, including the state military forces or a reserve component of the armed forces, who is ordered to active duty by proper authority
- Be the child of a member of the armed forces of the United States, including the state military forces or a reserve component of the armed forces, who was injured or killed while serving on active duty
- Be in, or have been in, the conservatorship of the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) following an adversary hearing held as provided by Section 262.201, Family Code

Pre-Kindergarten Curriculum Resources

Texas Education Code (TEC) §29.167 – 29.171 and consistent with the provisions of TEC Chapters 41 and 42 outline the requirement to implement Prekindergarten Guidelines, which were updated in 2015. All state funded prekindergarten programs must implement the state guideline standards and use curriculum that aligns with the state's Pre-K learning standards.

In the 2016-17 school year, Allen ISD Pre-Kindergarten classrooms utilized Scholastic's Big Day curriculum, which was on the commissioner's list of approved curriculum. Through the course of the 2016-17 school year, the curriculum for the Pre-Kindergarten program became more robust. The grant funding provided the opportunity to hire a curriculum writer to focus solely on prekindergarten curriculum. The curriculum focus was on literacy and it modeled the format and structure of other literacy curriculum in the district. The grant funding provided the opportunity to create authentic curriculum for our youngest learners. Plans for writing authentic curriculum for the other core content areas are in progress for the upcoming years. The area of focus for curriculum development for the 2017-18 school year is mathematics.

Increase in Digital Learning Opportunities

In the 2016-17 school year, the district established a goal to increase the digital learning opportunities for Prekindergarten students, and the grant funds from HB 4 created an opportunity to supplement the technological resources available to our early childhood students. Several devices and software products were added to the collection of instructional resources for the teachers. Teachers were also coached on techniques for effective integration of digital learning into the prekindergarten curriculum. Furthermore, the new literacy and math curriculum and resources includes technology integration learning experiences. Progress has been made in the learning environment of the youngest learners in the district to reflect 21st century digital learning opportunities.

Progress Evaluation Measure

Texas Education Agency required that upon the acceptance of the Highly Qualified Pre-Kindergarten grant program that districts select and implement a progress monitoring tool. The commissioner provided a list of vetted progress evaluation tools that would capture the learning progress of prekindergarten students. Allen ISD used the Children's Learning Institute (CLI) CIRCLE Progress Monitoring system to measure the learning outcomes of our prekindergarten program. The CIRCLE Progress Monitoring system measures all ten domains of the Texas Pre-Kindergarten Guidelines and was implemented in three waves (beginning of year, middle of year, and end of year). Student data was analyzed by the teacher on an ongoing basis to guide instruction and identify intervention needs for students. Teachers utilized professional learning communities as a forum to analyze data with the purpose of identifying strengths/weaknesses and adjust the instruction for continuous program improvement. The data collected by this progress monitoring tool was submitted to the Texas Education Agency (TEA). The state required that beginning of year and end of year data be submitted for each early childhood student. The education agency was looking for student growth from the beginning of the year to the end of the year in the following domains:

- Social Emotional Development
- Language and Communication
- Emergent Literacy Reading

- Emergent Literacy Writing
- Mathematics

Teacher Certification Requirements

Prior to the 2016-17 school year, the Allen ISD Teacher certification specialist reviewed the undergraduate, graduate, and any other post-secondary degrees of the Pre-Kindergarten teachers to ensure that the required qualifications were up-to-date.

In order for the Pre-Kindergarten teachers to be identified as having met the high-qualified required mandate of HB4, they must hold at least one of the following degrees:

- Bachelor of Arts in Early Childhood Education
- Bachelor of Science in Early Childhood Education
- Bachelor of Science in Early Childhood Development
- Bachelor of Science in Education/Early Children Education
- Master of Education in Early Childhood Education
- Master of Education in Early Childhood Special Education
- Doctor of Philosophy in Early Childhood Education
- Doctor of Philosophy in Early Childhood Education Special Education

All of Allen ISD's Pre-Kindergarten teachers were identified as having met the high qualified required mandate of HB4 because they held at least one of the previously listed degrees. Moving forward, all new Pre-Kindergarten teaching staff will be screened for the school credentials listed above.

Professional Development

The early childhood teachers participated in extensive professional learning and coaching opportunities that focused around early childhood curriculum and instructional practices. To begin, our Early Childhood staff began the year by participating in a learning experience that focused on the CIRCLE Progress Monitoring tool that the district selected. Trainers from the Children's Learning Institute came and supported the teachers through a full day of learning. This was a vital learning piece, since the progress monitoring tool was going to guide their instruction and intervention through the course of the year. This was also the first time that the early childhood staff used this progress monitoring tool. Through the course of the year the staff participated in 30 hours of Pre-Kindergarten focused professional development and 15 hours of coaching sessions. The professional development sessions were a combination of in-district training, Early Childhood Specialist contractors, and through our Education Service Center, Region 10. All of the learning that the early childhood staff participated in focused on strategies specific to early childhood education and some of the topics included: curriculum development, lesson design, STEAM learning for early childhood students, classroom management, and

utilization of progress monitoring tool. It was a year of learning and adapting to a high quality prekindergarten teaching and learning framework.

Family Engagement District Plan

Through the partnership of the campus and central office administration, a family engagement plan was created solely for the families of our early childhood students. Grant funds were used to coordinate parent support meetings and provide information on a variety of topics designed to meet the needs of our early childhood families and encourage opportunities for family-to-family network and collaboration. To encourage and promote participation in these events, childcare and light refreshments were offered.

The early childhood engagement support plan concluded the year with a parent learning session that focused on the “Prevention of Summer Learning Loss”. A consultant guided families through a learning session that informed them about the importance of continuing the learning of their preschooler during the summer months. Family participants were guided through some activities that they could do with their child on a daily basis. The activities focused on mathematics and literacy skills. Upon the conclusion of the learning session, families were able to take home a summer curriculum with activities and instructional resources that guided parents on how to support and maintain their students learning on a daily basis.

Summary & Conclusion

Through the course of the 2016-17 school year numerous processes, procedures, and expectations were created for the early childhood program. The program added literacy curriculum that is aligned to the Texas Early Childhood Guidelines as well as integrated with digital learning opportunities. The early childhood staff participated in intentional learning and coaching opportunities that focused on best-instructional practices and learning guidelines for Prekindergarten students. The implementation of the CIRCLE Progress Monitoring Tool provided teachers the opportunity to design lessons to meet the needs of each individual student. The implementation of Early Childhood Family Engagement creates a collaborative environment for family and school partnerships to develop and strengthen upon the initiation of a child’s learning journey.