

CASE STUDY

Achievement Gap at a Texas Elementary School Reduced by 88%

Hispanic Students' TAAS Percent Passing Rates Increase 59.4 Points

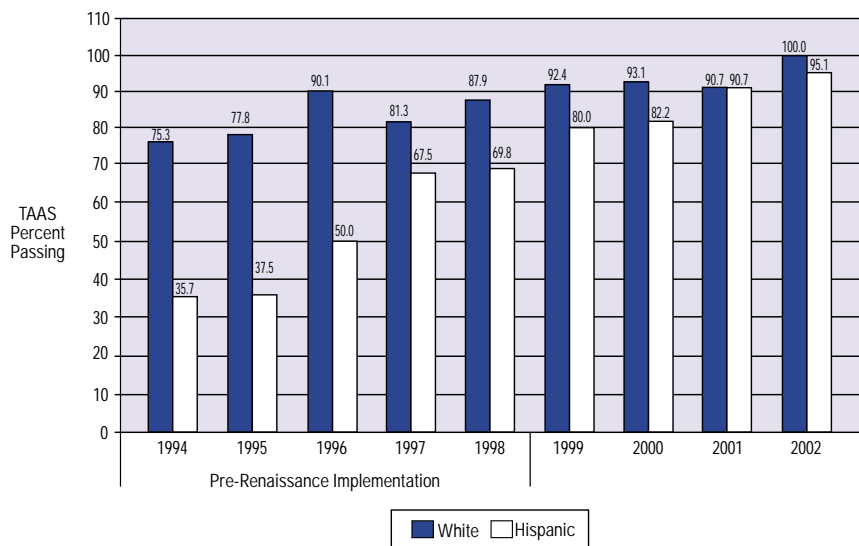
Source: Bo Lance, principal; Jennifer Beller, Janice Warren, and Teresa Slayden, teachers.

Research conducted from 1994–2002, report submitted in fall 2002.

Introduction

The implementation of Renaissance® school improvement solutions helped educators at Sudan Elementary personalize instruction and enable every student to become a successful learner. Evidence of the success of Renaissance solutions is seen in the reduction of the achievement gap between White and Hispanic students on the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS).¹ In the last eight years, the school's achievement gap was as high as 40.8 percentage points in 1995, compared to its post-Renaissance low of 4.9 points in 2002.

Achievement Gap Between White and Hispanic Students Narrows on TAAS (for all tests taken)



(more information on back)

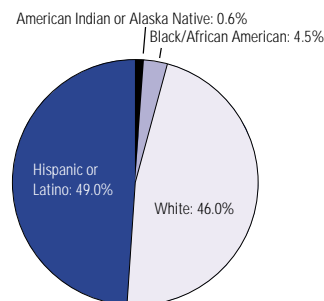
School Profile

Sudan Elementary School
 Students: 210, Grades: Pre-K–7
 Sudan, Texas

Demographics:

Rural
 Limited English proficiency: 9.0%
 Free or reduced lunch: 62.0%
 Mobility: 16.0%

Race/Ethnicity:



Educator Backgrounds

Bo Lance has been the principal of Sudan Elementary since 1990. He received his bachelor's degree in Physical Education and his master's degree in Educational Administration from Texas Tech University.

An educator for four years, **Jennifer Beller** received her bachelor's degree in Social Work from Abilene Christian University and her bachelor's degree in Elementary Education from West Texas A&M University.

Janice Warren, an educator for three years, received her bachelor's degree in Behavioral Science from Hardin-Simmons University.

Teresa Slayden, an educator for 12 years, received her bachelor's degree in Elementary Education from Eastern New Mexico University.

Study Description

After spending a year researching Renaissance solutions, Sudan Elementary faculty voted unanimously to use Accelerated Reader® reading management software and implement the Reading Renaissance® solution during the 1997–1998 school year. The implementation began with a 501: *Introduction to Reading Renaissance* professional development seminar, which was held for all staff during the summer of 1997.

During the first year, Sudan Elementary augmented their Reading Renaissance program with Perfect Copy™ writing skills development and management software. The school implemented Accelerated Math® math management software and the Math Renaissance® solution in grades four through seven in 1998–1999; implementation was expanded schoolwide in 1999–2000. In 2001–2002, the school added STAR Early Literacy® computer-adaptive diagnostic assessment.

Sudan Elementary incorporated many Renaissance Learning guidelines for an effective implementation of Renaissance solutions, including:

- Providing all students with 60 minutes of daily reading practice;
- Providing first- through third-graders with 80 minutes of daily math practice and fourth- through seventh-graders with 45 minutes of daily math practice²;
- Setting individualized goals;
- Using the Duolog Reading™³ method;
- Applying the zone of proximal development⁴;
- Targeting instruction through the use of Power Lessons™⁵
- Involving community and parent volunteers;
- Incorporating peer-tutoring techniques.

Sudan Elementary also developed a summer reading program, which encouraged students and parents to visit the school in the evening to checkout books and take Accelerated Reader quizzes.

Results

According to Bo Lance, principal at Sudan Elementary, the reduction of the achievement gap between student groups has been one of the most important benefits of implementing Renaissance solutions. The gap between White and Hispanic students on the TAAS (for all tests taken) was reduced by 88%—from 39.6 points in 1994 to just 4.9 points in 2002 (see graph on front).

In addition, library circulation increased by more than 119% since implementation of Renaissance solutions—14,637 books were checked out during the 1997–1998 school year and 32,073 were checked out during 2001–2002.

Attendance at the school's summer reading program has increased, as well. An average of 19 students attended each day in 1998 compared with 53 students attending each day in 2002.

Many educators at Sudan Elementary enrolled in the Renaissance Certification® program and achieved Model and Master Certification in their reading and math classrooms. What's more, the school became the first school in Texas to achieve Master certification.

Conclusion

The dedication of Sudan Elementary educators and administrators and the implementation of Renaissance school improvement solutions significantly impacted achievement for all students, as demonstrated by TAAS data, library circulation, and summer school participation.

¹ Texas Education Agency, (n.d.). *Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS)*. Austin, TX: Texas Education Agency, Student Assessment Division.

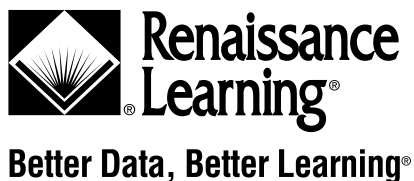
² Renaissance recommends providing students with at least 60 minutes of daily reading practice and 45 minutes of daily math practice.

³ Duolog Reading is a structured tutoring technique that helps struggling readers develop reading skills and independent readers read more difficult text. Tutors work one-on-one with students and are able to provide timely assistance to students.

⁴ The zone of proximal development (ZPD) is a student's appropriate reading range. Reading within the proper ZPD allows a student to be challenged without becoming frustrated, and therefore leads to optimum reading growth.

⁵ Power Lessons are 10 to 15 minute skill lessons that teach a single objective and are integrated into individual reading work.

⁶ The Renaissance Certification program provides professional recognition to educators who have met clear, objective Renaissance implementation standards.



For more information, or for additional copies of this report, contact:

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