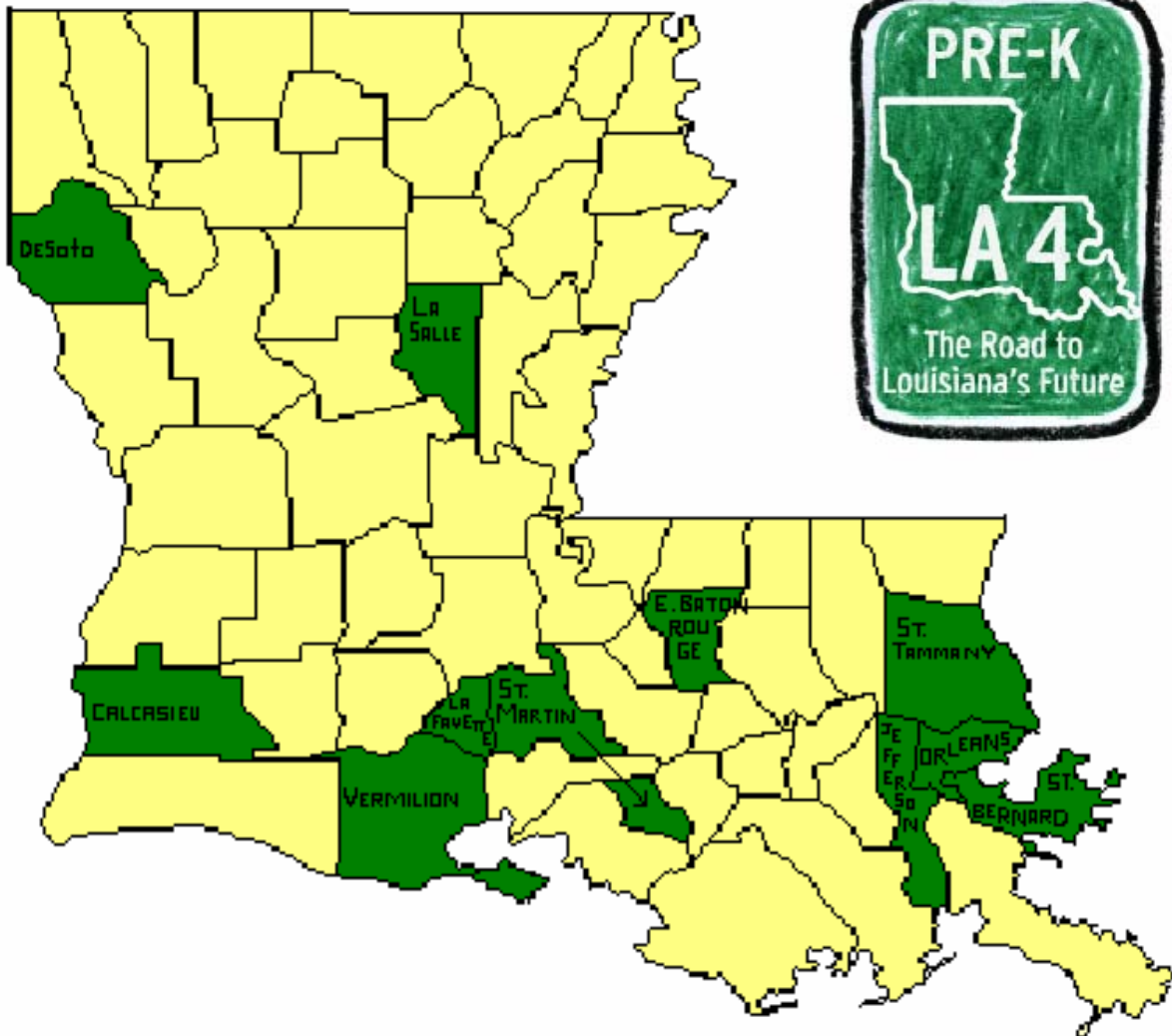


LA 4 Prekindergarten Program Evaluation

Pilot Year January – June 2002



Louisiana Department of Education
Lloyd J. Rockhold Center for Child Development
LSU HSC, Department of Psychiatry
UAB Civitan International Research Center
Georgetown University

Summary of Evaluation Results

Overall, the evaluation of the LA 4 pilot program demonstrates positive results. From the demographic information, it is clear that the program targeted those children intended – at-risk unserved four-year-olds. These participating students showed significant improvement between the pre- and post-tests, and will be followed as they progress through the early elementary grades.

The State of Louisiana took a progressive step in the 2001 legislative session with the passage of Senate Bill 776. This bill provides for the establishment of a statewide prekindergarten program, LA 4, to serve four-year-old children not currently enrolled in publicly funded preK classes. The purpose of the program is to provide high quality early childhood education to four-year-old children who are at risk of learning difficulties and to improve the children's readiness to begin school.

The Louisiana State Department of Education administers LA 4. A pilot program was conducted during the second half of the 2001-2002 school year. A total of fifteen million dollars was allocated for implementation of the pilot LA 4 program through the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program of the Department of Social Services.

Eleven parishes were awarded funding for the pilot project. These "pioneer" parishes were:

Calcasieu	DeSoto
East Baton Rouge	Jefferson
LaSalle	Lafayette
Orleans	St. Bernard
St. Martin	St. Tammany
Vermilion	

For the pilot program, the parishes provided LA 4 prekindergarten services to four-year-old students from January 2002 to May 2002. Within those 11 parishes, there were approximately 97 LA 4 classrooms and 1,709 children served.

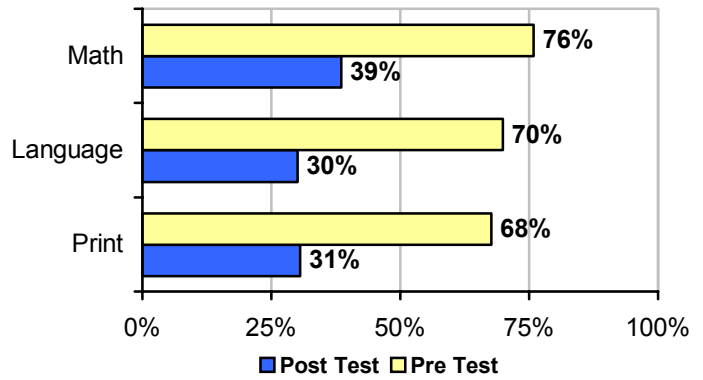
The Louisiana Department of Education contracted with the LSU Health Sciences Center and the UAB Civitan International Research Center to conduct program evaluation activities and to develop and implement a design for longitudinal research. This report will highlight the evaluation results from the pilot year.

Developing Skills Checklist (DSC) –Pre & Post Tests

A pre- and post-test was administered to all students using a subset of the Developing Skills Checklist items. Students were administered the DSC one-on-one in the areas of Math, Language, and Print.

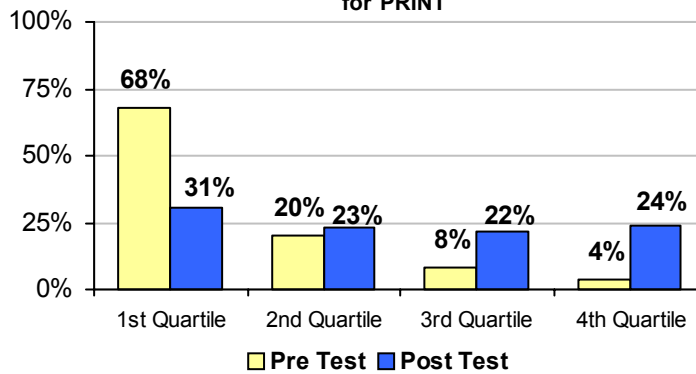
Test scores from the pre-test and the post-test were reported for a total of 1,358 students.* Analyses of the test scores revealed statistically significant improvement statewide from pre- to post-test for students participating in the program.

Percent of LA 4 Students Statewide Scoring in the National First Quartile of Developing Skills Checklist

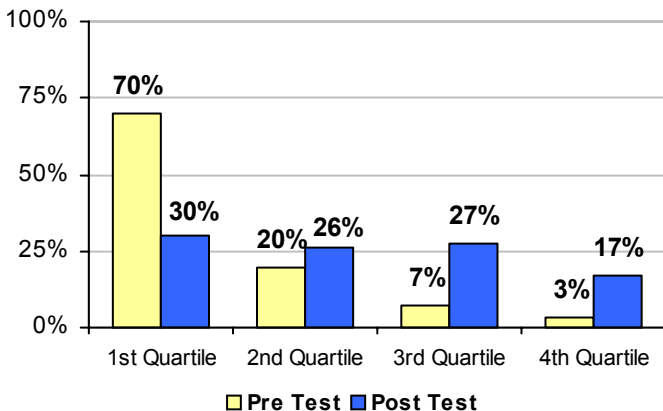


As a whole, the LA 4 students showed improvement by the decrease in the percent of students scoring in the lowest (first) quartile, and by the increase in the percent of students scoring in the highest (fourth) quartile. Post-test scores in the areas of print, language, and math improved in the second, third, and fourth quartiles and are comparable to national norms.

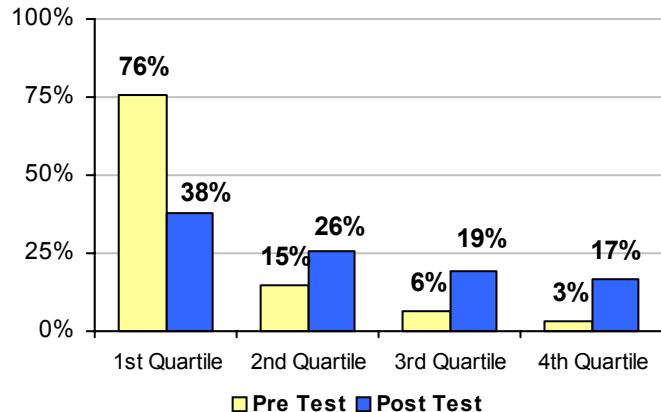
Percent of LA 4 Students Statewide Scoring in the Respective Quartiles of Developing Skills Checklist for PRINT



Percent of LA 4 Students Statewide Scoring in the Respective Quartiles of Developing Skills Checklist for LANGUAGE



Percent of LA 4 Students Statewide Scoring in the Respective Quartiles of Developing Skills Checklist for MATH

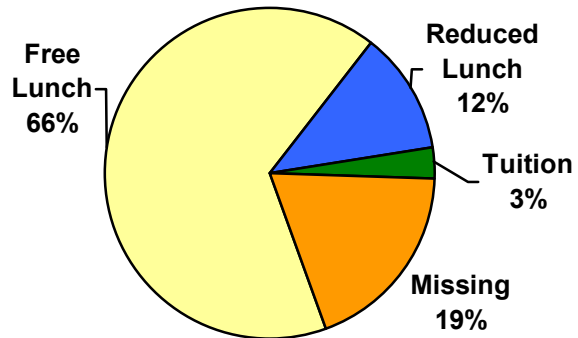


*All graphs are based on those students who had both a pre-test and a post-test score.

Intake Form

For the purposes of evaluation and research, general demographic information was collected for 1,596 students enrolled in the LA 4 pilot program. Data analyses indicate that, statewide, 50% of the LA 4 students lived in households with less than \$20,000 annual household income, and almost 80% of the students qualified for free or reduced lunch. These data demonstrate that the program is reaching the intended population.

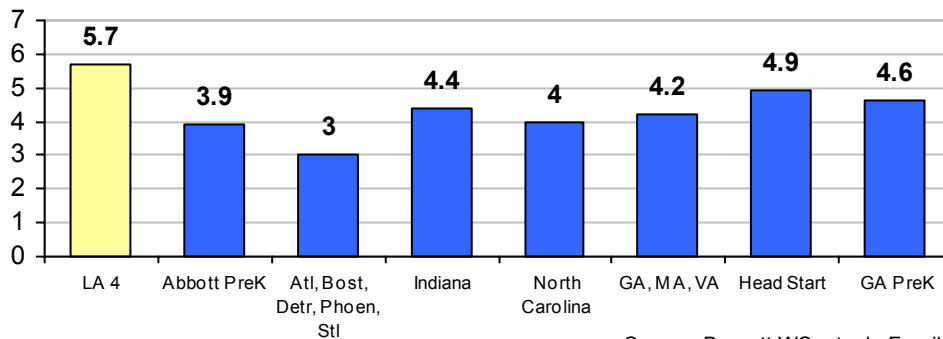
Percent of LA 4 Students Who Qualify for Free or Reduced Lunch



ECERS-R – Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale – Revised

LA Department of Education staff conducted the ECERS-R assessment in a sample of classrooms participating in the LA 4 pilot program. The ECERS-R assessment takes into account 7 areas related to program quality: space and furnishings, personal care routines, language-reasoning, activities, interaction, program structure, and parents and staff. A compilation of the assessment scores for 22 classrooms rated the LA 4 classrooms “good,” with an overall score of 5.7 on a scale of 1 to 7 - higher than average ratings of other prekindergarten programs.

Comparison of ECERS Scores for LA 4 Programs with Quality Ratings from Other US. Early Care and Education Studies



Source: Barnett WS, et. al. Fragile Lives, Shattered Dreams: A Report on Implementation of Preschool Education in New Jersey's Abbott Districts

SWOT Analysis

The LSU evaluation team conducted a SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) with administrators and teachers involved in the LA 4 pilot program to gain a better understanding of the implementation issues and results of the LA 4 program. Common strengths expressed were the high quality program guidelines, preparation of the children for kindergarten, improvement in children's social skills, and early identification of learning challenges. Common weaknesses included not all children were funded, the lack of experience and training opportunities for teachers, and limited parent involvement.

Acknowledgements

Local Education Agencies Participating in the Pilot Year LA 4 Program

Calcasieu Parish

Supt. Jude W. Theriot
LA 4 Coord. Sheryl Piper

DeSoto Parish

Supt. Walter C. Lee
LA 4 Coord. Lynda Binning

East Baton Rouge Parish

Supt. Clayton Wilcox
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Jefferson Parish

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LA 4 Coord. Patti S. Waddell

LaSalle Parish

Supt. Cary L. McGuffee
LA 4 Coord. Beth Parker

Lafayette Parish

Supt. Dr. James H. Easton
LA 4 Coord. Ouida Forsyth

Orleans Parish

Supt. Col. A.G. Davis
LA 4 Coord. Betty A. McLin

St. Bernard Parish

Supt. Frank P. Auderer, Jr.
LA 4 Coord. Dr. Charles Raviotta

St. Martin Parish

Supt. E.R. Valerie Haaga
LA 4 Coord. Angela McFaul

St. Tammany Parish

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