



One Nation Undivided  
English Language Learners:  
Teaching to Their Strength

Routh Roach Elementary School  
Garland, Texas

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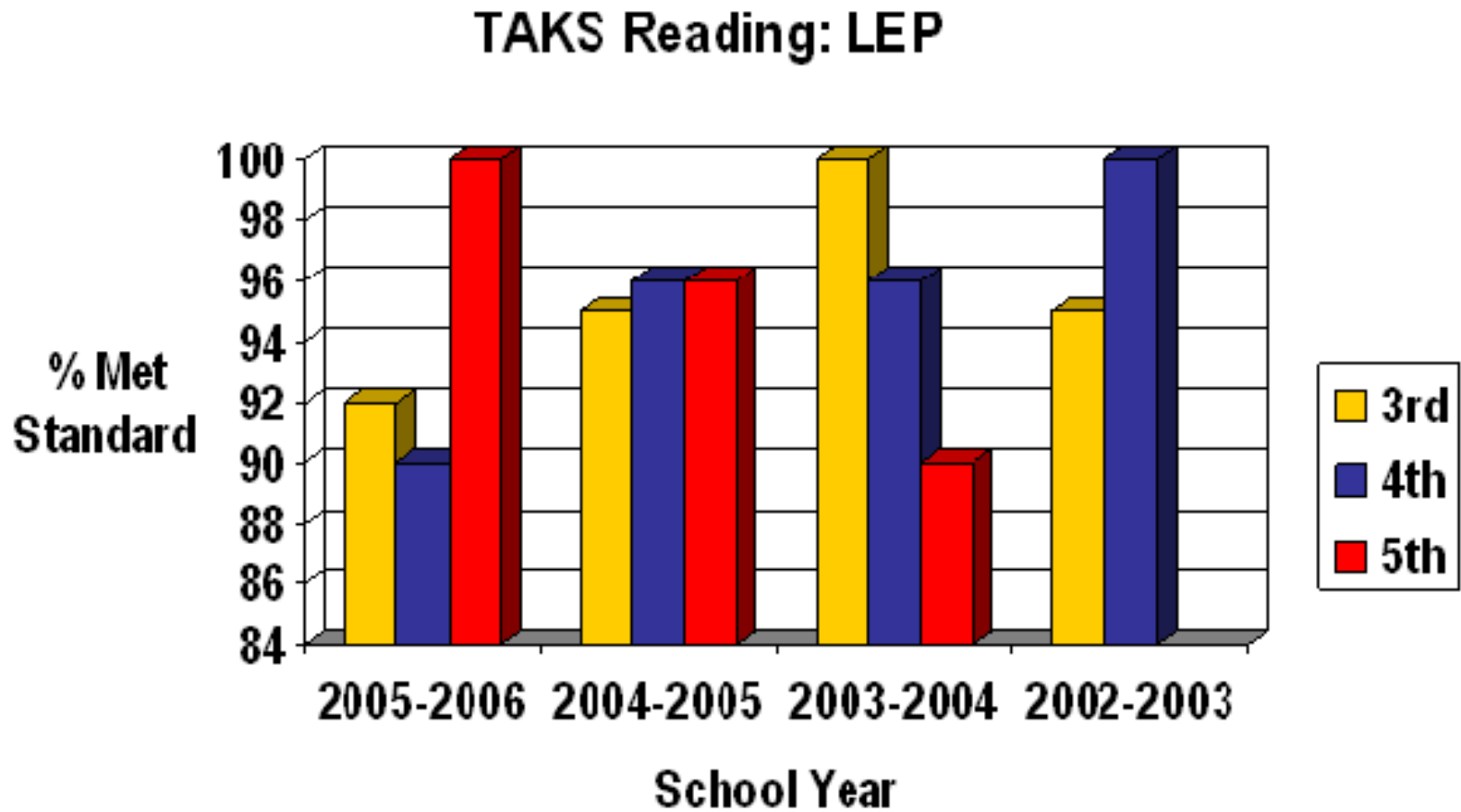


# School Facts

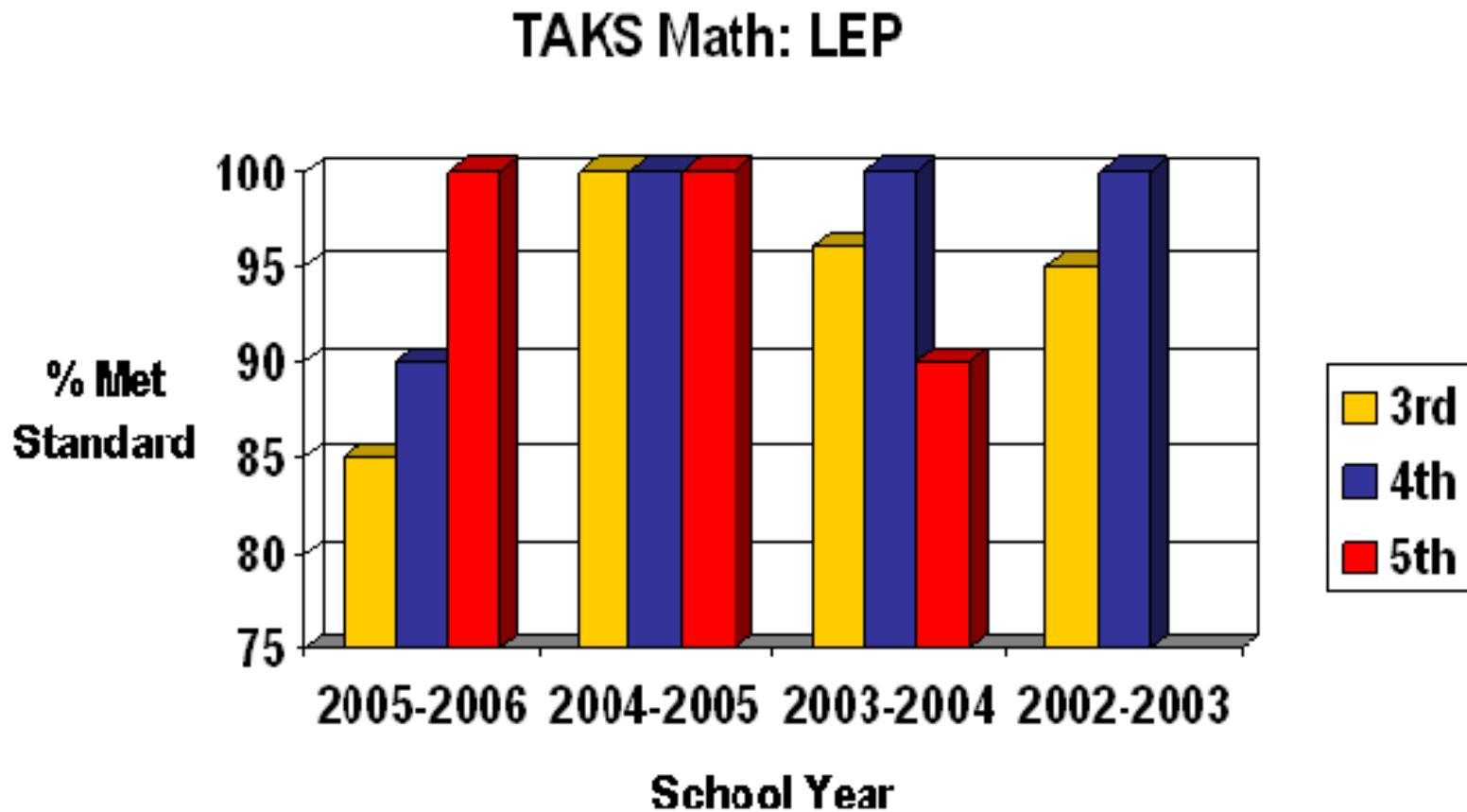


- Urban Elementary School (EC – 5)
- **379** students
  - African American, **18%**
  - Anglo, **25%**
  - Hispanic, **57%**
  - LEP, **44.7%**
  - BE, **39%**
  - ESL, **4.6%**
  - %FEDL & LEP, **91.5%**
- Located in North Texas (Dallas County)
- **31** faculty members (**20** classroom units)
- Assessments
  - TPRI & Tejas Lee
  - ITBS & Logramos
  - TAKS
  - TOP & RPTE
  - District Benchmarks & Unit Assessments

# TAKS Student Performance Data (LEP)



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# BE Program Implementation Highlights

- Instruction in core subjects provided exclusively in Spanish (K-2)
- Academic language in Spanish developed across all grade levels and core subjects
- Students expected to demonstrate advanced grade level skills in Spanish prior to transitioning into English



# BE Program Implementation Highlights

- Formal literacy instruction in English typically introduced in Grade 3
- ESL lessons integrated daily to promote students' acquisition of basic interpersonal communicative skills (Cummins, 1979)



# BE Program Implementation Highlights

- Commensurate rule: Students are instructed in both English and Spanish commensurate with their level of proficiency in both languages and their level of academic attainment
- Academic self-esteem: The program is successful as it honors the students' heritage, language and culture. The students are validated and acquire self-worth.

# Research Base for BE Program Design

- A series of studies find that the best entry into literacy is through the use of a child's native language (Clay, 1993; Snow, Burns, and Griffin, 1998)
- The strongest predictor of L2 (English) student achievement is amount of formal L1 (Spanish) schooling (August and Hakuta, 1997)





# Research Base for BE Program Design

- More than 100 empirical studies show a positive association between additive bilingualism and students' linguistic, cognitive, or academic growth

(Cummins, 2000)



# Research Base for BE Program Design



- English language learners immersed in the English mainstream because their parents refused bilingual/ESL services showed large decreases in reading and math achievement by Grade 5  
(Collier and Thomas, 2002)

# Research Base for BE Program Design

- Bilingually schooled students are able to sustain the gains in L2 (English) and in some cases, to achieve even higher than typical native English speaker performance as they move through the secondary years of school

(Collier and Thomas, 1997)



# Summary Points



- Key Concepts:
  - One nation undivided is a reality when we teach to our students' strength
  - Focus on long-term academic achievement and commit to abandoning any practice that requires that LEP students acquire English at the expense of their education
  - English proficiency is an inevitable outcome of academic success





# One Nation: Shared Challenge



- School districts frequently compound the academic challenges that LEP students face by introducing English literacy in the primary grades prior to students demonstrating mastery of basic reading skills in Spanish.

A consistent approach is critical.

- LEP students are more likely than their English-speaking peers to drop out of high school as a result of their inability to demonstrate academic proficiency in either language.

Elementary BE Programs are in a position to change that statistic.