

2018-19 Evaluation of Bilingual Education and English as a Second Language Programs

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At-a-Glance

The Dallas Independent School District (ISD) Bilingual Education/English as a Second Language (BE/ESL) department's mission is to increase student achievement by effectively addressing the academic, linguistic, and social needs of English learners (ELs). The department oversees Dual Language (DL) and ESL programs, sheltered instruction, services for immigrant students, tutoring, and summer programs, and oversees the Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC), which is responsible for the identification and reclassification of ELs and monitoring of reclassified ELs. Finally, the department collaborates with the Special Education (SPED) Department to provide services for ELs who require SPED services (ELSPED). The purpose of the full report was to evaluate the effectiveness of programs for district ELs, including outcomes for one Title I and three Title III workscopes.¹ Funding in 2018-19 totaled \$10,118,136, a decrease of \$301,523 from 2017-18 (Table 1).

Table 1: 2018-19 Funding for Bilingual/ESL Programs

Source	Funding		Change
	2017-18	2018-19	
Title III, English Learners	\$6,715,585	\$6,637,252	-\$78,333
Title III, Academic Tutoring	176,732	176,732	0
Title III, Immigrant	1,077,992	846,223	-231,769
Title I, ELSPED	1,629,000	1,652,936	+23,936
Dallas ISD Gen. Operating	820,350	804,993	-15,357
Total	\$10,419,659	\$10,118,136	-\$301,523

Source: Bilingual/ESL and the Communications Departments, updated with final numbers from Special Revenue Funds Management.

Note: Academic Tutoring was led by the Communications Department; it is included because it served English learners. ELSPED = English learner requiring special education. ISD = Independent School District. Gen = General. ESL = English as a second language.

Students, Programs, and Services

The district enrolled 69,419 ELs (45% of district) and 8,741 reclassified ELs (6,646 monitored) in 2018-19. EL enrollment increased by 94 students and the number of reclassified students decreased by 1,068 students since 2017-18. The highest rates of 2018-19 ELs were enrolled for at least the seventh year (39%) and in PK to grade two (33%). The top language spoken in EL homes was Spanish. Six percent of ELs were parent denials, and one percent were coded as unservable. Most reclassified monitored students were in grades 10 (25%) and 11 (24%). Table 2 shows the number of students in each program/classification in 2018-19.

Table 2: 2018-19 District Enrollment by Bilingual Education/ESL Program/Classification

Program/Classification	Students N	Dist %
District	155,057	100.0
All EL	69,419	44.8
All nonEL	84,709	54.6
Monitored	6,653	4.3
EL in OWDL	33,820	21.8
EL in TWDL	3,106	2.0
nonEL in TWDL	2,061	1.3
EL in SECDL	346	0.2
nonEL in SECDL	127	0.1
ESL	5,301	3.4
Sheltered	20,105	13.0
Immigrant	6,143	4.0
ELSPED	5,111	3.3
Parent Denials	4,249	2.7
Unservable	924	0.6

Source: District PEIMS snapshot demographic data file dated February 26, 2019.

Note: Includes students who were enrolled on the PEIMS snapshot date of October 26, 2018. Students may be included in more than one category shown. Dist = district. EL = English learner. OWDL = one-way dual language. TWDL = two-way dual language. SECDL = secondary dual language. ESL = English as a Second Language. ELSPED = dually-identified as English learner and requiring special education. PEIMS = Public Education Information Management System.

The Dallas ISD offers a wide variety of programs and services for ELs. First, students may participate in three DL programs: OWDL (PK to grade 5/6; 140 campuses), TWDL (PK to grade 5/6; 58 campuses), and SECDL (grades 6 to 12; 9 campuses). Second, elementary school ELs for whom Spanish is not the dominant language or who are Spanish speakers at campuses without a DL program participate in ESL. ESL at the secondary level is for students in the first three years in United States (US) schools. Third, secondary grade level students enrolled in US schools more than three years and have not yet been reclassified are enrolled in R/LA sheltered classes.

The BE/ESL department also offers services for student populations with high proportions of ELs. First, students enrolled in US schools fewer than three years are classified as immigrants. Because a large proportion of immigrants typically are also ELs (92% in 2018-19), the BE/ESL department plays a pivotal role in the integration of immigrant students and their families into the district and community. In addition, when students require both EL and SPED services, the campus ARD committee and LPAC must collaborate to ensure issues related to both the disability and language proficiency

¹ At-A-Glance Information for three workscopes were provided in separate reports: Academic Tutoring for ELs

(EA19-126-4A), Immigrant (EA19-126-4B), and Special Education/English Learners (EA-126-4C).

are carefully considered. In 2018-19, an important focus was improving student identification and service provision to ELSPED students.

Who were BE/ESL teachers?

In 2018-19, the district employed 2,205 DL or ESL teachers in elementary schools and 1,402 DL, ESL, and/or sheltered teachers in secondary schools.

Exceptions/Waivers

State law requires districts unable to provide the required number of DL and ESL teachers to request an exception to offer an alternative program (DL) or a waiver of teacher certification (ESL). Because of new high school level ESL certification requirements, the number of requested ESL waivers increased 346 percent since 2017-18 (2017-18: 54; 2018-19: 241).

What were the perceptions of BE/ESL teachers and administrators?

Dual Language Survey

Key findings from the summer 2018 Dual Language teacher ($N = 93$) and principal ($N = 69$) survey include 1) teachers advocated more instructional time in Spanish than principals, 2) teachers and principals favorably rated various aspects of the program, 3) teachers and principals agreed buy-in was low for nonEL teachers and staff members, and 4) most rated training attended and DL resources and supports as at least somewhat helpful.

ESL Teacher and Administrator Perceptions

Key findings from the spring 2019 ESL teacher ($N = 87$; 66%) and administrator ($N = 45$; 65%) survey included 1) over half of teachers met with ESL Instructional Support Specialists (ISS) at least once per week, but over 10 percent of teachers and administrators never met with an ESL ISS, 2) at least half of respondents felt the ESL ISSs effectively provided various resources and services, and 3) respondents generally were satisfied with ESL services.

What were academic outcomes for ELs?

Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS)

ELs Overall. Ratings for ELs at all grade levels clustered at intermediate and advanced English proficiency. Over half of ELs remained at the same proficiency level in 2019 as in 2018, and ELs in grades one to five progressed at higher rates and regressed at lower rates than those in the middle and upper grades.

Dual Language. ELs in OWDL and TWDL programs performed similarly in 2019, with the highest rates of students proficient at the intermediate or advanced

levels. Over a third of students from both programs progressed to a higher proficiency level from 2018 to 2019, and rates of OWDL and TWDL students who remained the same or regressed differed by about three to four percentage points. The highest rates of SECDL ELs scored at the intermediate and advanced proficiency levels in 2019. Like students in OWDL and TWDL, over half of ELs in SECDL remained at the same proficiency level from 2018 to 2019, but triple the rate of SECDL students regressed than progressed a level.

ESL/Sheltered. The highest rates of ESL students scored at the intermediate or advanced level for all grade level groupings. Rates of students at the advanced level decreased as grade level increased. Rates of students at the same level in 2019 as 2018 increased as grade level increased. The highest rates of students in sheltered classrooms also scored at intermediate and advanced proficiency levels. Proficiency rating movement was similar at all grade level groupings; students were more likely to regress than progress. Notably, while sheltered students performed at the advanced and advanced high levels at higher rates than ESL students, their progression rates were lower, and regression rates were higher than for ESL students, indicating more instability in English proficiency for students in sheltered classrooms than for ESL students.

Parent Denials. Parent denials generally performed similarly or slightly better than ELs overall.

Elementary School TerraNova/SUPERA (TN/SUP) and State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness (STAAR)

ELs vs nonELs. Rates of students at or above grade level on TN reading and mathematics were lower overall for ELs than nonELs. Rates at or above grade level on SUP reading were higher for ELs than for nonELs. Rates at STAAR Approaches+ and Meets+ for ELs exceeded rates for nonELs on all subtests except for science, with comparable rates at both standards.

Dual Language. Rates of students at or above grade level on TN reading and mathematics were lower for OWDL than for TWDL ELs but were slightly higher for OWDL than TWDL on SUP reading. Rates at both STAAR Approaches+ and Meets+ for OWDL generally were lower than for TWDL ELs, except for writing. Rates at Approaches+ and Meets+ were comparable or higher for both OWDL and TWDL students than for nonELs.

ESL. Rates of ESL students at or above grade level on TN reading and mathematics were comparable or slightly higher than for all nonELs. STAAR rates for ESL students compared to all nonELs varied, with ESL students at Approaches+ and Meets+ at comparable or higher rates than all nonELs for mathematics and

writing and comparable or lower than all nonELs on reading and science.

Parent Denials. Parent denials underperformed both ELs and nonELs overall on *TN* mathematics and reading, *SUP* reading, and all *STAAR* subtests.

Two-year trends. Two-year trends in rates at or above grade level for *TN* reading and mathematics increased over two years for all groups except for nonELs in *TWDL* but decreased for all groups on *SUP* reading. Rates at or above grade level increased the most on *TN* reading for ELs in *OWDL* (+14 percentage points) and *TWDL* (+12 percentage points). Most two-year trends in Meets+ rates on *STAAR* subtests were positive and overall ranged from a three percentage points decrease (*TWDL* ELs, writing) to a 15 percentage point increase (*TWDL* ELs, science; *ESL* science).

Secondary STAAR and End-of-Course (EOC)

ELs vs nonELs. Rates at both Approaches+ and Meets+ for ELs were comparable to or lower than for nonELs on all *STAAR* and *EOC* subjects, though gaps were narrower in *STAAR* mathematics and Algebra I.

Dual Language. Differences in grade six to eight *STAAR* rates at Approaches+ and Meets+ between both ELs and nonELs in *SECDL* and all nonELs varied by subject. *SECDL* EL rates at both Approaches+ and Meets+ lagged most strongly behind all nonELs in writing. Approaches+ and Meets+ rates for *SECDL* nonELs exceeded all nonELs rates in all subjects. Differences in *EOC* rates at Approaches+ and Meets+ between both ELs and nonELs in *SECDL* and all nonELs also varied by subject. Both Approaches+ and Meets+ rates for *SECDL* ELs most strongly exceeded those for all nonELs in Algebra I and lagged most strongly behind all nonELs in US History. Both Approaches+ and Meets+ rates for *SECDL* nonELs exceeded those for all nonELs for most *EOCs*

ESL and Sheltered. Rates of *ESL* students at Approaches+ and Meets+ fell short of rates for students in sheltered classrooms on every *STAAR* six to eight subtest and *EOC*. Both *ESL* and sheltered students were comparable to or lagged all nonELs on all but the Algebra I *EOC* at Approaches+ (sheltered students).

Parent Denials. Differences between rates of parent denials and all ELs at Approaches+ and Meets+ varied, with comparable or lower rates for parent denials than all ELs for most subjects.

Two-year trends. Two-year trends in Meets+ rates on *STAAR* and *EOCs* were mostly positive.

DL STAAR Reading by Testing Language

Rates for ELs taking the grade three to five *STAAR* reading subtests in Spanish were slightly greater at the Meets+ performance standard than at the Approaches+ standard. Rates of grade three to five reading at Meets+ were generally higher for nonELs than ELs in both programs, regardless of test language.

Monitored/Reclassified STAAR

Monitored reclassified students performed notably well overall on *STAAR* subtests and *EOCs*, with high rates of students attaining the Approaches+ (89% to 99%) and Meets+ (55% to 87%) performance standards. Overall, higher rates of monitored students than other nonELs attained both standards in all subjects.

STAAR and EOC Outcomes by TELPAS Rating

For all *STAAR* and *EOC* subjects, the rates of students at Approaches+ and Meets+ increased with increased *TELPAS* English proficiency ratings.

Grade Five to Six Transition STAAR

District rates of 2019 grade six students at all *STAAR* performance standards were lower than attainment rates for the same students in grade five mathematics (-1 to -27 percentage points) and reading (-5 to -43 percentage points). Mathematics rates for all ELs decreased more at Approaches+ on the Spanish subtest than on the English subtest, but rates decreased less at Meets+ and Masters on the Spanish subtest than on the English subtest. Reading rates for all ELs decreased more for students taking the subtest in Spanish than in English. The extent of decreased rates in both subjects varied among programs/classifications. In most cases, decreases were lower for students who were in PK/1 to grade six campuses than for students at grade six to eight campuses.

How did EL and monitored student participation in advanced opportunities compare to nonELs?

Qualified ELs applied to and participated in magnet programs at lower rates (37%) than nonELs (43%) and monitored students (64%). Grade six to eight advanced R/LA, mathematics, and science course enrollment of those who scored at Masters in the previous year were highest in all subjects for monitored students and lower for ELs than nonELs in grade eight mathematics, but comparable for ELs and nonELs in grade six and seven mathematics and grade six science.

How did outcomes compare to the state?

Differences in district and state proficiency level rates on the 2019 *TELPAS* ranged from 12 points below state rates (K to 2, Advanced) to 14 points above state rates

(K to grade 2, Beginning); rates of students at the higher English proficiency levels (Advanced, Advanced High) fell short of state rates, especially in lower grades. Most district rates exceeded the state on STAAR/EOCs.

Recommendations

The following key recommendations were offered.

- **Review data structures and processes for accuracy and usability.** With efforts to expand the ways data are reviewed for BE/ESL-related programs and the advent of the new student information system in 2018-19, several data shortcomings emerged that hindered the ability to explore various research questions (e.g., tracking former immigrant students, years as EL for current and reclassified students, identifying secondary BE/ESL teachers). The BE/ESL, Evaluation and Assessment, and Information Technology departments should collaborate to prioritize the most important data insufficiencies and establish a plan for eradication.
- **Include more process data collection and analysis in future evaluations.** Future evaluators and BE/ESL department leadership should work together to determine where further process data may be valuable for more in-depth program evaluation based on what is reasonable to collect and analyze given available anticipated resources.
- **Strengthen focus on English proficiency progression to support academic achievement.** Progression rates varied but about half of ELs remained the same. A relationship was found between TELPAS proficiency ratings and academic achievement. Elevating ELs out of the same proficiency level could result in achievement growth.
- **Explore reasons for lower EL participation in advanced opportunities.** ELs were accepted to and participated in magnet programs at lower rates than nonELs, EL participation often lagged nonELs in advanced courses, and EL rates of talented and gifted participation at the secondary grades was barely half as for nonELs. Program leadership and evaluators should explore reasons for these findings and plan to appropriately bolster EL participation.
- **Continue efforts to reduce parent denials and students coded as “unservable.”** Although parent denials generally scored on par with all ELs on TELPAS, achievement outcomes for parent denials mostly lagged those of all ELs and nonELs. Efforts should continue to educate more parents about the benefits of program participation. Department staff members also noted efforts to discourage using the “unservable” code to ensure all students are appropriately served. Both efforts could support favorable outcomes for more students in the district.
- **Continue focus on transition years.** Although an issue not unique to ELs, efforts to explore reasons

for the dip in STAAR achievement in grade six should be further examined, along with results for other transitional years. Program leadership should continue to watch these trends carefully and devise ways to mitigate these backslides.

- **Determine weakest areas of English proficiency for enhanced focus.** TELPAS listening, speaking, reading, and writing data should be examined in greater depth to develop plans to target the weakest areas. Efforts could further improve the rates of students progressing at least one level a year, potentially leading to narrower gaps with statewide results at the highest English proficiency levels. These efforts could also help to determine why regression rates were higher than progression rates for students in sheltered classrooms.
- **Continue efforts to increase awareness of ELSPED identification and needs.** Although a 21 percent increase in the number of district ELSPED students may indicate greater districtwide awareness of the need to identify ELSPED students, survey results suggested general education teachers were least perceived to be aware of ELSPED policies, and a higher proportion of teachers than administrators and CICs reported that they lacked enough knowledge to rate the priority or frequency of Admission, Review, and Dismissal/LPAC collaboration. In addition, program leaders mentioned ELSPED-related teacher misperceptions and low turnout at ELSPED-related professional development sessions as challenge. Program leadership should continue efforts to increase districtwide awareness of ELSPED policies.
- **Explore reasons for low ELSPED differentiation ratings in the reading and social studies curricula.** From 45 to 74 percent of survey respondents familiar with the new curricula did not highly rate ELSPED differentiation in the R/LA and social studies curricula. Program leadership should explore whether these ratings were low because of misperceptions or lack of training, or if the ratings reflect that more efforts are needed to further differentiate the curriculum for ELSPED students.

Reference

Ledezma, L. (2018) 2017-18 Evaluation of the Bilingual/ESL Program. Dallas, TX: Dallas Independent School District.

An electronic version of this report can be found at www.dallasisd.org/Page/888. For more information, please contact Program Evaluation at evaluation@dallasisd.org.

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