the future is bright

Preliminary Results From Dallas Independent School District's Personalized Learning Initiative

May 2018

Report Summary

As a burgeoning national initiative, Personalized Learning (PL) takes many forms. However it is practiced, PL is about putting the child at the center of instruction. Dallas ISD began its PL initiative in the fall of 2013 as part of the Next Generation Systems Initiative (NGSI) network. Following a competitive application process open to school teams across the District, five campuses were provided with funding and support to launch wall-to-wall PL models beginning in the 2015-2016 school year.

These campuses formed Dallas ISD's original PL cohort. As a result of their success and impact, the initiative rapidly evolved and expanded to reach over 20,000 students by 2017 - more than one in every ten students in the District. Dallas ISD's PL impact report examines the key practices, successes, lessons learned, and results of the original cohort campuses during their first two years of PL implementation and shares the District's vision for the future of the initiative.

Dallas ISD Personalized Learning Cohort

- 🏠 Chapel Hill Preparatory (PreK-5th)
- 🏠 Dan D. Rogers Elementary (PreK-5th)
- 🏠 Ignacio Zaragoza Elementary (PreK-5th)
- 🏠 T.C. Marsh Preparatory Academy (6th-8th)
- 🏠 Innovation, Design, Entrepreneurship Academy (IDEA, 9th-12th)

Key Findings

Outcomes at the District's PL cohort campuses were examined using data from multiple standardized assessments, state ratings, and surveys. Results from an independent study of the initiative by researchers at Southern Methodist University are also included. Overall, the data illustrate that the cohort schools generally outperformed both the District and their feeder patterns (geographically grouped K-12 schools to which students are zoned) on these measures, with the strongest results seen at the elementary level (three of the five cohort campuses).

Notable Trends:

- **Application rates** - From the initiative's launch in 2015-16 through the 2017-18 school year, over 250 students have chosen to transfer to the District's four Personalized Learning neighborhood schools, and 1,969 students have applied for 718 seats at the lottery-based Personalized Learning high school (IDEA) and new middle school (Ignite) scheduled to open in the fall of 2018.
- **Human capital** - The District's PL teacher competency framework and recruitment model led to a set of PL teacher applicants that outperformed the general applicant pool on every metric examined.

> Zaragoza Elementary's Math STAAR passing rates grew **26** percentage points in two years from **60%** to **86%**.

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- **STAAR results** - Cohort campuses generally achieved both higher passing rates and more growth than the District and their feeder pattern schools on the Math and Reading State Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR). The independent study found that PL students outperformed their matched non-PL peers on these assessments across six demographic subgroups.
- **NWEA MAP assessment results** - The Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) is an online, adaptive assessment that is independent of students' grade level and used for formative instruction. Cohort students were split approximately in half among the "high growth" / "high achieving" and "low growth" / "low achieving" categories on the assessments taken between Spring 2016 and Spring 2017.
- **State Performance Index Ratings** - The majority of cohort schools exceeded state targets on two key Performance Index Ratings (Student Progress and Postsecondary Readiness) at a greater rate each year.
- **Survey responses** - Staff and student responses to key survey questions related to PL practices were generally positive and consistently exceeded the average positive response rates for the District and their feeder pattern schools.
- **Change management** - Positive response rates to the District staff survey question, "My campus leadership helps me understand recent changes in the school's focus," generally decreased during the two years of PL implementation, though it remained relatively high overall.

> Rogers Elementary exceeded the Postsecondary Readiness target by 333% by the end of its second year of PL implementation.

Remaining Questions

> "We're trying something daring; it's going to take adjustment but will be hugely impactful."
> —PL Teacher

The report also addresses larger questions about Personalized Learning including how to measure the initiative's full impact beyond traditional measures such as test scores, and how to develop a shared understanding of the model that enables a wide range of practitioners to implement PL with fidelity. Dallas ISD is currently piloting a potential solution to the latter question through the recently developed Personalized Learning Continuum - a rubric developed in partnership with 2Revolutions and SchoolWorks that illustrates Personalized Learning practices at the campus level across 12 domains and 4 proficiency levels. The District plans to use the new continuum both as a readiness assessment for potential future PL campuses and as an added support structure to help current PL schools deepen their practices.

Conclusion

While the initiative is still early in its implementation and there is plenty of room for improvement, the results seen thus far are encouraging. In response to high family demand and successes of the PL cohort campuses, the initiative has already seen immense growth, evolving beyond the school-wide model into four unique implementation pathways. Further growth is on the horizon - in the fall of 2018, the District's PL initiative is set to reach up to 50,000 students across the four implementation pathways. The District looks forward to examining the results of these newer implementation models in the years ahead.

Download the full report at
www.thepltoolbox.com/impactreport

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