



# CASE STUDY

## **Haskin Elementary Rises to Top of the Class with Lindamood-Bell** *April 2016*

### **Haskin Elementary School**

Haskin Elementary School is the sole elementary school of the Center Consolidated School District in the San Luis Valley of southern Colorado. The San Luis Valley is comprised of thirteen independent, rural districts operating as a consolidated unit to house necessary programs such as special education. Center School District is one of those districts. Haskin Elementary has a high percentage of children from high minority, low-income families, qualifying the school to receive federal funds under Title 1 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

As of 2014, approximately 308 students attend Haskin Elementary. Twenty-four teachers, staff and administrators serve the school's student population.

### **Summary of Circumstances**

Haskin Elementary is a Title 1 school with 88% percent of the students eligible for free and reduced-price lunch and 93% Hispanic or Latino in 2010. That same year, 56% of the students were English Learners (1, see source on last page).

In 2010, the U.S. Department of Education initiated a program to bolster proficiency in underperforming schools, allocating funds to each state in the form of a School Improvement Grant (SIG). The \$3 billion in funds were intended to systematically change impediments to improved performance (2, see reference on last page). To qualify for a SIG, schools had to be among the bottom five percent of performing schools relative to the others in the state. Haskin Elementary met this criteria and was one in the first cohort of just six chronically low-performing, Title I elementary schools in Colorado to receive the initial grant. The Colorado Department of Education managed the federal funds through a competitive process, inviting outside organizations to apply to become an approved provider and then inviting the qualifying schools to select a provider from among the vetted vendors.

### **Beginning Challenges**

Despite receiving Title 1 support for several years, Haskin Elementary was still chronically underperforming when it came to student achievement. To reverse the situation and generate sustained success, numerous factors were identified and addressed as part of the SIG mandatory process:

1. *Understanding the population's needs.* School staff had to learn how to specifically identify and diagnose students exhibiting at-risk reading behaviors.
2. *Differentiated instruction.* When a child was identified as having reading deficits, interventions customized to meet his/her specific needs had to be put into place.
3. *Raising the level of competency for those involved in instruction.* For a positive change to take place, the overall skill-level of teacher, administrators, and even board members needed to improve.
4. *Leadership support.* To make a difference, district-level staff needed to embrace the model and support the development of the staff.
5. *Intensive instruction.* In the traditional environment, there was limited time for reading instruction, so school days needed to be restructured to accommodate for intensive reading instruction each school day.

6. *Family involvement.* Parents, who are largely responsible for student attendance, needed to be engaged in the process and willing to support the efforts at home.
7. *Understanding why previous interventions failed.* Haskin Elementary had participated in multiple programs to remediate the performance gap. Teachers had received professional development in reading instruction but the programs weren't researched-based, sufficiently diagnostic or intensive to improve the deficits.
8. *Dispel misconceptions.* Performance gaps are often attributed to minority- or poverty-related causes. Research has shown that teaching reading is far more complex than originally thought and deficits are more accurately attributed to lack of proper training for instructors.

To overcome these challenges, Haskin Elementary needed more than the latest fad in reading instruction. It needed a research-based, research-validated approach to address each of the obstacles.

### **Selection of Lindamood-Bell as a Partner**

After being approved by the Colorado Department of Education as a SIG vendor for school improvement, Lindamood-Bell attended a two-day conference with other vendors and each of the SIG-recipient schools. The conference provided the opportunity for schools to meet with prospective vendors and learn about their offerings in order to make a selection.

Lindamood-Bell had previously and successfully helped bottom-performing schools in Pueblo, Colorado remediate their deficits over a ten-year period between 1996-2006. The results from published research on that partnership compelled Haskin Elementary to select Lindamood-Bell as one of their partners in turning the school around with the SIG funding. The key factors in that decision were:

1. *The existence of a research-based and validated comprehensive model of multi-tiered intervention.* Lindamood-Bell's programs, Seeing Stars (Bell, 2013) and Visualizing and Verbalizing (Bell, 2007) are based on Allan Paivio's Dual Coding Theory (1990). The Seeing Stars program develops symbol imagery, the ability to visualize sounds and letters in words. The Visualizing and Verbalizing program develops concept imagery for both oral and written language. Likewise, Lindamood-Bell's comprehensive model for professional development to address all language and learning needs, as applied in Pueblo City Schools (Sadoski, 2006), offers the school-wide template necessary to significantly increase student achievement.
2. *Diagnosis and intervention.* Lindamood-Bell's model addresses students' learning needs on an individual basis. They determine specific deficits and then create interventions customized to meet those needs.
3. *Access to on-site support.* Throughout the multi-year process, Lindamood-Bell staff was available at Haskin full-time to offer support in all components of the process.

On their grant application to receive the SIG funds, Haskin Elementary emphasized that Lindamood-Bell "was selected for its quality reading instructional practices, much-needed reading intervention support, professional development, instructional support, and data interpretation and analysis of instructional practices." The program's origins in research, attention to the individual needs of each student, and the support offered to instructors set Lindamood-Bell apart from other approved vendors.

### **Program Design and Implementation**

Once the SIG grant was in place, Haskin Elementary and Lindamood-Bell began their partnership, which included:

1. *Professional development training.* Haskin teachers and paraprofessionals were trained in the Seeing Stars and Visualizing and Verbalizing programs. Teachers learned how to administer a battery of diagnostic assessments to determine the specific needs for at-risk students.
2. *Provision of materials.* Haskin received the instructional materials for the Seeing Stars and Visualizing and Verbalizing programs.
3. *Community outreach.* Lindamood-Bell hosted community presentations to overview the programs and offer strategies for helping students at home

4. *On-site support.* Lindamood-Bell became fully engaged with the Haskin community through sustained on-site presence. A company consultant was on-site at Haskin Elementary full-time between June 2010-May 2011 and available on a real-time basis throughout the grant period. While on-site, Lindamood-Bell consultants administered testing, provided oversight, assessment, and instruction, and analyzed and reported assessment data.

In sum, Haskin embraced Lindamood-Bell's interventions and recommendations fully, and was supported in their effort by the school board, the paraprofessionals, and all district staff. Their faithfulness in adhering to the program was a key factor in Haskin's successful implementation.

## **Results**

The partnership yielded outstanding results. Among the five Colorado elementary schools that received the School Improvement Grant, Haskin was the only one to improve from the lowest academic performance rating to the highest between 2010 and 2014. In 2010, based on their School Performance Framework (SPF), Haskin was rated "turnaround" and by 2014 had a ranking of "performance." On the Transitional Colorado Assessment Program (TCAP), Haskin gained 39 points, while the other schools gained merely 10 points *combined*.

Haskin also performed well in comparison to all elementary schools in Colorado. Out of 850 elementary schools across the state, Haskin ranked 7th, 1st, and 7th in grades 3-5, respectively, on 2010 to 2014 change in percent proficient and advanced on the TCAP reading. In addition, Haskin subgroups ranked 1st (English Learners), 3rd (free and reduced), and 4th (minority) statewide in reading proficiency gains. Furthermore, Haskin ranked 16th out of 799 elementary schools in Colorado on SPF change in total percentage points earned.

Melissa Garcia, Regional Literacy Intervention Project Coordinator for San Luis Valley Board of Cooperative Educational Services attested to the program success saying, "I truly believe that choosing to implement Lindamood-Bell at Haskin Elementary was a great decision. Our students are being challenged more than ever before and our teachers have the tools, the metacognitive strategies, and support to reach them."

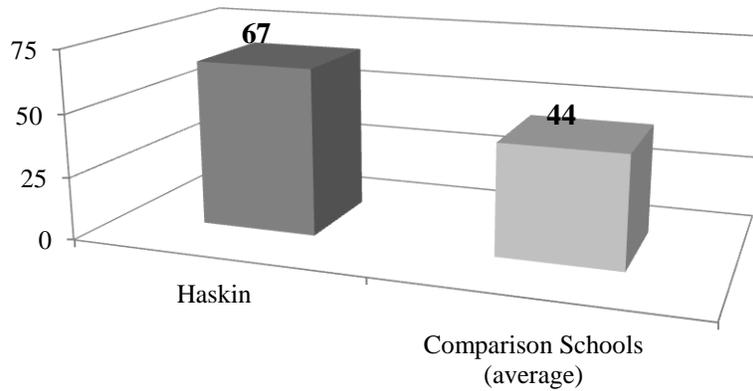
Haskin's principal, Kathy Kulp, said, "Lindamood-Bell has had an enormous impact on our school and on our students. The training our teachers received impacted all areas of their instruction and led to increased student achievement across the content areas."

Former Superintendent George Welsh corroborated, "I think the results we are achieving are a real-life indication that a significant infusion of dollars, spent wisely in targeted areas, can produce the kinds of results the state has striven for through the education system it has designed. Without the training and resource opportunities that were afforded to us through our turnaround grant, we would probably still be where we were in 2010 when only 28 percent of our third graders could read at grade level."

The results at Haskin Elementary mirrored those of the schools in Pueblo, Colorado when Lindamood-Bell was contracted between 1996-2006 under the Basic Literacy Act that mandated poor performing schools to change. After Lindamood-Bell concluded its work in Pueblo in 2006, several of the schools saw a decline in performance and were unfortunately eligible for SIG funds in 2010. None of those schools selected Lindamood-Bell for as their provider under the SIG and, in sharp contrast to Haskin Elementary results, saw further decline in their proficiency.

## **Sustainability**

In 2016, Haskin Elementary achieved the highest academic performance rating of "performance" for a third year in a row. None of the other schools achieved this level in 2016.



Percentage points earned for overall academic performance at Haskin Elementary School in 2016.

Out of 845 elementary schools in the entire state of Colorado, Haskin Elementary was one of only 10 schools that went from lowest rating of “turnaround” in 2010 to the highest rating of “performance” in 2016 (3, see source on last page). Haskin Elementary also continued to outperform the other SIG schools on the Colorado Measures of Academic Success (CMAS)/Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) English Language Arts assessment, which replaced the TCAP Reading in 2015. Change from 2015 to 2016 in the percent of students who met or exceeded expectations was 14.0, 4.8, and 10.3 for grades 3-5 respectively, compared to -4.4, -2.7, and .2 for the other schools (4, see source on last page).

The repeatability of success from the Pueblo district to Haskin Elementary is indicative of the programs’ efficacy. This provides compelling reason to implement Lindamood-Bell’s programs to remediate reading deficits, which, in turn, affect all facets of continued learning. When students are able to learn, they, their families, and their communities benefit.

#### **About Lindamood-Bell**

Lindamood-Bell believes that all children and adults can learn to their potential. For nearly 30 years, their research-validated instruction has consistently changed the lives of individuals with learning challenges such as dyslexia, ADHD, and autism. In addition to their nearly 100 Learning Centers and Seasonal Learning Clinics nationally and internationally, their efforts include research collaborations with MIT, UAB, and previously with Wake Forest, and Georgetown University. Lindamood-Bell has been recognized by the U.S. Department of Education, Time, US News and World Report, Neuron, NeuroImage, CNN, and PBS. Lindamood-Bell and all of their Learning Centers are accredited by AdvancED. Visit [lindamoodbell.com](http://lindamoodbell.com) or call 800-233-1819 to learn more.

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[1] "Title I, Part A Program." Title I, Part A Program. Web. 17 May 2016.

[2] *American FactFinder*. Web. 17 May 2016.

[3] *American FactFinder*. Web. 17 May 2016.

[4] *American FactFinder*. Web. 17 May 2016.

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Sources:

1. Colorado Department of Education (<http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdereval/rv2010pmlinks>).
2. Dragoset, L., Thomas, J., Herrmann, M., Deke, J., James-Burdumy, S., Graczewski, C., Boyle, A., Upton, R., Tanenbaum, C., & Giffin, J. (2017). *School Improvement Grants: Implementation and Effectiveness* (NCEE 2017-4013). Washington, DC: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education.
3. Colorado Department of Education (<http://www.cde.state.co.us/schoolview/performance>).
4. Colorado Department of Education (<http://www.cde.state.co.us/assessment/newassess-parcc>)