

2018-19 Evaluation of Refugee Support Services

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At-a-Glance

The Dallas Independent School District's (Dallas ISD) Refugee Support 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 Support Services is a division under Youth and Family Centers of Dallas ISD and was first implemented in Dallas ISD in 1999.

The Dallas ISD Refugee Support Services offerings include the following:

- translation and interpretation services for school-related purposes,
- tutoring programs – individual and small group instructional support,
- a summer 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 receive 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 represent those served by the program who fall into these categories.

Purpose and Methods

The purpose of this evaluation was to describe the activities and services that the program provided to refugee students and their parents. Data were obtained from the Refugee Support Services program manager. The *State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR)* and *STAAR End of Course (EOC)* data were merged with the district demographic data. Frequency and crosstab analyses were computed.

Funding

In 2018-19, the Refugee Support Services Program received \$126,579 through Title I, which was an increase from \$112,957 received through Title I in 2017-18.

In-Service Student Characteristics

After removing duplicates and invalid student identification numbers, the refugee student datafile included 278 students. During the 2018-19 school year, 278 in-service refugee students received instructional support and transitional support services through Refugee Support Services by May 30, 2019. In-service students included first year refugee students enrolled in Dallas ISD. Table 1 shows characteristics of in-service refugee students.

Table 1: Characteristics of Served Refugee Students (N=278)

	N	%
Gender		
Male	125	45.0
Female	153	55.0
Ethnicity		
African American	125	45.0
Hispanic	3	1.1
Asian	117	42.1
Other	33	11.9
Special Groups		
Economically Disadvantaged	271	97.5
At Risk	223	80.2
English Learners	274	98.6
Special Education	7	2.5

Source: Refugee student data dated June 17, 2019. District demographic data file dated May 20, 2019.

Note: An overlap occurs among special groups. Percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

Served Students by Campus

Refugee students were enrolled at 15 Dallas ISD schools. Tasby Middle School (MS), Conrad High School (HS), McShan Elementary School (ES), and Truett ES accounted for 235 (84.6%) of the refugee students. Table 2 shows data for the ten schools with the most refugee students.

Table 2: 2018-19 In-Service Refugee Students by Campus (Top 10)

Campus	N	%
Tasby MS	90	32.4
Conrad HS	65	23.4
McShan ES	50	18.0
Truett ES	30	10.8
Skyline HS	11	4.0
Lowe ES	7	2.5
Adams, B. HS	6	2.2

Table continues

Table (continued)

Campus	N	%
Hexter ES	6	2.2
Hill MS	3	1.1
Hotchkiss ES	3	1.1
Others	7	2.5
Total	278	100.2

Source: District refugee student data dated June 17, 2019. District demographic data file dated May 20, 2019.

Note: HS=high school. MS=middle school. ES=elementary school. The category "Others" included Lang MS (N=2), Gill ES (N=2), White HS (N=1), Rusk MS (N=1), and Kramer ES (N=1). Percentages do not add up to 100 due to rounding.

Served Students by Grade

Refugee students were enrolled in prekindergarten through grade 12. Refugee students in grades six and eight (N=35, respectively) constituted the largest group of students served, followed by those in grade nine (N=34) and grade 10 (N=31) (Table 3).

Table 3: 2018-19 In-Service Refugee Students by Grade (N=278)

Grade	N	%
Kindergarten	3	1.1
1	19	6.8
2	10	3.6
3	15	5.4
4	23	8.3
5	29	10.4
6	35	12.6
7	26	9.4
8	35	12.6
9	34	12.2
10	31	11.2
11	16	5.8
12	2	0.7
Total	278	100.1

Source: Refugee student data dated June 17, 2019. District demographic data file dated May 20, 2019.

Note: Percentages do not add up to 100 due to rounding.

Program Activities and Services

Professional Development

Refugee Support Services offered professional development opportunities throughout the 2018-19 school year to Dallas ISD staff. Topics included cultural awareness, the refugee resettlement process, refugee student support services, and instructional objectives. Professional development sessions were offered on 10 dates from October 2018 through May 2019 at Sam Tasby MS, Bryan Adams HS, Truett ES, McShan ES, Skyline HS, Family and Community Engagement Department, and online (webinar). A total of 131 school

staff members (principals, teachers, counselors, and other staff) received professional development in 2018-19.

Collaboration Efforts

Like past years, Refugee Support Services collaborated both with departments within Dallas ISD and with external agencies. Internal (district) departments included the Bilingual Services Department, the Department of Family and Community Engagement, the World Languages Department, and various other departments across the district. Refugee Support Services engaged with a total of 16 different external agencies and participated in a total of 33 meetings or professional activities. External agencies included: Dallas Area Refugee Forum (DARF), International Rescue Committee (IRC), and Vickery Community Action Team (VCAT).

Type of Support Provided

Services provided to parents included school orientation sessions and provision of basic school supplies such as uniforms and dictionaries. Program staff also acted as a liaison whenever schools needed to contact parents of refugee students. A total of 72 refugee parents or guardians attended school orientation sessions and 70 participated in parent teacher conferences between October 2018 and May 2019.

Summer Program

The 2019 summer program was for elementary school students (grades prekindergarten through 5). The program was held at Sam Tasby Middle School from June 3 through June 27, 2019, and it focused on literacy, language, mathematics, science, and social studies based on state standards. The program provided thematic learning, cultural lessons, and field trips (Dallas Zoo and Dallas Symphony Orchestra).

A total of 125 students from four different schools enrolled in the summer program including McShan (N=83), Jack Lowe (N=35), Jill Stone (N=5), and Hotchkiss (N=2). Participants from grade four (N=36) and grade three (N=26) comprised the largest groups, followed by grade one and grade five (N=20, respectively) (Table 4).

Table 4: 2018-19 Summer Program Participants by Grade

Grade	N	%
Prekindergarten	1	0.8
Kindergarten	5	4.0
1	20	16.0
2	17	13.6
3	26	20.8
4	36	28.8
5	20	16.0
Total	125	100.0

Source: Refugee student data dated July 8, 2019. District demographic data file dated May 20, 2019.

Note: The summer program was offered to elementary students only.

Student Outcomes

Attendance Rate

Of the 278 served refugee students, attendance data were available for 255 students who enrolled during 2018-19 school year. The average attendance rate for served refugee students was 95 percent, the same as the district overall.

STAAR and STAAR EOC Results

Out of 163 refugee students, 156 took the STAAR reading test in grades three through eight and 18.6 percent were at the Approaches+ Level¹ (71.6% for district overall). One hundred fifty-one took the STAAR mathematics test and 39.7 percent were at the Approaches+ Level (78.4% for district overall) (Table 5).

Table 5: Percentage of Served Refugee Students at Approaches+ Level for 2018-19 STAAR Reading and Mathematics

Grade	Reading		Mathematics	
	N	%	N	%
3	12	25.0	12	16.7
4	21	38.1	21	57.1
5	29	27.6	29	41.4
6	35	5.7	34	29.4
7	26	11.5	25	24.0
8	33	15.2	30	60.0
All	156	18.6	151	39.7

Source: District STAAR data file dated June 13, 2019. District demographic data file dated May 20, 2019.

Note: These students were excluded in district's accountability system since this was their first year in U.S. schools. Approaches+=Approaches Grade Level or Above.

Out of 83 refugee students from grades nine through 12, 45 students took the STAAR EOC English I test and 17.8 percent were at the Approaches+ Level (54.0% for district overall). Forty-six took the English II test and

10.9 percent were at the Approaches+ Level (58.2% for district overall). Thirty-seven students took the Algebra I test and 75.7 percent were at the Approaches+ Level (78.6% for district overall). Table 6 shows STAAR EOC results by subject and grade.

Table 6: Percentage of Served Refugee Students at Approaches+ Level for 2018-19 STAAR EOC English I, English II, and Algebra I

Grade	N	%
English I		
9-12 Combined	45	17.8
English II		
9-12 Combined	46	10.9
Algebra I		
9-12 Combined	37	75.7

Source: District STAAR EOC data file dated June 4, 2019. District demographic data file dated May 20, 2019.

Note: These students were excluded in district's accountability system since this was their first year in U.S. schools.

Recommendations

- **Continue to collaborate with internal and external agencies to support refugee students and their families.** Those collaborations provided much needed support. Many of the refugee students and families incurred great trauma when forced to flee their home country and settle in a different cultural, social, and economic system.
- **Encourage refugee students and their families to take advantage of available resources.** Not all families took advantage of the valuable resources and support offered. Attendance data indicated that only 72 parents attended the school orientation and 70 parents participated in parent teacher conference.

Reference

Zhang, J. (2018). 2017-18 Evaluation of Refugee Support Services. 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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¹ Approaches+=Approaches Grade Level or Above.