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Developing Partnerships across Rural, Cultural, and Intellectual Contexts to Improve Literacy and Student Achievement

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Developing partnerships across rural, cultural, and intellectual contexts to improve literacy and student achievement

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Presentation Outline

Background

Literacy
Development
Across Contexts

Taylor
Community

The Read to the
Top! Model

Lessons
Learned and
Future
Directions



Reading Difficulties

- On the 2013 NAEP, 65% of fourth graders still scored below Proficient in reading, while 32% scored below even the Basic level of competence (National Center for Education Statistics, 2014a).
- Reading is declining in America, and this decline has civic, social, cultural, and economic implications (National Endowment for the Arts, 2010)
- Findings from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (NLSY) suggest that poor families (those meeting the federal definition of poverty) are less likely than non-poor families to own 10 or more books (Bradley, Corwyn, McAdoo, & Coll, 2001).
- Once at the high school level, the opportunity to learn to read has passed and bad compensatory habits have developed. (Hilsmier et al., 2014)



Learning Disabilities

“Given the high prevalence of reading problems, it is much more likely for your child to have a reading problem than almost any other physical problem for which he is being checked.”

Dr. Sally Shaywitz, *Overcoming Dyslexia*



Summer Reading Programs

- The number of minutes spent reading during out-of-school time, correlates positively with reading achievement (Anderson et al., 1988)
- Programs intended to counteract this summer setback, such as programs offered by public libraries (ALA, 2009), can fail to reach the very students who need them the most, because the children who struggle the most with reading are the ones least likely to choose to read recreationally.
- The summer break can provide a unique opportunity to remediate and expand on learning for students who are struggling (Allington et al., 2010)
- Poor readers' loss of reading skill over the summer break is a major factor estimated to account for up to 80% of the developing gap between good and poor readers, especially for low-income children (Allington & McGill-Franzen, 2012)



When you can't read

- Academic failure in school
- Behavior problems
- High risk for victimization and crime
- Low self esteem
- Low skill/no employment
- Long-term poverty
- Generational illiteracy and poverty



Taylor, Texas

- In 1876 Taylor, TX was founded in anticipation of the International Great Northern Railroad. Immigrants from Czechoslovakia and other Slavic states, as well as from Germany and Austria, helped establish the town.
- Taylor became a shipping point for cattle, grain, and cotton.
- Taylor's population growth has increased an average of approximately 128 new residents per year
- Data from the United States Census Bureau estimates the 2014 population for the City of Taylor was 16,483.



Demographics of Taylor,TX

White alone (2010)	71.7%
Black or African American alone (2010)	10.2%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone (2010)	1.2%
Asian alone (2010)	0.7%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone (2010)	0.1%
Two or More Races (2010)	3.0%
Hispanic or Latino (2010)	42.8%
Language other than English spoken at home, age 5+ (2009-2013)	27.1%
High school graduate or higher, persons age 25+ (2009-2013)	78.6%
Bachelor's degree or higher, persons age 25+ (2009-2013)	14.7%
THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN	



Taylor, Texas

Persons under 5 years old (2010)	7.7%
Persons under 18 years old (2010)	27.5%
Persons 65 years and over (2010)	11.9%
Land area (2010)	17.20 sq mi.
Persons per square mile (2010)	883.3
Households (2009-2013)	5,658
Per capita money income in past 12 months (2013 dollars), (2009-2013)	\$20,631
Median household income (2009-2013)	\$44,158
Persons below poverty level (2009-2013)	16.6%



Research Supporting the Need for Structured Reading Programs

- Better school attendance
- Higher scores on standardized tests of mathematics, reading and language arts
- 4th graders outperform their counterparts on academic achievement tests
- Older children and adolescents (middle school and high school) may derive greatest benefit
- High school students found to have greater expectations for the future and are more interested in school than their peers
- Significant relationships between children, families and communities



Critical Facts About Safety

- After school and between school hours are critical times for youth
 - Opportunity to learn and grow
 - Or, a time of risk to youth's health and safety
 - Peak times for juvenile crime and risky behaviors such as alcohol and drug use



Safety Issues

- Students who spend no time in structured, extracurricular activities are 49 percent more likely to have used drugs and 37 percent more likely to become teen parents than those students who spend one to four hours per week in extracurricular activities.
- Students in the Read to the Top! Summer Program spent 12 hours (8 hours more) per week in reading activities (T-Th, 10-2).



Research Supporting the Need for Community-based and Supported Reading and Safety Programs

- Low literacy rates
- High dropout rates
- Low graduation rates
- Teen pregnancy
- Low college attendance
- High risk for incarceration



Mission of the Community-based Reading Program

- To provide educational, recreational, health and social support development for the residents of all ages within and surrounding the Taylor community, in collaboration and partnership with TISD, community groups (e.g., Rotary Club), and institutions (e.g., UT).



Goals of the Summer Reading Program

- To work with educators and community builders to design, implement and sustain literacy programs that meet the most urgent educational needs
- To promote reading as an enjoyable and leisure activity for all ages
- To provide opportunities for interactive reading
- To provide reading strategies for struggling and reluctant readers at all ages
- To raise up kids who love to read



Objectives for Reading Program

- To provide out of school safe, structured learning opportunities within a community context that convene regularly in hours after school and between school (summer);
- To promote the development, generalization and maintenance of reading and math skills;
- To develop responsible and literate individuals who enjoy reading and use skills to advance positive long life productivity and enjoyment.



Actual and Potential Benefits

- Reading achievement and enjoyment
- Math and science achievement
- Technological skill development
- Extracurricular involvement
- Music/arts
- Experiences such as community service
- Tutoring/mentoring opportunities
- Positive relationships with caring adults



Non-literacy Benefits

- Conflict resolution skills
- Collaboration/team work
- Respect for authority
- A sense of belonging and community
- Career exploration
- Self and parent reports of improved grades; teacher reports, report cards
- Fewer discipline problems
- Development of relationships with caring adults



The Bigger Picture

- **Community-based, Intervention and Prevention**
 - Offer a healthy and positive alternative
 - Bridge school and community
 - Involve community through service and resources
 - Keep kids safe and deter youth violence
 - Improve academic achievement
 - Help relieve stresses on working families
 - Provide spiritual foundations for families who seek those opportunities





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Reading Program Partners

- Significant and substantial support from TISD partnership (John Matthew-liaison)
- Community partners (e.g., Rotarians; Trish van Til)
 - Reading materials and supplies
 - Extracurricular materials
 - Food and nutrition
 - Extracurricular trips
 - Awards Banquet
 - Visibility



Sharing the Parent's Perspective

Success for their child...

1. Making accomplishments
2. Gaining opportunities
3. Acquiring knowledge/learning
4. Well-rounded/Joyful/happy

What parents feel they need to know in order for their child to be successful...

1. What are the expectations for students?
2. Are goals being met?
3. What are students learning?



Sharing the Parent's Perspective

Working in Partnership with Teachers/Schools

1. Communication
2. Staying informed
3. Sharing information

Teachers Need to Know this about/have with their students to have an effective teacher-student relationship

1. Students' interests
2. A relationship
3. Students' individual personality/learning style
4. Areas of strength and areas to develop



Future Directions

Where We Would To Take This Effort

- The creation of a Community-based Learning Center: It's okay to be safe and smart
 - Safe, drug-free, nicotine-free and supervised environment
 - Extensive mentoring in basic skills as reading and technology
 - Crime prevention measures
 - Significant parent and community involvement
 - Fun, positive, and open to all, inclusive
 - Goal oriented and outcomes based



What is a Literacy Community?

- What is a culturally responsive literacy community?
- Who should be the focus ?
- Why educators are key to community literacy building and sustainability?
- What do you do with volunteers from the community?
- Who gets the ball rolling?
- How do you pay for it?



Where are they Now?



My'Lik Kerley-international winner - student athlete at Stephen F. Austin.



Virginia Kerley -athlete of the year finalist and student athlete



Where are they now?



Kayla Taylor - National Honor
Society winner and
Superintendent's Scholar



Devon Taylor - 2015 Athlete of
the Year and currently attending
San Angelo State University



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