

Education, Truancy, Dropout & Literacy Subcommittee
2/19/08

This packet contains handouts that were distributed at the Education, Truancy, Dropout & Literacy Subcommittee meeting on February 19, 2008 and includes the following items:

- Truancy and Dropout Combined Proposal key points
- Memo to W.C. Gentry (chairman, Education, Truancy, Dropout & Literacy Subcommittee) from Bill Scheu (Truancy Workgroup)m dated 2.1.08, re: Subcommittee Recommendations
- Booklet (prepared by Florida Institute of Education @ UNF) – *High Quality School Readiness: Why We Need It, What We Know, Where We Are in Jacksonville*

Truancy and Dropout Combined Proposal Key Points
February 19, 2008 Education Meeting

- Dropout prevention services including Achievers For Life and middle school transitions grants will be added to the truancy intervention proposal for one complete subcommittee proposal prior to the March 12 deadline.
- The compilation of one proposal will illustrate that both prevention and intervention services are necessary to completely address the problems of dropping out and truancy.
- A truancy proposal has been submitted for the subcommittee's review previously. Below are detailed bullets regarding the dropout prevention services being proposed that will be integrated into one combined proposal.

Brief background

- Middle school is the focus of the drop out prevention services because research indicates that middle school is when signs of dropping out (low attendance, poor behavior and academic failure) begin to fully manifest.

United Way – Achievers For Life

- Achievers For Life is a prevention strategy developed by United Way resulting from 11 months of research by community stakeholders including DCF, The Community Foundation, School Board members, JSO, etc. and community leaders.
- Achievers For Life is a four-pronged strategy to address the root causes of dropping out: student's lack of attachment to school, problems at home, repeated academic failure and no one pushing the student to complete school. These causes are addressed through
 - Family Advocates - work with families to address obstacles to excelling in school: mental health/behavioral problems, financial instability, employment, housing.
 - Achievement Advocates - paid and volunteer Achievement Advocates work with the students for two years. They are provided information regarding their assigned student's grades, classroom behavior and attendance, and with professional assistance will help the child achieve mutually established goals
 - Counseling through Full Service Schools – Eight Full Service Schools are serving a total of 78 schools and approximately 3,000 children annually through counseling services
 - Parent Engagement - Principals are provided financial resources to implement research-based, measurable, school-wide strategies to keep students and their families engaged in learning. Potential initiatives include: family orientation to middle school, teacher training and development, homeroom teachers serving as family liaisons throughout middle school, parent leadership development, welcoming front offices, and any other research-based parent engagement models

- These services are currently being piloted in Arlington and Fort Caroline Middle Schools (Terry Parker high school feeder pattern). Services began in October 2007.
- Although all data is not in for the second grading period, early preliminary results indicate success. 30% of Achievers For Life students showed improvement in GPA and 40% of students showed improvement in attendance in the second grading period as compared to the first.
- The cost of bringing Achievers For Life to a high school feeder pattern is approximately \$350,000 per year. This level of funding provides services to approximately 150 families annually. Some high schools have a much higher student population resulting in additional resources to adequately serve the students.
- The preliminary expansion plan is: two additional high school feeder patterns in 2008; three additional high school feeder patterns in 2009; two additional high school feeder patterns in 2010.
- Approximate annual investment for expansion:
 - 2008 - \$750,000
 - 2009 - \$1,900,000
 - 2010 - \$2,600,000
 - 2011 - \$2,600,000
 - 2012 - \$2,600,000
- Outcomes:
 - Achievers For Life services provided at 18 middle schools by 2010, seven additional high school feeder patterns
 - Estimated 5,150 families with children on the track to dropping out, diverted toward high school graduation during 2008 - 2012
 - The Achievers For life partnership consisting of community experts will review the initial results data and establish long-term success targets regarding dropout and graduation.

The Community Foundation - Making the Move: *Transitions to Middle School*

- Helping students transition from elementary to middle school reduces the disengagement factors that lead to dropping out. Research shows that students often struggle with major transitions in their educational continuum – from elementary to middle school and from middle school to high school. The transition from elementary to middle is particularly difficult because it coincides with the student’s passage through the turbulent adolescent years. It is during this transition that students begin to disengage from school or deepen disengagement that began earlier. This is evident in poor grades, grades, poor attendance and poor behavior.
- The Community Foundation’s local research revealed that the academic and behavioral performance of Duval County middle school students was significantly poorer – year after year – than that of elementary students. National research shows that the process of dropping out begins in sixth grade but can be stemmed with appropriate whole school prevention and more targeted early intervention. Transition programs that help support students during this critical time lead to

better outcomes in attendance, behavior and academic performance and prevent the dropout process from ever beginning.

- The Community Foundation recommends the replication of Kirby-Smith Middle School's Making the Move summer orientation program for rising 6th grade students at all Duval county Middle Schools.
- The cost per school is \$15,000 for a four-day camp to precede the first day of school. The camp familiarizes new students with the school campus, teachers, classrooms and procedures as well as provides student and teacher team building and other fun activities that build confidence and relationships. The total cost for all middle schools (28) is \$420,000 per year for a five year investment of \$2,100,000.
- The results of Kirby Smith's program in the first nine weeks of 2006-2007 are striking: Discipline referrals for sixth graders dropped 73% from 1800 in 2005-06 to 500 in 2006-2007. Similar results would be expected for all middle schools.

TO: Chairman W.C. Gentry and Members of the Education, Literacy, Truancy and Dropout committee of the Jacksonville Journey

FROM: Chairman Bill Scheu and Members of the Truancy Workgroup

DATE: February 1, 2008

SUBJECT: Subcommittee Recommendations

The Truancy subcommittee will present three recommendations for consideration by the full committee that hold promise for reducing the truancy crisis in Duval County Public Schools. Each of these recommendations contains an overview of the proposed solution, identifies the lead design and implementation agency, and has a fiscal note.

Recommendation #1 Hiring and Deployment of 30 additional Attendance Social Workers.

Hiring, training, and deploying 30 additional attendance social workers will reduce the number of schools served by staff members, increase personal contact and follow-up with truant students, and promises to reduce the number of students who have missed 20+ school days.

During the 2007-2008 school year DCPS has worked with its combined staff of truant officers and attendance social workers. Staff has been reallocated to decrease the number of schools served by each staff member (Table 1).

Staff Ratio	2006-2007	Staff Ratio	2007-2008	Proposed 2008-2009
District Wide (159 Schools)	10 Staff Avg. 15.9 Schools	District Wide (147 Schools)	17 Staff Avg. 9 Schools	38 Staff Avg. 4 Schools
Priority Schools (7 Schools)	13 Staff Avg. 2 staff per school	16 Turn around Schools	7 Staff Avg. 2 Schools	16 Staff 1 School per staff member
Truancy Centers (4 sites)	11 Staff Avg. 3 staff per site	Truancy Centers (4 sites)	7 Staff Avg. 2 staff per site	7 Staff Avg. 2 staff per site

DCPS should be the lead development and implementation agency for truancy. Better alignment with governmental, JSO and State Attorney's office, and community wide partners will be necessary in order to create a lattice of support services that meets the needs of students and families.

Fiscal Note: The anticipated salary and benefits of each social worker will be \$60K. The cost of this recommendation will be \$1.8 Million. DCPS will incur recruitment, training, and equipment expenses

Recommendation #2 Identification, alignment and coordination of community resources to support elimination of truancy.

Jacksonville has numerous community based and governmental organizations that in their own manner attempt to address truancy problems. Truancy should not be viewed as a cause but a symptom of more serious individual, family and community conditions. It is the recommendation of the subcommittee that we identify promising strategies and resources from these organizations. Coordination of strategies and bringing resources to scale is critical to ensuring that truant students receive the services they need to address the cause(s) of their truancy.

United Way of Northeast Florida should be the lead agency for aligning resources to address the needs of truant students. The agency currently published a social service resource guide; operates United Way 2-1-1, a 24-hour helpline providing information and referrals for social services and management of a community database of services; and is the lead partner for the Full Service Schools of Jacksonville collaboration. Full Service Schools of Jacksonville (FSS) is a United Way-led collaboration aimed at removing the barriers to student success. This collaboration consists of Jacksonville Children's Commission, Duval County Public Schools, Duval County health Department, other funders and non-profit agency service providers all committed to service delivery to address the medical needs, mental health and behavioral needs, social service needs and positive youth programming needs to give students the opportunity to make the best use of their education. FSS exists in eight different communities: Arlington, Beaches, Englewood, Greater Springfield, Paxon, Ribault, Sandalwood and Westside. These neighborhoods were selected because of their high risk factors and low protective factors for students and families. FSS is working with 78 different schools where 45% of the students of Duval County Public Schools are enrolled. Last year, FSS served over 28,000 people through all services including counseling, medical services, after-school activities and school-sponsored activities funded with FSS grants.

A Full Service Schools experienced social worker is needed to meet with the 30 Attendance Social Workers to provide case staffing and assist in connecting the families served by the Attendance Social Workers to community resources including Full Service Schools of Jacksonville. This intervention promises to assist the

Attendance Social Workers in connecting families to community resources to address the cause(s) of their truancy and prevent truancy in the future.

Fiscal Note: The anticipated salary and benefits of the experienced social worker to coordinate resources for the families of truant students is \$65,000. United Way will incur recruitment, training, supplies, equipment and other operational expenses. In addition, this strategy could result in greater demand for existing community services greater than the current capacity of these services resulting in the need for additional funds to underwrite the cost of expanded services.

Recommendation #3 Development of Community Action Truancy Team

Galvanizing Jacksonville around the truancy crisis will require a team of concerned citizens to engage the community in this effort. Maintaining awareness and concentrating resources on those students most in need of intervention would be the focus of this team.

The State Attorney's Office (SAO) would be the lead agency in creating and maintaining the truancy team. The team would consist of Duval County Public Schools, the State Attorney's Office, Youth Crisis Center, and the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office which are statutorily charged with addressing truancy. The Community Action Truancy Team would coordinate with non-profit agencies to assure that the children and their families received services. The goal of this team would be to address truancy on an individual and community level. In order to effectively combat the problem on an individual level, a crucial component would be a "war room" atmosphere where members of the team meet regularly throughout the school year to monitor truant students at all school levels. On a community level, Jacksonville United Against Truancy should be the entity through which information is dispersed for purposes of community awareness and education. The experience of JUAT in focusing the community on this issue is critical.

The development of this team would require a Memorandum of Understanding between the participating agencies.

Fiscal Note: The cost of developing and maintaining the Truancy Team is \$75,000. These costs include research, labor, printing, conducting community meetings, and distribution. The truancy team will largely be staffed by the members of JUAT mentioned above with the addition of a Truancy Team Coordinator.

High-Quality School Readiness:

Why We Need It,
What We Know,
Where We Are In Jacksonville

FIE Research Snapshot

February 2008

High-Quality School Readiness:

Why We Need It,

What We Know,

Where We Are In Jacksonville

Why We Need It

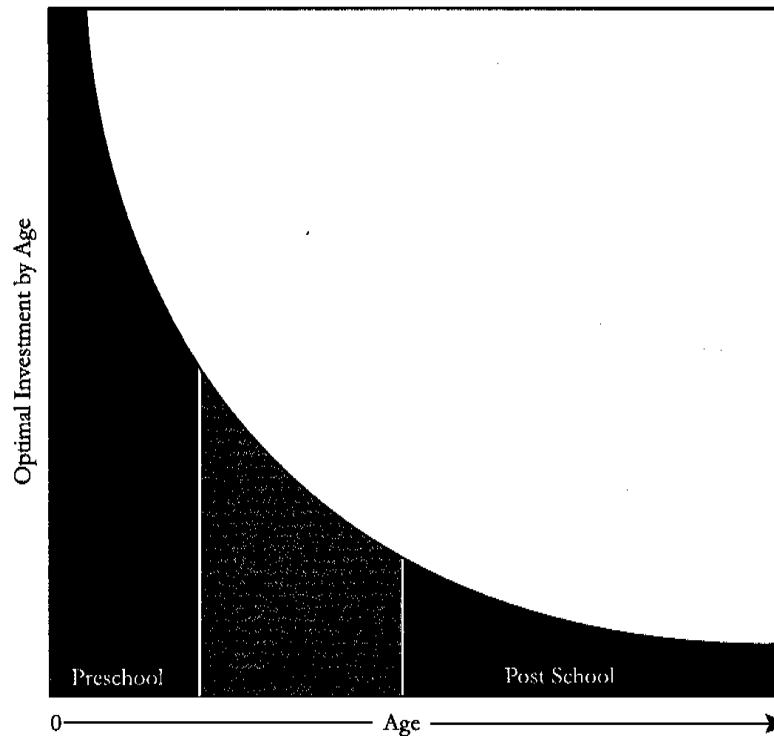
- Children from low-income families enter school with lower mean academic skills, and the gap increases over the school years.
- Children who start behind are unlikely to catch up.
- Children who remain behind are more likely to engage in delinquency and truancy and become high school drop outs.
- Consequences include low wages, poor health, less stable families, and less engagement in civic life.

What We Know

- Children's brains are built over time and depend on simultaneous development of their emotional well-being, social competence, and physical and cognitive development.
- Children's early experiences either *hinder or promote* their development. Supportive relationships, rich learning opportunities, and sound physical and mental health development come together to provide a strong foundation for improved school readiness *and* higher school achievement.
- Participation in *quality* early care and learning experiences enhances children's cognitive, social, and emotional development, thus increasing children's readiness for school.
- High-quality preschool programs use an intentional approach to teaching and learning.
- Evidence documents that *high-quality, intensive* early childhood interventions, particularly for children from low-income families, have lasting positive effects and are more cost effective than efforts to intervene later in life.

- Economists Heckman and Krueger (2003) reported that the economic return for high-quality preschool is higher than other youth-centered interventions (see figure below).

Optimal Investment for Higher Rates of Return



- Nationwide, pre-k programs vary widely in quality with large numbers judged as having mediocre to poor quality.
- Many of the most vulnerable children attend the lowest quality programs.

What Quality Looks Like

Seven program elements consistently produce positive impacts.

- Highly-skilled teachers who consistently engage in warm, responsive interactions
- Consistent use of age-appropriate, research-based curricula and stimulating learning materials
- High and consistent levels of child participation in meaningful learning activities
- A language-rich environment
- Strong accountability system that includes standards, valid assessments, and the use of data to guide program improvement
- Small class sizes in safe physical settings
- Families actively engaged in their children's development and learning

Where We Are in Jacksonville

No single program or delivery approach has proved to be a “silver bullet.” Researchers agree that the *key to success* is selecting strategies that have been documented as effective, ensuring they are well implemented, rigorously evaluating their impact, and using the results for continuous improvement.

Beginning with the Florida School Readiness Act, passed by the Florida Legislature in 1999, the Jacksonville school readiness sector created and has sustained collaborative partnerships (e.g., the *Early Learning Coalition of Duval [ELC]*, *Jacksonville Early Literacy Partnership [JELP]*) that bring together diverse perspectives and a shared vision of ensuring that all children enter kindergarten ready to read and ready to learn. The partners adopted and implemented a research-based, data-driven improvement model, organized into two components.

Component One: Develop, Test, and Implement Promising Models and Strategies Designed to Improve Quality

- **Guiding Stars of Duval** – a voluntary childcare center quality rating improvement system with a comprehensive program to support center teachers, staff, and directors as they work to improve quality
- **RALLY Jacksonville!** – citywide literacy program to increase community awareness and engagement via Mayor Peyton’s Book Club, *RALLY Book Drive!*, and *RALLY Champions!*
- **Jacksonville Career Ladder for School Readiness Practitioners** – citywide comprehensive professional development program for early childhood teachers to strengthen classroom instruction and support advanced education
- **United Way Born Learning and Success By 6, and Nemours BrightStart!**—examples of community investments to provide parent education and to improve children’s readiness and early literacy outcomes
- **ELC/JELP Pilot Initiatives** – pilot projects designed to test promising practices that target improving quality (e.g., *Family Engagement* and *Enhancing Leadership and Business Practices of Center Directors*)

Component Two: Evaluation and Accountability

- Monitor and assess program progress
- Identify and frame questions important to the community
- Conduct studies to inform policy and decision-making
- Share results with program staff, families, and the community
- Use results to guide future actions

Evidence of Success in Jacksonville

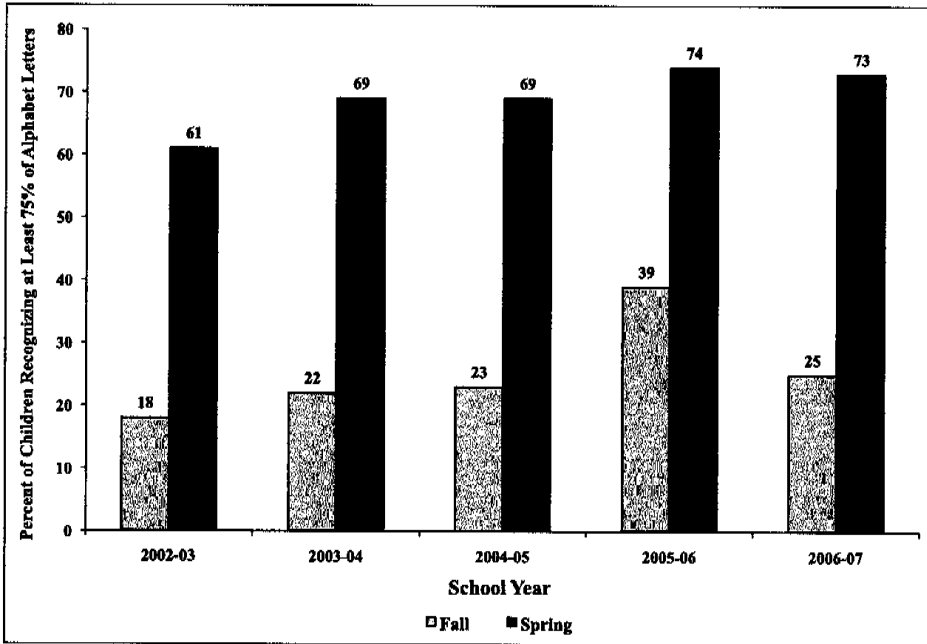
Intensive support to improve classroom environments, curricula, and instruction was offered to preschool centers serving low-income families as early as 2002-2003. ELC/JELP continued offering support and piloted a 5-star quality rating system in 2005.

Improvement in Centers’ Star Ratings from 2005 to 2006

Change in Star Rating	Percent of Centers
Negative Change	14
No Change	21
Improved One Star	41
Improved Two Stars	13
Improved Three Stars	9
Improved Four Stars	1

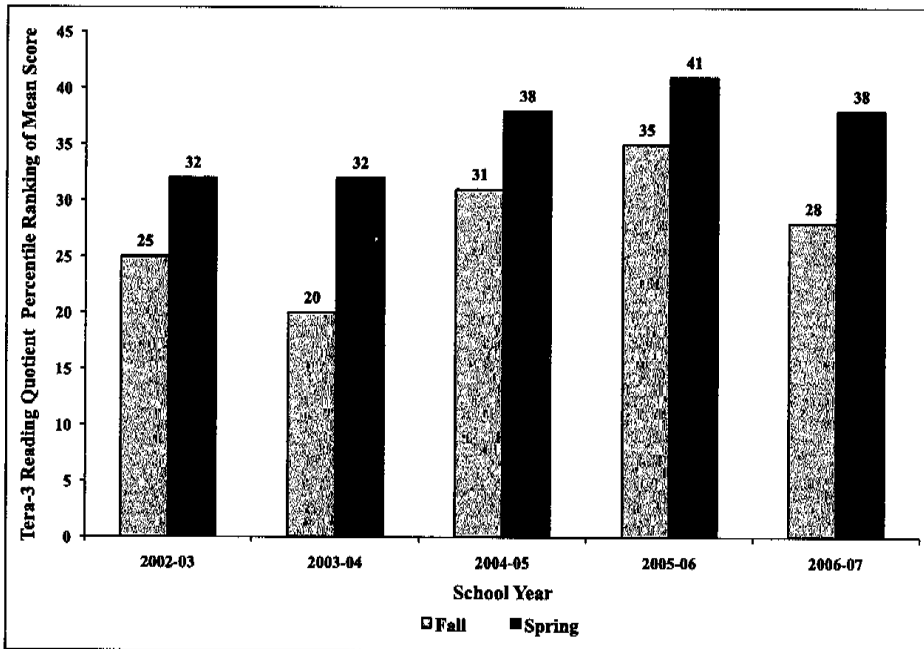
- 64% of the centers increased their rating by at least one star over the year.
- 23% of the centers increased their rating by at least two stars.

Alphabet Letter Recognition Inventory: Fall and Spring Scores, 2002-2007



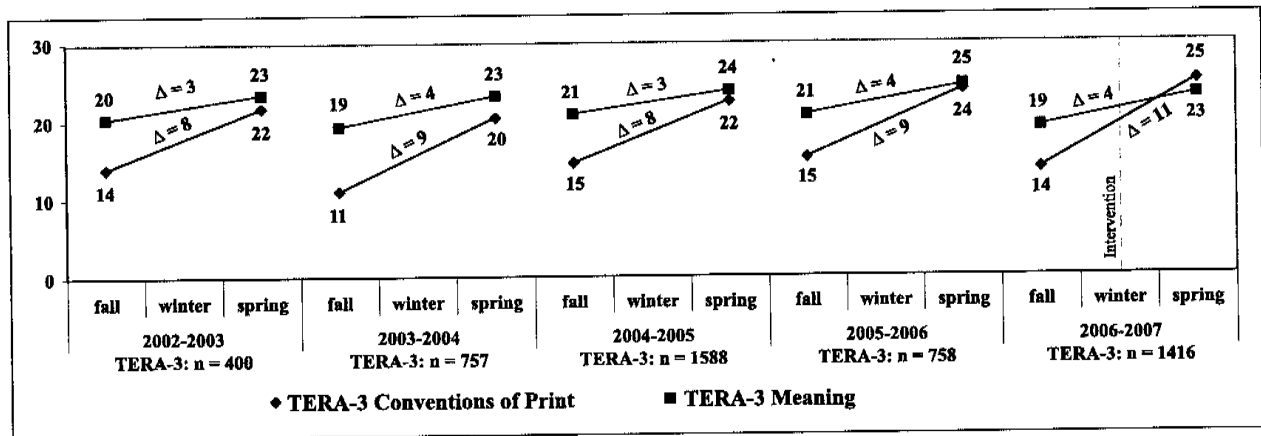
- The chart presents ELC and JELP participating children’s recognition of 52 letters of the alphabet (26 upper- and 26 lowercase) when presented in non-alphabetical order.
- Researchers established the recognition of 75% of sampled letters as *proficient* for kindergartners (USDOE, 2001).
- Over the years, an increasing percentage of children participating in ELC and JELP activities were proficient in the fall and in the spring of prekindergarten.

TERA-3 Reading Quotient: Fall and Spring Scores, 2002-2007



- Percentiles show the rankings of children’s scores relative to a national sample of children.
- Ideally, our average score would be at the 50th percentile.
- A positive change in the percentile ranking indicates the narrowing of the gap between the ELC and JELP children’s achievement and the achievement of children in the national sample.
- In each of the 5 years, ELC and JELP children made significant gains relative to the national sample of children.

Print Concepts Initiative (PCI): Fall and Spring TERA-3 Scores, 2002-2007



- The PCI was developed in response to data indicating children’s achievement of print concept knowledge could be improved. An intervention was designed in Fall 2006 by the Florida Institute of Education and implemented in January 2007 in ELC/JELP preschool classrooms.
- Scores reported represent percent correct, not standardized scores, and permit comparison across scales and years.
- Fall Conventions of Print scores from the PCI pilot year (2006–07) were similar to fall scores for other years. The spring scores for the Meaning scale were also similar.
- Growth in the Conventions of Print achievement in 2006–07 was different from the historical trend and that difference represents the effect of the PCI. No similar effect was found for the Meaning scores.
- The results of the PCI pilot study provide evidence that the initiative improved print concept knowledge of at-risk preschool children.

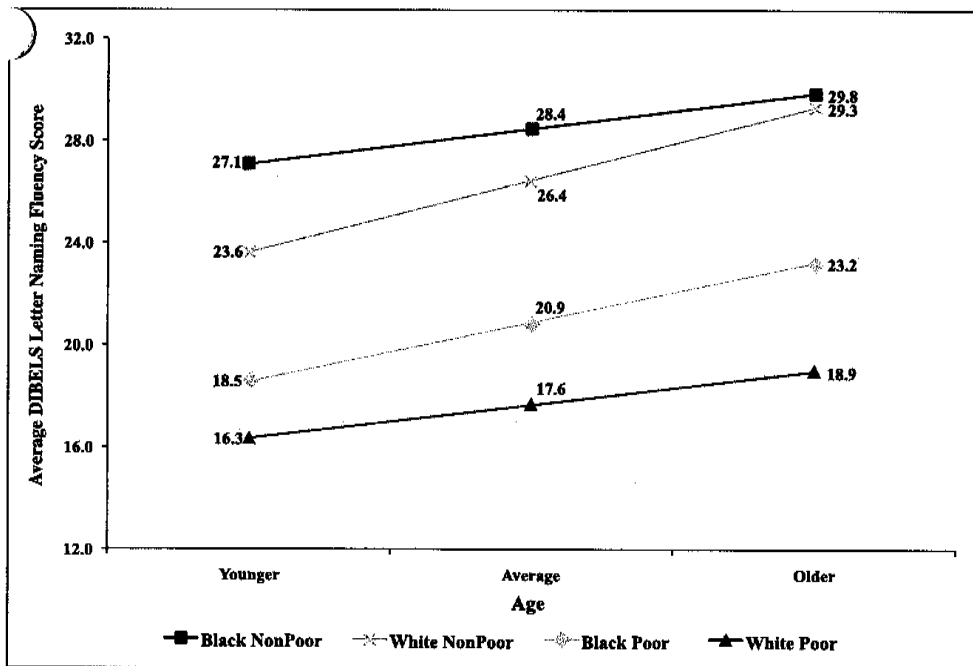
Duval County Public Schools 2005 Florida School Readiness Data

Test	Strata										
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	All
ESI-K	-	✓	✓	-	-	✓+	-	-	-	-	✓+
DIBELS Letter Naming Fluency	✓+	✓+	✓+	✓+	✓+	✓+	✓+	✓+	✓+	✓	✓+
DIBELS Initial Sound Fluency	✓+	✓	-	✓+	✓	-	✓+	-	-	✓	✓+

Note: ✓+ Indicates a significant difference at $\alpha \leq .05$. ✓ Indicates a significant difference at $\alpha \leq .10$. - Indicates no statistical difference.

- Strata 1-10 represent decreasing likelihood that the children participated in prekindergarten classrooms intensively supported by ELC/JELP. Most of the participating children’s scores were in the first four strata.
- Across all measures, ELC/JELP children out-performed children who did not attend classes where teachers received intensive support and coaching – an intentional strategy used to improve the quality of early care and learning services.
- The results are particularly dramatic for DIBELS Letter Naming Fluency. However, in no strata were the ELC/JELP children out-performed by their non-participating peers.

Duval County Public Schools 2006 Florida Kindergarten Readiness Data:
 DIBELS Letter Naming Fluency Scores by Race, Poverty Level, and Age of the Kindergarten Children



- Almost 8700 kindergarten children attending over 100 elementary schools had valid FLKRS scores in Fall 2006.
- In the 2006 kindergarten class, approximately 2300 children participated in ELC/JELP pre-k classes the previous year with Black children accounting for approximately 60% of the participating children.
- On the DIBELS Letter Naming Fluency scale, Black kindergarten children had higher average scores at all ages than white children who lived in similar conditions of poverty, irrespective of gender.

We Are Making a Difference

A preponderance of evidence documents that increasing the quality of early care and learning experiences is an effective strategy in closing the readiness gap between children from low-income families and their more affluent peers, and in increasing their school achievement.

Investments to attain high-quality preschools result in both individual and community benefits. **Individual benefits** include improved academic achievement, higher probability of graduating from high school, and lower probability of criminal activity. **Community benefits** include a more highly skilled workforce, less reliance on welfare and social services, lower rates of criminal activity, and higher engagement in civic life.

Jacksonville is off to a good start...

- A citywide partnership anchored by the ELC and the City of Jacksonville is focused on improving readiness outcomes for young children, particularly those from low-income families.
- A research-based, data-driven improvement system has been adopted, and important support structures are being implemented.
- Results document that children from low-income Jacksonville neighborhoods make gains in early literacy achievement when the quality of preschool programs is improved by using *effective teaching strategies*, providing *intensive job-embedded support* to preschool teachers, using *research-based curricula*, and providing resources to create *literacy-rich environments*.
- While the initial results are promising, much remains to be done if Jacksonville's vision for excellence is to be realized, if the impact is to be more widespread, and if the change in quality is to be sustained over time.

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