Business Education Partnership: Literacy in Ardmore, Oklahoma
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Business Education Partnership: Literacy in Ardmore, Oklahoma

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(E-TEAM)
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Submitted to the Institute for a Competitive Workforce

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Introduction

With support from the Institute for a Competitive Workforce, Dollar General Corporation is launching an initiative to engage local communities, including the public schools and local businesses, in addressing literacy issues where its customers, employees, and their families live and work. Dollar General believes that supporting local education and family literacy programs is critical to the well-being of the communities they serve. With a Dollar General distribution center and several store locations, Ardmore, Oklahoma is one of those communities.

The following profile was developed from a variety of data sources, including the Oklahoma State Department of Education (OSDE), the U.S. Census Bureau, and the National Center for Education Statistics. In addition, qualitative data was compiled from meetings with Ardmore teachers and administrators (superintendent, assistant superintendent, principals, and assistant principals), including a guided group discussion facilitated by Ms. Cecilia Retelle, Senior Director at the Institute for a Competitive Workforce, Ms. Cheryl Oldham, Vice President of the Institute for a Competitive Workforce, and Dr. Belinda Biscoe Boni, Associate Vice President of Public and Community Services at the University of Oklahoma OUTREACH and Director of Educational Training, Evaluation, Assessment, and Measurement (E-TEAM).

Ardmore Demographics

Ardmore is a business, cultural, and tourism city, and the county seat of Carter County, Oklahoma. According to the 2010 U.S. Census, the City of Ardmore had a population of 24,283. It is located approximately 90 miles south of Oklahoma City (the midway point to Dallas, Texas) at the junction of Interstate 35 and U.S. Highway 70, and serves as the hub of a ten-county region in South Central Oklahoma.

Table 1. Racial and Ethnic Makeup of Ardmore City Schools and the General Population of Ardmore, Oklahoma

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/Ethnic Grouping (non-Hispanic)</th>
<th>Student Population in Ardmore Schools</th>
<th>City of Ardmore General Population</th>
<th>Oklahoma Student Population Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two or More Races</td>
<td>--*</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic (of Any Race)</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* It is unknown what percentage of students is of two or more races.
Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of the Population 2010; and Oklahoma State Department of Education, Office of Accountability, Profiles 2011 District Report
Ardmore is at the heart of the Oklahoma State Department of Tourism’s “Arbuckle Country” and “Lake and Trail Country.” Geographically, Ardmore is situated about 9 miles south of the Arbuckle Mountains in Carter County, and is located at the eastern margin of the Healdton Basin, one of the most oil-rich regions of the United States.

According to the 2010 Census, the overall population of Ardmore is diverse, with 10% African American, 9% American Indian, 2% Asian, 7% two or more races, and 65% White (all non-Hispanic). Another 7% of the population is Hispanic of any race. However, the students attending Ardmore City Schools, representing a much younger population than the larger community, is even more diverse, with 23% African American, 21% American Indian, 42% White, and 12% Hispanic of any race. Therefore, more than half of the students in Ardmore City Schools are members of minority populations compared to one-third of the overall population of the city (Table 1).

A large proportion of Ardmore students are living in poverty. According to the U.S. Census in 2010, the poverty rate of Ardmore is 25%, compared to 16% for the State of Oklahoma overall. Eighty-three percent (83%) of the students in 2011 were eligible for free and reduced lunch (Table 2), compared to 61% statewide. Forty-one percent (41%) of the city’s young people come from single-parent families, compared to 32% statewide. With regard to educational attainment for adults age 25 and over, 16% have college degrees, compared to 23% statewide, and 20% have less than a 12th grade education, compared to 15% statewide (U.S. Census, 2010).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Grade Span</th>
<th>Number of Students 2010-2011</th>
<th>Number Free/Reduced Lunch</th>
<th>American Indian</th>
<th>African American</th>
<th>Asian</th>
<th>Hispanic All Races</th>
<th>White</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ardmore High School</td>
<td>9-12</td>
<td>780</td>
<td>568</td>
<td>72.8</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>19.0</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>21.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ardmore Middle School</td>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>614</td>
<td>523</td>
<td>85.2</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>22.1</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>26.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jefferson Elementary</td>
<td>1-5</td>
<td>274</td>
<td>229</td>
<td>83.6</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>20.8</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>15.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will Rogers Elementary</td>
<td>Pre K-K</td>
<td>501</td>
<td>444</td>
<td>88.6</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>27.1</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>30.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL ALL SCHOOLS</td>
<td></td>
<td>3,067</td>
<td>2,556</td>
<td>83.3</td>
<td>638</td>
<td>20.8</td>
<td>708</td>
<td>23.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data

District Makeup

Ardmore City Schools is the largest school district within the City of Ardmore, Oklahoma and consists of four elementary schools (one of which is early childhood, Pre-K to Kindergarten), one middle school, and one high school. As of the 2010-2011 school year, the district reported a student population of 3,067 students. A breakdown of the student
enrollment for each school within the district by race/ethnicity and eligibility for free and reduced lunch as of the 2010-2011 school year is provided in Table 2. The district covers 27 square miles, with 111.8 students per square mile (OSDE, Office of Accountability, Profiles 2011 District Report.) According to the National Center for Education Statistics district location classification system, Ardmore City Schools has a locale code of 33: Town, Remote.

There is considerable variation in race and ethnic distribution across school sites. For instance, only 23% of Jefferson Elementary School’s students are White, compared to 31% African American, 27% American Indian, and 19% Hispanic (of any race). Fifty percent of Lincoln Elementary students are White, 21% are American Indian, 15% are African American, and 3% are Asian. At Ardmore High School, 49% of the students are White, 22% are African American, 19% are American Indian, and 3% are Asian. There are significantly fewer Hispanic students at the high school—7% compared to 12% district-wide.

Additional data from the OSDE (not in the table) includes the senior graduation rate (2011 Seniors) of 98%, compared to 97% statewide. This percentage only includes students that enter 12th grade. It is important to note that for students that enter 9th grade there is a dropout rate of 15% for Ardmore, compared to 12% statewide. Therefore, for students that enter 9th grade, 85% graduate. The full-time equivalent (FTE) for teachers (non-special education) reported in the Oklahoma District Profiles for 2011 was 167.3, of which 25% held advanced degrees. All sites in the district are Title I schools.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Certified Staff Specialty</th>
<th>Ardmore High School</th>
<th>Ardmore Middle School</th>
<th>TOTAL SECONDARY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administrators</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counselors</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business/Computer Technology</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Tech/Family Education</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fine Arts</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical/Health Education</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Studies</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign Language</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In addition to certified teachers, 19.3 FTE were reported for special education teachers, 7.6 FTE for counselors, and 10.9 FTE for other certified professional staff. The average experience among Ardmore teachers was 9.7 years.¹

A review of the Ardmore City Schools webpage at www.ardmoreschools.org revealed a total of 52 certified staff members (including administrators and counselors) at the high school (Table 3), 49 at the middle school, and 137 certified staff at the elementary schools combined (Table 4). While all certified teachers are responsible for helping students meet literacy objectives, among secondary teachers, the six English teachers at the middle school and seven English teachers at the high school have been charged with the responsibility of preparing students to perform at proficiency on the Oklahoma State Testing Program (OSTP) assessments. Among elementary teachers, this responsibility is shared by all grade level teachers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Special Services</th>
<th>Athletic Director</th>
<th>TOTAL CERTIFIED STAFF</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>4</strong></td>
<td><strong>1</strong></td>
<td><strong>52</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3</strong></td>
<td><strong>0</strong></td>
<td><strong>49</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>7</strong></td>
<td><strong>1</strong></td>
<td><strong>101</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ardmore City Schools webpage.

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¹ There appeared to be a discrepancy between the number of teachers listed on the Ardmore City Schools web page and the total FTE reported in the Oklahoma District Profiles report. This may be due to a difference in reporting year, partial FTEs for part-time faculty, or other factors not accounted for in this report.
Table 4. Elementary Certified Staff by Subject Area Taught or Specialty

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Certified Staff Specialty</th>
<th>Charles Evans Elementary</th>
<th>Jefferson Elementary</th>
<th>Lincoln Elementary</th>
<th>Will Rogers Elementary</th>
<th>TOTAL ELEMENTARY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fine Arts</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Education</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Librarian</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer Lab</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speech Pathology</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title I</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Language Learners</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Services</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL CERTIFIED STAFF</strong></td>
<td><strong>49</strong></td>
<td><strong>25</strong></td>
<td><strong>24</strong></td>
<td><strong>39</strong></td>
<td><strong>137</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ardmore City Schools webpage.

Tables 5 and 6 provide the number of support staff at the high school, middle school, and elementary schools. Two paraprofessionals provide support to certified staff at Ardmore High School and five provide support at the Ardmore Middle School (Table 5). Ardmore Middle School staffs one Indian Education assistant.

Table 5. Secondary Support Staff by Specialty

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Staff Specialty</th>
<th>Ardmore High School</th>
<th>Ardmore Middle School</th>
<th>TOTAL SECONDARY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Office</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library/Technology Assistant</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paraprofessionals</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian Education</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Nutrition</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Custodial</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Nurse</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL SUPPORT STAFF</strong></td>
<td><strong>30</strong></td>
<td><strong>21</strong></td>
<td><strong>51</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ardmore City Schools webpage.
A total of 34 paraprofessionals provide support to certified teachers at the elementary schools (Table 6). The largest number of paraprofessionals are at Charles Evans (the largest elementary school) and at Will Rogers (Pre-K to Kindergarten). Also, six Indian Education assistants provide support. One teaching assistant is found at Will Rogers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Staff Specialty</th>
<th>Charles</th>
<th>Jefferson</th>
<th>Lincoln</th>
<th>Will Rogers</th>
<th>TOTAL ELEMENTARY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Evans</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library Assistant</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paraprofessional</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching Assistant</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian Education</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Nutrition</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Custodial</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Nurse</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL SUPPORT STAFF</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ardmore City Schools webpage.

Reading and Language Arts Proficiency Scores

Oklahoma requires that all students from Grade 3 through English III participate in the Oklahoma State Testing Program (OSTP). In Ardmore, three elementary schools, the middle school, and the high school administer the OCCT and OMAAP State tests annually in the spring. Test results for Spring 2012 are posted on the OSDE Web Page at [www.ok.gov/sde/accountability-state-testing-results](http://www.ok.gov/sde/accountability-state-testing-results). Table 7 provides the number of students tested for reading proficiency in the 2011-2012 OSTP. District-wide, 99% of all enrolled students were tested for Reading/English Language Arts proficiency. The majority of those students (1,460, or 90%) were tested using the Oklahoma Core Curriculum Test (OCCT). However, 10% were tested using the Oklahoma Modified Alternate Assessment Program (OMAAP). The purpose of the Oklahoma Alternate Assessment Program (OAAP) and the Oklahoma Modified Alternate Assessment Program (OMAAP) is to provide accountability for program improvement and instructional direction for children with disabilities in accordance with the federal regulations of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).
Table 7. Number of Students Tested in the 2011-2012 Oklahoma School Testing Program (OSTP) for Reading

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Level</th>
<th>Students Tested using the OCCT or the OMAAP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total Number Tested*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 3</td>
<td>243</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 4</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 5</td>
<td>218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 6</td>
<td>198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 7</td>
<td>210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 8</td>
<td>202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EOI English II</td>
<td>188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EOI English III</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTALS</td>
<td>1,625</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


*This includes both Full Academic Year Students and Partial Academic Year students. Only Full Academic Year Students are included in accountability reports to determine Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP).

The OMAAP is an alternative assessment based on modified academic achievement requirements for a small percentage of Special Education students. More information on the OMAAP can be found at [www.ok.gov/sde/assessment](http://www.ok.gov/sde/assessment). The Individualized Education Program (IEP) of a child participating in the OMAAP is expected to reflect grade level goals for the students being assessed using the OMAAP. The IEP is designed to monitor a student’s progress toward these goals. The percentage of students tested under the OMAAP are highest among students at Grade levels 3 (12%), 4 (16%), and 5 (12%). By the middle school grades (6, 7, and 8), 90% or more are tested using the OCCT. The test results of students with IEPs are provided in the section of this report titled Special Services beginning on page 13.

Table 8 and Table 9 provide two perspectives on increases (or decreases) in reading score proficiency from Spring of 2007 through Spring of 2012 among regular education (students without an IEP) students. The number and percent distributions in Table 8 provide the number and percent of students, by grade level, scoring proficient or advanced on the state test. The percentage point gains are calculated by subtracting, for example, the percent of 3rd graders proficient/advanced in 2007 from the percent of 3rd graders proficient/advanced in 2012 to show a negative gain of -28 percentage points.
### Table 8. Oklahoma Core Curriculum Test (OCCT) Reading Results by Grade Level: Comparison 2007 through 2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Level*</th>
<th>Number and Percent of Students Scoring Proficient or Advanced</th>
<th>Percentage Point Gains</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>REGULAR EDUCATION: Grades 3 through 8 – All Schools</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 3</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 4</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 5</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 6</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 7</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 8</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*All Students Tested (Full and Partial Year)


This drop in reading proficiency scores between 2008 and 2009 occurred statewide (Oklahoma NCLB Act Annual Report Card 2008-2009) and may reflect a shift in the NCLB benchmark. Test scores since 2009 show a general pattern of increase for Grade 4 (+12 percentage points), Grade 5 (+2 percentage points), Grade 7 (+7 percentage points), and Grade 8 (+9 percentage points).

### Table 9. Historical Progression (2007 to 2012) in Reading Proficiency: the 2012 8th Grade Student Cohort*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Cohort Grade Levels</th>
<th>Number and Percent of Students Proficient in Reading on the OCCT</th>
<th>Increase or Decrease in the Number of Students Year to Year</th>
<th>Gain in Percentage Points Each Year</th>
<th>Total Gain in Percentage Points from 2009 to 2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007 as 3rd Graders</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008 as 4th Graders</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>-26</td>
<td>+1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009 as 5th Graders</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>-6</td>
<td>-26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010 as 6th Graders</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>-24</td>
<td>-11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011 as 7th Graders</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>+18</td>
<td>+12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012 as 8th Graders</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>+22</td>
<td>+8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*All Students Tested (Full and Partial Year)

Table 9 provides a historical progression of the 2012 8th grade student cohort, beginning as 3rd graders in 2007. Because students within any given cohort, or grade level, can have characteristics that widely vary from other students at that same grade level in different years, it’s helpful to also examine increases in reading proficiency among students of the same cohort across multiple school years. This comparison is not precise, since there will be student turnover from year to year. Nevertheless, the majority of students across the district will remain relatively constant from one year to the next, allowing this comparison to provide some additional insights to student reading proficiency. Again, a significant drop in reading proficiency test scores occurred statewide between 2008 and 2009, which is reflected as a decrease of 26 percentage points between Grade 4 (93% proficient or advanced) to Grade 5 (67% proficient or advanced).

Table 10. Oklahoma Core Curriculum Test (OCCT) English II and English III End of Instruction Results by Grade Level: Comparison 2008 through 2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Oklahoma State Test Level</th>
<th>REGULAR EDUCATION: End of Instruction (EOI) – High School</th>
<th>Number and Percent of Students Scoring Proficient or Advanced</th>
<th>Percentage Point Gains 2008 to 2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2008 Number Percent</td>
<td>2009 Number Percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English II</td>
<td></td>
<td>122 85</td>
<td>106 81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English III</td>
<td></td>
<td>100 81</td>
<td>131 88</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*All Students Tested (Full and Partial Year)
Source: Oklahoma State Department of Education, Oklahoma School Testing Program, District Summary Reports (2008 to 2012)

Table 10 provides the percentages of high school students scoring proficient or advanced on the state End of Instruction (EOI) test for English II and English III. This table begins with the 2008 academic year since this is the first year the advanced test (English III) was administered. As shown here, students demonstrated a relatively consistent performance on the English II exam from year to year while student performance on the English III exam increased each academic year, culminating in a gain of +14 percentage points over the five-year period. Chart 1 provides a visual representation of the growth in performance over the five-year period.
Percent of Ardmore Students Scoring Proficient or Advanced on the Oklahoma EOI Test for English II and English III

Special Services

English Language Learners

Two groups of students are designated within Special Services—English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with IEPs. As of the 2010-2011 school year, there were 336 ELLs in Ardmore City schools (National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data, 2010-2011 school year). This represents 11% of the student population for that year. In this report, no data source for the numbers of ELLs attending Ardmore schools broken out by grade level or school site was available. However, several elementary teachers interviewed during an April 2013 site visit stated their belief that the number of ELLs approximates the number of Hispanic students, particularly in the early grades. The number of Hispanic students is provided by school site in Table 2.

The number of students tested was collected from each annual report of state test results. A total of 120 ELLs participated in the OSTP for reading in the 2011-2012 school year (Table 11). The majority of those students were assessed with the OCCT (88%). An additional 12% were assessed with the OMAAP. More than half (61%) of the ELLs tested were in Grades 3, 4, and 5. ELLs assessed with the OCCT were disaggregated into three groupings: ELLs not language proficient, 1st year language proficient, and 2nd year language proficient (Table 12).
Of the total of 98 ELLs tested in 2010, all grade levels, 49 (50%) scored proficient or advanced on the OCCT (Table 12). In 2011, 142 ELLs were tested, but the percentage that scored proficient or advanced is unclear due to suppression of data (5 students or fewer tested within a grade level). In 2012, 121 ELLs were tested, but again the percentage that scored proficient or advanced is unclear due to suppression of data.

Viewing the ELL literacy performance within grade levels at a finer granularity provides a different view. Continuing with Table 12, of the 27 ELLs in the 3\textsuperscript{rd} grade who were tested in 2010, 18 were classified as ELL (not language proficient), of which 9 (50%) scored proficient or advanced on the OCCT State test. Also of the 27 ELL 3\textsuperscript{rd} graders in 2010, 9 were classified as ELL—1\textsuperscript{st} Year Language Proficient, of which 100% scored proficient or advanced. This pattern of increase in test performance among 3\textsuperscript{rd} grade ELLs as they progress through the language proficiency classification remained constant for all three test years shown. Similar increases in test performance occurred within the 4\textsuperscript{th} and 5\textsuperscript{th} grade levels. However, among ELLs in the 6\textsuperscript{th} grade and above, the numbers tested are too few to analyze with any meaning due to suppression of results on the State reports.
Table 12. Oklahoma Core Curriculum Test (OCCT) Reading Results by Grade Level: Comparison 2010 through 2012

ELLs: Grades 3 through End of Instruction – All Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Oklahoma State Test Reading Grade Level*</th>
<th>Number and Percent of Students Scoring Proficient or Advanced Full Academic Year</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>#</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>#</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 3</td>
<td></td>
<td>17</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 4</td>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 5</td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 6</td>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 7</td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 8</td>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English II</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English III</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTALS</td>
<td></td>
<td>63</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*All Students Tested (Full Year)

**Not available when the number of students with valid test scores is 5 or less.


Students with Individual Education Programs (IEPs)

The National Center for Learning Disabilities describes IEPs as a requirement of “every public school child who receives special education and related services. Each IEP must be designed for one student and must be a truly individualized document. The IEP creates an opportunity for teachers, parents, school administrators, related services personnel, and students (when appropriate) to work together to improve educational results for children with disabilities. The IEP is the cornerstone of a quality education for each child with a disability.”

As of the 2010-2011 school year, there were 424 students with IEPs in Ardmore City Schools (National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data, 2010-2011 school year). This represents 13.8% of the student population for that year, which is just below the state average of 14.6%. This percentage varies from school to school within the district with 14.4% at Charles Evans Elementary, 17.8% at Jefferson Elementary, 15.7% at Lincoln Elementary, 15.2% at Ardmore Middle School, and 14% at Ardmore High School.
Table 13 provides the number of students with IEPs tested in the 2011-2012 OSTP for Reading and English. The 221 students with IEPs tested represent 14% of all students tested, a percentage that is consistent with the 2010-2011 district-wide percentage (13.8%) of students in special education. More than two-thirds (71%) of the students with IEPs were tested with the OMAAP, while 29% were tested with the OCCT. OSDE provides an alternate assessment for literacy from Grade 3 Reading to English II EOI.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Level</th>
<th>Total Number Tested</th>
<th>Percent of All Students Tested</th>
<th>Oklahoma Core Curriculum Test (OCCT)</th>
<th>Oklahoma Modified Alternate Assessment Program (OMAAP)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 3</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 4</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 5</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 6</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 7</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 8</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EOI English II</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EOI English III</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTALS</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


*This includes both Full Academic Year Students and Partial Academic Year students.

Table 14 provides State test results in reading and English for students with IEPs from Grades 3 to End of Instruction for the years 2010, 2011, and 2012. For students in Grades 3 and 4, the percentages scoring proficient or advanced on the OMAAP increases from year to year. That is, 28% of 2010 3rd graders scored proficient or advanced on OMAAP, 68% of 3rd graders scored proficient or advanced in 2011, and 70% scored proficient or advanced in 2012. Sixty-eight percent of 4th graders scored proficient or advanced in 2010 on the OMAAP, 85% scored proficient or advanced in 2011, and 87% scored proficient or advanced in 2012. A similar pattern of increase is not apparent for students with IEPs taking the OCCT over the three years; however, the small numbers of students taking the regular test are more difficult to interpret.

Students in Grades 5 and above taking the OMAAP showed increases in reading and English proficiency across grade levels from 2010 to 2011, but show decreases from 2011 to 2012. For example, 35% of Grade 5 students in 2010 scored proficient or advanced in reading, followed by 91% in 2011—an increase of 56 percentage points.
However, Grade 5 students in 2012 scoring proficient or advanced in reading decreased to 66%—a drop in 25 percentage points. For Grade 6, 37% of students in 2010 scored proficient or advanced in reading, compared to 59% in 2011—an increase of 22 percentage points. However, in 2012 Grade 6 students had a slight drop to 55% scoring proficient or advanced on the OMAAP. Grades 7, 8, and English II also showed increases in 2011, followed by decreases in 2012. The consistency across grade levels of this pattern calls for further examination of contextual factors that may have influenced test performance of students and/or other systemic factors are not apparent here.

Table 14. OSTP Reading Results by Grade Level: Comparison 2010 through 2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Oklahoma State Test Reading Grade Level*</th>
<th>STUDENTS WITH IEPs: Grades 3 through End of Instruction – All Schools</th>
<th>Number and Percent of Students Scoring Proficient or Advanced</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2010 Number and Percent Tested (OCCT)</td>
<td>2011 Number and Percent Tested (OCCT)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total Number Tested</td>
<td>Proficient on OCCT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 3</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>10 (67)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 4</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>6 (67)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 5</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5 (38)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 6</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>6 (40)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 7</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>4 (67)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 8</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English II</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>2 (25)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English III</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>7 (33)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTALS</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*All Students Tested (Full and Partial Year)
**Data not available; -- Not applicable

Data Summary

A variety of data sources were examined in this report to reveal a profile of literacy in Ardmore City Schools. The quantitative section of the report focuses on student demographics, high risk variables, and student achievement according to state test results. Some of the highlights of data findings are reiterated in this data summary.
Demographics

More than half of the students in Ardmore City Schools are members of minority populations, with 23% African American, 21% American Indian, 2% Asian, and 12% Hispanic. A large proportion of Ardmore students are living in poverty. According to the U.S. Census in 2010, the poverty rate of Ardmore is 25%, compared to 16% for the State of Oklahoma overall. Eighty-three percent of the students in 2011 were eligible for free and reduced lunch compared to 61% statewide.

Forty-one percent of the city’s young people come from single-parent families, compared to 32% statewide. Among adults age 25 and over, 16% have college degrees, compared to 23% statewide, and 20% have less than a 12th grade education, compared to 15% statewide. The four-year dropout rate for the Ardmore class of 2011 was 15%, compared to 12% statewide.

These statistics have strong implications for students attending school in Ardmore. High percentages of single parent families and low education of adults reduce the likelihood that these parents are adequately equipped to support their children’s academic needs at home. The relatively high dropout rate may reflect these and other issues that challenge educators in the community.

Reading Proficiency

With regard to reading proficiency, state test scores since 2009 show a general pattern of increase for Grade 4 (+12 percentage points), Grade 5 (+2 percentage points), Grade 7 (+7 percentage points), and Grade 8 (+9 percentage points). Upper level students demonstrated a relatively consistent performance on the English II exam from year to year while student performance on the English III exam increased each academic year, culminating in a gain of +14 percentage points over the five-year period. While there is growth in literacy scores, the district nevertheless experienced a challenge with regard to meeting literacy benchmarks established by the state. As one administrator stated in the April 22nd interview with Ardmore district personnel, what is needed is an acceleration of growth. Otherwise, students continue to get progressively behind.

Special Populations

Currently there is only one ELL specialist, a non-certified staff member, in the district that serves the elementary and middle schools. However, as of May 1, 2013, she is no longer with the district. One other staff member assists with ELL students while also teaching Spanish classes. For the high school students there is no staff member serving this population. Rather, the ELL “program” for the high school students is the language learning software called Rosetta Stone. Further examination is needed based on the lack of complete data available for reviewing student performance on the state test, however, it is clear that over half of the ELL students are not meeting minimum requirements.

Grade level performance of students with IEPs show a consistent pattern of change (increases from 2010 to 2011, followed by decreases from 2011 to 2012) across grade
levels suggesting it may be beneficial to examine contextual factors that may have influenced test results. There has been a significant change in the last year about how the IEP students in Ardmore are served. All special education students are now in regular education classrooms resulting in the special education teachers needing to serve multiple students in multiple classrooms. Based on the feedback from teachers at the April 22nd interview this new delivery of services is not adequate. These could be factors that influence student performance or programmatic and systemic factors that would not be apparent from a review of the data contained within this report.

Data Summary Conclusion

In conclusion, Ardmore City Schools serves a highly diverse and complex population of students. This diversity presents as both rich and demanding as leadership and educators across the district strive to prepare their students to be successful. As the district moves its student literacy goals forward, arming its teachers and administrators with data as a tool for decision-making becomes invaluable. Providing the right data, both quantitative and qualitative, is the primary purpose for developing this profile. The data contained within this report are by no means a complete story, but are intended as a step in the right direction.
Results of the April 22, 2013 Facilitated Group Discussions

Two guided group discussion sessions, one with Ardmore teachers and a second with administrators (superintendent, assistant superintendent, principals, and assistant principals), were facilitated by Ms. Cecilia Retelle, Senior Director at the Institute for a Competitive Workforce, Ms. Cheryl Oldham, Vice President of the Institute for a Competitive Workforce, and Dr. Belinda Biscoe Boni, Associate Vice President of Public and Community Services at the University of Oklahoma OUTREACH and Director of Educational Training, Evaluation, Assessment, and Measurement (E-TEAM). Each facilitator was accompanied by a researcher/recorder who documented responses to a series of questions about teaching and leadership practices, response to struggling readers, curriculum and instruction, professional development, special populations, parent engagement, assessment and data use, and other issues relevant to literacy.

The remainder of this report organizes the results of the discussion groups, first among teachers and then among administrators, by subheading (teacher practices, struggling readers, etc.), then by guiding question, and then by categorized responses. Twenty-seven teachers and ten administrators participated in the discussion.

TEACHER DISCUSSION

Teacher Practices: Elementary Teachers

Question 1: How do you help your students learn about themselves as readers?

Student engagement in their own learning
- I pick a topic, take the class to the library, and have the students find books to do research on that topic.
- I assign researchers (students) to find information on a topic and report back to a fellow student.
- I share the assessment data with the child and set a goal for them.
- I let the children pick books that they like to read.
- I have students learn how to talk about a book to other students.

Student choices in literacy selections
- I let the children pick books that they like to read.
- I ask what types of literature the children in my class like to read.
- I create a questionnaire for my students and this helps me decide what type of literacy materials I can provide.
Teacher guidance and support

- I read different types of books to see what is interesting to the kids.
- I let the students know what I expect of them, and show them examples to help them improve their skills.
- I make a graph to show what a student is scoring low in according to the graph.
- You see what skills they are low in and help them improve.
- I provide non-fiction books to read first before the students can read fiction books.

Question 2: How do you encourage student ownership and choice in the materials and books they select to read?

Student interests and preferences encouraged

- I let students select the book they would like to read.
- I would let them choose a genre to read.
- I ask questions about what students have read: What did you enjoy about the book? What did you not like about the book?
- Students like fiction better than nonfiction.

Peer to peer literacy interactions

- Students do “peer reading”; students go into another classroom and read with another class.
- I assign researchers (students) to find information on a topic and report back to a fellow student.
- I have students learn how to talk about a book to other students.

Other comments

- I have a self-help book that I let the kids read.
- Students create picture books of books they have just read.
- When I show that I am enjoying what I am reading the students pick up on that.

Question 3: What routines do you have in place within your classroom that encourages students to respond to their reading and interact with the others about their readings?

Motivation strategies

- I have students read to me one-on-one.
- I have students learn how to talk about a book to other students.
• We play a game called “inner-outer”. Students must read the assigned material to participate in the game (discussion). This helps motivate students to read.

Teacher Practices: Secondary Teachers

Question 1: What literacy practices do you as middle and high school teachers use to accomplish your science, social studies, or other content area goals?

Vocabulary and reading comprehension
• I have a vocabulary wall for students to use.
• I play a vocabulary game where I have students write down words they do not understand. I throw a ball to a student and that student gets a chance to share their word and have a classroom discussion on the word.
• I have students read the subject matter more than once to better comprehend what they are reading.
• Students summarize notes they take after reading.

Students’ responses to literature
• Students read aloud and then discuss.
• Students read current events and diary about it.
• I try to incorporate novel reading and hold a group discussion about the novel.

Other Comments
• Students read to themselves or out loud.

Question 2: What are the purposes of using these literacy practices?

Strategies for student motivation
• I make reading more enjoyable by using positive motivation.
• Placing students in smaller groups helps them feel comfortable.
• I find things my students are interested in to get them to read.

Other comments
• It helps students identify vocabulary words they may not understand.
• It helps everyone stay on the same page of the teaching model.
• I model problem-solving by showing how I can answer my own questions.
Struggling Readers

**Question 1:** Name the most pressing problems you face in addressing the needs of struggling readers in your classroom.

**Time constraint issues**
- Finding time to read to the students is hard.
- Having time to address the needs of the students can be an issue.
- There is not enough time to address the student’s needs.

**Staffing and personnel issues**
- There are not enough personnel in the classroom.
- There is a big turnover in teachers every year.

**Lack of support systems at home**
- Students do not get enough support at home.
- Parents feel they send their child to school to learn to read, and they (parents) do not feel like it is their job.

**Students’ lack of comprehension and mastery skills**
- Students are not retaining what they have learned from the end of the school year to the beginning of the next school year (summer break).
- Part of the problem is comprehension.
- Children are still moving up a grade without the skills they need.
- Students are having a hard time with vocabulary, phonics, and comprehension.

**Other comments**
- The children are embarrassed about not being able to read.
- There is a truancy issue.

**Question 2:** How is additional support provided for these students? At the elementary level---At the secondary level---

- We have Literacy First, but it provides little support for foundation skills.
- We are using Title 1 to help identify gaps.
Question 3: Exactly what kinds of intervention programs are provided for those who are having difficulty?

- We get volunteers in the classroom to help fill in the literacy gaps youths are facing.
- We are getting more technology in the classroom
- Implementing reading programs is helpful.

Question 4: Exactly how much extra time each week is devoted to specific interventions?

- It depends on the each child’s needs.
- There is not any extra time to devote to interventions.

Question 5: Describe the interventions specifically. Are your interventions more than just vendor programs? Based on your assessments, which skills pose the most difficulty?

- We use computer programs to help with the interventions.

Curriculum and Instruction

Question1: What do you perceive to be the strengths and concerns of the current literacy program?

Literacy First program

- K-3rd grade is tested with Literacy First. We use the fluency portion with the fourth and fifth grade.
- I like Literacy First. It assesses phonological awareness. It places students in skill level groups. We don’t all use it.
- I have used Literacy First for 15 years and more training is needed.
- I taught at a school that used Dibbles. It diagnoses but does not prescribe. I like Literacy First.
- Literacy First is recommended by the state. We started using it in the 90s.
- We are using Literacy First in Ardmore.
- Literacy First works when used properly. All teachers are trained on it; however, some do not use it. It’s clear by how the students perform which teachers do and do not.
Comprehension concerns

- I have seen a push for fluency and students need comprehension.
- People think that if you have fluency you will have comprehension, but that is not always the case.
- When fluency gets choppy they (students) lose comprehension.
- Fifth graders are tested on fluency but not comprehension. Comprehension is a different matter than fluency.

Other comments

- My job is to teach them to be better readers.

Question 2: How do you determine what reading curriculum and other instructional materials are used?

Assessment strategies to identify gaps in learning

- Each student takes a test to identify gaps.
- Small groups are created to address gaps, but there are management issues. When in a small group, the teacher still has to attend to the other students.
- We re-test every nine weeks to see if students are progressing and to see where they need help.
- We are also doing informal assessments.

Literacy First program

- Some teachers don’t have the resources to use Literacy First. Once you are trained and using Literacy First it works great. We have to be trained to use the materials.
- Literacy First is not monitored.
- There is data showing that Literacy First works.

Curriculum issues

- In high school we do not have a set curriculum. We group kids by skill level.
- The district adopts a curriculum, but it is left up to the teacher how to use it.
- Everyone has PASS objectives. We all use different resources.

Other comments

- Our year is mapped out according to what we need to learn for the state test. We will get behind if we do not teach to the test.
- There are lots of kids who need help with certain skills, but it is hard to give individualized instruction in a whole group.
Question 3: How is a student’s appropriate reading level determined? How is that accommodated?

Computer programs utilized for decision making
- For middle school we have a computer program called Acellus. It is internet based, and students can use it at home.
- We have a program that addresses dyslexia. We also have computer programs: Success Maker and Study Island. Not all schools have these programs.
- We only have two computers in the classroom, and we have licenses for various programs.

Other programs and strategies for assessing reading level
- We had Literacy First training, and high school ELL has Rosetta Stone.
- For older grades I use my own awareness of where they are. I assess using NWEA.
- I plan with other teachers.
- Literacy First helps diagnose the gaps a reader might have.

Other comments
- Once we diagnose the students, having the time and personnel is an issue.
- Every site is going to be different.

Question 4: How are the appropriate reading interventions determined?

- A lot of success comes from using the computer program. We can pull reports for individual children and see what each child needs.
- In Ardmore some teachers have gone to PAYNE Education Program.
- If someone comes to me saying a child is dyslexic we can offer testing.

Question 5: How do you plan and organize whole and small group instruction in your classroom?

Strategies for implementing small groups
- Small groups rotate weekly while centers are going on.
- Centers and small group happen at the same time.

Barriers to implementing small groups
- We have 24 children, but we may be working with five. This can cause a classroom management issue when there is only one teacher in the room.
It is a time issue. It is great to have small groups, but what about the rest of the students?

We don’t have space for resource room. We have 26 kids in one classroom. I can’t always stop to help the kids who are behind. I’m hoping they will get the scaffolding they need in the resource class.

Technology Use

- We do not have technology readily available. We think this would be beneficial when attempting to do individualized instruction, and implementing the common core.
- We have Lexia, READ 180. These are research based and electronic. We have computer labs, but not enough time slots to accommodate all the classrooms.
- We have smart boards and NEO boards in second grade.

**Question 6: What strategies and programs are in place to support adolescent literacy at the secondary level?**

**Teaching Strategies**

- I teach an elective and I try to get them to use full sentences.

**Resource classes for literacy instruction**

- At middle school if the students test unsatisfactory they take an elective resource class.
- We have kids whose electives are taken up with the resource classes, and they can’t take other electives like sports. This causes them to lose their sense of pride.

**Other comments**

- I have students who come back from taking the state department test and they have trouble with the vocabulary on the test, and these are good students. It surprises me the words they don’t know. Some students had to read and reread, but still could not understand what they were reading.
- All reading instruction is at the elementary level (from a middle school teacher).
Assessment and Data Use

Question 1: What types of data do you use to inform instructional decisions?

Data from reading programs for decision making
- We have READ 180.
- We use Literacy First and STAR reading. We take the data from that as a prescriptive to guide instruction.
- We use NWEA as a specific guideline.

Question 2: What types of teams do you have in place to support use of data to inform literacy instruction?

- There needs to be a better link between elementary, middle school and high school. We need professional development days built into the school year to work with other teachers and to talk about students.
- The resource teachers are good at communicating with us to help the kids.

Question 3: How do you know if a child has acquired the necessary literacy skills?

Assessing children’s learning
- There are not enough assessments and data to pull (6th grade teacher).
- Literacy First does a good job of assessing gaps for early readers. It stops being as useful when they get older. It doesn’t make the transition to comprehension.
- You can assess and assess, but if it is not used it doesn’t do any good.

Concerns around literacy learning
- If you don’t manage it-it won’t work.
- When we reassess we find that comprehension and vocabulary are weaknesses. You assume they know some things, but they don’t always know.
- Kids don’t know nursery rhymes and common stories. Some kids are not talked to at home.

Other comments
- We have to retrain teachers every year.
- We try to take something new and apply it to new situation.
Question 4: What types of assessments do you use to pre-screen, screen, diagnosis, monitor progress, or outcomes on the acquisition of literacy skills?

Programs for assessing
- We use Literacy First, our own curriculum and informal assessment.
- We have basil readers for skill assessment.
- We use Literacy First and Brigance for pre-screening assessment.

Concerns around literacy learning and assessment
- The last few years you have kids who have never been to Pre-K. Some kids are missing K skills in 2nd grade.
- My 2nd grade may have K readers and 7th grade level readers. We have to work with all levels.

Other comments
- The librarian takes my classroom once a week for 40 minutes for literacy instruction.

Parent Engagement

Question 1: What do you communicate with parents about the quality of their child’s progress in reading?

Parent Involvement in communication
- We give parents a list of things to talk to their kids about: colors, letters, words, etc.
- First grade teachers build a good rapport with parents using the child’s reading log.
- We have a Title 1 parent night and most parents come the first time. Attendance is not as good at subsequent parent nights.
- We provide a weekly newsletter, and we have a Thursday folder that they must look at and sign. However, it does not always seem like the parents are actually reading what is sent home. Rather they seem to just sign the paper and send it back.
- Communication involvement is highest in the early grades and quickly drops off as the students get older.

Lack of parent involvement
- At the secondary level many parents don’t see reading as a priority—it is not valued at home.
Parents do not see the connection between performance at school and reading at home.
There is an attitude from parents that it is not their job to read with their child.

Relationship building to enhance communication
- I try to find something good to say about every child to the parents.
- Teachers call when students do well to build a positive relationship.

Communication strategies
- We use the smart board during parent-teacher conferences to show parents how their students are performing. This helps engage more reluctant parents or parents that do not have literacy skills themselves.
- We have phone conversations with elementary parents.

Barriers to effective communication
- As the children get older parents rarely come to conferences and other meetings, with the exception of the parents of advanced students.
- Parents with negative school experiences of their own avoid coming to their child’s school.
- Some parents avoid speaking to the IEP team. They just want to speak to one teacher because they don’t understand how they all fit together.
- High school has less than one percent of attendance at parent-teacher conferences.
- Some of the problems with parent-teacher conferences are parents showing up and being on the same page with the teachers.
- For elementary teachers, I have a 90% attendance. After this initial meeting the attendance is much less.
- At the high school we have a very low turnout at parent-teacher conferences.

Other comments
- At the first parent-teacher conference we talk about the STAR report and reading level.
- At the middle school the parents come to talk to the math teachers.
- Teachers have Title 1 meetings with the parents.

Question 2: What do you report?
- When we break down reading assessments to specific deficits we lose parents.
Parents do not always understand the increasing level of rigor required to progress to the next level.

**Question 3: How do you involve parents in your reading program?**

- Effective parenting meetings for literacy are needed.
- Lack of parent involvement is an issue.
- We have an art fair and we try to get parents to come in. This is for T1 only, and without an incentive like this parents are less likely to attend.

**Special Populations**

**Question 1: How do you prepare English language learners to learn in an English-speaking classroom?**

**Assessments used to guide instruction**
- We have ELLs-We test every elementary child and assign them to tiers according to their score.
- Parents fill out a home language survey.

**Teaching strategies for English language learners**
- In Kindergarten they use visuals to help students hear the words. We also do this in high school.
- High school has no ELL specialist.
- T1 teachers use pull out (strategy) for targeted instruction.
- Newcomers buddy with other students.

**Computer programs for English language learners**
- We use English in a Flash (program) for 90 minutes at a time.
- We use READ 180 and other software for language development.
- For ELL we use Lexia (computer assessment) and Rosetta Stone. These are the only services provided to high school students.
- For non-English speaking students we use computer programs, but there is no social or academic help.

**Barriers to teaching English language learners**
- We have a lack of Spanish speaking staff to communicate with parents. We use janitors or cafeteria workers to help communicate with parents during parent teacher conferences.
• ELL parents may know basic words only, but they can’t help their students with their classwork.
• ELL students lack academic vocabulary.
• There is no language acquisition at the high school. It is total emersion.

**Question 2: In what ways do you accommodate special needs students?**

**Inclusion and other strategies**
- We use inclusion.
- In some grade levels inclusion works well. In others it does not.
- There are some days where special education students get zero services.
- The block scheduling allows teachers to go back and re-teach a student as needed.

**Staffing issues**
- Inclusion is very difficult because we do not have enough specialized help for the number of special educations students we have.
- Paraprofessionals are not experts in specific disabilities.
- We are understaffed with a lot of special education kids.

**Question 3: How do your classrooms promote conditions to support the literacy needs of low socio-economic students?**

**Lack of literacy rich learning experiences**
- Low socio-economic students lack community experiences.
- Common Core assessment is based on conversations and experiences. This creates a problem for children who are lacking in community experiences. Finding a way to give students experiences (perhaps through field trips) would be helpful.
- Low SES students lack social skills.

**Other comments**
- They have poor nutrition.
Professional Development

Question 1: What professional development opportunities have you had in literacy to support your continued growth as a teacher?

Professional development needs for teachers

- Teachers have not been trained on how to differentiate instruction. This type of training is essential.
- Teachers need to be trained on how to use data for instruction.
- I would like professional development on vocabulary instruction.
- We need professional development to help us with inclusion.
- Teachers want more professional development on how to teach comprehension to students.
- There is not adequate training.
- Different instruction would be helpful.

Professional development on literacy programs

- Almost all elementary teachers are trained in Literacy First.
- Literacy First addresses fluency and phonics.
- PAYNE Education Center provides phonics training.
- There is a wide range of reading levels within each classroom. We do not know how to deliver individualized literacy instruction to all these levels.
- We have an ELL webinar. We have also had training in Great Expectations—early childhood to high school.

Common Core training

- Teachers are excited about the Common Core Standards. However, they feel like they need more training on how to implement.
- Teachers have fears of the Common Core Curriculum. They are afraid that they will have to do some catching up with the new curriculum.
- We have had meetings to correlate the Common Core Curriculum with the priority academic student skills.
- In the Common Core math curriculum we have to explain the language to the students due to limited language skills.
- With the Common Core math requiring students to be able to articulate the problems we are concerned that the lack of literacy will impact students across more subjects.
- There are some webinars online for the Common Core State Standards, but we have to pay for it.
Other comments
- Middle school and high school training is geared toward content subject area.
- Middle and high school teachers that teach subjects other than language arts do not believe it is their responsibility to teach reading, or do not know how to.
- My first year I left orientation training more confused than when I came in.
- After third grade, students are in need of focusing more on comprehension.
- We have Love and Logic training.
- Some students with older siblings have the idea that reading does not matter and they can get older siblings to help them.
- As a resource teacher, if I pull students out of the classroom for individualized instruction, it is not for filling in gaps, but supplementing what is going on in the classroom.
- We need to teach toward strengths.

Final Question: What, if anything, would you change in your current literacy program?

Professional development needs for teachers
- We need better comprehension instruction in upper elementary.

Consistency in curriculum
- It would help if everyone were on the same page.
- We need vertical alignment. There is a gap year to year. There is always a transitional period where we have to get kids caught up on literacy skills.
- Have one basic literacy program for everyone to use.

Parent involvement issues
- We need more parent involvement.
- We have parents who think Pre-K and K are not important.

Attendance issues
- We don’t have an attendance policy in Pre-K and they miss a lot.
- Attendance is a problem in general.

Technology in the classroom
- Kids need technology in their hands—not just a computer.
- Most students know how to use technology: math games, literacy games, etc.
Other comments
- Multiple teachers stated that it would be helpful to go to year-round school.
- More kids need to be served at the middle school level.
- Who do we want writing the content?
- We have a lot of staff turnover, making content inconsistent.
- The quality of pre-K programs in the area varies significantly. It is evident when students show up for Kindergarten where they were prepared.
Administrator Discussion

Leader Literacy Practices: Elementary and Secondary

Question 1: How do you support literacy instruction as an instructional leader?

- From a H.S. prospective—To find materials that interest the reader, that are challenging, but not too challenging. Guide the instruction and give objectives to the student instead of taking a gray area and making something out of it.
- At the middle school level we have Title 1.
- Some teachers use the PASS objectives as an instructional base.
- We use READ 180. The teachers love it.

Question 2: How do you evaluate teacher effectiveness in literacy?

- We are not evaluating teachers as literacy teachers, but evaluating them in the context of teachers. One of the first things you look at is student success. If the kids are not getting it, you are not teaching. They need to meet the expectations of the curriculum. I am not sure that I buy into the statement that we are going to have a lot more rigor when we transition to the Common Core. I think we have rigor now. When we look at NWEA scores, we know that kids are behind in reading.
- One thing I have observed—teachers who are very comfortable with the PASS objectives are embracing the Common Core.
- We look at the data from NWEA, Literacy First assessments, and STAR assessments to see if the benchmark was met. We collaborate with teachers and we ask what we are doing for interventions and to monitor these students.
- I think our teachers see the Common Core as being deeper, by taking a smaller amount of objectives and studying them more in depth.
- I think for those of us, who have been in education for a long time, we have stepped away from regurgitating information without understanding. We have not honored literacy or thinking. We have become a nation of non-readers and don’t embrace it. It takes time and effort to learn how to do it well. It is a return to an older methodology.
- The Common Core is more in depth than the PASS. If you put the kind of energy and finance in testing that is what people will focus on.
Question 3: How do you support and work with your teams to support literacy instruction?

- We protect literacy instruction by providing adequate time without interruptions, staff development and resources.
- I think we have worked really hard with staff development. I have seen one round of it, and it is a little overwhelming and teachers understand it better when they put it into practice. Literacy First says scores will dip while teachers are training.
- First time teachers will take years to be proficient in literacy, so we pair them up with more experienced teachers.

Question 4: What do you see as the instructional leader’s role in supporting literacy?

- We make sure that teachers have time for instruction and look to see if centers are set up in a certain way so that kids learn what they need to know.
- We try to protect literacy time and provide the staff development the teachers need.

Question 5: What have you learned about teacher practices in literacy as you conduct walk-through and observations?

- The rigor has so much to do with student engagement; if the engagement is there, the rigor will be there.
- The more experienced teachers have mastered literacy instruction, it is embedded in all they do, and they are willing to mentor less experienced teachers.
- I think that our secondary teachers do a really good job at incorporating literacy and vocabulary into their instruction. Where we have gone wrong is how we teach vocabulary. We have to teach vocabulary differently by stopping the self-learning, and the teachers have got to do a better job in engaging themselves in vocabulary teaching and learning.

Struggling Readers

Question 1: Name the most pressing problems you face in addressing the needs of struggling readers in your school, both at the elementary and secondary levels.
Vocabulary is a huge part of it. When they start decoding words, if they do not have the words in their oral vocabulary they won’t get it. At the end, vocabulary is the basis of the work. Some kids come to us with thousands fewer words than they should.

We will see growth in every student, and then we will have summer loss. How does a kid get to ninth grade when they are behind? Those kids who are not reading come back behind.

There is not a lot of parental support, sometimes we are the only educational support the kids have. We do not have enough time in school. From the time I was in school it was 175 days, but now we have cut back and keep cutting back. A solution to this would be having year round school.

Even if the parents want to provide, many of them don’t have the skills to provide.

There is conflict with the concept of literacy—there is almost a fear of extended learning. If a child is going home to an environment where reading is not valued they sometimes get an attitude like, “who do you think you are.”

We should promote the idea that everyone must be able to read no matter what age. We need to become a community of readers.

Question 2: How is additional support provided for these students? At the elementary level and at the secondary level.

- The PAT program is present in Ardmore, but underfunded.

Curriculum and Instruction

Question 1: What do you perceive to be the strengths and concerns of the current literacy program?

- In addressing fluency, we need to have the students read aloud, but finding time is difficult. Bringing in mentors and volunteers may help. We also need the parent piece.
- The kids are being pulled in different directions. When we get to the Common Core we will get more in-depth.
- We decided to invest our money on technology-I-Pads.
- When we gave the children I-Pads their learning knowledge went way up (one teacher’s experience).
- Many teachers said they needed more hands on deck to help with diminishing resources and to help students with the most intensive needs.
Question 2: How do you determine what reading curriculum and other instructional materials are used?

- A district wide curriculum is used for literacy.
- We also use assessments and data: NWEA, STAR, and Literacy First.

Question 3: How is a student’s appropriate reading level determined?

- We use assessments and data: NWEA, STAR, and Literacy First.

Question 4: How are the appropriate reading interventions determined?

- We use assessments and data: NWEA, STAR, and Literacy First.

Questions 5: What strategies and programs are in place to support adolescent literacy at the secondary level?

- There has been no discussion of a formal support system.

Assessment and Data Use

Question 1: What types of data do you use to inform instructional decisions?

- It is ongoing.
- We assess the youth throughout the year.
- For Pre-K we use ABC inventory and Literacy First. NOTE: These answers relate to ONLY the Assessment part of the questions; no mention is made of any TYPE of DATA the ways it may be USED to inform (revise) about instruction that would be more effective.
- We use assessments and data: NWEA, STAR, and Literacy First.

Question 2: What types of assessments do you use to pre-screen, screen, diagnose, monitor progress, or outcomes on the acquisition of literacy skills?

- We use assessments and data: NWEA, STAR, and Literacy First.
Parent Engagement

Question 1: What do you communicate with parents about the quality of their child’s progress in reading?

- First through third have to report if their students are deficient around any area. We show their progress after each assessment. They share all five areas.

Question 2: What do you report?

- Their child’s reading level.

Question 3: How do you involve parents in your reading program?

- Every quarter we do a parent meeting, we incorporate a reading or math night. We have food or a performance to encourage them to come.
- A lot of our [SES] kids need help, but their parents don’t always feel comfortable coming into the school. We try to reach the parents to help their child at home.

Special Populations

Question 1: How do you prepare English language learners to learn in an English speaking classroom?

- There is no training for ELL for teachers.
- A lot of the same practices used with English speaking students are good for ELL students. We need extra support for the ELL students.

Question 2: In what ways do you accommodate special needs students?

- Title 1 is a three-tiered intervention.

Question 3: How do your classrooms promote conditions to support the literacy needs of low socio-economic students?

- We try to bridge the gap by providing food and supplies.
- 98-99% of [ALL or only the ELL] students are low SES.
We have to start with developing oral language. Many parents are not having conversations with children at home. Teachers have to provide rich experiences at school through field trips.

**Question 4: In what ways do you use a student’s cultural background and experiences to promote literacy?**

- Yes. We have a large American Indian population. Family life has not been a literate life. They live off the nation and are not working, so they are lacking motivation to read.
- Many of these kids come to class not knowing anything about literacy. They don’t read at home or come from a literacy supportive family.
- South Eastern University has developed a curriculum about the Choctaw Nation to help them have pride in their background and become more proficient in literacy.

**Professional Development**

**Question 1: What professional development opportunities have you had in literacy to support your continued growth as an instructional leader?**

- One thing is more directive instruction on utilizing the data.

**Question 2: What professional development opportunities have you, your teachers, and other staff had to help with transition to the higher level of rigor found in the Common Core?**

- Teachers are fearful of the unknown; they are not sure what is expected from the more rigorous Common Core.
- We have introduced the NATE web site so they can see and show students what will be expected from the Common Core Curriculum.
- I looked at other states and what their curriculum looked like. I want to hear those state’s experiences transitioning. I want to know what they did and did not do.
Question 3: What additional professional development opportunities would you like in the future to support you in your role as an instructional leader in literacy?

- We would like to get good at designing evaluations that evaluate what we really want to know, and design lessons that get the outcomes we want.
- We want to cross over from the PASS to Common Core.

Final Question: What if anything, would you change in your current literacy program?

- Teachers collaborating together more often.
- Design lessons and evaluations to assess learning and teaching.