

Transcript – Texas: Algebra Ready Initiative (TXAR)

Before we examine learning progressions in-depth, let's talk about where we have been.

Because algebra has long been considered a gateway to success in future mathematics courses and college, it is imperative that every student leave middle school equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to be successful in Algebra I. However, in 2011, only 40% of 8th grade students in Texas were deemed Proficient or Advanced on the National Assessment of Educational Progress in Math. After examining this information, one may note room for improvement with mathematics achievement.

The Texas: Algebra Ready (TXAR) initiative was put into place to increase the preparedness of students to meet standards and pass assessments in algebra. The professional development academies are key components of the Texas: Algebra Ready initiative. This includes the following professional development opportunities: Elementary Students in Texas: Algebra Ready (ESTAR) Academies, Middle-school Students in Texas: Algebra Ready (MSTAR) Academies, Academies for Algebra I End-of-Course (EOC) Success, Algebra II Success, and Geometry Success. ESTAR and MSTAR also have assessments and sample intervention lessons.

Students have rigorous high school graduation requirements, including acceptable performance on the mathematics EOC assessments. However, for students to be successful in Algebra II and Geometry, they must have a strong Algebra I foundation. Therefore, we must start with helping prepare students for Algebra I before enrollment in Algebra I. We continue to ask ourselves, "What can we do in the middle school classroom to help them arrive in Algebra I content with the tools to be successful?" ESTAR, MSTAR, and success academies were developed to enhance the mathematics instruction by exploring instructional strategies that support students who have historically struggled with mathematics, including English language learners and students with special needs.