

2017-18 Evaluation of Refugee Support Services

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At-a-Glance

The Dallas Independent School District's (Dallas ISD) Refugee Services Program provides educational and social support to refugee students and their families to help ease their entry into the United States and particularly to Dallas ISD. The Refugee Services Program was first implemented in Dallas ISD in 1999.

The Dallas ISD Refugee Services Program offerings include the following:

- translation and interpretation services for school-related purposes,
- tutoring programs – individual and small group instructional support,
- a summer enrichment program,
- transition services and assistance with educational placement,
- student and parent assistance with requisite forms and related school-entry information,
- school orientation meetings for parents on school related topics, and
- staff development training to inform and educate school professionals about the needs unique to the refugee population.

Refugee students and families who have been in the United States for less than one year received the highest program priority. However, the program may serve refugees who have resided in the United States for up to three years. Data in this report represented those served by the program who fall into these categories.

How was the Refugee Services Program funded?

To ensure uninterrupted programming for the Dallas ISD Refugee Services Program for the 2017-18 school year, the Refugee Services Program manager was able to secure funding through partner programs within the district. Budget detail for the Refugee Services Program was obtained from the Youth and Family Centers (YFC) 2017-18 Title 1 Workscape and the Refugee Services Program manager.

The total funding amount for Refugee Services Program in 2017-18 was \$112,957. A portion of the Youth and Family Center Title I budget was allotted to refugee services.

What were the characteristics of those who participated in the Refugee Services Program?

Methodology

Data were obtained from the Refugee Services program manager, merged with the district demographic data file (5/21/2018), and analyzed using frequencies and cross tabulations.

Results

During the 2017-18 school year, 375 refugee students received instructional support and/or transitional support services through the Dallas ISD Refugee Services Program by May 2018. In addition, 266 refugee parents or guardians received services from the program, primarily in school orientation sessions, interpretation and translation services, registration assistance, parent-teacher conference assistance, attendance and student discipline support, and food and health services support.

Served Refugee Students by School

Table 1 shows the number of served refugee students by school in 2017-18.

Table 1: 2017-18 Refugee Students Served by Campus (Top 10)

Campus	n
Tasby MS	103
Conrad HS	72
McShan ES	46
Lowe ES	27
Adams, B HS	18
Gill ES	16
Hill MS	10
Truett ES	9
Skyline HS	6
Lang MS	4
Total	311

Source: Data were obtained from refugee service staff 6/4/2018.

Note: There were 38 students who withdrew from the refugee support service, and seven students' information was missing. The table included top 10 schools only, omitting 19 other students. HS=high school. MS=middle school. ES=elementary school.

By Grade Level

Table 2 displays the distribution of students served by the Refugee Services Program in 2017-18 by grade level. Refugee students in seventh grade ($n=47$) constituted the largest group of students served, followed by those in ninth grade ($n=44$) and sixth grade ($n=42$).

Table 2: 2017-18 Refugee Students Served by Grade

Grade	<i>n</i>
Early Childhood	1
Kindergarten	18
1	21
2	14
3	24
4	17
5	18
6	42
7	47
8	31
9	44
10	35
11	7
12	11
Total	330

Source: Data were obtained from refugee service staff 6/4/2018.

Note: There were 38 students who withdrew from the refugee support service and seven students' information was missing.

Student Demographics

Table 3 shows demographics of the served refugee students in 2017-18.

Table 3: 2017-18 Demographic Characteristics of Served Refugee Students

	<i>n</i>	%
Gender		
Male	160	48.5
Female	170	51.5
Special Groups		
At Risk	326	98.8
Economically Disadvantaged	272	82.4
Limited English Proficiency	325	98.5
Special Education	10	3.0

Source: Data were obtained from refugee service staff 6/4/2018.

Note: An overlap occurs in the special groups. There were 38 students who withdrew from the refugee support service and seven students' information was missing.

What activities or services were provided through the Refugee Services Program in 2017-18?

Methodology

Data on program activities were obtained from the Refugee Services program staff. In addition to procuring quantitative data-tracking files, the program evaluator met with the program manager to have a better understanding of program activities for 2017-18 school year.

Results

Direct Supplemental Instruction: Tutoring and Summer Enrichment Program

The Refugee Services Program provided direct supplemental instruction to refugee students in tutoring. A total of 105 students received tutoring services at four schools: Conrad ($n=49$), Tasby ($n=29$), Lowe ($n=15$), and McShan ($n=12$).

2018 summer enrichment program consisted of two components: elementary school program (grades K-5) and high school program (grades 9-12). The elementary summer program was held at Tasby from June 8 through June 29, 2018, and it focused on literacy, language, mathematics skills, science, and social studies based on state standards. The high school summer program was held at Conrad from June 11 through June 29, 2018, and it focused on preparing for the *State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness End of Course (STAAR EOC)* test. The summer enrichment program provided thematic learning, cultural lessons, and field trips as well.

A total of 139 students enrolled in the summer program from four different schools including McShan ($n=76$), Lowe ($n=42$), Hotchkiss ($n=7$), and Conrad ($n=14$). Most program participants were from elementary school, with third-graders comprising the largest group of participants (Table 4).

Table 4: 2017-18 Summer Enrichment Program Participants by Grade

Grade	<i>n</i>
KN	18
1	14
2	19
3	32
4	20
5	22
9	11
10	3
Total	139

Source: Data were obtained from refugee service staff 7/10/2018.

Parent Orientation Sessions

The Refugee Services Program offered eight school orientation sessions for parents or guardians of refugee students in 2017-18. School orientations provided an introduction to the American education system and to Dallas ISD. Parents received a handbook, a school calendar, an example of a written absence excuse, and an application for a free school uniform. A total of 66 refugee parents or guardians attended an orientation session between October 2017 and May 2018.

Staff Professional Development

The Refugee Services Program offered professional development opportunities throughout 2017-18 school year to Dallas ISD staff. Topics and themes included cultural awareness, the refugee resettlement process, refugee student support services, and instructional objectives. Professional development sessions were offered on eight dates from October 2017 through May 2018 at Conrad, Lowe, Frank, as well as at Dallas ISD's Bilingual Department and Psychological Services Department.

Interdepartmental / Interagency Collaboration

The Refugee Services Program collaborated throughout the year both with departments within Dallas ISD and with external agencies.

Internal (district) departments included the Bilingual Services Department, the Office of Family and Community Engagement, and the World Languages Department, as well as with various other departments across the district. Refugee Services engaged with a total of 21 different external agencies during the 2017-18 school year and participated in a total of 43 meetings or professional activities.

Multicultural Student Club and Other Supportive Services

The Refugee Services Program also offered organizational and leadership assistance for multicultural clubs on various Dallas ISD campuses.

Other supportive services provided by the Refugee Services Program in 2017-18 included provision of referrals for and/or language (interpretation) support for physical health and immunizations, mental health issues, absence and attendance issues, and parent teacher conferences. Other support was material, in the form of uniforms, dictionaries, and other basic school supplies. Table 5 displays the five most common languages refugee students speak as their primary languages.

Table 5: Top Five Primary Languages Spoken by Served Refugee Students

Language	n
Burmese	78
Swahili	71
Nepali	35
Arabic	34
Tibetan	26

Source: Data were obtained from refugee service staff 6/4/2018.

How did the served students perform academically in 2017-18?

Methodology

The evaluator merged program files procured from the Refugee Services Program staff containing student identification (ID) numbers with the attendance file dated 6/11/2018 to analyze attendance data. *The State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR)* and *STAAR End of Course (EOC)* data files (6/20/2018) were merged with Refugee Services Program files for 2017-18.

Results

Attendance Rate

Of the 375 served refugee students, attendance data were available for 333 students. The average attendance rate for served refugee students (grades Early Childhood through 12) for the 2017-18 school year was 96 percent, while the district had an attendance rate of 95 percent.

STAAR and STAAR EOC Results

The evaluator merged the *STAAR* and *STAAR EOC* data (6/20/2018) and the district demographic data, and calculated the percentage of students at Approaches Grade Level or Above from grades three through 12. For served refugee students in grades three through eight, 21 percent approached grade level or above on the *STAAR* reading and 37 percent approached grade level or above for *STAAR* mathematics. Sixty-five percent of the students approached grade level or above for *STAAR EOC* Algebra I.

Tables 6 and 7 display *STAAR* and *STAAR EOC* results by subject and grade.

Table 6: 2017-18 STAAR Reading and Mathematics Approaches Grade Level or Above for Served Refugee Students by Grade

Grade	Reading		Mathematics	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
3	20	25.0	19	21.1
4	16	6.3	16	0.0
5	15	6.7	15	26.7
6	40	15.0	38	42.1
7	44	29.5	37	37.8
8	28	28.6	35	60.0
All	163	20.9	160	36.9

Source: 2017-18 STAAR data file 6/20/2018.

Note: These students are excluded in district's accountability since this is their first year in the U.S.

Table 7: 2017-18 STAAR EOC English I, English II, and Algebra I Approaches Grade Level or Above for Served Refugee Students

Grade Level	<i>n</i>	%
English I		
9-12 Combined	51	3.9
English II		
9-12 Combined	44	2.3
Algebra I		
9-12 Combined	54	64.8

Source: STAAR EOC data file 6/20/2018.

Note: Those students are excluded in district's accountability since this is their first year in the U.S.

Recommendation

Continue to partner with internal and external agencies to provide services and support needed for the refugee students and their families, and encourage those students and families to take advantage of the resources available. Many of those refugee students and families incurred great trauma, when they were forced to flee their home country and settled in a different cultural, social, and economic system.

References

Lucas, M. (September 2015). Evaluation of Refugee School Impact Grant: 2014-15 Final Report. Dallas, TX: Dallas Independent School District.

Mejan, M. (October 2017). 2016-17 Evaluation of Refugee Support Services. Dallas, TX: Dallas Independent School District.

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