

Arkansas Co-Teaching Project

July 2016

The Arkansas Co-Teaching Project provided a yearlong blended professional development package, Boundless Learning Co-Teaching, to a statewide cohort of 10 schools from 7 districts during the 2015-16 school year. Participating schools include:

Cooper Elementary, Elm Tree Elementary (Bentonville School District), Crossett High (Crossett School District), Mountain Home Junior High (Mountain Home School District), Jack Robey Junior High, Belair Middle, Pine Bluff High (Pine Bluff School District), Rivercrest Junior High (Rivercrest School District), Marshall High (Searcy County District), and Osceola High (Osceola School District).

Of the schools represented, the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) ESEA ratings of these schools identified one as an Achieving school, five as Needs Improvement, and four as Needs Improvement Priority. Two of the districts were also targeted for improvement based on their Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) data.

The Arkansas Co-Teaching Project was able to offer the Boundless Learning Co-Teaching professional development package as a result of its collaboration with Johns Hopkins University's Center for Technology in Education. The yearlong, blended, job-embedded, professional development package included:

- One traditional face-to-face session
- Six facilitated online learning events (online modules)
- Electronic learning communities for co-teachers and administrators
- Six virtual meetings with administrators
- Onsite coaching
- Co-teaching implementation evaluation

All ten of the schools completed the Boundless Learning Co-Teaching (BLC) package. In addition to completing the BLC activities, each school participated in the pre/post implementation evaluation process designed and used by the Arkansas Co-Teaching Project in the past. The focus of this process was to determine what impact, if any, the professional development had on the schools' planning for its co-teaching program, the application of the co-teaching model within the classroom, and the effect co-teaching had on students with and without disabilities.

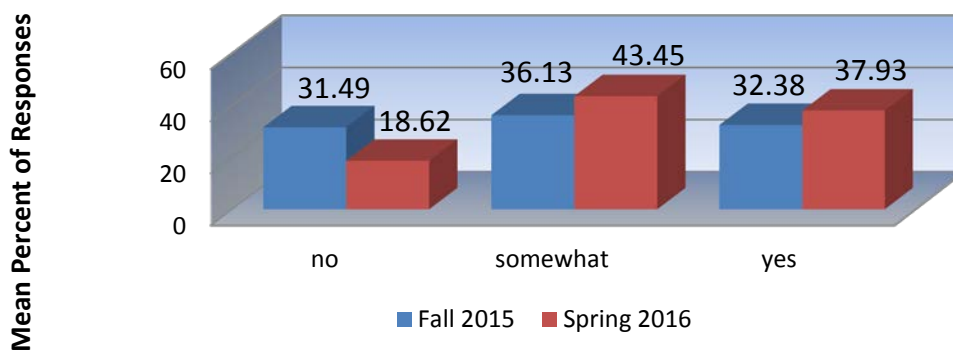
Building principals and/or designated assistant principals completed the Needs Assessment/Action Planning Checklist to determine what gaps in the twenty nine indicators of effective co-teaching programs had or had not been addressed since the fall. The co-teachers self-assessed changes in their instructional practices and their development of a collaborative relationship with their co-teacher using the Colorado Assessment of Co-Teaching (CO-ACT) survey. Results from both groups were then compared to the pre-assessment data collected in the fall.

Since participating schools included K-12 grade levels, final grades of students with and without disabilities were selected as the common data set to measure student impact. In order to provide a more comprehensive means of measuring the impact of co-teaching, participating

schools were encouraged to customize the project's three part implementation evaluation plan to include student outcome data of their choice that would be most appropriate to their grade level.

The Action Planning Checklist (APC), an instrument designed to identify areas of strength and weakness in school level planning, measures 29 items that should be addressed when planning for effective co-teaching implementation. According to the compiled data, the average school in the cohort addressed 81% of the items to some extent in spring 2016. These changes are illustrated in the graph below.

APC Results Fall 2015 Spring 2016: Mean % of Responses by Category



Participating school data from the co-teachers' CO-ACT surveys indicated that in June 2016 only one of the 42 items on the CO-ACT had a mean of less than 4.0 (agree) compared to 21 items with means less than 4.0 (agree) in the fall of 2015. This change is an indication that many of these teachers perceived that progress in implementing the co-teaching model in their classrooms had been made over the school year. An independent-samples t-test compared fall and spring results. Overall there was a significant difference between co-teachers perceptions in fall 2015 as compared to spring 2016.

After compiling the data, student outcome measures in the form of final grades of students from 10 schools indicated that in the 41 co-taught classes of 879 students (332 students with disabilities and 547 students without disabilities):

93% of students with disabilities received passing grades
75% of students with disabilities received a "C" or higher

These results were compared to the grades of students without disabilities in co-taught classrooms.

94% of students without disabilities received passing grades
77% of students without disabilities received a "C" or higher

Each school participating in the yearlong package will receive an individual report that compares their own fall and spring data. The report will also compare the school's data with the cohort mean. In addition to general recommendations for improvement found within the individual school reports, building administrators will also receive a Data Analysis Manual and a Guide for

Facilitators to assist them in analyzing their data, sharing the results with their co-teachers, and revising their implementation planning.

The AR Co-Teaching Project team continues to offer technical assistance to schools interested in starting or improving a co-teaching program especially those identified as Focus or Priority schools by the ADE. Technical assistance includes telephone and email consultation, informational resources, and onsite overviews of co-teaching. A number of overview sessions have been scheduled for the summer including presentations at two educational cooperatives and four school districts. The project team also provided sessions at conferences sponsored by AR Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD), ADE School Improvement and the AR Council for Exceptional Children (CEC).

In addition, the project is also in the process of revising its web site. To enhance the co-teaching information, co-teachers in three schools volunteered to be videotaped demonstrating the six co-teaching instructional formats. Final editing on this footage is taking place this summer, and the results should be posted on the newly revised website by fall.

Federal Deafblind Grant - CAYSI (Children and Youth with Sensory Impairment and other disabilities)

- The CAYSI Project submitted the deafblind child count to the National Center for DeafBlindness (NCDB). CAYSI identified 179 children on the registry, ages range from 0-2 = **3**; 3-5 = **18**; 6-14 = **104**; 15-21 = **54**
- The Annual Performance Report (APR) for the CAYSI grant period March 1, 2015 to February 29, 2016 was submitted in May.
- The Education Consultant completed the two-year Intensive TA for 4 teachers in Sherwood, Russellville, Pulaski County, and Greenbrier.
- Parent group meetings in Siloam Springs, Little Rock, and Osceola have continued with topics around communication for their children and learning how parents can effectively tell their story to individuals and groups.
- CAYSI, the NWA Community Resource Center and The Center for Exceptional Families have shared resources, provided education on the services each organization provides to families, and are working towards integrating our efforts to assist in empowering families make change in the systems they navigate for their child to be have a high quality of life and as independent as possible.
- CAYSI sponsored 2 students from Paragould and West Helena and their families to attend the 2016 Transition Institute in Athens, Georgia and 2 parent leaders from Mountain View and Wynne for the 2016 Family Symposium for DeafBlind in Austin, TX.

- CAYSI's Education Consultant retired June 30, 2016 after being with the project for 8 years. Recruitment for the position has begun

Professional Development Activities

- The ADE-SEU's Committee on the revision of the Arkansas **Paraprofessional Training** Modules has so far produced six (6) Modules for development through American Institutes for Research (AIR). Work began on the Modules in the Spring and will be completed by the end of 2016. All Modules will be available to and provide high quality professional development for paraprofessionals and all educational personnel with access to the Arkansas IDEAS portal system. Additional Modules are expected to be developed in the future.
- The **2016 Arkansas Paraprofessional Conference and Training** was held at A-State University in Jonesboro on July 7th and 8th. Ninety-eight paraprofessionals, administrators, teachers and other district personnel from around the state attended the training co-sponsored by the ADE-SEU, A-State's Education Renewal Zone and the Arkansas Chapter of the Council for Exceptional Children.
- The ADE-SEU **Tuition Reimbursement programs** continue to support students seeking certification as Speech Language Pathologists and Visual Specialists for Arkansas public schools. The ADE's Memorandums of Understanding with out-of-state programs allow certified Arkansas teachers to work toward licensure as Visual Specialists and Hearing Specialists.
- SEU Professional Development continues to actively participate with the ADE's **Teacher Recruitment and Retention** program and the ADE Licensure Unit to attract and support persons interested in becoming special education teachers. The last "Become an Arkansas Teacher" event was held on Saturday, April 16, at Heifer International, Little Rock.
- The ADE-SEU supports **Educational Interpreters** in Arkansas through TASK12, an assessment program for interpreters working in educational settings. Participation in TASK12 is a key support to the new standards for Educational Interpreters working in Arkansas schools. Educational Interpreters interested in increasing their skills through this program should contact the ADE-SEU for more information.