



## POSTER PRESENTATION SUMMARY SESSION I

**Tricia Gomez:** *Effective classroom management strategies for reducing disruptive student behavior in the elementary classroom.*

Addressing classroom management could reduce the number of disruptive student behaviors that occur. According to Marzano, Marzano, & Pickering (2003) it is critical to know which classroom management strategies work and which ones do not work. Such information would help to create effective and productive schools. This study will examine which classroom management strategies could be most effective in reducing disruptive student behaviors and thereby creating an effective and productive classroom.

**Keli Taylor:** *Increasing culturally responsive teaching strategies.*

Watts Elementary showed significant achievement gaps among our student population on the 2012 and 2013 STAAR test in 3rd and 4th grade. We implemented the 4-Stage approach created by Dr. Guerra and Dr. Nelson.

**Dana Wilcott:** *STAAR EOC reading GPC interventions.*

One third of Bluebonnet High School's incoming freshmen failed to meet satisfactory standards on the reading STAAR EOC Assessment and were promoted from grade 8 by the Grade Placement Committee (GPC). Unfortunately, this lack of mastering the basic state objectives causes these students to begin their freshmen year in remediation. This study examines how can we meet these students where they are and raise them to where they should be while still giving them instruction necessary to master the next level of state assessments.

**Hollee Braun:** *English language learners: Improving classroom practice and achievement at Central Elementary.*

This study explored the causes of the achievement gap of English Language Learners at Central Elementary and strategies for increasing student achievement through bilingual instruction, culturally responsive teaching and professional development. The research methodology consisted of examination of qualitative data gathered through focus groups, review of documentation, and classroom observations. The study found that teachers had limited knowledge of culturally responsive teaching practice through their own lack of funds and awareness. An action plan consisting of a combination of building awareness and developing culturally responsive instruction by means of professional development was developed and implemented.

**Lisa Vasquez:** *Creating a college going culture.*

Plains High School has experienced rapid growth. The school has worked to increase college going culture at the school. There are areas that the school can improve on including creating an advisory program and college and career fair and increasing parent communication. This study examines how to implement the above strategies in a successful manner.

**Virginia Avalos:** *Bilingual educators in high Incidence disabilities.*

Bilingual special educators face challenges unique to their dual role in teaching students with disabilities in a language other than English. This project focuses on supporting teachers in this high needs area.

**Roque Thompson:** *Using PBIS and procedures to enhance school culture.*

PBIS was implemented on our campus four years ago. The implementations of PBIS common area procedures have helped create consistency of expectations for students and staff. Discipline office referrals have decreased. This study examines the successful strategies that made this decrease possible.

**Sabrina Paul:** *Cross aged mentor program at River High School.*

After a summer professional development “Mentor Bridge” training, planning was initiated to bring our Senior and Junior National Honor Society students in to mentor the incoming freshmen. The district needs to provide a mentoring program that provides a safe environment for the transition, growth, academic and psychological support, communication and trust for the freshman student at River H.S.

**Norma Martinez:** *Improving vocabulary instruction for struggling readers.*

One of the weakest areas of performance from our students reading benchmarks has been word meaning and vocabulary. Due to the early exit of bilingual students and transition into English testing, ELL students have historically struggled with the TAKS and now with the STAAR. Students need to have automaticity in reading, strong vocabulary knowledge and considerable ability to derive meaning from unfamiliar words in order to be successful. This knowledge led me to research types of vocabulary instruction that could be implemented to support struggling students. Our large population of ELL and At-risk students would benefit largely from consistent and explicit vocabulary instruction by acquiring a clear understanding of best practices or a strong understanding of the effect that vocabulary can have on students reading ability and comprehension.

**Cynthia Spade:** *Increasing parental involvement.*

This action research project focused on how schools can increase parental involvement. parents, teachers, and administration are key to helping students succeed in school. Studies have shown that when you have all three involved with students on a campus your behavior and test scores improve. This action research project examined how to link parents, teachers, and administrators in this process.

**Kristina Perez:** *Improving the effectiveness of RTI at Meadowbrook.*

This action research focused on how to improvement RtI. Specifically, this research examined how through increasing teacher knowledge of available interventions, professional development on culturally relevant interventions, and effective schedule building could maked interventions a priority. In making the RtI process more effective, we expect to see an increase in student achievement.

**James Lyas:** *The academic achievement of English language learners in secondary science.* Covalent High School is a Title I campus in Avogadro ISD. The campus serves the highest population of ELLs in the district and is one of the most diverse high schools, with over 53 countries represented. There are regulations, both at the federal and local levels, which tie ELL performance with funding and accountability. In addition, ELLs have historically not received equitable curriculum and instruction in the classroom. The aim of this project is to identify barriers to ELL achievement in science and develop an action plan to ensure their success at Covalent High School.

**Nicole Griffith:** *Underrepresentation of students of color in the academy for global studies.* This project examines the underrepresentation of students of color in the Academy of Global Studies (AGS) at Lakeside High School. AGS is a rigorous small learning community within the larger comprehensive high school. Though LHS is a diverse school, AGS does not reflect this diversity. To better understand this issue, this project presents literature on the barriers to taking advanced classes, deficit thinking, and the link between academic success and sense of school belonging. This project utilized surveys, interviews, and focus groups to conclude that the problem lies in recruitment and the perception that students of color may not belong in AGS.

**Bree Davis:** *Improving school climate on a high school campus.* The purpose of the study is to focus on the students and staff at Roman High School and the impact positive behavior interventions and supports can have on school climate. This research utilized interviews with administration, observations throughout the school and a focus group composed of various staff members. This project uncovered that there are very critical aspects to improving school climate including working collaboratively to establish and achieve campus goals as well as developing and maintaining meaningful relationships.

**Melanie Solis:** *Building collaborative grade level teams to increase student achievement.* Achievement data, teacher interviews, and administrator surveys indicate that cohesive teamwork among teachers directly correlate to gains in students' achievement. This research focuses on supporting team leadership and the PLC process to strengthen efficiency and effectiveness of teacher collaboration, thereby increasing student achievement.

**Bridget Guidry Arndt:** *Increasing the participation of racially and ethnically diverse students in advanced academics.* HHS teachers overall do not know what it means to be culturally responsive and those who think they know display a superficial understanding described as visible culture. Every year HHS's student demographics become more diverse while the teacher demographics remain a White majority. As the demographics change, teachers need to modify their instructional methods by incorporating cultural responsiveness into teaching strategies in order to better meet the learning needs of their students. Therefore, teachers need professional development. This action research examines how professional development infused with culturally responsive pedagogy and deconstruction of deficit beliefs impact and informs how teachers build cultural and social capital for cultural responsiveness.

**Byron Harkless:** *Improving academics in ISS.*

One of the biggest challenges facing Ojeda Middle School is the growing number of students in In-School Suspension (ISS) each year. The result is loss of instructional time for these students, as they miss out on valuable instruction from teachers while they are in ISS. The goal of this action research is to develop a program for students in ISS which allows them to be successful academically on STAAR and maintain their grades despite lost instructional time. This research indicates that focusing on academics will also improve overall student behavior.

**Sara Soto:** *Breaking down expository text: Elementary strategies to understand non-fiction text.*

One of the biggest struggles in reading is building the bridge between what is being read and what is understood. The purpose of this action research is to help build a set of strategies to help students break down and analyze non-fiction text. By utilizing different strategies to make inferences, draw conclusions, and write summaries, students have been given the opportunity to enhance their ability to analyze what they read and make meaning of it. Learning how to apply these life-long strategies will help all students across subject areas and throughout their educational careers.

**Zack Kleypas:** *Clarifying expectation in order to liberate hope.*

This action research project was geared toward helping eliminate persistent minor classroom misbehavior by implementing consistent proactive approaches across classrooms.

**Claudia Vasquez:** *Investigating parental involvement at wisdom high school: Implications, obstacles, and solutions.*

Parents, who are active participants in their children's life, have a positive impact on school achievement. Unfortunately, there are still students who are missing this essential component of parental involvement. This study examined how language barriers, time constraints, and meeting demands can effect parental involvement in a school culture. This action research plan seeks to explore parental involvement at Wisdom High School.

**Kathryn Koronka:** *Problem solving in mathematics and the effects of vertical alignment and team cohesion.*

The purpose of this study is to develop a variety of instructional strategies for problem solving in mathematics and to foster a common vision and collaboration among vertical teams. To address the needs of group development and leadership development in the areas of grade-level team and curriculum, a plan was implemented to development leadership within the campus, in order to increase team collaboration and math achievement of students. The action plan included the development of teacher leadership and instructional leadership. Effectiveness will be measured using the state-mandated assessment and the district staff climate survey.

## POSTER PRESENTATION SUMMARY SESSION II

**David Hanley:** *Providing students with 21st century skills.*

This action research examined how 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills enhance opportunities for students. Students will be impacted by this curriculum as they transition into the high school campus. They will have an opportunity to discover and implement their strengths with 21st Century Skills in a safe and dedicated environment for this exploration. With the acquisition and/or enhancement of these skills, the students will be better equipped to successfully navigate the rigor of this nationally recognized high school campus. In addition, as these students graduate from high school and transition to post-secondary education or employment, they will be proficient in the skills necessary to not only survive in these competitive environments, but to excel.

**Priscilla Sanchez:** *Improving second language acquisition in dual language classrooms.*

In order to improve second language acquisition in dual language students, a collaborative team of Dual Language teachers will study different models of bilingualism along with various approaches of second language acquisition. A suggested plan will be devised to ensure the best practices are introduced into the Dual Language classroom. Teachers, students, and parents will serve as data before and after implementation of the findings. Evaluation of the implementation will determine the effectiveness of the plan.

**Robyn Boegel:** *Improving decision making and behavior modification through quantitative tracking of objective progress and strategy effectiveness.*

This is a collaborative study intended to improve the behavior modification of ED students through electronic quantitative data collection in a small self-contained Special Education Campus. A literature review of behavior modification practices, data collection processes and professional development for teaching staff is included. Qualitative data including staff interviews regarding use of quantitative data and understanding the FBA process, as well as, a quantitative review of existing data were conducted. An action plan was developed to improve processes and progress monitoring is ongoing to determine effectiveness.

**Lori Davis:** *Steps to success: Transition planning for students returning from district alternative education placement.*

This research examined solution based interventions and how they will help to ensure student success that may lead to a reduction in the recidivism in students who have attend the District Alternative Education Placement (DAEP) and reduce severe discipline issues. This study identified that if we show students that we are committed to their future, we will get the buy-in and trust that we so desperately need. Additionally, success can only be measured if we develop and implement these life- changing plans for our students. If we follow the “Steps to Success” that have been laid out through this action research, all students at LHS will excel.

**Brittany Thomas:** *Working collaboratively to close gaps in math for intermediate students.*

The purpose of this action research is to examine structures and systems in schools that might help to reduce the achievement gap in the area of mathematics. A plan for opportunities for parent engagement as well as a plan for teachers to work collaboratively analyzing student data

and aligning of curriculum was developed. When teachers work collaboratively focusing on student data, instructional decisions targeting specific student needs can be addressed.

**Elizabeth McKinney:** *New faces, same school: The effects of changing student demographics.*

This research examined the effects of changing student demographics in an elementary school setting. Literature indicates various viable solutions and obstacles to these changes. Data gathered through survey, interview, and focus group with faculty members helped to understanding some concerns and needs of the teachers. Possible solutions were examined, an action plan of best practices were explored. Cultural proficiency and multi-cultural education were shown in literature to have the greatest effect on the faculty and students.

**Anastacio Gomez:** *Hispanic dropout rate and parental involvement.*

This action research examined how to increase parental involvement that would address issues that many students face in completing the graduation requirements at Lehman High School. The research findings indicate that if parents understand their role in their children's secondary education, then they could assist administrators and staff in providing support for individual students. Additionally, since some parents are unaware of opportunities to participate and support their student's success in high school, Lehman High School could devise a plan to educate and inform parents about their own expectations and the assets that are currently available in supporting their students in the high school education process.

**Lisa Shaw:** *After-school tutoring programs.*

The demographic data of Akins High School shows that 70% of students are classified as economically disadvantaged. The student body has roughly 2,650 students being taught by almost 200 teachers. During the first progress report, reporting period 2,897 classes reported a failing grade. At the time that this research was conducted, there were no formal after-school tutoring supports in place at Akins High School but students were responding that they were assigned homework multiple times per week and the completion rate of homework was poor. Research findings indicate that students needed after-hours homework and tutoring supports.

**Stacey Dowd:** *Reducing referrals of African-American males.*

The purpose of this study was to examine how the ethnic composition was reflected in referral data and to analyze how Murchison Elementary School supports and guides students of all backgrounds. Data collected on campus indicated a need for culturally relevant discipline practices being implemented school wide. This study examines a set of strategies implemented over the course of one year to reduce the number of referrals for this population of students.

**Rebecca Laurel:** *Teacher and principal turnover at Chrysler Elementary.*

Chrysler Elementary School is a Title I school with 88.5% of the student population considered economically disadvantaged. After analyzing data, its apparent Chrysler has a problem with teacher turnover. The data suggested that the number one reason for a high rate of teacher mobility is problems with administration. Teacher turnover is so intertwined with principal turnover at Chrysler, this research focused on both issues.

**Catherine Molina:** *Physical activity and its effects on brain cognition in an elementary school population.*

The purpose of this action research is to demonstrate the correlation and relationship between physical fitness and academic achievement. This study examined the impact of daily moderate to vigorous activity. Research findings indicate that increased physical activity, also has an impact on a multitude of other processes: learning, attention, cognition, behaviors and overall health and wellness. Increasing both heart rate and oxygen capacity levels should have a positive impact on students' health and wellness and benefit their cognitive and energy levels, thereby decreasing classroom off-task behaviors. This action research was administered at Kiker Elementary, located in Austin, Texas.

**Beth Tousek:** *Improving reading achievement through effective intervention.*

This research examines how reading intervention in kindergarten can contribute to school-wide reading success. Research supports that learning to read in kindergarten is a precursor for academic success. When young students lack pre-reading skills and do not receive proper intervention, they fall further behind their reading peers. This action research focuses on investigating methods for improving the phonemic awareness of kindergarten students through the implementation of effective reading intervention in order to improve the reading achievement of these students, thus ensuring reading success for all students.

**Petra Rios:** *Homework programs.*

The purpose of this action research project is to evaluate the effectiveness of a newly developed school-wide work completion intervention program: Homework Club (HWC) and Individual Responsibility Support (IRS). This study provides the reader with the school's background and student failure rates, six weeks grades, and state assessments results. A review of scholarly research focused on interventions aimed at increasing student motivation to complete assignments is also presented. More specifically, this study examines individual contingencies, self-monitoring, communication between schools and home, parent training, after school programs, study skills, and tutoring programs as steps to increase student work completion. The data source for the research include; surveys, observations, and an interview. These data were conducted to provide methods that could increase student motivation and decrease the number of students missing assignments and failing. Three alternate solutions are proposed and an action plan was created utilizing aforementioned solutions. Lastly, an evaluation of the implementation of the action plan is provided.

**Aiza Garcia:** *Language arts intervention in the lower grades.*

This research examined the implementation an intervention program for language arts in the lower grades that focuses on phonemic awareness, fluency and comprehension. A program was created to align a curriculum/assessment throughout the lower grades to increase their knowledge and have a deep understanding in the foundations of language arts. Research findings indicate that by implementing this program that students will progress academically and be better prepared for other assessments implemented by the district.

**Christine Choi:** *Addressing substitute development at Mayfield IB School.*

This action research delves into various aspects of substitute development methods and how to maximize substitute performance to enhance student achievement in an International

Baccalaureate (IB) setting. Through triangulation of various data sources, possible solutions and strategies were drafted to include on-going professional development, collaboration between teachers and substitutes and incorporating IB standards in a teacher's absence.

**Shari Knippa:** *Unmasking the inequitable discipline experience.*

A collaborative team at HHS will learn about and implement culturally responsive instruction in order to decrease discipline referrals of students of color and students identified as "Special Education" and improve relationships between them and their administrators and teachers. The goal to reduce formal referral incidents of disruptive behavior by ensuring that students who are showing signs of behavior difficulty are taken through the process of the Positive Behavior Support System; In a way that considers the type of interventions that students are receiving and how teachers are routinely accommodating for these students through documentation by understanding the following areas in order to ensure a successful outcome in curbing student disciplinary referrals. Research findings indicate that teachers who participate in culturally responsive teaching training will be successful in closing the discrepancy between campus referral rates and district referral rates.

**Leah Mercer:** *Decreasing referrals among male students.*

This research examined how classroom observations and studying of selected literature informs teachers of ways they can adjust their ways of teaching. Additionally, it examines how when students allow teachers in their "world" it helps to create positive relationships. Teachers that realize that lessons aren't "one size fits all," especially when involving male students of diverse cultural backgrounds have lower rates of referrals for those students.

**Kimberly Grubb:** *Improving the social studies achievement of students designated as "economically disadvantaged."*

Students designated as "economically disadvantaged" perform at a significantly lower level than their counterparts on social studies assessments. This research examined what could be done to improve not only performance, but motivation as well. Target data were gathered and a three-part plan was put into place. These parts included: teachers becoming culturally responsive through targeted professional development, relationship building through the creation of a mentor program, and making social studies more relevant to student's lives.

**Heather Hughes:** *The effects of bullying on school culture.*

School climate encompasses beliefs, values and attitudes of teachers, students and administrators. These concepts are directly related, as the degree to which a student feels connected to his/her school is in part reflective of the school climate. Thus, a positive school climate is a key asset for having a positive impact on students. Overall, school connectedness research shows that students' ability to form bonds with adults and others in their community is associated with "higher academic performance, better social-emotional functioning, higher self-esteem, and a lower engagement in at-risk behaviors" (O'Brennan & Furlong, 2010, p. 376). This research examined how these effects can reduce bullying on school culture.

**Jordan Waltzer:** *Behavior programming for special education students at Del Valle Middle School.*

This study explores the experiences of one educator that has served as the self-contained special education behavior teacher at Del Valle Middle School as insight of behavior programming for special education students. The “STEP” class serves special education students who have been given the “emotionally disturbed” special education label as their primary disability. The students in this class are typically unable to be behaviorally or academically successful in mainstream school environments. This study explores the long-standing belief that more can and should be done to facilitate the academic and social success of the special education students being served under these programs.

**Sonia Chowdhury:** *Decreasing high school dropout rates.*

Lost in the shuffle of a large suburban high school are students who proverbially fall through the cracks. They begin by not succeeding in class, disengaging from the school environment, stop attending and eventually drop out. This can lead to many ramifications for the school and society including lost funding, poor achievement data, lack of a qualified workforce, money spent on correctional programs and government assistance programs, as well as countless other negative outcomes. This study examines possibilities for decreasing high school dropout rates.

**Carol Elliott:** *Bully guard.*

In today's world being a teenager and navigating high school can be overwhelming. Peers can tear you down or build you up. This study examines a program that encourages upperclassmen athletes to befriend underclassmen. The program is entitled "The Bully Guard" It is a "win-win" for all involved. This study examines some of the components that make this approach successful.

**Nancy Jaimes:** *Addressing first grade reading levels.*

First grade Bilingual students at Chavez Elementary School are making very few gains in literacy learning during the course of a year. One bilingual first grade classroom along with one fifth grade classroom will learn, pilot, and implement the Reader Leaders Program in a first grade class in order to increase the first grade student achievement in literacies. For phase two, teachers and parents will work alongside and conduct reading work-shops with the focus on reading support for teachers, parents, and students.