ALBUQUERQUE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Academic Excellence
And
Early Learning

Results of the 2004 KDPR
2nd Grade Reading
4th Grade Follow up
ALBUQUERQUE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Executive Summary
Academic Excellence and Excellence in Early Learning

The foundations for academic excellence begins in the early learning environment. To measure the progress towards academic excellence, Albuquerque Public Schools (APS) reports three early learning measures:

- Kindergarten literacy and math
- 2nd grade reading outcomes
- 4th grade follow up in reading

The teacher-administered Kindergarten Developmental Progress Record (KDPR) identifies essential standards for kindergarten students to master in order to be successful in first grade.

In 2004 more than 6600 kindergarten students participated in the KDPR. 82% of these students were identified as proficient while another 8% were identified as nearing proficient in literacy and math. This figure shows that the district goal of 75% of students reaching proficiency for Excellence in Early Learning was accomplished.

While all first grade students are assessed in reading, the district outcome measure is the percent of students at grade level at the end of second grade.

In 2004, 76% of second graders were reading at grade level. This rate has risen from 60% in 1998-99 to the current rate of 76%.

In order to ensure students who are not at grade level are provided the interventions needed to reach grade level, a second follow up is reported. Any student who is not at grade level at second grade and again in 3rd grade are identified for the fourth grade teachers.

Of the group entering fourth grade not at grade level, 50% reached grade level by the end of fourth grade. This special intervention plan resulted in 84% of all fourth graders reaching reading grade level.

The second grade results and these fourth grade results show that the district achieved one indicator of the Academic Excellence goal.
Kindergarten Developmental Progress Record

The *Kindergarten Developmental Progress Record (KDPR)* is a locally developed assessment designed to assist kindergarten teachers in documenting student progress in mastering the APS standards in literacy and mathematics. The KDPR has been in use in APS for over 15 years. This assessment is composed of a series of tasks assessed through teacher observations, large and small group work, and one-on-one teacher interviews. A rubric guides teachers’ evaluations of students’ progress and standing in mastery.

Teachers worked with assessment experts in the district to revise the KDPR and began using this revised version in the Fall 2002. The KDPR has 49 items that align to the most recently published APS performance standards and is inclusive of those skills determined by kindergarten teachers to be essential for successful completion of kindergarten.

Kindergarten teachers were asked to determine which of these 49 items on the KDPR are non-negotiable content standards of which mastery is essential to student success in first grade. Teachers identified 38 items as critical, foundational competencies. These items include social/emotional development, physical development, intellectual development, mathematics and language arts.

While the primary purpose of the KDPR is to inform and guide instruction, the KDPR supports two other critical foundations: the kindergarten report card and the First Grade Alert List. The KDPR aligns to the kindergarten report card and provides teachers a set of standard tasks to use when completing the student’s report card each grading period. The scoring guide provides consistency in communicating the results to parents and teachers. This is the first step towards a standards based report and assessment system.

Each year an alert report is provided to first grade teachers. This report identifies those students who exited kindergarten not having full mastery of these essential performance standards. The First Grade Alert Report is based on results from 25 items in the area of literacy and mathematics. Figure 1 shows KDPR results for the last four years in the area of language arts/literacy.

![Figure 1- Students’ Status on KDPR Language Arts](image-url)
At the end of the 2003-2004 school year, 82% of kindergarten students were proficient in all language arts areas and 8% were nearing proficiency. Students are considered proficient when they have achieved mastery of 91% of the language arts items. Nearing proficient students must demonstrate mastery by earning from 46 to 57 points of the 57.

Figure 2 illustrates the proficiency levels for the demographic groups tested with the KDPR. The demographic breakdowns are as follows: 58% Hispanic, 4% African American, 5% Native American, 31% Anglo, and 2% Asian. The Hispanic and Anglo groups comprise the majority of students represented in kindergarten in APS. Although the Anglo population shows a larger percentage of students achieving proficiency in language arts, the gap is not huge. Through close adherence to the standards and by making use of assessment information to guide instructional decisions we will move toward closing this gap.

Figure 3-4 illustrates student status for two different populations; students receiving free and reduced lunch and English Language Learners. These particular groups of students generally perform lower than their more economically advantaged peers, however, the results of the KDPR are showing a smaller gap among the groups. This raises the question as to why this is occurring. One reason for this narrowing of the gap could be due to the lack of understanding on the part of the teachers on how to truly observe student performance over time and in a variety of situations. Only through this understanding can proficiency really be determined. Professional development in the use of the KDPR and its application to classroom practice, are necessary to ensure consistency and accuracy in the reporting of student performance.
Another reason for this trend could be due to the availability and opportunity for kindergarten students speaking English or Spanish to be assessed in their home language. The Spanish KDPR is an assessment that is not a mere translation but a true Spanish version of the English Assessment. This affords students the possibility of being assessed in their dominant language and building on their existing knowledge, which would raise proficiency levels for all students. Figure 5 represents the number of students and their proficiency level by language.
Figure 5 – Students’ Status by Language Tested

![Graph showing percentage of students proficient in English and Spanish.]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
<th>Nearing Proficient</th>
<th>Beginning Steps</th>
<th>Priority</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total # of Students</td>
<td>5929</td>
<td>769</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 6 represents the proficiency levels for Special Education students in language arts. The KDPR was designed and developed following the principles of Universal Design, which allows participation of the widest possible range of students. Not only are teachers able to assess students in English and Spanish but Special Needs students are also able to demonstrate progress toward instructional goals. It provides teachers with diagnostic information that helps in planning for individual instructional needs.

Figure 6 – Special Education Students’ Status in Language Arts

![Bar chart showing proficiency levels of special education students.]

N = 585
The 2003-2004 summary results for the mathematics portion of the KDPR shows 89% of the students reaching proficiency and 7% at nearing proficiency. The results also show movement out of the beginning and priority levels into the nearing proficiency and proficiency levels. Given that students’ proficiency levels are rated on the basis of six items, results in the past did not accurately reflect students’ overall performance levels. To correct this anomaly the cut scores have been adjusted to better represent students’ mastery of the standards thus accounting for the 15% increase at the proficient level. Figure 7 shows KDPR results for the last four years for some of the mathematics areas.

Figure 7 – Students’ Status on Mathematics

Figure 8 illustrates proficiency levels in mathematics by ethnicity. Once again there is a difference in performance among all of the groups, however that margin is small. The discrepancy at the proficient level, between the Hispanic and Anglo population is only 7%. Items reported for mathematics at the kindergarten level are based largely on understanding of numbers and are very experiential. These concepts are less language based than mathematical concepts at the next level of learning, therefore we would expect there to be less of a gap among various groups.

Figure 8 – Students’ Status by Ethnicity for Mathematics
Figure 9 – Free and Reduced Lunch Students’ Status for Mathematics

Figure 10 illustrates how English Language Learners whose dominant language is Spanish are able to demonstrate their understanding of mathematics in that language. The chart represents students who have been tested in either English or Spanish depending on their need. Having a quality assessment available in English and Spanish allows teachers the ability to truly assess the level of understanding for the concepts being addressed for the majority of their students.

Figure 10 – English Language Learners’ Status for Mathematics
As seen in Figure 12 special education students fall below the percent proficient of their regular education peers. However, the KDPR does allow students with special needs to show their abilities and offers information that can be used to move all students along instructionally.

In order to provide consistency in the administration and reporting of student performance on the KDPR, professional development is required. If we want kindergarten students to be truly proficient in mastery of the standards we must raise the bar and work toward helping all students reach the standards at their highest level.

The KDPR continues to support teachers in meeting the individual needs of students, moving them toward their instructional goals. The majority of kindergarten students are mastering their grade level standards in both language arts and mathematics. Over all, the assessment results show positive outcomes for kindergarten students in APS.
Analytical Reading Inventory
2nd and 4th Grades

The Analytical Reading Inventory (ARI) is a diagnostic assessment used to observe, analyze and record data about strategies a student uses to read. It is an informal reading inventory, composed of a series of graded passages that reflect the type of texts assigned in school. The information rendered from the ARI is very specific, such as:

- How a student processes text at various instructional levels.
- The strategies used to recognize words.
- The strategies used to comprehend the meaning of the text.

Knowing specialized data such as this enables teachers to make the everyday classroom decisions that culminate in meaningful instruction. Furthermore, it is authentic data used to communicate to parents, other teachers, and school administrators about a student's reading proficiency.

Following House Bill 212 requirements, student’s reading levels are reported to the district in the spring of each school year. Students reading below grade level are placed on a student alert list in the fall and become eligible for Academic Improvement Plans (AIP). These plans provide a framework for teachers and parents to work together on supporting children to become proficient readers. At the end of second grade, students reading below grade level based on the ARI who have had AIPs are eligible to participate in the summer school Second Grade Reading Academy. AIPs for all grades frequently include summer school, specifically for reading, tutoring, and specific home programs.

Since 1998-99 the ARI has been used as the APS district assessment administered to second grade students in order to determine their instructional reading level. During the 2003-04 school year eight schools became Reading First Schools. As part of the Reading First grant, these schools were required to administer the Texas Reading Primary Reading Inventory (TPRI) to inform reading instruction. The reading results for the 2003-04 school year represent students’ reading levels based on the ARI and TPRI. The reading results represented in Figure 1 shows the percent of second grade students reading at or above grade level over the last six years. During the 2003-04 school year 76% of second grade students were reading at or above grade level. This is a 3% increase over 2002-03. This figure also shows that the district has met the Excellence in Early Learning Goal.

![Figure 1 – Students Reading At or Above Grade Level in Second Grade](chart.png)
Figure 2 represents the percent of second grade students reading at or above grade level based on ethnicity. While there are differences among the different ethnicities, the results are encouraging. Using the ARI and TPRI to guide instruction provides teachers with the necessary information to meet the individual needs of students. Both assessments are available in English and Spanish and are being used by teachers to guide instructional decision making that will close the achievement gap.

![Figure 2 - Second Grade Students Reading At or Above Grade Level by Ethnicity](image)

Figure 3 represents the percent of second grade students reading at or above grade level based on English Language Learner (ELL) status.

Students learning English are classified as NEP, speaking/understanding little or no English, or LEP, Limited English proficiency. Students who have achieved FEP status are English proficient at entry to school. These students are often fully bilingual. FEP students are former LEPs and have been classified as English proficient for less than a year. While students categorized as LEP and NEP are lower than the district as a whole, the Fully English Proficient on Monitor status (FEPM) groups show rates of on grade level reading that are comparable to district levels.

![Figure 3 - Second Grade English Language Learners Reading At or Above Grade Level](image)
Figure 4 shows the reading performance of second grade students receiving free and reduced lunch. 69% of the students falling into this category are reading at or above grade level as of spring 2004. Over 2000 students in this economic range are proficient in reading according to these assessment results. However, these students continue to have higher rates of struggling readers.

Figure 4 – Reading Performance of Second Grade Students Receiving Free and Reduced Lunch

![Bar Chart]

Figure 5 compares the percent of special education students reading below grade level to those reading at or above grade level for the 2003-04 second grade. When evaluating this information it is important to take into account the number of special education students being assessed with the ARI and TPRI. Frequently special education students at this age must take an alternate assessment in order to have their abilities properly assessed. However, the ARI and TPRI provides information regarding the strategies being used by many students with special needs as well as the general population.

Children receiving special services due to learning disabilities progress at a much slower rate than their general education peers. Language processing issues are at the core of many special education students' disabilities. Before a child reads proficiently he/she needs to be language proficient. Therefore, the pace at which special education students' progress into reading proficiency will be slower but reading proficiency is not impossible. Our goal is to move the 63% into the proficient range with special reading interventions such as the Wilson Reading Program, Fundations, and the LETRS Program for special education students.
During the 2001-02 school year fourth grade students were assessed for the first time using the ARI. The students who were identified for re-evaluation were those who were reading below grade level on their second grade ARI and who scored below the 40th percentile in reading on their third grade TerraNova. Students who were new to APS and did not have either an ARI score or a TerraNova Reading score were also assessed for their reading proficiency using the ARI.

Of the 6619 fourth graders in 2003-04, 2080 students were identified for reassessment using the ARI. This represents 31% of all fourth graders who required a re-evaluation. Half of the fourth grade students who were reading below grade level improved their reading skills. Of the 2080, fourth graders assessed, 50% of the students are now reading at or above grade level. Over the three years the percent of students achieving grade level proficiency after entering fourth grade below proficiency has been consistent. Further study will be undertaken to determine factors associated with the successful remediation and how this may be enhanced.
Figure 6 represents reading performance with a breakdown, by ethnicity, of students entering fourth grade reading below grade level. Although there is variation in proficiency rates among the different ethnicities, approximately 50% of the students are now reading at or above grade level. Close to fourteen hundred Hispanic students entered fourth grade reading below grade level. By the end of the year approximately 700 students were at or above grade level, a reduction by half.

Figure 6 – Identified Fourth Grade Students Reading Proficiency by Ethnicity

![Bar chart showing reading proficiency by ethnicity.]

Figure 7 demonstrates the end of the year reading performance of English Language Learners who entered fourth grade reading below grade level. The ARI is available in Spanish as well as English and offers teachers detailed information regarding the strategies students are using to read. The Limited English Proficient and Non-English Proficient students are making gains, although not as great as the students on monitor status (FEPM) or those rated as Fully English Proficient (FEP). Almost 60% of the FEPM and FEP students who were initially below grade level are now proficient readers in English.

Figure 7 - Identified Fourth Grade English Language Learners Reading Proficiency

![Bar chart showing reading proficiency of English Language Learners.]

Total = 2070

Total = 685
Figure 8 illustrates the gap in reading performance as it relates to students in the lower socio-economic range. 459 students who were below grade level in reading are now proficient at the end of fourth grade. The remediation rate of students in poverty is slightly less than that of their more advantaged grade mates.

Special education students require very specialized instruction, which addresses specific learning disabilities. Figure 9 illustrates how slow this progress can be. 17% of the special education students who were below grade level in reading entering fourth grade are now proficient readers based on this ARI information. 83% of the students are still below grade level in reading. These students have Individual Education Plans and specialists working with the teacher, which will guide the instructional process and help move these students forward in reading.
Summary

76% of students are exiting second grade reading at or above grade level, a higher percentage than any other time in the last six years. The adoption and full implementation of Balanced Literacy programs, core reading programs, and Literacy Leaders providing on-going professional development, account for much of this accomplishment. However, for struggling second grade readers the district provides Academic Improvement Plans and a recognized Second Grade Reading Academy. Helping these students make gains in reading over the summer, so that they enter third grade prepared is critical to ensuring all students reach rigorous content standards. Differences in proficiency rates exist among second graders when scores are disaggregated by ethnicity. Special education students had the greatest difficulty achieving proficiency, while free lunch students were the next most challenged group.

Over the last three years the district has examined the remediation outcomes for students entering fourth grade below grade level. About half of these students are able to achieve proficiency at year-end even though they entered below grade level.

Successful remediation rates in fourth grade are fairly comparable for different ethnic groups. The persistence of this remediation rate over the last few years warrants further study.

Over all the district reached its’ goals for existing second graders and fourth graders needing remediation.