

## 30 TLI Grantees

Alice ISD  
Arlington ISD  
Austin ISD  
Bartlett ISD  
Bastrop ISD  
Brooks County ISD/  
Ramirez CSD  
Brownsville ISD  
Chilton ISD  
Como-Pickton CISD  
Connally ISD  
Edinburg CISD  
El Paso ISD  
Greenville ISD  
La Marque ISD  
La Vega ISD  
Lubbock ISD  
Manor ISD  
McAllen ISD  
Mercedes ISD  
Nixon-Smiley CISD  
Odem-Edroy ISD  
Pilot Point ISD  
Raul Yzaguirre  
School for  
Success  
San Antonio ISD  
San Saba ISD  
Sinton ISD  
Taft ISD  
Taylor ISD  
Tenaha ISD  
Tornillo ISD

## TLI Tidbits

Smallest Literacy Line  
has 2  
sites/campuses  
serving 487  
students  
Largest Literacy Line  
has 62  
sites/campuses  
serving 49,325  
students  
Grant serves  
262,055+ students

## TLI Updates

- **2013-2014 Commissioner's List** - The 2013-2014 Commissioner's List of Reading Instruments has successfully been posted to the TEA website at: <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/literacy/TLI/>
- **2014 Spring TLI Online Course Module** will be covering the **TSLP Process** instead of an actual LASERS component. The start date for the first week is scheduled for:
  - **February 10-16, 2014**
- This year, the **2014 TLI Institutes** will directly follow the **Leadership Summit** in both **Houston** and **Dallas**. Look for registration information around the first of March.

### Houston Location

- **Leadership Summit - June 23, 2014**
- **TLI Institute - June 24-25, 2014**

### Dallas Location

- **Leadership Summit - July 15, 2014**
- **TLI Institute - July 16-17, 2014**

## Get Right to What You Need

Do you like to jump straight to the newsletter articles that interest you most? Good news. The Project Share version of your TLI Newsletter will provide short summaries of each article in the current issue. From there, you can choose the articles you want to read, click "**Read Full Story**," and view the articles.

**In this issue**, the theme is using data to identify needed professional development, planning the delivery of the professional development to all critical personnel, and providing follow-up and support for effective implementation.

- **Taylor ISD** relates the process taken to agree upon and define 1-3 action steps to raise the level of implementation District-wide in Standards-Based Instruction. You will be able to see through the narrative and pictures that PD does not have to be 'boring!' "[Read Full Story](#)"
- **Arlington ISD** shares a strategy for a focused, systematic approach that has been a positive, effective experience. There is a plan in place to replicate the system in other areas of need. Be sure to read the surprising blog from a Middle School English Teacher. "[Read Full Story](#)"
- **Brownsville ISD** outlines a process for communicating expectations, tracking implementation, and providing follow-up support for the TLI PD. Note the example of writing effective, consistent Comprehension Purpose Questions (CPQs) for the core program. A unique District Instructional Feedback Form that incorporates the TLI training has been established. "[Read Full Story](#)"



## TAYLOR ISD ON STANDARDS-BASED INSTRUCTION

### Highlighted TLI Effective Literacy Practice: Standards-Based Instruction Action Step:

Develop campus-wide system for teaching academic vocabulary or words that influence achievement in multiple disciplines.

### The Vocabulary and Oral Development THS PD “Booster” Session



Secondary Instructional Specialist, Johna Underwood, explains the Levels (or Tiers) of Vocabulary



TLI Grant Manager Jennifer Greene models the TEA/VGC Routine for Explicit Vocabulary Instruction.

### Description:

Taylor ISD (TISD) held a TLI data meeting on May 24<sup>th</sup>, 2013, with the Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment Director, all campus administrators, GIT team members, instructional specialists, the grant manager, and representatives from the state literacy leaders at the Vaughn Gross Center for Reading and Language Arts. **Prior to the meeting** LPLD and CBLT members at each campus met and reviewed the year's **Quarterly Action Plans** and conducted **Data Digs** to provide input. Administrators also reviewed data on a district-wide level during their monthly **Saturday Administrators Session**.

**100% attendance** and our new **Literacy Center** allowed the team to gather in one room to facilitate the adoption of action steps that were vertically aligned and clearly tied to the district's newly developed **Motto Vision Mission Values**.

The team began by examining **EOY data** from CPALLS for PreK to TPRI for K-2 and STAAR/EOC data for Grades 3-12. Additional information was provided by data from the **536 Learning Walks submitted in Eduphoria by the Literacy Center staff**, **observational data** from our VGC liaisons, and a **district-wide staff needs survey** conducted through SurveyMonkey at the end of the year. The meeting was **framed by defining the objective** – to review and reflect on district-wide data as it pertains to the **Texas State Literacy Plan** guide for **Standards-Based Instruction**. The **product** was to agree upon and define 1-3 action steps to raise our level of implementation in this section of the LASERS district-wide.

While we found the data to be overwhelming, and planned a more focused approach for future meetings, several trends did emerge.

1. Professional development in the district has been disorganized at worst and too broad at best.
2. Second, district staff from the Child Development Center to the Legacy Early College High School desperately wanted help with vocabulary development across the curriculum.
3. Assessment data supported the observational data that vocabulary was
  - a) not being taught systematically or explicitly enough,
  - b) was an area of weakness in core subjects, especially science, and
  - c) was an area of weakness in students entering the school system in PreK and K.

### Three immediate Action Steps were agreed upon:

1. Provide more intentional and focused professional development with follow up support for teachers/providers in implementing vocabulary instruction Ages 0-Grade 12.
2. Provide training to parents on how to increase vocabulary through reading and writing at home.
3. Develop a school-wide, systematic approach at each campus to incorporate academic vocabulary words across all content areas.

# TAYLOR ISD ON STANDARDS-BASED INSTRUCTION (contd.)

**Outcome:**

As we near the winter break, with the support of the Vaughn Gross Center training staff and materials, TISD has offered and plans to offer **9 Vocabulary and Oral Development PD sessions** - 3 during the summer with 3 follow up “booster” sessions this fall and 3 more in the spring. So far, over 150 staff members have attended one or more sessions. All attendees then participate in an **observation and coaching cycle** to help them implement what they’ve learned in the classroom.

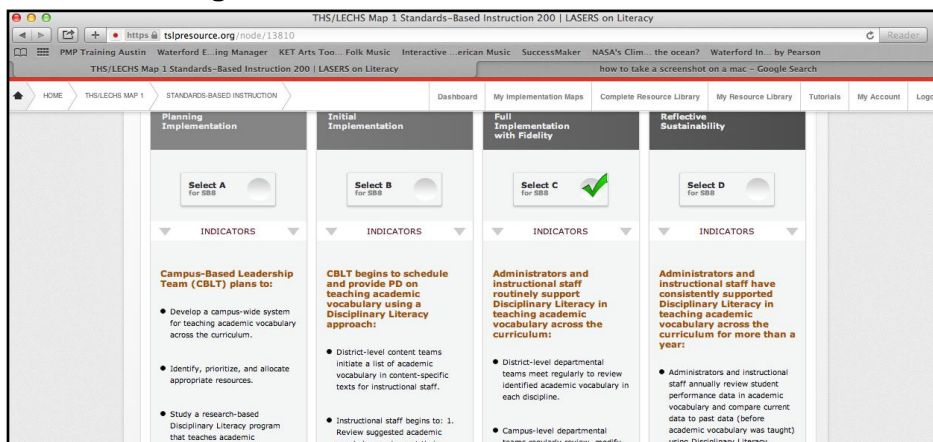
TISD has also created an initial **Parent’s Guide to Reading and Writing At Home in English and Spanish** for elementary students with plans to create one for each campus that is developmentally appropriate by the end of the 2014 school year. This guide has been distributed at school and community events along with free books as part of our initiative to train parents and provide 20 books to every family with school aged children.

Finally, at the Vocabulary and Oral Development booster sessions and **quarterly vertical team meetings**, **each core subject area and grade level** is using Lead4Ward STAAR vocabulary and TEKS Handbooks to **create vocabulary lists of both Tier II content and academic vocabulary**. This will become part of the **grade level accomplishments each grade is developing (based on the Three Tier Reading Model, UT College of Education)**.

The next stage will be to:

- **Finalize parent’s guides and vocabulary achievements lists for each campus,**
- **Develop a communication plan for both the parent’s guide information and grade level achievements lists to address all stakeholders, and**
- **Develop a plan to implement explicit vocabulary and oral development instruction in every content area Ages 0-Grade 12 by this time next year.**

**Implementation Map for this Action Step: As a District, we are currently at level B and aiming for C.**



[Return to Front Page](#)

## The Vocabulary and Oral Development THS PD “Booster” Session



THS Staff begins to sort and develop vocabulary lists from Lead4Ward STAAR Vocabulary resource documents.



The Vocabulary and Oral Development PD “booster” session ends with a TPR game. Faculty demonstrates the motion to go with the vocabulary word “chromosphere”.

## Arlington ISD Focused, Systematic Approach to PD

**Determining Need:** This year through the Texas Literacy Initiative Arlington ISD (AISD) is **focusing on vocabulary and oral language development**. After reviewing data from last year, as well as data from many observational visits on the campuses, it was **determined there was a high need for a structured, explicit, and systematic routine for vocabulary instruction**. After discussing this with many campus administrators, the plan was created as part of the district's support plan with the Vaughn Gross Center for Reading and Language Arts.

**Delivering PD and Follow-up Plan:** In early September 2013, Dr. Jennifer Schnakenberg delivered the initial vocabulary session to **AISD's campus-based instructional coaches using a "training of trainers" model**. The coaches were given a two-week time period to study the vocabulary material presented. The group came together for a **second meeting where the coaches were placed into small groups led by district literacy specialists**. The coaches presented a part of the training to their group, ensuring the **fidelity of the professional development**. This also allowed them time to ask questions and build confidence before training the teachers at their campuses.

From October through December, the coaches:

- **delivered this training to teachers**
- **followed up with grade-level planning**
- **modeled in classrooms**
- **observed the implementation of the vocabulary routine**

Although the training was only required for literacy teachers, schools instructed their entire staff on the routine, **implementing it across all content areas**. In December, the TLI State Literacy Liaison, Maria Longhi, and the AISD TLI District Project Manager, Becki Krsnak, conducted a **follow-up meeting with the coaches**, concentrating on challenges they discovered on campuses. Beginning in January, district literacy specialists, the state liaison, and the project manager **will conduct observational visits** on campuses to give **continued support to teachers** in implementing this initiative. Furthermore, campus and district **Data-Informed Plans reflect this initiative in the goals**, looking for an overall growth in scores based on increasing students' vocabulary.

The coaches appreciated the rolling out of this initiative in this systematic format, and teachers have embraced the explicit instructional routine. One AISD teacher at Barnett Junior High has blogged about her experience with teaching the routine for the first time. You can read her blog at:

[\*\*My Life as a Middle School English Teacher: Texas Literacy Initiative: Vocabulary Routine.\*\*](#)

For our early childhood centers, the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston conducted a **Saturday session in October 2013 for teachers of children ages 0 to 2 entitled Using Language to Support Positive Behavior**. **Prekindergarten teachers** at these fourteen sites were **trained** on the vocabulary routine. A **follow-up session** will be held in January 2014 to **support teachers in planning vocabulary lessons and choosing appropriate vocabulary words for the routine**. The district early childhood literacy specialist will provide additional, on-site support to all teachers.

Becki Krsnak's reflection: "This focused, systematic approach to professional development has proven to be such a positive, effective experience that we intend to replicate the system in other areas of need. By building the expertise of our campus-based instructional coaches, as well as our classroom teachers, successful strategies will be sustained for years to come."

[\*\*Return to Front Page\*\*](#)

## BISD Professional Development Supports Implementation

### Highlighted TLI Effective Literacy Practice:

Leadership  
Action Step:  
Establish a  
coaching model  
aimed at  
fulfilling the  
goals of the  
Data-Informed  
Plan

Brownsville ISD (BISD) has used the **District's Data-Informed Plan (DIP)** as their TLI Grant Summary Sheet to **note their efforts and track the TLI grant progress**. The **performance goals** for each grade are noted and the **professional development sessions** targeting fluency and comprehension are listed in the DIP. The **action steps from the key stakeholders** follow in along with the teacher specialists, project manager, district leaders, site/campus-based leadership team, and teachers. The DIP is also **customized at the campus level** since each site includes their supports towards meeting the grant goals and performance targets. The **District DIP is approved each year** by the District Educational Improvement Council. All the sessions that call for pulling teachers out of classrooms for training are approved one year in advance. The District DIP is further incorporated into each school's **Campus Improvement Plan (CIP)**.

The key role of the TLI Teacher Specialist in collaboration with the campus administration is supported with a **professional development model of follow-up** which was put in place since year one of the TLI grant:

1. Each session is provided by our partners from UT Health Science Center in Houston.
2. Expectations for turnaround trainings are communicated and are tracked in our District Electronic Registrar Online (ERO).
3. Teachers are then supported by Student Focused Coaching and class visitation forms that target students, class environment, and the teacher. The class visitation form includes the key TLI effective instructional strategies and supports.
4. Follow up sessions/refreshers are provided to ensure that areas noted in the visits needing clarification are fine tuned.

This year the Curriculum & Instruction(C&I) Assistant Superintendent, Bertha Peña, established a **BISD Instructional Feedback Form** that would be used by all staff as they observe classrooms. Needless to say, the TLI grant strategies and routines were included in the form. The **form was then provided to all campus administrators with training** in August during back-to-school in-services. Since the form is used as part of the PDAS by administration, it was uploaded in the Eduphoria system and is accessible online. Administrators conduct walkthroughs, note them in the form, and **teachers have immediate access to feedback** on their instruction.

We continuously collect data on the use of the TLI routines and strategies and **utilize this data to provide follow-up trainings and support**. For example, we noted that the CPQs needed to be supported and we created CPQs for our reading adoption HMH Journeys/Senderos. **We posted the CPQs in our Project Share collaborative group and the Teacher Specialists use them to provide teachers support**. Our middle and high schools are also creating CPQs at their levels. C & I has **incorporated the CPQs in our district instructional frameworks** and they are available in the C & I webpage. Standardizing of the Instructional Feedback Form is key to supporting our journey in attaining the TLI Grant performance goals!

BISD Instructional  
Feedback Form

[Return to Front Page](#)

## Highlighting TLI Effective Practices

We would like to thank the following people for submitting their articles about practices their districts have put in place and feel are effective for their TLI Literacy Lines:

- **Becki Krsnak, Arlington ISD TLI Project Manager**
- **Jennifer Greene, Taylor ISD TLI Grant Manager**
- **Maria Gonzales, Brownsville ISD TLI Project Director**

In the conclusion of the booklet handed out at the TLI 2012 Leadership Summit, **How the World’s Best-Performing School Systems Come Out on Top**, it was stated the three guiding principles most important for achieving real improvement in outcomes are:

1. The quality of an education system cannot exceed the quality of its teachers,
2. The only way to improve outcomes is to improve instruction, and
3. Achieving universally high outcomes is only possible by putting in place mechanisms to ensure that schools deliver high-quality instruction to every child.

(McKinsey & Co., 2007, p.40)

By sharing some of the effective practices each of our TLI Grantees have been able to put in place in the process of implementing the TSLP, all of us will be able to learn from each other. We also know that by sharing successful examples of the challenging task of improving instruction, we can show that it can be done with the right support structures in place.

As stated in the first issue, the TLI Newsletter will be used to highlight the effective practices that our TLI Literacy Lines are using to improve their literacy outcomes. **We encourage all of our TLI Grantees to reflect on the practices and to share those that have proven to be effective in reaching the TLI Goals.** The next issue of the TLI Newsletter will be posted in April 2014, and Submission Date is highlighted in yellow.

**Process for submitting TLI Effective Practice Highlights for publication:**

- TLI Districts will work with their State Literacy Liaison (SLL) to identify goals set and achieved from their Language and Pre-Literacy Development Plan and/or Data-Informed Plan. **(Outcome)**
- Write up a description of the LASERS Action Step(s) taken to achieve these goals. **(Description)**
- Email submissions for consideration with “**TLI Newsletter**” in **Subject Line** by below deadlines to [TLI@tea.state.tx.us](mailto:TLI@tea.state.tx.us):

Newsletter Date	Submission Date	Newsletter Date	Submission Date
<b>First Quarter 2014</b>	December 6, 2013	<b>Third Quarter 2014</b>	June 6, 2014
<b>Second Quarter 2014</b>	<b>March 7, 2014</b>	<b>Fourth Quarter 2014</b>	September 5, 2014

**References**

McKinsey & Co. (2007). *How the world’s best-performing schools come out on top*. Retrieved from <http://mckinseysociety.com/how-the-worlds-best-performing-schools-come-out-on-top>.