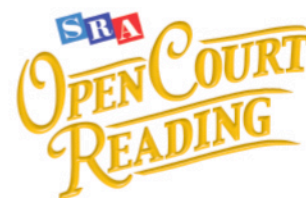




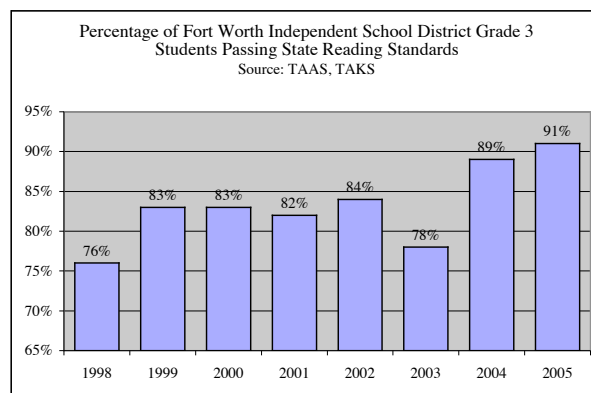
About the District:		About the Students:	
Grades:	K-12	African American:	29%
Number of Students:	80,000	Caucasian:	19%
Test(s):	TAAS/TAKS	Hispanic:	50%
Reduced Price Lunch:	70%	Asian:	-
		Other:	2%
		ELL	24%



## Fort Worth School District Builds Reading Achievement, Especially Among Economically Disadvantaged Students

The percentage of elementary students in the Fort Worth Independent School District passing state reading standards has increased significantly since the late 1990s, reflecting an extraordinary improvement among schools serving the city's economically disadvantaged.

Fort Worth Independent School District's success story began in the late 1990s when its superintendent at the time, Thomas Tocco, asked retired Assistant Superintendent Marsha Sonnenberg to help implement a reading initiative with low-functioning Fort Worth Elementary schools. The reading initiative was part of then-Gov. George W. Bush's effort to improve reading test scores throughout Texas and was the predecessor of the No Child Left Behind Act that he implemented after becoming president.



### SRA Reading Programs Adopted District-Wide

Sonnenberg and her colleagues visited the lowest-performing schools and found they were using the whole-language approach to reading without success. She shared her findings with the superintendent, who then recommended that either SRA/McGraw-Hill's Direct Instruction reading programs or *Open Court Reading* be implemented district-wide at the beginning of the 1998-1999 school year.

Thirty-two Fort Worth schools then chose between *Open Court Reading* and Direct Instruction reading programs for their students in Grades K-2. Eighteen selected Direct Instruction programs, and 14 chose *Open Court Reading*. Because these schools demonstrated significant progress, another 30 schools were given the same choice the following year (1999-2000).

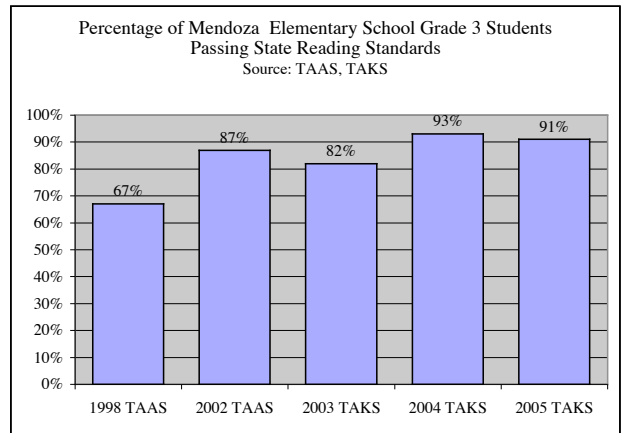
By 2001-2002, all 76 Fort Worth elementary schools had implemented SRA reading programs for Grades K-5. All elementary schools also implemented Direct Instruction's *Corrective Reading* program for at-risk students in Grades 3-5. The program directs that once up to speed, these students return to their respective programs at their reading levels. In addition, most of Fort Worth's 26 middle schools had implemented *Corrective Reading* for at-risk and special education students.



The impact of SRA/McGraw-Hill’s Direct Instruction and *Open Court Reading* is reflected by the steady increase in Grade 3 scores. Initially, educators administered the Texas Assessment of Achievement of Students (TAAS). In 2003, they changed to a more rigorous test, the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) and 78% passed. By 2005, 91% passed.

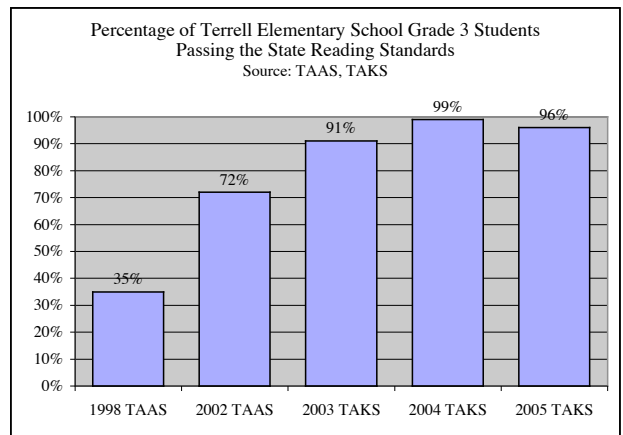
**Mendoza Elementary School**

Sonnenberg said two of Fort Worth’s poorest elementary schools benefited the most from the SRA reading programs. Mendoza Elementary School, where nearly all students are Hispanic and live in low socioeconomic neighborhoods, chose to adopt both *Open Court Reading* and Direct Instruction’s *Corrective Reading* at the start of the 1998-1999 school year. At that time, only 67% of Grade 3 students had passed the reading portion of the TAAS the year before. After four years with both programs, more than 87% passed the TAAS in 2002. The more rigorous TAKS showed 82% passing in 2003, 93% in 2004, and 91% in 2005.



**Terrell Elementary School**

Terrell Elementary School adopted three Direct Instruction programs: *Corrective Reading*, *Reading Mastery*, and *Language for Learning*. Terrell’s student population is nearly all African American, and all students live in low socioeconomic neighborhoods. Before adopting these SRA reading programs, only 35% of Grade 3 students passed the reading portion of the TAAS in 1998. Four years later (in 2002), 72% passed. By 2003, 91% passed TAKS, and the following year, 99% of Terrell students passed! In 2005, 96% passed.



“We must continue on this path,” said Sonnenberg, former District Director of Reading. “We’ve made such great progress so far, and there are many more children coming in to our system who deserve this same approach to reading education.”



**About Fort Worth Independent School District**

The district serves more than 82,000 students in an urban, multicultural environment. Its student population is 50% Hispanic, 29% African American, 19% Caucasian, and 2% Asian American. Twenty-six percent of the students are English Language Learners. More than half the schools are located in low socioeconomic neighborhoods, so 64% of its student population receives free or reduced-price lunches. For more information about Fort Worth Independent School District, visit [www.fortworthisd.org](http://www.fortworthisd.org).

**For More Information**

If you would like to learn more about success with *Open Court Reading* or Direct Instruction in your school or district, please contact us today at **1-888-SRA-4543**.