

2017-18 Evaluation of Special Education/English Learner Instructional Specialists Program

Nick Grimberg, M.A.

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At-a-Glance

The Special Education/English Learner Instructional Specialists program is designed to support and assist the educators of students who are dually identified as both English learners (EL) and receiving special education services. Instructional specialists facilitate collaboration between campus based educators and appropriate bilingual/special education specialists and assist campuses in planning and implementing services designed to meet the needs of dually identified students at all grade levels. Instructional specialists also create and conduct professional development opportunities for teachers, administrators and other campus based staff throughout the district. Five instructional specialists specialize in reading/language arts (RLA) curriculum development and support throughout the district while two specialize in social studies. The 2017-18 Title I work scope allocation for this program was \$1,629,000 including 18 instructional specialists and one manager.

The Special Education/English Learner Instructional Specialists program is a new program developed by Amanda Clymer, Director of Bilingual/English as a Second Language (ESL), for the 2017-18 school year. Instructional specialist positions were posted to Applitrack on November 14, 2018. Final interviews for the first 13 instructional specialists concluded on February 8, 2018. The first group of instructional specialists began initial training on March 19, 2018. Most instructional specialists began working in April and May of the 2017-18 school year.

Purpose and Methods of the Evaluation

The purpose of this evaluation was to monitor program implementation to provide feedback to program staff which can be used to identify potential challenges and improve program effectiveness. Due to the start date of instructional specialists, this evaluation focused on context data. This evaluation analyzed the characteristics of dually identified students, monitored training and implementation of the program, and reported activities.

What were the characteristics of dually identified students?

As of October 27, 2017, there were 156,804 students enrolled in the district: 69,273 (44.2%) English learner students and 12,871 (8.2%) special education students. There were 4,570 students (2.9% of enrollment) who were dually identified as both English learners and

receiving special education services. Dually identified students made up 35.5 percent of the special education population. Almost all dually identified students (97.7%) were Hispanic (Table 1). In addition, although males and females were similarly represented in the English learner population, two-thirds (68.9%) of dually identified students were male.

Table 1: Characteristics of English Learner, Special Education, and Dually Identified Students: 2017-18

Group	English Learner		Special Education		Dually Identified	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Eco Dis	61,932	89.4	10,904	84.7	4,161	91.1
At-Risk	68,688	99.2	9,114	70.8	4,533	99.2
Ethnicity						
Hispanic	66,395	95.8	8,035	62.4	4,466	97.7
AA	751	1.1	3,918	30.4	26	0.6
White	623	0.9	658	5.1	26	0.6
Asian	1,309	1.9	102	0.8	44	1.0
Gender						
Female	33,263	48.0	4,188	32.5	1,420	31.1
Male	36,010	52.0	8,683	67.5	3,150	68.9

Source: Dallas ISD Chancery student database: 10/27/17.

Note: Native American, Pacific Islander, and Two or More Races not included in this table (N = 195; 0.3%). Eco Dis = Economically Disadvantaged, AA = African American.

The primary disabilities of special education and dually identified students are shown in Table 2. A higher percentage of dually identified students had a learning disability (35.9%) than special education students (28.6%). Overall, the primary disabilities of special education students and dually identified students were similar.

Table 2: Primary Disabilities of Special Education and Dually Identified Students: 2017-18

Disability	Special Education		Dually Identified	
	N	%	N	%
Learning Disability	3,664	28.6	1,636	35.9
Autism	2,301	18.0	771	16.9
Other Health Impairment	2,089	16.3	569	12.5
Speech Impairment	1,829	14.3	823	18.1
Intellectual Disability	1,726	13.5	444	9.8
Emotional Disturbance	487	3.8	70	1.5
Auditory Impairment	400	3.1	135	3.0
Orthopedic Impairment	184	1.4	67	1.5
Visual Impairment	98	0.8	29	0.6

Source: Dallas ISD Chancery student database: 10/27/17.

Note: Percentages do not equal 100 when added together due to students categorized as: No Disability, Noncategorical Early Childhood, Developmental Delay, Traumatic Brain Injury, Deaf-Blind, and missing data (N = 26; 0.6%).

The grade-level distribution of dually identified students was similar to special education students (Table 3). In comparison, there were fewer English learners in higher grade levels.

Table 3: Grade Levels of English Learner, Special Education, and Dually Identified Students: 2017-18

Grade	English Learner		Special Education		Dually Identified	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Elementary School						
EC	40	0.1	394	3.1	37	0.8
PK	6,120	8.8	261	2.0	103	2.3
KN	5,489	7.9	562	4.4	233	5.1
Grade 1	5,928	8.6	774	6.0	296	6.5
Grade 2	5,985	8.6	1,059	8.2	386	8.4
Grade 3	6,153	8.9	1,099	8.5	390	8.5
Grade 4	6,257	9.0	1,149	8.9	419	9.2
Grade 5	6,212	9.0	1,192	9.3	442	9.7
Middle School						
Grade 6	5,388	7.8	1,096	8.5	403	8.8
Grade 7	5,139	7.4	936	7.3	338	7.4
Grade 8	4,691	6.8	954	7.4	379	8.3
High School						
Grade 9	4,779	6.9	1,079	8.4	415	9.1
Grade 10	3,270	4.7	854	6.6	293	6.4
Grade 11	2,189	3.2	729	5.7	229	5.0
Grade 12	1,633	2.4	733	5.7	207	4.5

Source: Dallas ISD Chancery student database: 10/27/17.

Note: EC = Early Childhood, PK = Pre-kindergarten, KN = Kindergarten

Refer to the *2017-18 Evaluation of Special Education Program* (Grimberg, 2018) report for special education and dually identified student STAAR performance data.

What training and professional development did instructional specialists receive?

There were two separate sessions of teambuilding and onboarding training that coincided with the start dates of 13 instructional specialists on March 19, 2018 and April 16, 2018. Each session lasted three days. Seven instructional specialists attended initial onboarding training on March 19, 2018, while six instructional specialists attended initial onboarding training on April 16, 2018. Three instructional specialists began training in May and June. Topics included policies and procedures related to serving special education, ESL, and dual language students as well as social studies and reading/language arts curriculum development.

What services did instructional specialists provide?

The program was not fully implemented during the 2017-18 school year. More than half of instructional specialists (58.8%) did not deliver professional development or perform a site visit at a Dallas ISD campus prior to June 1, 2018. Thus, the instructional specialist activities reported below are limited in scope.

Between March 19, 2018 and July 6, 2018, instructional specialists participated in 574 sessions (54.6%) of curriculum support for dually identified students. Instructional specialists received 149 sessions (14.2%) of professional development, planned the delivery of professional development over 79 sessions (7.5%), and delivered 72 professional development sessions (6.9%). There was an average of 4 staff/departmental meetings during the 2017-18 school year (N = 67; 6.4%). Overall, instructional specialists conducted 61 campus visits (5.8%). Instructional specialists visited educators and provided services at 49 Dallas ISD campuses.

Recommendations

- **Build on efforts to fully implement the Special Education/English Learner Instructional Specialists program with fidelity throughout the 2018-19 school year.** The first two groups of instructional specialists were not hired and trained until March and April of 2018. Most of the 2017-18 school year was devoted to planning and training. The program should be fully implemented in the 2018-19 school year to allow for a comprehensive and meaningful study of processes and outcomes of the program.

References

- Grimberg, N. Z. (2017). 2016-17 Evaluation of Special Education Program (Dallas Independent School District, Evaluation Services, Evaluation and Assessment).
- Grimberg, N. Z. (2018). 2017-18 Evaluation of Special Education Program (Dallas Independent School District, Evaluation Services, Evaluation and Assessment).

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Dallas ISD
Department of Evaluation and Assessment
H. B. Bell School Support Service Center
2909 N. Buckner Blvd.
Box 10
Dallas, TX 75228