RESEARCH

Report on an Educational Program

Department of Research and Accountability

PROJECT ACADEMIA XOCHIQUETZAL DE BENAVIDEZ ELEMENTARY

2001–2002

Houston Independent School District

HOUSTON INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Board of Education

Deborah L. Muñiz
RESEARCH SPECIALIST

Alfredo A. Gavito
RESEARCH MANAGER

Executive Summary

Project Academia Xochiquetzal de Benavidez Elementary
2001–2002

Project Academia Xochiquetzal de Benavidez Elementary (AXBE) was a campus-wide attempt to restructure instructional programming and improve the social and educational environment for English Language Learners (ELLs). The project is five years in length, and funded through the Title VII Bilingual Education Comprehensive Schools Grant Program. The five-year total budget for Project AXBE is $2,634,672. The project has three principal components:

- Developmental Bilingual (DB) and Bilingual Gifted and Talented (G/T) instructional programs;
- professional development training; and,
- parent/community outreach efforts.

Project AXBE had three goals which subsume a variety of objectives. The first goal was "to improve the academic achievement of ELLs by restructuring the instructional programs through implementation of a Developmental Bilingual Program and a bilingual Gifted and Talented program which utilizes the Multiple Intelligences, Fine Arts, and Multiculturalism." The second goal of Project AXBE was "to restructure and upgrade the professional development of staff to improve the academic achievement of ELLs." The third project goal was "to increase parent/community outreach participation to improve the academic achievement of ELLs."

Project AXBE personnel consisted of a program coordinator, secretary, 33 bilingual teachers, and 22 teacher aides.

This evaluation report represented the fourth year of implementation for Project AXBE. The following research questions were addressed:

1. How was the Project AXBE Developmental Bilingual Program (DBP), which utilizes Gifted and Talented (G/T) instruction, multiple intelligences, fine arts, and multiculturalism, implemented during the 2001–02 school year?
2. What were the oral language proficiency scores and the reading proficiency levels in English for program participants during the 2001–02 school year?
3. What were the academic achievement scores during the 2001–02 school year?
4. What were the perceptions of students regarding the implementation of AXBE?
5. How were students involved in community service and extracurricular activities?
6. What were the levels of parent participation in program related activities?
7. How successful was the program in engaging business/community partners in program-related activities?

Findings

- Classroom observations indicated compliance with the Developmental Bilingual Model.
- Teachers lesson plans linked classroom activities to specific Multiple Intelligence domains for Gifted and Talented students.
- Kindergarten students met expected gains in oral language as measured by the LAS. However, first and second grade students did not meet oral language gains.
- Reading Proficiency Test in English (RPTE) results indicated that 55% of the 3rd, 36% of the 4th and 42% of the 5th grade students scored in the Advanced level.
- Stanford 9 NCE scores were within the average range for all grade levels and subtests, except 2nd grade mathematics, 4th grade reading and 5th grade reading and mathematics.

- Aprenda normal curve equivalent (NCE) scores for each subtest and grade level were within the average range or higher.

- A five percent increase over the previous years passing rate on the Spanish and English Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) was the expected annual growth for AXBE grade levels. The percent of students passing the Spanish and English TAAS were all above 80% passing, except for 5th grade English reading.

- Fourth grade project student's were given an opportunity to participate in a survey that was English on one side and Spanish on the other side. The overwhelming majority (80%) of students completed the Spanish version.

- Approximately 50% of the project students stated that they speak in Spanish with their friends at school and 39% speak in both English and Spanish with their friends.

- Also, 56% of project students indicated that they can translate "some things" and 38% "most things" from Spanish to English and English to Spanish.

- Family Math Nights had the highest level of parent participation with 53 parents attending the sessions. Parenting classes had the second highest level of participation with 23 parents in attendance.

- Two-hundred sixty students participated in After School Activities for the 2001–02 academic year. The following three activities had the highest attendance: 109 students registered and attended Karate classes, 49 students participated in Basketball and 46 students were involved in piano classes.

- The Houston Police Bicycle Administration was the community partner that was added for the school year 2001–02. The community partner provided parent, teacher, and student training workshops in safety.

Recommendations

1. Since next year is the last year of the project, changes in the program that would impact achieving objectives should be documented. Specifically, document the number of new teachers by grade level, training, and other factors that may impact student achievement.

2. First and second grade students did not attain expected gains in oral language proficiency on the LAS. Project teachers need to develop student's English and Spanish oral language abilities. Project coordinator may consider providing project teachers with additional strategies/training that would assist them in increasing their students oral language proficiency.

3. Less than half of fourth and fifth graders scored at the Advanced level on the RPTE. Project teachers at this grade level should assess or diagnose individual students reading difficulties and develop appropriate lesson plans.

4 The fifth grade passing rate on the reading subtest of the English TAAS revealed that only 68% passed. NCE reading scores on the Stanford 9 indicated that fifth grade students scored below average. Project staff should review instructional practices in reading at this grade level. The number of recent immigrants placed at the fifth grade level should be documented because these students have not benefited from four years of the program.

5. The majority of fourth grade students completed the Spanish version of the survey, although their responses demonstrated bilingual characteristics. Project teachers should encourage project students to feel equally confident in the English language.

6. Continued monitoring of project AXBE will provide additional information on the program's effectiveness. Also, a final evaluation of AXBE at the end of its fifth year will yield the full outcome of the project.

Project Academia Xochiquetzal de Benavidez Elementary
2001–2002

Purpose: *To evaluate the degree of fourth-year program implementation; present four years of student performance; and assess student, parent, and community extracurricular participation in the program.*

Design: *Nonexperimental*

Population: *English Language Learners (ELLs) at Benavidez Elementary who received bilingual education services.*

Methods: *Standardized tests were used to assess changes in oral language proficiency and academic achievement. Instructional implementation data were obtained through observational checklists, lesson plans, class schedules, and interviews with the project coordinator. Data regarding perceptions of AXBE were gathered through the student survey. Student, parent and community involvement were assessed with sign-in sheets, class rosters, and interviews with the project coordinator.*

Findings: *Kindergarten students met the expected gain on the Language Assessment Scales (LAS). However, first and second graders did not. Reading Proficiency Test in English (RPTE) results indicated 55% of the third graders, 36% of fourth graders and 42% of the fifth graders scored in the Advanced level. Stanford 9 Reading test scores at the 5th grade fell below average. Aprenda NCE scores were within the average range or higher on all subtests. Students met or exceeded expected gains on the Spanish and English TAAS* on the Mathematics subtests.

Conclusions: *Project AXBE activities were implemented as designed in the proposal for the fourth year of the study. Achievement objectives need to be addressed by the project director in order for them to be accomplished. Documentation of project activities for the 2002–03 school year will be critical since it is the last year of the program.*

Introduction

Program Description

Project Academia Xochiquetzal de Benavidez Elementary (AXBE) was a campus-wide attempt to restructure instructional programming and improve the social and educational environment for English Language Learners (ELLs). The project was funded through the Title VII Bilingual Education Comprehensive Schools Grant Program. The project had three principal components:

- Developmental Bilingual (DB) and Bilingual Gifted and Talented instructional programs,
- professional development training, and
- parent/community outreach efforts.

Developmental Bilingual and Bilingual Gifted and Talented Programs

A key element of Project AXBE was the restructuring of existing instructional programming to reflect the tenets of Developmental Bilingual (DB) education. This model emphasizes the concurrent development of both English and Spanish language skills for ELLs. Benavidez (kindergarten) students began their education receiving instruction primarily (80%) in Spanish. The amount of instruction received in English increased each grade in increments of 10%, so that by the fifth grade students were receiving half of their instructional programming in Spanish and half in English. In addition, to providing DB instruction, Project AXBE included a bilingual Gifted and Talented (G/T) component

for exceptional ELLs. The G/T program employed a model, which provided enriched curricula in all subject areas. Identification for the G/T Program consisted of five criteria:

- the Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test (NNAT;
- teacher observational inventories;
- parent observational inventories;
- grades; and,
- standardized tests.

Admission to the program was determined by a Campus Based Gifted and Talented Committee using the above criteria. Both instructional components emphasized instruction geared toward students' respective predominant intelligences with recent theory regarding the existence of multiple intelligences (Gardner, 1994). Both components incorporated the fine arts as a vehicle for developing curricula and enhancing the sociocultural awareness of students.

Program History

Before the development and implementation of Project AXBE, Benavidez employed a Transitional Bilingual Program (TBP). Under this model, student performance was not impressive. For example, the discrepancy between English-speaking students and Spanish-speaking students was evident in the results of the 1997 Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) Reading and Mathematics subtests. Across grade levels, students taking the Spanish version of the TAAS performed lower than students taking the English test. These disparities ranged in magnitude from 6% in fifth grade Mathematics to 37% in fourth grade Reading.

The Houston Independent School District (HISD) did not offer a Gifted and Talented program for ELLs. These as well as other discrepancies were identified during an audit conducted by the Office of Civil Rights (OCR) in May, 1997. Additional citations included the following:

- lack of language support in the core content areas, particularly in the upper elementary grades;
- lack of Spanish materials and software;
- lack of ELLs in the G/T programs; and
- current entrance criteria and test do not provide an equal opportunity for participation in the G/T programs by ELLs, due to all English based criteria.

All of the district-level discrepancies listed above were also found at Benavidez.

Therefore, Benavidez's students had to confront academic barriers. Project AXBE was a comprehensive response to the needs of Benavidez students who represented the shared vision of campus administrators, and staff.

Program Goals and Objectives

Project AXBE consisted of three goals that subsume a variety of objectives. The first goal was "to improve the academic achievement of ELLs by restructuring the instructional programs through implementation of a Developmental Bilingual Program and a Bilingual Gifted and Talented program which utilizes Multiple Intelligences, Fine Arts, and Multiculturalism." The following objectives were delineated:

- 50% of ELLs will gain at least one level each year on the Language Assessment Scales (LAS);
- ELLs will make annual gains of at least 5% in academic achievement on the criterion-referenced Spanish TAAS;
- ELLs will make annual gains of at least 5% in academic achievement on the norm-referenced tests Stanford 9 and Aprenda; and,
- to increase students' higher level thinking skills as measured through a norm-referenced test and portfolios.

The second goal of Project AXBE was "to restructure and upgrade the professional development of staff to improve the academic achievement and self-esteem of ELLs." Objectives associated with the second goal of the project were:

- Increase the teachers' knowledge of Developmental Bilingual Education, gifted and talented, and fine arts instructional programs as measured by the state teacher appraisal instrument, Professional Development Appraisal System (PDAS), and on-site administrative tours;
- increase the teachers' awareness of the students' learning styles through staff development in multiple Intelligences as demonstrated by pre and post surveys and lesson plans; and,
- Increase the teachers' knowledge and appreciation of students' multiculturalism by studying the history of various cultures as measured by a pre and post training survey.

The third project goal was "to increase parent/community outreach participation to improve the academic achievement of ELLs." The following objectives were articulated by program personnel:

- Enhance partnerships between the school and parent/community through expansion of existing programs and the addition of at least one new business/community partner each year;

- To increase parental/community involvement in the school by creating an information center that facilitates parent training and volunteering;
- To increase student involvement in the community through community services/projects;
- To increase parents' literacy skills in their primary language and English by participation in literacy and language classes; and
- To empower parents by training them to serve in leadership roles in the school and community.

Program Personnel

Project AXBE personnel consisted of a project coordinator, secretary, 35 bilingual teachers, and 18 teacher aides.

Program Participants

The demographic characteristics of the students at Benavidez Elementary School were retrieved from the 2001–02 Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS). These data are provided in **Table 1.** The majority (82%) of students were Hispanic. About 73% of the students were identified as bilingual. Also, 96% of the students received free/reduced lunch, and 92% were considered at-risk. Students identified as gifted and talented comprised 4% of the total population. Lastly, 34% of the students at Benavidez were identified as immigrant[1].

A total of 197 parents were involved in some type of educational programming in the 2001–02 school year. No demographic data were available for these parents. However, parent participants were representative of students as a whole.

Budget Arrangements

The five-year total budget for Project AXBE was $2,634,672. The Title VII contribution is $1,625,491, while in-kind contributions from HISD amount to $1,009,181. Fourth year implementation costs totaled $221,142.

Purpose of the Evaluation Report

This evaluation report represented the fourth year of implementation for Project AXBE. The following research questions were addressed:

1. How was the Project AXBE Developmental Bilingual Program (DBP), which utilizes Gifted and Talented (G/T) instruction, multiple intelligences, fine arts, and multiculturalism, implemented during the 2001–02 school year?

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Benavidez Elementary Students, 2001–02

	2001–2002	
Demographics	**N**	**%**
At-Risk	884	92
Free/Reduced Lunch	796	96
Bilingual	702	73
Gifted and Talented	41	4
African-American	87	9
Asian	32	3
Hispanic	793	82
White	50	5
Immigrant[1]	326	34
Female	478	50
Male	486	50
Total	**964**	**100**

2. What were the oral language proficiency scores and the reading proficiency levels in English for program participants during the 2001–02 school year?
3. What were the academic achievement scores during the 2001–02 school year?
4. What were the perceptions of students regarding the implementation of AXBE?
5. How were students involved in community service and extracurricular activities?
6. What were the levels of parent participation in program related activities?
7. How successful was the program in engaging business/community partners in program-related activities?

Methods

Data Collection

Both qualitative and quantitative data were used to address the research questions. Data pertaining to implementation of the instructional component of the project were collected using class schedules, lesson plans, classroom observation checklists, and interviews with the project coordinator (see **Appendix A**).

Oral language proficiency in English and Spanish was assessed using the Language Assessment Scales (LAS). At least 40 students from each grade level were randomly selected using class rosters for LAS testing. Data were provided in raw score form. The criteria used for expected gains were developed by the author of the LAS (DeAvila, 1997). DeAvila suggests that students at Level 1 can be expected to make 20 raw score point gains; Level 2 students are expected to gain 10 points per year; lastly, the expected growth of Level 3, 4, and 5 learners is 5 points. Also, the Reading Proficiency Tests in English (RPTE) were used to measure the

progress of program participants. Student's reading proficiency is rated at the Beginning, Intermediate and Advanced levels.

Academic achievement data consisted of scores on the norm-referenced Stanford 9, Aprenda, and the criterion-referenced Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS). The subtests from the Stanford 9 and Aprenda used were (a) Reading, (b) Mathematics, and (c) Language. The TAAS subtests included (a) Reading, (b) Writing, and (c) Mathematics. Higher-order thinking skills were assessed with the Thinking Skills subtest of both the Stanford 9 and Aprenda. Students were tested this year on either the Spanish or English TAAS, and both the Stanford or Aprenda in third, fourth, and fifth grades. In the first and second grades, all students were tested solely on Aprenda. Also, this school year both Stanford 9 and Aprenda were compared to a different set of norms. In previous years, HISD students were compared to Stanford 9, 1995 norms and Aprenda 2, 1996 norms. This year HISD student performance was compared to the Stanford 9, 2000 norms and Aprenda 2001 norms. These new norms are slightly more rigorous.

Data regarding perceptions of AXBE were gathered through a student survey adapted from a study titled, "Becoming Bilingual in the Amigos Two-Way Immersion Program." (Cazabon, Nicoladis, and Lambert, 1998). The survey included questions regarding the student's perceptions about Project AXBE (see **Appendix B**). Fourth grade students from two bilingual classrooms were selected to participate in the survey. A total of 64 surveys were completed. During the administration of the survey, the teacher was excused, while the students completed the survey.

Data used to document business/community partner involvement were provided by the project coordinator. Parent and student involvement in program-related activities was documented through sign-in sheets and class rosters.

Data Analysis

Qualitative data regarding program implementation were descriptive in nature and were presented in narrative form. Data reflecting implementation compliance were presented as percentages. Quantitative data pertaining to oral language proficiency were presented as raw scores. RPTE data were presented as percentages. Academic achievement and higher-order thinking skills data from the Stanford 9 and Aprenda were expressed as Normal Curve Equivalent (NCE) scores. Data from the criterion-referenced TAAS were presented as number taking and percentage passing each subtest. Qualitative data regarding student's perception of AXBE were also presented in narrative form.

Results

How was the Project AXBE Developmental Bilingual Program (DBP), which utilizes gifted and talented instruction, multiple intelligences, fine arts, and multiculturalism, implemented during the 2001–02 school year?

The DBP model requires that students follow a specified instructional sequence integrating English and Spanish. The daily schedules for the 35 Project AXBE teachers were analyzed to determine the ratio of Spanish to English instruction. All of the daily schedules conformed to the guidelines suggested in the DBP model. A series of unannounced classroom visits were also conducted to determine whether teachers were adhering to DBP guidelines in their daily instruction. A total of 5 classrooms were visited beginning in September, 2001. Observations of the classrooms revealed compliance with the DBP instructional model. For instance, a third grade teacher utilized gifted and talented instruction by having students conduct independent research on deserts. Students then presented their reports to the class. A fourth grade teacher incorporated fine arts by having students draw a picture of These students visited the library and searched on the Internet to gather information regarding deserts.

During the 2001–2002 school year, several opportunities were provided to teachers for G/T training. A total of 28 bilingual teachers attended professional development for G/T on September 18, 2001. Also, eight bilingual teachers attended a workshop on April, 20, 2002, titled "Drawing Out the Best in Gifted Students," given by Jon Pearson. On April 22, 2002, a total of 20 bilingual teachers attended a workshop on G/T and Multiple Intelligences. There were 12 out of the 35 Project AXBE teachers that were not G/T certified. Therefore, these teachers were given an opportunity during the summer of 2002 to participate in a 30 hour G/T training given by Dr. Terry Brandt. According to records provided by the project coordinator, a total of 5 bilingual teachers attended the training.

A sample of a G/T lesson plan was procured to

determine how teachers used multiple intelligences theory to guide instructional practice. The lesson plan was organized around a thematic unit on Spanish Missions. The teacher linked *logical/mathematical intelligence* to instruction by having students solve word problems using information from the text on Spanish Missions. *Verbal linguistic intelligence* was emphasized during an exercise that required students to present research on missions. *Visual/spatial intelligence* was the focus of an exercise in which students built a model of a mission and made a mural. *Interpersonal intelligence* was highlighted in requiring students to work with a partner in exchanging and solving word problems. Finally, *intrapersonal intelligence*, or knowing about oneself, was demonstrated by having students write about how it would be to live in a mission. Evidence of utilizing *Body/kinesthetic intelligence or Musical/rhythmic intelligence* was not found in the lesson plan that was examined.

Beginning in August 2001, a variety of whole group, small group, and individual fine arts lessons were implemented at the Benavidez campus. Lessons were held on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday. One example of a whole group lesson was a project in which multiple classrooms were involved in drawing and painting. An example of a small group lesson was a drama class in which students acted in plays in groups of six to twelve. An example of an individual lesson was piano keyboarding or individual guitar lessons.

What were the oral language proficiency scores and the reading proficiency levels in English for program participants during the 2001–02 school year?

As discussed previously, the expected gain for Level 1 students is 20 points; Level 2 students are expected to gain 10 points; lastly, Levels 3,4, and 5 students are expected to gain 5 points (DeAvila, 1997). The average raw score gains on the Language Assessment Scales (LAS) in Spanish are presented in **Table 2.** Indicated in bold, Level 1 students in kindergarten had a 25.4 point gain, and exceeded the expected gain of 20 points. Level 1 students in first and second grade made gains of 17.4 and 14.2, but did not meet the expected gain of 20 points. Also, Level 2 students in kindergarten, first, and second grade made gains of 5.2, 7.3, and 9.3, but did not met their expected gain of 10 points. Level 3,4,5 students in kindergarten had a 5.3 gain and met the expected gain of 5 points. However, Level 3,4,5 students in first and second grade did not meet the expected gain.

The average raw score gains on the English LAS are presented in **Table 3**. Indicated in bold, Level 1 students in kindergarten met the expected gain of 20 points, with a 21.8 gain. Level 1 students in first grade made an 11.2 gain, but did not meet the expected gain. Level 1 second grade students experienced a decline of 4.8 in their average raw score. Also, Level 2 students in kindergarten, first, and second grade experienced

Table 2: Matched Spanish LAS Raw Scores by Grade

			Average Raw Score Gains				
Level	Expected Gain	N	Kinder.	N	First	N	Second
1	20+	10	**25.4**	10	17.4	7	14.2
2	10+	14	5.2	15	7.3	16	9.3
3,4,5	5+	22	**5.3**	15	.7	22	-1.8

Table 3: Matched English LAS Raw Scores by Grade

			Average Raw Score Gains				
Level	Expected Gain	N	Kinder.	N	First	N	Second
1	20+	44	**21.8**	32	11.2	28	-4.8
2	10+	1	-6	5	-5.9	18	-0.1
3,4,5	5+	1	**9**	3	-5.8	0	*

*Sample did not include students at this LAS level.

declines. Level 3,4,5 students in kindergarten met the expected gain of 5 points, with a 9 point gain. Level 3,4,5 students in first grade experienced a decline of 5.8 in their average raw score. There were no Level 3,4,5 students in second grade tested.

The oral language proficiency of students served by AXBE was measured using the LAS. Only Levels 1 and 3,4,5 students in kindergarten met the expected gain on the Spanish LAS. Also, only Levels 1 and 3,4,5 students in kindergarten met and exceeded the expected gain on the English LAS. Overall, 4 of the 17 (indicated in bold) groups met the expected gains in oral language proficiency.

The Reading Proficiency Tests in English (RPTE) are presented in **Table 4.** Third, fourth, and fifth grade student's reading proficiencies were rated at the Beginning, Intermediate and Advanced levels. The majority (55%) of third grade students had a proficiency rating of Advanced followed by 23% Beginning and 21% Intermediated. Approximately, 38% of fourth grade students were rated Beginning followed by 27% Intermediate and 36% Advanced. The reading proficiency ratings of fifth graders included 42% Advanced, 32% Beginning and 27% Intermediate.

Table 5 presents the RPTE Cohort Report. Proficiency ratings for students that were rated Beginning in 2001 and tested in 2002 reveal that 53% of these students were rated beginning again. About 28% were rated Intermediate and 18% Advanced. In addition, proficiency ratings for students that were rated Intermediate in 2001 and tested in 2002 revealed that 70% were rated Advanced. The remaining 30% rated Intermediate again.

Table 4: RPTE Ratings by Grade 2002

Table 5: RPTE Cohort Report by Ratings 2001-02

Proficiency Rating	Students Rated Beginning		Students Rated Intermediate	
	N	%	N	%
Beginning	32	53	0	0
Intermediate	17	28	11	30
Advanced	11	18	26	70

What were the academic achievement scores for program participants during the 2001–02 school year?

Tables 6 and 7 present achievement data by subtest and grade level on the Stanford 9. The number of students taking the test decreased from 2001 to 2002 because Rodriguez Elementary School opened in 2002 as a relief school for Benavidez Elementary School. The Normal Curve Equivalent (NCE) scores are given for a four year period. NCE scores range from 1 to 99, 50 being the median. NCE

Table 6: Stanford 9 Achievement Data by Subtest and Grade: Spring 1999, 2000, 2001, and 2002

	Number Taking				Reading NCE				Mathematics NCE			
Grade	1999	2000	2001	2002	1999	2000	2001	2002	1999	2000	2001	2002
1st	43	46	53	44	41	40	44	40	34	36	33	40
2nd	50	40	49	42	37	45	39	40	31	40	39	36
3rd	49	48	43	32	53	44	52	41	62	48	55	50
4th	86	49	51	41	44	45	51	35	51	55	58	43
5th	133	154	171	113	31	31	35	27	44	45	45	39

Table 7: Stanford 9 Achievement Data by Subtest and Grade: Spring 1999, 2000, 2001, and 2002

	Number Taking Taking				Language NCE				Thinking Skills NCE			
Grade	1999	2000	2001	2002	1999	2000	2001	2002	1999	2000	2001	2002
1st	43	46	53	44	39	46	43	41	†	†	†	†
2nd	50	40	49	42	41	41	38	44	†	†	†	†
3rd	49	48	43	32	57	43	53	46	55	42	52	†
4th	86	49	51	41	52	56	55	47	46	47	52	†
5th	133	154	171	113	42	39	41	35	35	35	36	†

†-Test Not Administered

scores that fall below 34 are considered below average, scores that fall between 35-65 are considered average, and scores above 65 are considered above average. The Reading NCE scores for all grades decreased from 2001 to 2002 with the exception of second grade. However, the Reading NCE scores were within the average range except for fifth grade where the scores fell in the below average range. For all grades except first grade, Math NCE scores decreased from 2001 to 2002. Math NCE scores were within the average range for all grades except fifth grade. The 2002 Language NCE scores for first, third, fourth and fifth grades have decreased compared to the 2001 NCE scores. However, Language NCE scores were within the average range. The Thinking Skills NCE scores were not reported for 2002 because that subtest was not administered. The Stanford scores for Spring 2002 should be viewed with caution because the test was renormed and test scores for all students across the district decreased due to the new norms.

Student achievement data on the Aprenda are presented in **Tables 8 and 9.** These data reflect strong performance on all subtests across grades. All of the NCE scores for each subtest and grade were within the average range or higher. The Reading NCE scores slightly increased in 2002 for fourth and fifth grades. However, decreased for first and second grades. The Math NCE scores increased at the third grade, and decreased in the first, second and fourth grades. The Language NCE scores decreased at all grades tested. The Thinking Skills subtests was not administered in 2002. Once again, caution should be taken when comparing the 2002 Aprenda scores to the 2001 scores because a different set of norms were used.

Tables 10,11, and 12 present student performance on the Spanish TAAS for third and fourth grades and the English TAAS for fifth grade. Third grade students had the highest percent passing the reading section of the Spanish TAAS with 87%. Ninety six percent of the third and fourth grade students passed the Mathematics section of the Spanish TAAS. Finally, 94% of fourth grade students passed the Writing section of the Spanish TAAS. The passing rate of fifth grade students taking the English TAAS improved on the Reading and Mathematics subtests. On the Reading subtest of the *English* TAAS for example, the passing rate increased from 67% to 68%. Furthermore, the passing rate for fifth grade students increased on the Mathematics section of the English TAAS from 79% to 85%.

The expected gain for students taking the Spanish and English TAAS was 5% annual increase. Fourth grade met the expected 5% gain. However, third and fifth grade did not. There was a 5% increase in the number of students passing the Mathematics subtests of the Spanish and/or English TAAS. Fourth grade exceeded the expected gain on the Reading subtest, but third and fifth grade did not. In addition, the fourth

	Number Taking				Language NCE				Thinking Skills NCE			
Grade	1999	2000	2001	2002	1999	2000	2001	2002	1999	2000	2001	2002
1st	171	196	180	111	59	59	58	48	†	†	†	†
2nd	176	159	180	127	61	65	63	52	†	†	†	†
3rd	179	188	154	89	66	63	67	63	62	63	64	†
4th	91	143	147	73	55	63	62	54	55	62	60	†
5th	6	0	0	0	50	†	†	†	36	†	†	†

†-Test Not Administered

Table 8: Aprenda Achievement Data by Subtest and Grade: Spring 1999, 2000, and 2001

	Number Taking				Reading NCE				Mathematics NCE			
Grade	1999	2000	2001	2002	1999	2000	2001	2002	1999	2000	2001	2002
1st	171	196	180	111	59	59	58	48	46	43	50	46
2nd	176	159	180	127	68	67	64	53	56	59	59	53
3rd	179	188	154	89	64	65	65	67	63	61	66	71
4th	91	143	147	73	55	59	58	59	58	63	61	51
5th	6	0	0	0	50	†	†	†	36	†	†	†

†-Test Not Administered

Table 9: Aprenda Achievement Data by Subtest and Grade: Spring 1999, 2000, and 2001

Table 10: Spanish TAAS Performance for Third and Fourth Grade, English TAAS Performance for Fifth Grade

Table 11: Spanish TAAS Performance for Third and Fourth Grade, English TAAS Performance for Fifth Grade

	Number Taking				Mathematics Percent Passing			
Grade	1999	2000	2001	2002	1999	2000	2001	2002
3rd	177	193	155	98	74	76	85	96
4th	89	145	152	68	74	77	89	96
5th	129	137	135	85	64	64	79	85

Table 12: Spanish TAAS Performance for Third and Fourth Grade, English TAAS Performance for Fifth Grade

	Number Taking				Writing Percent Passing			
Grade	1999	2000	2001	2002	1999	2000	2001	2002
4th	88	143	148	69	85	78	90	94

grade writing section did not meet the 5% annual increase. However, the fifth grade reading passing rate of 68% passing is a problem that should be addressed since only a 1% increase was attained and the passing rate could be improved.

What were the perceptions of students regarding the implementation of AXBE?

Student's perceptions regarding the implementation of AXBE were gathered through a survey. The majority (80%) of the students completed the Spanish version of the survey. The remaining 20% completed the English version. A total of 64 fourth grade students enrolled in a bilingual class participated. Students were asked "When did you become a student at Benavidez Elementary School?" Approximately 28% indicated "kindergarten," 11% "first grade," 19% "second grade", 19% "third grade," and 23% indicated that this was their first year at this school. Students were also asked, "When you first started school, what language did you mostly speak?" The majority of students at 55% stated "A lot Spanish, and a little English." An additional 42% stated "only Spanish," while 2% stated "only English." One student did not respond. The majority (69%) of these students enjoyed "very much" studying Spanish and English the way it is taught in school compared to 20% whom enjoyed it " a little," and 8% "not a lot." Two students did not respond to the question. Students were then asked, "How often does your teacher teach in English?" The overwhelming majority (83%) of students indicated "sometimes," followed by 17% who stated "all the time." In addition, students were asked, "Do you think that you are ahead in English compared to the other fourth grade students at your school?" About 48% of the students indicated, "Yes, I am ahead," and 42% indicated "Maybe a little ahead. Nine percent of the students indicated "No, I am behind." Students were also asked, "When speaking to your friends in school, in what language do you mostly speak?" Approximately 50% of students stated "Spanish," compared to 11% who stated "English." About 39% of students stated that they speak to their friends at school in "both English and Spanish." Students were asked, "What can you translate from Spanish to English and from English to Spanish?" The majority (56%) of students indicated "some things," while 38% indicated "most things." Also, 2% of students indicated "everything," compared to 5% who indicated "nothing." Furthermore, students were asked, "How often do you use the computer in your classroom?" The overwhelming majority (81%) of students indicated "sometimes, 16% "never," and 3% "all the time." Project AXBE provided students with extracurricular activities. Of those students surveyed, the majority (56%) indicated "yes," they have participated

in after-school activities. About 44% indicated "no" they have not participated.

Students were also given an opportunity to comment on what they like most about the way they are learning Spanish and English in their classroom. Two themes emerged from the responses provided by students. The first theme described what students like most about what they have learned. For example, students stated that they like how they can translate, communicate, and learn new words. Some of the comments from students included:

- That you can translate English into Spanish and Spanish into English.
- That I like to learn more to speak both languages so I can talk to people.
- That you can learn new words in both languages and also if they tell you something in English you can understand them and you will not remain silent because you understand English and Spanish.

The second theme described what students like most about the ways they have learned. For example, students like doing activities, working in groups, and how they are taught. Some of the comments from students included:

- That you do activities.
- When we read in a group or with classmates.
- I like the way they teach me both languages because they give reasons and they give me instruction.

What were the levels of parent participation in program related activities?

The parent involvement program at Benavidez Elementary School was implemented throughout the school year. Each month meetings and special activities were initiated to address the special needs of the parents in the Benavidez community. (**See Appendix C**) Parents had the opportunity to participate in various activities such as: Literacy, Arts and Crafts, English as a Second Language, computer, and nutrition classes. **Table 13** presents the total number of parents enrolled in the parent activities during the 2001–02 school year. Family Math Night had the highest attendance of all the activities with 53 parents attending. Some of the classes that had smaller attendance may have been due to the fact that the classes were held during the work time hours rather than after school. A total of 197 parents were registered in at least one activity. Additional parent involvement activities were available through Project Reconnect a district-wide program implemented at Benavidez Elementary School.

How were students involved in extracurricular activities and community service?

Benavidez Elementary School implemented a Title VII after school program that took place Monday through Friday, from 3:30-4:30. (**See Appendix D**) Children had the opportunity to participate in various classes such as: Volleyball, Basketball, Piano, Baile Folklorico and Karate. **Table 14** presents the total number of students registered in after-school programs in 2001–02 school year. The most attended class was Karate with 109 students registered. A total of 260 students were registered in at least one after school activity. Additional after school programs available for students were: Camp Twist and Shout, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Music, and YMCA.

Students were also involved in community service activities. Students participated in a food drive by making Holiday food baskets to distribute to needy families. Also, students, along with the help of parents and staff, raised money for September 11 victims. Finally, students wrote letters to soldiers in Afghanistan.

Table 13: Parent Involvement Programs: 2001–02

Activities	Number of Parents
English as a Second Language	20
Computer	14
Literacy	11
Parenting Classes	23
Nutrition	9
Arts and Crafts	11
Family Math	53
Math Workshops	15
Children's Museum	18
PAC/PTO Meetings	23
Total	**197**

Table 14: After School Programs: 2001–02

Activities	Number of Students
Volleyball	35
Basketball	49
Piano	46
Baile Folklorico	21
Karate	109
Total	**260**

How successful was the program in engaging business/community partners in program-related activities?

Project AXBE personnel achieved their goal of adding one new business partner during the school year. The Houston Police Bicycle Administration was the community partner added for the 2001–02 school year. Officer Jack Hanagriff was the Houston Police officer who was the community contact at the school.

The Police Bicycle Administration provided safety training for students and visits to the school during the peak hours of vehicle traffic and provided training to the Parent Safety Patrol. Finally, Officer Hanagriff spoke to the parents at the PTO meeting regarding child safety.

Discussion

Project AXBE consisted of three goals that were designed to restructure instructional programming and improve the social and educational environment of English Language Learners (ELLs). The first goal was "to improve the academic achievement of ELLs. An analysis of Spanish and English LAS scores for kindergarten, first and second grade students revealed that 4 of the 17 groups met the expected gains in oral language proficiency. Only Level 1 and Levels 3,4,5 students in kindergarten met and exceeded the expected gain on the Spanish and English LAS. However, there were no first or second grade students who met the expected gain on either the Spanish or English LAS. Furthermore, 6 of the 17 groups experienced a decline in oral language proficiency on the Spanish and English LAS. The LAS scores may be an indication that the project coordinator needs to review English and Spanish oral language instruction. An analysis of RPTE results revealed that the majority (55%) of third grade students, 36% of fourth grade students and 42% of the fifth grade students had an English reading proficiency rating of Advanced. Also, proficiency ratings for students that were rated Beginning in 2001 and tested in 2002 revealed that 53% (n=32) of these students were rated Beginning again. About 28% (n=17) were rated Intermediate and 18% (n=11) Advanced. Proficiency ratings for students that were rated Intermediate in 2001 and tested in 2002 revealed that 70% (n=26) were rated Advanced, 30% (n=11) rated Intermediate again. Stanford 9 and Aprenda scores were also analyzed. Stanford 9 reading test scores at the 4th and 5th grade level were below grade level. This may be due to the number of new immigrants[1] at these grade levels. New students placed at the fourth or fifth grade level who have not had an opportunity to benefit from three or more years in the program. Aprenda NCE Scores were in the average range or higher on all subtests. The Spanish and English TAAS scores indicated that students met or exceeded expected gains except for 5th grade English TAAS.

In addition, fourth grade project student's were given an opportunity to participate in a survey that was English on one side and Spanish on the other side. The overwhelming majority (80%) of students completed the Spanish version. Approximately 50% of the project students stated that they speak in Spanish with their friends at school and 39% speak in both English and Spanish with their friends. Also, 56% of project students indicated that they can translate "some things" and 38% "most things" from Spanish to English and English to Spanish. Although most student participants completed the Spanish version of the survey, their responses to the survey exhibit bilingual characteristics.

The second goal of Project AXBE was "to restructure and upgrade the professional development of staff to improve the academic achievement and self-esteem of ELLs. Bilingual teachers participated in a total of 4 professional development activities regarding project AXBE. The types of professional development teachers attended focused on Gifted/Talented and Multiple Intelligences training.

The third goal was "to increase parent/community outreach participation to improve the academic achievement of ELLs." This was accomplished by adding the Houston Police Bicycle Administration as the new community partner for the 2001–02 school year. Also, parent had ten different opportunities for involvement during the 2001–02 school year. Family Math classes had the highest number of parents involved with Parenting Classes coming in second. A total of 197 parents attended parent involvement activities at the school during the school year. Students had many opportunities for after school involvement. Karate classes were most popular with students followed by basketball and volleyball. A total of 260 students attended after school activities.

Conclusion

During its fourth year, Project AXBE staff addressed and met the majority of the program goals. It was evident that the students in the program were learning to speak and read in both Spanish and English through the Bilingual Developmental Model. Therefore, the full implementation of these goals in the fifth year of the program will ensure that project AXBE's attempt to restructure instructional programming and improve the social and educational environment for English Language Learners will occur.

Recommendations

1. Since next year is the last year of the project, changes in the program that would impact achieving objectives should be documented. Specifically, document the number of new teachers by grade level, training, and other factors that may impact student achievement.

2. First and second grade students did not attain expected gains in oral language proficiency on the LAS. Project teachers need to develop student's English and Spanish oral language abilities. Project coordinator may consider providing project teachers with additional strategies/training that would assist them in increasing their students oral language proficiency.

3. Less than half of fourth and fifth graders scored at the Advanced level on the RPTE. Project teachers at this grade level should assess or diagnose individual students reading difficulties and develop appropriate lesson plans.

4 Fifth grade passing rate on the reading subtest of the English TAAS reveals that only 68% passed. NCE reading scores on the Stanford 9 indicated that fifth grade students scored below average. Project staff should review instructional practices in reading at this grade level. The number of recent immigrants placed at the fifth grade level should be documented because these students have not benefited from four years of the program.

5. The majority of fourth grade students completed the Spanish version of the survey, although their responses demonstrated bilingual characteristics. Project teachers should encourage project students to feel equally confident in the English language.

6. Continued monitoring of project AXBE will provide additional information on the program's effectiveness. Also, a final evaluation of AXBE at the end of its fifth year will yield the full outcome of the project.

References

DeAvila, E. A., & Duncan, S. E. (1981). *A Convergent Approach to Oral Language Assessment: Theoretical and Technical Specifications on the Language Assessment Scales (LAS) Form A*. San Rafael, CA: Linguametrics Group.

Gardner, H. (1985). *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences*. New York: Basic Books.

Cazabon, M., Nicoladis, E. and Lambert, W. (1998). Becoming Bilingual in the Amigos Two-Way Immersion Program." Santa Cruz, CA and WashinG/Ton, DC: Center for Research on Education, Diversity and Excellence.

Endnote

1 HISD defines immigrant status for TEA funding purposes as those students born outside the United States who have been in the United States 3 continuous years or less.

Appendix A

Classroom Implementation Checklist

Date_____ Grade_____ Teacher_____

Task/Activity	Observed	*Degree of Implementation 1 2 3 4	Not Observed but Evident	Not evident	Comments
Students are assigned an ESL Level					
Language Allotment: 80% Spanish/20% English____ 70% Spanish/30% English____ 60% Spanish/40% English____ 50% Spanish/50% English____					
Content: ESL/ESLD____ Social Studies____ Math____ Science____ ESL Reading____ Reading____ Other Languages____					
LEP students instructed in Science/Social Studies using English, Spanish in all other subjects.					
Non-LEP students instructed in Science/Social Studies using English.					
Students participate in daily oral language exercises in English.					
Students are taught using specific strategies that focus on individual MI's.					

1. *Implementation is only in the planning stages*
2. *Limited Implementation has started*
3. *Being Implemented, needs Improvement*
4. *Full Implementation*

Appendix B

Questionnaire for the Students in the AXBE Program

Purpose: We would like to know what you think about AXBE, a bilingual program at your school for the past four years. Your responses are important to us. There are no wrong or right answers.

Instructions: Please do NOT write your name on this page. For each statement, circle your answer.

1. When did you become a student at Benavidez Elementary School?

A	B	C	D	E
I started in kindergarten.	I started in first grade.	I started in second grade.	I started in third grade.	This is my first year at this school.

2. When you first started school, what language did you mostly speak?

A	B	C
Only Spanish	Only English	A lot of Spanish, and a little English

3. How much do you enjoy studying Spanish and English the way it is taught in school?

A	B	C
Very much	A little	Not a lot

4. How often does your teacher teach in English?

A	B	C
All the time	Sometimes	Never

5. Do you think that you are ahead in English compared to the other fourth grade students at your school?

A	B	C
Yes, I am ahead.	Maybe a little ahead.	No, I am behind.

6. When speaking to your friends in school, in what language do you mostly speak?

A	B	C
English	Spanish	Both English and Spanish

7. What can you translate from Spanish to English and from English to Spanish?

A	B	C	D
Everything	Most things	Some things	Nothing

8. How often do you use the computer in your classroom?

A	B	C
All the time	Sometimes	Never

9. Have you ever participated in any after-school activities like karate, soccer, *baile folklorico*, keyboarding or sculpting/pottery.

A	B
Yes	No

10. What do you like most about the way you are learning Spanish and English in your class?_____

_____

_____

_____

Appendix C

AXBE Parent Involvement Activities 2001-2002

Category	Description
Math Workshops	• Parents as Partners – Three sessions with the math specialist to provide an overview of elementary mathematics. • Family Math Night
Adult ESL Classes	• English as a Second Language Classes
Parenting Classes	• Nutrition • Council on Alcohol and Drugs
Arts and Crafts	• Dance • Making Objects •
Computers	• Logging On • Internet Us
Meetings	• Parent Advisory Committee • Parent/Teacher Organization

Appendix D

After School Program Schedule

Karate	
Kindergarten	Monday & Tuesday
1st	Wednesday
2nd- 5th	Thursday & Friday

Volleyball	
Kindergarten-2nd	Monday & Tuesday
3rd - 5th	Wednesday

Basketball	
Kindergarten- 2nd	Thursday
2nd- 5th	Friday

Piano	
Kindergarten (Ms. Bell's Class)	Monday
Kindergarten and 1st	Tuesday
2nd- 5th	Thursday

Baile Folklorico	
Kindergarten – 1st	Monday, Tuesday & Wednesday
2nd- 5th	Thursday & Friday