



NEWS

Contact: Meg Grant

210.558.1902

mgrant@edvanceresearch.com

TEXAS CONSORTIUM ON SCHOOL RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS THE IMPORTANCE OF DATA IN SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT STRATEGIES

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SAN ANTONIO – The growing importance of education practitioner and researcher collaboration was illustrated at the recent [Texas Consortium on School Research \(TCSR\)](#) convening in Dallas on February 18th. Leaders from 18 Texas school districts demonstrated how the Consortium is facilitating the use of data in their districts to improve student outcomes, focusing on the area of College and Career Readiness. TCSR continues to build district research capacity as evidenced by members who shared examples of the “real world” application of data. They cited how their participation in TCSR has resulted in the identification of common issues and the subsequent development of practical strategies for utilizing data to support school improvement efforts.

As this was the fifth gathering of TCSR members, the meeting reflected the value of TCSR as a **Community of Practice**, with members presenting insights on how the knowledge and best practices gained through TCSR are being applied, including:

- **Houston ISD:** *Using Research to Align College Readiness Standards*
- **Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board:** *Texas Pathways Project*
- **Northside ISD (San Antonio):** *High School to College: A Teacher to Teacher Connection*
- **Grapevine-Colleyville ISD and Spring Branch ISD:** *Vertical Alignment of College Ready Standards: What TCSR Districts and Institutes of Higher Education are Doing*

In addition, a number of the TCSR districts participated in a pilot of a “How-To Guide” for the REL Southwest study, [How Prepared are Students for College Level Reading? Applying a Lexile® Based Approach](#). An overview of the study and the development of the “How-To Guide,” specifically the importance of district input, reflected how this collaboration is generating the practical application of research with the goal of increasing student achievement.

Aaron Smith, Director of Knowledge Management at YES Prep in Houston, a participant in the pilot, stated, ***“The guide is a simple tool that produces powerful data. It will help us identify and address areas of opportunity so we can better prepare YES students to read at the college level. The guide is simple, concise, and meaningful—there’s no question we’ll use it.”***

A research panel represented by the Regional Educational Laboratory – Southwest (REL Southwest at Edvance Research) staff provided ideas for the refinement and enhancement of research in the areas related to:

- ***Research Questions***
- ***Evaluation Designs***
- ***Metrics for Evaluating Designs***
- ***Intervention Components***
- ***Fidelity of Interventions***

TCSR is an **action-oriented Consortium** managed by the [REL Southwest at Edvance Research \(Managing Partner\)](#) in partnership with [The University of Texas at Dallas Education Research Center \(UTD-ERC\)](#) and the [Consortium on Chicago School Research \(CCSR\)](#).

Participants at the recent Texas Consortium meeting included representation from geographically and demographically diverse school districts, including Aldine ISD, Austin ISD, Beaumont ISD, Carrollton-Farmers Branch ISD, Clear Creek ISD, Dallas ISD, Fort Bend ISD, Fort Worth ISD, Galena Park ISD, Grapevine-Colleyville ISD, Houston ISD, Irving ISD, Lewisville ISD, Lubbock ISD, Northside ISD (San Antonio), Plano ISD, Spring Branch ISD and YES Prep Public Schools (Houston). A total of 33 Texas districts comprise TCSR membership, representing over 25% of students in Texas.

REL Southwest at Edvance Research will convene the Arkansas Consortium on School Research (ACSR) on March 3rd in Monticello, Arkansas with attendees from over 25 districts, of which a majority are in rural areas. This meeting will have a focus on On-Track Indicators for High School Graduation. Planning for the Louisiana Consortium on School Research (LCSR) is in progress with over 40 education leaders in the state.

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