



PRAISE: Preparing for Readiness & Academic Improvement for pre-School ELs: Cohort One Promising Results



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ABSTRACT

This poster details celebrations, joys and challenges of implementing **PRAISE: Preparing for Readiness & Academic Improvement for pre-School ELs**. This 5-year project aims to improve effective instruction, learning, and leadership for preschool dual language learners through initial professional learning and ongoing collaborative inquiry. Preliminary results for the first cohort of schools indicate promising student achievement outcomes based on state assessment data, including significant gains between progress monitoring windows and an overall higher mean scale score in comparison with non-cohort schools. In addition, qualitative analysis indicates increased teacher efficacy and teacher voice for English language instruction in the pre-school setting.

INTRODUCTION

PRAISE: Preparing for Readiness & Academic Improvement for pre-School ELs is designed to benefit preschool educators and students. It's two-part professional learning includes: (1) a four-day Summer Institute for educators and leaders and (2) monthly school readiness professional learning communities (SR-PLC) to develop and implement student readiness action plans (SRAP). Targeting 192 educators from 24 schools in Florida's state-funded Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK), the project impacts 1,223 students, over 60% expected to need services as English Learners (ELs). Coordinated by the FAU-SDOC Taskforce, experts from Florida Atlantic University and e School District of Osceola County guide the initiative. Each participating school forms a School Readiness Team (SRT) of leaders and educators to carry out the program.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

To measure the impact of the professional development intervention on instructional practice and student learning, as well as determine if the project is meeting its overarching goal, investigators collected evidence to help answer the following research questions:

- *What is the overall impact of the intervention model on principal, assistant principal, ESOL education specialists, literacy coaches, student, and teacher and school outcomes?*
- *To what extent does the intervention funded activities yield more positive student and improved teacher instructional outcomes?*
- *To what level are families engaged in and supportive of the project's goal of increased school readiness outcomes?*

METHODOLOGY

Our quasi-experimental study employs a mixed-methods approach to address the research questions. Qualitative data is gathered through semi-structured interviews with PRAISE participants, focus groups, document and artifact analysis (e.g., training manuals, SR-PLC agendas, SRAP), and observations. Quantitative data include pre- and post-knowledge assessments before and after the four-day Summer Institute and CLASS instructional observation pre- and post-measures for paraprofessional instruction, as well student academic achievement as measured by state assessments (STAR). With 36 participants (six SRTs) per cohort, statistical power will be ensured by collecting data across all four cohorts and analyzing results in Year 5 (June to December 2027). An external evaluator reviews results to maintain objectivity. Differential change in CLASS scores and knowledge assessments will be reported to identify improvement or decline patterns. Our design parallels a convergent mixed-methods approach, where qualitative and quantitative data are collected and analyzed independently to verify or challenge each other's findings (Creswell, 2014).

In the words of SR-PLC participants:

We all have a voice.

Yeah, you know, if we were good, we're better now.

This year I felt more like a family member in this school.

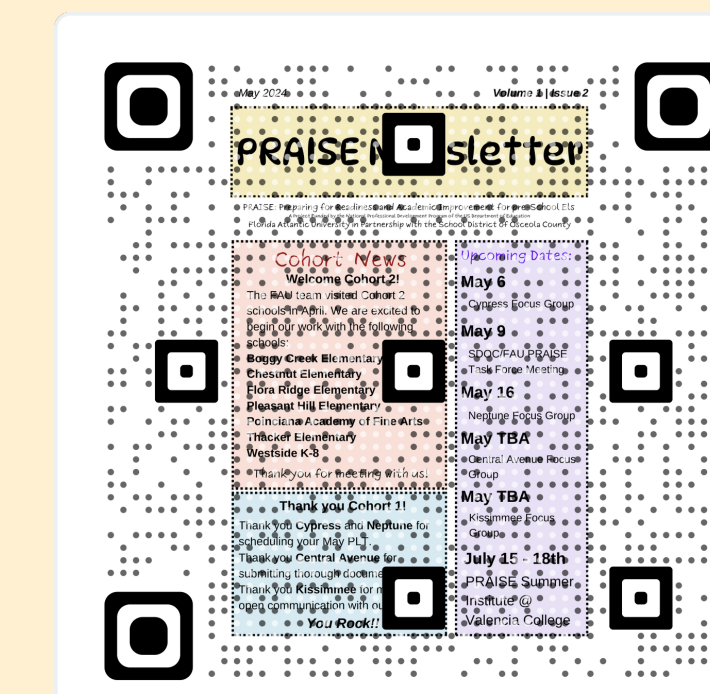
I think we we've seen more VPK parents than we've ever seen - they're coming to all the events.

DISCUSSION

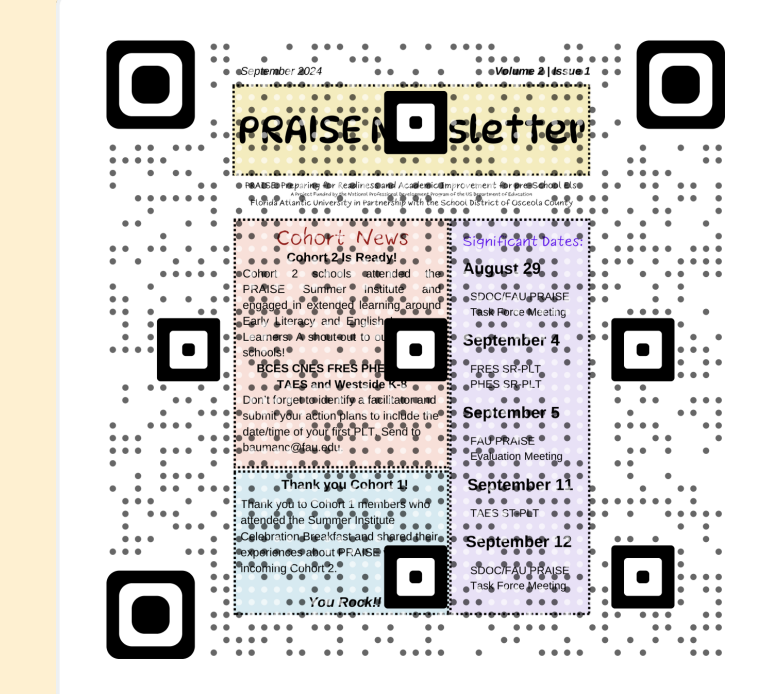
The FAU-SDOC collaboration has found joy by breaking down barriers and working across siloed structures. VPK paraprofessional instructors feel valued and included in school-wide family engagement events. Students and families are experiencing greater engagement and academic success as educators unite to build a strong social, emotional, and academic foundation for young learners. These outcomes inspire our continued partnership to deliver high-quality education for VPK and EL students. We eagerly anticipate refining our work as more data is collected and our impact on student learning grows.

PRAISE Newsletters

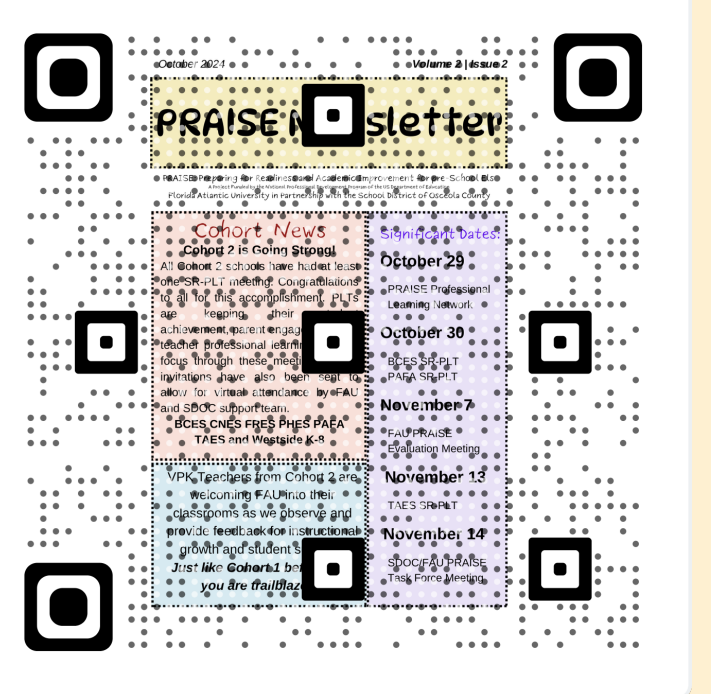
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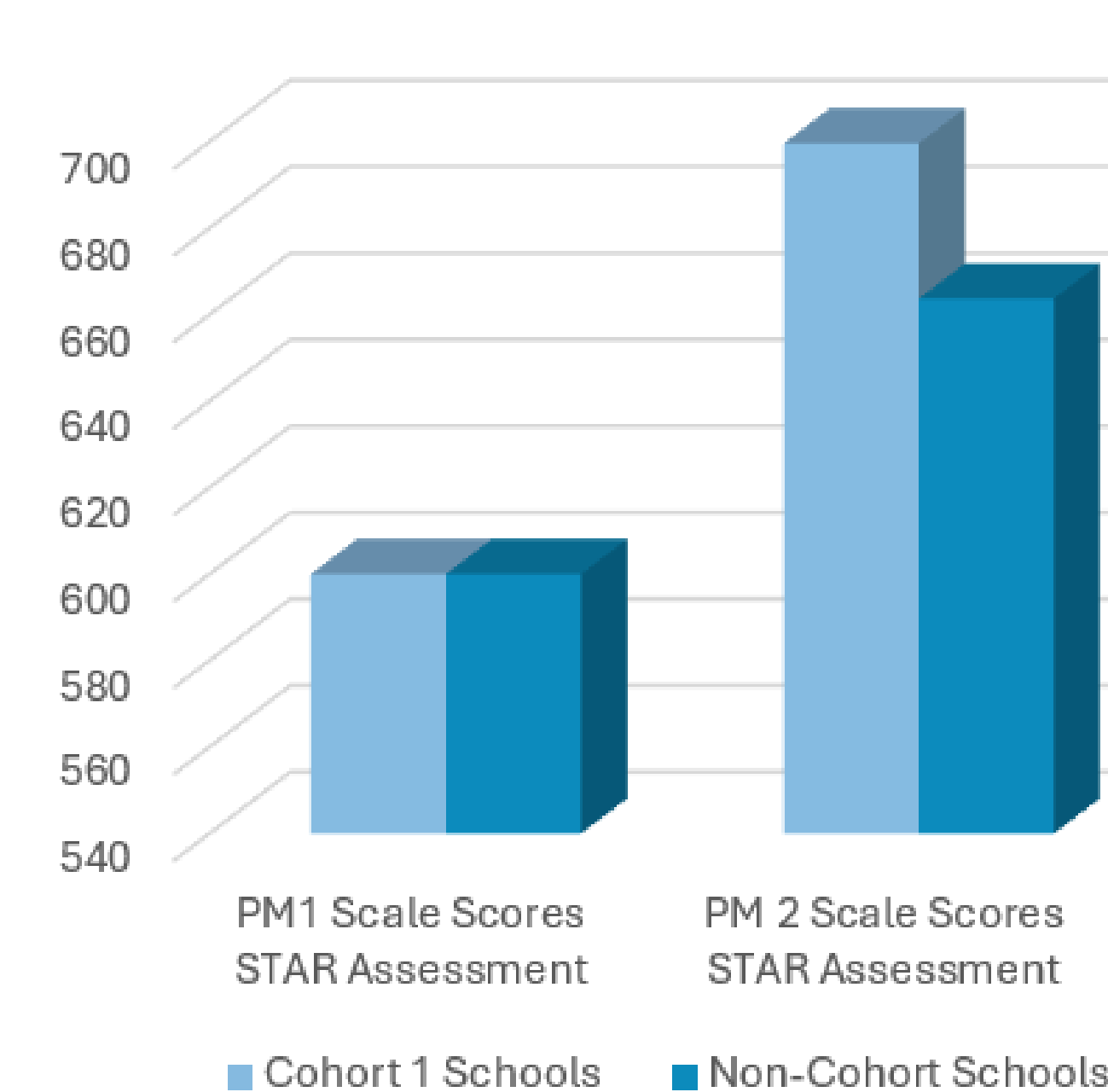
October 2024



PRELIMINARY RESULTS

The mean change in scale score from PM 1 to PM 2 is 44.3 for children at non-participating schools and 97.6 for children in Project PRAISE schools. PM 1 mean scale score was 600 for both groups. PM 2 mean scale score is 663.7 for students of non-participating teachers, and 699.6 for students of participating teachers. Students from one of Cohort 1 schools scored the HIGHEST overall in the school district on the end of year VPK STAR assessment. This school will be sending 97% of its VPK students to kindergarten above the 75th percentile.

VPK Student Achievement



One VPK teacher recommended to subsequent cohorts:

Take in the advice to try different strategies...trying something new might just work even better.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to our partners at the School District of Osceola County for their collaboration in this ongoing project.

REFERENCES

Creswell, J. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. Sage.

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