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BISD considering highly touted reading program



Tuesday, February 8, 2005
By Ed Hernandez

When a high school goes from low performing to exemplary in just six years, and the principal is selected as the Texas Secondary School Principals' Principal of the Year, people notice.

Educators and public figures have begun to take notice of Decatur High School and its Principal Melinda Reeves. A former reading teacher, she credits the big turn-around to several initiatives, but perhaps the most significant one is the incorporation of a reading program called Read Right.

Read Right is an intervention program for students who are at risk of failing to meet reading standards.

Read Right is a unique program that essentially teaches the brain to re-teach reading skills. It employs the use of brain research, learning and reading theories.

The inception of the program was in 1978. Dr. Dee Tadlock, who had received her PhD in reading, had a young son who struggled with reading. Nothing conventional was working, so she set about to find something that would.

Dr. Tadlock began the process with two questions. How does

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the brain learn a process? and what is the brain doing when it is reading excellently?

It took her three years of research, but Tadlock developed a theoretical prospective which combined both learning theory and reading theory. It was the result of studying information theory, cognitive psychology, language acquisition theory, neurobiology, reading theory and interactive constructive learning theory and various other disciplines.

Tadlock taught the new program successfully in grade school, middle school and at a community college and in the private sector over a period of 11 years. She then set up her company known as Read Right Systems.

Read Right has been used successfully with students who are classified as dyslexic, learning disabled, those who are enrolled in Title I programs, and those for whom English is a second language.

Last school semester Mrs. K.K. Brannies, assistant superintendent of the BISD, along with several teachers and one parent went to Decatur to observe the Read Right program.

The group was able to observe the program at work, and they were able to visit with the teachers, administrators and students.

The group came away impressed with the implementation of the program and the numerous success stories they heard.

According to Dr. Tadlock, students who have trouble with school work due to reading problems should see significant improvement in three or four months into the program.

To set the program up locally, a group of tutors would come to Brady to train four teachers or aides for seven weeks of hands-on methodology. This would include performing student assessments, using project management and student management systems, training materials, implementation manuals, reporting systems and quality assurance systems.

Brady ISD would be responsible for providing four qualified individuals for the training. These trainees would include two for high school and one each for the middle school and the elementary school.

A brief description of the program was presented to the BISD trustees at a regular meeting in January. The program might be included as an action item at a board meeting in the future. A two-year cost which includes all support materials, tutor training and a library, which includes over 850 books and tapes, is estimated at \$108,000.

Read Right Systems' claim to cost effectiveness is "If

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measured on cost per grade level gain, it is by far and away the most cost effective investment a school can make to optimize the learning potential of students who have fallen behind in reading."

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