

Department of Evaluation and Assessment

Executive Summary Reports 2019-2020



Department of Evaluation and Assessment

Executive Summary Reports December 2020

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ASSESSMENT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Assessment coordinates the training, administration, campus support, distribution, and processing of all state-, national-, and district-mandated criterion- and norm-referenced testing in the Dallas ISD. These tests include *State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR)*, *STAAR Spanish*, *STAAR Alt 2*, *STAAR End-of-Course (EOC)*, *Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS)*, *TerraNova/SUPERA*, *IDEA Language Proficiency Tests (IPT)*, *LAS Links*, and *Assessment of Course Performance (ACP)*. In addition, Assessment supports magnet school testing, *National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)*, *Texas Student Initiative Assessment (TSIA)*, and the administration of *Credit by Examination (CBE)* and *Credit by Examination for Acceleration (CEFA)*.

Assessment is also responsible for assisting with Test Security by training Campus Testing Coordinators (CTCs), monitoring test administrations, and reporting testing irregularities to the proper authorities (Texas Education Agency [TEA], Human Capital Management, and Professional Standards Office).

Testing

State-Mandated Assessments

TEA requires students to be assessed in grades 3-12 to determine academic skill levels and progress made during a given school year. Grades 3-8 are to be administered the *STAAR*, while students in grades 9-12 are to be administered the *STAAR EOC*.

At grades 5 and 8, students have three opportunities to test: April, May, and June. During each administration, students are assessed in reading and math in either English and Spanish.

At grades 9-12, students have three scheduled opportunities to test (December, Spring, and July). Students are assessed in English I, English II, Algebra I, Biology, and U.S. History.

The *STAAR* has a paper version and an online version. In addition, there are options to allow online accommodations (embedded supports). The state is moving toward online testing in the future. The *STAAR Alt 2* version of the test is administered via paper test while student responses are entered online.

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), previously referred to as No Child Left Behind (NCLB), mandates an annual English-language proficiency assessment of English

learners (ELs) in grades K-12 in four language domains {reading (online), writing, speaking (online), and listening(online)}. TEA developed the *TELPAS* to assess ELs in these domains.

Spring testing was interrupted after COVID closedown of the district in person learning March 19, 2020. Spring *STAAR* and *STAAR-Alt* Grades 3-8 Reading, Math, Writing, Social Studies and Science tests were not administered in April, May or June. Due to COVID shutdown, only a portion of *TELPAS* was administered, as the window extended through April 7th, after the COVID shutdown, so there are incomplete *TELPAS* subtests.

The following presents an overview of the number of state mandated tests administered in the Dallas ISD until COVID shutdown:

- A total of 10,011 *STAAR EOC* tests were administered in December: the highest numbers were in English I (4502) and English II (3122), the lowest retest counts were in U.S. History (444), while the Algebra I (1,009) and Biology (1,111) counts fell between the highest and lowest counts. 2493 were tested online, while 7695 on paper-based tests.
- 36,532 students were rated on *TELPAS* before COVID shutdown, compared to the previous year with a total of 60,740 students were rated on the *TELPAS* in 2018-2019. A total of 554 *TELPAS-Alt* were administered, while a total of 522 were administered 2018-2019.

Terra Nova Third Edition Norm Referenced Assessments at Grades K-2

The *TerraNova* is an English-language standardized norm-referenced achievement test. The *SUPERA* is the Spanish version of the test.

Spring testing was interrupted after COVID shutdown of the district in person learning March 19, 2020. *TerraNova/SUPERA* were not administered due to virtual learning.

IDEA Language Proficiency Tests and LAS Links Assessments of EL Students

School districts are required to identify EL students in grades PreK-12 using a home language survey. Students identified as having a language other than English were assessed with the *IDEA Language Proficiency Tests (IPT)*. Students in grades PreK-12 who were new to the district and spoke a language other than English were assessed

with the *IPT* and placed in an appropriate instructional program within four weeks of enrollment. Students in grades 2-12 who scored equal or greater than four on the *IPT* were assessed with *TerraNova*. In the Fall, TEA also transitioned to mandating every district in the state to using the same instrument to assess ELs, *LAS Links* and *PreLAS*.

A total of 10,462 *IPT* tests were administered in early Fall before transitioning to *LAS Links* (Grades 1-12) and *PreLAS Links* (Grades EC, PK3, PK4, KN). In addition, 277 *TerraNova* were administered before the transition to *LAS Links/PreLAS Links*. A total of 1591 *LAS Links* were administered, while a total of 1771 *PreLAS Links* was administered (484 English, 1277 Spanish). COVID shutdown March 19th interrupted EL testing for the year.

Magnet School Application Process and Assessments.

State and National Assessments administered the *TerraNova/SUPERA* to students who did not have norm- or criterion-referenced achievement test scores from the previous school year as part of the process of applying to the Dallas ISD magnet program. Specifically, these services were provided to students who were applying for admission to the district's vanguards, academies, and magnet high schools who met the following criteria: (a) currently enrolled in private, parochial, or other schools (grades K-11), and (b) currently enrolled Dallas ISD students (grades 1-2 and 9-11). Out-of-district students were charged \$100, while in-district students tested free. A total of 131 students were tested with for admission into the magnet program. 121 students were tested with *TerraNova*, and 10 were tested with *SUPERA*; while in 2018-2019 a total of 168 students were tested with *TerraNova*.

The *Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test (NNAT)* is an instrument used by selected district vanguards, academies, and magnet high schools for additional screening of applicants. It is a nonverbal test of general ability commonly used to identify gifted children. Assessment provided *NNAT* test booklets, answer documents, and score results for campus officials. A total of 1,146 students were tested, while in 2018-2019 a total of 1,119 students were tested.

The *Math Pre-Assessment* was developed by the Region IV Education Service Center. It is used, along with other assessments, to determine whether students fulfill the requirements needed for entry into five of the vanguards and academies. Assessment printed the test booklets, answer documents, and scored the exams. A total of 810 students were tested compared to the previous year with 1,269.

Early Collegiate Academy and Comprehensive High School Grade 12 Texas Success Initiative Assessment (TSIA) Testing

Early Collegiate high schools continued testing TSIA this year. A total of 2,175 tests were administered among 22 campuses through March 9, 2020 when COVID shutdown occurred, while in 2018-2019 a total 2,016 tests were administered.

Grade 12 students from the comprehensive high schools were scheduled to be added to TSIA testing in late Spring. COVID shutdown March 19th interrupted, so 12th grade students were not tested.

Credit by Examination for Acceleration and Credit by Exam with Assessment Course Performance

Tests used for *Credit by Examination for Acceleration (CEFA)* were developed by Texas Tech University to assess mastery of the TEKS for students in grades 1-12 (EHDB LOCAL & EHDC LOCAL). *CEFA* is a means by which high-achieving elementary students may advance one grade level by passing all four tests in the core areas (language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies), while middle and high school students may be awarded course credit. The *TerraNova* was used to determine acceleration for students in kindergarten. *Languages Other Than English (LOTE)* tests were transitioned into *CEFA* testing for World Languages for high school students with the collaboration with the World Languages Department. The *OPI (Oral Proficiency Interview)* is an evaluation of uncommon languages via telephone conversation with an evaluator; *AAPPL (ACTFL Assessment of Performance Toward Proficiency in Languages)* and *LTI (Language Testing International)* are online tests; *AVANT*, *AVANT STAMP (Standards-based Measurement of Proficiency)*, and *AVANT World Speak* are online tests also.

Students had to meet the following passing standards to accelerate or gain course credit:

- Kindergarten students had to score at or above the 70th percentile on the *TerraNova* Reading and Math test to advance to the next grade.
- Elementary school students had to achieve a mastery score of 80 percent in all four core areas (language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies) to advance to the next grade.
- Middle and high school students had to achieve a mastery score of 80 percent in each subject area tested to receive course credit.
- Middle and high school students with prior instruction in the course taken had to achieve a mastery score of 70 percent in each subject area tested to receive course credit.
- *LOTE* tests grant credit based on student proficiency level to award up to two years credit for language.

The following results were observed:

- Six students were tested for acceleration at the

kindergarten level with 3 scoring at or above the 70th percentile.

- At the elementary level, 14 students were tested for acceleration with 2 students scoring 80% mastery in all core areas (reading, math, science, and social studies).
- At the middle and high school levels, 8 tests for course credit were administered with 2 students passing with 70% mastery; and 7 tests with prior instruction were administered with 1 student passing with 70% mastery.
- The number of tests administered for the LOTE were: STAMP (209), AVANT World Speak (20), and ALIRA (1).

Campus Test Coordinator Trainings

State and National Assessments provided Fall through March trainings (8 monthly multiple days sessions) to Campus Test Coordinators (CTC), then the COVID shutdown ceased Spring *TerraNova/ACP* trainings since testing was discontinued for the Spring semester. Surveys were not administered since the goal was to have Test Coordinators complete surveys at the end of testing at Spring Quality Control to cover the complete process of training, preparation, testing and quality control for the survey information, but due to COVID shutdown, testing/quality control nor the surveys occurred in the Spring semester.

Role of Districtwide Testing Coordinators

Six Districtwide Testing Coordinators were assigned various feeder patterns to train, assist, and support CTCs with testing activities in association with the district's testing calendar. These activities included:

- assisting with training CTCs before each test administration on test procedures, test security, online testing setup, online test administration and completion, and quality control of paper and online test materials;
- providing functional planning expertise to campus and district personnel required to meet state testing timelines and district administered local testing timelines outlined on the district's testing calendar;
- working collaboratively with various departments including, but not limited to, special education, counseling, ESL/bilingual, RTI, 504 and technology to ensure coherence and alignment of local, state, and national assessments;
- presenting best practices at the Texas Assessment Conference;
- assisting with summarizing testing activities and operations in interim reports, technical reports, and final reports; and

- online managing databases (delivery ticket, CTC lists, Out Of School *TEAMS/TAAS/TAKS*, online order forms, meetings), score code corrections, scanning booklets to ensure the return of all secure test booklets, uploading users to state online databases, fixing rejects from uploads of state precode files, working on the out of school testing database, working with computer analyst for list of data needed for uploads to state sites; and
- making recommendations for improvement of operations for each future school year.

Testing Irregularities and Test Monitoring

Testing irregularities fell into two distinct categories, procedural and serious. As COVID shutdown and no Spring *STAAR/TerraNova/ACP* testing occurred, there were minimal irregularities. A total of 97 testing irregularities were reported to the Office of Test Security for Fall 2019.

Our department sent monitors for December 2019 EOC Retest. A total of 20 monitors were trained to monitor test administration procedures at 20 high schools for December EOC Retest. Due to COVID shutdown spring monitoring did not take place since *STAAR* testing did not occur.

Assessment of Course Performance Return Rate

Fall ACP was the only semester testing completed due to COVID shutdown in the Spring semester. There was only a sampling completed for December 2019 return of ACP booklets. A random sample of 13 schools: 4 elementary, 5 middle, and 4 high schools from across the district's feeder patterns were selected for the fall and spring ACP booklet return rate scanning with .02% not being returned. From the fall 2019 testing session, a total of 5,434 boxes were sent out to schools.

Service Center Shipping and Scanning

The Service Center acts as the main distribution hub for all district testing. From the Fall 2019 testing session, a total of 5,434 boxes shipped from the Service Center to the schools. In addition, all grade 3-12 ACP answer sheets were scanned at the Service Center as a part of the processing of scores. A total of 391,215 were scanned and processed.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1. All campuses should strive to maintain the same test coordinator for the entire year and succeeding years.

Recommendation 2. This will ensure that the test coordinators have a building knowledge base on successful

techniques that they have learned at the beginning of the year trainings, as well as trainings throughout the year.

EA20-210-4

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

For the 2019-20 school year, Assessment, in conjunction with the Department of Teaching and Learning (T&L), developed the *Assessments of Course Performance* (ACPs) as standardized final semester tests in grades one through 12 for Mathematics, Reading/Language Arts, Science, Social Studies, English as a Second Language (ESL), World Languages, Instructional Technology, Health, Physical Education and Visual & Performing Arts courses. Overall, 131 tests were developed and six were trans adapted in Spanish. With eight single-semester tests and four high school tests also used for middle school students, a total of 149 ACPs were ready to be administered the 2019–20 school year. Due to COVID 19 and remote learning, only first semester ACPs, a total of 103, were administered.

ACP Development

Prior to the test development phase, T&L provided outlines, called blueprints, detailing the Student Expectations (SEs) that required assessment items. In addition, T&L provided item blueprints, which directed item writers to measure specific aspects of SEs with special content to ensure item validity.

The processes of item writing, editing, item analyses, and test approvals were managed through the Office of Test Development. Tests comprised approximately three-quarters of the well-performing items from the previous year and one-quarter new or revised items. Item writing during the summer generally focused on expanding and revising test item banks. All test blueprints were published on MyData Portal and blueprints, formula charts and sets of example items were published on the Assessment website at the beginning of the school year. All tests were aligned to the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) using T&L's curriculum guides developed by each content area. After administration began, alignment pages were published on the Assessment website, which showed the specific aspect of the SE that each item measured.

Example Item Sets for ACPs

Assessment developed a representative set of items for each ACP, or Example Items, for teachers to gain an understanding of the format and rigor of the ACPs. At the beginning of each semester, Example Items were available for download and teachers could use these items, along with the test blueprint, as guides for preparing students for the ACP. They were intended to provide an understanding of some possible approaches to assessing the given SE. Each Example Item had the correct answer and content SE listed in the key.

Valid and Reliable Tests

The development of valid and reliable assessments is crucial for the evaluation of student knowledge and mastery of instructional material. Therefore, it is essential that the data provided by tests be valid and reliable. Content validity was demonstrated by using item and test blueprints, developed with T&L, and alignment pages, ensuring each item was aligned with the curriculum. Cronbach's alpha, a coefficient used to provide a general indicator of consistency across items within a test, ranges from 0 to 1, with 0 indicating no test reliability. Coefficients approaching 1 indicate high test reliability. Of the 103 ACPs administered, 102 ACPs had a reliability of .70 or higher, of which 67 were equal to or above .80. One ACP had a reliability below .60.

Curriculum Alignment

The ACPs were designed as measures of the taught curriculum. Although every SE in the curriculum was not measured, significant SEs were identified and included in the test design process. Teachers were surveyed only during first semester administration and asked to indicate the extent to which the ACPs successfully matched what was taught. The results are presented in Table 1. Almost 90 percent of the teachers reported courses and ACPs had a 75 percent to 100 percent match. Given that there were more SEs taught than can be measured on a 90 minute test, this level of matching was acceptable.

Table 1: ACPs Aligned with Taught Curriculum

Question	Response Category	Sem 1 (%)	Sem 2 (%)
To what extent does the ACP successfully assess (match) what is taught in this course?	100% match	36.2	--
	About 75% match	53.2	--
	About 50% match	8.7	--
	About 25% match	1.5	--
	No match at all	0.5	--

Scaled Scores

All 2019–20 ACPs used scaled scores to report student achievement. Tests aim to have at least 55 percent correct set to equal a scale score of 70, or passing. However, some tests have lower or higher passing percentages based on test difficulty. The 55 percent criterion was lowered on 59 and raised on 28 of 103 first semester tests. Maintaining the 55 percent standard would have led to unreasonably high or low passing rates.

Semester One Results

Table 2 reports semester one results for the 103 ACPs administered, including the mean ACP scale score, standard deviation, and the percentage of students passing the ACP. The mean scale score ranged from a low of 67.6 (Grade 3 Spanish Math) to a high of 87.3 (Kindergarten Reading), while the median scale score was 74.4. The percent of students passing the ACPs ranged from 39.0 percent (Reading LA 8 for ESL) to 91.9 percent (Kindergarten Spanish Reading).

Table 2: Semester One ACP Results

ACP	Mean Scale Score	Scale Score SD	Percent Passing
Grade 1 Math	81.3	15.1	78.8
Grade 1 Spanish Math	73.4	16.2	65.5
Grade 2 Math	79.7	15.4	76.5
Grade 2 Spanish Math	66.6	14.3	44.2
Grade 3 Math	76.5	15.0	70.6
Grade 3 Spanish Math	70.1	14.8	56.5
Grade 4 Math	77.9	16.6	71.7
Grade 4 Spanish Math	69.1	15.6	50.0
Grade 5 Math	80.8	15.6	78.3
Grade 5 Spanish Math	71.8	15.3	55.9
Math 6	74.6	9.6	68.6
Math 6 Pre-AP	77.2	12.9	72.9
Math 7	69.7	11.5	52.0
Math 7 Pre-AP	76.6	13.7	69.7
Math 8	72.9	13.4	60.1
Algebra I Pre-AP	78.6	13.8	76.3
Algebra I	75.6	14.7	68.9
Geometry	71.3	9.5	52.5
Geometry Pre-AP	75.9	12.5	68.1
Algebra II	71.1	12.0	58.1
Algebra II Pre-AP	74.6	11.0	68.7
Pre-Calculus	69.5	12.8	51.1
Pre-Calculus Pre-AP	75.9	12.8	69.8
Algebraic Reasoning	72.0	14.6	56.7
Grade 1 Reading	86.2	11.5	91.2
Grade 1 Spanish Reading	87.1	12.8	89.5
Grade 2 Reading	77.8	14.4	72.1
Grade 2 Spanish Reading	78.7	15.4	75.0
Grade 3 Reading	73.3	12.9	62.6
Grade 3 Spanish Reading	72.2	12.7	57.7
Grade 4 Reading	74.5	10.4	68.9
Grade 4 Spanish Reading	79.7	12.7	80.7
Grade 4 Language Arts	74.7	15.8	68.2
Grade 4 Spanish Lang Arts	74.8	15.7	68.6
Grade 5 Reading	77.3	9.0	79.5
Grade 5 Spanish Reading	78.8	12.8	79.8
Reading LA 6	71.9	9.6	58.0
Reading LA 6 Pre-AP	77.3	10.0	81.2
Reading LA 7	74.9	9.5	68.5
Reading LA 7 Pre-AP	78.1	9.4	83.1
Reading LA 8	73.3	9.2	67.6
Reading LA 8 Pre-AP	76.8	9.3	80.0
English I	70.0	12.5	53.2
English I Pre-AP	77.4	13.7	75.4
English II	73.3	11.1	62.4
English II Pre-AP	78.1	10.8	79.5
English III	71.7	10.5	59.1
English IV	74.3	9.7	70.1

table continues

Table 2 (continued)

ACP	Mean Scale Score	Scale Score SD	Percent Passing
Grade 5 Science	79.4	15.5	76.5
Grade 5 Spanish Science	78.1	14.1	73.2
Science 6	70.9	11.0	53.4
Science 6 Pre-AP	76.9	10.6	75.3
Science 7	73.3	15.7	62.8
Science 7 Pre-AP	80.4	10.3	84.8
Science 8	73.7	13.5	63.8
Physics 8	74.7	13.4	70.5
Astronomy 8	74.0	13.7	66.1
Biology	73.3	8.5	64.0
Biology Pre-AP	76.2	10.6	73.3
Chemistry	68.4	8.2	41.1
Chemistry Pre-AP	75.8	13.3	69.5
Physics	70.3	10.9	54.2
Physics Pre-AP	74.3	12.3	65.3
Environmental Systems	75.0	11.7	68.6
Astronomy	67.9	11.2	46.9
World Cultures 6	69.7	9.2	48.4
World Cultures 6 Pre-AP	76.2	10.3	74.8
Texas Studies 7	69.6	10.5	48.5
Texas Studies 7 Pre-AP	77.2	11.3	74.5
US Studies 8	71.4	10.0	53.0
US Studies 8 Pre-AP	77.3	10.3	77.2
World Geography	71.2	9.4	55.0
World Geography Pre-AP	76.2	11.0	75.2
World History	69.5	9.6	51.7
World History Pre-AP	76.4	9.6	76.6
US History	72.9	12.1	63.9
Government	71.5	10.5	59.4
Economics	76.0	10.8	74.4
Reading LA 6 ESL YR 1	69.2	8.4	41.0
Reading LA 6 ESL YR 2	68.7	8.4	39.3
Reading LA 7 ESL YR 1	67.7	7.0	32.9
Reading LA 7 ESL YR 2	69.6	8.5	41.9
Reading LA 8 ESL YR 1	70.6	9.1	49.6
Reading LA 8 ESL YR 2	68.5	11.7	41.1
English I ESOL Beg	68.1	10.3	38.9
English I ESOL Inter	68.7	8.9	41.0
English II ESOL Inter	71.5	10.5	48.6
Technology Applications	71.2	12.7	58.9
MS Health Education 6	74.8	12.3	69.6
MS Health Education 7	78.6	11.3	78.6
MS Health Education 8	77.0	11.8	76.6
HS Health Education	76.2	10.8	73.5
PE 6	76.0	9.7	76.5
PE 7 & 8	78.2	10.3	80.9
Studio Art I	78.3	10.3	77.9
MS Art I Studio	78.1	10.9	74.7
MS Varsity Band	73.0	10.1	58.1
HS Varsity Band	77.4	11.3	70.9
French I	74.6	11.6	69.2
French II	74.2	13.0	66.7
Spanish I	78.8	12.8	76.1
Spanish II	78.3	11.6	76.3
Spanish Heritage Spkr Fund	73.4	8.8	69.4

Semester Two Results

Students were taught remotely for the majority of semester two due to COVID-19. ACPs were not administered. Therefore, there are no semester two ACP results.

Course Grades

Scale score results were used in the calculation of the final semester grade for grades three through twelve. For grades one and two, *ACP* scores were not factored into final semester grades. For grades three through five, *ACP* scale score results accounted for 5 percent of the final semester grade. Middle school results accounted for 10 percent of the final semester grade, while high school *ACP* scale score results accounted for 15 percent of the final semester grade.

Summer School *ACPs*

Summer school classes were provided for remote learning for all students who did not pass courses during the school year. High school students enrolled in up to two courses and those who were instructed in Mathematics, Reading Language Arts (English), Science, Social Studies and Health were not required to take the respective *ACP* due to COVID-19 and remote learning.

EA20-220-4

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The background of the slide is composed of several overlapping triangles in various shades of blue, ranging from a very light, almost white blue to a dark navy blue. The triangles are arranged in a way that creates a dynamic, geometric pattern. The title text is centered over this background.

PROGRAM EVALUATION AND DATA ANALYSIS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Dallas Independent School District (Dallas ISD) supports high quality research and evaluation that addresses well-formed research and outcome questions of educational importance. At the same time, the district has moral and legal obligations that require oversight of research and evaluation activities that make use of district resources such as data, facilities, employee time, or access to students.

In order to conduct research or evaluations in the Dallas ISD, a proposal must be submitted and reviewed by the district's Research Review Board (RRB). The RRB is housed within the Department of Evaluation and Assessment and draws on the expertise of district researchers and program evaluators, as well as the professional knowledge of staff from the departments of Teaching and Learning, Student Services, School Leadership, and Legal Services, among others. The Office of Legal Services continues to assist with development of guidelines to ensure compliance with state and federal student privacy laws.

Proposals must demonstrate clear and direct educational value to the district, be minimally disruptive to the educational process, manifest a sound research methodology, and comply with current privacy laws. The potential direct benefit to Dallas ISD must outweigh demands on district resources, particularly staff and student time. Proposals submitted to evaluate district initiatives or partner services must also have a district sponsor.

Research Board Responsibilities

In addition to continuing to review the methodology of submitted proposals, the RRB has taken on a larger role in protecting the privacy of students and staff and ensuring compliance with state and federal law, coordinating external research with internal research and evaluation, avoiding unnecessary or redundant data collection, and monitoring the progress of approved research projects. Current RRB responsibilities are carried out by a six-member team, comprised of a coordinator and five evaluation researchers (including the chair) who review proposals submitted to the district.

During the 2019-20 school year, board members made several changes to refine the RRB website and online proposal process as well as published an updated *Guidelines for Conducting Research within the Dallas Independent School District*. The online research proposal application and modification request form were also updated to ensure that researchers comply with

Senate Bill 22. To ensure that the district is only receiving high quality research applications that are more broadly generalizable and applicable to the entire district, the RRB stopped accepting non-employee graduate research requests beginning June 1, 2019.

Board members have also teamed up with the IT department and Office of Legal Services to create a district wide data sharing policy. In addition, board members continue to collaborate with the Office of Legal Services, Procurement Services department, and Volunteer and Partnership Services department to streamline the review of third-party Memorandums of Understanding and partnership agreements that request access to student-level data. Furthermore, board members have cooperated with multiple internal Dallas ISD departments and external partners such as RAND Corporation, Westat Corporation, Southern Methodist University, and the University of Pittsburgh to assist in the successful completion of the Wallace Foundation Social Emotional Learning grant, Building Assets and Reducing Risks (BARR) Scale-Up grant, the Network School Improvement project, and the Dallas ISD West Dallas STEM school project.

Proposal Submission

Research applications and modification request materials must be submitted electronically. Research guidelines and application materials are available on the district's website at <http://www.dallasisd.org/Page/868>. Questions about the application process are submitted to research@dallasisd.org.

Researchers and evaluators must submit an application:

- If the research project involves collecting individual-level data from or about Dallas ISD students, staff, or parents (e.g., surveys, assessments, interviews, observations, focus groups, or other direct primary data-gathering methodologies), or
- If the project involves requesting an extract of individual-level data maintained by Dallas ISD on district databases, including student educational records or other district records.

Proposal Review

For studies taking place during the 2019-20 school year, between June 2019 and May 2020, 32 proposals and 37 modification requests were submitted (Table 1). During 2018-19, there were 55 proposals submitted.

Out of the 32 proposals submitted, the RRB approved 24 or 75.0 percent of proposed studies while rejecting 6.3 percent or two proposals. Researchers for the remaining six (18.8%) proposals withdrew their submission for various reasons. Out of the 24 approved proposals, nine or 37.5 percent were employee graduate research projects. Of the 37 modifications submitted, 34 or 91.9 percent were approved while three or 8.1 percent were rejected.

Table 1: 2019-20 Proposals and Modification Submissions

Status	N	%
Proposals		
Approved	24	75.0
Closed*	6	18.8
Rejected	2	6.3
Total	32	
Modifications		
Approved	34	91.9
Rejected	3	8.1
Total	37	

Source: Research Review Board database dated 06/01/2020.

Note: * = Proposals were withdrawn or closed due to various reasons. Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

There are several reasons why proposals were rejected. The list below includes some of the most common reasons.

- No clear and direct educational value to the district;
- Lack of compliance with state and federal laws such as the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA);
- Conflict between the study timeline and district testing windows;
- Too disruptive to campuses or central office;
- Too costly in terms of campus resources (e.g., time, personnel, supplies);
- Poor research design or lack of sufficient information about the study (e.g., program, population, research methods, etc.); and/or
- No district sponsor (applicable to some proposals).

Approved proposals can be grouped under three broad categories. The first category consists of district sponsored research projects which have the support of a department in the district because the department believes findings from these studies will inform the work of the department. The second category includes external studies that are not sponsored by a district department and include major state and national research projects and studies conducted by university researchers. The third category includes employee graduate research projects.

A list of current research studies taking place within Dallas ISD can be found on the RRB website (<https://www.dallasisd.org/Page/37481>).

Data Request

Research studies that require secondary data must have a completed Data Sharing Agreement (DSA). Researchers need to request a DSA template after the RRB has approved their research proposal. Schools or district staff cannot provide data to external researchers without prior approval from the RRB and Dallas ISD Legal department.

During 2019-20, nine new data sharing agreements were submitted by researchers with approved research studies. In addition, four data sharing agreements were submitted for renewal by researchers with approved, ongoing research studies. Data fulfillment associated with all active data sharing agreements decreased from 247 hours of staff time in 2018-19 to 206 hours of staff time in 2019-20.

RRB Expectations for 2020-21

The Dallas ISD RRB will continue to refine its processes and procedures during the 2020-21 school year. The RRB will also collaborate with the Teaching and Learning department, Volunteer and Partnership Services department, and Office of Legal Services to finalize and implement new district wide data sharing policies as well as facilitate the transition to virtual services and data collection with external researchers and partners.

REFERENCES

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Dallas Independent School District (ISD) Bilingual Education/English as a Second Language (BE/ESL) department 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, reclassification, and monitoring of ELs. Finally, the department collaborates with the Special Education (SPED) Department to provide services for ELs who require SPED services (ELSPED). The purpose of this report was to evaluate the effectiveness of programs for district ELs. Funding in 2019-20 totaled \$6,622,785, a decrease from \$7,442,245 in 2018-19.

STUDENTS, PROGRAMS, AND SERVICES

The district enrolled 70,004 ELs (46% of district) and 7,859 reclassified ELs (6,204 monitored) in 2019-20. From 2018-19, EL enrollment increased by 585 students, and the number of reclassified students decreased by 882 students. The highest rates of 2019-20 ELs were enrolled for at least the seventh year (39%) and in PK to grade two (32%). 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 (23%) and 11 (23%). Table 1 shows the number of students in each program/classification in 2019-20.

Table 1: 2019-20 District Enrollment by Bilingual Education/ESL Program/Classification

Program/Classification	Students N	District %
District	152,963	100.0
All EL	70,004	45.8
All nonEL	82,959	54.2
Monitored	6,204	4.1
EL in OWDL	31,809	20.8
EL in TWDL	3,996	2.6
nonEL in TWDL	2,382	1.6
EL in SECDL	474	0.3
nonEL in SECDL	156	0.1
ESL	5,546	3.6
Sheltered	21,271	13.9
Immigrant	8,862	5.8
ELSPED	5,334	3.5
Parent Denials	4,080	2.7
Unservable	894	0.6

Source: District PEIMS snapshot demographic data file dated 11/01/19.

Note: Students may be included in more than one category. OWDL = one-way dual language. TWDL = two-way dual language. SECDL = secondary dual language. PEIMS = Public Education Information Management System.

The Dallas ISD offers a wide variety of programs and services for ELs. First, the district provides three DL programs: One-Way DL (OWDL; PK to grade 5/6; 140 campuses), Two-Way DL (TWDL; PK to grade 5/6; 65 campuses), and Secondary DL (SECDL; grades 6 to 12; 7 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 (6% in 2019-20), 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 (ELSPED), the campus Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) committee and Language Proficient Assessment Committee (LPAC) must collaborate to ensure issues related to both the disability and language proficiency are carefully considered. In 2019-20, an important focus was improving student identification and service provision to ELSPED students. For evaluation of programs serving immigrant students and ELSPED students, see Voss (2020) and Barton and Voss (2020).

EVALUATION QUESTIONS/OUTCOMES

What were the characteristics of BE/ESL teachers?

In 2019-20, the district employed 2,652 DL or ESL teachers in elementary schools and 98 DL or ESL teachers in secondary schools. With the exception of elementary-level DL teachers (68%), rates of ESL and DL teachers at Teacher Excellence Initiative effectiveness levels Proficient I or above (range: 44% to 58%) lagged district rates (65%).

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). The number of requested ESL waivers decreased 14 percent since 2018-19 (2018-19: 241; 2019-20: 207).

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

DL/ESL Survey

Key findings from the 2019-20 DL ($N = 106$; 67% response rate) and ESL ($N = 74$; 59% response rate) staff member survey include 1) DL and ESL staff members who worked with an instructional specialist in 2019-20 generally said they were provided with beneficial supports, resources, and PD during in-school learning, and 2) during at-home learning, half of DL staff members reported receiving a little less or a great deal less help than during in-school learning, as opposed to 23 percent of ESL staff members.

Sheltered Survey

Of the 526 surveyed R/LA teachers (55% response rate) who had at least one sheltered student in their classroom(s) in 2019-20, 17 percent reported having no sheltered students in their classrooms. Of those who indicated that they implemented sheltered instruction, the highest percentages of respondents indicated implementing it daily (68%) or weekly (27%).

What activities did the BE/ESL department implement in order to reach yearly goals?

The BE/ESL Department aimed to reach two primary goals for 2019-20. The first goal was to increase the percentage of ELs meeting the Approaches Grade Level or Above (Approaches+) performance standard on *State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR)* in 2019-20 by three percentage points over the rate of students meeting Approaches+ in 2018-19. The second goal was to increase the percentage of ELs who improved their *Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS)* composite level by one from 2018-19 to 2019-20 by three percentage points over the percentage progressed by one level from 2017-18 to 2018-19. Although the BE/ESL Department worked toward these goals throughout the school year, the goal relating to STAAR was not assessed in this evaluation because it was cancelled as part of the statewide response to the COVID-19 pandemic. In order to reach these two primary goals, the BE/ESL Department planned to implement six activities. Planned activities included 1) supplemental professional development, 2) supplemental tutoring, 3) summer enrichment programs, 4) engagement in parent workshops and trainings, 5) supplemental resources, and 6) the Dual Language Cadre and ESL Leadership Cohort. Beyond the planned activities, the BE/ESL Department also implemented unplanned activities in response to the COVID-19-related district change to at-home learning after spring break.

Key 2019-20 findings regarding the activities include 1) 7,404 teachers attended PD (DL: 3,428 ESL: 3,976) and

197 administrators attended PD (DL: 58; ESL: 139); 2) 794 students were tutored in 2019-20 through the Biliteracy Camp and Title III tutoring efforts; 3) 328 students attended the PK/Bilingual Program, 616 attended Science Discovery Camp, and 111 attended the Teaching and Coaching in Accelerated Language Learning program; 4) 99 percent of parents indicated that attending workshops made them want to be more involved in their children's education, exceeding the BE/ESL Department's goal of 90 percent; 5) the BE/ESL department distributed resources such as books, parent guides, dictionaries, and manipulatives; and 6) 20 teachers were added to the DL CADRE (97 total) and 7 teachers were added to the ESL Leadership Cohort (10 total). Also, in response to COVID-19 at-home learning needs, the BE/ESL Department provided supports such as translated and transadapted online content, weekly activities for students, online resources, and webinars and google classroom support meetings for teachers.

What were the academic outcomes for EL students during the 2019-20 school year?

Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS)

Because of the transition to at-home learning and the resulting incomplete testing in all domains required to calculate composite scores for all students, spring 2020 composite TELPAS results represent 62.4 percent of test takers.¹ Therefore, the 2019-20 results, trends from previous years, and goal attainment should be reviewed with caution and are provided for informational purposes only. Trends in progression rates for each EL grouping are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: 2019 to 2020 TELPAS English Proficiency Progression Rate Trends by Program/Classification

Program/Classification	Progressed		
	2019 %	2020 %	1 Yr Δ %pts
All ELs	23.8	32.0	8.2
OWDL	34.5	38.0	3.5
TWDL	34.8	36.7	1.9
SECDL	10.6	18.8	8.2
ESL	22.4	33.4	11.0
Sheltered	10.6	18.7	8.1
Parent Denials	19.5	28.7	9.2

Source: District TELPAS data files dated 05/24/19 (2019) and 07/19/20 (2020). District PEIMS snapshot demographic data file dated 11/01/19.

Note: 2019 to 2020 level movement data include students who earned a TELPAS proficiency rating and were enrolled on the PEIMS snapshot dates in both years. Progressed = Student moved up at least one level of English proficiency from the previous year. Results are not included for students who took TELPAS-Alternate.

ELs Overall

Composite ratings for ELs at all grade levels clustered at intermediate and advanced level of English proficiency. Over half of ELs remained at the same proficiency level in

¹ Of students who were assessed on at least one domain, the percentages of test takers on each spring 2020 TELPAS domain were as follows: Listening: 94%; Speaking: 94%; Reading: 95.5%; and Writing: 67.5%.

2020 as in 2019, and ELs in grades one to five progressed at higher rates and regressed at lower rates than those in the middle and upper grades. One-year trends in English proficiency rates varied, and 2020 ELs overall exceeded the BE/ESL Department goal of a one-year three percentage point increase in the rate of students who progressed at least one *TELPAS* proficiency level from 2019 (Table 2).

With respect to domains, proficiency rates in listening were generally 15 to 20 percent higher at the advanced and advanced high levels than for speaking and reading. ELs progressed at higher rates across all domains than they regressed in 2020; progressed at a higher rate in 2020 than in 2019 on the listening, speaking, and reading domains; and regressed at lower rates on all domains.

Dual Language

ELs in OWDL and TWDL programs performed similarly in 2020, with the highest rates of students proficient at the intermediate or advanced levels. Over a third of students in both programs progressed to a higher proficiency level from 2019 to 2020, and rates of OWDL and TWDL students who remained the same or regressed differed by two percentage points or less. The highest rates of 2020 SECDL ELs scored at the advanced and advanced high levels. Like students in OWDL and TWDL, over half of 2020 ELs in SECDL remained at the same proficiency level as the previous year, but a higher rate of SECDL students regressed (24%) than progressed (19%) a level over one year.

One-year trends in English proficiency rates for DL programs varied, and 2020 rates were generally similar to those from 2019, except for SECDL rates, which notably increased over one year at the advanced and advanced high proficiency levels. In addition, although the *TELPAS*-related goal of the BE/ESL Department was intended for ELs overall, rates of 2020 DL students in OWDL and SECDL also exceeded the BE/ESL Department goal of a one-year three percentage point increase in the rate of students who progressed at least one *TELPAS* proficiency level from 2019 (Table 2).

With respect to individual domains, generally, rates for OWDL and TWDL clustered around the beginning and intermediate levels for all domains, and rates for SECDL clustered around the advanced and advanced high levels. In general, rates at the advanced and advanced high levels were highest for the listening domain. One-year changes in domain rates for ELs varied. Except for SECDL ELs in the speaking domain, ELs in all DL programs and grade levels progressed at higher rates across all domains than they regressed. Generally, for most DL programs, progression rates trended higher and regression rates trended lower over one year in all domains.

ESL/Sheltered

Composite ratings for ELs in the ESL program typically clustered at the beginning or intermediate proficiency levels on the 2020 *TELPAS*, whereas composite ratings for ELs in

the sheltered program tended to cluster at the intermediate and advanced levels. ELs in ESL progressed at higher rates than they regressed in all grade level groupings, whereas ELs in sheltered classrooms either regressed at higher rates than they progressed (grades 9 to 12) or regressed and progressed at the same rate (grades 6 to 8).

One-year trends in English proficiency rates for ESL and sheltered students varied, and often rates remained consistent from 2019 to 2020. Although the *TELPAS*-related goal of the BE/ESL Department was intended for ELs overall, both ESL and sheltered students also exceeded the BE/ESL Department goal of a one-year three percentage point increase in the rate of students who progressed at least one proficiency level from 2019.

With respect to domains, rates for ESL students across all grade levels and domains clustered around the beginning and intermediate levels. The rates for sheltered students varied across domains, with higher rates of students achieving the advanced and advanced high levels in the listening and writing domains than in the speaking and reading domains. One-year change rates for ESL and sheltered students varied. With few exceptions, ESL students progressed at higher rates across all domains and grade levels than they regressed. Across grade levels, sheltered students progressed at higher rates than they regressed in the listening and writing domains but regressed at higher rates than they progressed for the speaking and reading domains. For all grade levels overall, ESL student progression rates were trended higher in 2020 than in 2019 in listening, speaking, and reading and trended lower in writing, whereas sheltered student progression rates trended higher in 2020 than in 2019 in the listening and speaking domains and trended lower for the reading and writing domains.

Parent Denials

Students whose parents denied EL services generally performed similarly to ELs overall on the *TELPAS*. Composite ratings for parent denials at all grade levels tended to cluster in the intermediate and advanced level of English proficiency, with similar patterns as those for all ELs. Parent denials in grades one to five progressed at higher rates and regressed at lower rates than those in the middle and upper grades. One-year trends in English proficiency rates for parent denials varied, and often rates remained relatively consistent from 2019 to 2020.

With respect to domains, parent denial rates for the listening domain clustered around the advanced to advanced high levels, and scores in the other domains generally clustered around the intermediate or advanced levels. One-year trends in domain proficiency rates for parent denials varied. Overall, 2020 parent denials progressed at higher rates than they regressed in listening, reading, and writing. Overall for all grades, parent denials progressed at higher rates and regressed at lower rates in 2020 than in 2019 in all domains.

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

Qualified ELs were accepted to at least one magnet program at lower rates (56%) than nonELs (64%) and monitored students (63%) and participated in magnet programs at lower rates (55%) than nonELs (63%) and monitored students (65%).

Grade six to eight advanced course enrollment rates of ELs who scored at Masters on *STAAR* in 2018-19 ranged from 63 percent (grade eight mathematics) to 99 percent (grade eight science). One-year trends in enrollment for ELs were positive or comparable in all subjects.

How did outcomes compare to other Texas ISDs and the state?

Because of the statewide response to COVID-19 in spring 2020, students in Texas districts completed the *TELPAS* at different rates. Therefore, comparisons of Dallas ISD results to those for other districts and the state are limited and are provided for information only.

Rates of students in the Dallas ISD performing at the higher English proficiency levels on the 2020 *TELPAS* were generally comparable or lower than the state and all regional comparison group rates (i.e., large Texas urban districts), especially for the younger grades. Differences between district and state attainment rates ranged from 10 points below state rates (K to 2, Advanced) to 13 points above comparison rates (K to 2, Beginning). Differences between district and regional comparisons ranged from 17 points below comparison rates (grades 3 to 12, Advanced High; San Antonio ISD) to 14 points above comparison rates (grades 3 to 12, Intermediate; San Antonio ISD).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the key findings, the following recommendations are offered for stakeholders.

Continue efforts to reduce parent denials and students coded as “unservable.” Efforts should continue to educate more parents about the benefits of program participation to continue the declining trend of students whose parents denied services. 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.

Include more process data in future evaluations to explore sheltered instruction. Seventeen percent of surveyed R/LA teachers with at least one sheltered student in the classroom reported teaching no sheltered students, and 20 percent reported not implementing sheltered instruction in 2019-20. Future evaluators and BE/ESL department leadership should work together to further investigate these findings to determine best practices for increasing teacher awareness and implementation of sheltered instruction.

Explore reasons for lower EL participation in advanced opportunities. ELs were accepted to and participated in magnet programs at lower rates than nonELs and monitored students, EL participation often lagged nonEL participation in advanced courses, and EL rates of talented and gifted participation at the secondary grades was just over half as that of nonELs. Program leadership and evaluators should explore reasons for these findings and plan to appropriately bolster EL participation.

Bolster efforts to increase EL progression and reduce EL regression on *TELPAS*. All grade levels across all groups progressed at higher rates and regressed at lower rates in 2020 than in 2019. That said, in the secondary grade levels, most groups either regressed at higher rates than they progressed or regressed and progressed at similar rates. The BE/ESL Department should continue efforts to increase progression rates and reduce regression rates to ensure students are gaining English proficiency.

Explore the weakest areas of English proficiency for enhanced focus. Although 2020 *TELPAS* domain data should be viewed with caution because of the transition to at-home learning in March 2020, future evaluations should continue to examine these domains 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.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Dallas Independent School District (Dallas ISD) Youth and Family Centers (YFC) program began in 1993 to provide mental, behavioral, and physical health services to students in the district. The program goals were: 1) to reduce barriers to academic success for students and teachers; 2) to promote the wellness of families; and 3) to improve access to health care and education. During 2019-20, the YFC program received a total of \$6,716,013 from district general operating funds, Title I funds, and Medicaid revenue, an increase from \$6,114,857 in 2019-20.

On March 13, 2020, in alignment with federal recommendations, the Governor of Texas issued a disaster proclamation certifying that the novel coronavirus COVID-19 posed an imminent threat of disaster for all counties in the state of Texas. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Dallas ISD transitioned students to at-home learning on March 23 following spring break (March 16 – 20) until the end of the school year.

PURPOSE AND METHOD

The purpose of this evaluation was to provide information about the 2019-20 YFC program to district leadership, program administrators, and other stakeholders. The evaluation included characteristics of YFC staff members, demographic characteristics of students served, clinical services provided to students and families, most common mental health diagnoses of YFC students, attendance and discipline referral rates of students served, clinician survey results, and results from a YFC director questionnaire and follow-up interview.

Data on sources of program funding and budget, staff professional development, and clinical services provided to students and families were obtained from program staff. Data on characteristics of YFC staff and student clients, as well as attendance and discipline referrals were obtained from district data files. Primary data were obtained from an evaluator-designed clinician survey, a director questionnaire, and a follow-up interview. Frequency and crosstab analyses were computed. Open-ended responses and interview transcripts were analyzed qualitatively for common themes and patterns.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS/OUTCOMES

What were the characteristics and professional qualifications of YFC staff in 2019-20?

A total of 68 administrators, clinicians, and support staff operated out of 11 YFC service sites and one central

administration office in 2019-20. The number of YFC clinical positions totaled 42 (62%) in 2019-20 and was comprised of counselors, psychiatrists, psychotherapists, and specialists (Table 1). The number of YFC administrative and support roles totaled 26 (38%) and included all other positions. Overall, psychotherapists ($n=33$) comprised the largest group of YFC staff at almost half (48.5%).

Table 1: 2019-20 YFC Staff Members

Job Title	<i>n</i>	%
Director	1	1.5
Coordinator	1	1.5
Administrative Assistant	12	17.6
Counselor	4	5.9
Manager	11	16.2
Psychiatrist	3	4.4
Psychotherapist	33	48.5
Specialist	2	2.9
Billing Assistant	1	1.5

Source: Dallas ISD 2019-20 personnel data file, 09/17/19.

Note: $N=68$.

Of the 68 YFC staff members, 50.0 percent were Hispanic, 22.1 percent were African American, and 85.3 percent were female. Seventy-two percent held a master's-level degree or higher. Almost 60 percent had between one to ten years of experience within the district.

What professional development opportunities were provided to YFC staff in 2019-20?

In addition to formal staff development opportunities that were open to all YFC staff, there were also seven professional development opportunities offered locally at individual clinics during 2019-20. These training sessions focused on a variety of topics, including child abuse reporting, telehealth services, and collaborative culture training. A total of 285 staff members attended professional development sessions from August 2019 through May 2020.

What were the characteristics of the students served in 2019-20?

YFC program staff provided 2019-20 data for students served between May 2019 and April 2020, which was different from 2017-18 (August 2017 through June 2018) and 2018-19 (July 2018 through April 2019). As a result, year-to-year comparisons should be viewed with caution.

A total of 4,704 students received clinical services from the YFC in 2019-20, a decrease from 5,745 in 2018-19; 270 students were missing in the district Public Education

Information Management System (PEIMS) demographic file dated 10/28/19, leaving 4,434 students in the file for analyses. Of the 4,434 students served by YFCs in 2019-20, most were economically disadvantaged (75.6%), male (63.1%), and Hispanic (64.5%). Percentages for YFC students differed from district percentages in several areas: 1) the percentage of YFC male students (63.1%) was higher than for all district students (51.2%); 2) the percentage of Hispanic students (64.5 %) was slightly lower than for all district students (70.4%); 3) students who identified as English learners (EL) constituted 39.8 percent of those served by YFC clinics, slightly lower than districtwide (45.7%); 4) there were notably more special education students (28.3%) served in comparison to the district (9.4%); and 5) compared to districtwide enrollment, there were lower percentages of served students from early childhood (EC) through grade one and from grade nine to grade 12, whereas there were higher percentages of served students from grade two through grade eight as compared to districtwide enrollment.

What clinical services were provided to Dallas ISD students and families in 2019-20?

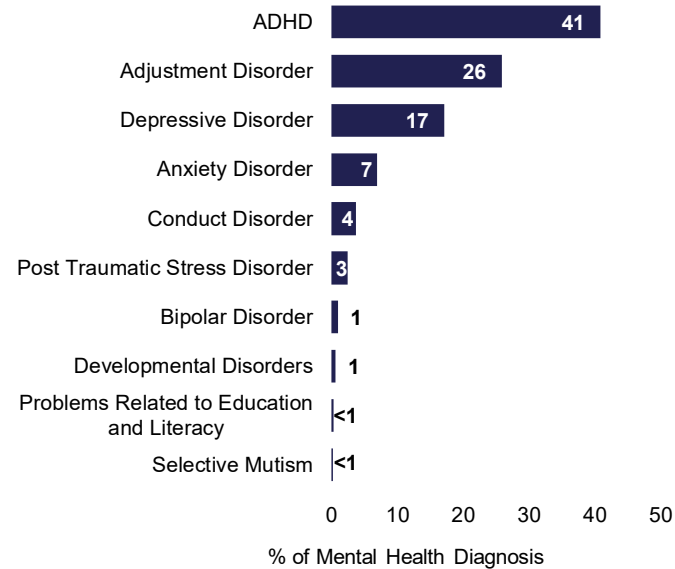
A total of 34,943 YFC contacts were made with Dallas ISD students and their families in 2019-20 (33,797 in 2018-19 and 38,247 in 2017-18), bringing the average number of visits per client to 7.4 (5.9 in 2018-19 and 7.9 in 2017-18). The YFC program provided 17 distinct types of clinical services to 4,704¹ Dallas ISD students and families in 2019-20. The three most common types of clinical services were psychotherapy sessions of 60 minutes with patient and/or family members, psychotherapy sessions of 45 minutes with the patient and/or family members, and psychiatrist evaluation sessions of 15 minutes for established patients. By volume, these three types of services together accounted for 19,873 (56.9%) of all clinical services provided to YFC clients in 2019-20. These three types of services combined also accounted for the majority of clinical services provided in 2017-18 (64.1%) and in 2018-19 (68.8%). West Dallas YFC received the highest number of visits overall (including repeat visitors) in 2019-20 at 4,829 total visits. Adamson YFC had the highest number of unique visitors (n=596) and Seagoville YFC had the fewest number of unique visitors (n=249).

What were the most common mental health diagnoses for YFC students in 2019-20?

The three most common primary mental health diagnoses made for Dallas ISD students in 2019-20 were Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder or ADHD, adjustment disorder, and depressive disorder (Figure 1). The top seven most common diagnoses from 2019-20 were among the top 10 primary diagnoses in 2017-18 and 2018-19. The top 10 primary diagnoses accounted for 99 percent of all primary diagnoses in 2019-20. In 2017-18 and 2018-19, the top 10

primary diagnoses accounted for 96% of all primary diagnoses in each year.

Figure 1: 2019-20 Percentages of Most Common Mental Health Diagnoses Among YFC Students



Source: YFC 2019-20 data file from YFC manager, 07/06/20.
Note: Data include students and their visits from May 2019 through April 2020. The most common primary diagnoses accounted for 99 percent of all primary diagnoses. N=4,704

Differences for male and female YFC students differed for some diagnoses. In 2019-20, there were notably more male students than female students who received primary diagnoses of developmental disorders (86%), ADHD (76%), conduct disorder (67%), problems related to education and literacy (54%), post-traumatic stress disorder (53%), and adjustment disorder (52%). There were more female than male students for selective mutism (98%), depressive disorder (64%), bipolar disorder (59%), and anxiety disorder (52%). In 2018-19, except for selective mutism, more female students than male students also accounted for each of the other three primary diagnoses. On the other hand, only primary diagnoses for ADHD, conduct disorder, post-traumatic disorder, and adjustment disorder were among the 10 most common primary diagnoses for male students in 2018-19 and 2019-20. The number of diagnoses in the top 10 most common primary diagnoses with more female students than male has increased over the last three years. In 2017-18, there were two diagnoses (depressive disorder and anxiety disorder, 56% and 51%, respectively). In 2018-19, there were three such diagnoses (depressive disorder, 64%; anxiety disorder, 54%; and bipolar disorder, 54%). As mentioned above, in 2019-20, there were four diagnoses with more female students than male.

¹ Includes 270 students who were not found in district PEIMS data file dated 10/28/19.

What were the attendance and discipline referral rates of students served in 2019-20?

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, attendance data and discipline data were limited to the first four six-week periods (08/19/19 through 02/21/20). Therefore, year-to-year comparisons should be viewed with caution.

The average attendance rate for YFC students was 94.2 percent in 2019-20, and the average attendance rate districtwide in 2019-20 was 95.4 percent. The attendance rate for 2018-19 (August 2018 to May 2019) was 93.5 percent, and the attendance rate for 2017-18 (August 2017 to May 2018) was 92.7 percent.

The discipline data file included 4,434 students.² Of the 4,434 YFC students in 2019-20, there were 823 discipline referrals recorded among 449 (10.1%) clients as compared to 15.4 percent in 2018-19 and 19.9 percent in 2017-18. One hundred and eighty-five of the 449 students (41.2%) were referred for more than one offense during the school year. Fighting and classroom disruptions were the two most common causes for a discipline referral among this group. Fighting was the top cause in 2019-20, and accounted for the largest share (29.5%, $n=243$) of discipline referrals among YFC student clients as compared to 576 (30.8%) in 2018-19 and 526 (21.1%) in 2017-18. There were 13 bullying incidents recorded among this group in 2019-20, a decrease from 32 in 2018-19 and 54 in 2017-18. Seagoville YFC had the highest number of discipline referrals among YFC student clients in 2019-20, followed by West Dallas YFC and Woodrow YFC. Balch Springs YFC and Kiosco YFC had the lowest number of student client discipline referrals in 2019-20.

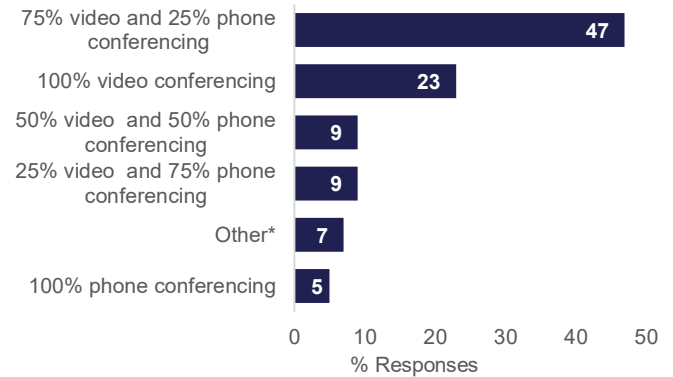
How did YFC change how it provided services to students and parents during at-home learning?

A YFC clinician survey and a director questionnaire were developed by evaluators to solicit feedback about program staff experience during at-home learning. Evaluators also conducted a follow-up interview with the YFC director to get additional insight. The majority of clinicians (72.1%) reported their YFCs were open five days per week for students and families during at-home learning, and the largest percentage (47%) reported sessions were held through a 75/25 percent balance of video and phone conferencing (Figure 2).

Clinician survey results revealed additional findings related to the district's shift to at-home learning. Interestingly, 79.0 percent of respondents reported they spent 40 percent or less time during client sessions on COVID-19-related issues. Whereas 58 percent indicated using the same amount a time preparing for a therapy session/psychiatric appointment as they did prior to at-home learning, 40 percent stated that they needed more time to prepare.

Fifty-one percent of clinicians stated they served fewer students during the pandemic compared to pre at-home learning, while 42 percent stated they served approximately the same number of students. Clinicians indicated that the most beneficial sources of support during at-home learning were from coworkers ($n=39$), YFC administration ($n=29$) and professional associations ($n=14$).

Figure 2: 2019-20 Percentage of Video and Telephone Conferencing During At-Home Learning



Source: YFC 2019-20 clinician survey file, 06/08/20.

Note: $N=43$. *Other=3 responses: 90% video and 10% phone conferencing; originally scheduled for 100% video and later switched to 50% video and 50% phone, and 95% video and 5% phone conferencing.

Clients' perceptions of tele-health revealed advantages and disadvantages. Almost half of clinicians (48.8%) believed that telehealth was as effective as face-to-face counseling. Clinicians believed that telehealth benefited clients because it was more convenient, especially for those who did not have reliable access to transportation. It provided clients easier access to clinicians, made scheduling easier, improved the likelihood that clients showed up for their appointment, and overall provided some flexibility to clients. On the other hand, some clinicians also indicated there were several challenges including internet connection issues for clients, keeping students focused, ensuring client privacy during sessions, no show/tardy clients, and lack of adequate resources for play therapy sessions. Clinicians indicated they needed resources such as art supplies, stress balls, and bubbles, a more stable digital platform for better connectivity and video conferencing, and upgraded digital equipment such as webcams, microphones, and laptops, so they can provide services via telehealth more effectively. More than one-third of clinicians hoped to keep telehealth as an option in 2020-21.

In the director questionnaire and follow-up interview, the director indicated that during the COVID-19 pandemic, YFCs quickly implemented a process for remote mental health services, created an electronic consent for telehealth, developed a new electronic client referral system, and identified a virtual platform to offer services to students and families. As a result, the work of YFCs remained largely unchanged during at-home learning. At

² An additional 270 students could not be matched to the PEIMS file and were excluded from the analyses.

the beginning of at-home learning, administrative staff at each YFC held weekly telehealth training providing clinicians, among others, suggestions and guidelines on how to ensure privacy and confidentiality and keep young students engaged. YFCs pivoted to address student and district needs by “pulling resources together to ensure processes were implemented for referrals, consents, and service delivery” and “shared resources on best practices for responding to COVID-19 as well as providing telehealth services”.

Starting in 2020-21, YFCs and PSS (Psychological and Social Services) will merge under a new department, Mental Health Services (MHS). The combined number of staff will increase by 57 fulltime employees. School-based clinicians (formerly PSS) will provide a variety of services to campus staff and students including behavior management and training in Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS); staff consultation, training, and support; individual and group counseling; transition services for students returning the District Alternative Education Program (DAEP); individual and schoolwide crisis intervention and postvention; threat assessment support; and outreach and education. Clinic staff members (formerly YFC) will provide services including individual, group, and family therapy; psychiatric evaluation and consultation; outreach and education; and physical health services through a partnership with Parkland Hospital Health System (PHHS).

The merger is expected to benefit the district in many ways. In prior years, including 2019-20, caseloads for PSS staff were very high, with each clinician serving eight campuses. The merger is expected to reduce clinician caseloads with each clinician serving only four campuses, providing them with additional time they can spend at each campus. Additionally, staffing across YFC sites was not equitable in prior years, creating long waiting lists for clients at certain centers; MHS plans to address this issue. MHS will allocate funds for professional development opportunities to its staff, including specialized training. Funds will also be used to aid MHS employees in obtaining additional certifications.

MHS plans to create a handbook and subcommittees who will work to define policies and outline procedures and would also like to create a process for external referrals as many outside agencies contacted YFC to refer potential clients. Additionally, MHS will create an efficient data system to track data points and establish a tracking system in a new Electronic Medical Record (EMR) system in 2020-21. This approach is expected to enable MHS to efficiently review data at the end of the year to assess the

extent to which it has reached its goals. According to the director, MHS will keep the telehealth service as an option for students and families during the 2020-21 school year.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Conduct a comprehensive needs assessment to find out what resources YFC clinicians need to provide services via telehealth in 2020-21. In the 2019-20 clinician survey, some clinicians indicated that resources were inadequate when providing therapeutic and psychiatric services via telehealth. A comprehensive needs assessment conducted early in 2020-21 will allow MHS to ensure that clinicians have adequate resources to provide the best service possible to their clients.

Provide technical support to students and families utilizing telehealth. Based on survey feedback, clinicians indicated that students and families encountered technology-related issues during telehealth sessions in 2019-20. Since telehealth will continue to be an option in 2020-21, MHS should consider developing a step-by-step telehealth user guide or an online tutorial for students and families in order to make telehealth sessions efficient and productive.

Ensure clinicians have on-going opportunities to communicate with colleagues and administrative staff during the remote work arrangement. Feedback from the clinician survey indicated that the most beneficial support clinicians received during the remote work arrangement was from their colleagues and YFC administration. During a challenging time (impact of COVID-19) and a time of transition (merger), it will be important for clinicians to communicate regularly with peers who face similar challenges in order to give and receive support based on shared experience.

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EA20-143-4

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Office of Family and Community Engagement (OFCE) in the Dallas Independent School District (ISD) develops and implements programs and strategies to engage parents and the community in collaborative parent, school, and community partnerships. The OFCE received \$1,062,425 (the same amount as in 2018-19) in Title I and \$437,904 (an increase from \$412,527 in 2018-19) in Title III funds for the 2019-20 school year to support the Parent and Family Engagement (PFE) program.¹

The PFE program continued several of its long-standing programs and initiated a large project in 2019-20 as a result of the district's partnership with the Flamboyant Foundation.² The district began working with the foundation to pilot a Whole School Model framework on selected campuses during the 2019-20 school year.

PURPOSE AND METHODOLOGY

The purpose of the evaluation was to summarize the context, process, and outcome data of the PFE programs for the 2019-20 school year. The evaluator used program documents, interviews, attendance data, and survey data to evaluate the programs. All PFE programs were impacted when the district moved to at-home learning beginning on March 23, 2020 because of COVID-19. Impacts to programs are detailed in the relevant sections of the report.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS/OUTCOMES

What programs did the PFE program continue from 2018-19 to 2019-20?

Several PFE programs provided in 2018-19 continued with some changes in 2019-20. The changes are outlined in this report. More detailed program descriptions are available in Garcia-Rincon (2019).

Campus Support Team (CST)

The CST continued program implementation with some changes in the 2019-20 school year. The six program staff members, referred to as coaches in 2018-19, were referred to as trainers/coaches in 2019-20. Additionally, in 2019-20, trainers were assigned to specific networks of campuses to support campus-level parent engagement activities.

Trainers also supervised their network's community liaisons.

After the transition to at-home learning, the CST trainers continued providing campus support via phone calls, email communication, and Zoom meetings. Support included one-on-one meetings with campus parent contacts and participation in school parent meetings via Zoom.

Program Support Team (PST)

PST members continued to support PFE programs in 2019-20. Their work was very similar to that of the previous school year. They continued to support the PREP U Super Saturdays (renamed Fam Jams) and the Prep U Adult Ed Track (renamed Adult ED Track). The PREP U workshop series for parents was discontinued for the 2019-20 school year.

Latino Family Literacy (LFL) Project

In 2019-20, the LFL Project continued with some changes. Three main programs were implemented in 2019-20, a family reading program, a parent engagement program, and a computer class for parents.

The LFL Project provided a 16-week family reading program at 18 elementary schools from October 2019 to December 2019 and from February 2020 to March 2020 (compared to 10 weeks in 2018-19). The LFL Project also provided a six-week reading and college awareness program at three middle and four high schools. Classes continued through virtual learning after the transition to at-home learning. A total of 1,566 parents at the elementary school level and 213 parents and 166 students at the secondary level participated in the LFL Project in the 2019-20 school year.

One program addition in the 2019-20 school year included Navigating the School System (NSS). The purpose of the program was to increase the effectiveness of parental engagement in children's academic experiences. The five-week, 90-minute program was offered at five elementary schools.³ Program sessions offered parent information and discussions on various topics. A total of 93 parents participated in the program from November 2019 to March 2020. After the transition to at-home learning, the discussions continued through virtual sessions. There was

¹ The funding amounts were provided by Special Revenue Funds Management on 02/28/20.

² The Flamboyant foundation is a non-profit organization that provides family engagement support to public school systems.

³ The five schools included Nathan Adams, C. F. Carr, Maria Moreno, Leslie Stemmons, and T. G. Terry Elementary Schools.

greater participation with the online sessions ($N = 206$ participants).

A second program addition included a 10-week (from November 2019 to March 2020) basic skills computer class for English learner parents at two campuses to equip parents with tools to support their children when the children needed to use a computer/tablet for school work.⁴ Computer classes were provided weekly, on Friday mornings, for one hour and thirty minutes. A combined total of 258 parents participated in and completed the training at the two campuses during the 2019-20 school year.

Adult Education Track Program

In 2019-20, the Adult Education Track Program continued to provide two-hour English as a Second Language classes twice a week for parents of students with limited language proficiency at nine elementary, two middle, and two high school campuses. The curriculum and eight instructors were provided by an outside vendor, Excel Institute. Seven sessions were provided from October 2019 to December 2019, and nine sessions were provided from January 2020 to March 2020. Sessions were cancelled after March 23, 2020 because of the transition to at-home learning.

The average number of enrolled parents per school was 16. A total of 224 parents participated in the program and received a certificate of participation for the 2019-20 school year.

What was the context of the Fam Jam sessions in 2019-20 and what were the associated outcomes?

In 2019-20, Fam Jams replaced the PREP U Super Saturdays with redesigned events. Five Fam Jams were held between September 2019 and February 2020.⁵ The events took place on Saturdays from 9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and were provided free of charge.

All Fam Jam events included childcare for children ages three to twelve for the duration of the event. Parents could then participate in parent workshops and receive assistance from Translation Services.⁶ The workshop sessions provided information to engage and empower parents, who selected a maximum of three sessions from a list of 16 options (45 minutes each). Some of the session topics included bullying, discipline, mental health, school safety, building literacy skills, college readiness, and school choice. Additionally, families could receive books and resources, participate in fun activities, enjoy food and drinks, watch student entertainment, play games, and win door prizes.

Parent attendance data were collected for each Fam Jam event by program staff members and shared with the evaluator.⁷ The attendance data indicated that a total of 294 parents attended the Conrad Fam Jam, 369 parents attended the Adamson Fam Jam, 229 parents attended the Lincoln Fam Jam, 295 parents attended the Spruce Fam Jam, and 398 parents attended the Woodrow Wilson Fam Jam.

Surveys were administered to parents at the end of each workshop and at the conclusion of each Fam Jam to collect feedback. The data were collected by program staff members for each Fam Jam event and shared with the evaluator.⁸ A combined total of 247 surveys were completed among the five Fam Jams in the 2019-20 school year.⁹ Overall, feedback results from the five Fam Jams indicated that the vast majority of parents surveyed thought Fam Jam staff members were welcoming or very welcoming (99%; $N = 247$), found the locations convenient (95%; $N = 242$), and rated the Fam Jams as helpful or very helpful (98%; $N = 245$). All parents ($N = 242$) responded that they would recommend the Fam Jam events to other parents. When asked about the workshops, surveyed parents indicated that they were interested or very interested in the workshop content (99%; $N = 243$) and felt the presenters were engaging or very engaging (99%; $N = 246$).

Of the 239 respondents, 66 percent ($n = 157$) indicated that future Fam Jam events should include workshops about academic achievement support and 55 percent ($n = 131$) requested workshops about supporting positive behavior.

What was the context of the Flamboyant Fellowship project in the Dallas ISD in 2019-20 and what were the associated outcomes?

The Flamboyant Foundation Fellowship was a 20-month partnership between the foundation and the district to help Dallas ISD administrators learn about family engagement using a design-thinking framework.

First, district leadership staff conducted a landscape assessment to examine the historical context of the district with a racial equity lens. The district also hosted a community liaison professional development summit presented by Flamboyant. The conference-style summit was designed to inform the community liaisons about the new model and the Flamboyant Fellowship process, and to help liaisons understand that family engagement was a campus-team effort.

The end of the year data provided by the PFE staff members indicated that 175 community liaisons attended

⁴ Jack Lowe Elementary held classes for Burmese-speaking parents and Henry B. Gonzales held classes for Spanish-speaking parents.

⁵ Sessions (by network) were conducted at the following high schools: Emmett J. Conrad (09/14/19), W. H. Adamson (09/28/19), Lincoln (10/26/19), H. Grady Spruce (11/16/19), and Woodrow Wilson (02/08/20).

⁶ Health service events (i.e., free health screenings, immunizations, etc.) were not part of Fam Jam events in 2019-20.

⁷ Data provided on 02/28/20.

⁸ Data provided on 03/23/20.

⁹ Not all respondents completed all questions, resulting in varying Ns.

the PFE Summit in August 2019.¹⁰ Summit feedback survey data provided by PFE staff members indicated that of the 100 respondents, 96 percent rated the summit as very good or excellent and 89 percent felt that the sessions were very or extremely relevant to their role on their campus.

2019-20 Pilot Program: Whole School Model

In 2019-20, the district launched a pilot program in four elementary schools.¹¹ PFE staff members supported school staff members to help them implement Flamboyant's Whole School Model which includes four components, 1) the Family Engagement Leadership Team (FELT), 2) professional development (PD), 3) the Home Visit Project, and 4) listening interviews.

The FELT worked at the campus level to lead all family engagement efforts. The team at each campus included the principal, two teachers, a community liaison (if available), and the campus CST trainer. In addition to serving on the FELTs, the CST trainers supported their campuses with visits every other week.

Second, all teachers at the four targeted campuses were expected to receive Mindset PD training. The training was designed to help teachers acknowledge their implicit biases and reach out and build trusting relationships with parents, thereby fostering parental engagement. Teachers also received Ongoing Communication and Family Listening Interviews training. Flamboyant staff members initially conducted the trainings, but district staff members were trained to eventually conduct them as well.

Third, through the Home Visit Project, teachers, counselors, and/or assistant teachers visited students and families at their homes in another effort to increase family engagement.

Finally, teams from each of the four campuses planned to conduct listening interviews with families in spring 2020 to solicit feedback about family engagement, what parents wanted to see in the future, and about barriers to family engagement. However, all listening interviews were canceled after the district transitioned to at-home learning.

Pilot Program Outcomes

Program staff members reported that the Whole School Model was implemented at varying levels by the four pilot-program campuses. Martinez, for example, started late, causing a delay with conducting home visits and fewer completed visits. Program staff members reported that Martinez also had problems with campus staff members building trust and relationships. Martinez will receive additional support to address these issues in 2020-21.

¹⁰ Data provided on 12/06/20.

¹¹ The four Flamboyant pilot program campuses included: Henry B. Gonzalez Personalized Learning Academy, Eladio R. Martinez Learning Center, Ronald Edwin McNair Elementary School, and Julian T. Saldivar Elementary.

FELT

End-of-year data provided by the PFE staff members showed that a total of 219 FELT members attended FELT meetings in 2019-20.¹² In general, all but one of the four campuses (Martinez) was consistent in conducting FELT meetings during the 2019-20 school year.¹³ Zoom meetings and check-in calls were conducted beginning March 23, 2020 when at-home learning started due to COVID-19.

Professional Development

Table 1 shows PD attendance data for teachers from each of the four campuses. All teachers were required to attend the training sessions. PD attendance was highest for Gonzales teachers (except for Ongoing Communication).

Table 1: 2019-20 Teacher Professional Development Attendance

Session	Gonzales (N=35)		McNair (N=52)		Martinez (N=38)		Saldivar (N=45)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Mindset/Home Visits	35	100	28	54	17	45	43	96
Ongoing Communication	24	69	10	19	28	74	-	-
Family Listening Interviews	30	86	13	25	2	5	22	49

Source: PFE department, 06/12/20.

Note: Attendance data reported in this table are approximate counts as sign-in sheets were not available because of COVID-19. The data came from the number of completed teacher PD surveys. % = the percentage of teachers at that campus that attended the training session. - indicates no data were available because teachers were not administered a survey for the PD session.

Teacher feedback regarding the PD sessions were collected through surveys created by Flamboyant staff members and administered by the presenters after each PD session (August 2019, October 2019, and February 2020). These data were provided to the evaluator on June 2, 2020. Teacher perceptions regarding the Mindset/ Home Visit and Ongoing Communication PD sessions were very positive. Most teachers agreed or strongly agreed that they were well-prepared to implement the strategies and content provided by the two PD sessions (Mindset/Home Visit, 98%, $N = 123$ and Ongoing Communication, 97%, $N = 62$).¹⁴

Campus staff members responded to open-ended questions relating to each PD session. After the Mindset/Home Visit PD, teachers indicated the most common barriers to implementing home visits included time (constraints, for follow-up, and inconvenient visit times; $n = 6$), parent buy-in (acceptance of and participation in home visits; $n = 5$), and safety ($n = 4$).

¹² Data provided on 06/23/20.

¹³ In 2019-20, Gonzales and McNair each held 14 FELT meetings, Saldivar held 13, and Martinez held six.

¹⁴ These data were not collected for the Family Listening Interviews PD session.

After the Ongoing Communication PD, teachers indicated that in order to build relationships with families, they needed additional supports around communication (how to communicate with parents, engaging in positive communication, and more opportunities for communication; $n = 5$) and more time with families ($n = 4$).

Last, after the Family Listening Interviews PD, teachers indicated that in order to build relationships with families, they needed more time (for activities and events and to communicate with parents; $n = 9$) and communication assistance (conversation prompts and activities for families, and Spanish translations; $n = 7$).

Home Visits

Home visit data provided by program staff members on June 2, 2020, indicated that a total of 666 home visits were conducted by teachers (between 54 and 326 visits per campus) during the fall semester in 2019-20.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Continue to support school personnel, parents, and the community through Parent and Family Engagement programs in 2020-21. A total of 1,566 parents at the elementary school level and 213 parents and 166 students

at the secondary level participated in the LFL Project in 2019-20. A total of 224 parents participated in the Adult Ed Track program and the majority of the Fam Jam participants (98%) rated the events as very helpful or helpful and all would recommend the Fam Jam events to other parents. The OFCE should continue these programs to provide families the opportunities they need to become engaged, educated, and empowered.

Collaborate and train campus staff to ensure that the Flamboyant Whole School Model is implemented in a timely manner and with fidelity in 2020-21. Martinez implemented the model late, causing a delay in conducting home visits, and inconsistently conducted FELT meetings ($n = 6$) in 2019-20. There were also reported problems with campus staff members building trust and relationships. Efforts should be made in 2020-21 to correct these issues to allow for a successful program implementation. This will be important as the model expands to additional schools.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Dallas Independent School District (Dallas ISD) developed its own On-Track indicator in 2007-08. Like the Consortium on Chicago School Research (CCSR) indicator¹, the Dallas ISD indicator combines two factors. A student is considered to be On-Track at the end of ninth grade if he or she has met both of the following criteria:

- The student has accumulated five full course credits, and
- The student has no more than one semester F (that is, one-half of a full credit) in a core subject (English, mathematics, science, or social studies).

The purpose of this evaluation was to assess the ninth grade On-Track rates for the district and individual high school campuses. Specifically, this evaluation reports (1) On-Track rates by school type, (2) On-Track rates by ethnicity, and (3) On-Track rates by school.

On Friday March 13, 2020, in alignment with federal recommendations, the Governor of Texas issued a disaster proclamation certifying that the novel coronavirus COVID-19 posed an imminent threat of disaster for all counties in the state of Texas. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Dallas ISD transitioned students to at-home learning on March 23 following spring break (March 16 – 20) until the end of the school year. Due to the impact of COVID-19, the district suspended its normal course grading policies.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS/OUTCOMES

What were the On-Track rates of first-time ninth-grade students in 2019-20?

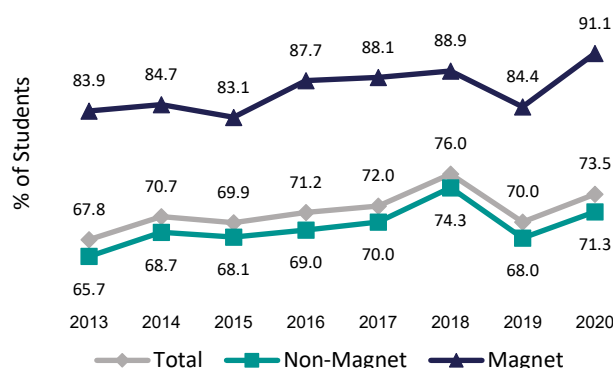
Methodology

Student characteristics were extracted from the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) district data files², and course performance data were extracted from the district course data files³. Only non-special education grade nine students who were enrolled in the same school for the fall semester were included.

Results

Overall, the 2019-20 district mid-year On-Track rate (73.5%) was higher than the mid-year On-Track rates for 2018-19 (70.0%, Figure 1). Mid-year On-Track rates for magnet schools were higher than those of non-magnet schools for all examined school years, resulting in a *gap* between the two groups. While the *gap* decreased from 2015-16 (18.7 percentage points) to 2017-18 (14.6 percentage points), it increased again in 2018-19 (16.4 percentage points). In 2019-20, the mid-year *gap* between the two groups continued to widen (19.8 percentage points).

Figure 1: On-Track Mid-Year Rates of First-Time Ninth-Grade Students by School Type, 2012-13 to 2019-20



Source: District course files dated 02/10/13 (2012-13), 02/10/14 (2013-14), 02/10/15 (2014-15), 09/15/16 (2015-16), 04/19/17 (2016-17), 07/11/18 (2017-18), 08/14/19 (2018-19) and 01/24/20 (2019-20) for students enrolled on the PEIMS snapshot dates of 10/29/12 (2012-13), 10/28/13 (2013-14), 10/31/14 (2014-15), 10/30/15 (2015-16), 10/31/16 (2016-17), 10/30/17 (2017-18), 10/26/18 (2018-19), and 10/28/19 (2019-20).

Overall, the 2019-20 end-of-year On-Track rate for non-magnet and magnet high schools (83.3% and 95.7%, respectively) was markedly higher than their 2018-19 end-of-year On-Track rates (74.4% and 88.4%, respectively) (Figure 2). It is important to note that due to COVID-19, the district suspended its normal course grading policies and the 2019-20 end-of-year On-Track rates may be inflated.

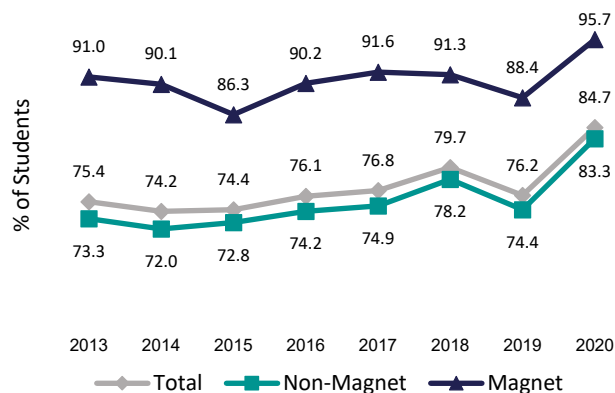
¹ The CCSR developed an On-Track indicator in 1999 to gauge whether students in their first year of high school were making enough progress to have a reasonable expectation of graduating in four years. Unlike other indicators, it provides information about progress and performance from a relatively early point in a student's high school career.

² PEIMS snapshot dates of 10/29/12 (2012-13), 10/28/13 (2013-14), 10/31/14 (2014-15), 10/30/15 (2015-16), 10/31/16 (2016-17), 10/30/17 (2017-18), 10/26/18 (2018-19), and 10/28/19 (2019-20).

³ District course files dated 02/10/13 (2012-13), 02/10/14 (2013-14), 02/10/15 (2014-15), 09/15/16 (2015-16), 04/19/17 (2016-17), 07/11/18 (2017-18), 08/14/19 (2018-19) and 01/24/20 (2019-20).

Overall, from 2012-13 to 2019-20, On-Track rates for non-magnet and magnet high schools consistently increased from midyear to end of year (increases ranging from 2.4 percentage points to 12.0 percentage points). Similarly, the On-Track rate *gap* between the two groups tended to narrow from midyear to end of year (decreases ranging from 0.5 percentage points to 7.4 percentage points) except for 2013-14 in which the *gap* widened by 2.1 percentage points.

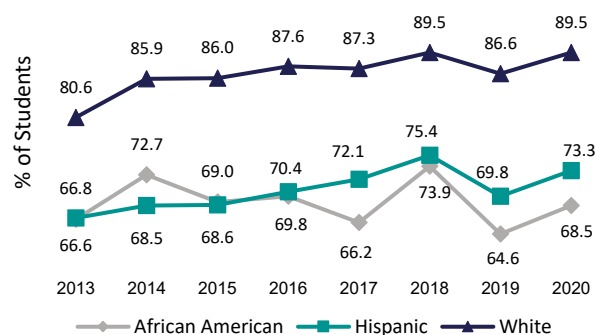
Figure 2: On-Track End-of-Year Percentages of First-Time Ninth-Grade Students by School Type, 2012-13 to 2019-20



Source: District course files dated 02/10/13 (2012-13), 02/10/14 (2013-14), 02/10/15 (2014-15), 09/15/16 (2015-16), 04/19/17 (2016-17), 07/11/18 (2017-18), 08/14/19 (2018-19) and 07/30/20 (2019-20) for students enrolled on the PEIMS snapshot dates of 10/29/12 (2012-13), 10/28/13 (2013-14), 10/31/14 (2014-15), 10/30/15 (2015-16), 10/31/16 (2016-17), 10/30/17 (2017-18), 10/26/18 (2018-19), and 10/28/19 (2019-20).

In 2019-20, the districtwide mid-year On-Track rate of African American students (68.5%) was lower than Hispanic students (73.3%) and White students (89.5%, see Figure 3). Since 2012-13, mid-year On-Track rates for White students have been higher than those of African American students and Hispanic students, resulting in a *gap* between the student groups. The *gap* widened between African American students and White students from 2013-14 (13.2 percentage points) to 2016-17 (21.1 percentage points) but decreased markedly in 2017-18 (15.6 percentage points) and increased again in 2018-19 (22.0 percentage points). In 2019-20, the *gap* between the African American students and White students decreased slightly to 21.0 percentage points. The *gap* narrowed between Hispanic students and White students from 2014-15 (17.4 percentage points) to 2017-18 (14.1 percentage points) but increased in 2018-19 (16.8 percentage points). In 2019-20, the *gap* between the Hispanic students and White students decreased slightly to 16.2 percentage points.

Figure 3: On-Track Mid-Year Rates of First-Time Ninth-Grade Students by Ethnicity, 2012-13 to 2019-20



Source: District course files dated 02/10/13 (2012-13), 02/10/14 (2013-14), 02/10/15 (2014-15), 09/15/16 (2015-16), 04/19/17 (2016-17), 07/11/18 (2017-18), 08/14/19 (2018-19) and 01/24/20 (2019-20) for students enrolled on the PEIMS snapshot dates of 10/29/12 (2012-13), 10/28/13 (2013-14), 10/31/14 (2014-15), 10/30/15 (2015-16), 10/31/16 (2016-17), 10/30/17 (2017-18), 10/26/18 (2018-19), and 10/28/19 (2019-20).

Overall, magnet high schools (91.1%) had a higher percentage of mid-year On-Track students compared to non-magnet high schools (71.3%, Table 1). In 2019-20, eight out of 28 (28.6%) non-magnet high schools had mid-year rates at or above 80 percent, which was an increase from 2019 ($n = 5$). Ten non-magnet high schools had mid-year On-Track rates below 70 percent, with three of those schools falling below 60 percent (Lincoln, Roosevelt and Spruce). Nine out of ten (90.0%) magnet high schools had mid-year rates exceeding 80 percent, which was an increase from 2018-19 ($n = 5$). One magnet high school, New Tech, had a mid-year On-Track rate below 80 percent.

Overall, from 2017-18 to 2019-20, magnet high schools' mid-year On-Track rates increased by 2.2 percentage points, while the district and non-magnet high schools had decreases in mid-year On-Track rates (2.5 percentage points and 3.0 percentage points, respectively). From 2017-18 to 2019-20, 18 out of 28 (64.3%) non-magnet high schools had decreases in mid-year On-Track rates (ranging from 0.6 percentage points to 29.9 percentage points). Four out of ten (40.0%) magnet high schools had decreases in mid-year On-Track rates (ranging from 0.1 percentage points to 11.0 percentage points).

Table 1: Freshman Mid-Year On-Track Rates by School, 2017-18 to 2019-20

	Percent On-Track			2-yr Δ
	2018	2019	2020	
Non-Magnet High Schools				
B. Adams	77.1	69.2	68.1	-9.0
Adamson	78.3	67.7	76.5	-1.8
Carter	69.2	61.0	72.5	3.3
CityLab	91.3	72.4	82.0	-9.3
Conrad	74.4	74.9	75.0	0.6
Garza Early College	84.8	93.9	95.2	10.4
Gilliam Collegiate Academy	99.0	87.1	80.2	-18.8
Hillcrest	71.7	70.4	81.5	9.8
IDEA	86.4	70.8	79.7	-6.7
Jefferson	80.7	71.6	70.8	-9.9
Kimball	72.9	67.2	63.9	-9.0
Lassiter Early College	96.5	92.9	100.0	3.5
Lincoln	83.4	61.9	53.5	-29.9
Madison	81.9	81.6	80.0	-1.9
Molina	79.2	72.4	73.4	-5.8
North Dallas	60.2	55.1	70.0	9.8
North Lake	-	-	100.0	-
Pinkston	76.3	67.6	64.7	-11.6
Roosevelt	58.0	33.1	55.8	-2.2
Samuell	79.7	63.0	77.6	-2.1
Seagoville	78.2	58.8	68.4	-9.8
Skyline	67.3	66.6	70.5	3.2
South Oak Cliff	74.5	75.1	65.2	-9.3
Spruce	69.3	52.4	50.1	-19.2
Sunset	73.9	66.3	69.5	-4.4
White	69.0	71.8	72.3	3.3
Wilmer-Hutchins	67.5	64.7	66.9	-0.6
Wilson	76.7	81.6	82.1	5.4
Non-Magnet Total	74.3	68.0	71.3	-3.0
Magnet High Schools				
Obama	83.3	88.6	100.0	16.7
Rangel	100.0	100.0	96.3	-3.7
New Tech	88.3	25.5	77.3	-11.0
Townview Business	82.5	79.1	89.7	7.2
Townview ESSM	82.1	67.7	82.0	-0.1
Townview Health	90.5	93.1	96.1	5.6
Townview Law	84.8	75.0	92.4	7.6
Townview SEM	95.5	98.3	97.4	1.9
Townview TAG	95.9	97.3	98.4	2.5
Washington Arts	88.6	78.4	85.7	-2.9
Magnet Total	88.9	84.4	91.1	2.2
District Total	76.0	70.0	73.5	-2.5

Source: District course files dated 07/11/18 (2017-18), 08/14/19 (2018-19) and 01/24/20 (2019-20) for students enrolled on the PEIMS snapshot dates of 10/30/17 (2017-18), 10/26/18 (2018-19), and 10/28/19 (2019-20).

Note: ESSM = Education and Social Science Magnet. SEM = Science and Engineering Magnet. TAG = Talented and Gifted. - = No data available. Schools with 2019-20 mid-year On-Track rates below 70 percent are highlighted in gray. 2-yr Δ = Difference change in On-Track percentage from 2017-18 to 2019-20. All differences shown in percentage points.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Investigate how mid-year On-Track rates compare to end-of-year On-Track rates. The 2019-20 end-of-year On-Track rates for non-magnet and magnet high schools were markedly higher than their 2018-19 end-of-year On-Track rates. However, due to COVID-19, the district suspended its normal course grading policies in the spring of 2020, and the 2019-20 end-of-year On-Track rates may be inflated. Understanding the relationship between mid-year and end-of-year On-Track rates could help the district better identify students who are at-risk of not being On-Track by the end of the school year.

As recommended in previous years, analyze progress of recent freshman cohorts to revalidate the On-Track Indicator. Longitudinal analyses of freshman cohorts who have graduated should be conducted to determine the overall accuracy of the On-Track indicator and determine if other factors should be incorporated into the On-Track criteria.

REFERENCE

Featherston, L. (2019). *2018-19 Dallas ISD On-Track Indicator*. Dallas, TX: Dallas Independent School District.

EA20-153-4

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Dallas Independent School District (Dallas ISD) received federal funds for high-quality summer programming for the summer of 2020 through Title I, Part A, as authorized under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). The Extended Learning Opportunities (ELO) Department supported one districtwide online academic program for kindergarten through grade eight students during summer of 2020, marketed as Virtual Summer School. All elementary and middle school campuses identified 20 percent of the student population per grade level based on the following criteria: (1) core course failures; (2) low grades in core courses; (3) low scores on district common assessments; and (4) low mid-year results on *Measures of Academic Performance (MAP)* assessment. In lieu of the ELO Credit Recovery Program, Campus Reconnection Centers provided opportunities for remote summer online learning for students in grades 9-12.

The purpose of the 2019-20 Virtual Summer School evaluation was to provide context and implementation data so that program managers could assess the delivery of program components and operations, determine effectiveness, and plan future efforts. The evaluation examined the level of implementation of the grant-funded program and participant perceptions of the program. Data for this report were obtained from interviews with program staff members, a review of program documents, program observations, and parent and teacher surveys.

On March 13, 2020, in alignment with federal recommendations, the Governor of Texas issued a disaster proclamation certifying that the novel coronavirus COVID-19 posed an imminent threat of disaster for all counties in the state of Texas. On March 19, 2020, all schools in the state were temporarily closed to slow the spread of the pandemic. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Dallas ISD transitioned students to at-home learning from March 23, 2020 (following spring break) to the end of the school year. All district summer programs were held virtually. As a result of this change, summer program offerings were narrower in scope than in previous years and only academic support for kindergarten through grade eight students was provided. All programs for high school students and enrichment programs for all grade levels were canceled.

The district allocated \$2,000,000 of Title I, Part A, funding to Summer Learning programs in 2019-20. This amount was the same in 2018-19 (Watson, 2019). Actual expenditures for 2019-20 totaled \$1,135,492.79.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS

How was the Virtual Summer School program implemented?

Teacher Recruitment and Training

Virtual Summer School teachers were selected by campus principals, who were also campuses' Virtual Summer School principals, based on the unique needs of summer school students. Principals sought to match teacher skill sets with the challenges of remediation and differentiation in a supplemental curriculum setting. Selections were made in February for summer of 2020. Once selected, Virtual Summer School teachers attended professional development through the Virtual Summer School Teacher Academy, which included online learning resources developed by the Teaching and Learning Department. Teachers of grades kindergarten through two were trained on May 20, 2020. Training for teachers of grades three through eight reading and mathematics was held on May 21 and 22, 2020, respectively. Summer school site coordinators attended training by ELO staff on proper summer school protocol, technology, attendance recording, and other pertinent operational information on May 19, 2020. Additionally, campus administrators received training from ELO staff specific to the role of summer school principals on May 18-22, 2020.

Student Identification

The ELO Department set student eligibility guidelines to determine which students should participate in Virtual Summer School. Campuses were instructed to identify 20 percent of the student population per grade level (prekindergarten through grade eight) based on the following criteria: (1) core course failures; (2) low grades in core courses; (3) low scores on district common assessments; and (4) low scores on the mid-year *MAP* assessment. Students in grades prekindergarten through one were considered for retention when grade-level objectives were not mastered, especially in language arts and mathematics (parent permission was required for student retention).

Each campus provided ELO with student program enrollment information by May 13, 2020. Summer data controllers at each campus used student summer enrollment forms to develop class rosters and place students by grade level and English-language ability (general education or bilingual).

Program Characteristics

Virtual Summer School was held for four weeks, Monday through Thursday, beginning on June 1 and ending on June 25 (for a total of 16 days of instruction). The program ran from 9:00am to 11:00am, with the first hour consisting of teacher-led virtual instruction via Google Classroom, and the second hour consisting of student-paced modules assigned by teachers. Teachers also used the second hour for one on-one or small group instruction, as needed.

Due to lower total enrollment numbers, students in kindergarten through grade two were grouped together to receive early learning content in foundational reading and mathematics skills. Teachers differentiated individual student instruction, assignments, and support based on grade level, ability, and need.

Each student was assigned to a reading teacher and a mathematics teacher and attended programming in each subject area for two days out of the week (i.e., Monday/Wednesday reading, Tuesday/Thursday mathematics). The order and arrangement of subject rotation varied by school and grade level. Reading instruction was delivered through Reading A-Z, a comprehensive system of books and teacher resources correlated to state-mandated Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), including reading lessons, decodable books, leveled readers, fluency passages, phonological resources, and vocabulary materials. Mathematics instruction was delivered through ST Math. ST Math consists of spatial-temporal interactive TEKS-aligned math games and puzzles, with learning objectives that target key grade-level concepts and skills. Both applications are part of the Clever Portal, a web-based single sign on resource where teachers and students can access learning software and resources on one site.

Students were given application-native pre-assessments created by and housed within Reading A-Z and ST Math on their first days of instruction in each subject. Reading materials offered in Reading A-Z throughout the Virtual Summer School program were leveled based on the result of the pre assessment, providing each student with instruction matched to his or her ability and need. Similarly, ST Math adapted content to the student's level based on pre-assessment results.

Promotion Criteria

Grade-level promotion was based on mastery of the curriculum. Expectations and standards for mastery were established for each grade level and content area. In addition, at grades five and eight, if the student was enrolled in a Texas public school on any day between January 1 and the date of the first administration of the *State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR)*, the student was required to meet the Approaches+ standard on STAAR. Prekindergarten and kindergarten students were not retained due to the voluntary status of their enrollment. Grade one students were considered for retention if mastery

of grade-level objectives is not reflected by assessments, especially in reading/language arts and mathematics. If a student was being considered for possible retention, a parent conference must be held. In grades two through eight, promotion to the next grade level was based on an overall average score of 70, on a scale of zero to 100, based on course-level and grade-level standards for all subject areas.

According to the Texas Administration Code 19 TAC 105.1001(c) and Texas Education Code 29.082(e)–(f), any student in grades one through eight who does not meet these criteria for promotion to the next grade level may attend supplemental summer programming. As has been the case in past years, the recommendation was that students who attended at least 90 percent of the Virtual Summer School program days would be promoted to the next grade level at the beginning of the school year based on academic achievement or demonstrated proficiency of the course material or grade-level objectives. Ultimately, all promotion decisions in the summer were made by the principal or assistant principal designee, based on their professional opinion regarding the best interest of the student.

Per Board policy EIE (LOCAL), it is the official position of the district that retention of students has not shown to be an effective strategy for improving student achievement. The district and individual campuses have established procedures designed to reduce the number of students retained, and indeed, most students receiving any amount of supplemental summer instruction can expect to be promoted. A parent, however, may present a written request to the school principal asking that the student not be promoted. The Admission, Review and Dismissal (ARD) committee determines promotion and retention procedures and academic achievement level expectations through the Individualized Education Program (IEP) for students who receive special education services.

What were the results of the Virtual Summer School program?

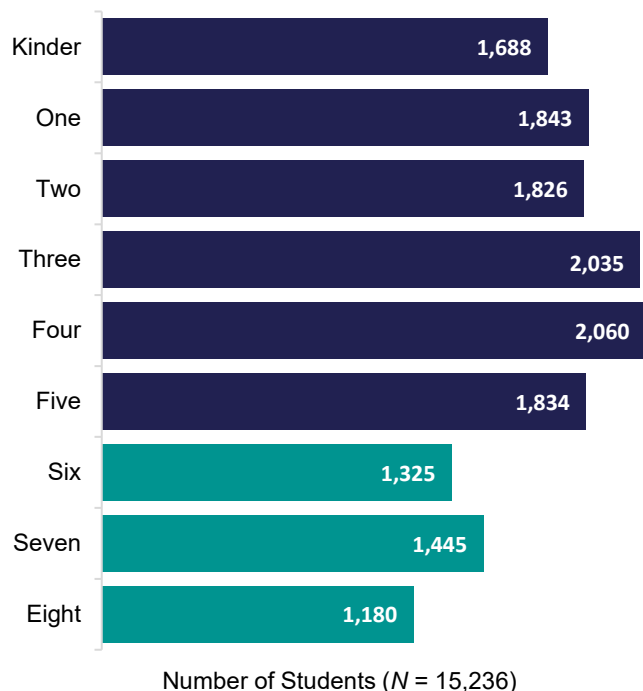
Attendance, Enrollment, and Demographics

Campus staff members recorded attendance via a district-provided an online platform and provided access to data to the evaluator. Data collected were insufficient for meaningful analysis because the default code for attendance was “present” and students who did not attend the summer program were left in the system marked as “present.”

A total of 15,326 students in grades kindergarten through eight enrolled in Virtual Summer School. Enrollment by grade level is presented in Figure 1. Elementary school enrollment ranged from 1,688 (kindergarten) to 2,060 (grade four). Middle school enrollment ranged from 1,180 (grade eight) to 1,445 (grade seven). In 2019, a total of 11,083 students in grades one through twelve attended at

least one day of the summer academic program (Watson, 2019).

Figure 1: 2020 Number of Students Enrolled in Virtual Summer School by Grade



Source: Data retrieved from the district summer data file dated 08/04/20.
Note: Teal denotes secondary campuses.

The demographic characteristics of the 15,236 students who attended the Virtual Summer School generally mirrored the characteristics of district students during the 2019-20 school year. As during the regular school year, most Virtual Summer School students were Hispanic (73.0%) or African American (21.6%). The African American Virtual Summer School student population was similar to the regular school year, while the Hispanic enrollment in Virtual Summer School program was slightly higher as compared to the district (73.0% vs 69.8%). Also, the proportion of white students in the program was smaller compared to the proportion of white students enrolled districtwide (2.9% vs 6.0%). Additionally, the proportion of students classified as an English Learner (EL) was over eight percentage points higher during the Virtual Summer School summer program (56.3%) than during the regular school year (48.2%). The proportion of students classified as economically disadvantaged was higher in the Virtual Summer School student population (92.0%) than during the regular school year (86.0%).

Promotion and Retention

Overall, 13,194 of the 13,543 students (97.4%) in grades one through grade eight who enrolled in the program were promoted to the next grade at the beginning of the 2020-21

school year while 349 students were retained (2.6%). In 2018-19, 9,688 of the 11,082 students (87.4%) in grades one through grade twelve who attended the program were promoted to the next grade at the beginning of the 2019-20 school year while 1,358 students were retained (12.3%) (Watson, 2019).

Classroom Observations

The evaluator conducted unannounced Google Classroom observations ($n = 53$ classrooms) of the Virtual Summer School programs at Gooch ($n = 11$), Highland Meadows ($n = 13$), Lowe ($n = 13$), Reinhardt Elementary Schools ($n = 6$), Rusk ($n = 6$), and Quintanilla Middle Schools ($n = 4$). The results of the observations were generally positive. Students were engaged in learning (active or passive, but clearly observed to be on task and non-disruptive) in 42 of 53 (79.2%) classrooms observed. Teachers were observed to be equitable and inclusive in their interactions with students, working to engage any student who appeared isolated, and not favoring a particular student or small cluster of students in all 53 evaluator observations. Teachers were managing the online space appropriately (including using the mute function for non-active speakers, using screen sharing properly when needed, and addressing comments added to chat windows in a timely manner) in 51 of 53 (96.2%) classrooms observed. Both instances of negative ratings for this item related to the use of the mute function (instructors neglecting to mute when they should have), which can be challenging in groups of young students.

What were parent perceptions of the Virtual Summer School program?

The evaluator utilized SurveyMonkey, an online survey development tool, to design and administer a parent survey. Overall, 1,852 parents of the 15,326 student participants responded to the survey. Parents of students from 88 different campuses responded. An additional 46 parents completed the survey but indicated that they did not know which campus their children attended.

Most surveyed parents ($n = 1,526$ of 1,845; 82.7%) felt their child had adequate technology resources to succeed in the program. Most parents ($n = 1,510$ of 1,849; 81.7%) felt the amount of daily involvement required of parents and guardians was reasonable. Additionally, 80.0 percent of parents surveyed ($n = 1,474$ of 1,842) believed that the quality of the Virtual Summer School lessons were high. Three-fourths of parents agreed or strongly agreed that their child benefited from participating in the summer program ($n = 1,398$ of 1,847; 75.7%). Further, 69.5 percent ($n = 1,285$ of 1,848) believed their child improved academically as a result of participation in the Virtual Summer School program.

Notably, over half (52.3%, or 925 out of 1,768) reported that if the Dallas ISD Virtual Summer School were not available, their child would have been without any summer academic

programming. Parents rated their child's overall satisfaction with all aspects of the program at 3.8, on a scale of 0 to 5. Parents rated their own overall satisfaction with all aspects of the program experience at a 3.5. When asked about their plans for summer 2021, 862 parents of the 1,844 who responded to the item (46.7%) indicated that they plan to enroll their child in a Dallas ISD summer program based on the summer 2020 experience (765 out of 1,844, or 41.5% indicated that they were still undecided). Parents who planned to enroll their child in a Dallas ISD summer program in 2021 rated their overall satisfaction with the program at a 3.9 out of 5.0. Parents who were undecided rated their overall satisfaction with the program at a 3.4, while those who planned not to enroll their child in 2021 rated their overall satisfaction at a 2.8.

The last survey item was an open-ended question soliciting additional feedback regarding the program. A total of 480 parents provided substantive comments to this item. Nearly a quarter of respondents ($n = 112$; 23.3%) used the opportunity to express their personal gratitude for the program and its teachers, frequently referencing challenges that virtual instruction can bring and how well campus staff overcame them. While feedback was generally positive, 70 parents (14.6%) reported frustration with various technical issues.

What were program staff perceptions of the Virtual Summer School program?

The evaluator utilized SurveyMonkey, an online survey development tool, to craft and administer a staff survey.

Overall, 724 respondents completed the survey, resulting in a 48.7 percent response rate. Of the 724 respondents, 98.3 percent ($n = 712$) were teachers. The remaining 12 respondents were support staff ($n = 8$) and administrators ($n = 4$). Overall, the majority of respondents (73.4%, $n = 469$) felt the technology component of the program worked well. Over half (57.6%) of respondents ($n = 382$) rated the quality of the professional development they received positively. Finally, respondents were generally satisfied with the number of students in classrooms (84.9%, $n = 541$), but fewer than half of respondents felt that their students had adequate adult support in the home during the program (46.0%, $n = 293$).

Two-thirds of respondents commented on challenges they encountered during the implementation of the ST Math

online training ($n = 57$, 65.5%). Of these, a total of 39 teachers (68.4%) reported being disappointed with the number of trainees in the virtual classroom simultaneously and ensuing technical issues with sound and chat feed notifications.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Improve the collection of attendance data. The timing of the program along with the availability of campus data controllers was such that dropping students from rosters for non-attendance (labeling "no shows") was difficult to accomplish. In addition, the default attendance code for students was present, undermining confidence in attendance data. However, the most significant barrier to collecting quality attendance data was inconsistent collection. Determining which programs are successful requires knowing which students attended and how many days each student attended. The ELO Department should clearly communicate attendance tracking expectations and procedures and ensure all campuses adhere to daily attendance tracking procedures and follow up with specific classrooms and campuses when the procedures are not followed with fidelity.

Continue blending synchronous and asynchronous learning. The current model of combining active teacher-led instruction time on Google Classroom with independent self-paced activities for students is a research-backed best practice to maximize student learning. The addition of group work to independent work, whenever possible, may further enhance the curriculum.

Continue offering supplemental activities for students outside of core programming. Optional, supplemental STEM activities provided in partnership with Epic may help keep students engaged in virtual learning, while providing added social-emotional benefits. Consider retaining supplemental offerings in STEM while expanding to include arts-based activities and materials for students at home.

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EA20-160-4

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of the Title I, Part A program is to improve educational quality and to help ensure that all students, particularly those students at risk of not meeting challenging state academic assessment standards, meet the state's student performance standards. In 2019-20, all but four Dallas Independent School District (ISD) schools¹ received supplemental Title I, Part A funding to support at-risk students. All Dallas ISD Title I schools had schoolwide programs except for one,² which operated a targeted assistance program.

PURPOSE AND METHODS OF THE EVALUATION

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the district transitioned to at-home learning for students on March 23, 2020 (following spring break) and continued to the end of the spring semester. As a result, the student achievement data typically included in the annual Title I, Part A achievement report were unavailable for 2019-20.³ Instead, the 2019-20 report was limited to budget information and demographic characteristics of Title I teachers and students.

Multi-year data⁴ were used to examine Title I, Part A budget and demographic trends over the years. Title I, Part A funding information was obtained from the Special Revenue Funds Management department. Demographic characteristics were compiled from district data files. For the 2019-20 school year, the Dallas ISD personnel data file (as of December 10, 2019) was used for teachers, while the Dallas ISD Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) snapshot demographic file (as of October 28, 2019) was used for students.

Frequency and crosstabs analyses were computed to review teacher and student demographic characteristics overall and by student group. In 2019-20, the four schools that were excluded from the Title I school list had a total population of 3,224 students, which was about two percent of the total enrollment ($n=153,494$). Therefore, this report included total district population on all data presented.

¹ The four excluded schools were Booker T. Washington High School for the Performing and Visual Arts, William B. Travis Academy/Vanguard for the Academically Talented and Gifted, Mockingbird Elementary School, and Lakewood Elementary School.

² George Bannerman Dealey Montessori Academy.

³ Spring data typically includes end of year attendance data, graduation data, TerraNova, SUPERA, State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) 3-8, and STAAR End of Course (EOC). Four-year

EVALUATION QUESTIONS/OUTCOMES
What was the amount of funding for the Title I Program?

A total of \$87,123,576 was allocated to Title I, Part A for the 2019-20 school year (Table 1). Of the \$87,123,576, \$72,944,715 was distributed directly to schools, and \$10,618,528 was allocated to centrally administered projects that supported schools. This was a decrease of \$2,736,261 from the 2018-19 school year. When reviewed by workscope, the largest amount was for Instructional Lead Coaches (\$6,891,216) followed by HCM Resident Teachers (\$2,504,649) and Summer Learning (\$2,000,000).

Table 1: Title I, Part A Budgeted Amounts from 2016-17 to 2019-20

School Year	Campus (\$)	Non-Campus (\$)	Total (\$)
2016-17	\$60,059,207	\$12,553,762	\$76,187,116*
2017-18	\$60,376,609	\$23,855,513	\$84,232,122
2018-19	\$77,365,992	\$10,230,314	\$89,859,837*
2019-20	\$72,944,715	\$10,618,528	\$87,123,576*

Source: Special Revenue Funds Management: 04/23/20. Information for prior years was obtained from the 2018-19 Title I student achievement evaluation report (Kim, 2019).

Note: *Total included unassigned allocations: \$3,574,147 for 2016-17, \$2,263,531 for 2018-19, and \$3,560,333 for 2019-20.

What were the characteristics of the Title I teacher and student populations?

Of the 9,758 full-time teachers during 2019-20, 70 percent were female, while 30 percent were male. Thirty-four percent were African American, 32 percent were Hispanic, and 29 percent were white. The proportion of Hispanic teachers increased by one or two percentage point(s) every year from 2015-16 (27%) to 2019-20 (32%). Eleven percent were new to the district in 2019-20. Most had Bachelor degrees (68%), while 23 percent had Master degrees or doctoral degrees.

In 2019-20, Dallas ISD served 153,494 students in early childhood (EC) through grade twelve, a decrease of 1,743 students from 2018-19 ($n=155,237$). Like last year, the largest decreases were in the elementary grades (Figure 1).

longitudinal graduation rates for federal accountability purposes were not available since all districts and campuses received a label of "Not Rated: Declared State of Disaster" for the 2020 accountability cycle due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

⁴ Four years of data were used for funding information from 2016-17 to 2019-20, while five years of data were used for demographic information from 2015-16 to 2019-20.

Prekindergarten (PK) showed the largest decrease (n decrease=-949) from 2018-19 to 2019-20, but the largest increase (n increase=+584) from 2017-18 and 2018-19.

Figure 1: Student Enrollment Changes by Grade



Source: PEIMS demographic files: 10/30/17, 10/26/18 and 10/28/19.

Note: G=grade. PK=prekindergarten. K=kindergarten. $n=156,804$ in 2017-18, 155,237 in 2018-19, and 153,494 in 2019-20. See Appendix A in the full report for the number of students and percentage distribution by student group for each grade from 2015-16 to 2019-20.

During the last five school years (2015-16 to 2019-20), the percentage distribution between male (51%) and female (49%) students was stable. By ethnicity, Hispanic (70 to 71%; 71% in 2019-20) and African American (21 to 23%; 21% in 2019-20) students made up the majority of the student population. The proportion of English learners (ELs) increased by one percentage point from 2015-16 (43%) to 2016-17 (44%), remained the same in 2017-18 (44%), and then increased by one percentage point the next two years (45% in 2018-19 and 46% in 2019-20). Between 84 and 87 percent of the district students were identified as economically disadvantaged (84% in 2019-20). Special education students made up between eight and nine percent of the district students (9% in 2019-20).

Additional Title I Reports

The Title I evaluation includes this report as well as separate reports for centrally administered Title I programs. These reports are available at <https://www.dallasisd.org/Page/62222>.

REFERENCE

Kim, M. (2019). 2018-19 Evaluation of Title I: Comparative Measures of Student Achievement. Dallas, TX. Dallas Independent School District.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The goals of the Early Learning department are to improve kindergarten (K) readiness and to ensure that all students are reading on grade level by the end of grade two. The budget for the department in 2019-20 was \$22,309,917, an increase from last year (\$19,694,012).

The purpose of this report is to summarize the 2019-20 context, process, and outcomes of the Dallas Independent School District (Dallas ISD) Early Learning initiatives.¹ Contextual information about the services provided to children from birth through grade two was gathered through review of internal documents and interviews with Early Learning central staff members. Process information was examined through analyses of the *Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS)* and an early learning teacher survey. The evaluation also included analyses of K readiness and student academic achievement data through grade two, when available.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, all Dallas ISD campuses transitioned to at-home learning as of March 23, 2020. As most End-of-Year (EOY) assessments were canceled, evaluation questions relating to those assessments were omitted from the report.² After the transition, the department supported district families by creating daily lessons aligned with the district curriculum for families to work through with their prekindergarten (PK) through grade-two students.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS/OUTCOMES

What was the context of the Early Learning programs and the related 2019-20 initiatives?

The first Early Learning department goal was increasing K readiness through the provision of educational services to children from birth to age five through the expansion of the PK program. The second was to ensure that all students were reading on grade level by the end of grade two. Thus, early learning staff members endeavored to increase demand for and access to PK through increased enrollment,

extend the continuum of care through community resources to support children from birth, increase classroom quality, and support reading and language acquisition in K and beyond.

To increase access and demand through enrollment, the district continued to add partner sites; the number of PK partnerships increased from 27 in 2017-18, to 32 in 2018-19, and to 37 in 2019-20.³ Early learning staff members fostered community partnerships with Commit!⁴ and PK partnership sites. To expand the continuum of care, students from birth to age five could also receive services through the Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY)⁵ program and AVANCE.⁶ The district also worked with Stand for Children to provide families with the opportunity to receive home visits through the Parent Teacher Home Visit Project.

To improve classroom quality, the Early Learning department continued using PK and K through grade-two specialists. Specialists provided individual support for teachers. The district employed 37 PK specialists, 53 K through grade-two specialists, 16 campus lead specialists, and six floating specialists.⁷ Specialists participated in professional development (PD) programs and then provided teachers with training.⁸ Department staff members also provided 2019 summer PD for PK through grade-two teachers through the Personalized Professional Learning and Development (P2LD) program. Additionally, the Early Learning department provided training for teachers in PK partnership sites and for teaching assistants.

Another attempt to improve quality was a focus on assessing student-teacher interactions. The *CLASS*,⁹ an observation instrument, was administered by Southern Methodist University (SMU) to measure the quality of teacher-student interactions.

Finally, to ensure that students were reading on grade level, there was an increased focus on reading and language acquisition. Department staff continued to revise instructional materials and related curricula based on the

¹ Detailed methodologies are available in the full report. Portions of this report have been adapted from Hinkley and Rowles (2019).

² *State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR)*, *TerraNova*, *SUPERA*, and End of Year (EOY) *Istation's Indicators of Progress (ISIP)*, *Measures of Academic Progress (MAP)*, and *Texas Kindergarten Entry Assessment (TX-KEA)* were intended to be used as measures of student achievement for the 2019-20 school year, but these assessments were canceled after the transition to at-home learning. Early Learning reports prior to this year contain these data.

³ As of January 2020. Dallas ISD teachers taught students in all settings.

⁴ For more information, see <http://commit2dallas.org/>.

⁵ For more information, see Tyree (2020).

⁶ For more information, see <https://avance-dallas.org/>.

⁷ As of January 2020. In 2019-20, all PK classrooms had a specialist. In January 2020, 28 of the K through grade-two specialists were moved from schools rated as Breakthrough in the Local Accountability System to three of the lowest performing schools until the transition to at-home learning. After the transition to at-home learning, specialists checked on teachers and answered questions, but they did not continue to coach teachers.

⁸ A list of training given to and provided by specialists is available in the full report.

⁹ For more information, see <http://teachstone.com/classroom-assessment-scoring-system/>.

new Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS). Teachers also continued to receive specialist coaching and other reading-related PD.

What were the characteristics and continuous enrollment rates of early learning students?

In 2019-20, 45,549 students enrolled in early childhood (EC) education through grade two, a decline from 46,457 in 2018-19. A similar pattern of decline was observed in K (10,992 in 2018-19 to 10,938 in 2019-20). Over half of the students were male (52%) and/or Hispanic (68%), and most were economically disadvantaged (89%). English learners comprised 49 percent of students. Seventy-seven percent of students who attended Dallas ISD PK in 2018-19 returned to Dallas ISD for K in 2019-20. This means that almost a quarter of 2018-19 PK students did not remain in the district in 2019-20. Sixty-nine percent of students were continuously enrolled from 2016-17 (their K year) to 2019-20 (most students' grade-three year).

What were the early learning teacher effectiveness ratings?

Sixty-seven percent of all early learning teachers (EC through grade two) received a 2018-19 Teacher Excellence Initiative (TEI) effectiveness level of Proficient I or above.¹⁰ The percentages of teachers rated Proficient I or above for each grade level were as follows: 69 percent for PK, 66 percent for K, 63 percent for grade one, and 68 percent for grade two.

What were the teacher perceptions of the early learning specialists?

Early learning teachers were surveyed about their perceptions of the specialists. The response rate for early learning teachers was 59 percent. Overall, PK survey respondents were satisfied with the professionalism of their specialists (96%), the quality of support they received from their specialists (91% to 93%), and the services provided by their specialists overall (89%). The most-cited successes were idea generation and brainstorming ($n = 45$), observation and feedback ($n = 40$), and specialists providing quick and consistent responses to teacher needs and being willing to help teachers (for both, $n = 36$). The most commonly cited challenges were scheduling and availability of the specialists ($n = 40$) and time limitations of both the specialists and teachers ($n = 20$).

K through grade-two survey respondents were satisfied with the professionalism of their specialists (93%), the quality of support they received from their specialists (87% to 92%), and the services provided by their specialists overall (85%). The most-cited successes were specialists providing materials and resources ($n = 54$), providing hands-on help

with classroom organization and set up ($n = 27$), and the general support provided by the specialist and observation and feedback (for both, $n = 26$). The most commonly cited challenges were lack of consistency in specialists (i.e., changing specialists midyear; $n = 45$), scheduling and availability of specialists ($n = 37$), and time limitations of both the specialists and teachers ($n = 26$).

What was the quality of early learning instruction as measured by CLASS?

Consistent with the last three years, overall results of CLASS indicated that district teachers were strongest in emotional support (98% of PK teachers and 87% of K through grade-two teachers met the threshold in spring 2020, respectively) and classroom organization (93% of PK teachers and 86% of K through grade-two teachers) and weakest in instructional support (60% of PK teachers and 54% of K through grade-two teachers). Even so, the percentage of teachers who met or exceeded quality thresholds trended upward from fall 2019 to spring 2020 for all three domains and overall for PK. For K through grade-two teachers there was a slight increase overall with mixed results in trends for domains. When reviewed overall and by grade, the average scores of the observed teachers were at or above the quality thresholds for both semesters on all three domains (emotional support, classroom organization, and instructional support).

In spring 2020, 59 percent of PK teachers and 51 percent of K through grade-two teachers met or exceeded the quality threshold in all three domains.¹¹ Compared to spring 2018 and 2019, increased percentages of teachers met or exceeded the quality threshold overall and for all three domains in 2020.

How did early learning student scores change throughout the 2019-20 school year?

Early learning students participated in several assessments in 2019-20. For K readiness, 8,857 students took the Literacy Reading domain of *TX-KEA*; 72 percent scored *On Track*, indicating they were K ready, a slight increase from 2018-19 (70%). A higher percentage of Dallas ISD (DISD) PK students (78%) were K ready than No DISD PK students (41%). Even so, about a fifth (22%) of DISD PK students did not meet the K Ready standard on *TX-KEA*.

More K students than grade-one and grade-two students scored at or above grade level at MOY (Table 1). The majority of K students met the MOY grade-level standard on *TX-KEA* reading (75%) and mathematics (65%). In contrast, between 31 and 49 percent met the MOY standards on grade-one *ISIP* (44%), grade-two *ISIP* (48%), *MAP* reading (49%), and *MAP* mathematics (31%).

¹⁰ For more information on TEI, see the 2018-19 report (Barton, 2020). TEI scores are typically reported in the fall for the prior school year, thus, 2018-19 scores are examined in the 2019-20 report.

¹¹ SMU conducted CLASS observations from January 2020 until 03/12/20; the data were incomplete because of the transition to at-home learning and results should be reviewed with caution.

When scores from BOY to MOY were examined, the percentage of K students scoring at or above grade level increased from BOY to MOY on *TX-KEA* reading (61% to 75%) and mathematics (49% to 65%), whereas results were the same for grade-one *ISIP* (44%) and about the same for grade-two *ISIP* (49% to 48%). In comparison to 2018-19, the percentages of K students meeting the standards for BOY *TX-KEA* vocabulary and mathematics were lower in 2019-20. For grades one and two, the percentages of students meeting the standards for *ISIP* were lower in 2019-20 than in 2018-19 at both BOY and MOY.

Table 1: 2018-19 and 2019-20 Percentage of Students Performing At or Above Grade Level on Reading and Mathematics Assessments by Grade

Exam	BOY		MOY		EOY	
	2018	2019	2018	2019	2018	2019
	-19	-20	-19	-20	-19	-20
	%	%	%	%	%	%
K						
<i>TX-KEA-V</i>	70	61		75		
<i>TX-KEA-M</i>	67	49		65		
Grade One*						
<i>ISIP</i>	49	44	48	44	55	
Grade Two						
<i>ISIP</i>	54	49	53	48	55	
<i>MAP-R</i>		46		49		
<i>MAP-M</i>		36		31		

Source: PEIMS district database: 10/26/18 (2018-19) and 10/31/19 (2019-20). *TX-KEA*: 05/13/20 (2018-19 BOY) and 02/13/20 (2019-20 BOY and MOY). *ISIP*: 11/05/18 (2018-19 BOY), 02/04/19 (2018-19 MOY), 06/05/19 (2018-19 EOY), 11/01/19 (2019-20 BOY), and 02/05/20 (2019-20 MOY). *MAP*: 02/11/20 (2019-20 BOY and MOY). None of these assessments were given at EOY in 2019-20.

Note: V = the vocabulary subscale of *TX-KEA*, a component of the reading assessment given over time. M = mathematics. R = the reading subscale of *MAP*. * no multi-administration mathematics assessment was administered in grade one in 2018-19 or 2019-20. Grey = the assessment was not administered in that timeframe. *MAP* scores are only reported for the 2-5 version of the assessment here.

CIRCLE scores varied by domain. The percentage of PK students scoring *On Track* on the Phonological Awareness domain of *CIRCLE* were 69 percent (wave 1) and 79 percent (wave 2). On the Rapid Vocabulary domain, percentages were 47 (wave 1) and 61 (wave 2) percent.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Continue efforts to retain Dallas ISD PK students in the district. Twenty-three percent of 2017-18 and 2018-19 PK students did not remain in the district the following year for K. Efforts to increase enrollment (partnership sites, teacher home visits, etc.) should continue.

Continue to implement the early learning initiatives with a focus on language and literacy development. The percentage of students scoring at or above grade level on *TX-KEA* vocabulary and mathematics and *ISIP* declined from 2018-19 to 2019-20 for students in grades K to two. The Early Learning department should continue its focus on increasing K readiness and ensuring students are reading on grade level by the end of grade two. In particular, the district should continue increasing K readiness by increasing access to and the quality of PK. Like previous years, a higher percentage of students who attended Dallas ISD PK (78%) were K ready in comparison to those who did not attend (41%).

Continue to train teachers to provide more effective instructional support for students. Overall, the district performed well on *CLASS* with an upward trend in scores over time; however, 40 percent of PK teachers and 46 percent of K to grade-two teachers did not meet the quality threshold for instructional support in spring 2020. Thus, the department should continue efforts to improve these scores.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Student Success Initiative (SSI) was created by the 76th Texas Legislature in 1999 and modified by the 81st Texas Legislature in 2009. SSI was designed to ensure that all students in grades five and eight receive the instruction and support they need to be academically successful in reading and mathematics. According to the initiative, accelerated instruction (AI) must be provided at no cost after each *State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR)* administration for “at-risk” students and for those who failed to meet the Approaches Grade Level or Above (Approaches+) performance standard. This policy includes students who did not meet Approaches+ but were advanced to the next grade through a unanimous Grade Placement Committee (GPC) decision.

AI requirements were expanded to include high school students during the 83rd Texas Legislative session with the passage of House Bill 5 (TEC §28.0217). This bill requires school districts to provide AI in the applicable subject area each time a student fails to meet Approaches+ on a *STAAR End of Course (EOC)*. *STAAR EOC* subjects include Algebra I, Biology, English I, English II, and U.S. History.

House Bill 5 requires that State Compensatory Education (SCE) funds be used to provide AI for students who failed *STAAR 3-8/STAAR EOC* before the funds can be used for other purposes. In addition, House Bill 5 amended TEC §29.081 to require each school district to evaluate the effectiveness of the district AI programs for high school students and to hold an annual public hearing to review the results of the evaluation.

The purpose of the 2019-20 SSI and AI evaluation was 1) to evaluate the effectiveness of the AI provided to students who failed grade-five or grade-eight *STAAR* mathematics or reading subtests and high school students who failed *STAAR EOCs* and 2) to describe the GPC promotion rates of SSI students. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, Dallas ISD students transitioned to at-home learning beginning March 23, 2020 (after Spring Break) and continued through the end of the 2019-20 school year. Likewise, TEA waived *STAAR* testing requirements and GPC requirements for the remainder of 2019-20. As a result, the scope of this report is limited in comparison to previous years.¹

The current evaluation provided information known prior to the district transition to at-home learning including funding,

the rates of high school students who failed December EOCs, the services provided to students in fall 2019 who failed assessments in 2018-19, and the services that were provided to students who failed the December 2019 *STAAR EOC* administration. Because of unavailable data, the evaluator was unable to conduct the other analyses generally reported in this evaluation including services provided to students after failing in April 2020 (grade five and eight students) and after failing in May (grades five, eight, and high school), the analyses of the impact of accelerated instruction on scores from one administration to the next, and the rate of students promoted through the GPC.

The evaluation was based on a review of legislation pertaining to SSI and AI, district funding documents, course files, campus-based information forms, and *STAAR EOC* data. AI information was collected for the June 2019 (all levels) and December 2019 (high school) administrations using course files and information forms. Course files were used to gather information about AI that students were provided through Applications and Study Skills Courses (ASSCs).² Principals were provided information forms to document the AI provided outside of ASSCs to students who failed one or more grade-five, grade-eight, or high school subtests. Emails about the forms were sent to campus principals and office managers after testing data were released. Campus staff members had four weeks to complete forms after each administration. The evaluator sent weekly reminders to principals of campuses who had not yet completed the forms. Campus staff members indicated the hours of AI provided outside of ASSCs during a typical week, when AI was provided, and the campus role of the most common AI provider. Staff members completed multiple entries for students who failed more than one subtest. Frequency analyses were conducted on ASSC enrollment data and campus information form data.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS/OUTCOMES

What was the source and amount of SSI and accelerated instruction funding?

A total of \$708,195.81 in SCE funding was used to pay campus staff members to provide AI during the 2019-20 school year (Table 1). An additional \$29,680.00 was spent

¹ The notice from the TEA detailing the cancellation of *STAAR* and *STAAR EOCs* can be found at <https://tea.texas.gov/about-tea/news-and-multimedia/correspondence/taa-letters/cancellation-of-staar-testing-for-the-remainder-of-the-school-year>. The *STAAR* and *STAAR EOC* assessments were suspended for the April 2020, May 2020, and June 2020 administrations. Grade five and eight students who typically must

pass *STAAR* reading and mathematics to be promoted to the next grade or be promoted by a committee consisting of the principal (or designee), teacher, and parent or guardian were promoted with local discretion. Portions of this report were modified from Hinkley (2019).

² ASSCs are for local credit only and designed for students who did not meet Approaches+ on *STAAR* subtests or are “at risk” of failing.

on curricular resources (\$12,800.00 on Algebra I and \$16,880.00 on Biology).^{3,4}

Table 1: 2019-20 State Compensatory Education Funding Allocated for Accelerated Instruction

Level	Extra-Duty Pay
Elementary School	\$301,617.95
Elementary/Middle School	\$10,582.40
Middle School	\$213,514.54
Middle/High School	\$5,616.00
High School	\$176,864.92
Total	\$708,195.81

Source: District budget department, received 05/04/20.

Note: Extra-duty pay reflects only State Compensatory Education funding and includes in-school and out-of-school tutoring.

What were the rates of students who did not meet STAAR Approaches+ and what progress did they demonstrate?

In 2020, no STAAR assessments were given for students in grades five and eight; therefore, no data is available.

For high school students, STAAR EOCs were administered in December 2019. This administration included mostly retesters. Students were required to take STAAR EOCs at each administration until they attained the Approaches+ standard or graduated. Table 2 displays the rates of students who did not meet Approaches+ by exam for the December administration.

Table 2: 2019-20 STAAR EOC Failure Rates in December by Exam

Exam	Tested <i>n</i> (% Fail)
Algebra I	1,010 (63.2)
Biology	1,112 (63.3)
English I	4,503 (71.8)
English II	3,123 (76.7)
US Hist	444 (54.3)

Source: STAAR EOC file dated 01/16/20 (December).

Note: Fail = did not meet Approaches+. US Hist = United States history.

What services were provided to SSI students who failed grade-five or grade-eight STAAR?

In grade five, AI was provided through individual or small-group instruction. In grade eight, AI was provided through individual instruction, small-group instruction, or ASSCs. Data would typically be provided to document the services students were provided after failing in 2018-19, April 2020, and May 2020. However, only services provided after failure in 2018-19 were available during the 2019-20

school year because of cancelation of STAAR. Those results are provided below.

Grade-Five and Grade-Eight 2018-19 STAAR Failures

A total of 4,140 students did not meet Approaches+ (failed) on a 2018-19 STAAR subtest and remained in the district for 2019-20. Of these, 2,211 students failed grade-five ($n = 1,097$) or grade-eight ($n = 1,114$) STAAR mathematics. Additionally, 3,480 students in grade five ($n = 1,535$) or grade eight ($n = 1,945$) failed STAAR reading. These totals include 1,551 students who failed both STAAR mathematics and reading.⁵ Even though most students with failing STAAR scores in 2018-19 were promoted to the next grade, AI was required to be provided at the campuses at which the students were enrolled in 2019-20.

In fall 2019, students who failed at least one STAAR subtest in 2018-19 were enrolled in ASSCs at 47 Dallas ISD campuses.⁶ Students attended these classes for approximately 3.75 hours per week.⁷ Thirty-five percent of students that failed STAAR reading or mathematics were enrolled in at least one relevant ASSC (some students may have been enrolled in ASSCs for both subjects; therefore they could be included in the percentage twice).

To determine what AI students were provided outside of ASSCs at the beginning of the 2019-20 school year, campus principals were sent information forms. Because some students failed multiple subtests, there were 5,691 failure occurrences (grade five = 2,632; grade eight = 3,059).⁸ Some principals reported occurrences in which only ASSCs were used to provide AI (3% of failure occurrences); 97 percent of these students were enrolled in ASSCs relevant to the subtests they failed.

For failure occurrences with available data, when AI was provided outside of ASSCs after 2018-19, campus staff members most often reported providing 1-1.99 hours of AI per week (32% of occurrences). This was followed by 3-3.99 hours (20%), and 2-2.99 hours and 4-4.99 hours (both 13%). AI most often was provided during school (62% of occurrences) or after school (26%). A teacher with content expertise most often provided AI (95% of occurrences). Campus staff members indicated that the students were no longer enrolled at their schools for less than one percent of failure occurrences. Campus staff members reported that no AI was provided for three percent of failure occurrences.

The student was not enrolled in an ASSC nor provided AI outside of an ASSC for 103 failure occurrences (grade-five mathematics = 14, grade-five reading = 4, grade-eight

³ No money was spent on resources for the other subjects in 2019-20.

⁴ Typically, money is spent over the summer to fund SSI summer school, EOC Test Prep, and June testing. STAAR testing and the related summer school programming did not occur in 2019-20 because of the district transition to at-home learning. However, the money was used to provide virtual summer learning with a focus on reading and mathematics to the neediest 20 percent of students at each prekindergarten through grade-eight campus, across grade levels, in an effort to reduce student learning losses related to COVID-19.

⁵ Data were extracted from a file provided by the Office of Institutional Research on 11/21/19.

⁶ Some students were enrolled in ASSCs at the high school level after being promoted.

⁷ Calculations were based on bell schedules posted on school websites (Hinkley, 2017 & Hinkley & Sanguras, 2016).

⁸ No information was available for 706 failure occurrences at campuses where staff members did not complete information forms.

mathematics = 32, and grade-eight reading = 53). These instances comprised two percent of all grade-five and grade-eight 2018-19 reading and mathematics failure occurrences.

What services were provided to students who failed STAAR EOC?

High school AI was provided through individual instruction, small-group instruction, or ASSCs. Data would typically be provided to document the services students were provided after failing in 2018-19, December 2019, and May 2020. However, only services provided after failure in 2018-19 and December 2019 were available during the 2019-20 school year because of cancelation of STAAR EOCs. Those results are provided below.

2018-19 STAAR EOC Failures

A total of 8,135 students enrolled in 2019-20 did not achieve Approaches+ (failed) on at least one STAAR EOC as of the June 2019 administration. Some students failed more than one exam.⁹

Students who failed STAAR EOCs attended ASSCs at 19 high schools for an average of 3.75 hours per week.¹⁰ Nine percent of students that failed STAAR EOCs were enrolled in at least one relevant ASSC (some students may have been enrolled in ASSCs for multiple subjects; therefore, they could be in the percentage more than once).

To determine what AI students were provided outside of ASSCs between the beginning of the 2019-20 school year and the December 2019 administration, high school campus principals completed information forms. Because some students failed multiple exams, there were 14,126 failure occurrences.¹¹ One campus reported occurrences in which only ASSCs were used to provide AI (less than 1% of failure occurrences); none of these students were enrolled in ASSCs relevant to the subtests they had yet to pass.

For failure occurrences with available data, when AI was provided outside of ASSCs after testing in June 2019, campus staff members most often reported providing 1-1.99 hours of AI per week (40% of occurrences). This was followed by 3-3.99 hours (15%) and 2-2.99 hours (12%). AI most often was provided after school (45% of occurrences) or during school (38%). A teacher with content expertise most often provided the AI (88% of occurrences). Campus staff members reported that no AI was provided in seven percent of failure occurrences and marked “unknown” for less than one percent of failure occurrences.

The student was not enrolled in an ASSC nor provided AI outside of an ASSC for 861 failure occurrences (7% of all STAAR EOC failure occurrences).

December 2019 STAAR EOC Failures

A total of 6,611 students enrolled in the district in February 2020 failed at least one STAAR EOC as of the December 2019 administration; some students failed more than one exam.¹²

Students who failed STAAR EOCs attended ASSCs at 17 high schools for an average of 3.75 hours per week.¹³ Six percent of students that failed STAAR were enrolled in at least one relevant ASSC (some students may have been enrolled in ASSCs for multiple subjects; therefore, they could be in the percentage more than once).

To determine what AI students were provided outside of ASSCs after the December EOCs, 31 high school campus principals were sent information forms. Because some students failed multiple exams, there were 11,529 failure occurrences.¹⁴ Three campuses reported occurrences in which only ASSCs were used to provide AI (16 failure occurrences). Of these, no students were enrolled in ASSCs relevant to the subtests they failed.

For failure occurrences with available data, when AI was provided outside of ASSCs after testing in December 2019, campus staff members most often reported providing 2-2.99 hours of AI per week (43% of occurrences), then 1-1.99 hours (26%), and 3-3.99 hours (14%). AI most often was provided during school (35% of occurrences), after school (27%), or on Saturday (25%). A teacher with content expertise most often provided the AI (87% of occurrences). Campus staff members reported that no AI was provided in five percent of failure occurrences. Campus staff members marked “unknown” for two percent of failure occurrences.

The student was not enrolled in an ASSC nor provided AI outside of an ASSC for 514 failure occurrences (5% of the STAAR EOC failure occurrences).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Most students who failed STAAR 3-8/STAAR EOC were provided some type of AI.

Assign a central staff member to document the services provided under SSI and accelerated instruction for high school students. Lack of data during the school year (no data were available for the 3,748 students at campuses for which data were not completed) prohibits accurate analyses. The district should appoint a central staff member

⁹ Data were extracted from a file provided by the Office of Institutional Research on 11/21/19 and included students from all administrations that had yet to pass a STAAR EOC. Students must test until they pass or graduate.

¹⁰ Calculations were based on bell schedules posted on school websites (Hinkley, 2017 & Hinkley & Sanguras, 2016).

¹¹ No information was available for 1,512 students at campuses where staff members did not complete information forms.

¹² Data were extracted from a file provided by the Office of Institutional Research on 03/09/20 and included students from all administrations that had yet to pass a STAAR EOC. Students must test until they pass or graduate.

¹³ Calculations were based on bell schedules posted on school websites (Hinkley, 2017 & Hinkley & Sanguras, 2016).

¹⁴ No information was available for 1,530 failure occurrences where staff members did not complete information forms.

to monitor and track accelerated instruction, thereby ensuring students are provided the services they need to be successful.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY) is a home visiting program for parents of three-, four-, and five-year-olds that involves training parents to be their children's first teachers.¹ The program targets school readiness and parent involvement and is the largest of the 11 HIPPY programs in Texas.² In 2019-20, HIPPY Dallas Independent School District (ISD) had a total budget of \$2,152,979, including \$799,400 from the Dallas ISD general operating funds, \$1,020,611 from Title I funds, and \$332,968 from external sources.³ This was a decrease from 2018-19 (\$2,408,737). In response to the COVID-19 pandemic in spring 2020, Dallas ISD HIPPY staff members switched to virtual visits with families.

PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION

The purpose of this evaluation was to evaluate and report outcomes of the HIPPY program.⁴ Specifically, this evaluation reports (1) characteristic data for participants and families, (2) *Ages and Stages Questionnaire, Third Edition* (ASQ-3) data as a measure of development, and (3) kindergarten (K) readiness assessment outcomes.⁵

EVALUATION QUESTIONS/OUTCOMES

What were the HIPPY program and student characteristics in 2019-20?

Methodology

HIPPY Dallas ISD program implementation information primarily came from an interview with the HIPPY Dallas ISD program director and data files from the Texas HIPPY office. The evaluator conducted frequency analyses to summarize participant characteristics.

Results⁶

In 2019-20, HIPPY Dallas ISD served 884 children and 735 parents. Enrollment was highest in HIPPY Year 2 (30%).⁷ Most children (87%) and parents (88%) in the program were

Hispanic. Just over half of the children were female (55%) and most participated with a biological parent (96%). A majority of the parents were married (62%); completed a high school education, GED, or less (73%); and/or participated using the Spanish curriculum (76%).

Fewer children participated in HIPPY Dallas ISD this year ($N = 884$) compared to 2018-19 ($N = 1,253$).⁸ While the number of students who completed the curriculum years decreased from 1,060 in 2018-19 (85%) to 760 in 2019-20 (86%), the percentage of completers remained comparable.

What were the retention rates of HIPPY participants from 2018-19 to 2019-20?

Methodology

The evaluator used frequency analyses to determine the number of HIPPY children who remained enrolled in the program from 2018-19 to 2019-20.

Results

Of the 562 2018-19 HIPPY Year 1 children, 223 (40%) remained enrolled in 2019-20 as HIPPY Year 2 children.⁹ Of the 394 2018-19 HIPPY Year 2 children, 247 (63%) remained enrolled in 2019-20 as HIPPY Year 3 children.¹⁰

What percentage of HIPPY participants scored at or above developmental benchmarks?

Methodology

Texas HIPPY provided the evaluator with ASQ-3 data for Dallas ISD HIPPY students on July 7, 2020.¹¹ The ASQ-3 contains five domains (Communication, Gross Motor, Fine Motor, Problem Solving, and Personal-Social). Each domain score has an associated cut off indicating on-schedule development. Both the assessment questions and the cut offs for each domain vary by the age of the child at the time of assessment.¹² The evaluator examined the EOY (assessments given between May 18, and

¹In 2019-20, HIPPY Dallas ISD began including some two-year olds in their program to target children for earlier intervention; however, the curriculum was not yet widely disseminated.

²As reported by the Dallas ISD HIPPY Director on 01/29/20.

³As reported by the Early Learning department on 01/21/20. The grants office reported \$974,258 in Title I funds for HIPPY as of 02/28/20.

⁴Portions of this evaluation were adapted from Rowles and Hinkley (2019).

⁵Typically, this report examines *Bracken School Readiness Assessment 3rd Edition* scores (Bracken, 2002) and other long-term data including *TerraNova*, *SUPERA*, and *State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness*. However, these assessments were cancelled in 2020 because of the district transition to at-home learning due to COVID-19.

⁶Texas HIPPY data files received 06/25/20 (characteristics) and 07/07/20 (ASQ-3).

⁷The HIPPY curriculum consists of three years: Year 1 (first year) through Year 3 (last year). HIPPY Dallas ISD also engaged with a two-year-old curriculum in 2019-20.

⁸The decrease in participants was attributed to a decrease in the overall caseloads of HIPPY staff members. The smaller caseloads followed best practices set forth by HIPPY USA.

⁹Fifty-eight percent did not return, two percent repeated Year 1, and 0.2 percent completed Year 3.

¹⁰Thirty-seven percent did not return and 0.3 percent repeated Year 2.

¹¹See Squires and Bricker (2009) for more information on ASQ-3.

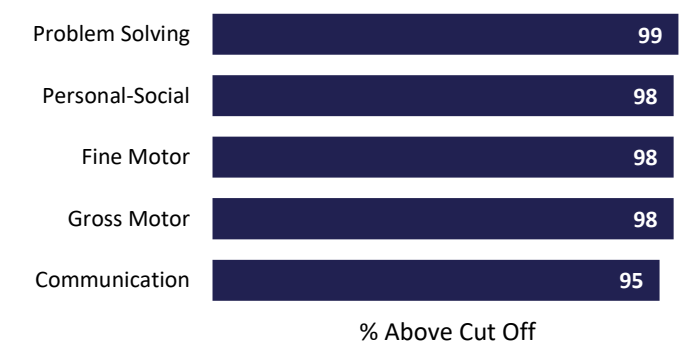
¹²Cut scores were available for children aged one month to 66 months old at the time of assessment. Children older than 66 months at the time of assessment were excluded from analyses ($n = 27$).

June 09, 2020) ASQ-3 data to determine the percentage of students who scored at or above the cut off for each domain.

Results

EOY data were available for 446 2019-20 HIPPY participants (50% of enrolled participants). Across domains, the vast majority of participants scored at or above ASQ-3 cut scores (Figure 1).

Figure 1: 2019-20 Percentage of HIPPY Participants that Met ASQ-3 Cut Scores



Source: Provided by Texas HIPPY on 07/07/20.
Note: Tested n = 446.

What percentage of students were kindergarten ready in 2019-20?

Methodology

The evaluator examined the *Texas Kindergarten Early Assessment (TX-KEA)* to measure K readiness. *TX-KEA* is a multidimensional assessment; however, the evaluator used beginning-of-year (BOY) *TX-KEA* Emergent Literacy: Reading (the domain equated with K readiness) data to examine the K-readiness rates of former HIPPY students and a matched non-HIPPY control group.¹³ The matched control group was created using propensity score matching to identify students who took the same exam but did not participate in the HIPPY program.¹⁴ The evaluator used *chi-square* analyses and Cohen's *w*¹⁵ to test the differences in K-readiness rates between the two groups.

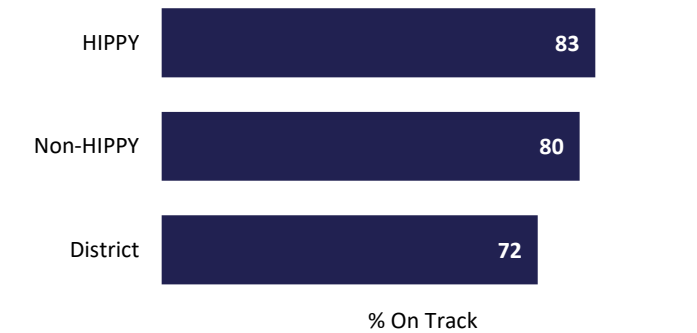
Results

A slightly greater percentage of former HIPPY participants (83%) were K ready as measured by BOY *TX-KEA* when compared to matched non-HIPPY participants (80%; Figure 2). This difference was neither statistically nor practically significant, $\chi^2(1) = .16, p = .67, w = .03$.

¹³ For the analysis, the English and Spanish administrations were combined into one file to allow for examination of overall student performance. The percentage of students *On Track* was used. The BOY *TX-KEA* data file was dated 10/29/19.
¹⁴ Non-HIPPY matched controls included students who took BOY *TX-KEA* in kindergarten who did not participate in HIPPY but had the same

Although the HIPPY students were not statistically tested in comparison to the district (72%), the HIPPY students also outperformed the district on BOY *TX-KEA*.

Figure 2: 2019-20 Percentage of Kindergarten-Ready Students on BOY *TX-KEA* Literacy Reading for Former HIPPY Participants, Matched Non-HIPPY Comparisons, and the District



Source: *TX-KEA* data file dated 10/29/19.
Note: HIPPY n = 80; Non-HIPPY n = 80; district n = 8,857.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Continue to seek areas for improvements in effectiveness. The program has enjoyed pre/post gains in developmental skills in every previous year (Rowles & Hinkley, 2019). This year, at least 95 percent of HIPPY students met ASQ-3 thresholds across domains. HIPPY leadership should continue to nurture its staff and review processes to maintain these strong results.

Include HIPPY in the evaluation of other major Dallas ISD early childhood programs. Many children in the Dallas ISD attend more than one prekindergarten program. Thus, it has become more difficult to evaluate the efficacy of any one early childhood program exclusively, particularly for long term outcomes. Evaluation and program managers should consider program participation and dosage as a variable in future evaluations of early childhood education. Data structures and systems should be carefully reviewed and enhanced to support this goal.

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probability of HIPPY enrollment. This methodology allows for group comparisons with reduced concern about systematic differences that may confound the effects of the treatment. For a detailed methodology on propensity score matching see Palladino (2016).
¹⁵ Cohen's *w* values of 0.1, 0.3, and 0.5 are considered small, medium, and large effect sizes, respectively (Cohen, 1988).

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Homeless Education Program (HEP) was designed to serve homeless students and their families, primarily within the Dallas Independent School District (Dallas ISD). The purpose of the HEP was to facilitate the enrollment, attendance, and academic success of homeless students. Primary program services included Drop-In Centers at 15 Dallas ISD high schools, removing enrollment barriers for homeless students, and working with the Dallas ISD Student Transportation Services to ensure homeless students could attend their schools of origin. The HEP also provided homeless students with tools to help them succeed, such as school and hygiene supplies. Additionally, the HEP provided mentoring experiences and afterschool programs. Tutoring services were provided through After8toEducate (After8). Finally, the HEP strove to reduce the stigma and stereotypes surrounding homelessness. The HEP staff members helped educate teachers, school staff members, and the community on the rights and issues of the homeless and services that the HEP provides.

The HEP is federally funded through the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, which is a U.S. federal law that provides funding and protections for homeless individuals. The total budget for the 2019-20 school year was \$499,329, an increase from \$424,028 during the 2018-19 school year. The 2019-20 budget included \$317,435 from the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act and \$181,894 from Title I, Part A (as of February 28, 2020).

PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION

The purpose of this evaluation was to describe the context, process, and outcomes of the HEP program in 2019-20.¹ Specifically, the evaluation reports 1) characteristics of the Dallas ISD homeless students, 2) services the HEP provided, and 3) changes in the status of homeless students from 2018-19 to 2019-20.

The evaluation intended to assess the academic achievement for homeless Dallas ISD students in kindergarten through grade 12, but in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Texas Education Agency² and Dallas ISD,³ cancelled most spring assessments.

METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Students were classified as homeless if they and/or their families fit into one of four categories: 1) two or more families living in one home because of financial issues, domestic violence, or other factors (i.e., “doubled up”); 2) family living in motels, often paying on a week-to-week basis; 3) family living in homeless shelters; or 4) unaccompanied youth with no guardian or permanent residence (e.g., couch surfing⁴ or living out of a car).

Students classified as homeless were flagged as either “homeless” or “McKinney-Vento” in the Dallas ISD district database. For the purposes of this evaluation, there were no substantive differences between the Dallas ISD students identified as homeless and those identified as McKinney-Vento.⁵ Thus, these students were combined into one group of students for this evaluation.

Once students were flagged as homeless and/or McKinney-Vento, they retained that flag for the remainder of the school year, regardless of whether the student transitioned out of homelessness. That flag was then reevaluated at the beginning of the following school year.

Because of the transient nature of homeless students in the Dallas ISD, this evaluation reports data for homeless students who were enrolled at any time during the school year. Thus, homeless student analyses were conducted using the end-of-year (EOY) district demographic file (May 29, 2020). Districtwide analyses were conducted using active students enrolled on the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) date (October 31, 2019).

¹ Portions of this report were adapted from Rowles (2019).

² <https://tea.texas.gov/about-tea/news-and-multimedia/correspondence/taa-letters/cancellation-of-staar-testing-for-the-remainder-of-the-school-year>.

³ The district transitioned to at-home learning on March 23, 2020 and continued through the end of the school year. Students could have enrolled in the district at any time, regardless of the learning environment.

⁴ Couch surfing refers to staying temporarily in a series of others' homes, often without paying.

⁵ Staff members were funded by McKinney-Vento funds or Title I, Part A funds. The funding source of the staff members with which each homeless student interacted determined the classification of the student.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS/OUTCOMES

What were the characteristics of Dallas ISD homeless students?

Methodology

The evaluator conducted descriptive analyses to summarize the characteristics of homeless students using the district demographic file dated May 29, 2020.

Results

Throughout the 2019-20 school year, 3,964 homeless students enrolled in the Dallas ISD. The largest percentages of homeless students were in prekindergarten, ($n = 519$, 13%), grade one ($n = 343$, 9%), and grade nine ($n = 341$, 9%; Table 1). Homeless students made up about three percent of the total district population. A larger percentage of homeless students were in early childhood through grade five (61%) than the district overall (52%). The percentages of homeless students during the 2019-20 school year were similar to the percentages during the previous school year for students in early childhood through grade five (61%, 2019-20; 60% 2018-19; Rowles, 2019), grade six through grade eight (18%, 2019-20; 19% 2018-19), and grade nine through grade 12 (21%, 2019-20; 21% 2018-19).

Table 1: 2019-20 Homeless Student and District Student Enrollment by Grade

Grade	Homeless Students ($N = 3,964$)		District Students ($N = 153,494$)	
	n	%	n	%
Grades EC-5				
EC	14	0.4	531	0.3
PK	519	13.1	10,938	7.1
K	309	7.8	11,788	7.7
1	343	8.7	11,229	7.3
2	331	8.4	11,063	7.2
3	304	7.7	11,135	7.3
4	288	7.3	11,364	7.4
5	324	8.2	11,974	7.8
Total	2,432	61.4	80,022	52.1
Grades 6-8				
6	280	7.1	11,089	7.2
7	232	5.9	10,974	7.1
8	190	4.8	10,300	6.7
Total	702	17.7	32,363	21.1
Grades 9-12				
9	341	8.6	12,860	8.4
10	197	5.0	10,666	6.9
11	138	3.5	9,258	6.0
12	154	3.9	8,325	5.4
Total	830	20.9	41,109	26.8

Source: PEIMS demographic file dated 10/31/19 and EOY demographic file dated 05/29/20.

Note: EC = Early childhood. PK = prekindergarten. K = kindergarten. Grade level percentages may not sum to the total because of rounding.

A larger percentage of homeless students were African American (47%) compared to the district overall (21%; Table 2), and a smaller percentage were Hispanic (45%) than the district overall (70%). A smaller percentage were considered English learners (29%) than the district overall (51%). Other characteristics of homeless students were similar to the district overall.

Table 2: 2019-20 Homeless Student and District Student Characteristics

	Homeless Students ($N = 3,964$)		District Students ($N = 153,494$)	
	n	%	n	%
Race/Ethnicity				
Asian	22	0.6	1,794	1.2
African American	1,872	47.2	32,627	21.3
Hispanic	1,772	44.7	108,063	70.4
Native American	7	0.2	301	0.2
Hawaiian/PI	6	0.2	54	<0.1
Two or More Races	135	3.4	2,829	1.8
White	150	3.8	7,826	5.1
Sex				
Female	1,926	48.6	74,976	48.8
Male	2,038	51.4	78,518	51.2
Special Student Populations				
SPED	427	10.8	14,478	9.4
EL	1,154	29.1	78,030	50.8

Source: PEIMS demographic file dated 10/31/19 and EOY demographic file dated 05/29/20.

Note: PI = Pacific Islander. SPED = special education. EL = English learner. Totals may not sum to 100 percent because of rounding.

What services did the HEP provide in 2019-20?

Methodology

The evaluator collected information about HEP services through interviews with program staff members and document and website review.

Results

The HEP worked with Dallas ISD Student Transportation Services, Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART), and the transportation services of nearby districts to ensure that all homeless students had consistent transportation to their school of origin. In 2019-20, the HEP fulfilled 365 in-district transportation requests.⁶ In addition, the HEP split transportation costs with other school districts to transport 250 students that either lived within the Dallas ISD boundary and attended other school districts or lived within other school district boundaries and attended the Dallas ISD.

In partnership with Promise House⁷ and Focus on Teens,⁸ two Dallas-based non-profit organizations, the HEP also supported 15 Drop-In Centers at Dallas ISD high schools. The Drop-In Centers served as hubs for homeless students

⁶ No bus passes were issued after the district transitioned to at-home learning on March 23, 2020.

⁷ For more information, see <https://promisehouse.org/>.

⁸ For more information, see <https://www.focusonteens.org/>.

to access helpful and necessary materials, such as backpacks, uniforms, hygiene items, and school supplies. The HEP assisted 582 students by providing materials. Drop-In Center leaders also referred students to additional services (e.g., mental health services) and organized presentations from outside agencies about numerous topics (e.g., college admissions, career options, etc.). The Drop-In Centers also worked with Food and Childhood Nutrition Services to provide students with healthy breakfasts, because they previously had been providing students with unhealthy options like donuts. Beyond the Drop-In Centers, the HEP worked to ensure that homeless students were provided the same enrichment-filled opportunities and experiences that other students received, including access to sports teams, afterschool programs, and summer camps.

The HEP worked with After8,⁹ a center supporting unaccompanied high school youth in Dallas. In addition to providing drop-in services and tutoring, After8 helped students move into transitional housing or to reunify with their families.

The HEP assisted homeless students and their families through efforts to reduce the stigma and stereotypes surrounding homelessness. The program provided training sessions and videos to help educate teachers, campus staff members, and the community on the rights and issues of homeless individuals, the services the HEP provides, and what role individuals can play in assisting the homeless community.

After the district transitioned to at-home learning, homeless students were left without regular Internet access and were unable to access instructional resources online. While most mobile Wi-Fi hotspots were distributed by campuses, the HEP worked with the Information Technology Department to ensure homeless students obtained the technology. HEP staff members also worked more intently with Food and Child Nutrition Services and Student Transportation Services in addition to DART, shelters, and area hotels to identify delivery sites for meals, school supplies, and hygiene items.

What was the status of homeless students in 2019-20 as compared to 2018-19?

Methodology

For homeless students during the 2018-19 school year, the evaluator used frequency analyses to determine if homeless students stayed within the Dallas ISD, moved elsewhere, or changed homeless status for the 2019-20 school year.

Results

Of the students who were homeless in 2018-19 ($n = 3,306$), 2,588 (78%) stayed in the Dallas ISD in 2019-20 and 718 (22%) were no longer enrolled. Of the 3,964 Dallas ISD students who were homeless in 2019-20, 554 were also

flagged as homeless in 2018-19 (14%), and 3,410 were newly flagged as homeless (86%). Of the 3,410 students who were newly flagged as homeless in 2019-20, 1,851 were in the Dallas ISD in 2018-19 (54%) and 1,559 were newly enrolled (46%).

How did attendance rates, discipline referrals, and graduation rates for homeless students in 2019-20 compare to 2018-19?

Methodology

The evaluator conducted descriptive analyses to compare 2018-19 and 2019-20 attendance rates, discipline referral rates, and graduation rates for homeless students in the Dallas ISD.

Results

The 2019-20 semester 1 attendance rate for homeless students was slightly below 92 percent (Table 3), which was comparable to the semester rates during the 2018-19 school year (93%, semester 1; 92% semester 2). The rate was lower than the overall district rate of 95% for semester 1 2019-20.

For discipline referrals, nearly four percent of homeless students earned at least one discipline referral in fall 2019-20; this rate was slightly lower than in fall or spring 2018-19 when over four percent and six percent of homeless students earned at least one discipline referral, respectively (Table 3). This was also slightly higher than the fall 2018-19, spring 2018-19, and fall 2019-20 (all 3%) discipline referral rates for the district overall. The most common type of discipline referral during each semester was fighting. Homeless students were referred 69 times for fighting in fall 2019-20 (37% of homeless student discipline cases), compared to 72 times in fall 2018-19 (33% of homeless student discipline cases), and 107 times in spring 2018-19 (38% of homeless student discipline cases).

⁹ For more information, see <http://after8toeducate.com/>.

Table 3: 2018-19 and 2019-20 Homeless and District Overall Attendance and Discipline Rates

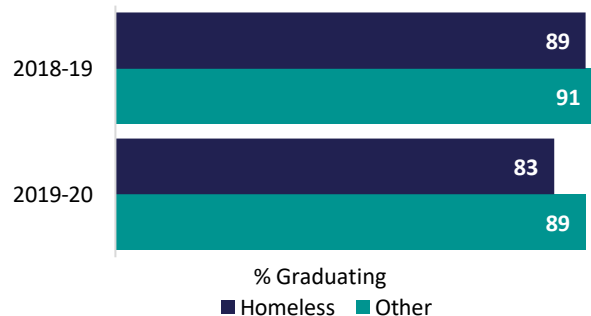
District Overall Attendance and Discipline Rates					
Year	Sem	Homeless		District	
		N	%	N	%
Attendance					
2018-19	Fall	3,306	92.5	151,700	95.5
	Spring	3,306	92.2	151,700	95.2
2019-20	Fall	3,964	91.9	153,416	94.9
Discipline					
2018-19	Fall	3,306	4.4	155,237	3.1
	Spring	3,306	5.5	155,237	3.3
2019-20	Fall	3,964	3.5	153,494	2.9

Source: District PEIMS data files dated 10/26/18 (2018-19) and 10/31/19 (2019-20). EOY demographic files dated 05/28/19 (2018-19) and 05/29/20 (2019-20). District attendance files dated 06/04/19 (2018-19) and 01/24/20 (fall 2019-20). District discipline files dated 07/18/19 (2018-19) and 01/16/20 (fall 2019-20).

Note: Sem = Semester.

Of the 110 homeless seniors enrolled at the end of 2019-20, 83 percent graduated (Figure 1). This rate was lower than in 2018-19, when 89 percent of the 130 homeless seniors graduated, and the 2019-20 rate for district students overall (89%).

Figure 1: 2018-19 and 2019-20 Homeless and District Overall Graduation Rates



Source: District PEIMS data files dated 10/26/18 (2018-19) and 10/31/19 (2019-20). EOY demographic files dated 05/28/19 (2018-19) and 05/29/20 (2019-20). District graduation files dated 07/08/19 (2018-19) and 06/17/20 (2019-20).

Note: Homeless student graduation Ns and rates include only seniors that were enrolled at the end of the year.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Continue to provide necessary services to homeless students. The HEP provided many services to homeless students and their families during the 2019-20 school year. The HEP fulfilled 365 within-district and 250 inter-district transportation requests; cooperated with community organizations to provide shelter, clothing, and supplies; and operated Drop-In Centers for support and supplies at 15 high school campuses. It is important that these supports continue in 2020-21.

Explore approaches to engaging homeless students in learning when they cannot physically be at a campus. While the graduation rate for the District overall remained consistent with previous years, the rate for homeless students dropped six percentage points from 2018-19 after the District transitioned to at-home learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The HEP staff members should develop means to continue engaging homeless students – especially students near obtaining a high school diploma – when in-person learning is not possible.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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 program, overseen by the Youth and Family Centers department, began in 1999. In 2019-20, the Refugee Support Services Program received \$126,579 through Title I funding, the same as in 2018-19 (Zhang, 2019).

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,
- 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,
- staff development training to inform and educate school professionals about needs unique to the refugee population, and
- summer program.

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 five years. Data in this report represent those served by the program who fall into both categories.

On March 13, 2020, in alignment with federal recommendations, the Governor of Texas issued a disaster proclamation certifying that the novel coronavirus COVID-19 posed an imminent threat of disaster for all counties in the state of Texas. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Dallas ISD transitioned students to at-home learning on March 23 following spring break (March 16 – 20) until the end of the school year.

PURPOSE AND METHOD

The purpose of this evaluation was to describe activities and services that the program provided to refugee students and their parents.

Data were obtained from the Refugee Support Services program manager and the district student data file. Frequency and crosstab analyses were computed.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS/OUTCOMES

What were student characteristics?

After removing duplicates and invalid student identification numbers, the refugee student data file included 188 students who received instructional support and transitional support services during the 2019-20 school year. Served students included first year refugee students enrolled in Dallas ISD. Table 1 shows characteristics of served refugee students.

Table 1: Characteristics of Served Refugee Students (N=188)

	<i>n</i>	%
Gender		
Male	84	44.7
Female	104	55.3
Ethnicity		
African American	95	50.5
Hispanic	5	2.7
Asian	46	24.5
Other	42	22.3
Special Groups		
Econ. Disadv.	173	92.0
At Risk	165	87.8
English Learners	185	98.4
Special Education	5	2.7

Source: Refugee student data file 06/02/20. District demographic data file 05/29/20.

Note: Econ.Disadv.= Economically disadvantaged. An overlap occurs among special groups.

Served Students by Campus

Refugee students were enrolled at 14 Dallas ISD schools. Sam Tasby Middle School (MS), McShan Elementary School (ES), and Conrad High School (HS) accounted for 130 of the refugee students or 69.2 percent (Table 2).

Table 2: 2019-20 Served Refugee Students by Campus (Top 10)

Campus	n	%
Sam Tasby MS	59	31.4
McShan ES	41	21.8
Conrad HS	30	16.0
Adams HS	13	6.9
Gill ES	13	6.9
Hill MS	8	4.3
Truett ES	7	3.7
Skyline HS	5	2.7
Jack Lowe ES	4	2.1
Meadows ES	2	1.1
Others	6	3.2

Source: District refugee student data file 06/02/20.
District demographic data file 05/29/20.

Note: HS=high school. MS=middle school.
ES=elementary school. The category "Others"
includes Hotchkiss ES, Lang MS, Larry Smith ES
and Lowe ES. 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 seven ($n=30$) and nine ($n=27$) constituted the largest group of students served, followed by those in grade three ($n=25$) and grades six ($n=20$) and eight ($n=20$) (Table 3).

Table 3: 2019-20 Served Refugee Students by Grade (N=188)

Grade	N	%
Prekindergarten	3	1.6
Kindergarten	9	4.8
1	9	4.8
2	10	5.3
3	25	13.3
4	7	3.7
5	8	4.3
6	20	10.6
7	30	16.0
8	20	10.6
9	27	14.4
10	11	5.9
11	8	4.3
12	1	0.5

Source: Refugee student data file 06/02/20.
District demographic data file 05/29/20.

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

What program activities and services were provided?

Professional Development

Refugee Support Services offered professional development opportunities throughout the 2019-20 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 17 dates from

October 2019 through February 2020 at Adams HS, Highland Meadow ES, Hotchkiss ES, Jack Lowe ES, Sam Tasby MS, Conrad HS, Lang MS, Communication Services department, and Health department. A total of 119 school staff members (principals, teachers, counselors, and other staff) received professional development in 2019-20.

Collaborative Efforts

Similar to previous years, Refugee Support Services collaborated with departments within Dallas ISD and with external agencies. Internal (district) departments included English as a Second Language (ESL), Student Intake Center, Psychological and Social Services, Special Education, Truancy, and various other departments across the district. Refugee Support Services engaged with a total of 25 different external agencies and participated in a total of 42 meetings or professional activities. External agencies included: Dallas Area Refugee Forum (DARF), International Rescue Committee (IRC), Reading Circle, and Vickery Community Action Team (VCAT).

Student Support

Services students received from the Refugee Support Services program included tutoring, counseling, ESL enrollment, school enrollment, translation service, and Multicultural Student Club.

Parent Support

Services provided to parents included school orientation sessions, immunization updates, and provision of basic school supplies such as uniforms, dictionaries, and backpacks. Program staff members also acted as liaisons whenever schools needed to contact parents of refugee students. A total of 48 refugee parents or guardians attended school orientation sessions and 41 participated in parent-teacher conferences between October 2019 and February 2020.

Summer Program

The 2020 summer program enrolled students in grades Kindergarten through 11. The program was held virtually from 9am to 12pm Monday through Thursday, June 1 through June 25, 2020. The program utilized the at-home learning curriculum provided by Dallas ISD and used Google classroom and Zoom meetings to connect to students. The program focused on literacy, language, mathematics, science, and social studies and was based on state standards. In addition, the summer program provided several virtual field trips including the Dallas Zoo, Fort Worth Zoo, Dallas Museum of Art, and Nasher Sculpture Center.

A total of 118 students from 10 different schools enrolled in the summer program including McShan ES ($n=42$), Sam Tasby MS ($n=32$), Jack Lowe ES ($n=14$), and Conrad HS ($n=12$). Students in grade four ($n=19$), grade two ($n=16$) and grade three ($n=15$) comprised the largest groups, followed by grade seven ($n=12$) and grade eight ($n=12$) (Table 4).

Table 4: 2019-20 Summer Program Participants by Grade (N=118)

Grade	<i>n</i>	%
Kindergarten	9	7.6
1	4	3.4
2	16	13.6
3	15	12.7
4	19	16.1
5	7	5.9
6	10	8.5
7	12	10.2
8	12	10.2
9	11	9.3
10	2	1.7
11	1	0.8

Source: Refugee student data 06/10/20. District demographic data file 05/29/20.

What were attendance and academic outcomes?

Attendance Rate

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, attendance data were limited to the first four six-week periods (08/19/19 through 02/21/20). Of the 188 served refugee students, attendance data were available for 178 students enrolled during the 2019-20 school year. The average attendance rate for served refugee students was 95 percent, the same as the district overall.

STAAR and STAAR EOC Results

Due to COVID-19, Texas Education Agency (TEA) cancelled The *State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR)* and *STAAR End of Course (EOC)* administrations for the 2019-20 school year. Data for previous years can be found in the 2018-19 report (<https://www.dallasisd.org/Page/62222>, page 3).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Continue to provide services and supports to refugee students. Refugee students are forced to leave their home countries and settle in a different environment where they encounter social, cultural and educational challenges. As a result, services are needed to provide support for the district's refugee students.

Continue to encourage refugee students and their families to take advantage of available resources. Attendance data indicated that 48 parents attended school

orientation and 41 parents participated in a parent-teacher conference. To ensure families benefit from the valuable resources and supports offered, refugees support services staff members should keep in contact with refugee parents and encourage participation in district activities.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Compensatory education is defined in law as programs and services designed to supplement the regular education program with compensatory, intensive, and accelerated instruction for students identified as at risk of dropping out of school (At-Risk). The purpose of the State Compensatory Education (SCE) program is to increase academic achievement and reduce the dropout rate of At-Risk students. The goal is to reduce disparities between At-Risk and all other students in (a) performance on state-mandated assessments and (b) rates of high school completion.

State criteria for identifying At-Risk students are defined by Texas Education Code (TEC) §29.081. Students who meet any of the criteria are to be reported through the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) in the fall of each school year. Among the 13 criteria are English learners (EL) or students of limited English proficiency (LEP), students who failed a state assessment, or students who were retained. The district is required to submit the District Improvement Plan (DIP), two Campus Improvement Plans (CIP), and the local evaluation of state compensatory education strategies, activities and programs to the Texas Education Agency (TEA) annually.

The scope of the evaluation includes the program context, implementation, and results of the SCE Program budget for 2018-19. It outlines how SCE direct cost funds were used for supplemental services and programs, as described in district and campus improvement plans and in budget allocations and expenditures. The report also describes the characteristics of 2018-19 At-Risk students in the Dallas Independent School District (Dallas ISD) and examines how their assessment performance, graduation rate, and dropout rate compared to their Not-At-Risk peers.

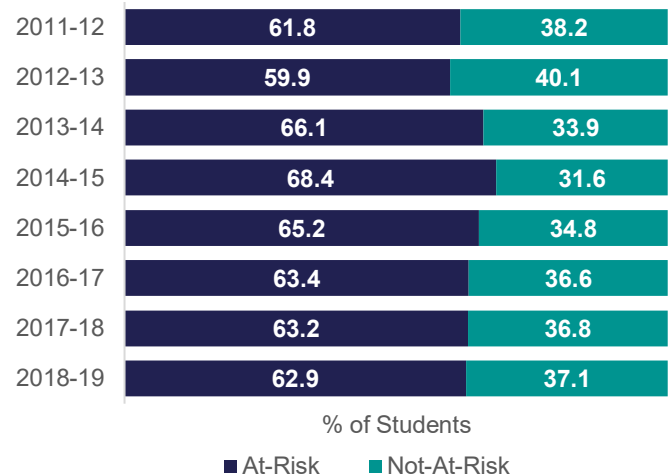
EVALUATION QUESTIONS/OUTCOMES

What were the demographic characteristics of 2018-19 Dallas ISD At-Risk students?

Results

During the 2018-19 school year, a total of 97,476 Dallas ISD students were identified as At-Risk according to the TEA Texas Academic Performance Report (TAPR) District Profile, representing 62.9 percent of the district's grades EC-12 enrollment ($N=155,030$). As shown in Figure 1, the percentage of At-Risk students increased between 2012-13 and 2014-15. From 2014-15 through 2018-19, a gradual decline in the percentage of At-Risk students was found.

Figure 1: 2011-12 through 2018-19 District Student Population by At-Risk Status



Source: TEA 2012 AEIS and 2013 to 2019 TAPR reports.

The largest number of At-Risk students were in grades 5 and 9; grades 4 through 10 had the largest percentages of students identified as At-Risk (Table 1). A larger proportion of At-Risk students were identified as Hispanic compared to the overall district student population. Similarly, a larger proportion of At-Risk students were identified as EL compared to the overall district student population.

Table 1: 2018-19 Student Enrollment by Grade

Grade	District <i>N</i>	At-Risk	
		<i>n</i>	%
EC	180	41	22.8
PK	12,737	6,369	50.0
KN	10,992	5,478	49.8
1	11,234	5,925	52.7
2	11,314	6,260	55.3
3	11,518	6,414	55.7
4	12,197	8,470	69.4
5	12,248	9,378	76.6
6	11,144	8,064	72.4
7	10,554	8,011	75.9
8	10,424	7,728	74.1
9	12,192	9,041	74.2
10	10,603	6,803	64.2
11	9,398	5,332	56.7
12	8,502	4,054	47.7
Total	155,237	97,368	62.7

Source: PEIMS district data file, 10/26/18.

Note: Data from the PEIMS submission may differ from data obtained from the TAPR report.

What programs and services were funded by the SCE Program?

2018-19 SCE Funding

In 2018-19, the district received an SCE program allotment of \$178,339,900 from the state. The minimum direct cost requirement was 52 percent for the 2018-19 school year, or \$92,736,748. The district budgeted \$95,306,764 in direct cost to support programs/services for At-Risk students, and actual expenditures totaled \$86,273,103.

The primary sources of documents for SCE program expenditures are the DIPs and CIPs, which are required by state law. SCE funded programs and services must be described in the DIP if the program is implemented districtwide or in CIP if implemented at the campus level.

District Improvement Plan

The 2018-19 DIP was reviewed for SCE components. The DIP contained relatively broad statements regarding strategies and activities targeting At-Risk students, with detailed plans to be developed at the campus level.

Campus Improvement Plans

A review of 26 CIPs (six comprehensive high schools, seven middle schools, and thirteen elementary schools) showed that all schools conducted a needs assessment as required and set achievement targets aligned with campus needs assessments. The percentage of At-Risk students at sampled schools ranged from 26 to 92 percent. Strategies utilized to provide assistance to struggling students included differentiated instruction, increased use of data for progress monitoring and identification of individual students' strengths and weaknesses, greater emphasis placed on quality instruction and strategies such as small-group, and in-school and out-of-school tutoring. Greater emphasis was also placed on increased teacher professional development, parental involvement and education, and use of Personalized Learning Communities (PLCs).

What were the academic performance outcomes, graduation rates, and dropout rates of At-Risk and Not-At-Risk students?

STAAR 3-8 and STAAR EOC Performance

On nearly all STAAR 3-8 and STAAR EOC tests in 2019, the percentage of At-Risk students at Approaches Grade Level or Above (Approaches+) was lower than the percentage of Not-At-Risk students (Table 2). On the STAAR Reading tests in grade 3, the percentage of At-Risk students at Approaches+ was the same as the percentage of Not-At-Risk students. On the STAAR Mathematics tests in grade 3, the percentage of At-Risk students at Approaches+ was one percentage point higher than the percentage of Not-At-Risk students.

Table 2: 2019 STAAR 3-8/STAAR EOC Approaches Grade Level or Above Rates and Performance Gaps

Subject	Grade	2019 % Approaches+		Diff.
		At-Risk	Not-At-Risk	
Reading	3	72	72	0
	4	59	89	-30
	5	81	98	-17
	6	48	85	-37
	7	58	94	-36
	8	74	99	-25
English I EOC		49	93	-44
English II EOC		47	94	-47
Mathematics	3	77	76	1
	4	69	91	-22
	5	86	98	-12
	6	69	92	-23
	7	55	87	-32
	8	86	98	-12
Algebra I EOC		81	97	-16
Science	5	63	93	-30
	8	69	95	-26
Biology EOC		78	98	-20
Social Studies	8	53	91	-38
US History EOC		87	99	-12
Writing	4	58	81	-23
	7	50	91	-41

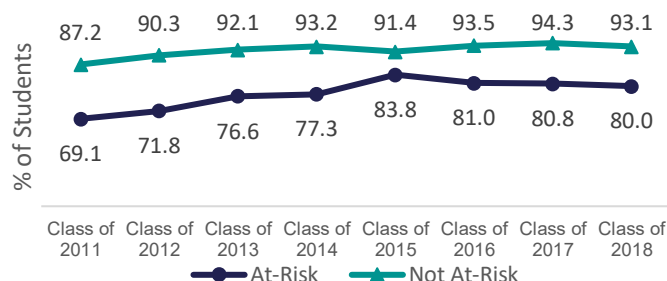
Source: TEA 2019 TAPR reports.

Note: Data include all students in the Accountability Subset for each year reported. Diff.=Difference. Approaches+=Approaches Grade Level or Above.

High School Graduation and Completion Rates

Overall, there has been a positive trend in graduation rates of At-Risk students since 2011. However, graduation rates of At-Risk students continue to be lower than those of Not-At-Risk students, resulting in a gap between the two groups (Figure 2). The gap for the Class of 2018 decreased slightly but was due to the 1.2-point decrease in the Not-At-Risk student graduation rate.

Figure 2: Graduation Rates by Cohort and At-Risk Status: Class of 2011 to Class of 2018



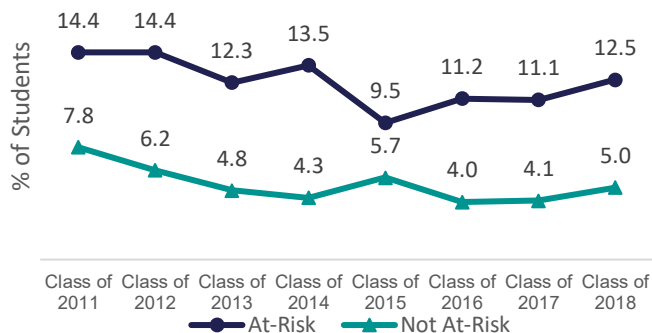
Source: TEA Completion, Graduation, and Dropouts data.

Note: Data reported are the federal graduation rates and are different than prior year reports which reported state accountability graduation rates.

Overall, dropout rates of At-Risk students were lower for the Classes of 2015 to 2018 compared to the Classes of 2011

to 2014. The Class of 2015 had the lowest dropout rate (9.5%) but rates increased gradually in subsequent years. Dropout rates of At-Risk students are higher than those of Not-At-Risk students, resulting in a *gap* between the two groups (Figure 3). The *gap* widened for the Class of 2014 but decreased markedly for the Class of 2015. For the Classes of 2016 and 2017, the *gap* narrowed slightly but increased for the Class of 2018.

Figure 3: Dropout Rates by Cohort and At-Risk Status: Class of 2011 to Class of 2018



Source: TEA Completion, Graduation, and Dropouts data.

RECOMMENDATIONS

As recommended in previous years, designate a full-time SCE program administrator. At its current level of funding, with an overall budget of approximately \$178 million, oversight would help to ensure that funds are used efficiently and effectively. With more than \$85 million available in 2018-19 in indirect cost allocations intended primarily to defray program administrative costs, the SCE program should well be able to meet the expense of a designated program manager assigned the responsibility of overseeing program implementation and data collection.

Investigate how the passage of House Bill 3 will impact the funds allocated for prekindergarten compensatory education. Based on the 86th Texas Legislature passage of HB 3 mandating the state to provide funding for full-time prekindergarten, it will be important for district staff to carefully consider how HB 3 funding will interact with SCE funding.

Require, as recommended in previous years, central organizations to apply for SCE funds. In 2011-12 and 2012-13, central organizations that received SCE funds were required to submit Project Workscopes to the district's

Budget Services department. That requirement was discontinued in 2014-15. Reinstatement would provide documentation for the use of SCE funds and facilitate evaluation of services and activities supported by central SCE expenditures.

Ensure adequate funding and support is provided through SCE to decrease At-Risk student dropout rates. The dropout rate was higher for the Class of 2018 (12.5%) compared to the Class of 2015 (9.5%), 2016 (11.2%), and 2017 (11.1%).

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Dallas Independent School District (ISD) provides specialized services and accommodations to students with disabilities. Federal laws and State of Texas accountability systems provide a framework that helps shape and guide special education (SPED) programming within the district. The total budget for 2019-20 Dallas ISD SPED services was \$61,597,547, an increase from \$60,210,915 in 2018-19. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the district transitioned to at-home learning beginning after spring break on March 23, 2020. As a result, district operations and support functions were modified accordingly, and most state and district assessments were cancelled for the year.

The purpose of this report was to describe the SPED program, to summarize trends in the characteristics and academic performance of students served by SPED with a focus on indicators related to state and federal accountability systems, and to summarize feedback from SPED teachers, principals, and evaluators to identify SPED program-related challenges, successes, and areas for improvement. In particular, this evaluation aimed to achieve the following objectives for 2019-20: 1) report funding and budget information; 2) summarize district performance on the Texas Education Agency Results-Driven Accountability (RDA) report; 3) summarize the characteristics of SPED students; 4) summarize the characteristics of SPED teachers and the SPED professional development they were offered; 5) report trends in academic achievement for SPED students; 6) report trends in the dropout rates and attendance rates of SPED students; and 7) summarize stakeholder perceptions of program-related components.

Changes to SPED Evaluations and Supports During At-Home Learning

Because of the COVID-19-related transition to districtwide at-home learning on March 23, 2020 and the nature of the SPED evaluation process, which necessitates in-person interaction with students, SPED student evaluations were suspended in spring 2020 once districtwide at-home learning began. However, annual Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) meetings and three-year re-evaluations were required to continue virtually during this time. In addition, completion of Individual Education Program (IEP) amendments was required for each SPED student outlining the SPED services the district could continue to provide to students during at-home learning.

SPED service modifications for at-home learning varied and depended on the nature of each student's disability, the level of student and parent engagement during this period, appropriate technological device availability and provision, and the limits of the nature of technology inherent to distance-learning. The SPED department also provided resources for parents of SPED students during this time, including through the Dallas ISD SPED department website,¹ which listed (in both English and Spanish) organizations and contact information for additional parent and community support.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS/OUTCOMES

How did the SPED program perform on the 2019 RDA Report?

Table 1 provides a summary of Dallas ISD SPED-related performance levels (PLs) for the past three years, as indicated in the respective PBMAS²/RDA reports. In summary, three areas on the 2017 Dallas ISD SPED program PBMAS report were assigned a PL indicator of zero, and seven program areas were assigned a PL indicator of three or above.³ By 2019, more program areas were assigned a PL of zero ($N=5$), and fewer were assigned a PL of three or above ($N=5$) than in previous years. These results indicated some improvement. However, in both 2018 and 2019, eight areas were assigned PLs of two, and the number of PLs three or greater⁴ remained steady.

Table 1: 2017-2019 Dallas ISD Special Education Related PBMAS/RDA Performance Level Assignments

PL Assignment	2017	2018	2019
0	3	2	5
1	5	5	4
2	5	8	8
3 or SD Year 3	7	5	5

Source: Texas Education Agency 2017, 2018, and 2019 Dallas ISD PBMAS/RDA reports.

Note: Details about calculation and assignment of PLs can be found in the 2019 TEA RDA Manual available on the TEA website.

The RDA system identified three SPED areas as 2019 areas of concern: 1) the SPED African American student representation rate (ages 3-21) in the primary disability category of Emotional Disturbance, 2) the SPED African American student Out-of-School Suspensions (OSS) ≤ 10 Days rate (ages 3-21), and 3) the SPED African American

¹ See: <https://www.dallasisd.org/sped>. Link retrieved 07/07/2020.

² PBMAS=Performance-Based Monitoring Accountability System (of the Texas Education Agency). PBMAS was replaced by RDA in 2019.

³ A PL of zero indicates that the state standard was met; the higher the PL number, the greater the concern regarding the program area.

⁴ "Or greater" includes the SD (significant disproportionality) PL assignment. Additional detail on SD including its definition, background, and use can be found at <https://tea.texas.gov/sites/default/files/2019%20SD%20Information.pdf>.

student OSS ≥ 10 Days rate (ages 3-21). As required by law, in 2019-20 the district planned how to address these issues in upcoming years.

What were the characteristics of students served by SPED?

The SPED population in the Dallas ISD totaled 14,478 students (9.4% of district enrollment). The number and percentage of students served in the Dallas ISD SPED program has increased each year since 2014-15, when SPED student enrollment totaled 11,722 (7.3% of district enrollment). This rise has persisted despite a downward trend in overall districtwide enrollment since 2014-15.

Similar to 2018-19, a higher percentage of African Americans received SPED services (28.4%, Table 2) relative to their representation in general education enrollment (20.5%). Although males and females were equally represented in the general education population, two-thirds of special education students were male (67.3%). While more than a third (38.0%) of special education students were English learners (EL), this rate was lower than the rate of ELs in the general education population (46.5%).

Table 2: 2019-20 Characteristics of SPED Students

Group	Special Education (N=14,478)		General Education (N=139,016)	
	n	%	n	%
Ethnicity				
Hispanic	9,233	63.8	98,830	71.1
African American	4,110	28.4	28,517	20.5
White	717	5.0	7,109	5.1
Other	418	2.9	4,560	3.3
Sex				
Female	4,730	32.7	70,246	50.5
Male	9,748	67.3	68,770	49.5
Student Groups				
Econ Dis	12,558	86.7	116,885	84.1
English Learner	5,498	38.0	64,673	46.5
Homeless	223	1.5	2,300	1.7

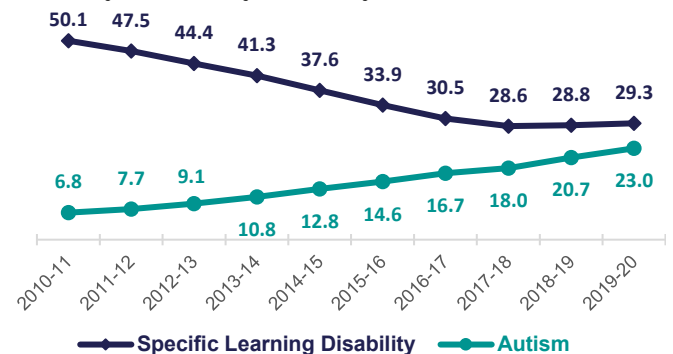
Source: District PEIMS snapshot demographic data file for 10/28/19 (2019-20).

Note: Econ Dis=Economically Disadvantaged, PEIMS=Public Education Information Management System.

Specific learning disability and autism were the two most common primary disabilities of SPED students overall in 2019-20. As shown in Figure 1, the overall percentage of SPED students identified with a specific learning disability as a primary disability declined since 2010-11, while the rate of those identified with autism steadily rose, more than tripling between 2010-11 and 2019-20, from 6.8 percent to 23.0 percent. Several studies and government entities have reported similar increases in autism spectrum disorder cases (Blumberg et al., 2013), relating increases to changes in the diagnostic criteria of behaviors constituting the

disorder (Wazana, Bresnahan, and Kline, 2007) and better monitoring and diagnosis of the disorder, rather than to a “de facto” rise in the number of children who fall on the autism spectrum.⁵ However, the topic of factors contributing to the marked rise in autism spectrum disorders over the past few decades is one of intense debate at the national and international level, and more research is needed to better understand both the causes and effective treatments of those identified on the autism spectrum.

Figure 1: 2010-11 to 2019-20 Percentage of Dallas ISD SPED Students with Autism and Specific Learning Disability as Primary Disability



Source: District PEIMS snapshot demographic data file for 10/28/19 (2019-20) and Mejan, 2019 (2010-11 to 2018-19).

What were the characteristics of SPED teachers?

A total of 1,129 SPED teachers served the district in 2019-20. Over four years the rate of district SPED teachers increased by 2.3 percentage points; the number of general education teachers decreased by 2.3 percentage points.

More than 77 percent of 2019-20 district SPED teachers were female. A smaller percentage of SPED teachers were Hispanic (11.2%) compared to general education teachers (31.3%), while a higher percentage of SPED teachers were African American (53.6%) compared to general education teachers (31.9%). A higher percentage of SPED teachers held a master's degree (31.2%) compared to general education teachers (20.9%). The average length of teaching experience of district SPED teachers was 8.7 years.

What professional development opportunities did the SPED department offer in 2019-20?

From data provided by program leadership listing 2019-20 SPED professional development and other training provided to campus staff members, the evaluator identified 69 unique 2019-20 session topics. Examples of training themes included policy and procedures, skills acquisition, classroom organization, technology, and supporting students with various disabilities, for example. During spring 2020 at-home learning, professional learning committee (PLC) meetings were held online weekly to address a variety of concerns related to at-home learning.

⁵ See <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/autism/data.html> for more information.

What were stakeholder perceptions regarding the SPED department?

The evaluator collaborated with SPED program leadership in 2019-20 to design and administer an online survey titled the SPED Customer Service Survey to solicit feedback from district SPED teachers, SPED teacher assistants, principals, and assistant principals. The survey addressed a range of issues that included the customer service experience with the SPED department and understanding of SPED policy, procedures, and resource access, both before and during at-home learning. The response rate was 60 percent (teachers: 65%, $N=1,243$; administrators: 45%, $N=289$).

Perceptions About Student Support Teams (SSTs)

The campus Student Support Team (SST) is integral to the effective functioning of the Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) and the SPED student evaluation processes. A higher percentage of campus administrators than SPED teachers agreed (agreed or strongly agreed) that campus SSTs met regularly to discuss student concerns (teachers: 57%; administrators: 85%), and that SSTs met regularly specifically to discuss, recommend, and review progress on appropriate interventions before referring students for an initial SPED evaluation (teachers: 55%; administrators: 85%). Survey findings also indicated a low rate of SPED teacher awareness of the presence and activities of campus SSTs, possibly indicating some under-engagement of SPED staff members at the campus level.

Core 4

Ratings of the SPED department prior to at-home learning on all Core 4 domains (Focused, Fast, Flexible, and Friendly) were generally positive (range: 75% to 91%), an improvement from 2018-19. During at-home learning, SPED customer service ratings were comparable and often higher than before the transition.

Technology and Online Platforms: Levels of Need During At-Home Learning

A high percentage of SPED teacher (61%) and administrator (74%) respondents indicated a need for more effective online teaching resources for at-home learning. More than half of both groups reported a need for more training on Microsoft Teams and Google Classrooms.

In addition, the highest percentage of administrators and SPED teachers indicated that students needed more reliable internet connectivity (teachers: 71%; administrators: 81%), and technology (hardware) resources (teachers: 64%; administrators: 73%). Higher rates of SPED teachers (49%) than administrators (34%) needed more reliable technology (hardware) and internet connectivity (teachers: 39%, administrators: 32%) for themselves.

Finally, both SPED teachers (66%) and administrators (82%) expressed a need for more guidance on engaging students and parents during at-home learning.

What were the activities and perceptions of SPED evaluators?

The evaluator also collaborated with SPED program leadership to design and administer an online survey to solicit feedback on the activities and perceptions of 2019-20 SPED evaluators (diagnosticians and LSSPs), including during spring 2020 districtwide at-home learning. Of the 119 SPED evaluators invited to participate in this SPED Evaluator Survey, 111 at least partially completed the survey (93%).

Parent Referrals for SPED Evaluations

Similar to 2018-19, 2019-20 SPED evaluators reported high rates of parent requests for initial evaluations, but the rate of respondents indicating all evaluations were parent requests decreased from 24 percent in 2018-19 to 14 percent in 2019-20.

Workspace on Campus

Many SPED evaluators reported they had space on campus to conduct student evaluations with fidelity (68%) and to conduct job-related duties (60%), but these numbers mean 32 to 40 percent lacked adequate workspace on campus.

Supplies on Campus

SPED evaluators reported that their printer- and copy-related needs were met on campuses (90%) and they had reasonable access to needed assessment kits (83%), but fewer (57%) reported they had reasonable access to the protocols needed [e.g. *Wechsler Intelligence Test for Children (WISC)*] to complete their work duties.

Professional Support and Collaboration Before and During At-Home Learning

Ratings of professional support and collaboration prior to at-home learning improved in all areas compared to the previous year, with notable increases in ratings for regularity and usefulness of collaboration meetings.

Ratings of professional support and collaboration during at-home learning were also very high, and many evaluators remarked that virtual meetings during this time were more time and energy efficient compared to in-person meetings.

What was the academic performance of students served in special education?

Because of the 2019-20 statewide COVID-19-related STAAR cancellation, 2019-20 STAAR outcomes could not be reported.

What were the dropout and attendance rates of special education students?

Dropout, graduation, continuation, and Texas Certificate of High School Equivalency (TxCHSE) information is calculated and published by the TEA. These data (lagged

one year for 2018-19) were not provided by the TEA in summer 2020, so outcomes were not reported.

The overall attendance rate among SPED students as of the fourth six-week period was 93.1 percent, a lower rate than the districtwide rate of 94.4 percent. Among SPED students, rates were highest in the middle and elementary grades, with the highest attendance rate in grade four (94.9%) and the lowest attendance rate in grade nine (88.2%). Attendance rates among high school SPED students were higher in each consecutive grade level.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Continue to stress to all campuses the importance of regular SST meetings for the identification of students needing services. Although 55 percent of SPED teachers agreed that campus SSTs met regularly to discuss, recommend, and review progress on appropriate interventions before referring students for an initial SPED evaluation, 43 percent of SPED teachers were aware of an SST on their campuses but did not have enough information to rate their SST, suggesting possible under-engagement of SPED staff members in SST campus activities. Stressing the crucial role that regular SST meetings play in the effective and efficient functioning of MTSS may also help to address the finding persisting over three years that a high percentage of referrals for initial evaluations came from parents.

Continue working to ensure that SPED evaluators have the workspace they need on campuses. While many SPED evaluators reported having adequate space on campus to conduct evaluations (68%) and to carry out work duties effectively (60%), these findings indicated that 32 to 40 percent would benefit from improved on-campus space allocation to serve students properly.

Continue working to ensure that SPED evaluators have needed supplies. Although 57 percent of SPED evaluators reported they had reasonable access to needed protocols (e.g., *WISC*), this finding indicates 43 percent of respondents need improved access to supplies.

Review and enhance the technological resources of teachers and students to ensure uninterrupted SPED services during possible future periods of at-home learning. Many SPED teachers (61%) and campus administrators (74%) reported needing more effective online teaching resource options for at-home learning and more guidance on effective use of Microsoft Teams (teachers: 51%; administrators: 59%) and Google Classrooms (teachers: 55%; administrators: 57%). Other needs mentioned included more reliable internet connectivity and more reliable, age-appropriate technology (hardware) resources for students. Attention to correcting these technological shortcomings will improve the ability to more seamlessly provide SPED services virtually, when necessary.

Consider virtual meetings as a year-round option to improve efficiency. Many SPED evaluators remarked that virtual meetings during this time were more time and energy efficient compared to in-person meetings. Stakeholders should consider whether virtual meetings would also improve communication and engagement with SPED students and their families, when appropriate.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The College Access Program (CAP) was created in 2010 by Dallas Independent School District (ISD) to increase student college applications, scholarship applications, participation in college entrance exams, and parental involvement in the college admissions and financial aid processes. The program has been managed by a college access coordinator within the Dallas ISD Postsecondary Partnerships and Programs department. The three CAP vendors selected for the 2019-20 school year were Academic Success Program (ASP), Education is Freedom (EIF), and Southern Methodist University (SMU). In 2019-20, the CAP program served 36 high school campuses. CAP vendors provided supplemental assistance to students and parents. This assistance included: 1) completing college applications; 2) completing financial aid applications; 3) registering and preparing for the SAT, ACT, and TSIA tests; 4) completing college and scholarship application essays; 5) completing Dallas County Promise Pledges; and 6) attending college fairs. The total amount of funding for 2019-20 CAP was \$2,350,000, which was a slight increase from \$2,325,000 in 2017-18 and 2018-19 when funded through Title I.

On March 13, 2020, in alignment with federal recommendations, the Governor of Texas issued a disaster proclamation certifying that the novel coronavirus COVID-19 posed an imminent threat of disaster for all counties in the state of Texas. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Dallas ISD transitioned students to at-home learning on March 23 following spring break (March 16 – 20) until the end of the school year. In order to support students during this difficult time, the CAP program continued to provide services to students remotely.

PURPOSE AND METHOD

The purpose of this evaluation was to examine the effectiveness of the CAP program based on the outlined program goals. This evaluation examined: 1) characteristics of students who participated in the CAP program, 2) the extent to which CAP vendors met outlined program goals, 3) the extent to which the CAP participation changed from 2017-18 to 2019-20, 4) the relationship between CAP participation and college enrollment for 2016-17 through 2018-19 seniors, and 5) the way the program provided services to students and parents during at-home learning.

Data on sources of program funding and budget, number of CAP students, number of CAP schools served, Texas Application for State Financial Aid (TASFA), linked Khan Academy accounts with College Board, and CAP staff meeting with counselors were obtained from program staff.

College application information was obtained from program staff and ApplyTexas website. Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) was obtained from Department of Education website. Dallas County Promise Pledge information was obtained from a website shared between Dallas ISD and the Dallas County Community College District. CAP student characteristics and SAT/ACT/TSIA results were obtained from district data files. 2018-19 senior college enrollment information was obtained from the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) data file. Additional information was obtained from an evaluator-designed vendor survey and a manager questionnaire. Frequency and crosstab analyses were computed. Open-ended responses were analyzed qualitatively for common themes.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS/OUTCOMES

What were the characteristics of the students served in 2019-20?

During the 2019-20 school year, 13,290 students in grades nine to 12 utilized the CAP vendor services. A total 468 students were missing in the district demographic file dated 05/29/20, leaving 12,822 students in the file for analyses (Table 1).

Table 1: 2019-20 CAP Student Characteristics

Level	CAP Enrollment		District HS Enrollment	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Grade				
Grade 9	526	4.1	12,205	30.7
Grade 10	1,918	15.0	10,297	25.9
Grade 11	2,701	21.1	8,552	21.5
Grade 12	7,677	59.9	8,765	22.0
Gender				
Female	6,832	53.3	19,959	50.1
Male	5,990	46.7	19,860	49.9
Ethnicity				
Asian	159	1.2	376	0.9
African American	2,873	22.4	8,196	20.6
Hispanic	9,065	70.7	28,644	71.9
White	501	3.9	1,846	4.6
Other	224	1.7	757	1.9
Student Groups				
Eco.Dis.	9,850	76.8	31,927	80.2
At Risk	8,943	69.7	29,651	74.5

Source: CAP data provided by vendors 7/15/20. District demographic file 05/29/20.

Note: N=12,822 excluding 468 students who were not found in the district demo file dated 05/29/20. Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Since the CAP program focused on supporting senior students, most participants were enrolled in grade 12 (59.9%). The majority were Hispanic (70.7%) followed by African American (22.4%). There was a slightly higher percentage of CAP female students than for all high school female students districtwide (53.3% vs. 50.1%) and a slightly lower percentage of at-risk CAP versus all district high school students (69.7% vs. 74.5%). Additionally, there was a lower percentage of economically disadvantaged CAP students than the district overall (76.8% vs. 80.2%).

To what extent did CAP vendors meet 2019-20 program goals?

College Application

Overall, 92 percent of 2019-20 seniors completed at least one college application, below the 95 percent goal. College application rates by campus ranged between 75 and 100 percent. Six of the 11 campuses served by ASP (55%), 14 of the 23 campuses (except CityLab which had no seniors) served by EIF (61%), and the one campus served by SMU (100%) met the CAP goal. Ninety-five percent of seniors in 2018-19 and 94 percent in 2017-18 completed at least one college application. Seniors self-reported data indicated 26,142 college applications were submitted during the 2019-20 school year, and 9,933 (38%) were accepted.

Financial Assistance

Overall, 2019-20 seniors met the program goal of 70 percent completing a FAFSA or TASFA application. The completion rate increased from 68 percent in 2017-18 to 69 percent in 2018-19 (Lorenz, 2018 & Lorenz, 2019) to 70 percent in 2019-20. It is worth mentioning that due to the COVID-19 pandemic, CAP students had difficulty retrieving documents to complete FAFSA applications because the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) office was closed for a period of time preventing students from retrieving tax returns and other documents. Some students might not have had adequate time to submit required documents and complete the entire FAFSA process. When reviewed by campus, the completion percentage ranged between 52 percent and 100 percent. Obama Leadership Academy had the highest percentage of financial aid applications (100%), followed by Townview Business (98%), Townview SEM (97%), and Townview TAG (96%).¹

Overall, 10 percent of all seniors assisted by a CAP vendor self-reported that they were offered at least one scholarship or institutional grant.²

Linked Khan Academy Accounts

The program goal of 50 percent of participants linking their College Board account with their Khan Academy account was not met in 2019-20. Overall, 25 percent of grade 10 and grade 11 students who had a PSAT score linked their College Board account to Khan Academy. Eight of the 24 campuses served by EIF (33.3%) met the CAP goal of 50

percent, and none of the campuses served either by ASP or SMU met the outlined program goal. 2019-20 was the second year the CAP program had a goal for linking College Board and Khan Academy accounts. In 2018-19, the percentage of linked College Board accounts to Khan Academy was 30 percent, higher than in 2019-20 (25%).

SAT/ACT/TSIA

The program goal of 95 percent of 2019-20 seniors taking SAT, ACT or TSIA was not met. Overall, 93 percent of 2019-20 seniors took either the SAT, ACT or TSIA. The percentage of seniors taking one of the above-mentioned assessments remained largely stable over the past three years, with 92 percent in 2017-18 (Lorenz, 2018) and 93 percent in 2018-19 (Lorenz, 2019). SMU had the highest percentage of seniors who took a test (100%), followed by ASP (94%) and EIF (93%). Seven of the 11 campuses served by ASP (64%) and 11 of the 23 campuses (except for CityLab) served by EIF (48%) met the CAP goal.

CAP Staff Meeting with Counselors

The program goal of CAP staff meeting with counselors at least three times was met. The CAP staff visited 30 campuses from October 2019 through January 2020. Meetings covered a range of topics, such as college placement exam updates, college readiness goals, graduation requirements, financial aid information, and dual credit updates. The 2019-20 school year was the first year to report CAP staff meetings with campus counselors.

Dallas County Promise Pledges

The CAP goal was that 95 percent of seniors would complete a Dallas County Promise Pledge. Overall, 99 percent of CAP students completed their Dallas County Promise Pledges. Twenty-nine out of 31 (94%) participating campuses met the program goal. 2019-20 was the first year to report Dallas County's Promise Pledge completion.

To what extent did CAP participation change from 2017-18 to 2019-20?

The number of students served by CAP increased from 12,878 in 2017-18 to 14,428 in 2018-19 and decreased to 13,290 in 2019-20 (Table 2).

Table 2: 2017-18 through 2019-20 Students Served by CAP Vendor

	2017-18		2018-19		2019-20	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
ASP	4,382	34	4,007	28	2,418	18
EIF	7,649	59	9,243	64	10,080	76
SMU	847	7	1,178	8	792	6
Total	12,878	100	14,428	100	13,290	100

Source: 2017-18 and 2018-19 CAP information taken from Lorenz (2018 & 2019). 2019-20 CAP participation data from 07/15/20.

Note: N=13,290 including 468 students not found in the district demographic file dated 05/29/20.

¹ School of Business and Management (Business), School of Science and Engineering (SEM), School for the Talented and Gifted (TAG).

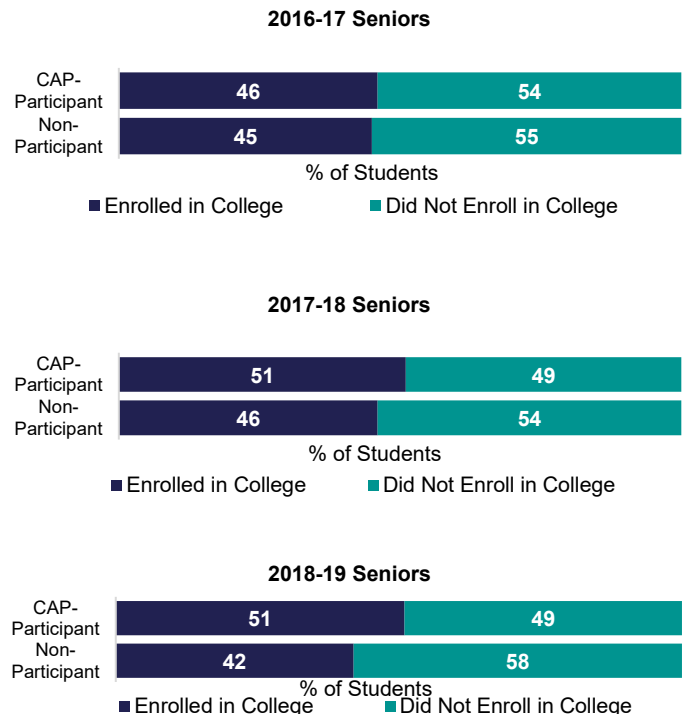
² Since this is a self-reported data, results should be viewed with caution.

On average, students receiving CAP services were served 4.7 times by CAP vendors in 2019-20. Students visited CAP vendors most commonly once (34%), followed by five to nine times (20%). In past years, Lorenz (2018 & 2019) reported that most students visited CAP vendors once (2017-18, 31%) and five to nine times (2017-18, 20%), and in 2018-19, most students visited CAP vendors once (37%) or twice (17%) or five to nine times (17%).

What was the relationship between CAP participation and college enrollment for 2016-17, 2017-18, and 2018-19 seniors?

The number of Dallas ISD seniors who participated in the CAP program increased from 2016-17 (7,048 seniors) to 2017-18 (7,475 seniors) and decreased slightly in 2018-19 (7,298 seniors). However, the percentage of seniors who participated in the program remained stable (88% to 89%) over the same timeframe. The 2019-20 NSC data file included college enrollment information for 93 percent (n=8,241) of 2018-19 Dallas ISD graduates, 51 percent of CAP participants and 42 percent of non-CAP participants enrolled in college in within one year of graduation (Figure 1).

Figure 1: 2016-17 through 2018-19 Percentages of Students Enrolled in College within One Year of Graduating High School



Source: CAP participation data file 07/15/19, district demographic data file 05/28/19, and National Student Clearinghouse data file 08/27/20. Prior year information was taken from Lorenz (2018 & 2019).
Note: N =6,873 CAP participants in 2016-17. N=734 non-participants in 2016-17. N=7,285 CAP participants in 2017-18. N=730 non-participants in 2017-18. N= 7,298 CAP participants in 2018-19. N =867 non-participants in 2018-19.

College enrollment increased from 2016-17 to 2018-19 by five percentage points (46% to 51%) for CAP participants

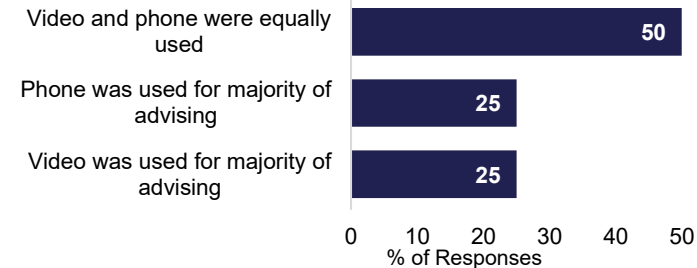
and decreased by three percentage points (45% to 42%) for non-participants. The 2018-19 seniors who participated in CAP were more likely to enroll in two-year colleges than non-participants, while 2018-19 seniors who did not participate in CAP were more likely to enroll in four-year colleges than CAP participants. More CAP participants than non-participants did *not* enroll in college in 2017-18 (49% vs. 54%) and 2018-19 (49% vs. 58%). This may indicate a need to recruit more non-CAP participants into the program.

In 2018-19, seniors who visited a CAP vendor 10 and more times were more likely to enroll in a four-year college than those who visited less frequently or non-CAP participants. Also, those with 10 or more visits were more likely to enroll in a two-year college than non-CAP participants. These results were similar for 2016-17 and 2017-18 seniors (Lorenz 2018 & Lorenz 2019).

How did CAP change the ways in which it provided service to students during at-home learning?

A CAP vendor survey and a CAP manager questionnaire were developed to solicit feedback about the program staff experience during at-home learning. The majority of vendors (58.3%) reported they provided service to students five days per week. Half of the survey respondents (50%) reported services were provided via video and phone conferencing equally (Figure 2).

Figure 2: 2019-20 Percentage of Video and Telephone Conferencing During At-Home Learning



Source: 2019-20 CAP vendor survey file, 07/08//20.
Note: N=24.

Vendors were asked to rank the most challenging issues when serving students remotely. Fourteen respondents (58.3%) ranked assisting with financial processes (FAFSA/TASFA) as the most challenging, followed by assisting with linking Khan Academy with College Board accounts (n=6 or 25.0%) and helping students complete the Dallas County Promise Pledge (n=3, 12.5%). The majority of respondents (79%) indicated virtual advising was less effective compared to in-person advising, and 62.5 percent of respondents stated they served fewer students during the pandemic compared to pre at-home learning.

The percentage of students that linked their Khan Academy accounts with their College Board accounts was relatively low in 2018-19 (30%) and in 2019-20 (25%), so vendors were asked what could be done to increase student

engagement with Khan Academy linked accounts in the coming years. Vendors (total responses=20) listed several critical elements to increase students' engagement including receiving adequate support from campus staff ($n=13$, or 65%), raising student interest ($n=5$, or 25%), and making it a priority for vendors ($n=2$, or 10%).

When asked which areas for improvement they would target in 2020-21, vendors (total responses=20) identified the following areas: assisting with financial aid applications ($n=18$, or 90%), assisting students with linking Khan Academy and College Board accounts ($n=15$, or 75%), assisting with college applications ($n=14$, or 70%), assisting with scholarship applications ($n=12$, or 60%), and assisting with registering and preparing for SAT/ACT/TSIA tests ($n=11$, or 55%).

Vendors (total respondents=23) listed several challenges. These included reaching out and communicating with CAP students ($n=27$), accessing student information ($n=7$), engaging with students ($n=4$), assisting students with college paperwork ($n=3$), and having internet connection issues using Zoom and other platforms ($n=2$).

The CAP manager encountered some challenges during this difficult time, including assisting students with FAFSA/TASFA applications. For example, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, students had difficulty retrieving IRS tax transcripts and other tax documents since the IRS was closed at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, some students' financial aid applications were delayed, and some students were concerned that their college application and other admissions information would not be processed in a timely manner.

During the 2020-21 school year, the CAP manager plans to do the following: 1) hold virtual meetings with CAP supervisors on a monthly basis; 2) have one-on-one meetings with advisors at each campus to ensure they get the support they need; 3) make changes to how scholarships are reported; 4) have a meeting with the Special Revenue Funds Management department to complete requirements for virtual reporting; and 5) keep verifying vendor monthly reports, including services and workshops provided, student signatures, and so forth.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Identify ways to help students link their Khan Academy and College Board accounts, especially among students in grades 10 and 11. In 2019-20, 25 percent linked their Khan Academy accounts with College Board, which was much lower than the 50 percent program goal. Likewise, eight out of 36 campuses (22%) met the program goal. Program staff should work closely with CAP vendors to make sure vendors prioritize helping students link their accounts and to note the benefits available when the accounts are linked.

Identify ways to increase senior college application completion rates. In 2019-20, 40 percent of the campuses with seniors (14 out of 35 campuses) did not meet the application completion rate CAP goal of 95 percent. Program staff should coordinate with CAP vendors to determine possible reasons for the high incompleteness and target steps to ensure students receive adequate support and encouragement to complete the process.

Update FLS and ADL files on an ongoing basis. A data discrepancy existed between the district demographic file and what vendors reported for the number of seniors on each campus when excluding FLS and ADL students. CAP staff members should ensure the FLS and ADL information is updated throughout the school year to improve data accuracy.

Find ways to recruit more students in the CAP program. More CAP participants than non-participants did *not* enroll in college in 2017-18 (49% vs. 54%) and 2018-19 (49% vs. 58%). This likely means there is a need to recruit more students, especially seniors, into the CAP program.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Differentiated Instructional Support for District (DISD) Needs program in the Dallas Independent School District (ISD), previously known as the Instructional Lead Coaches Structure, was created in 2018-19 to improve the collaboration between Instructional Lead Coaches (ILCs), Teaching and Learning, and School Leadership (SL). The goal of the ILCs was to empower and build capacity within campus instructional coaches (CICs) and assistant principals (APs). To accomplish this goal, ILCs served as the bridge for SL to provide direct campus instructional support. Each ILC reported to an Executive Director (ED) and worked closely with content and instructional experts from the Teaching and Learning department to increase depth of knowledge and to create professional development (PD) for teachers, CICs, principals, and APs. ILCs ensured curriculum implementation fidelity by attending professional sessions and by coaching instructional practices that support and enhance student achievement. They also learned key coaching competencies that promote innovative change and improvement at district campuses.

In 2019-20, SL guided the work of ILCs to maintain strong accountability for implementing district priorities and to improve the blended learning instructional model. The services that ILCs provided campus staff members included 1) assisting with the implementation of district curricula, 2) developing action plans, 3) providing feedback for action plans, 4) on-site coaching of teachers, 5) organizing PD sessions; 6) guiding Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), 7) reviewing and interpreting campus data, and 8) working with campus administration on instructional practices. ILCs also received training most Fridays (ILC Fridays).¹

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic districtwide transition to at-home learning, the DISD Needs program staff members directed ILCs to provide several new supports.² During at-home learning, ILCs transitioned to providing all PLCs to teachers virtually. They also created lesson plans and monitored teachers in virtual classrooms. These observations were used to determine how content was being shared with students and to provide feedback to teachers. In addition, ILCs started working with Teaching and Learning to create new at-home lessons for the

upcoming 2020-21 school year that could be used in-person or virtually. These lesson plans were designed to provide flexibility if at-home learning was used again in 2020-21. Lastly, ILCs provided support for teachers experiencing technology issues, and ILCs continued to attend virtual meetings with teachers and parents, as needed.

The purpose of this evaluation was to provide an overview of the implementation of the DISD Needs program, including funding, program staff member characteristics, PD opportunities, and the perceptions of participants in the program. The total budget for the 2019-20 DISD Needs program was \$6,891,216 from Title I funds, which was an increase from \$5,875,399 in 2018-19.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS/OUTCOMES

What were the characteristics of ILCs in 2019-20?

During the 2019-20 school year, 68 ILCs worked in the Dallas ISD, which was an increase from 62 ILCs in 2018-19.³ The majority of 2019-20 ILCs were female (87%) and/or African American (59%). Most ILCs (75%) held a master's degree or doctorate. In addition, 77 percent of ILCs were retained as district ILCs from 2018-19 to 2019-20.

What was the distribution of ED and ILC campus visits by network during the 2019-20 school year?

During the 2019-20 school year, 3,142 ED/SL visits and 2,069 ILC visits were conducted on Dallas ISD campuses (Table 1). The largest percentage of visits occurred in the Southeast (ED/SL: 29.1%; ILC: 29.8%) and Southwest (ED/SL: 15.9%; ILC: 19.8%) networks, and the smallest percentage occurred in the Magnet (ED/SL: 0.6%; ILC: 0.8%) and Transformation (ED/SL: 1.8%; ILC: 1.0%) networks. ED spot observations were not reported in 2019-20 because of incomplete available data.⁴

¹ One Friday per month was spent with Teaching and Learning to increase depth of knowledge and to develop PD that ILCs used to train EDs, teachers, CICs, and APs. One Friday per month included coaching training from an outside vendor (Ed Elements) to build ILC coaching capacity. One or two Fridays per month were spent with SL to present ideas, address needs, and collaborate (i.e., sessions on reading, sound research-based practices, etc.)

² The last day of 2019-20 in-class instruction in the Dallas ISD was March 13, 2020. At-home learning began on March 23, 2020 after spring break.

³ The 10 ILCs that served Accelerating Campus Excellence (ACE) campuses or the Office of Racial Equity in 2019-20 were not included in this evaluation because they had different job responsibilities and were not required to attend the same meetings as other ILCs.

⁴ After reviewing the Campus Coaching Tracker file, the evaluator and SL staff members determined that the spot observation data were likely incomplete because some EDs used a different system for recording spot observations. EDs also may have calibrated with campus leaders during campus visits without submitting an ED spot observation.

Table 1: 2019-20 ED/SL and ILC Visits by Network

	ED/SL Visits		ILC Visits	
	N	%	N	%
ACE	362	11.5	22	1.1
Central	372	11.8	263	12.7
Magnet	19	0.6	16	0.8
Northeast	417	13.3	396	19.1
Northwest	499	15.9	327	15.8
Southeast	915	29.1	616	29.8
Southwest	501	15.9	409	19.8
Transformation	57	1.8	20	1.0
District	3,142	100.0	2,069	100.0

Source: Campus Coaching Tracker data files from SL dated 06/11/20.

Note: Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding.

What professional development opportunities were offered and completed by ILCs in 2019-20?

After reviewing the attendance data for ILC PD, the evaluator identified that attendance data for 15 PD sessions prior to March 13, 2020 were not available for analysis. The evaluator and SL program leadership determined that these data likely were missing for a variety of reasons, such as the COVID-19-related transition to at-home learning, inconsistent use of sign-in sheets at PD sessions, addition of PD sessions to the original calendar, and inconsistent use of sign-in sheets because of changes in times and dates of the sessions. Therefore, these results were not possible to include in this report.

What were the perceptions of EDs, ILCs, CICs, and APs regarding the implementation of the DISD Needs program in 2019-20?

Survey results presented in this section reflect major findings for the ED, ILC, CIC, and AP surveys. This section includes results related to experiences prior to and during COVID-19-related district at-home learning. Similar to 2018-19, survey responses regarding the DISD Needs program were generally positive.

Executive Director Survey

Of the 20 EDs invited to complete the survey, eight (40%) completed at least part of the survey. The three most common services that EDs assigned to their reading and mathematics ILCs included guiding, planning, and modeling support for PLCs (100%); leading PD sessions (100%); and reviewing and interpreting campus data (100%).

Prior to at-home learning, EDs highly rated the ILC model. All EDs reported that the reading and mathematics ILCs:

- provided above average or excellent services,
- frequently or almost always met the needs of their campuses prior to at-home learning, and
- provided extremely helpful support and content to leadership teams.

In addition, 100 percent of EDs who responded to the survey agreed or strongly agreed that:

- the efforts of CICs in their networks contributed to the improvement of teacher performance,

- the ILC model strengthened the skills of administrative teams and CICs, and
- the ILC model was effective during the 2019-20 school year.

When describing two strengths of the 2019-20 ILC model (16 responses), EDs most frequently mentioned the content knowledge of the ILCs ($n = 5$; 31%), planning with ILCs ($n = 4$; 25%), and having the autonomy to meet the needs of their campuses ($n = 3$; 19%). Regarding the supports that would be beneficial for the ILC model for the 2020-21 school year (11 responses), EDs most often mentioned having additional resources (e.g., extra planning time and more ILCs; $n = 4$; 36%) and maintaining consistency with the ILC model ($n = 3$; 27%).

Once the district transitioned to at-home learning, 100 percent of EDs reported that:

- the quality of services provided by the reading and mathematics ILCs was above average or excellent,
- the support and content from the ILC model was moderately or extremely helpful to content leadership teams, and
- the ILC model was effective during at-home learning.

Regarding how the needs of their ILCs changed during at-home learning (6 responses), most respondents reported that the ILCs helped campuses transition to virtual content learning ($n = 4$; 67%) by providing professional development, resources and tools, technology lessons, and feedback on best instructional practices. When asked how the ILC model could be improved in possible future at-home learning situations (6 responses), EDs most often reported that ILCs should continue in their current roles ($n = 2$; 33%).

Instructional Lead Coach Survey

Of the 68 ILCs invited to complete the survey, 66 (97%) completed at least part of the survey. ILCs reported that the three most common services frequently or very frequently requested by EDs included guiding, planning, and modeling support for PLCs (95%); reviewing and interpreting campus data (95%); and helping to implement curriculum (94%).

The frequency with which ILCs reported providing services to CICs and APs was generally high, but somewhat varied depending on the support recipient.

- Guiding, planning, and modeling support for PLCs (CICs: 97%; APs: 88%) and working with campus administrators on instructional practices (CICs: 91%; APs: 77%) were two services that ILCs frequently (frequently or very frequently) provided to both CICs and APs.
- While 92% of ILCs reported frequently leading PD sessions for CICs, a smaller percentage of ILCs (63%) frequently led PD sessions for APs. In contrast, 85 percent of ILCs reported that they frequently reviewed and interpreted campus data for APs, compared to 49 percent of ILCs for CICs.

ILCs who completed the survey highly rated the helpfulness of the services that they received from the DISD Needs program. Seventy-seven percent of ILCs rated the PD collaboration with the Teaching and Learning department as helpful (moderately or extremely helpful), and 72 percent rated the Coaching Academies from Ed Elements as helpful. Eighty-six percent of respondents agreed that the collaboration between Teaching and Learning and ILCs provided content resources that effectively helped campuses. In addition, all ILC survey respondents agreed that

- APs, CICs, and principals were receptive to the service(s) that they provided,
- the ILC model was effective, and
- the efforts of CICs contributed to the improvement of teacher performance during the 2019-20 school year.

Prior to at-home learning, the two areas that ILCs most frequently reported as working well were collaborating with other ILCs, EDs, CICs, and stakeholders (92%) and having the flexibility to provide support based on campus needs (89%). In addition, 64 percent of ILCs reported that developing knowledge and competency was an opportunity for growth as an ILC. When responding to an open-ended question regarding the most important ways that EDs could continue to support the role of ILCs (130 responses), ILCs most frequently referenced working collaboratively with EDs as a team ($n = 27$; 21%), followed by receiving feedback and coaching for growth ($n = 24$; 18%) and having autonomy and flexibility to support their campuses ($n = 14$; 11%).

Once the district transitioned to at-home learning, ILCs continued to report that working with campus administrators on instructional practices (CICs: 88%; APs: 72%) and guiding, planning, and modeling support for PLCs (CICs: 84%; APs: 78%) were the most common services provided to CICs and APs. Most ILCs (91%) also reported the ILC model was effective during at-home learning.

When ILCs described how their needs changed during at-home learning (58 responses), about half of respondents referred to the transition to a virtual environment for at-home learning and how they needed additional trainings to provide virtual campus support for technology and instruction ($n = 31$; 53%). The supports that ILCs most often cited as most successful during at-home learning (61 responses) were related to a combination of online support (e.g., technology training, PLC meetings, and professional development; $n = 36$; 59%) and developing at-home lesson plans ($n = 9$; 15%). When ILCs described the challenges that they faced during at-home learning that required additional support (30 responses), the most frequent responses were related to technology issues and learning new online platforms ($n = 7$; 23%).

Campus Instructional Coach Survey

Of the 349 CICs invited to complete the survey, 224 (64%) completed at least part of the survey. During 2019-20, 95 percent of CIC respondents reported that an ILC had provided services to them or their campuses, and 88 percent reported that their ILCs at least sometimes provided services to their campuses.

The most frequent service that ILCs provided CICs was the implementation of district curricula (69%). In addition, over half of CICs reported that ILCs:

- provided guiding, planning, and modeling support for PLCs (59%);
- led PD sessions (56%);
- reviewed/interpreted campus data (55%);
- developed instructional practices (54%);
- provided feedback on action plans (54%); and
- helped develop action plans (52%).

Regarding the CIC conferences,⁵ CICs generally expressed favorable views about the sessions they attended. High rates of participants highly rated the helpfulness (helpful or very helpful) of the choice sessions (81%), content sessions (79%), and network sessions (73%) at the CIC conferences. When describing how the CIC conferences could be improved (214 responses), the CICs most frequently mentioned that they wanted more options for choosing CIC Conference classes ($n = 12$; 6%), and to provide input on the session topics before the conferences ($n = 12$; 6%).

In addition, most CICs expressed favorable views about their experiences with the DISD Needs program.

- Ninety percent of CICs agreed that the ILC model was effective in 2019-20.
- Eighty percent were satisfied with the quality of feedback and support from their ILCs.
- Most CIC participants agreed that ILCs responded in a timely manner (93%) and met the needs of their campuses (91%).
- Seventy-five percent of CICs who completed the survey also reported that they were satisfied (very or completely satisfied) with the quality of PD prior to at-home learning and with their collaboration with school administrators.
- CIC respondents also reported that they experienced at least some improvement in their coaching (84%), data (80%), feedback (84%), and knowledge (87%) skills.

The pattern of rates at which CICs received the three most common services from ILCs during at-home learning remained similar to rates before the transition, including implementation of district curriculum (59%); guiding, planning, and modeling support for PLCs (57%); and leading PD sessions (47%).

⁵ At the CIC conferences, ILCs shared best practices from the Teaching and Learning department to help CICs improve content knowledge depth.

When CICs described how their needs changed during at-home learning (161 responses), they most frequently reported that they needed more assistance providing technology support for teachers ($n = 58$; 36%), and 12 percent responded that their needs did not change. In addition, CICs considered the most successful support received during at-home learning (166 responses) to be the feedback that ILCs provided ($n = 33$; 20%), followed by weekly meetings with ILCs ($n = 30$; 18%) and the technology support ILCs provided ($n = 15$; 9%). CICs also described some challenges during at-home learning that required additional support from ILCs (136 responses). While they most often explicitly reported that they did not require additional support ($n = 44$; 32%), 13 percent ($n = 18$) reported that they faced challenges regarding technology, needing online resources for at-home learning, or coaching teachers during at-home learning.

Assistant Principal Survey

Of the 115 APs invited to complete the survey, 51 (44%) completed at least part of the survey. Seventy-nine percent reported that their ILCs at least sometimes provided services to their campuses, whereas six percent reported that an ILC had never provided services on their campuses. Prior to at-home learning, the three most common services that ILCs provided to APs included:

- helping to implement district curricula (51%);
- working with campus administrators to develop instructional practices (49%); and
- reviewing and interpreting campus data (49%).

Regarding the quality of services provided by ILCs, a high percentage of AP respondents agreed that ILCs responded in a timely manner (84%) and provided services that met the needs of their campuses (80%) during 2019-20. When describing the skills that improved from the ILC model, AP respondents reported that they experienced at least some improvement on their coaching (66%), data (60%), feedback (66%) and knowledge (66%) skills.

While a smaller percentage of APs reported that they frequently received services from ILCs after the district transition to at-home learning (between 22% and 37%) compared to before the transition (between 45% and 51%), the most common services that ILCs provided APs during at-home learning included:

- helping to implement district curriculum (37%);
- guiding, planning, and modeling PLCs (35%);

- working with campus administrators to develop instructional practices (33%);
- leading PD sessions (33%); and
- providing feedback on action plans (33%).

When describing the supports from the ILCs that were most successful during at-home learning (32 responses), APs most often explicitly reported that they did not receive support from an ILC during at-home learning ($n = 12$; 38%), followed by receiving instructional support ($n = 6$; 19%) and PLC support ($n = 5$; 16%). APs also described the challenges that they faced during at-home learning that required additional support from their ILC (24 responses). Forty-six percent ($n = 11$) of APs explicitly reported that they did not require additional support, followed by 17 percent ($n = 4$) who reported that they faced challenges regarding online engagement strategies and instructional practices.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Improve tracking of ED spot observations and PD attendance data. Missing or incomplete data prevented the ED spot observations and PD attendance data from being evaluated in 2019-20. DISD Needs program staff members should determine how the Campus Coaching Tracker file and PD sign-in sheets can be used more effectively to track ED spot observations and PD attendance during the school year. These data could be invaluable for monitoring the impact of these supports over time.

Continue using ILCs in their current roles. In 2019-20, most EDs, ILCs, CICs, and APs had favorable views of the ILC model and reported that the ILC model was effective before and after the transition to at-home learning. Thus, ILCs should continue to focus on providing direct campus instructional support that empowers and builds capacity within CICs and APs.

Provide additional support for at-home learning. During at-home learning, both ILCs and CICs reported that they needed additional trainings to provide virtual technology support for campuses and teachers. Because of the uncertainty regarding the effect of COVID-19 on the upcoming 2020-21 school year, DISD Needs program leadership should evaluate the needs of EDs, ILCs, CICs, and APs to determine the additional resources and supports they need to effectively lead and coach in both face-to-face and online settings.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Extended Learning Opportunities (ELO) department oversees after-school and summer programs across the Dallas Independent School District (ISD). In response to three main areas of concern reported by a safety focus group in 2018-19, the ELO department requested additional funding for the After-School Learning Programming and ELO Safety initiatives, two new initiatives in 2019-20.

In 2019-20, \$1,099,633 in Title IV funds supported the initiatives.¹ To support the After-School Learning initiative, Title IV funding was used to provide comprehensive after-school programs to eight elementary level campuses² in underserved geographical areas during the 2019-20 school year. Title IV funding covered the supplemental pay for eight After-School Program Coordinators (also referred to as Site Coordinators) and contracted services for the after-school programs at each campus.

As part of the ELO Safety Initiative, Title IV funds were to be used for supplemental pay for 50 After-School Safety Coordinators at designated after-school campus sites for the 2019-20 school year. The funding was also allocated to support quarterly after-school safety professional development (PD) for the After-School Safety Coordinators whom were not already trained.

The 2019-20 in-person initiatives were implemented up to spring break. However, in response to COVID-19, in-person initiatives were cancelled after spring break due to the district's move to at-home learning on March 23, 2020. After the transition to at-home learning, the ELO department staff worked with program vendors to provide virtual on-demand resources focusing on Science, Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM), theater, the visual arts, etc.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS/OUTCOMES

How was the ELO After-School Learning Programming initiative implemented during the 2019-20 school year?

After-school programs for students in grades prekindergarten through grade five were provided to eight campuses with the highest priority needs in the Pleasant Grove and Southern Dallas areas. The programs provided hands-on extra-curricular activities in an effort to engage, enrich, and empower students, while aiming to increase

their academic achievement. In an effort to develop the whole child, program emphases included STEM, literacy, and visual and fine arts.

The ELO department provided one Site Coordinator for each of the eight campuses to organize the after-school program at each campus and coordinate with outside vendors. Program implementation data were collected from ELO department staff members, informal interviews with the eight Site Coordinators, and observations during campus visits between February and March of 2020.

The ELO director reported that, in the first semester, programs were organized by the campus staff. Beginning in January 2020, programs were to be led by vendors; however, few campuses had begun vendor-led programming before the district was closed in March 2020 in response to COVID-19. ELO department staff members reported that this was partially because purchase orders were delayed. ELO department staff members were asked to provide student attendance data, but these data were reportedly not collected with fidelity.³

Site Coordinator Interviews

Of the eight interviewed Site Coordinators, five were teachers; and one each were an assistant principal, an instructional coach, and a teacher assistant.

When asked about the after-school program, Site Coordinators expressed disappointment because of inconsistencies due to program vendors starting their enrichment activities late (February 2020 at the earliest). Site Coordinators attributed the late start to the delayed purchase order approval process for vendor contracted programs. Before vendor-led programs began, Site Coordinators arranged for campus staff members to provide other after-school activities in an attempt to keep students motivated and to prevent program drop out. Nevertheless, some students reportedly left to attend other after-school programs. During the time prior to vendor-led programming beginning, some Site Coordinators felt that there was not sufficient communication from ELO department staff members about the start dates for the contracted vendors.

The evaluator asked Site Coordinators about successes and challenges with their role and with the program. In terms of the Site Coordinator role, successes included providing activities to motivate students while waiting for vendor

¹ As of 02/28/20.

² The eight campuses included: W.W. Bushman, Chapel Hill Preparatory School, Julius Dorsey, Barbara Jordan, Kleberg, Ronald McNair, Thomas Tolbert, and Urban Park.

³ Department staff members reported searching for a method to better track attendance in 2020-21.

programs to begin (n=7) and maintaining a positive relationship with parents (n=3). The most commonly reported challenge was providing alternative activities to engage students before vendor programs started (n=6). Regarding the After-School Learning program, successes included student enjoyment of the vendor programs (n=6) and student ability to be exposed to or learn new things (n=4). Program challenges included the previously mentioned late start of vendor programs (n=7) and inconsistent vendor instructor attendance (n=3).⁴ Finally, Site Coordinators were asked about suggestions for improving the After-School Learning program. They indicated that vendor programs should start in the beginning of the school year (n=7), program vendor instructors should report to class on time (n=2), and that there should be better communication between ELO central staff members and the Site Coordinators (n=2).

Classroom Observations

Classroom observations were conducted on four of the eight campuses (Bushman, Dorsey, McNair, and Urban Park Elementary schools). Classrooms could not be observed at the other four after-school sites because of class cancellations by the vendor-led program instructors. A combined total of six one-hour classroom observations were conducted for four programs (Discover Art, Discover Theater, American Sign Language, and Step-it-Up).⁵

Overall, the evaluator observed that instructors arrived prepared for class, gave clear instructions and demonstrations for the activities, monitored students, and praised student efforts. The students appeared actively engaged in the activities and demonstrated expressions of anticipation and enjoyment.

What were the perceptions of student participants regarding the implementation of the 2019-20 after-school programs?

A student perception survey was created by the evaluator in collaboration with ELO central staff members to collect feedback from a sample of after-school program participants. All surveyed students were in grades three through five and attended one of the eight campuses served by the After-School Learning Program initiative. The surveys were conducted as part of campus visits that occurred between February and March of 2020 in conjunction with After-School Site and Safety Coordinator interviews and classroom observations. The evaluator administered surveys to a total of 113 students, using scantron forms, before conducting each classroom observation. Students rated each item about their after-school program on a three-point scale (agree, disagree, not sure).

In general, students positively rated the after-school programs (Table 1). Most participants agreed that they liked

the after-school activities (78%). Fewer agreed that they would participate in the activity again next school year (59%) or that the activity was helping them do better in school (56%).

Table 1: 2019-20 Students That “Agree” With Statements About After-School Programs

Statement	%
I like the after-school activities.	78
I learn interesting things in this after-school activity.	70
I make many friends in this after-school activity.	69
I get excited about coming to this after-school activity.	66
I want to participate in this program again next school year.	59
I feel that this after-school activity is helping me to do better in school.	56

Source: 2019-20 ELO: After-School Student Survey administered March 2020.
Note: N = 113.

How was the ELO Safety Initiative implemented during the 2019-20 school year?

After-School Safety Coordinators served campuses with the highest safety needs. They provided safety support to campus staff, students, and visitors during after-school hours (Monday through Friday from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m.) for the 2019-20 school year. The main responsibilities of the After-School Safety Coordinator included:

- developing an after-school safety plan and procedures,
- ensuring all campus programs/activities were centrally located,
- providing access to facilities within the building,
- ensuring the code of conduct was carried out in accordance with Dallas ISD policy,
- monitoring external guests and visitors,
- administering first-aid and CPR if needed,
- conducting monthly emergency drills, and
- serving as the point of contact for crisis events in the community.

The ELO department expected to fill 50 After-School Safety Coordinator positions with staff members who served as day-time Safety Coordinators on campuses and were already trained for the role. However, finding campus staff members to fill the positions was a problem because of the extended work hours. ELO central staff members indicated that 12 of the 50 (24%) After-School Safety Coordinator positions were filled, meaning 76 percent of the positions were not filled. Coordinators included five teachers, five assistant teachers, one assistant principal, and one instructional coach. Three of the 12 After-School Safety Coordinators also worked as day-time Safety Coordinators.

⁴ Reportedly, not all vendor instructors contacted the Site Coordinator to say that they would not be providing programing that day.

⁵ Step it Up is a dance class offering a variety of dance styles (modern, hip hop, ballet, etc.).

What professional development training was provided to After-School Safety Coordinators in 2019-20?

The ELO Safety Initiative supported specialized PD for After-School Safety Coordinators provided by staff members in the Dallas ISD Risk Management, Police and Security, Emergency Operations, and Health Services departments. All After-School Safety Coordinators were required to be knowledgeable of emergency protocols for their designated campuses. PD funding was used for After-School Safety Coordinators not previously trained for the role. Initial plans included safety PD in August 2019 (Fall) and January 2020 (Spring). However, Spring PD was not scheduled and the fall training only took place online. Outside of other training, all After-School Safety Coordinators were required to be trained and certified in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) in 2019-20.

After receiving training themselves, After-School Safety Coordinators were responsible for providing safety training to their campus after-school staff members. Attendance data for trainings were unavailable for 2019-20. A tracking system is reportedly being developed for 2020-21.

What were the results of the ELO Safety Initiative interviews and end-of-year activity code report?

Safety Coordinator Interviews

Seven interviews with After-School Safety Coordinators were conducted between February and March of 2020.⁶ Data were collected from interviews with the After-School Safety Coordinator from each of seven campuses using a sample of items taken from the Program Functionality and Safety Checklist and a list of safety coordinator responsibilities provided by ELO central staff members.

In general, all interviewed After-School Safety Coordinators felt that their role was beneficial and said they felt supported by after-school staff members at their campuses. They also reported complying with some of the required responsibilities from the safety checklist. After-School Safety Coordinators agreed that:

- first aid kits were available and accessible to all after-school staff;
- after-school campus staff were aware of and had access to the guide for first aid and emergency care;
- after-school campus staff were familiar with the campus fire, tornado, and lockdown crisis plans;
- external guests were logged in and out, and monitored;
- access to facilities within the building was provided; and
- all programs/facilities were centrally located.

However, After-School Safety Coordinators did not report complying with all required responsibilities. Of the seven After-School Safety Coordinators interviewed:

- four received safety training in the 2019-20 school year,
- four were CPR certified,
- three posted district code of conduct⁷ charts in each classroom/area where program activities took place as instructed (one After-School Safety Coordinator was unfamiliar with the code of conduct requirement and others placed the code of conduct charts in common areas including the hallway or cafeteria), and
- three did not know when the last campus fire drill was conducted during after-school hours (a monthly requirement).⁸

After-School Safety Coordinators were asked about additional supports needed for their role and about the Site Coordinator role. Most respondents stated the need for safety training (n=5). Over half (n=4) indicated they did not see any challenges in their role of Safety Coordinator. However, individual respondents expressed the need to update parent contact information, get additional help to conduct after-school drills, and obtain a list of the After-School Safety Coordinator responsibilities. Safety Coordinator recommendations regarding the Site Coordinator role included increased communication with the program vendors and with After-School Safety Coordinators.

When asked about recommendations for the ELO department, After-School Safety Coordinators recommended ensuring all vendor-led programs started on time (n=3), providing timely PD to all After-School Safety Coordinators not trained in emergency protocols (n=2), providing better communication with all parties involved in the after-school program to coordinate trainings and needs to campus staff (n=2), and offering a greater variety of vendor-led programs (i.e., sports, Saturday activities, and field trips; n=2).

End-of-Year Activity Code Report

The After-School Safety Coordinators were hired to provide 465 hours of safety support during the 2019-20 school year at their designated campuses. ELO central staff members were unable to provide accurate records of time worked for the 12 After-School Safety Coordinators.

⁶ Because of time constraints, the eight After-School Learning program sites and the related observations also served as sites for safety observations. Thus, the safety observation and interview data presented here is only representative of schools also being supported with the After-School Learning program sites and generalizations to other sites should be made with caution.

⁷ The code of conduct details the student rules/expectations and a discipline action plan for after-school participants that should be posted in the program space.

⁸ One campus conducted a fire drill during observations after the interview with the Safety Coordinator was completed.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Ensure better communication with After-School Site and Safety Coordinators. Site Coordinators and Safety Coordinators reported a need for better communication between ELO department staff members, vendors, and other campus after-school staff members.

Improve recruitment efforts to fill vacant After-School Safety Coordinator positions. The majority of After-School Safety Coordinator positions (38 of 50; 76%) were not filled in 2019-20. To ensure the safety of students attending after-school programs at high-risk campuses, it will be important to rethink the recruitment of quality candidates for the positions.

Use participant feedback to improve the training of After-School Safety Coordinators. Five of the seven After-School Safety Coordinators interviewed expressed a need for safety training to fulfill their duties and responsibilities adequately. Four of the seven interviewed indicated they did not meet all required responsibilities.

Ensure more accurate tracking of data. No valid data were available for student attendance, safety training attendance, or work hours for the Safety Coordinators. Tracking of these data in the future will provide a more complete picture of program implementation.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Public School Choice (PSC) is an initiative born out of the Office of Transformation and Innovation (OTI) to help Dallas Independent School District (ISD) students find their “best-fit” school. Transformation, innovation, and innovation pilot schools were the focus of this evaluation. In 2019-20, the district operated 34 transformation and innovation (T & I) schools (10 transformation, 24 innovation), each with an anchor model and with no academic or parental admission requirements.¹ Transformation schools are new schools without traditional attendance zones, whereas innovation schools are existing schools and limited to students in the school’s attendance zone. The 2019-20 budget was \$5,639,500, an increase from \$4,775,402 in 2018-19.²

PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION

The purpose was to examine context, process, and outcomes related to student selection/socioeconomic diversity, school climate, and student outcome goals. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the district transitioned to at-home learning on March 23, 2020 (following spring break). Spring districtwide surveys and most spring student assessments were canceled as a result. Context/process data included interviews, emails, internal documents, and web site review. Demographic, climate survey, enrollment, attendance, and assessment data were pulled from district files. Outcomes for reading and mathematics included fall *Assessment of Course Performance (ACP)*. Frequency and crosstabs analyses were used. Findings should be viewed with caution due to the reduced evaluation scope³ and pandemic effects.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS/OUTCOMES
What was the context of the T & I schools?
2019-20 T & I Campuses

From 2018-19 to 2019-20, the number of campuses ($N=25$ to 34) and students ($N=13,505$ to 18,739) increased (Table 1). Most students (81%) attended an innovation school.

Table 1: 2019-20 Dallas ISD Transformation and Innovation Schools

T & I School	Anchor Model	Grades Served	Students <i>N</i>
Transformation Schools			
Hernandez	Montessori	PK-3	230
Houston	PL	PK-5	233
Solar Boys	STEAM	PK-3	305
Solar Girls	STEAM	PK-5	561
Mata	Montessori	PK-7	645
Ignite	PL	6-7	358
Hulcy	STEAM	6-8	519
CityLab	Urban Planning	9-11	203
IDEA	PL	9-12	286
New Tech	Technology & PBL	9-12	269
Total Transformation			3,609
Innovation Schools			
Alexander ¹	PL	4 & 5 (reading)	339
Botello	PL	PK-5	541
Chapel Hill	PL	PK-5	470
Cowart	PL	PK-5	585
De Zavala	Montessori	PK-6	479
Donald	Leadership	PK-5	403
Douglass ^{2,3}	STEM	PK-5	476
Geneva Heights	IB	PK-5	434
Gonzalez	PL	PK-5	625
Kleberg ¹	STEAM	PK-5 (core subjects)	775
Kramer	IB	PK-5	628
Lipscomb	IB	PK-5	462
Lowe	PL	PK-5	593
McNair	STEAM	PK-5	556
Preston Hollow	IB	PK-5	431
Reagan	STEAM	PK-5	309
Richardson ²	PL	4 (all subjects)	630
Rogers	PL	PK-5	502
Salazar	PL	PK-5	513
Weiss	Leadership	PK-5	528
Zaragoza	PL	PK-5	351
Franklin	IB	6-8	1,342
Marsh ³	PL	6-8	992
Adams, B	Leadership	9-12	2,166
Total Innovation			15,130
T & I Total			18,739

Source: Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) demographic file, 10/28/19.

Note: ¹Innovation pilot schools in 2019-20. ²Innovation pilot schools in 2018-19 and 2019-20. ³Choice strategies were restricted at Douglass Elementary School (ES) and Marsh Middle School (MS) during 2019-20 due to subpar 2018-19 accountability results (“Focus” and “Developing” LAS ratings, respectively); numbers were included for informational purposes. All innovation pilot school students were included.

¹ Anchor models included International Baccalaureate (IB); Leadership; Montessori; personalized learning (PL); Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics (STEAM); Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM); Technology and project-based learning (Technology & PBL), and urban planning, architecture, and community development (Urban Planning). Choice model strategies were restricted at Douglass and Marsh due to subpar 2018-19 Local Accountability System (LAS) results; these schools were not included in the outcome analyses. More information on LAS can be found here: <https://www.dallasisd.org/localaccountability>.

² This included \$5,168,756 in district funds and \$470,744 in Title II funds.

³ Some goals were modified to use available data and others were not measured. EOY data that could not be used included full-year attendance, districtwide spring climate surveys, *TerraNova*, *SUPERA*, the *State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR)* 3-8 and *STAAR End of Course (EOC)*. Fall rather than spring staff climate survey data were used. Attendance was limited to the first four six-week periods. Student achievement analyses were limited to fall ACP reading and mathematics.

Like the district, most Choice students were economically disadvantaged (83%) and Hispanic (73%); however, some differences were found when reviewed by campus type. The percentage of economically disadvantaged students was lower (69%) for transformation schools than for innovation schools (86%) and the district (84%); this was expected because the district has been working toward having 50/50 socioeconomic diversity at transformation schools except Hulcy and New Tech. Fewer Hispanic (60% vs. 76% vs. 70%, respectively) and more white students (12% vs. 5% vs. 5%, respectively) attended transformation schools than innovation schools and the district. In contrast, more African American students attended a transformation school (21%) when compared to innovation schools (16%), but the percentages of African American students were the same between transformation schools and the district (21%). Fewer English learners (32%) attended transformation than innovation (53%) and district (46%) schools. Percentages of special education students were similar for transformation, innovation, and district schools (range: 9 to 10%).

Spring 2020 School Selection Process for 2020-21

Like previous years, OTI oversaw the 2019-20 PSC school application and selection process for 2020-21 schools (PSC 6.0), and it remained competitive. A total of 26 proposals were submitted, and 13 were approved (two transformation, eight innovation, and three innovation pilot). One additional school (Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Arts Academy) was named a transformation school. There were more applications and campuses selected in PSC 6.0 than in PSC 1.0- 5.0.

School Location/Anchor Model Decision Processes

The district relies on market analyses, school mapping, and other applicable data when making decisions for new school locations to ensure students living within all areas of Dallas ISD have equitable access to choice options such as T & I schools, magnet schools, early college high schools, and career institutes. In 2019-20, the Demographic Studies department provided market analysis information to OTI staff members to help them make informed decisions for future school locations and anchor models. Profiles were developed for each high school (HS) feeder pattern attendance zone, which included current choice offerings, incoming applications by model, outgoing applications by model, enrollment trends, market share,⁴ and maps of nearby charter and private schools.

Innovation Engine and Middle School Redesign

OTI grant initiatives, new in 2019-20, included Innovation Engine and Middle School Redesign (MS Redesign). Both

were designed to provide \$50,000 to selected campuses for a year, to expand innovation across the district, to allow selected campuses to explore or implement innovation efforts while receiving OTI support, and to help selected campuses work toward formal innovation school status. Of the 20 Innovation Engine schools, three (Ireland ES, Marsalis ES, and Moreno ES) were selected to be innovation schools and two (Bowie ES and North Dallas HS) were chosen to be innovation pilot schools in 2020-21.⁵ Of the five MS Redesign schools, one (Quintanilla) was selected as an innovation school, and one (Hill) was selected as an innovation pilot school for 2020-21.⁶

Development of Implementation Continuums

OTI staff members developed implementation continuums during 2019-20 for use in 2020-21 specific to four anchor models; more continuums are planned. Campus leaders are to use the continuums to determine where the campus falls in meeting anchor model standards, to pinpoint areas for improvement, and to review growth over time.

COVID-19 Impact on the PSC Initiative

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic and transition to at-home learning, OTI staff members reported four changes. First, the campus tours planned for the spring semester were cancelled. Second, the deadline was extended for parents to confirm an offered seat for 2020-21. Third, current choice schools and newly selected 2020-21 choice schools were unable to utilize their funding for conferences or hold in-person professional development. Fourth, in response to the delay in the start of the 2020-21 school year, OTI adjusted the timeline for the PSC 7.0 process.⁷ The new deadline to submit the Letter of Intent was September 25, 2020, with the final proposals due on January 18, 2021.

Were student selection and socioeconomic goals met for transformation schools?

Goal 1: 100 percent of 2019-20 transformation schools will be at least five percentage points more economically and racially diverse when compared to the district average.⁸

Goal 1 was met for all transformation schools combined and for all but two transformation schools.⁹ The percentage of economically disadvantaged students for transformation schools combined (69%) was 15 percentage points lower than for the district (84%). All transformation schools combined had fewer Hispanic (-10 ppts), more white (+7 ppts), and more other (+3 ppts) students than the district;

⁴ Market share analyses were based on 2018-19 district enrollment data, charter school data, and population data. Population estimates were based on census data. These numbers were used to determine the number of students in a district school and the number that were untapped (e.g., students attending charter schools, private schools, and so forth).

⁵ They were selected during the PSC 2019-20 school selection process.

⁶ They were selected during the PSC 2019-20 school selection process.

⁷ The timeline and application information can be found at <https://www.dallasisd.org/Page/57277>.

⁸ For the economic diversity part of the goal, the percentage of economically disadvantaged students had to be 5 percentage points or lower than the district average (did not apply to Hulcy and New Tech). To meet the racial diversity goal, campuses needed to have a five percentage point difference (higher or lower) in at least one racial category.

⁹ All but Hernandez and Ignite.

the percentage of African American students was the same for all transformation students combined and the district.

Hernandez (85%) did not meet the economic diversity part of the goal (79% or lower) and Ignite did not meet the goal for racial diversity. Percentage point differences between Ignite and the district ranged from one (African American and other) to three ppts (Hispanic and white).

Goal 2: The number of students applying to a transformation school in spring 2020 will exceed the number of seats available overall and for each transformation campus.

Goal 2 was met for all transformation schools combined and for all 10 schools in the lottery process. Like previous years, the number of students applying to a transformation school in spring 2020 ($N=3,177$) exceeded the number of seats available ($N=1,523$), which indicated markedly more applications than seats available. Overall, the applicant-to-seat ratio was 2.1 applicants for each available seat. Solar Girls had the highest applicant-to-seat ratio (7.2:1), followed by Mata (4.1:1) and Solar Boys (2.8:1).

Goal 3: At least 25 percent of 2020-21 students selected in the spring 2020 lottery will be recapture¹⁰ students.

Goal 3 was met for all transformation schools combined. The overall percentage of recapture students enrolled in 2020-21 transformation schools (25%) was the same as the target percentage (25%) but lower than the percentage for 2019-20 (29%). This was somewhat expected due to COVID-19 concerns in fall 2020 and because the recapture percentage in fall 2019 was higher than anticipated. When reviewed by campus, Dr. MLK Arts had the highest recapture percentage (62%), followed by Solar Girls (52%), Houston (44%), and Solar Boys (43%).

Were T & I school climate goals met?¹¹

Goal 4: The percentage of positive responses on the District Campus Climate Survey for T & I schools will be at or above the district average.

Goal 4 was met on all six climate survey subscales for four¹² of the 10 transformation schools, 13¹³ of the 22 innovation schools, and for all T & I campuses combined. For all innovation schools combined, the goal was met for all subscales. As for all transformation schools combined, the goal was met on three subscales but not for the other three.

¹⁰ Recaptured students were calculated based on external seats and tuition-based PK seats (External Seats (K-11) + Tuition-Based PK Seats).

¹¹ Two additional goals were set but could not be assessed due to cancellation of the districtwide spring student and parent surveys. Goal 4 was modified to use fall campus climate survey data instead of spring data due to the cancellation of the spring campus survey.

¹² Hernandez Montessori, Solar Girls, Hulcy, and New Tech.

¹³ Botello, Chapel Hill, Cowart, De Zavala, Donald, Kleberg, Kramer, Lipscomb, Lowe, McNair, Reagan, Richardson, and Rogers.

¹⁴ One goal could not be assessed due to the cancellation of spring 2020 STAAR. Goals 5 and 6 were limited to attendance data through the first

The percentage of positive responses was higher for all innovation schools combined than for all transformation schools combined for five of the six subscales; the percentages were about the same for one.

Ten schools (four transformation and six innovation) had fewer than 70 percent positive responses on three or more scales. Climate responses were below 70 percent on at least five scales for two transformation (Ignite and Solar Boys) and two innovation schools (Alexander and Franklin). Ignite and Solar Boys also had decreases in positive responses by more than 20 percentage points (ppts) for all six subscales (range of decreases: -20 to -40).

Were T & I student outcome goals met?¹⁴

Goal 5: The 2019-20 attendance rates for students at T & I schools will be at or above the district average.

Goal 5 was met for nine¹⁵ of 10 transformation schools, 19¹⁶ of 22 innovation schools, and for all T & I schools combined; the goal was barely missed (within 0.2 ppts) for two of the 22 innovation schools. Two schools (one transformation and one innovation) had attendance rates below the district average (94.4%): City Lab (93.8%) and McNair (93.3%). Year-to-year attendance rates for students at T & I schools that were open in 2018-19 and 2019-20 as well as the district were about the same (96.3% and 96.2% for transformation, 95.7% and 95.2% for innovation, and 94.7% and 94.4% for district schools, respectively).

Goal 6: The 2019-20 chronic absenteeism rates¹⁷ for students at T & I schools will be at or below the district average.

Goal 6 was met for nine¹⁸ of 10 transformation schools, 20¹⁹ of 22 innovation schools, and for all T & I schools combined. Students at transformation (3.3%), innovation (5.7%), and all T & I schools (5.2%) had lower chronic absenteeism rates compared to the district (8.4%). Three schools (one transformation and two innovation schools) had higher chronic absenteeism rates than the district: City Lab (11.8%), McNair (9.0%), and B. Adams (10.3%).

Goal 7: The percentage of T & I school students that meet grade-level standards on student assessments will be at or above the district average.

Goal 7 was met for both of the fall 2019 ACPs (reading and mathematics) for five²⁰ of 10 transformation schools, 12²¹ of

four six weeks of the school year. Goal 7 was modified to use fall ACP data rather than TerraNova, SUPERA, STAAR 3-8, and STAAR EOC data.

¹⁵ All but City Lab.

¹⁶ All but Alexander, McNair, and B. Adams.

¹⁷ Students with 15 absences or more were identified as having chronic absenteeism.

¹⁸ All but City Lab.

¹⁹ All but McNair and B. Adams.

²⁰ Hernandez Montessori, Solar Boys, Solar Girls, Hulcy, and New Tech.

²¹ Botello, Chapel Hill, Donald, Geneva Heights, Gonzalez, Kramer, Lowe, Preston Hollow, Reagan, Richardson, Rogers, and Salazar.

22 innovation schools, and all T & I schools combined. Of the 10 transformation schools, seven met the goal for reading/language arts, and five met the goal for mathematics. As for the 22 innovation schools, 13 met the goal for reading/language arts, and 18 did so for mathematics.

One-year passing rate comparisons are provided for informational purposes only and should be viewed with caution.²² Year-to-year results varied when reviewed for individual campuses. In reading, the percentages of students passing decreased from fall 2018 to fall 2019 for eight of the nine transformation campuses and for eight of the 14 innovation campuses, stayed about the same for one of the nine transformation schools, and increased for six of the 14 innovation schools. As for mathematics, the passing percentages decreased for four of the nine transformation schools and eight of the 14 innovation schools, increased for five of the nine transformation schools and four of the 14 innovation schools, and stayed about the same for two of the 14 innovation schools.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Continue using market analysis data for determining future locations and instructional models for T & I schools. By using market analyses, school mapping and other applicable information, OTI staff members coordinated the expansion of T & I schools not only for the purpose of scaling the initiative but to also make decisions through an equity lens. The data-focused planning coupled with the rigorous selection process should be commended as the district continues to scale the initiative.

Keep the Innovation Engine and Middle School Redesign initiatives. The initiatives provided seed money to allow 25 campuses to explore and test out innovative ideas during 2019-20. The year of exploration allowed campuses to develop and/or attempt to replicate an innovative idea, test the idea out on a small-scale basis, and determine whether the innovation should be continued, expanded, and/or refined. First-year efforts were effective as seven of the 25 campuses were chosen during the spring 2020 school selection process (PSC 6.0) as innovation ($n=4$) or innovation pilot ($n=3$) campuses for 2020-21.

Ensure adequate support, campus use of OTI-developed implementation continuums, and systematic follow-up measures to target areas in need of improvement. The number of schools in operation was 25 in 2018-19, 34 in 2019-20, and will increase to 46 in 2020-21. As the district continues to scale the initiative, it will be important that adequate supports are in place to assist both new and existing campuses. Further, it will be imperative that campus leaders use OTI quality control continuums as expected, share results and actions based on continuum results with OTI staff members through an established system, and provide targeted support through training, coaching, and written expectations.

Create a system to place low-performing schools on probation and/or remove the Choice status. As an example, two schools (Douglass and Marsh) retained Choice status in 2019-20 but implementation of their anchor models was restricted due to subpar 2018-19 LAS ratings. Develop an annual or biannual system that begins after the second year of operation to assess whether a school should retain or lose Choice status or continue on probationary basis for one year. Include measures such as progress toward anchor model implementation, school climate, and student achievement. Consider automatic probation or removal guidelines for schools that earn a LAS rating of Developing or Focus.

Bolster support for schools that scored below the district average on three or more of the six staff climate survey subscales. Ten schools (four transformation and six innovation) had fewer than 70 percent positive rates on three or more subscales. Positive rates were below 70 percent on at least five subscales for two transformation (Ignite and Solar Boys) and two innovation schools (Alexander and Franklin), showing a need for overall school climate improvement. Solar Boys and Ignite had decreases in positive rates from fall 2018 to fall 2019 by more than 20 ppts for all six subscales (range of decreases: -20 to -40). One transformation school (City Lab) and two innovation schools (Geneva Heights and B. Adams) had fewer than 70 percent positive ratings on four of the six subscales.

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²² Because ACPs are scaled yearly based upon the current year's results, readers should exercise caution when comparing year-to-year results.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Accelerating Campus Excellence (ACE) initiative was formed in 2015-16 on the principle that transforming schools requires strong leadership and effective teachers enveloped in an environment of high expectations for students and staff members. To accomplish this goal, the Dallas Independent School District (Dallas ISD) provided competitive stipends to incentivize top teachers and principals to relocate to some of the district's most challenged campuses.

In 2019-20, four of the six campuses from the second cohort (ACE 2.0; C.F. Carr, J.N. Ervin, Thomas J. Rusk, and Edward Titche) participated in their third year of the program. These campuses continued to receive competitive stipends to incentivize top teachers and principals to serve some of the district's most challenged campuses. In addition, seven campuses from the third cohort (ACE Leadership 3.0; Cesar Chavez, Paul L. Dunbar, L.L. Hotchkiss, Maple Lawn, Martin Luther King, Jr., Elisha M. Pease¹, and Joseph J. Rhoads) participated in their second year of the program. Leadership teams of 12 to 14 teachers at these campuses were offered stipends for an additional eight hours of weekly leadership work in professional development, curriculum alignment, data analysis, positive culture building, and the development of strong parent and community partnerships. The district will expand the ACE program to 23 campuses including four campuses that participated in ACE 1.0². Beginning in 2020-21, the district will designate 80 campuses as High Priority Campus (HPC) with ACE campuses being identified as a subset of HPC campuses.

The ACE program goal was to improve student achievement by striving to accelerate learning through a focus on three general components: *People*, *Learning*, and *Expectations*. To support acceleration in the three areas, ACE campuses prioritized balanced literacy, social and emotional development, and professional learning communities (PLCs) with strong data practices.

To accelerate factors related to people, ACE campuses were staffed with strong administrators and effective teachers. The program goal was to recruit, retain, and develop strong teachers as measured by (1) a minimum of 60 percent of teachers on ACE campuses with Proficient I or above Teacher Excellence Initiative (TEI) effectiveness levels, (2) annual teacher retention rates at or above district retention rates, and (3) fourth or fifth quintile scores on the

Culture of Feedback and Support section of the district Climate Survey.

To accelerate factors related to learning, ACE staff members participated in supplemental professional development opportunities and committed to excellence in both academic and social-emotional learning. The program goal was to (1) improve rates of kindergarten to grade two students reading on grade level as measured by *Istation's Indicators of Progress (ISIP)* (i.e., rates of Level 3 and above students at or above district rates)³, (2) close the achievement gap in assessment scores (i.e., within 10 percentage points of district rates on fall and spring *Assessment of Course Performance (ACP)* and *State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR)*), and (3) close the achievement gap for reading and mathematics growth (i.e., within at least 10 percentage points of district rates of students with Expected and Accelerated ratings on *STAAR* reading and mathematics progress measures).

To accelerate factors related to expectations, ACE campuses emphasized relationships among campus community members. The program goal was to increase positive student expectations and parent engagement as measured by having (1) disciplinary offenses at or below the district average, (2) attendance rates at or above 96 percent, (3) Student Experience survey positive response rates at or above district averages, and (4) parent perception positive response rates at or above district averages.

On Friday March 13, 2020, in alignment with federal recommendations, the Governor of Texas issued a disaster proclamation certifying that the novel coronavirus COVID-19 posed an imminent threat of disaster for all counties in the state of Texas. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Dallas ISD transitioned students to at-home learning on March 23 following spring break (March 16 – 20) until the end of the school year. Due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, Texas Education Agency (TEA) cancelled *STAAR* administration for the 2019-20 school year. Additionally, the district cancelled the administration of local assessments and districtwide surveys including the spring Climate survey, Student Experience survey, Parent/Guardian survey, *ACPs*, and fifth and sixth six-week *ISIP*. The district also suspended normal collection of attendance and disciplinary data.

¹ In 2018-19, former ACE 1.0 campus Elisha M. Pease elementary school joined ACE Leadership 3.0.

² ACE 1.0 campuses participated in the ACE program from 2015-16 to 2017-18.

³ *ISIP* will no longer be administered in Dallas ISD after the 2019-20 school year.

Therefore, results presented in this report are from data available through the first four six weeks of the 2019-20 school year.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS/OUTCOMES

What was the source and amount of funding for the ACE program?

The total budget for the 2019-20 ACE program was \$8,090,320, which was a \$552,389 decrease from \$8,642,709 in 2018-19. This budget was supported by general operating funds from the Dallas ISD. The budget included \$6,727,199 for additional personnel and teacher stipends, \$181,964 for uniforms, and \$1,181,157 for professional development and extra duty pay.

What were the student, teacher, and principal characteristics of ACE 2.0 and ACE Leadership 3.0 campuses?

Students

In 2019-20 there were a total of 6,422 ACE 2.0 ($N=2,318$) and ACE 3.0 ($N=4,104$) students compared to 6,394 in 2018-19 (ACE 2.0: $N=2,221$; ACE 3.0: $N=4,173$). Over half of 2019-20 students in ACE 2.0 and 3.0 campuses were male (52%) and a higher proportion were identified as economically disadvantaged (97%)(Table 1) compared to the district (84%). ACE 2.0 and 3.0 campuses also had a larger proportion of African American (52%) students compared to the district (21%) but had a smaller proportion of Hispanic (43%) students compared to the district (70%). ACE 2.0 and 3.0 campuses had a smaller proportion of students identified as English learners (ELs; 36%) compared to the district (46%), and had a similar proportion enrolled in special education (10%) compared to the district (9%).

Table 1: 2019-20 ACE Student Characteristics

	ACE 2.0 and 3.0 ($N = 6,422$)	
	<i>N</i>	%
Sex		
Male	3,312	51.6
Female	3,110	48.4
Race/Ethnicity		
African American	3,313	51.6
Hispanic	2,767	43.1
White	89	1.4
Other/Missing	253	3.9
Special Student Groups		
Econ. Disadvantaged	6,215	96.8
English learner	2,315	36.0
Special education	649	10.1

Source: District Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) demographic data dated 10/28/19.

Note: Econ. = Economically. Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding.

Teachers

In 2019-20, the 393 teachers on ACE campuses were 77 percent female, 81 percent African American or Hispanic (48% and 33%, respectively), and 27 percent held at least a master's degree (Table 2). Over half of teachers (59%) earned a TEI effectiveness level of Proficient I or above, which was slightly lower than the program objective (60%). A higher rate of ACE 2.0 teachers (62%) than ACE Leadership 3.0 teachers (57%) had TEI effectiveness ratings of Proficient I or higher.

Table 2: 2019-20 ACE Teacher Characteristics

	ACE 2.0 and 3.0 ($N = 393$)	
	<i>n</i>	%
Sex		
Male	91	23.2
Female	302	76.8
Race/Ethnicity		
African American	189	48.1
Hispanic	128	32.6
White	67	17.0
Other/Missing	9	2.3
Highest Degree Earned		
Associate's	2	0.5
Bachelor's	261	66.4
Master's	103	26.2
Doctoral	4	1.0
Other/Missing	23	5.9
TEI Effectiveness Level		
Below Proficient I, No Level, or N/A	171	40.8
Proficient I, II, or III	217	51.8
Exemplary I or higher	31	7.4

Source: District personnel file dated 01/07/20 and teacher effectiveness level data file from the Dallas ISD Data Analytics and Control department dated 04/20/20.

Note: Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding. Total number of teachers for each ACE cohort may differ slightly from the total in the TEI effectiveness level section because the files were created on different days.

Principals

There were 11 ACE principals, with the majority identifying as female (64%), African American (64%), and Hispanic (27%). Most principals held at least a master's degree (82%). Assigned principals remained with their assigned ACE campus throughout the academic year.

What were the outcomes related to the people component of ACE 2.0 and ACE Leadership 3.0?

Teacher Retention

The teacher retention rate for ACE 2.0 was the same as the district rate (71%), while the ACE Leadership 3.0 teacher retention rate (72%) met the objective of exceeding the district rate.

Climate Survey

Due to the lack of spring 2020 Climate Survey data, the evaluator could not determine whether the program met its

end-of-year objective. Therefore, only descriptive results from the fall 2019 survey are presented in this report. In fall 2019, two out of four ACE 2.0 campuses (Carr and Titcher) and four out of seven ACE Leadership 3.0 campuses (Chavez, Dunbar, Hotchkiss, and King) had scores in the fourth or fifth quintile (most positive) on the Culture of Feedback and Support section of the climate survey, which was the same in spring 2019.

What were the outcomes related to the learning component of ACE 2.0 and ACE Leadership 3.0?

Due to the lack of fifth and sixth six-week *ISIP* data and spring 2020 *ACP* data, the evaluator could not determine whether the program met its end-of-year objectives for these metrics. Therefore, only descriptive results from the first four six weeks of *ISIP* data and the fall 2019 *ACP* data are presented in this report.

Istation's Indicators of Progress (ISIP)

Overall, the percentages of ACE 2.0 and ACE Leadership 3.0 students who performed at grade level⁴ were mixed for all grades levels and showed no clear trends. Fourth six-week results showed that the rate of students reading on grade level at ACE 2.0 campuses exceeded district rates in grade one (45% vs 43%) and grade two (48% vs 47%). Fourth six-week results showed that the rate of students reading on grade level at ACE Leadership 3.0 campuses (range: 47% to 53%) exceeded district rates (range: 43% to 49%) for all three grade levels. ACE Leadership 3.0 campuses had a higher rate of kindergarten and grade one students reading on grade level (53% and 50%, respectively) than ACE 2.0 campuses (45%, for both grade levels).

Assessment of Course Performance (ACP)

The 2019-20 fall *ACP* passing rates for ACE 2.0 exceeded the previous year on 35 of the 46 (76%) fall exams. Passing rates for ACE Leadership 3.0 exceeded the previous year on 19 of the 24 (79%) fall exams. In addition, ACE 2.0 students met the objective of passing rates within 10 percentage points or exceeding district rates on 42 of 46 (91%) fall exams, and ACE Leadership 3.0 students met the objective on 21 of 24 (88%) fall exams. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the district cancelled the administration of the spring *ACPs*.

What were the outcomes related to the expectations component of ACE 2.0 and ACE Leadership 3.0?

ACE program leadership designated disciplinary offenses, attendance rates, Student Experience Survey results, and Parent/Guardian survey results as metrics to evaluate the 2019-20 expectations component of ACE. Due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the district cancelled the 2020

spring administration of the Student Experience Survey and Parent/Guardian survey. Also due to the lack of fifth and sixth six-week discipline and attendance data, the evaluator could not determine whether the program met its end-of-year objectives for these metrics. Therefore, only descriptive results from the first four six weeks of discipline and attendance data are presented in this report.

Disciplinary Offenses

Through the first four six weeks of 2019-20, ACE 2.0 campuses had 159 total offenses, which was markedly less than the 263 total offenses at the ACE 2.0 comparison campuses. ACE Leadership 3.0 campuses had 83 total offenses, which was higher than the 62 total offenses at the ACE 3.0 comparison campuses.

Attendance Rates

Through the first four six weeks of 2019-20, ACE 2.0 and ACE Leadership 3.0 campuses had an average attendance rate of 95 percent. Through the first four six weeks, all ACE 2.0 campuses and six of the seven (86%) ACE Leadership 3.0 campuses exceeded the overall district attendance rate (94%).

What were the 2020 ACE state accountability ratings?

The ultimate goal of the ACE program was for all ACE campuses to earn or maintain a passing accountability rating letter grade. Due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, TEA cancelled *STAAR* administration and suspended calculation of accountability ratings for the 2019-20 school year. As a result, all districts and campuses received a 2020 State Accountability Rating of "Not Rated: Declared State of Disaster."

RECOMMENDATIONS

As recommended in previous years, evaluate long-term outcomes. As ACE students move into higher grades at other campuses, long-term outcomes should be evaluated to determine the lasting benefit of ACE participation. This could include examining dosage of years enrolled on ACE campuses and comparing ACE students with similar students who were not enrolled on ACE campuses on long-term achievement outcomes (e.g., assessments, college and career readiness, graduation rates, and college enrollment).

Monitor the long-term sustainability of the ACE program. Beginning in 2020-21, the ACE program will expand from 11 campuses to 23 campuses (109% increase). Due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, state monetary resources have been negatively impacted by a strained economic environment. Therefore, it will be important for district leadership and program managers to

⁴ In 2019, Istation moved from a three Tier system for identifying lower performing students to a five Level system. Level 1 is equivalent to Tier 3,

Level 2 is equivalent to Tier 2, and Level 3 and above is equivalent to Tier 1 (i.e. performing at grade level).

monitor current and future program funding sources to ensure program sustainability.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

City Year¹ is a national organization providing students in 29 cities with a program designed to help them stay in school, make positive behavioral changes, and get back on track to graduate. The City Year student intervention and support model placed teams of trained AmeriCorps volunteers² in schools to partner with a Dallas Independent School District (ISD) teacher for one school year and provide attendance coaching, academic interventions, and social-emotional learning (SEL) to students in Kindergarten through grade twelve.

AmeriCorps members focused on reducing early warning indicators that placed students at increased risk for dropping out of school including low attendance, behavior issues and/or failing English/Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics.

City Year Dallas deployed 74 AmeriCorps members across 10 Dallas ISD campuses (Table 1) for the 2019-20 school year. The number of AmeriCorps members assigned to a school ranged from six to eight based on school enrollment and need. In 2019-20, the program was supported by \$690,000 from the Dallas ISD, the same amount as in 2018-19 (Featherston, 2019).

Table 1: 2019-20 Number of City Year Members by Campus Receiving Services

Campus	n	%
Elementary School		
John Neely Bryan	6	8.1
Harrell Budd	6	8.1
Cedar Crest	8	10.8
Maple Lawn	8	10.8
William B. Miller	6	8.1
Elisha M. Pease	8	10.8
Middle School		
E. B. Comstock	8	10.8
O. W. Holmes	8	10.8
High School		
Franklin D. Roosevelt	8	10.8
H. Grady Spruce	8	10.8

Source: Member assignment received from City Year Dallas on 12/10/19.

Note: Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding.

After the District transitioned to at-home learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic,³ City Year program activities evolved

to include academic support in virtual classrooms, remote tutoring support, contacting students directly to provide SEL support, and parent support.

PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION

The purpose of this evaluation was to assess the effectiveness of attendance, SEL, and academic support services provided to Dallas ISD students by City Year Dallas during the 2019-20 school year.⁴ This report would typically include analyses of academic achievement results on the spring 2020 *State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR)*. However, these assessments were canceled due to the state response to the COVID-19 pandemic.⁵

EVALUATION QUESTIONS/OUTCOMES

What were the characteristics of students served by City Year Dallas?

Methodology

City Year Dallas provided the evaluator with a list of students in grades Kindergarten through grade twelve served during the 2019-20 school year. The evaluator matched these data with the district Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) demographic data file (dated October 31, 2019) and conducted frequency analyses to summarize participant characteristics.

Results

City Year coaching and support primarily focused on students in grades three through nine, but students in other grades were also served (Table 2). The largest proportion of served students were in grade four (18%). The percentage of students who were African American was larger for served students (52%) than for other students at the same campuses (36%). Conversely, a smaller proportion of served students were Hispanic (45%) than other students at the same campuses (62%). Lower proportions of students served by City Year staff members received specialized services (32% English learner; 7% special education) than other students at the same campuses (48% English learner; 14% special education).

¹ For more information about City Year, see <https://www.cityyear.org/>.

² For more information about AmeriCorps programs, see <https://www.nationalservice.gov/programs/ameri-corps>.

³ At-home learning began March 23, 2020 and continued through the remainder of the spring semester.

⁴ Portions of this report were adapted from Featherston (2019).

⁵ <https://tea.texas.gov/about-tea/news-and-multimedia/correspondence/taa-letters/cancellation-of-staar-testing-for-the-remainder-of-the-school-year>

Table 2: 2019-20 City Year Student Characteristics

	Served Students (N = 1,268)		Other Campus Students (N = 4,659)	
	n	%	n	%
Grade				
One	10	0.8	339	7.3
Two	32	2.5	321	6.9
Three	202	15.9	170	3.6
Four	227	17.9	173	3.7
Five	199	15.7	245	5.3
Six	103	8.1	376	8.1
Seven	101	8.0	395	8.5
Eight	94	7.4	408	8.8
Nine	191	15.1	636	13.7
Ten	67	5.3	579	12.4
Eleven	28	2.2	542	11.6
Twelve	14	1.1	475	10.2
Race/Ethnicity				
Asian	0	0.0	4	0.1
African American	655	51.7	1,673	35.9
Hispanic	576	45.4	2,894	62.1
Native American	3	0.2	10	0.2
Two or More Races	19	1.5	31	0.7
White	15	1.2	47	1.0
Sex				
Female	634	50.0	2,149	46.1
Male	634	50.0	2,510	53.9
Special Student Populations				
English Learner	406	32.0	2,244	48.2
Special Education	94	7.4	643	13.8
Eco Dis	1,202	94.8	4,254	91.3

Source: Served students received from City Year on 04/13/20. District PEIMS demographic file dated 10/31/19.

Note: Eco Dis = economically disadvantaged. Totals may not sum to 100 percent because of rounding. Includes students enrolled on the 2019-20 PEIMS snapshot date.

How did the attendance rates of students served by City Year Dallas compare to the rates of other students at the same campuses?

Methodology

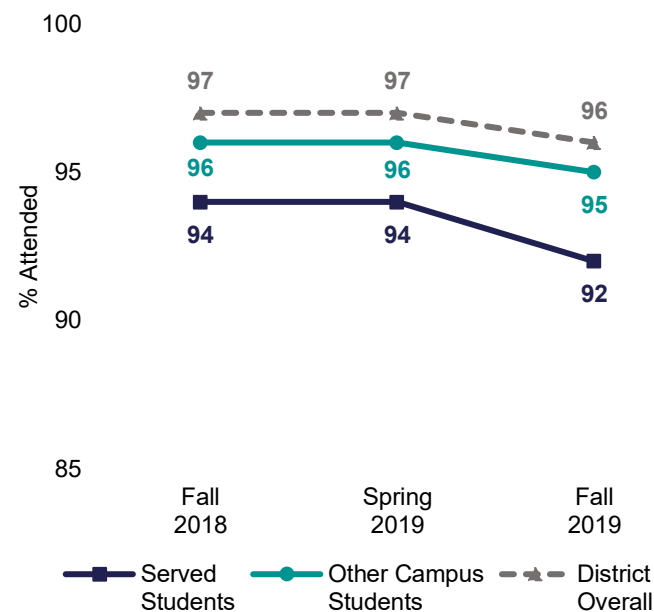
For grade-two through grade-twelve students enrolled in the Dallas ISD during fall 2019, the evaluator compared the average percentage of enrolled days attended by students served by City Year Dallas, other students at the same campus, and the district overall for each semester at the elementary school and secondary school levels.

Results

City Year provided attendance coaching to 235 elementary school students in grade two through grade five during fall 2019. On average, these students received 3.4 hours of coaching. In 2018-19, attendance rates were lower for served students (94% both semesters) than for other students at the same campuses (96% both semesters) and the district overall (97% both semesters; Figure 1). This pattern continued during fall 2019; but attendance across

groups decreased. The percentage of days attended by students receiving attendance coaching dropped by two percentage points compared to one percentage point for other students at the same campuses and the district overall.

Figure 1: Fall 2018 through Fall 2019 Elementary School Attendance Rates

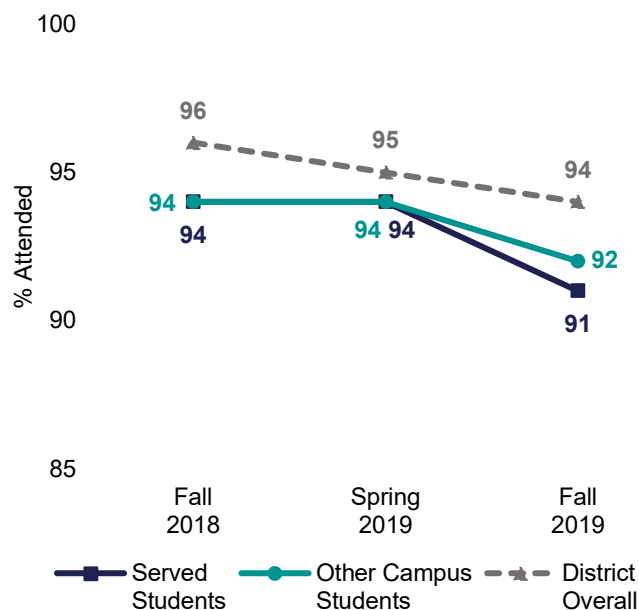


Source: Served students received from City Year on 04/13/20. District attendance files dated 06/04/19 (2018-19) and 01/24/20 (2019-20).

Note: Attendance support was provided during Fall 2019 based on attendance rates from the 2018-19 school year. These data include students in grade two through grade five who were enrolled in the Dallas ISD all three semesters.

At the secondary school level, City Year provided attendance coaching to 168 students in grade six through grade 12. These students received 2.6 hours of coaching, on average. Attendance remained consistent during the 2018-19 fall and spring semesters for served students (94%) and other students at the same campuses (94%; Figure 2). Overall district attendance decreased by one percentage point from fall to spring (96% to 95%) but was still higher than attendance at served campuses. During fall 2019, the percentage of days attended by students receiving attendance coaching dropped by three percentage points compared to two percentage points for other students at the same campuses. At the secondary level, in fall 2019 the district attendance rate (94%) was higher than that of other campus students (92%) and served students (91%).

Figure 2: Fall 2018 through Fall 2019 Secondary School Attendance Rates



Source: Served students received from City Year on 04/13/20. District attendance files dated 06/04/19 (2018-19) and 01/24/20 (2019-20).
Note: City Year attendance support was provided during Fall 2019 based on attendance rates from the 2018-19 school year. These data include students in grade six through grade 12 who were enrolled in the Dallas ISD all three semesters.

What were the SEL outcomes for students served by City Year?

Methodology

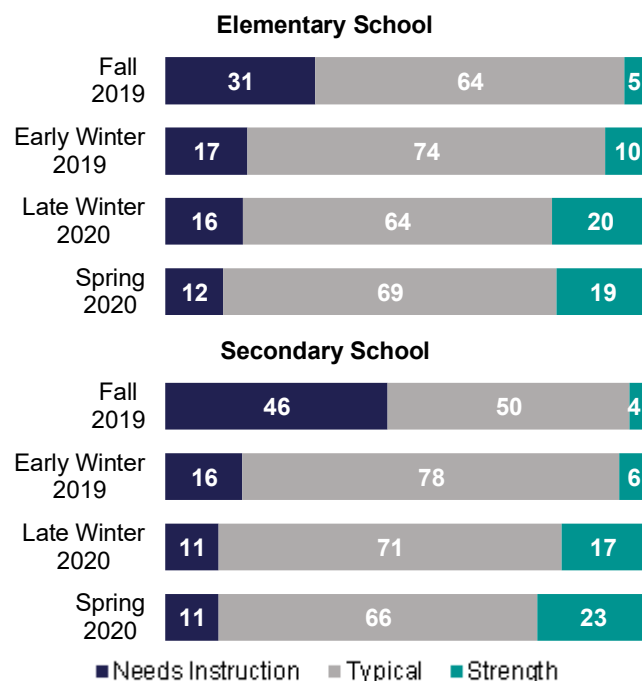
The evaluator received four ratings⁶ on the *Devereux Student Strengths Assessment (DESSA)* for served students from City Year Dallas on April 13, 2020. The *DESSA* is a measure of SEL that places student ratings into one of three social-emotional categories: needs instruction (students scoring 40 or below), typical (students scoring 41-59), and strength (students scoring 60 and above; Lebuffe, Shapiro, & Naglieri, 2009). For students with *DESSA* ratings at each timepoint, the evaluator conducted crosstab analyses to determine the percentage of students at each social-emotional category across timepoints by campus level (elementary school and secondary school).

Results

City Year provided social-emotional learning support to 527 elementary students and 384 secondary students during the 2019-20 school year. On average, elementary students received 3.6 hours of support and secondary students received 2.1 hours of support. At the elementary level, 31 percent of supported students received ratings of needs instruction after the first *DESSA* administration; after the fourth *DESSA* administration, 12 percent received the needs instruction rating (Figure 3). Similarly, the percentage

of SEL-supported secondary students receiving a needs instruction rating decreased from 46 percent after the first administration to 11 percent after the fourth administration.

Figure 3: 2019-20 Percentage of DESSA Ratings by Category and Campus Level for Students Served by City Year Dallas by Administration Period



Source: *DESSA* ratings received from City Year Dallas on 04/13/20.
Note: Students must have received a rating during all rating periods for inclusion in analyses. Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

What other services were provided by City Year during the 2019-20 school year?

In addition to attendance coaching and SEL support, City Year provided literacy coaching, mathematics coaching, afterschool enrichment, and afterschool homework help to elementary and secondary students (Table 3). City Year staff members worked with district elementary school teachers to provide 255 students with literacy support (mean hours = 13.1) and 237 students with mathematics support (mean hours = 14.7). At the secondary level, City Year staff members provided 208 students with literacy support (mean hours = 9.4) and 129 students with mathematics support (mean hours = 10.9). Typically, these services are examined in relation to *STAAR* scores; however, those data were unavailable in 2019-20.

⁶ Rating periods were fall 2019, early winter 2019, late winter 2020, and spring 2020.

Table 3: 2019-20 Number of Students Served and Average Hours of Support by Intervention

Intervention	N	Mean Hours Received
Elementary School		
Attendance Coaching	235	3.4
SEL Support	527	3.6
Literacy Support	255	13.1
Mathematics Support	237	14.7
Afterschool Enrichment	178	5.0
Afterschool Homework	145	3.1
Secondary School		
Attendance Coaching	168	2.6
SEL Support	384	2.1
Literacy Support	208	9.4
Mathematics Support	129	10.9
Afterschool Enrichment	115	1.9
Afterschool Homework	53	1.9

Source: Served students received from City Year on 04/13/20.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Continue to provide SEL support to district students.

The percentages of elementary school and secondary school students initially rated as needs instruction on the *DESSA* decreased by 19 percentage points and 35 percentage points, respectively, during the 2019-20 school year. This directly indicated SEL growth among served students.

Consider increasing the amount of attendance coaching delivered to individual students.

The percentages of days attended dropped more from the previous school year for students receiving attendance coaching than for other students at the same campuses. An increase in time spent coaching attendance may lessen decreases in attendance for these students.

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- LeBuffe, P., Shapiro, V., & Naglieri, J. (2009). *Devereux student strengths assessment*. Lewisville, NC: Kaplan.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Academy for Science Teachers and Leaders was a partnership between the Dallas Independent School District (ISD) STEM Department and Southern Methodist University (SMU)¹ and was predominantly funded by the Texas Instruments Foundation. The partnership goals were to grow the abilities of middle school science teachers to integrate active learning experiences in lessons, foster professional growth and leadership, increase student science achievement, and promote student pursuit of STEM coursework. The Texas Instrument Foundation, Dallas ISD, and the Dallas Education Fund provided funding of \$658,074 for the 2019-20 school year, an increase from \$609,869 in 2018-19.

Middle school science teachers attended three-week training academies during the summers of 2017, 2018, and 2019. The trainings were supplemented by direct coaching and professional development during the school year. Cohort 1 consisted of grade-seven and grade-eight teachers from six campuses.² Cohort 2 began during summer 2018 and included new teachers from the original six campuses, and grade six through grade-eight teachers from seven new campuses.³ For participation each summer, teachers received four SMU graduate credits and discounted tuition for future courses. Recruiting challenges for Cohort 2 led program administrators to offer \$1,000 stipends for attending the academies in summer 2018 and 2019. After programming in summer 2019 ended, coaching and professional development should have continued throughout the 2019-20 school year. However, the STEM Academy ceased activities after the Dallas ISD transitioned to at-home learning on March 23, 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This was considered the end of the program.

PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION

The purpose of this evaluation was to report teacher characteristics, program retention rates, Student Experience Survey results, and Teacher Excellence Initiative (TEI) evaluation ratings for participating teachers, and academic outcomes and rigorous high school course

enrollment rates for students taught by STEM academy teachers. The Dallas ISD did not administer the Student Experience Survey during Spring 2020 and TEI ratings were held at ratings from the previous school year due to the district response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Thus, those data were unavailable. Data from prior years is available in previous evaluations (Mickelson, 2018, 2019).

This evaluation also typically assesses the academic outcomes of students taught by STEM Academy teachers. However, only outcomes from the fall 2019 were available. The spring 2020 *Assessments of Course Performance (ACP)* and the spring 2020 *State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR)* were not administered because of the district⁴ and state⁵ responses to the COVID-19 pandemic. Data from prior years are available in previous evaluations (Mickelson, 2018; Mickelson, 2019).

EVALUATION QUESTIONS/OUTCOMES

What were the characteristics and program retention rates of participating teachers?

Methodology

The evaluator received the initial Cohort 1 participant data from SMU on May 19, 2018 and Cohort 2 participant data from SMU on November 2, 2018. To determine teacher characteristics, these data were matched with the district personnel files dated May 20, 2018 (Cohort 1) and September 16, 2018 (Cohort 2). The evaluator conducted frequency analyses to summarize participant gender and race/ethnicity. To calculate grade levels taught for science courses, the evaluator matched participant data with the district course file dated October 29, 2019 and calculated the frequency of participants teaching a science course to students at each grade level.

Using updated cohort data provided from STEM Academy staff members on April 22, 2020, the evaluator calculated the percentage of Cohort 1 and Cohort 2 participants that continued to receive program support through the end of program activities.

¹ Caruth Institute for Engineering Education, Lyle School of Engineering, and Annette Caldwell Simmons School of Education & Human Development.

² William H. Atwell Law Academy, Billy Earl Dade Middle School, Young Men's Leadership Academy at Fred F. Florence Middle School, Francisco F. "Pancho" Medrano Middle School, Ann Richards Middle School, and Seagoville Middle School.

³ Hector P. Garcia Middle School; W.E. Greiner Middle School; Robert T. Hill Middle School; Harold W. Lang, Sr. Middle School; H.W. Longfellow

Career Exploration Academy; Thomas C. Marsh Preparatory Academy; and Piedmont G.L.O.B.A.L. Academy Middle School.

⁴ The Dallas ISD began at-home learning on 03/23/20 and continued through the remainder of the spring semester.

⁵ <https://tea.texas.gov/about-tea/news-and-multimedia/correspondence/taa-letters/cancellation-of-staar-testing-for-the-remainder-of-the-school-year>.

Results

Teacher characteristics are shown in Table 1. Eighty percent of Cohort 1 teachers and 67 percent of Cohort 2 teachers were female. A smaller proportion of Cohort 1 teachers (20%) than Cohort 2 teachers (30%) were white, and a greater proportion of Cohort 1 teachers (27%) than Cohort 2 teachers (7%) were Hispanic.

Table 1: Original Participating Teacher Characteristics by Cohort

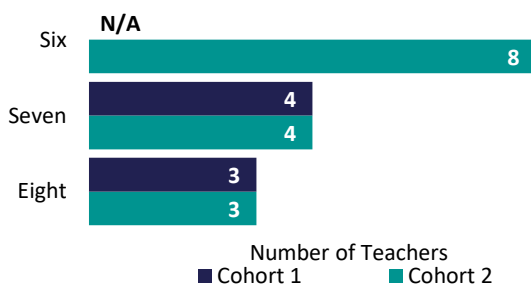
	Cohort 1 (N = 15)		Cohort 2 (N = 30)	
	n	%	n	%
Gender				
Female	12	80.0	20	66.7
Male	3	20.0	10	33.3
Race/Ethnicity				
Asian	0	0.0	2	6.7
African American	8	53.3	17	56.7
Hispanic	4	26.6	2	6.7
White	3	20.0	9	30.0

Source: Teacher data from Southern Methodist University on 05/19/18 (Cohort 1) and 11/02/18 (Cohort 2). District personnel files dated 05/20/18 (Cohort 1) and 09/16/18 (Cohort 2).

Note: Totals may not sum to 100 percent because of rounding.

During fall 2019, four Cohort 1 teachers taught science to grade-seven students and three Cohort 1 teachers taught grade-eight students (Figure 1). For Cohort 2 teachers, eight taught science to grade-six students, four taught grade-seven students, and three taught grade-eight students. One Cohort 2 teacher did not teach a science course during the fall 2019 semester.

Figure 1: Fall 2019 Science Grade Level Taught by STEM Academy Participants



Source: Teacher data from Southern Methodist University on 05/19/18 (Cohort 1), 11/02/18 (Cohort 2), and 04/22/20 (updated cohort data). Grade level data from district course file dated 10/29/19.

Note: Recruitment for Cohort 1 in 2017 did not include grade six teachers. Teachers may have taught multiple grade levels. One Cohort 2 teacher taught a Career and Technical Education course to grade six through grade eight students during fall 2019 and is not included.

Forty-seven percent of Cohort 1 teachers (initial $N = 15$, final $N = 7$) continued participation through the duration of the program. Fewer Cohort 2 teachers (40%, 12 of the 30 initial participants) completed the program.

What were the academic achievement outcomes for students taught by STEM Academy teachers?

Methodology

To examine student outcomes, the evaluator used propensity score matching (PSM) to create matched-comparison groups of students in ten courses⁶ who were not taught by STEM Academy participants. Then, the evaluator compared passing rates for students of STEM Academy teachers to matched-comparison students on the fall 2019 ACP using *chi-square* analyses (statistical significance) and Cramer's V (practical significance; Cohen, 1988).⁷

Results

Overall, fall ACP results varied, with one-year students of STEM Academy teachers passing four exams at higher rates, five exams at lower rates, and one exam at a similar rate, on average, than matched-comparison students (Table 2). For courses where students may have had a STEM Academy science teacher for two years⁸, two-year students of STEM Academy teachers passed four of the six exams at higher rates than matched-comparison students and three of the six exams at higher rates than one-year students of STEM Academy teachers. Analyses indicated significant relationships between having a STEM Academy teacher and passing the ACP in four courses. Students taught Science 6 by a STEM Academy teacher passed at a higher rate (64%) than comparison students (51%), $\chi^2(1, N = 1,330) = 21.7, p < .01$. Students in Science 7 who were taught by a STEM Academy teacher for two years passed at a higher rate (72%) than comparison students (67%) and one-year students of STEM Academy teachers (62%), $\chi^2(2, N = 2,170) = 8.6, p < .05$. Students in Science 8 who were taught by a STEM Academy teacher for one year passed the fall ACP at a higher rate (69%) than students taught by a STEM Academy teacher for two years (67%) and matched-comparison students (62%), $\chi^2(2, N = 1,558) = 7.2, p < .05$. Astronomy students who had been taught by a STEM Academy teacher for one year and two years passed the ACP at lower rates (36%, one year; 58%, two years) than matched-comparison students (76%), $\chi^2(2, N = 476) = 68.4, p < .01$. The practical effects of having a STEM Academy teacher and ACP passing rates were relatively small for the general science courses (Science 6 Cramer's $V = .12$,⁹ Science 7 Cramer's $V = .04$,

⁶ Science 6, Sheltered Science 6, Science 6 Pre-Advanced Placement (Pre-AP), Science 7, Sheltered Science 7, Science 7 Pre-AP, Science 8, Sheltered Science 8, Astronomy, and Physics.

⁷ The analyses intended to include results of the spring 2020 ACP and STAAR data, but those exams were not administered due to the district and TEA response during the COVID-19 pandemic.

⁸ Courses with students who had been taught science by a STEM Academy teacher for two years included Science 7, Science 7 Pre-Advanced Placement, Science 8, Sheltered Science 8, Astronomy, and Physics.

⁹ Cramer's V values of .10, .30, and .50 are considered small, medium, and large, respectively (Cohen, 1988).

and Science 8 Cramer's $V = .05$). The effect size was moderate for Astronomy (Cramer's $V = .27$).

Table 2: Fall 2019 Science ACP Percent Passing for Students of STEM Academy Teachers and Matched-Comparison Students by Course

Group	Tested <i>N</i>	Passed %
Science 6*		
One-Year STEM Academy ^a	665	63.5
Comparison Group	665	50.8
Sheltered Science 6^b		
One-Year STEM Academy	5	40.0
Comparison Group	6	33.3
Science 6 Pre-Advanced Placement		
One-Year STEM Academy	263	73.4
Comparison Group	263	76.4
Science 7*		
One-Year STEM Academy	932	61.7
Two-Year STEM Academy ^c	153	71.9
Comparison Group	1,085	66.5
Sheltered Science 7^d		
One-Year STEM Academy	162	50.0
Comparison Group	164	59.1
Science 7 Pre-Advanced Placement		
One-Year STEM Academy	459	85.8
Two-Year STEM Academy	28	85.7
Comparison Group	487	83.0
Science 8*		
One-Year STEM Academy	592	68.8
Two-Year STEM Academy	187	67.4
Comparison Group	779	62.0
Sheltered Science 8		
One-Year STEM Academy	37	51.4
Two-Year STEM Academy	11	18.2
Comparison Group	48	52.1
Astronomy*		
One-Year STEM Academy	179	35.8
Two-Year STEM Academy	59	57.6
Comparison Group	238	76.1
Physics		
One-Year STEM Academy	143	69.9
Two-Year STEM Academy	29	86.2
Comparison Group	172	72.7

Source: District fall 2019 ACP file dated 02/20/20 and district Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) file dated 10/31/19.

Note: ^aReceived STEM Academy teacher instruction for one year.

^bOne student received two years of grade six instruction from a STEM Academy teacher, hence the difference in sample sizes.

^cReceived STEM Academy teacher instruction for two years. ^dTwo students received two years of instruction from STEM Academy teachers, hence the difference in sample sizes. *Indicates statistically significant difference, $p < .05$.

What were the high school rigorous course enrollment rates for students who were taught in middle school by STEM Academy teachers?

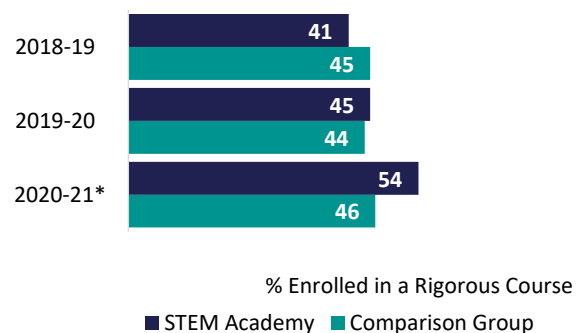
Methodology

The evaluator used PSM to create a group of grade-nine students who were taught by STEM Academy teachers and a group of matched-comparison students who were not taught by STEM Academy teachers during middle school. The evaluator used *chi-square* analyses (statistical significance) and calculated Cramer's V (practical significance; Cohen, 1988) to compare the percentages of former students of STEM Academy participants and comparison students who, in grade nine, enrolled in Pre-AP, AP, or dual credit mathematics or science courses for the 2018-19, 2019-20, and 2020-21 school years.

Results

During the 2018-19 school year, 41 percent of former students of STEM Academy teachers enrolled in a rigorous science or mathematics course compared to 45 percent of comparison students (Figure 2). During the 2019-20 school year, 45 percent of grade-nine students who were taught by STEM Academy teachers enrolled in a rigorous mathematics or science course, a rate on par with matched-comparison students (44%). During the 2020-21 school year, 54 percent of grade-nine students who were taught by STEM Academy teachers enrolled in a rigorous mathematics or science course compared to 46 percent of matched-comparison students, a statistically significant difference, $\chi^2 (1, N = 2,544) = 15.0, p < .01$. The effect of having a STEM Academy teacher on advanced course enrollment in high school was small (Cramer's $V = .08$).

Figure 2: 2018-19 through 2020-21 Grade-Nine Enrollment of STEM Academy Students and Comparison Students in a Rigorous High School Mathematics or Science Course



Source: District course files dated 10/22/18 (2018-19), 10/28/19 (2019-20), and 10/30/20 (2020-21). PEIMS files dated 10/26/18 (2018-19), 10/28/19 (2019-20), and 10/30/20, (2020-21).

Note: Rigorous courses were defined as AP, Pre-AP, and Dual Credit courses. Data include only matched students. 2018-19 included students taught by Cohort 1 teachers; 2019-20 and 2020-21 included students taught by Cohort 1 and Cohort 2 teachers. *Indicates statistically significant difference, $p < .01$.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Continue to monitor student performance on 2020-21 ACP and STAAR exams in science. Students were not able to take the spring 2020 ACPs or STAAR due to the district and state responses to the COVID-19 pandemic. Results on the fall 2019 ACPs varied with students of STEM Academy teachers passing at higher rates than comparison students in some courses and lower rates in other courses. Analyses of 2020-21 exams should investigate the cumulative effect of having a STEM academy teacher for more than one school year.

Monitor the trend of increased enrollment in advanced mathematics or science courses as the students taught by STEM Academy teachers enter high school. Following the first year of the program, former students of STEM Academy teachers enrolled in advanced mathematics or science courses at a lower rate than matched-comparison students. The rate of enrollment for former students of STEM Academy teachers increased to a rate similar to comparison students following the second program year. Following the third year, the enrollment rate

increased by nine percentage points and was higher than the rate for matched-comparison students. Additional analyses of 2021-22 enrollment should be conducted to investigate the residual effect of having a STEM Academy teacher on the pursuit of STEM coursework as students taught science by STEM Academy teachers in grade six and/or grade seven enter high school.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

An Early College High School (ECHS) is a high school that blends high school and college level coursework to provide traditionally underserved students the opportunity to earn an associate degree or up to 60 hours of tuition-free college credit by the time of high school graduation. The Dallas Independent School District (Dallas ISD) was among the first Texas school districts to establish an ECHS in 2006 and has grown to 25 ECHSs (Table 1). In 2019-20, ECHS campuses were supported by \$14,292,375 in Dallas ISD general operating funds. This was an increase of 20 percent over 2018-19 (\$11,871,142) and 37 percent over 2017-18 (\$10,458,764).

Table 1: 2019-20 Dallas ISD Early College High Schools

Early College High Schools	Dallas College Campus
Traditional Early College High Schools (ECHS)	
Trinidad Garza	Mountain View Campus
Kathlyn Joe Gilliam	Cedar Valley Campus
Dr. Wright L. Lassiter Jr.	El Centro Campus
North Lake	North Lake Campus
W.W. Samuell	Eastfield Campus
Skyline	Cedar Valley Campus
H. Grady Spruce	Eastfield Campus
Pathways in Technology Early College High Schools (P-TECH)	
Bryan Adams	Eastfield Campus
W. H. Adamson	El Centro Campus
David W. Carter	Cedar Valley Campus
Dr. Emmett J. Conrad	Richland Campus
Hillcrest	Richland Campus
Thomas Jefferson	Brookhaven Campus
Justin F. Kimball	Mountain View Campus
Lincoln	El Centro Campus
James Madison	El Centro Campus
Moisés E. Molina	Mountain View Campus
North Dallas	Brookhaven Campus
L.G. Pinkston	El Centro Campus
Franklin D. Roosevelt	El Centro Campus
Seagoville	Eastfield Campus
South Oak Cliff	Mountain View Campus
Sunset	Mountain View Campus
W.T. White	Brookhaven Campus
Wilmer-Hutchins	North Lake Campus
2019-20 Planning Year	
W.T. White Fine Arts CA	Brookhaven Campus
Wilmer-Hutchins Fine Arts CA	Cedar Valley Campus

Source: ECHS program documents and ECHS website accessed 01/08/20.

The 25 ECHSs include seven traditional Early College High Schools (ECHS) and 18 Pathways in Technology Early College High Schools (P-TECH). Two additional Fine Arts ECHS are in their planning year. The ECHS program at the Dallas ISD is coordinated by the Early College Programs division within the Postsecondary Partnerships and Programs department.

PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION/Limitations

The purpose of this evaluation was to examine the implementation of the ECHS programs based on outlined program goals. On Friday, March 13, 2020, in alignment with federal recommendations, the Governor of Texas issued a disaster proclamation certifying that the novel coronavirus COVID-19 posed an imminent threat of disaster for all counties in the state of Texas. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Dallas ISD transitioned students to at-home learning on March 23 following Spring Break (March 16 – 20) until the end of the school year. Additionally, the Governor used his statutory authority under Texas Government Code, §418.016 to suspend annual academic assessment requirements for the remainder of the 2019-20 school year cancelling remaining planned administrations of *STAAR EOCs*. Furthermore, national administration of college readiness assessments, such as the *ACT* and *SAT*, were canceled. Due to these COVID-19 pandemic related changes, the scope of the evaluation was limited to available data.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS/OUTCOMES

What were the components of the ECHS program?

TEA Requirements. For schools to be designated by TEA as early college high schools, they must meet the criteria articulated in the ECHS and P-TECH Blueprints.¹

Dallas ISD ECHS Structure. Four of the 25 ECHSs are “stand alone” campuses and solely educate ECHS students (Garza, Gilliam, Lassiter, and North Lake Collegiate Academy). The remaining 21 schools operate as a “school within a school” to provide a sense of cohesiveness for students within the comprehensive high school. Students are accepted into ECHS programs as freshmen and matriculate as a cohort as they progress through high school. Students attend grade nine and grade 10 dual credit classes at their high school campuses while students in grades 11 and 12 attend classes on a partner campus of the

¹ Blueprints can be accessed at <https://tea.texas.gov/echs> and <https://tea.texas.gov/ptech>

Dallas College, formally known as Dallas County Community College District. The Dallas ISD provides transportation to partner community college campuses at no charge.

Student Applications. Online applications are accepted from interested eighth grade students (incoming freshman) from November through the end of January every school year. Applicants are asked to select their top three choices among the district's ECHSs. Students are required to write briefly about their strengths, what they enjoy learning, and how attending high school at an ECHS would help them to reach their academic goals. All students who apply are invited for an interview. Acceptance letters are sent to applicants in February. The district has a recruitment and enrollment goal of approximately 60 to 125 students per campus per year. In 2019-20, ECHS campuses accepted between 65 to 133 grade nine students.

Summer Bridge Program. The goal of this two-week long program is to orient incoming grade nine students to academic behaviors and skills needed for dual credit achievement and to prepare students to meet *TSIA* requirements. The summer bridge program for the 2019-20 cohort ran for 10 days from June 5 through June 20, 2019. Attendance was not mandatory. There were 2,287 incoming ECHS students who attended at least one day of the Summer Bridge Program (87% of all incoming grade nine ECHS students).

Pathways and Industry Partners. P-TECH students select a pathway in grade nine to guide them towards a specialized field. Industry partners offer students essential mentoring and internship opportunities to gain relevant hands on learning experiences in their chosen field to prepare them to enter the workforce career ready.

What were the demographic characteristics of ECHS students?

During the 2019-20 school year, a total of 7,692 students were enrolled in an ECHS. The ethnic composition of district ECHS students was similar to Dallas ISD high school students; 73 percent of ECHS students were Hispanic, and 24 percent were African American (72% and 21%, respectively, for all district high school students). In contrast, a higher percentage of ECHS students were economically disadvantaged (83%) than overall Dallas ISD high school students (77%). There were more female ECHS students (57%) than male ECHS students (43%), unlike the district (50% male and 50% female). A smaller percentage of ECHS students received special education services (3%) compared to all district high school students (9%). More ECHS students (22%) were Talented and Gifted (TAG) eligible than district high school students (16%). Fifty-six percent of ECHS students were considered at risk, slightly lower than all high school students (60%).

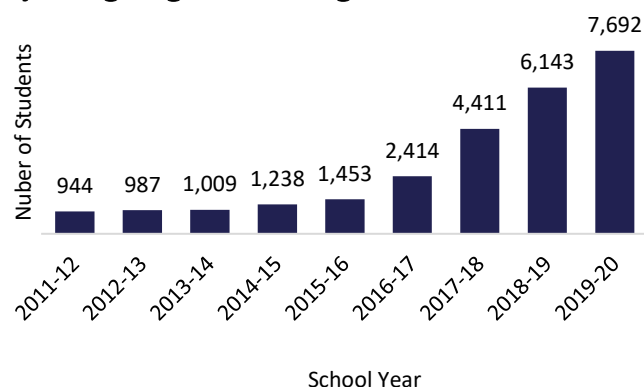
Traditional ECHS students were comparable to P-TECH students except in three aspects. First, a higher percentage

of Hispanic students enrolled in traditional ECHSs than P-TECHs (79% vs 71%). Second, a higher percentage of traditional ECHS students was TAG eligible (30% vs 20%). Third, a smaller percentage of traditional ECHS students was considered at risk of dropping out of school (47% vs 58%).

What were the student enrollment characteristics?

With the opening of additional ECHSs and higher enrollment numbers at existing schools, enrollment numbers have grown significantly over the past five years from 1,453 in 2015-16 to 7,692 students in 2019-20 (Figure 1).

Figure 1: 2011-12 to 2019-20 Student Enrollment in Early College High School Programs



Source: PEIMS demographic files dated 10/30/11 (2011-12), 10/29/12 (2012-13), 10/28/13 (2013-14), 10/31/14 (2014-15), 10/30/15 (2015-16), 10/31/16 (2016-17), 10/30/17 (2017-18), 10/26/18 (2018-19), and 10/28/19 (2019-20).

Thirty-four percent of students ($n=2,639$) were enrolled in grade nine, 29 percent in grade 10 ($n=2,212$), 25 percent in grade 11 ($n=1,907$), and 12 percent in grade 12 ($n=934$).

Attendance Rates. The average attendance rate for district ECHS students was 6.5 percentage points higher than non-ECHS students (96.3% versus 89.8%). Students enrolled in traditional ECHSs had an average attendance rate of 97.5 percent, while students at P-TECHs had an average attendance rate of 95.9 percent. The attendance rate difference between ECHS and non-ECHS students increased by 1.5 percentage points from 2018-19 (5 percentage points) to 2019-20 (6.5 percentage points).

Student Retention Rates. Overall, retention rates were higher for ECHS students than comprehensive high school students enrolled in campuses offering the ECHS program. The two-year retention rate difference was eight percentage points (84% versus 76%), the three-year retention rate difference was nine percentage points (73% versus 64%), and the four-year retention rate difference was 21 percentage points (66% versus 45%). Traditional ECHS students had a higher retention rate than P-TECH students for all cohorts. The retention rate difference for the 2018-19 cohort was five percentage points, for the 2017-18 cohort

seven percentage points, and for the 2016-17 cohort 15 percentage points.

Graduation Rates. The average four-year graduation rate for the 2016-17 ECHS cohort was 65 percent; 13 percentage points higher than Dallas ISD comprehensive high school students. For this cohort, the graduation rate of traditional ECHS students was 14 percentage points higher than that of P-Tech students (75% versus 61%). However, there was no difference between traditional ECHS and P-Tech students in the graduation rate of students who were enrolled in the program for four consecutive years. Overall, the graduation rate for continuously enrolled students differed by 10 percentage points between ECHS students (99%) and comprehensive high school students (89%). The graduation rate for the 2016-17 cohort was lower than that of the 2015-16 cohort across all student groups. The graduation rate of continuously enrolled students remained stable between both groups.

What were the academic performances of ECHS students on post-secondary readiness assessments?

SAT. Of the 2,841 ECHS students enrolled in grade 11 (2017-18 cohort) and grade 12 (2016-17 cohort), 41 percent met the TSI SAT benchmark on ERW (480), and 21 percent met the TSI SAT benchmark on mathematics (530). Traditional ECHS students met TSI SAT benchmarks at a higher rate than P-TECH students (difference of 29 to 32 percentage points). In comparison, 19 percent of non-ECHS students enrolled in comprehensive high schools containing the ECHS program met the TSI SAT benchmark for ERW, and eight percent did so for mathematics.

ACT. Overall, of the 934 ECHS students in grade 12 (2016-17 cohort), 11 percent met the TSI ACT benchmarks on English and Mathematics. Traditional ECHS students met TSI ACT benchmarks at a higher rate than P-TECH students (difference of 15 percentage points for mathematics and English each). In comparison, three percent of non-ECHS students enrolled in comprehensive high schools containing ECHS programs met the TSI ACT benchmark for English and mathematics each.

TSIA. Meeting TSIA benchmarks, or qualifying for an exemption, indicates that students are ready for college-level course work in the areas of reading, writing, and mathematics. Of the 934 grade 12 ECHS students enrolled in 2019-20, 98 percent met TSIA benchmarks or qualified for an exemption for reading and writing, and 95 percent met TSIA benchmarks for mathematics, thereby exceeding the program goal of 70 percent for each subtest. Overall, ECHS students outperformed non-ECHS students by 70 (writing and reading) to 74 (mathematics) percentage points.

Did Early College High School students earn the targeted number of dual credit hours for each grade level?

One of the program goals was that 70 percent of ECHS students will have earned three credit hours by the end of grade nine, 12 credit hours by the end of grade 10, 30 credit hours by the end of grade 11, and 60 credit hours by the end of grade 12. However, enrollment files did not provide data on cumulative dual credit hours earned by students. Therefore, this evaluation report provides the number and percentage of students who met the expected number of dual credit hours at each grade level in 2019-20. Overall, 55 percent ($n=4,226$) earned the expected number of dual credit hours at each grade level.

How many industry-based certifications or educational certificates were earned by ECHS students?

Overall, 554 ECHS students (grades 11 and 12) completed 841 educational certificates while enrolled at Dallas College. Students completed between one to four certificates with an average of 1.5 certificates per student. P-Tech students accounted for 88 percent of ECHS students who completed a certificate and 92 percent of the 841 completed certificates.

In addition, 419 ECHS students earned a total of 434 industry-based certifications in 2019-20, including 382 certifications listed in the A-F accountability system. All but two students who attempted and passed industry-based certifications in 2019-20 were P-Tech students. Fewer ECHS students attained industry-based certifications in 2019-20 than in past years (2017-18, $n=966$, 2018-19, $n=633$) even though ECHS enrollment numbers increased from previous years.

How many ECHS graduates earned an associate degree or 60 college credit hours?

Of the 869 ECHS students who graduated in 2019-20, 684 students (79%) earned an associate degree or 60 dual credit hours, exceeding the ECHS program goal of 70 percent. Of the ECHS students who met the goal, 91 percent ($n=623$) met the goal by earning an associate degree while nine percent ($n=61$) met the goal by earning 60 or more dual credit hours. Fifty-eight percent ($n=397$) of students who met the goal were P-Tech students, while 42 percent ($n=287$) were traditional ECHS students. In 2019-20, more Associate of Applied Science degrees were awarded to ECHS students ($n=341$, 55%) than Associate of Science ($n=239$, 38%) or Associate of Arts ($n=43$, 7%) degrees. This differs from 2018-19 where nine percent ($n=22$) of ECHS graduates were awarded an Associate of Applied Science. Although 2019-20 was the first time the number and percentages of ECHS graduates who earned an associate degree or 60 dual credit hours were reported, the number of associate degrees awarded increased by 216

percent from 197 associate degrees in 2017-18 to 623 associate degrees in 2019-20. At the same time, the percentage of graduates who were awarded an associate degree increased from 64 percent to 72 percent.

What were the college enrollment rates for ECHS students?

According to the 2019-20 National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) data file, 67 percent of 2018-19 ECHS graduates and 52 percent of non-ECHS graduates enrolled in college within one year of graduation (Table 2). Of these students, more ECHS students (93%) enrolled in a four-year university than non-ECHS students (46%). Similarly, fewer ECHS students (7%) enrolled in a two-year college than non-ECHS students (54%).

Table 2: 2018-19 Percentages for Students Enrolled in College within One Year of Graduating High School

Grad Yr	ECHS Graduates			Non-ECHS Graduates		
	Graduated	Enrolled	%	Graduated	Enrolled	%
2018-19	372	248	67	7,346	3,848	52
Two Yr		17	7		2,065	54
Four-Yr		231	93		1,783	46

Source: Dallas ISD graduation file, 09/25/19. Demographic file, 05/20/19 (2018-19). NSC file, 05/01/20.

Note: Grad Yr = graduation year.

What were student perceptions of the ECHS programs?

The graduation of the first P-TECH Cohort (2016-17) in 2019-20 marked an important milestone for the ECHS program at the Dallas ISD. An online survey invitation was emailed to 925 ECHS grade 12 students to collect their perceptions on the ECHS program. Overall, 60 students responded to the survey request. From those, 49 students completed the survey for a five percent response rate. Due to the low response rate, survey results were not representative and thus not generalizable. Therefore, survey results are not included in this report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the key findings, the following recommendations are offered for stakeholders.

Continue to raise ECHS departmental goals for *TSIA*. For 2019-20, ECHS program staff set a *TSIA* goal of 70

percent of Grade 12 ECHS students earning a passing score on the *TSIA* subtests or qualifying for an exemption. This goal was surpassed with 98 percent of Grade 12 ECHS students meeting *TSIA* criteria for reading and writing, and 85 percent meeting *TSIA* criteria for mathematics. Given the importance of the *TSIA* in determining whether students are ready for college-level course work after grade 10, ECHS program staff should consider setting achievable goals at lower grade levels.

Continue to examine successful implementations of the ECHS model. Lassiter ECHS ranked first among ECHSs in the percentage of students who met SAT and ACT benchmarks. Consider studying success stories to better understand how this was achieved and identify steps to replicate with other ECHSs.

Continue to support ECHS campuses in monitoring dual-credit course completions. Overall, 55 percent of ECHS students met the targeted number of dual credit hours by the end of each grade level. Although traditional ECHS students met the goal for grades nine and 11, P-TECH students did not meet the goal for any grade level. ECHS department staff should continue to help campuses identify students who may not meet the targeted dual credit hours by the end of the school year.

Continue to promote ECHS students' completion of educational certificates or industry-based certifications. ECHS students (grades 11 and 12) earned 841 educational certificates while taking dual credit classes at Dallas College. In addition, ECHS students earned 434 industry-based certifications during the 2019-20 school year. However, the number of ECHS students who earned industry-based certifications has dropped over the past three years from 966 students in 2017-18 to 434 students in 2019-20. Given that industry-based certifications can provide students with an advantage in finding employment, ECHS staff should, in cooperation with the Career and Technical Education Department, review causes for this trend.

Work with program evaluators to increase ECHS student participation in the annual student exit survey. Exit surveys provide unique insight into the ECHS program from students' perspective that is not otherwise available through other data sources. Feedback could help with future program development to ensure the ECHS program addresses student needs.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The goal of the Dallas Independent School District (Dallas ISD) Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) initiative is to provide campus staff members with SEL training and implementation support. The 2019-20 budget for the SEL initiative was \$2,512,214, a decrease from \$3,744,874 in 2018-19 (Hinkley, 2019).¹

PURPOSE AND METHODS OF THE EVALUATION

This report summarized the context, process, and outcome data for the 2019-20 SEL initiative. Context data included information about services provided to campus staff members and students collected from SEL central staff members. Process data included implementation rubric data completed by district SEL coordinators with principals. Outcome data included fall discipline, attendance (student and teacher), teacher Climate Survey, and in-district retention (student and teacher) data. This report typically examines spring data instead of fall data; however, these measures were unavailable in 2019-20. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Texas Education Agency canceled some state assessments, and the district canceled local spring assessments and districtwide climate surveys after the district transition to at-home learning (beginning March 23, 2020).² The evaluator used frequencies to summarize available fall 2019 outcome data by 2018-19 by implementation level.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS/OUTCOMES

What was the context of the 2019-20 SEL initiative?

SEL in Dallas ISD

In the Dallas ISD, the SEL initiative focused on building “the skills, knowledge and attitudes students and adults need to be successful in school, work, and life.”³ In 2017-18, district SEL staff members began providing SEL training to campus staff members. Beginning in 2018-19, campus-staff-member SEL training continued with a new focus on introducing SEL concepts to students. Campuses

were classified into one of five SEL-related groups.⁴ Some components were shared among groups, but each group also implemented unique components. Some campuses were not formally involved in the SEL initiative.

Common SEL Components

Six components of the SEL initiative occurred across all campuses implementing SEL. First, campus steering committees fostered SEL by planning, leading, and supporting campus-level SEL implementation. Second, campus champions served as steering committee members and SEL experts, provided feedback, and served as a bridge between campuses and central staff members. Third, district SEL coordinators served as a link between campuses and the SEL department. Coordinators provided campus staff members with professional development, coaching, observation and feedback, and support at campus meetings.⁵ Fourth, since 2018-19, all campuses implementing SEL ideally designated times in the schedule and methods of instruction for teaching SEL. Explicit SEL instruction was required for 10 minutes each day or for 45 minutes each week. In 2019-20, most elementary campuses implementing SEL continued using the Sanford Harmony⁶ curriculum to teach SEL. Beginning in 2019-20, middle school campuses used Positive Action Kits and high school campuses used Community Matters from Facing History in Ourselves. SEL also was embedded into the social studies and reading and language arts curricula in 2018-19 and the math and science curricula in 2019-20. Sixth, each SEL campus in the district operated on SEL guiding principles (e.g., environment enhances the learning experience). Each principle included signature practices to serve as possible action items (e.g., morning greetings).

PSELI Study and Comparison Campuses

In 2017-18, the Dallas ISD began participating in the PSELI study (funded by the Wallace Foundation). The study was designed to examine the impact of consistent SEL implementation during in- and out-of-school time (OST). Seven PSELI Study and seven PSELI Comparison campuses participated in the two-phase study. Across phases, each campus worked with an OST partner provided by Big Thought to provide OST programming.⁷ In phase I, the

¹ The decrease can be partially attributed to the separation of the counseling and SEL departments in 2019-20.

² Examined assessments typically include *TerraNova*, *SUPERA*, *State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR)*, and *STAAR End of Course (EOC)*. Spring Student Experience and campus staff climate surveys are also typically examined.

³ Documentation provided by the SEL program manager on 09/20/18.

⁴ Groups included 1) Partnerships for Social and Emotional Learning Initiative (PSELI) Study campuses; 2) PSELI Comparison campuses;

3) SEL Partnership/Building Assets, Reducing Risks (BARR) campuses; 4) SEL Partnership campuses; and 5) NonPartnership campuses.

⁵ Staff members (both campus and central) could also attend various district-level trainings related to SEL during the school year including training on Sanford Harmony and Positive Action curricula, building positive classroom systems, culturally responsive teaching, effective teacher language, morning meetings, and self-care.

⁶ <https://www.sanfordharmony.org/>.

⁷ Student attendance at after-school programming was not mandatory.

study campuses received SEL support while the comparison campuses did not. When phase II begins in 2020-21, the comparison campuses will receive SEL implementation support. In addition, PSEL Study campuses also were provided with an SEL specialist (who coached and trained in the OST space but also attended daytime activities) and a site lead (who ran the OST program) by Big Thought.

While PSEL Comparison campuses were asked not to engage in campuswide or OST SEL practices until phase II, some students may have received exposure to SEL from individual staff members. For compensation, each comparison campus received \$5,000 per year. Use of this money was not restricted, except that it could not be used for anything related to SEL. When PSEL Comparison campuses implement SEL in 2020-21, they will receive dedicated funds to support initial costs.

SEL Partnership/BARR Campuses

SEL Partnership/BARR (BARR) campuses used the BARR curriculum, an SEL curriculum designed to assist with the transition to high school.⁸ In 2019-20, BARR campuses included W.H. Adamson, H. Grady Spruce, W.T. White, and Woodrow Wilson high schools. Campuses could choose to engage in SEL outside of BARR as well; except for Spruce, all BARR campuses elected to do this.

SEL Partnership Campuses (SEL Partners)

SEL Partners campuses were district-supported SEL campuses not participating in PSEL or BARR. These campuses received all the common SEL components outlined previously. SEL Partners included 139 campuses (88 elementary schools, 7 combined elementary/middle school, 30 middle schools, 1 combined middle/high school and 13 high schools), an increase from 114 campuses in 2018-19.

NonPartnership Campuses

In 2019-20, nonPartnership campuses included 74 campuses (43 elementary schools, 2 combined elementary/middle schools, 5 middle schools, 4 combined middle/high schools, and 20 high schools). This is a decrease from 101 campuses in 2018-19 because more campuses became SEL Partners. NonPartnership campuses did not formally participate in SEL in the Dallas ISD. These campuses may have had some exposure to SEL, but not as part of the districtwide initiative.

COVID-19

The SEL department has continued to support staff members, students, and families during at-home learning and to collaborate with partners (SEL Dallas, Big Thought, etc.). To support staff members, the department posted information on the SEL webpage, conducted webinars, and created monthly newsletters.⁹

To support students and families, the SEL department posted daily activities for all grades on the At-Home Learning website. The activities were available in English and Spanish and focused on topics aligned with the COVID-19 context, like self-care and the care of others, and the SEL learning standards.¹⁰ The SEL department also created videos modeling SEL practices for dissemination on districtwide social media and YouTube¹¹ and created a self-care video for parents of special education students in partnership with the special education department.

How were the SEL initiative components implemented in 2019-20?

A rubric was developed by Evaluation and Assessment and SEL central staff members to measure SEL implementation by campus. The mean score was 65.5 out of a possible 105 points (standard deviation = 15.0; range: 31.0 to 96.0). The rubric was highly reliable (21 items; $\alpha = .89$).¹² Implementation tended to be rated higher at PSEL sites than elementary level SEL Partner sites, which received a wider range of scores. Implementation was slightly lower at BARR sites compared to high school level SEL Partner sites even though they received a wider range of scores. Across campus levels, there was some evidence of increased percentages of campuses at the high implementation level (elementary and middle school) and the medium implementation level (high school).

How did 2019-20 student outcome data vary by SEL implementation level?¹³

Readers should not attribute causation based upon the results presented in this section. All results are descriptive and have not been experimentally examined. Additionally, the number of campuses within groups widely varied; thus, readers should use caution when comparing among groupings. Finally, these results are representative of the fall 2019 semester based on 2018-19 implementation data instead of spring outcomes data compared with spring implementation data of the same year; therefore, results should be viewed with additional caution. Discipline data results in particular should be viewed with even greater

⁸ www.barrcenter.org.

⁹ To explore this website, see <https://www.dallasisd.org/Page/66052>.

¹⁰ To explore the SEL portion of the At-Home Learning website, see <https://sites.google.com/dallasisd.org/athomelearningplans/helpful-parent-resources/social-and-emotional-learning>.

¹¹ To explore the SEL videos, see <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLpyhyA1qUPMZvbqEhZsLZYpNxQXXd8D2k>.

¹² Cronbach, 1951; 0.70 is considered acceptable, 0.80 is considered good, and 0.90 or higher is considered excellent. Only campuses implementing SEL were included in analyses.

¹³ Readers should not attribute causation based upon the results presented. All results are descriptive and have not been experimentally examined. Additionally, the number of campuses within groups widely varies; thus, readers should use caution when comparing among groupings.

caution because results could be because of differences in reporting rather than actual incidences of behavior.

Results provided mixed evidence of an advantage for SEL programs. For example, high or medium implementation campuses outperformed low implementation campuses across campus levels on some, but not all, fall 2019 outcomes (Table 1).

Table 1: 2019-20 Fall Student Outcomes by 2018-19 SEL Implementation Level

Outcome	High	Medium	Low
Elementary Schools			
Discipline Referrals	13.9	10.6	5.5
Bullying Referrals	2.0	2.2	-
CD Referrals	1.5	6.4	2.7
Attendance (%)	95.0	95.5	95.3
Reenrollment (%)	82.9	84.5	83.3
Middle Schools			
Discipline Referrals	N/A	104.2	82.0
Bullying Referrals	N/A	2.9	3.0
CD Referrals	N/A	20.2	10.3
Attendance (%)	N/A	95.5	95.4
Reenrollment (%)	N/A	86.6	83.0
High Schools			
Discipline Referrals	N/A	93.3	114.0
Bullying Referrals	N/A	2.0	-
CD Referrals	N/A	3.9	1.0
Attendance (%)	N/A	92.7	93.1
Reenrollment (%)	N/A	84.1	78.8

Source: PEIMS demographic data (including enrollment data): 10/26/18 (2018-19), 10/31/19 (2019-20). Fall 2019 discipline data: 01/16/20 (2019-20). Fall 2019 attendance data: 01/24/20 (2019-20).

Note: - = no referrals in that category. CD = classroom disruption. Reenrollment = reenrollment year over year. N/A= not applicable.

How did 2019-20 campus staff member outcome data vary by SEL implementation Level?

Readers should not attribute causation based upon the results presented. All results are descriptive and have not been experimentally examined. Additionally, the number of campuses within groups widely varied; thus, readers should use caution when comparing among groupings. Finally, these results are representative of the fall 2019 semester based on 2018-19 implementation data instead of spring outcomes data compared with spring implementation data of the same year; therefore, results should be viewed with additional caution.

Some support was found for a possible SEL advantage for campus staff members. High and medium SEL implementation campuses outperformed low implementation campuses on several of the measured fall 2019 staff member outcomes, especially at the elementary level (Table 2).

Table 2: 2019-20 Fall Campus Staff Member Outcomes by 2018-19 SEL Implementation Level

Outcome	High	Medium	Low
Elementary Schools			
Days Absent	6.3	6.1	5.9
Retention (%)	86.8	84.9	83.0
Climate PCE (%)	77.1	70.3	75.6
Climate TTT (%)	85.0	80.7	82.9
Climate TPT (%)	82.4	73.9	79.0
Middle Schools			
Days Absent	N/A	6.9	6.3
Retention (%)	N/A	76.8	74.4
Climate PCE (%)	N/A	63.2	79.4
Climate TTT (%)	N/A	73.3	76.9
Climate TPT (%)	N/A	67.6	88.0
High Schools			
Days Absent	N/A	6.6	13.5
Retention (%)	N/A	84.0	86.8
Climate PCE (%)	N/A	53.2	70.1
Climate TTT (%)	N/A	68.2	78.7
Climate TPT (%)	N/A	55.8	92.7

Source: Fall 2019 absences data: 05/05/20 (2019-20). Retention data: 12/19/19 (October 2018 to October 2019). Fall 2019 Climate Survey data: 01/10/20 (spring 2020).

Note: Retention = returning to teach year over year. PCE = Positive Culture and Environment. TTT = Teacher-Teacher Trust. TPT = Teacher-Principal Trust.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Continue the SEL support provided to schools, especially in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The work of SEL department staff members and campuses has increased the number of high implementation campuses (from 10 in 2018-19 to 18 in 2019-20). The department also provided continued support to staff members, students, and families during at-home learning thorough information on the SEL webpage, webinars, newsletters, and daily activities for all grades on the At-Home Learning website. It will be important to collect campus staff feedback related to the level of use and helpfulness of the SEL efforts to inform decisions related to future training and resource development.

Explore more direct methods of measuring SEL-related factors. The current evaluation was the first to be able to examine the relationship between level of campus SEL implementation and outcomes. As a next step, SEL should be measured directly. A districtwide, direct measure of SEL for students and staff members does not currently exist. The district should invest in a tool that interferes minimally with classroom instruction but provides a valid bridge to connect implementation first to SEL and then to outcomes.

Examine whether the student and campus staff member outcomes used the past two years should be adjusted. As the Dallas ISD SEL program matures and expands, it will be important to ensure the indicators used to measure program effectiveness align with those found in best practices research.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Dallas Independent School District (ISD) hired Collier Educational Consulting to conduct an audit of the district special education program in 2017. A key finding of the culminating report was that English learners (ELs) who were dually-identified as receiving SPED services (EL/SPED) required additional, targeted supports. The report further highlighted the need to improve student identification and service provision for EL/SPED students. Thus, the BE/ESL department began collaborating with the reading/language arts, social studies, and SPED departments at the end of the 2017-18 school year to provide services for district EL/SPED students. The purpose of this collaboration was to 1) develop and support embedded EL/SPED differentiation for all learners in the general education curriculum; 2) facilitate collaboration among campus-based educators, administrators, parents, and EL/SPED specialists; 3) assist campuses in planning and implementing services for EL/SPED students at all grade levels; and 4) create and conduct professional development.

The EL/SPED program aims to support and assist the teachers of EL/SPED students.¹ EL/SPED instructional specialists assist campuses to plan and implement services designed to meet the needs of EL/SPED students at all grade levels. They also create and conduct professional development opportunities for teachers, administrators, and other campus-based staff members throughout the district. Because EL and SPED services are not mutually exclusive, improving student identification and providing services and targeted support to EL/SPED students continued to be an important focus for the district in 2019-20.

In 2019-20, 30 campuses² were targeted for extra EL/SPED support because 1) they enrolled high numbers of EL/SPED students or 2) they showed high achievement gaps in 2019 *State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness* outcomes for EL/SPED students compared to students in general education or to students in special education who were not ELs. To meet the linguistic and special education needs of EL/SPED students at these 30 campuses, Title I

funds were used to boost multi-departmental leadership and provide instructional specialists at the 30 campuses.

In response to the COVID-19-related district change to at-home learning beginning on March 23, 2020, EL/SPED instructional specialists provided additional curriculum and campus support beyond the planned activities. Regarding curriculum, EL/SPED specialists wrote dual-language lesson plans to help ELs and EL/SPED students with at-home learning during the spring and summer.³ Specialists met virtually with teachers each week and collaborated with the SPED and Curriculum departments to develop best practices for teaching EL/SPED students during at-home learning. Specialists also provided campus support for students, parents, and teachers.⁴ In preparation for the 2020-21 school year, EL/SPED specialists began writing curricula that could be implemented in online or face-to-face classrooms, and all summer EL/SPED professional development sessions were conducted virtually.⁵

The purpose of this report was to provide data for campus, program, and district stakeholders to determine the effectiveness of the EL/SPED program in meeting the needs of EL/SPED students in the Dallas ISD. The budget for the 2019-20 EL/SPED program was \$1,652,936 from Title I funds; this total was unchanged from 2018-19. Areas affected by the COVID-19-related transition to at-home learning were addressed in the associated sections.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS/OUTCOMES

What were the characteristics of 2019-20 EL/SPED students?

Of the 70,004 ELs and 13,966 SPED students in the Dallas ISD, 5,334 (8% of ELs; 38% of SPED) were dually-identified as EL/SPED in 2019-20, accounting for almost four percent of all district students in 2019-20. In general, the distribution of students in most grades was comparable across all EL and SPED classifications. The percentage of EL/SPED

¹ For the evaluation of programs for district ELs and SPED students, see Voss (2020) and Mejan (2020).

² The 30 campuses included 16 campuses at the elementary school level (Adams, Blanton, Burleson, Cedar Crest, DeZavala, Douglas, Gill, Gooch, Jones, Sanger, Seagoville, Seagoville North, Soto Jr., Urban Park, Webster, and Wilmer-Hutchins), four campuses at the middle school level (Marsh, Piedmont Global Academy, Seagoville, and Young Men's Leadership), and 10 campuses at the high school level (Conrad, Jefferson, Molina, North Dallas, Samuell, Skyline, South Oak Cliff, Spruce, Sunset, and White).

³ While EL/SPED specialists primarily wrote lesson plans in Spanish, they also provided support for Amharic, Arabic, Burmese, Nepali, and Swahili.

⁴ Specialists provided a newsletter with information about how to support EL/SPED students during at-home learning and highlighted the successes of teachers with EL/SPED students. They also leveraged an iPad pilot program from January 2020 that helped monolingual teachers to communicate with students and provided access to translation services and online resources (e.g., Rosetta Stone and Nearpod). EL/SPED specialists conducted "Coffee Chat and Zoom" meetings every two weeks to help parents and teachers navigate the transition to at-home learning.

⁵ Online professional development included topics related to instructional strategies and writing culturally relevant Individualized Education Programs.

students by grade level gradually increased from prekindergarten (PK; 2%) to Grade 4 (10%) and then gradually decreased to Grade 12 (4%). Student characteristics for EL/SPED students generally were comparable to the SPED and NonEL SPED students with respect to sex (67% male) and comparable to ELs with respect to race/ethnicity (mostly Hispanic). In addition, the highest percentage of district EL/SPED students were enrolled in the Northwest network (24.9%), and the lowest percentage were enrolled at magnet campuses (0.4%).

Overall, the number of ELs in PK to grade 12 has remained relatively stable from 2017-18 to 2019-20. However, the number of EL/SPED, NonEL SPED, and SPED students has increased by at least 12 percent during the past two years. These differences likely reflect an increased awareness and focus on student identification and service provision for students requiring special education services.

What were stakeholder perceptions regarding EL/SPED services and training in 2019-20?

Of the 45 teachers, four CICs, and 19 administrators emailed an invitation to complete the survey, 35 (78%) teachers, three CICs (75%), and five administrators (26%) completed at least part of the survey. Because a small number of CICs and administrators completed the survey, the results for all groups were aggregated in this section.

Prior to at-home learning, most survey respondents reported that they participated in professional development that addressed the needs of EL/SPED students, and they had favorable views regarding the collaboration of the LPAC and ARD committees.

- Seventy-one percent of respondents reported that they participated in professional development that addressed the needs of EL/SPED students.
- Seventy-two percent of survey respondents reported that both BE/ESL teachers and special education teachers at their campuses were moderately or completely aware that qualified EL/SPED students should receive both special education services and BE/ESL services, compared to 65 percent who believed that general education teachers were aware.
- Most respondents also reported that the LPAC and ARD committees collaborated frequently or very frequently (62%), were at least moderately effective at collaborating (80%), and were at least moderately important for student success (80%)

In addition, most (90%) survey respondents reported that they worked with the EL/SPED instructional specialists at least once prior to at-home learning. Other findings included:

- Forty-six percent of respondents reported that they worked with the specialist at least seven times prior to at-home learning.
- Survey respondents most frequently reported that EL/SPED specialists provided resources/materials

(76%), professional development (72%), in-class support (67%), and classroom observation and feedback (61%).

Survey respondent views generally were positive regarding the support from the EL/SPED specialists.

- Seventy-four percent of survey respondents who worked with an EL/SPED specialist rated the support they received as very or extremely helpful.
- The resources/materials provided by EL/SPED specialists was the highest rated support (86%), followed by in-class support (72%), professional development (70%), and classroom observation and feedback (69%).

Survey respondent views also were generally positive regarding the helpfulness (very or extremely helpful) of the professional development opportunities and resources that they received from EL/SPED specialists.

- Both one-on-one professional development (88%) and campus-wide professional development (73%) were rated the most helpful professional development opportunities, followed by PLCs (66%).
- Supplies and resource classroom implementation (84%) and technology resources (e.g., iPads and electronic dictionaries; 74%) were the most helpful resources for impacting student achievement, followed by online resources (e.g., Nearpod, Powerschool, and Ellevation; 70%) and materials created for lesson implementation (68%).

Prior to at-home learning, the majority of survey respondents answered favorably about the effectiveness of the E/LA and social studies curricula to provide differentiated instruction for EL/SPED students.

- Most respondents answered that the curricula differentiated instruction at least to a moderate extent (E/LA: 66%; social studies: 63%) or were at least moderately effective (E/LA: 59%; social studies: 63%).
- However, a relatively high percentage reported that the curricula did not differentiate instruction at least to a moderate extent (E/LA: 34%; social studies: 38%) or were not at least moderately effective (E/LA: 41%; social studies: 38%).

Once the district transitioned to at-home learning, most survey respondents reported that the level of support from EL/SPED specialists and the effectiveness of the LPAC and ARD committees were similar to before at-home learning.

- Most respondents reported that the support from EL/SPED specialists (59%) and the frequency (52%) and effectiveness (61%) of the collaboration between LPAC and ARD committees were about the same or more frequent than before at-home learning.
- However, a relatively high percentage of respondents reported that the support from EL/SPED specialists (41%) and the frequency (49%) and effectiveness (38%) of the collaboration between LPAC and ARD

committees were a little less or a great deal less than before at-home learning.

During at-home learning, survey respondents reported that the most helpful (very or extremely helpful) support that they received from their EL/SPED specialist included:

- online resources (57%),
- professional development (56%),
- Google classroom support (55%), and
- student/parent communication support (54%).

Survey respondents most often reported that technology support and online resources ($n = 10$; 37%) were the most successful supports provided by the EL/SPED specialists during at-home learning. Regarding the challenges that survey respondents faced during at-home learning that required additional support (23 responses), respondents most frequently mentioned that they needed translation services ($n = 5$; 22%) or technology support ($n = 3$; 13%).

What professional development opportunities were provided for campuses about the needs of EL/SPED students?

Professional development was most often conducted on campuses ($n = 9$ sessions), and 91 percent of professional development participants ($N = 663$) reported they were likely to bring the content from the professional development session to their classrooms or campuses, falling short of the 95 percent goal.

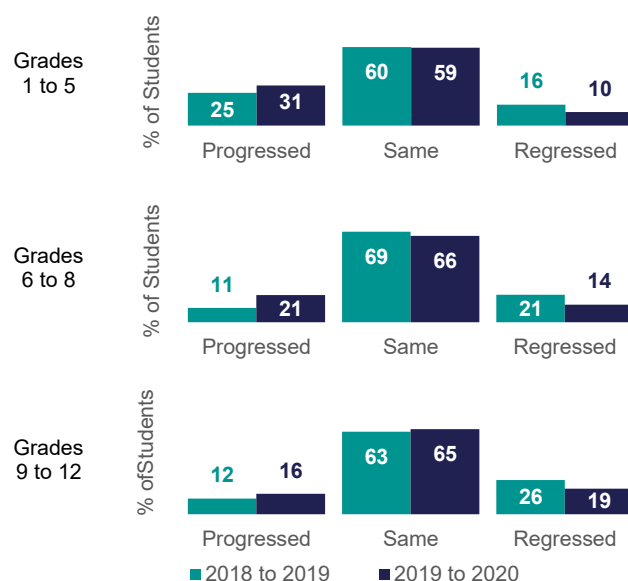
What were the assessment outcomes for EL/SPED students in 2019-20?

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, all of the 2019-20 assessments for EL/SPED students were cancelled except for *Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS)* and *TELPAS-Alternative (TELPAS-ALT)*.^{6,7} The primary achievement-related goal of the EL/SPED program was to achieve a two-percentage point increase over 2018-19 in the rate of EL/SPED students who progressed at least one English proficiency level on *TELPAS* composite ratings from 2019 to 2020.

In 2020, *TELPAS* composite ratings for EL/SPED students at all grade levels tended to cluster in the Intermediate level of English proficiency, with higher rates of students proficient at the Intermediate level in grades 9 to 12 (70%) than those in the lower grades (range: 56% to 62%). 2020 EL/SPED students exceeded the BE/ESL Department goal of a one-year two percentage point increase in the rate of

students who progressed at least one *TELPAS* proficiency level. Progression rate increases ranged from 4 (grades 9 to 12) to 10 (grades 6 to 8) percentage points (Figure 1).

Figure 1: 2018 to 2019 and 2019 to 2020 *TELPAS* Level Movement



Source: District *TELPAS* data files dated 05/24/19 (2019) and 07/19/20 (2020). District PEIMS snapshot demographic data file dated 11/01/19.

Note: 2018 to 2019 Level Movement data obtained from Palladino et al. (2019). Level movement data include students who earned a *TELPAS* proficiency rating in both years. Because of the spring 2020 transition to at-home learning, 2020 *TELPAS* results and trends from previous years for EL/SPED students should be reviewed with caution and are provided for informational purposes only. Progressed = Student moved up at least one level of English proficiency from the previous year. Same = Student remained at the same proficiency level from the previous year. Regressed = Student moved down at least one level of English proficiency from the previous year. Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding.

Overall, 551 EL/SPED students took the *TELPAS-ALT* in 2020. Twenty-four percent of students earned the highest proficiency rating (basic fluency) on the 2020 *TELPAS-ALT* districtwide, with the highest rates in grades 6 to 8 and 9 to 12 (28%) and the lowest rates in grades 2 to 5 (18%). In addition, the percentage of EL/SPED students who earned the highest proficiency rating increased from 19 percent in 2018-19 to 24 percent in 2019-20. Proficiency rating movement patterns were relatively similar across the elementary school, middle school and high school levels for 2020 EL/SPED students, with almost half of students progressing to a higher proficiency level and about a third remaining at the same proficiency level. Forty-six percent of

⁶ Because of the transition to at-home learning and the resulting incomplete testing in all domains required to calculate composite scores for all students, spring 2020 composite *TELPAS* results represented 60.9 percent of EL/SPED test takers, whereas the spring 2020 composite *TELPAS-ALT* results represented 98.4 percent of EL/SPED test takers. Therefore, the 2019-20 results, trends from previous years, and goal attainment for *TELPAS* should be reviewed with caution and are provided for informational purposes only.

⁷ Of students who were assessed on at least one domain, the percentages of test takers on each spring 2020 *TELPAS* domain were as follows: Listening: 94%; Speaking: 94%; Reading: 95.5%; and Writing: 67.5%.

students progressed to a higher proficiency level, with the highest rates in grades 3 to 5 (48%) and the lowest rates in grades 9 to 12 (43%).

How did Dallas ISD EL/SPED students compare to other Texas large urban districts and statewide EL/SPED students on *TELPAS* and *TELPAS-ALT*?

Because of the statewide response to the COVID-19 pandemic in spring 2020, students in Texas completed the *TELPAS* at different rates. Therefore, comparisons of Dallas ISD results to those for other districts and the state are limited and are provided for information only. District rates of EL/SPED students performing at the higher English proficiency levels on the 2020 *TELPAS* were lower than state rates, especially for the older grades. District rates at the higher English proficiency levels on the 2020 *TELPAS* were generally comparable or lower than other large urban Texas districts, especially for the older grades.

District rates of EL/SPED students performing at the higher English proficiency levels on the 2020 *TELPAS-ALT* were generally comparable or lower than state rates, especially for the lower grades. Rates of students in Dallas ISD performing at the higher English proficiency levels on the 2020 *TELPAS-ALT* were generally comparable or lower than other large urban Texas districts.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Continue efforts to increase awareness of EL/SPED identification and policies. While an 18 percent increase in the number of district EL/SPED students since 2017-18 may indicate greater districtwide focus on identifying EL/SPED students, survey respondents reported that general education teachers were least likely to be aware of EL/SPED policies on their campuses compared to BE/ESL teachers and special education teachers. Program leadership should continue efforts to increase districtwide awareness of EL/SPED policies.

Continue using EL/SPED specialists in their current roles. Most survey respondents expressed positive views regarding the professional development opportunities, support, and resources that they received from EL/SPED specialists. Thus, EL/SPED specialists should continue to assist campuses with meeting the needs of EL/SPED students and explore ways to make professional development opportunities more applicable for teachers, administrators, and other campus-based staff members.

Explore ways to improve EL/SPED differentiated ratings for the reading and social studies curricula.

A little over half of survey respondents who used the E/LA and social studies curricula reported that the curricula differentiated instruction to a moderate or great extent and was at least moderately effective at meeting the needs of EL/SPED students. However, a sizeable percentage (range: 34% to 41%) reported that the curriculum did not differentiate instruction at least moderately or was not at least moderately effective. BE/ESL program staff members should explore whether these ratings were affected by misperceptions, lack of training, or if more efforts are needed to further differentiate curricula for EL/SPED students.

Provide additional support for at-home learning. While most respondents reported that the support from EL/SPED specialists and the collaboration between LPAC and ARD committees during at-home learning were similar to prior to the transition, a relatively high percentage reported these supports were less than before at-home learning. Because of the uncertainty regarding the effect of COVID-19 on the upcoming 2020-21 school year, BE/ESL program staff members should evaluate the needs of teachers, CICs, and administrators to determine the additional resources and supports they need to meet the needs of EL/SPED students.

Continue efforts to improve the percentage of EL/SPED students earning the highest English proficiency ratings. While the rates of EL/SPED students who progressed at least one *TELPAS* proficiency level and earned the highest *TELPAS-ALT* proficiency rating increased from 2019 to 2020, district rates of EL/SPED students performing at the higher English proficiency levels on the *TELPAS* and *TELPAS-ALT* were generally comparable or lower than the state and other large urban Texas districts. BE/ESL program staff members should continue their efforts to improve the rates of students progressing at least one level a year to narrow the gap with statewide results at the highest English proficiency levels.

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EA20-620-4

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Dallas Independent School District (ISD) partnered with the Dallas Arboretum Botanical Society (DABS) during the 2018-19 and 2019-20 school years to deliver science instruction through the Jonesville Pathway to Science Education (JPSE) program at nine elementary schools in the Bryan Adams feeder pattern (the feeder pattern nearest the arboretum) and one elementary school in the Woodrow Wilson feeder pattern.¹ Like the previous year, the Arboretum intended to deliver four lessons and a field trip to the Rory Meyers Children's Adventure Garden (CG) to every grade three, four, and five student at participating campuses.² However, in 2019-20, the number of lessons and field trip opportunities was limited because of the Dallas ISD transition to at-home learning following Spring Break in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.³

Each lesson lasted approximately 50 minutes and was conducted by an educator from the Arboretum working with the classroom teacher. Each lesson topic and the relevant Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS)⁴ are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: 2019-20 JPSE Lesson Topics and TEKS by Grade Level

Lesson	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
One	Traveling Seeds 3.5(A)	Matter Over Time 4.5(A)	Landform Formation 5.7(B)
Two	Energy in the Garden 3.6(A)	Pickle Powered 4.6(A)	Exploring Day and Night 5.8(C)
Three	Rapid Changes 3.7(B)	Ecosystems in Action 4.9(B)	Eco Flow 5.9(A)
Four	Models: Sun, Earth, & Moon 3.8(C)	No Lessons Delivered	No Lessons Delivered

Source: DABS on 04/07/20.

Note: The Arboretum did not deliver any lessons after 03/12/20 because of the district transition to at-home learning in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The JPSE was initially funded for the 2018-19 school year through a \$100,000 grant from the Jonesville Foundation and supplemented with a \$50,000 grant from the Sammons Corporation. The program funding for the 2019-20 school year consisted of the same amounts and sources.

PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION

The purpose of this evaluation was to report the characteristics of students at campuses served by the JPSE program, report student participation, and examine the science-related academic achievements of students who received JPSE instruction.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS/OUTCOMES

What were the characteristics of students at participating campuses and at other district campuses?

Methodology

The evaluator summarized data from the district Public Education Information Data Management System (PEIMS) student demographic file (dated October 28, 2019) for grade-three, grade-four, and grade-five students at participating campuses and at other district elementary school campuses.

Results

Students at JPSE campuses were more likely to be Hispanic and less likely to be African American than other Dallas ISD students in the same grades (Table 2). A smaller proportion of students at JPSE campuses were economically disadvantaged (81.2%) than other district students (86.5%). The percentages of JPSE students with other characteristics were similar to the percentages for other district students.

¹ Participating schools included Bayles Elementary School, Casa View Elementary School, Charles A. Gill Elementary School, Victor H. Hexter Elementary School, Edwin J. Kiest Elementary School, Mount Auburn STEAM Academy, Martha Turner Reilly Elementary School, Reinhardt Elementary School, Alex Sanger Preparatory School, and Larry G. Smith Elementary School.

² All students received four free passes to visit the garden with family.

³ At-home learning began March 23, 2020 and continued through the remainder of the spring semester.

⁴ Descriptions of all science TEKS can be found at <https://tea.texas.gov/curriculum/teks/>.

Table 2: 2019-20 Characteristics of Students at JPSE Campuses and Other District Students

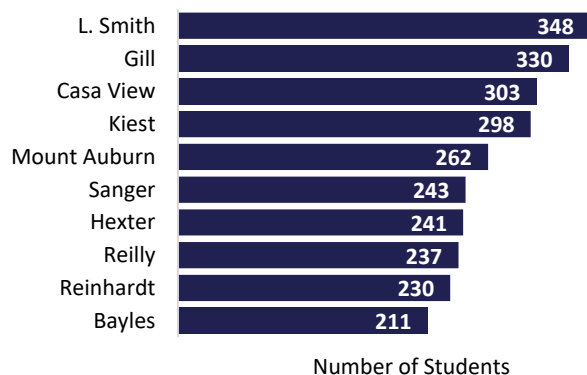
	JPSE Students (N = 2,613)		Other District Students (N = 31,860)	
	n	%	N	%
Race/Ethnicity				
Asian	21	0.8	306	1.0
African American	335	12.8	6,939	21.8
Hispanic/Latino	2,012	77.0	22,368	70.2
Native American	4	0.2	56	0.2
Hawaiian/PI	0	0.0	10	<0.1
Two or More Races	47	1.8	593	1.9
White	194	7.4	1,588	5.0
Sex				
Female	1,246	47.7	15,565	48.9
Male	1,367	52.3	16,295	51.1
Special Student Populations				
Eco Dis	2,122	81.2	27,564	86.5
EL	1,376	52.7	16,394	51.5
TAG	412	15.8	6,018	18.9
SPED	270	10.3	3,766	11.8

Source: District PEIMS demographic file dated 10/28/19.

Note: PI = Pacific Islander. Eco Dis = economically disadvantaged. EL = English learner. TAG = talented and gifted. SPED = special education. Totals may not sum to 100 percent because of rounding.

Students could enroll at JPSE campuses and begin participating in JPSE lessons at any time during the school year. Overall, 2,703 students participated in at least one JPSE lesson or field trip. Participation ranged from 211 students at Bayles Elementary to 348 students at Larry Smith Elementary (Figure 1).

Figure 1: 2019-20 Number of Students Receiving JPSE Instruction by Campus (N = 2,703)



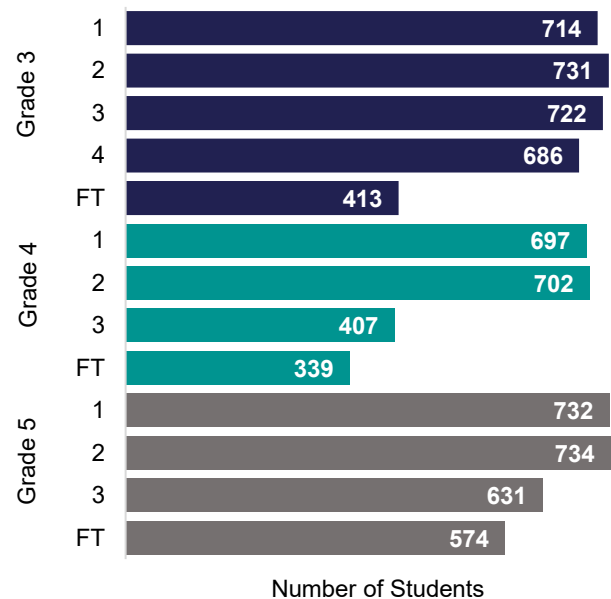
Source: DABS on 04/01/20.

Note: Includes students with valid identification numbers who participated in at least one lesson or field trip.

The number of students who participated in each JPSE lesson or attended a field trip by grade level is presented in Figure 2 and ranged from 339 students in the grade four field trip to 734 students in lesson two for grade five (Exploring Day and Night). As a result of district transition to at-home learning because of the COVID-19 pandemic, not all grades received all planned lessons or the field trip. The

Arboretum delivered all four lessons to all grade three classes; four of the ten campuses did not receive grade three field trips. Students in grades four and five received at least two lessons, but some students received more. At grade four, seven campuses received three lessons and six campuses took field trips to the CG. At grade five, nine campuses received three lessons and seven campuses took field trips. No grade-four or grade-five students received all four lessons.

Figure 2: 2019-20 Number of Students Receiving JPSE Instruction by Grade Level (N = 2,703)



Source: DABS on 04/01/20.

Note: Includes students with valid student identification numbers who participated in at least one lesson or field trip. FT = field trip.

Over 27 percent of grade-three students ($n = 901$) participated in all five JPSE instructional events (four lessons and a field trip; Table 3). Some campuses received three lessons for grade-four and grade-five students; few received all four lessons.

Table 3: 2019-20 Cumulative Grade-Level JPSE Instruction Received by Students

Cumulative Instruction*	Grade 3		Grade 4		Grade 5	
	n	%	N	%	n	%
One	86	9.5	148	17.4	139	14.6
Two	69	7.7	264	31.1	160	16.8
Three	189	21.0	279	32.9	404	42.4
Four	310	34.4	158	18.6	250	26.2
Five	247	27.4	0	0.0	0	0.0
Total	901	100.0	849	100.0	953	100.0

Source: DABS on 04/01/20.

Note: Includes students with valid identification numbers. *Cumulative instruction includes JPSE classroom lessons and CG field trip attendance. Thus, students could have attended up to five events (four lessons and one field trip). Some opportunities became unavailable due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the district's transition to at-home learning after Spring Break.

What were the academic achievement outcomes of participating students?

Methodology

Pre- and Post-Lesson Assessments

Arboretum staff members developed a pre- and post-lesson assessment for each lesson. Each assessment consisted of three multiple choice questions, was administered online or on paper, and was available in English and Spanish. The questions and answer choices were re-ordered on the post-test. Because of the district's transition to at-home learning after Spring Break in response to COVID-19, classes did not receive all four lessons across all grade levels as originally planned. Grade four and grade five classes received two lessons at all campuses and could have answered six pre-lesson and post-lesson assessment questions. Grade three classes received all four lessons and could have answered 12 pre-lesson assessment questions and 12 post-lesson assessment questions. For students who completed all questions for each available pre- and post-test, the evaluator used a repeated-measures *t* test (statistical significance) and calculated Cohen's *d* (practical significance) at each grade level to compare the average number of correct answers on the pre-lesson assessments to the average number of correct answers on the post-lesson assessments.

Formal Science Assessments

The evaluator used propensity score matching (PSM) to match grade-five students who participated in the first JPSE lesson during fall 2019 with a comparison group of district students who did not receive JPSE instruction.⁵ The evaluator included the following covariates to determine comparison students: 2018-19 attendance, spring 2019 *State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness* (STAAR) performance on the reading and mathematics subtests, 2019-20 attendance for semester one, race, sex, English learner status, socio-economic status, special education status, talented and gifted participation, and whether retained the previous school year. The evaluator then used *chi-square* analyses (statistical significance) and Cramer's *V* (practical significance) to compare passing rates for students who received JPSE instruction to comparison students on the fall 2019 Science ACP. The evaluator also calculated the likelihood that JPSE students would answer all items addressing the grade five TEKS standard on landform formation correctly compared to matched students.⁶

The evaluator intended to include comparisons of the rates of JPSE students and comparison group students who met

the Approaches Grade Level or Above, Meets Grade Level or Above, and Masters Grade Level performance standards on the spring 2020 STAAR science subtest. However, the state canceled spring 2020 STAAR in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.⁷

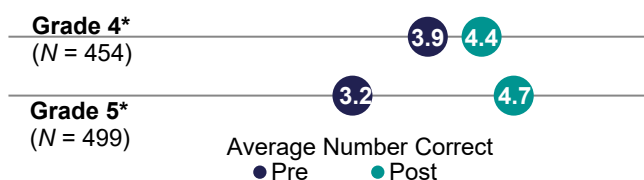
Results

Pre- and Post-Lesson Assessments

Grade-three students at all campuses received four JPSE lessons. These students averaged 1.9 more correct answers on all 12 post-test questions than on pre-test questions (7.7 vs 9.6), $t(260) = 16.11, p < .01$. This gain was practically significant ($d = 1.00$).⁸ Grade three students answered, on average, 1.7 more correct answers on post-tests than on pre-tests during the previous school year (2018-19).

As shown in Figure 3, students in grades four and five answered significantly more post-test than pre-test questions correctly. Grade-five student performance increased the most strongly of the grade levels by answering an average of 1.5 more questions correctly on post-tests than on pre-tests through two lessons, $t(498) = 25.08, p < .01$. Grade four average student gain from pre- to post-test was 0.5 more correct answers, $t(453) = 6.92, p < .01$. These gains were practically significant at both grade levels though weaker at grade four (grade four: $d = 0.32$; grade five: $d = 1.12$). JPSE students showed positive gains during the 2018-19 school year through four lessons (Mickelson, 2019).

Figure 3: 2019-20 Pre- and Post-Lesson Assessment Results for JPSE Students through Two Lessons



Source: DABS on 04/01/20.

Note: Includes students who completed all six pre- and six post-lesson assessment. * = Indicates statistically significant difference, $p < .01$.

Formal Science Assessments

During the 2018-19 school year, significantly higher percentages of grade-five JPSE students than matched-comparison students passed the fall 2019 science ACP, met the Approaches Grade Level or Above standard on STAAR science subtest, and met the Meets Grade Level or Above standard on the STAAR science subtest

⁵ The first lesson was delivered to grade-five students at all campuses before the fall 2019 *Assessment of Course Performance* (ACP) administration. Other lessons were to be delivered during the spring 2020 semester. Students at five campuses also attended a field trip to the CG before the fall 2019 ACP administration.

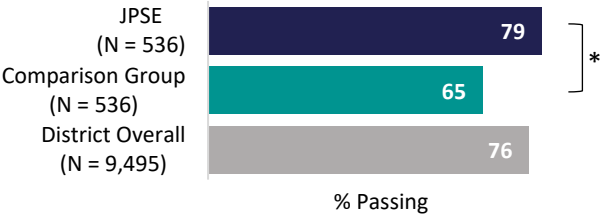
⁶ Students were expected to recognize how landforms such as deltas, canyons, and sand dunes are the result of changes to the Earth's surface by wind, water, or ice (Texas Education Agency, 2019).

⁷ <https://tea.texas.gov/about-tea/news-and-multimedia/correspondence/taa-letters/cancellation-of-staar-testing-for-the-remainder-of-the-school-year>

⁸ Cohen's *d* values of .20, .50, and .80 are considered small, medium, and large, respectively (Cohen, 1988).

(Mickelson, 2019). While the *STAAR* was not administered during the 2019-20 school year, the results for JPSE students continued to be positive on the fall science *ACP*. JPSE grade-five students passed the fall science *ACP* at a significantly higher rate than matched-comparison students, $\chi^2 = 23.29, p < .01$ (Figure 4). The practical effect was small (Cramer's $V = .15$).⁹ Prior to taking the *ACP*, JPSE students received a lesson on landform formation. JPSE students were 1.8 times more likely than comparison students to correctly answer all *ACP* items that addressed the *TEKS* standards on landform formation ($\chi^2 = 15.08, p < .01$). The practical effect was small (Cramer's $V = .12$).

Figure 4: 2019 Fall Grade Five Science ACP Results



Source: DABS on 04/01/20.

Note: Includes students who participated in the first lesson.

* = Indicates statistically significant difference, $p < .01$. District rates are shown for informational purposes only.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Continue to provide science lessons and field trips to Dallas ISD students. Grade-five students who received JPSE instruction significantly outperformed matched-comparison students on the fall 2018 and fall 2019 science *ACPs*. Additionally, JPSE students were 1.8 times more likely than comparison students to correctly answer all fall 2019 assessment items related to landform formation.

Consider recording pre- and post-lesson assessment and field trip participation data in one spreadsheet. Because data from each lesson assessment was included on separate spreadsheets, assessing cumulative instruction and field trip participation meant matching up to five spreadsheets (four post-lesson assessments and field trip participation). Any incorrect or missing student data on a spreadsheet meant a student would not be credited with participation. This led to undercounting student participation in the JPSE program.

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EA20-624-4

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⁹ Cramer's V values of .10, .30, and .50 are considered small, medium, and large, respectively (Cohen, 1988).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report was to provide context and process evaluation information related to three federally funded Dallas Independent School District (Dallas ISD) Human Capital Management (HCM) workscopes: Teacher Residency Program, Teacher Recruitment and Retention, and Dallas ISD Alternative Certification program. The Teacher Residency program was funded through Title I, Part A at \$2,504,649. The amount of Title II, Part A funding the district budgeted for Teacher Recruitment and Retention in 2019-20 was \$1,822,147, an increase of \$128,157 from 2018-19's budget of \$1,693,990 (Watson, 2019). Alternative Certification was budgeted \$794,774 of Title II funding in 2019-20. This figure was unchanged from 2018-19 (Watson, 2019).

The focus of the 2019-20 evaluation was to determine the level of implementation of the grant-funded programs and to examine participant perceptions of the programs, as applicable. Data for this report were obtained from interviews with program staff members assigned to each grant component, a review of internal documents, and analyses of available survey data.

On March 13, 2020, in alignment with federal recommendations, the Governor of Texas issued a disaster proclamation certifying that the COVID-19 pandemic posed an imminent threat of disaster for all counties in the state of Texas. On March 19, 2020, all schools in the state were temporarily closed to slow the spread of the pandemic. Dallas ISD transitioned to at-home learning on March 23, 2020 following spring break and continued to the end of the school year. Since district employees worked remotely during this time, central office departments also transitioned to remote hiring and training practices.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS/OUTCOMES

How was the Teacher Residency program implemented?

Context of the Program

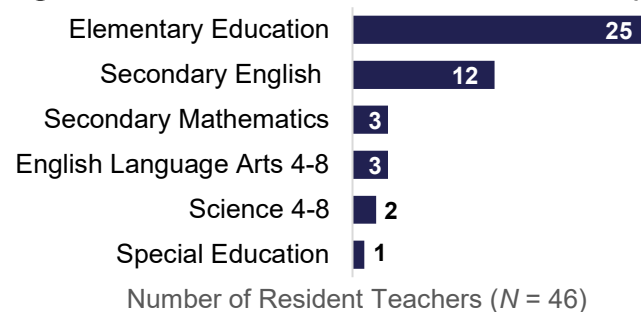
The primary purpose of the Teacher Residency Program was to increase student achievement by improving teacher and student support at campuses with the highest need. Resident Teachers provided a range of services to schools and students by providing co-teaching assistance, small group instruction, substitute teaching, help with formative assessments and diagnosis of student needs, along with support for classroom management.

Throughout the school year, a consistent need exists in Dallas ISD for certified teachers in critical shortage areas, especially at high needs campuses. Specifically, vacancies are highest in the areas of elementary bilingual, secondary math and science, and special education and English as a second language (ESL) at all levels. More pipelines are needed to help address this need and bring more teachers into the district. Resident Teachers are hired from Urban Teachers and Dallas Teacher Residency and serve in co-teaching roles in classrooms on high-needs campuses until they graduate and become full-time teachers of record. The goal is for resident teachers to complete all training on one campus so that they can transition into a teacher role at the same campus where they were trained. The hope is that this will help improve student outcomes because they are trained to meet the needs of their assigned campuses.

2019-20 Resident Teachers

By August 2019, HCM hired 46 resident teachers to serve in critical shortage roles (bilingual, math, science, Special Education, and ESL) (Figure 1). The departmental goal was to transition 90 percent of resident teachers into full-time teaching roles in high-needs campuses by August of 2020.

Figure 1: 2019-20 Number of Resident Teachers by Role



Source: Human Capital Management internal records retrieved 03/06/20.

Of the 2018-19 resident teacher cohort ($n = 27$), 89 percent ($n = 24$) were hired for the 2019-20 school year as full-time teachers of record in Dallas ISD. The departmental goal was 90 percent.

Response to Impact of COVID-19

During at-home learning, resident teachers continued to support campuses' implementation of at home learning. Teacher training activities and meetings continued as planned through virtual learning platforms.

How was the Teacher Recruitment and Retention program implemented?

Recruitment

HCM staff members were responsible for recruiting and screening highly qualified teachers to meet the state certification and federal legislative requirements. HCM's Campus Staffing Team routinely recorded resignations in Oracle, which notified HCM's Talent Acquisition Team¹ of openings that needed to be filled. The Talent Acquisition Team was responsible for using the information to connect candidates with campus principals.

HCM staff members attended 66 recruitment events and visits between September 2019 and May 2020 (69 during the 2018-19 year, both in-person and virtual) (Watson, 2019), including student teacher events, university job fairs, the Texas Association for Bilingual Educators (TABE) Conference, Texas Alliance of Black School Educators (TABSE) Conference, National Association for Bilingual Education (NABE), and national recruitment visits to Oklahoma, Georgia, and Puerto Rico. Beginning March 25, 2020 the department participated in 18 virtual job fairs after the district closure.

The department continued an initiative expanding the use of early contracts to attract and retain the most qualified candidates. As of May 1, 2020, HCM had issued 147 early contracts to applicants for 2020-21 teaching positions.

Screening and Hiring

The hiring process consisted of two components. The first component was the application process, which took place prior to a principal recommendation. The second component of the hiring process was the hiring and onboarding occurring after principal recommendation. The Campus Staffing Team managed the hiring process, ensuring that all candidates met district and state policies. As of May 2020, HCM employees hired 1,760 new teachers.² The total number of new 2018-19 hires as of May 2019 was 1,936 (Watson, 2019).

To recruit and retain international talent for critical-needs areas, in 2019-20, the district processed 293 new H1-B visas in addition to extending existing visas. HCM offered a permanent residence process, known as "PERM," to help teachers qualify to begin the permanent residence process and potentially provide sponsorship.³ HCM accepted 31 candidates to PERM in 2019-20, joining the 31 candidates added in 2018-19 for a total of 62 in the program.

¹ HCM's Talent Acquisition Team consisted of one student teacher coordinator, one data coordinator, seven recruitment coordinators, and the Talent Team Leader. Recruitment coordinators were primarily responsible for specific recruitment activities, such as marketing or special events.

² The data were collected in May 2020. This number only includes teachers new to the district. That is, it does not include internal transfers, in which a teacher moved from one campus to fill a vacancy at another campus.

For a sixth year, HCM partnered with the TechTeach Program, a Texas Tech University initiative⁴ that requires students to student-teach a full year, rather than a semester, before graduating. TechTeach participants student-teach four days a week and, then come together at a central Dallas facility to take classes together as a cohort for the remaining weekday each week. Many courses are online, supplementing the in-person classes⁵ led by Texas Tech faculty; this allows students to simultaneously complete courses and student-teach throughout the year. Dallas ISD's partnership enables TechTeach participants in the Dallas Fort Worth (DFW) area to student-teach in Dallas ISD. Many participants are bilingual candidates, creating a beneficial pipeline for one of the district's greatest needs. Currently, 32 district teachers were TechTeach alumni.

Response to Impact of COVID-19

The Teacher Recruitment and Retention team continued to increase the applicant pool and provide principals with highly effective teachers by attending and creating virtual events. From holding virtual job fairs to facilitate principals interviewing applicants to holding virtual interviews, HCM maintained this crucial function to ensure preparedness for the 2020-21 school year despite working remotely from March and into the summer.

How was the Dallas ISD Alternative Certification program implemented?

Context of the Program

The purpose of the Dallas ISD Alternative Certification program is to prepare and certify new teachers who have not completed traditional teacher certification. The program provides support and training to new teacher interns. Title II funds were used to supplement the recruitment, screening, and training efforts of the program. Intern candidate applications were first screened for program eligibility. If eligible, candidates were granted a phone interview. Upon passing the phone interview, candidates were invited to an on-site interview, which included a group interview and a one-on-one interview with an Alternative Certification staff member. The final pool attended a seven-week pre-service training program prior to program acceptance.

During the pre-service program, Alternative Certification staff members trained on teaching techniques and best practices; interns received field experience in classrooms. A new policy required interns to pass a content examination in the certification area before teaching in the program.

³ To qualify, teachers must have a standard Texas teacher certification, at least two years of teaching experience in Dallas ISD, and be rated Proficient I or higher under the Teacher Excellence Initiative (TEI). Once selected, the district continued to pursue the teacher's permanent residence process if legal avenues were available.

⁴ More information about the TechTeach Program can be found in this Texas Tech article: <http://today.ttu.edu/2013/10/innovative-techteach-program-aims-to-better-prepare-teaching-candidates>.

⁵ In-person classes shifted to virtual instruction in March 2020.

After pre-service training, interns were assigned to a campus, a mentor, and a teacher effectiveness coordinator. Mentor teachers were required to observe and provide continual feedback. Teacher effectiveness coordinators observed interns at least three times. During observations, coordinators provided support and immediate feedback to allow interns to monitor progress and adjust performance.

Interns were fully certified as teachers after passing the *Assessment of Classroom Effectiveness (ACE)* and committee approval. The committee reviewed principal and mentor teacher recommendations and decided whether an intern should become certified, stay in the program for one more year, or be denied certification.

2019-20 Alternative Certification Interns

A total of 131 interns enrolled in the Alternative Certification program between summer 2019 and spring 2020 (see Table 1). For comparison, 93 interns enrolled between summer 2018 and spring 2019 (Watson, 2019).

Table 1: 2019-20 Enrolled Interns by Certification Area

Certification Area	Interns N
Art Early Childhood-12	7
Bilingual Core Subjects Early Childhood-6	3
Core Subjects 4-8	1
Core Subjects Early Childhood-6 & Science of Teaching Reading	15
Core Subjects Early Childhood-6	19
Core Subjects Early Childhood-6 with English as a Second Language	11
Core Subjects Early Childhood-6 with English as a Second Language/Special Education	1
Core Subjects Early Childhood-6 with Special Education	2
Core Subjects Early Childhood-6/Special Education & Science of Teaching Reading	5
Core Subjects Early Childhood-6/Bilingual & Science of Teaching Reading	11
Core Subjects Early Childhood-6/English as a Second Language & Science of Teaching Reading	3
Core Subjects Early Childhood-6/English as a Second Language & Science of Teaching Reading	3
English Language Arts and Reading 7-12 with English as a Second Language	15
Languages Other Than English: Spanish	3
Math 7-12	5
Music Early Childhood-12	2
Physical Education Early Childhood-12	5
Science 7-12	6
Social Studies 7-12	17
Total	131

Source: Alternative Certification internal records retrieved 05/19/20.

Of those who completed the Alternative Certification program in 2018-19, 82 percent ($n = 76$) continued to teach in Dallas ISD during the 2019-20 school year. As for those who completed the program in 2017-18, 67 percent ($n = 92$) continued to teach in Dallas ISD during the 2018-19 school year. Of those who finished in 2016-17, 84 percent ($n = 113$) continued to teach during the 2017-18 school year.

Response to Impact of COVID-19

All regularly scheduled meetings transitioned to Microsoft Teams Platform. AC staff meetings, field facilitator meetings, and teacher quality training meetings continued with no gap after spring break. Likewise, recruiting efforts went on as planned in exclusively online formats.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the key findings, along with the transition to remote work, the following recommendations are offered for stakeholders.

Consider soliciting teacher feedback. As district departments shifted to a remote work model during the spring and summer, teachers, candidates, and interns were asked to adjust to rapidly changing practices and policies. The departments should consider seeking feedback via survey from stakeholders for guidance about what worked well and what could be improved in the implementation of remote work.

Continue utilizing remote work tools to supplement recruitment and training efforts. Once the threat of COVID-19 eventually passes, all departments will resume functioning in their usual way. Departments should examine which practices that arose out of necessity during the remote work era should be permanently implemented due to their increased efficiency, cost effectiveness, or other benefits.

Determine whether teachers hired through alternative certification programs are successful. As more Dallas ISD teachers are being hired through alternative certification programs, it will be important to ascertain that the programs are producing high-quality teachers.

REFERENCE

Watson, C. E. (2019). 2018-19 Evaluation of Title II Programs. Dallas, TX. Dallas Independent School District.

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For more information, please contact Program Evaluation at evaluation@dallasisd.org.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Dallas Independent School District (ISD) allocated grant funds to the District Wide Curriculum Enhancement project to provide teachers with physical and digital curriculum resources, assist with lesson planning and implementation, and provide personal support through grant-funded specialist positions.

The purpose of the Dallas ISD Curriculum Enhancement project evaluation was to provide context and implementation data so that program managers could assess the implementation of grant components and perceptions of staff that participated in grant-funded activities. Data for this report were obtained from interviews with the program staff, a review of internal documents, and analyses of available survey data.

On March 13, 2020, in alignment with federal recommendations, the Governor of Texas issued a disaster proclamation certifying that the novel coronavirus COVID-19 posed an imminent threat of disaster for all counties in the state of Texas. On March 19, 2020, all schools in the state were temporarily closed to slow the spread of the pandemic. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Dallas ISD transitioned students to at-home learning from March 23, 2020 (following spring break) to the end of the school year. As a result, the curriculum units planned for the fifth and sixth six-weeks were significantly modified.

The 2019-20 Language, Literacy, and Social Studies Curriculum Enhancement project was funded through Title I, Part A at \$1,438,532. The budget included \$438,382 for the Language, Literacy, and Social Studies Manager; Curriculum Coordinator; Curriculum Specialist; and three other specialist positions. Other funding was used to cover supplemental pay to curriculum writers, supplies and materials, and employee travel. In 2018-19, district Curriculum Design Programs were funded through Title I, Part A at \$1,271,730 (Watson, 2019).

EVALUATION QUESTIONS/OUTCOMES

How was the Dallas ISD Curriculum Enhancement Project implemented?

A districtwide curriculum was created during the 2018-19 school year for designated courses in both Reading

Language Arts, Dual Language, English as a Second Language and Social Studies. The district designed and published a supplemental kindergarten through grade 12 Reading Language Arts and Social Studies curriculum package to create greater cohesion in planning daily instruction for teachers. The curriculum is housed on a digital platform, PowerSchool Learning¹, and includes key components essential to instructional design as included in the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) Resource System². The new curriculum's implementation was supported through professional learning communities (PLCs) and ongoing teacher observations and coaching. The curriculum package was rolled out incrementally, with two six-week instructional periods of content released at a time. The first two six-weeks' units were available in August 2018, and the remaining four six-weeks' units were available in December of 2018. The district hired teams of teacher writers who authored the curriculum content, which was then vetted by Teaching and Learning staff members in collaboration with campus representatives.

A feedback survey was completed on an ongoing basis through the 2018-19 school year. These data indicated that the district curriculum needed to be updated to represent the new TEKS and Instructional Materials released in 2019-20 as well as refined to enhance the experience of the user. Changes to previously created curricula were guided by end user feedback included in the departmental needs assessment, along with curriculum user feedback in the form of surveys and interviews with teachers and campus administrators. The focus for the 2019-20 school year was on the continuous improvement of the curriculum units.

Due to safety concerns surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic, in addition to shifting to at-home learning, district departments worked remotely after spring break through the end of the school year. As a result, PowerSchool Learning use was greatly reduced. At-home learning lessons were simplified for parent use, comparable to a novice teaching level. Due to the shift to remote work, the responsibilities of curriculum writers changed little for the 2020-21 school year. Teachers were hired as consultants to assess curriculum improvements and test and troubleshoot existing units. Since much of the work of writing is easily completed online, the cancelation of in-person curriculum writing for the

¹PowerSchool Learning is a cloud-based digital learning management system for teachers and students. Teacher level accounts in PowerSchool Learning may belong to teachers or other professional staff who require access to the curriculum units.

²The TEKS Resource System is a comprehensive curriculum management system developed by Texas Curriculum Management Program Cooperative (TCMPC) and a team of content experts. Its focus is to provide districts and teachers tightly aligned high quality curriculum documents based on the state mandated TEKS.

summer is not expected to negatively impact the quality or timeliness of the 2020-21 curriculum.

How were professional learning opportunities implemented?

The Language and Literacy and Social Studies departments provided school-based and districtwide curriculum training to teachers, instructional coaches, and academic facilitators. In addition, staff members conducted classroom walk-throughs to support implementation of content learned in the professional development sessions and facilitated PLCs to build teacher capacity at the school and feeder pattern level. Between June 2019 and March 2020, Language and Literacy and Social Studies staff members conducted a total of 588 training sessions, serving 6,684 total participants (Table 1).

Table 1: 2019-20 Language and Literacy and Social Studies District Curriculum Professional Development Session Attendance

Date	Sessions N	Participants N
World Languages	62	583
Social Studies	159	699
Multi-Tiered Systems of Support	77	2,062
Reading Language Arts	290	3,340
Total	588	6,684

Source: Language and Literacy department internal documents dated 01/15/20.

Note: Some participants attended multiple sessions.

Due to inconsistent sharing of the professional development feedback survey with session participants, data collected were insufficient for meaningful analysis.

What were teacher perceptions of the district curriculum?

Curriculum Feedback Survey

On the curriculum feedback survey, results were positive, with most respondents reporting that they found the units and their components useful. Overall satisfaction ratings were reported on a scale from one through four, with one being "Not Useful" and four being "Very Useful." Because the district transitioned to at home learning after spring break, the planned curriculum for the fifth and sixth six-weeks was significantly modified. The evaluator suspended the feedback survey at the end of the fourth six-weeks. For units one through four, a total of 1,926 teacher responses were collected.

Kindergarten through grade two Reading Language Arts and Social Studies teachers rated the Reading Block component of the units the highest (3.3 out of 4.0, $n = 622$) overall. For grades three through eight, Reading Language

Arts teachers rated the Unit Outlines highest (2.9, $n = 386$), while Social Studies teachers rated the Guiding to Consensus Questions and TEKS Aligned Questions the highest (2.9, $n = 62$) overall.

Teachers shared valuable insights through open-ended items on which parts of the curriculum were most useful, suggested improvements, and which parts of the curriculum they felt benefited students most. Additionally, teachers reported the aspects of their teaching practice in which they felt they needed support or help from the Language and Literacy Department. Overall, teachers who responded to these items most appreciated instructional planning calendars, wanted to see improvements in alignment to standardized tests, and requested help with lesson pacing and lesson planning.

Reading Language Arts teachers reported that anchor charts³, the presentation of old and new TEKS side by side, and unit exemplars were helpful for consistency, and especially as support for newer teachers. The most frequently suggested improvements to the Reading Language Arts curriculum included an improved alignment of the curriculum to the *State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR)*, more videos and visual resources, and improved organization of the site. Teachers reported that students benefitted most from comprehension and character contrasting activities. Teachers reported that they needed help with lesson pacing and needed more Spanish language resources.

Social Studies teachers reported that unit outlines, instructional planning calendars, and example *Assessment of Course Performance (ACP)* questions were the most helpful resources. The most frequently suggested improvements were improved alignment to *STAAR*, improved organization of the site, more resources, and more student activities. Teachers also requested the ability to send worksheets to students through Google Classroom. Teachers reported that students benefitted the most from learning about cultures and their impact on current life, colonization, slavery, and race relations. Teachers reported the need for help with lesson pacing and lesson planning.

Curriculum Usage Survey

PowerSchool Learning system usage statistics showed 51,089 unique visitors with teacher accounts between June 1, 2019 and May 29, 2020. Teachers visited the online system a total of 1,204,376 times, spending a total of 103,084 hours on the online system.

In order to explore the reasons why some teachers were not taking full advantage of the curriculum resources available on PowerSchool Learning, the evaluator invited 3,611 teachers with below average total minutes of system usage for the school year to participate in the survey. The overall

³ Anchor charts are created during the instruction of the lesson. As the teacher models the lesson or strategy, the lesson reinforcement or strategy tool is written on chart paper. Once the lesson is complete, the chart is

placed in a convenient student-friendly location that the students can access it independently. This is another vehicle for academic support, especially for the visual learner.

mean total minutes was 215 per teacher. Teachers invited had total system usage of 214.8 minutes or fewer. Questions explored barriers to PowerSchool Learning system usage, training on the district curriculum, and resources available on PowerSchool Learning, including: instructional planning calendars and recommended texts, high leverage tasks (HLT) and “Engage, Explore, Explain, Elaborate, and Evaluate” (5E) model tasks.

A total of 340 invitees responded (out of 3,498 invited, or a 9.5% response rate). Of the 340 respondents, 10 indicated that they were not teachers and had been misclassified in PowerSchool Learning. Of the remaining 330 respondents, 142 indicated that they were specials (e.g. art, music, physical education) or other non-core subject area ⁴ teachers (43.4%). Therefore, the following results are based on responses of the remaining 188 teachers.

A total of 167 teachers responded to the survey item asking why they had not used the curriculum more. The most frequent responses included, “I haven’t had adequate training to use it” (*n* = 38), “The curriculum materials I already have include everything that I need” (*n* = 38), “The layout of the curriculum content is difficult to navigate” (*n* = 37), and “Other” (*n* = 37). Of the 37 teachers who selected “other,” nearly all (*n* = 35) indicated a lack of specialized materials for their specific course or campus type (Advanced Placement, or AP, courses; Special Education; ACE ⁵ curriculum; or Pre-Kindergarten materials) as a barrier.

When asked about training, a total of 104 out of the 166 teachers who responded to the item stated that they had received training on the curriculum (63%). However, while 79.9 percent (*n* = 83) “agreed” or “strongly agreed” that they received adequate training on how to access or log in to the

curriculum, 58.7 percent (*n* = 61) “agreed” or “strongly agreed” that they had received adequate training on how to use the curriculum to plan lessons.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the key findings, the following recommendations are offered for stakeholders.

Improve methods for collecting feedback on professional development and training. Teacher feedback from both the curriculum feedback and usage surveys revealed issues with training on the system’s use. Post training feedback surveys administered were not distributed to all who were trained this year, leaving major holes in the current knowledge of training practices.

Consider updating the layout of the PowerSchool Learning curriculum materials. Feedback from teachers indicated that the current site layout may lead to confusion for users. A redesign with emphasis on ease of navigation and streamlining resources by lesson may improve the user experience.

Continue seeking continuous direct feedback and partnership with classroom teachers. Communication with teachers will be the most productive way to improve the PowerSchool Learning System curriculum and ultimately have the biggest impact on student success.

REFERENCE

Watson, C. E. (2019). 2018-19 Evaluation of Title I Curriculum Design, Resources, and Specialists Program. Dallas, TX. Dallas Independent School District.

EA20-627-4

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⁴ Core subject areas include Reading Language Arts, Social Studies, Mathematics, and Science.
⁵ The Dallas ISD Accelerating Campus Excellence (ACE) initiative incentivizes top teachers and principals to voluntarily work at the district’s

highest-need schools, ensuring the best educators are in classrooms where they are needed the most. ACE schools combine effective instruction, additional learning time, and social and academic skill-building for continuous improvement.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2018-19, the Dallas Independent School District (ISD) began to implement the Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) framework to help students succeed in school. MTSS is a widely used framework for early identification of students who are struggling in the areas of academics, language, and/or engagement. MTSS support for these students is provided in a tiered manner. All general education students automatically receive Tier 1 support through core instruction. Students who are not performing as desired in Tier 1 receive greater support through Tier 2 interventions, while a smaller number of students who do not succeed in Tier 2 receive the most intensive level of support in Tier 3. Students who continue to struggle in Tier 3 may receive referrals for services outside MTSS.

In 2019-20, the second year the MTSS framework was implemented in Dallas ISD, the district began to use the *Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) Reading* and *Mathematics Growth* assessments as universal screeners. The intent was to administer the *MAP* assessments three times during the school year to students in grades two to nine to strengthen Tier 1 instruction and to help identify students in need of Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions. Specific interventions provided to each student were aligned with individual *MAP Growth* data. Progress monitoring was used to evaluate student progress and to inform Student Support Team (SST) decisions about whether to shift the student among tiers.

The purpose of this report was to examine the scope and reach of MTSS-related training in the Dallas ISD during 2019-20, and to describe MTSS implementation within the district. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the district transitioned to at-home learning after spring break beginning on March 23, 2020. This transition impacted the MTSS program with respect to training, implementation, and assessment, as noted in sections of this summary.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS/OUTCOMES

How were MTSS operations in the Dallas ISD funded in 2019-20?

The 2019-20 budget for the MTSS program totaled \$565,626 in Title II funding, an increase from \$472,163 in 2018-19.

How was the MTSS framework administered in the Dallas ISD in 2019-20?

In 2019-20, the MTSS framework was administered by one manager and three additional central staff members.

Training was the primary activity conducted by the MTSS administrative team. The MTSS team provided training to Dallas ISD staff members that focused on various aspects of MTSS implementation. Throughout the school year, the program manager examined intervention plans posted to PowerSchool to create additional trainings. In addition, the program manager organized ad hoc trainings for campus staff members who expressed specific training needs.

How was the MTSS framework implemented on Dallas ISD campuses in 2019-20?

In 2018-19, the MTSS framework replaced the Response to Intervention (RTI) system that functioned in a comparable but more limited way within the district. While RTI and MTSS both address academic challenges, the MTSS framework also supports student development in the areas of language and engagement.

An additional innovation in 2018-19 that continued in 2019-20 was the introduction of PowerSchool to maintain districtwide tracking of intervention plans developed for students assigned to Tiers 2 and 3. PowerSchool stores student-level descriptions of intervention plans and progress monitoring results, as well as resources that campus staff members can use to support students.

A key innovation in 2019-20 was the districtwide use of *MAP Growth* assessments as universal screeners and partial determinants of which tier of support each student received. *MAP Growth* reading and mathematics assessments were administered at the beginning and middle of the school year. Plans for an end-of-year administration were canceled because of the spring 2020 transition to at-home learning.

What MTSS-related training was provided to 2019-20 Dallas ISD staff members?

During 2019-20, the MTSS department offered 99 MTSS-related training sessions to over 2,153 Dallas ISD staff members. Attendance rates per session ranged from 1 to 395 staff members. The shortest and most frequently provided type of training session consisted of one-hour workshops (33 virtual; 11 face-to-face). The longest training sessions, eight-hour symposia, were presented once per semester and were the most well attended. Topics covered in training sessions included an overview of the MTSS framework, Root Cause Analysis, use of *MAP Growth* data, PowerSchool, as well as the creation, progress monitoring and closing of implementation plans. Following the transition to at-home learning, all training sessions were conducted virtually (36 in summer 2020).

What were Dallas ISD staff member perceptions about MTSS in 2019-20?

The evaluators created and administered the 2019-20 MTSS Feedback Survey, a brief online survey for district staff members who had participated in at least one MTSS-related training during 2019-20. Survey questions focused on knowledge of the MTSS framework, preparedness to implement elements of this framework, and beliefs about the effectiveness of MTSS-related training.

To determine potential survey respondents, sign-in sheets for all MTSS trainings offered to district staff members from August 1, 2019 through February 14, 2020 were used to identify 1,324 potential participants. The evaluators emailed invitations to complete the survey on March 6, 2020, and the survey remained open until March 24, 2020. The evaluators then re-opened the survey on April 27, 2020 with three new questions on MTSS-related changes resulting from the transition to at-home learning and closed the survey on May 13, 2020. A total of 657 staff members (49.6%) completed the survey.

Forty-three percent of respondents attended one training session during 2019-20, while 42 percent attended two or more trainings. At least 69 percent of respondents felt well prepared to implement elements of the MTSS framework. Most (83%) respondents stated that the MTSS training sessions they attended were at least somewhat useful, and many (62%) felt the MTSS framework was implemented well on campuses. When asked how MTSS training could improve, respondents most often reported wanting more frequent training, more content or depth of training, and/or more user-friendly training.

Over half (56%) of respondents were working with one or more students on a Tier 2 or Tier 3 intervention before the transition to at-home learning. Of these respondents, 70 percent continued working with at least one student on a Tier 2 or 3 intervention during at-home learning.

Which Dallas ISD students were served by the MTSS framework in 2019-20?

Dallas ISD students served by MTSS in 2019-20 were examined by reviewing 1) the number and characteristics of students with Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions documented in the PowerSchool MTSS Intervention Module, and 2) the number and characteristics of students for whom *MAP Growth* score data were available.

Out of 11,525 plans, 9,898 Tier 2 intervention plans were recorded for 6,058 students and 1,627 Tier 3 intervention plans were recorded for 1,178 students. Students who received interventions most commonly received one plan in each tier (Tier 2: 60%; Tier 3: 73%). Proportionally more Hispanic students than white students received an intervention plan, while proportionally more African American than Hispanic students received a plan. Table 1 shows the breakdown of tier plans by area.

Table 1: 2019-20 Dallas ISD Tier 2 and Tier 3 Intervention Plans by Area

Tier	Total	Academics	Language	Engagement
	N	%	%	%
Tier 2	9,898	80.7	4.8	14.5
Tier 3	1,627	72.0	9.0	19.0

Source: PowerSchool MTSS Intervention Module database, 06/15/20.

Note: Data represent the number of plans. Because students could have multiple plans in each tier for an area, students could be represented in multiple cells.

2019-20 *MAP Growth* data were available for the beginning-of-year (BOY) and middle-of-year (MOY) administrations. The end-of-year administration was cancelled because of the spring 2020 transition to at-home learning. Because of these missing data, all *MAP Growth* results are provided for informational purposes only.

As shown in Table 2, testing rates for reading ranged from 54 percent (grade 9) to 85 percent (grade 2) of enrolled students at BOY, and from 50 percent (grade 9) to 90 percent (grade 2) at MOY. Testing rates for mathematics ranged from 50 percent (grade 9) to 90 percent (grades 2 and 3) of enrolled students at BOY, and from 43 percent (grade 9) to 92 percent (grade 2) at MOY.

Table 2: 2019-20 Dallas ISD *MAP Growth* Testing for Reading and Mathematics by Grade Level and Assessment Window

Grade Level	BOY		MOY		EOY	
	Enr N	Test %	Enr N	Test %	Enr N	Test %
Reading						
2	11,063	85.9	11,049	89.8		
3	11,135	84.7	11,099	86.3		
4	11,364	80.8	11,323	82.6		
5	11,974	80.9	11,943	79.4		
6	11,089	68.5	11,063	73.9		
7	10,974	68.1	10,977	71.4		
8	10,300	70.9	10,292	67.9		
9	12,860	54.2	12,677	49.7		
2-9	90,759	74.0	90,423	74.8		
Mathematics						
2	11,063	89.9	11,049	92.0		
3	11,135	90.2	11,099	90.8		
4	11,364	88.1	11,323	88.1		
5	11,974	88.0	11,943	87.5		
6	11,089	71.6	11,063	70.3		
7	10,974	67.6	10,977	64.8		
8	10,300	67.0	10,292	66.0		
9	12,860	50.1	12,677	43.3		
2-9	90,759	76.3	90,423	75.0		

Source: District *MAP* files dated 02/11/20 (BOY and MOY). District PEIMS snapshot demographic file dated 10/28/19 (BOY), district demographic data files dated 12/16/19 (MOY).

Note: *MAP Growth* reading rates include the English- and Spanish-language versions. EOY *MAP Growth* assessments were cancelled in 2019-20 because of the COVID-19-related transition to at-home learning. Enr = enrolled. Test = Tested.

For both BOY and MOY, white students were tested at higher rates than Hispanic students, and Hispanic students were tested at higher rates than African American students.

How were trends in 2019-20 MAP Growth related to MTSS implementation?

The relationship between *MAP Growth* scores and MTSS implementation of Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions was explored by means of three *MAP Growth* variables.

First, the Rasch Unit (RIT) score represents the level at which students are ready to learn at the time of assessment. The RIT score is a standardized, equal-interval score that can be compared to other RIT scores regardless of student age or grade.

Second, the Conditional Growth Percentile (CGP) captures change in student achievement from one testing window to the next, relative to change for other students who are similar in starting achievement level, grade, and number of instructional weeks between testing. For each subject assessed, CGPs for each student are calculated with respect to a large, nationally-normed sample. A CGP at the 50th percentile indicates, relative to other test-takers at that grade level, a median amount of RIT score increase from the prior testing window. To measure growth across testing periods, the evaluators divided CGP scores into three categories: 1) failed to meet projected growth (failed to meet; < 45th percentile), 2) met projected growth (met; >=45th to <=55th percentiles), or 3) exceeded projected growth (exceeded; > 55th percentile).

The third *MAP Growth* variable used specifically for analyses of Spanish *Map Growth* reading data is the RIT score threshold. Because norms were unavailable for the 2019-20 *MAP Growth* Spanish reading assessments, CGP scores representing growth across testing windows could not be generated. Instead, the evaluators used thresholds provided by the vendor to indicate grade two and three students at or above the 25th percentile, and, therefore not considered at-risk for future reading difficulties.

For the purposes of growth-related analyses, student scores were divided into quintiles based on BOY *MAP Growth* scores. In this case, a quintile is a division of scores into five equal groups according to a 1 (highest performing) to 5 (lowest performing) distribution. Quintiles were determined separately for reading and mathematics scores. For reading, mean RIT scores ranged from 164 (Quintile 5) to 226 (Quintile 1) at BOY and from 173 to 226 at MOY, while mean RIT scores for mathematics ranged from 169 to 234 at BOY and from 178 to 236 at MOY. Ideally, students who fall into higher BOY quintiles (i.e., lower performing students) catch up academically to what is expected for peers at their grade level. One way to measure the impact of the MTSS framework is to examine the rates of students at higher quintiles who have exceeded growth thresholds across assessment windows.

Table 3 shows the rates of students who failed to meet, met, or exceeded threshold growth rates from BOY to MOY, grouped by BOY quintile and tier. The rates of students who met or exceeded growth thresholds were not clearly related to quintile for either subject area. Among the highest two BOY quintiles for mathematics, the percentages of Tier 2 or 3 students who exceeded growth thresholds ranged from 35 percent (Quintile 4, Tier 3) to 44 percent (Quintile 5, Tier 2), indicating that these students may have started to catch up to their peers nationally. Small numbers of students in Tiers 2 and 3 for reading resulted in no discernable pattern of results.

Table 3: 2019-20 Dallas ISD MAP Growth Reading and Mathematics Growth Threshold Rates by Quintile and Tier: BOY to MOY

BOY Quintile	Tier	N	Failed to Meet %	Met %	Exceeded %
Reading					
1	1	8,737	51.8	9.2	39.0
	2	0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	3	0	0.0	0.0	0.0
2	1	6,837	53.4	8.4	38.2
	2	0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	3	0	0.0	0.0	0.0
3	1	5,887	51.2	7.7	41.1
	2	6	83.3	0.0	16.7
	3	0	0.0	0.0	0.0
4	1	5,356	50.1	6.9	43.0
	2	2	50.0	0.0	50.0
	3	1	0.0	0.0	100.0
5	1	4,994	53.1	6.7	40.2
	2	3	100.0	0.0	0.0
	3	0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Mathematics					
1	1	10,053	50.8	9.5	39.7
	2	35	54.3	17.1	28.6
	3	1	0.0	0.0	100.0
2	1	10,764	54.0	10.3	35.7
	2	136	65.4	11.8	22.8
	3	1	100.0	0.0	0.0
3	1	9,740	48.0	8.5	43.6
	2	305	62.6	6.9	30.5
	3	22	63.6	4.5	31.8
4	1	9,285	46.3	7.6	46.1
	2	541	50.5	7.4	42.1
	3	74	44.6	20.3	35.1
5	1	8,871	48.3	9.0	42.7
	2	670	47.6	8.7	43.7
	3	133	56.4	7.5	36.1

Source: District BOY and MOY MAP Growth data file dated 02/11/20. District PEIMS snapshot demographic file dated 10/28/19.

Note: Includes data for students enrolled on the PEIMS snapshot date of 10/28/19 who also had valid MAP scores. Tier was defined as the highest tier attained by a student during the entire year for a subject, regardless of how long or how many times the student remained at any one tier. Failed to Meet: student percentile < 45th percentile. Met: 45th percentile <= student percentile <= 55th percentile. Exceeded: student percentile > 55th percentile. For each assessment and quintile, percentages of students in the Failed to Meet vs. Met vs. Exceeded categories may not sum to 100 percent because of rounding. Spanish reading MAP Growth data could not be included in this table because of the absence of national norms. Data exclude SPED students, who are not categorized into tiers for either subject. Students with tier plans may not have been assessed at BOY and MOY; therefore, every student with a plan in 2019-20 may not be represented in this table.

Mean RIT scores increased from BOY to MOY at all grade levels for reading (English) and mathematics except for grade eight mathematics (same at BOY and MOY). For each assessment and testing period, mean RIT scores were higher at higher grade levels, as expected, except for a one-point lower average score in BOY mathematics in grade nine as compared to grade eight.

Finally, the rates of grade two and three students who met or exceeded thresholds (only grades available) for the *MAP Growth* Spanish reading assessment ranged from 88 percent (grade 3, BOY Tier 3) to 94 percent (grade 2, BOY Tier 2). These rates decreased slightly from BOY to MOY for both Tier 2 and 3 students.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Improve frequency and content of MTSS training.

Although survey response was favorable for MTSS-related training and implementation, some respondents reported concerns about 2019-20 training, including a desire for more frequent and more in-depth training. Users of MTSS would benefit from training meeting their evolving needs. Stakeholders should regularly poll staff members to determine the topics that would be most beneficial and offer training on those topics as frequently as possible.

Improve ease and understanding of MTSS Implementation.

Survey respondents expressed concerns about the user-friendliness of MTSS tools, especially with respect to *MAP Growth* data and PowerSchool. Stakeholders should review and evaluate systems and processes to remove this barrier to implementation.

Improve documentation related to MTSS training and implementation.

Attendance for MTSS training sessions in 2019-20 could not be calculated accurately because of incomplete records and partial reliance on hand-written attendance sheets. In addition, language-related plans were

clearly coded for Tier 2 but not Tier 3 interventions. Evaluators and stakeholders should work together to elevate systems and processes that will maintain more accurate records to allow more rigorous and complete future analyses.

Continue to improve consistency in *MAP Growth* implementation.

Although the Dallas ISD has committed to using *MAP Growth* as universal screeners for reading and mathematics, the percentage of students screened in this first year of implementation rarely exceeded 90 percent for any grade or either subject. Further, inconsistencies in implementation were revealed, such as some students testing outside of grade level or issued the wrong test. Stakeholders should work to improve communication and training with respect to *MAP Growth* administration to continually improve the process.

Continue monitoring *MAP Growth* progress among at-risk students.

Although data were incomplete and of limited use for conclusions in 2019-20, the desired pattern of higher rates of struggling students exceeding expected growth from BOY to MOY generally was not found. Although EOY *MAP Growth* data were unavailable, findings suggest students with the greatest needs (i.e., students in the lowest BOY quintiles and students who received a Tier 2 or 3 plan) were not catching up to peers. Stakeholders should use lessons learned from this first year of *MAP Growth* implementation to improve assessment processes and necessary assignment to Tier 2 and 3 plans to ensure that at-risk students receive the extra help they need.

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For more information, please contact Program Evaluation at evaluation@dallasisd.org.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Dallas Independent School District (Dallas ISD), funded by \$1,243,117 of district general operating funds (a decrease from \$1,284,326 in 2018-19) provides campus-based services districtwide for students with dyslexia. The mission of the Dyslexia Services program is “to assist students with dyslexia in the attainment of independent literacy skills by providing services and support to students, their parents, and school personnel through identification, instruction, and community awareness.”¹

Dyslexia is one of the most common language-based learning disabilities; among those exhibiting reading difficulties, 70 to 80 percent are believed to have some form of dyslexia. Estimates place the percentage of people who have dyslexia between 5 and 10 percent;² depending on the definition, this percentage can reach as high as 17 percent.³

Dallas ISD Dyslexia Services has expanded notably over the past four years. In 2016-17, 14 dyslexia evaluators served districtwide, programming was primarily video based, and no dyslexia interventionists were employed. In 2019-20, 183 staff members comprised the Dallas ISD Dyslexia Services department, with 147 dyslexia interventionists serving one to two campuses each, and 27 dyslexia evaluators identifying students and prescribing accommodations.

This evaluation focused on continued district efforts to provide quality dyslexia services to students and their families and to support campuses to serve these students effectively. Specifically, this 2019-20 evaluation planned to examine: 1) the program budget; 2) program components; 3) the identification process and available programming; 4) characteristics of district students with dyslexia; 5) efforts to identify dyslexia early; 6) characteristics of program staff members; 7) dyslexia-related professional development; 8) education and support provided to parents of students with dyslexia; 9) growth in literacy skills and trends in reading and writing achievement for students with dyslexia, and 10) perceptions of interventionists during at-home learning.

For topics included in this report that were affected by the COVID-19-related transition to at-home learning starting on March 23, 2020, resulting changes to operations, supports, and outcomes were addressed within each section of the report, as appropriate.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS/OUTCOMES

What were the components of the Dyslexia Services program?

Before 2017-18, Dyslexia Services used structured literacy programs and video-based programming to support multisensory language learning for students with dyslexia. Video-based programming was the primary method of support for identified students until 2017-18, when the district amplified efforts to expand and enhance services, including increased use of the following systems.

Wilson Reading System. The *Wilson Reading System* (*Wilson*) currently is the most widely used structured literacy program in the district for students with dyslexia. The *Wilson System* is an intensive literacy program provided by a highly-trained teacher – a dyslexia interventionist – to individual students or to small groups in kindergarten through grade eight for 45 minutes a day, four to five days a week. Dyslexia interventionists earn special certification to provide *Wilson Reading System* instruction and support to students. The *Wilson Reading System* focuses on reading, spelling, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension.

Other Literacy Programs for Dyslexic Learners. The district also uses 1) the *Esperanza Spanish Language Program* (*Esperanza*) for Spanish literacy (elementary grades); 2) the video-based *Texas Scottish Rite Hospital for Children Dyslexia Training Program* (elementary grades); and 3) the video-based *Texas Scottish Rite Hospital for Children Literacy Program* (secondary grades).

Support for Teachers and Parents

Dyslexia interventionists also work with teachers, providing training in the Multisensory Teaching Approach (MTA), a teaching method specially designed for learners with dyslexia that directly involves students in seeing, hearing, saying, and writing during instruction (Birsh, 2019).

Dyslexia interventionists lead trainings twice per year for campus staff members on dyslexia characteristics. They also provide regular support to parents of students with dyslexia through sessions on supporting continued student growth in the summer and on additional available community supports.

¹ <https://www.dallasisd.org/Page/52188>, retrieved 09/28/18.

² A January 2019 report by the American Institutes for Research (AIR) similarly noted that the prevalence of dyslexia in the United States “has not

been determined definitively but [that] the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development estimates the rate at approximately 10%” (p. ix).

³ University of Michigan Dyslexia Help Center, <http://dyslexiahelp.umich.edu/answers/faq>.

How are students with dyslexia in the Dallas ISD identified, and how many students received dyslexia programming and support?

Identification Process

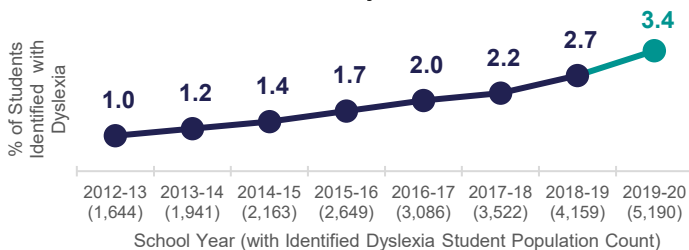
Dyslexia potentially can be identified as soon as a child begins learning to read, and, generally, the sooner dyslexia is identified and intervention provided, the more promising the developmental trajectory.⁴ District students can be referred for assessment through a campus staff member or committee, or by a parent. According to Texas House Bill (HB) 1886, grade one students must be screened for reading difficulties like dyslexia by mid-school year. In 2019-20, campuses used the *Texas Kindergarten Entry Assessment System (TX-KEA)* for kindergarten students; *Istation's Indicators of Progress (ISIP)* in grade one; *Measures of Academic Progress Growth (MAP)* or *ISIP* in grade two; and *MAP*, *STAAR*, or *Common Assessments* for middle school students. Campuses review screening data and grades to assess whether dyslexia may be present.

When dyslexia is suspected and other interventions [like through the Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) framework]⁵ were provided but unsuccessful, parent consent for a dyslexia assessment is obtained, and a variety of additional student data are reviewed, as applicable. After a dyslexia evaluator assesses the student, student support teams and parents meet to determine if the student requires dyslexia services. If so, an Individual Accommodations Plan (IAP)⁶ is created for the student and interventions begin. If the student is identified with dyslexia and needing special education (SPED) services, dyslexia accommodations are integrated into the Individual Education Plan (IEP).

Longitudinal Trends in Dyslexia Identification

The rate of district students identified with dyslexia increased from 1.0 percent in 2012-13 to 3.4 percent in 2019-20 (Figure 1). Increases will likely continue due to increased dyslexia staff and improved universal screening.

Figure 1: 2012-2019 Percentages and Number of Dallas ISD Students Identified with Dyslexia



Source: 2018-19 evaluation report (2012-13 through 2018-19; Mejan, 2019). Dallas ISD PEIMS demographic snapshot data file for 10/28/19 (2019-20).
Note: Includes students enrolled on the PEIMS snapshot date of each year.

⁴ See <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/dyslexia/diagnosis-treatment/drc-20353557> for more information.

⁵ See Springer and Kim (2020).

Program Placement

As in 2018-19, most students needing Dyslexia Services received *Wilson Language* programming (2018-19: 78%; 2019-20: 74%; Table 1). Because evaluations for dyslexia require in-person interaction between a student and a dyslexia evaluator, dyslexia evaluations were suspended in 2019-20 during at-home learning. This change reduced the number of students placed in 2019-20 Dyslexia programs.

Table 1: 2018-19 and 2019-20 Program Placement of Dallas ISD Students with Dyslexia

Dyslexia Program	2018-19 (N=2,287)		2019-20 (N=1,112)	
	N	%	n	%
Wilson Language	1,777	77.7	820	73.7
Esperanza	313	13.7	226	20.3
MTA/Alphabetic Phonics	139	6.1	21	1.9
Dyslexia Training Program	27	1.2	0	0.0
Literacy Program	19	0.8	11	1.0
Other	12	0.5	34	3.1

Source: Dyslexia Services, November 2019 (2018-19) and June 2020 (2019-20).

Note: Total Ns = students actively receiving programming.

What were the characteristics of students served by Dyslexia Services, including one-year trends?

In 2019-20, 5,190 district students were identified with dyslexia. Over half of these students were male (59%; 2016-17: 61%; 2018-19: 60%), eight percentage points above the district rate (51%). While some research has attributed this difference to externalizing problem behavior leading to referral process bias toward diagnosis of boys (Shaywitz et al., 1990), more recent studies provide some evidence that males may be more vulnerable to learning disorders like dyslexia, and, while both boys and girls are commonly under-identified in schools, girls are more frequently under-identified (Quinn & Wagner, 2013).

The rate of 2019-20 English learners (ELs) with dyslexia (40.7%) was lower than the districtwide percentage of ELs (45.7%), possibly indicating a need for more screening and identification of ELs with dyslexia. Also, 36.3 percent of students with dyslexia received SPED services, up two percentage points from 2018-19 (34.3%). SPED program leadership attributed these findings to a continuum of severity in dyslexia symptoms and the possibility of concurrent disabilities.

What progress was made in 2019-20 to meet the Dyslexia Services early identification goal?

In terms of developmental capacity, most students in prekindergarten through grade three are learning to read; by the end of grade three, most students should be transitioning to reading to learn. This literacy foundation sets a critical stage for academic, career, and social-emotional

⁶ IAPs are also called section 504 plans and provide accommodations for students not meeting the criteria for SPED but require accommodations to receive a free and appropriate public education (FAPE).

potential. Students who fail to attain literacy in the early years are at significant risk of dropping out of school.⁷ The goal of Dyslexia Services was to identify and effectively support students with dyslexia as early as possible.

Increases in Dyslexia Services Staffing

To meet the goal of early identification, the program increased the number of staff members who provide dyslexia services. Shortly before 2017-18, the district hired a Dyslexia Services program director. In 2017-18, the program added 22 dyslexia interventionists. Increasing each year since, 147 dyslexia interventionists and 27 lead dyslexia evaluators were employed in 2019-20.

Roles and Dispersion of Staff Members

Dyslexia interventionists, the largest group of Dyslexia Services staff members ($N=147$), are certified teachers with specialized dyslexia training. Interventionists work with identified students to provide supplemental multisensory instruction, most commonly through the *Wilson Reading System*, and continually assess their achievement levels. Further, interventionists train teachers to provide effective curricular accommodations for identified students, according to IAP or IEP guidelines. Interventionists served one or two campuses each, and 168 district campuses (72%) were assigned an interventionist either full- or half-time (139 elementary schools; 29 middle schools).

Dyslexia evaluators ($N=27$) identify needs and prescribe appropriate accommodations and services for students with dyslexia. Including the program director, two accommodations coordinators, staff supervisors, and administrative assistants, 193 employees served the Dyslexia Services department as of spring 2020. Increased numbers of Dyslexia Services staff members and the type, intensity, and dispersion of services provided districtwide has likely contributed to increased and earlier identification of students with dyslexia.

What types of dyslexia-related training was provided to staff members in 2019-20?

Training for Dyslexia Services Central Staff Members

Attendance at regular professional development (PD) sessions was required of all program staff members. Topics covered for Dyslexia Services staff member PD in 2019-10 included 1) *Wilson* programming, 2) *Esperanza* programming, 3) instruction on the TEA *Dyslexia Handbook*, 4) policies and procedures for dyslexia interventionists, 5) Region 10 resources, 6) interpreting a dyslexia evaluation, 7) PowerSchool navigation, 8) provision of dyslexia-related PD to campuses, 9) *WIST* training, 10) instruction on Section 504, 11) MTSS, and

⁷ See <https://www.ncsl.org/research/education/pre-kindergarten-third-grade-literacy.aspx> for more information.

12) Root Cause Analysis. In addition, interventionists and evaluators met regularly for collaboration and mentoring.

Program leadership maintained regular, detailed communications with dyslexia interventionists and evaluators during at-home learning, with a focus on continuation of services. Staff members used scripts provided by program leadership for communicating effectively and efficiently with parents and attempted to communicate multiple times weekly with parents during at-home learning to ensure students were effectively supported by parents and interventionists. Communications provided links and instructions for navigating online instructional resources, including for the *Wilson* program.⁸

Training for Campus Staff Members

Sessions provided to campus staff members covered 1) the nature of dyslexia, 2) House Bill 1886, 3) the dyslexia screening process, 4) teacher checklists for dyslexia identification, and 5) the role of dyslexia interventionists.

What services and supports did Dyslexia Services offer to parents of students in 2019-20?

Sessions for parents included 1) the role of dyslexia interventionists, 2) the nature of dyslexia, 3) how to meet the needs of students with dyslexia, 4) dyslexia programming, 5) accommodations, and 6) at-home support.

How did students with dyslexia perform and grow in literacy skills and reading and writing achievement in 2019-20?

Because the 2019-20 EOY *WIST* administration and 2020 STAAR were cancelled after the COVID-19 transition to at-home learning, 2019-20 literacy growth and achievement outcomes could not be included in this report.

What were the experiences of Dyslexia Services interventionists during the spring 2020 districtwide transition to at-home learning?

In spring 2020, Dyslexia Services staff members administered a survey soliciting feedback from interventionists about experiences during at-home learning. The survey was sent to all interventionists on June 1, 2020 and was closed on June 10, 2020. Of the 147 dyslexia interventionists invited, 93 (63%) completed the survey.

Engagement with Students

Student engagement with dyslexia interventionists varied widely during at-home learning. While 54 percent of respondents indicated that at least half of their students logged in each day, 18 percent of respondents said 25 percent or fewer of their students logged in each day. In

⁸ See <https://www.wilsonlanguage.com/pages/tips-for-wrs-online-lesson-delivery/> for more information on resources Dyslexia services staff members provided to address *Wilson* online instruction.

addition, when comparing their ability to support students during at-home learning compared to when on campus, most interventionists (72%) reported that they were at least somewhat less adequately able to support their students, meaning a small proportion of respondents (27%) felt they could provide at least the same level of support to students.

The highest percentage of respondents in all grade-level groups considered the communication with students during at-home learning to be easy or very easy, but, importantly, from 23 percent (grades 3-5) to 40 percent (grades K-2) of respondents reported having a difficult or very difficult time communicating with students. These findings indicate that communication hurdles should be carefully examined, and support should be provided to interventionists – particularly to those who serve the younger grade levels.

Engagement with Parents

Dyslexia interventionists reported a notable mix of experiences with engagement with parents and parental support of students during at-home learning. While approximately half (52%) of interventionists reported that overall it was easy or very easy to communicate with parents/caregivers during at-home learning, one in three (32%) reported that it was difficult. Also, the two most common reasons interventionists heard from parents for why students did not log in during at-home learning were 1) no parental supervision (54%) and 2) no internet connectivity (39%).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Focus on year-over-year growth to ensure that students with dyslexia keep up with peers in reading. Although no STAAR outcomes were available for 2019-20, STAAR progress measures showed some evidence of limited growth in reading performance (grades 4 to 8) between 2017-18 and 2018-19 for students with dyslexia. The rate of students with dyslexia with expected reading growth held relatively steady around 35 percent between 2017-18 and 2018-19. The percentage of students with limited growth, however, increased almost five percentage points, and the rate of students with accelerated growth decreased by over four percentage points from 2017-18 to 2018-19. Progress measure data should be used in the future to follow students with dyslexia and ensure they are not falling behind.

Review ways to improve online engagement in instruction and with interventionists to support

students during possible future at-home learning. The percentage of students reported to have logged in daily to engage with dyslexia interventionists during at-home learning varied widely. While 54 percent of interventionists indicated at least half (51%) of their students logged in daily, 18 percent reported that 25 percent or fewer logged in each day. In addition, when comparing their ability to support students during at-home learning to when on campus, most respondents (72%) were at least somewhat less adequately able to provide support, meaning a small proportion of respondents (27%) felt they could provide at least the same level of support to students. Mitigating barriers to engagement should bolster the ability of interventionists to serve students more regularly and adequately.

Review communication and technological hurdles with students and caregivers during at-home learning, and provide more communication support to dyslexia interventionists, particularly to those who serve the younger grade levels. Between 23 percent (grades 3-5) and 40 percent (grades K-2) of interventionists reported having difficulty with communication during at-home learning. In addition, 32 percent of interventionists reported difficulty communicating with caregivers of students with dyslexia during at-home learning. Parents most commonly told interventionists that students did not log in during at-home learning because of 1) no parent instructional supervision (54%) and 2) no internet connectivity (39%). Stakeholders should consider how to overcome these barriers to ensure that communication with students and caregivers continues adequately during future at-home learning.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Dallas Independent School District (ISD) created an intensive targeted summer experience for students during the summer of 2019 (July 15 through 26), focused on key foundational reading skills. Additionally, the program design included planned touch points throughout the 2019-20 school year.

The Creating Accelerated Performance (CAP) program, marketed as an Awesome Summer Adventure, sought to accelerate the achievement of students who had not demonstrated proficiency in reading at critical transitional grades. Rising grade three, six, and nine students who were African American, two or more races, or English learners at select campuses were invited based on qualifying academic criteria.

The purpose of the 2019-20 CAP program evaluation was to provide context and implementation data so that program managers could assess the implementation of program components and operations, determine effectiveness, and plan future efforts. The evaluation examined the level of implementation of the program, participant perceptions of the programs, as applicable, and reading assessment scores.

As reported to the Dallas ISD School Board by the CAP Instructional Team in October 2019, the expenditures for the program's summer component totaled \$169,369.95.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS/OUTCOMES

What were the characteristics of students and teachers participating in the CAP program?

Student Identification

The stated purpose of the program was to create an intensive targeted summer experience for students, in addition to planned touch points throughout the 2019-20 school year. The CAP program sought to create a yearlong experience that would accelerate student achievement by focusing on key foundational reading skills. Students were identified for invitation if they (1) were African American, two or more races, or English learners; (2) met at least two of the qualifying academic criteria; and (3) attended selected campuses with the greatest needs (six elementary and six middle schools were identified).

The CAP instructional team used existing Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) data to create student profiles for eligible students. They used this intentional placement method to place students in appropriate instructional groupings.

A total of 879 students across the three grades met the criteria to be invited to the program. Of those, 653 (74.3%) completed registration to attend. Ultimately, 404 students (46.0% of those who were originally invited to the program) attended at least one day of the summer session.

Rising grade-three students attended the program at either Thornton or Roberts Elementary Schools, while rising grade-six students attended at Atwell or Dade Middle Schools. The CAP program for rising grade nine students was held at the University of North Texas at Dallas (UNT). Out of the overall total of 404 program participants, 50 students (12.4%) attended one day of the program, while 100 of the 404 (24.8%) were present for all ten days (Table E1). A total of 304 students (75.2%) attended five or more days, or at least half the program.

Table E1: Attendance Rate of CAP Program Students (N = 404)

Number of Days Attended	Students	
	N	%
1	50	12.4
2	18	4.5
3	17	4.2
4	15	3.7
5	16	4.0
6	28	6.9
7	39	9.7
8	52	12.9
9	69	17.1
10	100	24.8

Source: CAP student registration and attendance files dated 08/05/19.

Note: Attendance data for 13 students could not be verified.

Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Student Characteristics

The majority of students attending the CAP program were African American (80.7%) while Hispanic students made up 16.1 percent, and roughly three percent of students in the program were of other ethnicities. Female students comprised 44.1 percent, while 55.9 percent were male. A total of 76 students (18.8%) were English learners, and 70 (17.3%) received Special Education services. Most CAP program students were economically disadvantaged (97.0%). Additionally, 31 attending students (7.7%) were identified as requiring dyslexia intervention.

Teachers

To prepare for the 653 students who registered to attend, the program hired and trained 71 teachers with a Teacher

Excellence Initiative (TEI) effectiveness level of Proficient I or higher. The CAP instructional team planned for low student teacher ratios (10:1) to best implement the intensive nature of reading interventions. A minimum of one Special Education teacher was assigned to each site to address the students' unique needs. Additionally, 18 teachers had Bilingual, English as a Second Language (ESL), or English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) certifications to serve English learners. Notably, 29 teachers (40.8%) were dyslexia specialists.

How was the Awesome Summer Adventure component implemented?

Advertising and Communications

The CAP program was marketed to parents of invited students as an "Awesome Summer Adventure." Parent information meetings were held at the home campuses of invited students on May 7-9, 2019. The Dallas ISD Communications department mailed the initial invitations in English and Spanish to families on April 29, 2019. A follow-up "Claim Your Seat" postcard reminder was mailed to the same families on May 6, 2019. A final reminder postcard was mailed to parents on July 8, 2019, one week before the first day of the program. The Communications department reported a number of mailings were returned as undeliverable due to incorrect or outdated parent addresses.

Professional Development

Half-day professional development sessions were provided to teachers on May 31 and from June 3-6, 2019. The sessions were differentiated by grade level and included a range of topics. The first day, May 31, served as an orientation for CAP teachers, covering scheduling, expectations, program goals, and administrative information. Teaching and Learning provided daily support to CAP teachers and staff during the program in addition to Professional Learning Community (PLC) support.

Enrichment and SEL

Enrichment and social/emotional learning (SEL)-focused activities were built into the program day during the summer component of CAP. Each morning before breakfast, students had the option of attending SEL activities, including mindfulness and meditation sessions. Each afternoon after the conclusion of academic programming, students were offered enrichment activities.

Technology

One-to-one technology was a major component of the program. The CAP program planned to issue each student a device to take home on the first day of attendance. Elementary and middle school students each received an HP Chromebook with a backpack, and high school students each received an Apple MacBook Air with a bag. Due to low attendance levels across the campus sites, a total of 249 devices out of the 653 expected were deployed.

Food and Nutrition

The Texas Department of Agriculture approved summer meal service for the CAP program. Students received free breakfast, lunch, and dinner during the program. Elementary and middle school campuses provided meal service in the school cafeteria, while the UNTD site received meals delivered from the district's Central Kitchen.

Student Transportation

Dallas ISD Student Transportation Services provided bus transportation to CAP program sites, via routes originating from four different district service centers. A total of 35 total routes were planned (27 regular education and eight special education) to accommodate the 653 registered students. Program management reported transportation issues throughout the duration of the program.

How was the Student Saturday Experience component implemented?

The CAP program was originally planned as a summer experience that would continue into the 2019-20 school year through seven Saturday sessions, running from 9:00 am to 12:30 pm at each of the CAP campuses. Sessions were planned for August 24, September 21, October 26, November 16, 2019, and a session each in January, February, and March 2020. Based on projected enrollment for Saturday sessions, 42 CAP teachers were invited to continue teaching the program during the school year. The academic focus of the sessions was the same as the summer program, with a low student/teacher ratio and an emphasis on enhancing and accelerating the development of reading skills. Due to extremely low attendance rates during the first three Saturday sessions, the decision was made to cancel remaining sessions for the remainder of the school year.

How did teachers perceive the CAP program?

A teacher survey was constructed to understand the methods and quality of training and preparation, curriculum design, logistics, communication between the CAP program, teachers, and parents of CAP students, and program impact. Overall, approximately 83 percent ($n = 59$ out of 71) of those invited completed the survey.

A total of 54 teachers (94.7% of 57 respondents) "agreed" or "strongly agreed" that the goals and objectives of the CAP program were clearly communicated to them. Additionally, 84.2 percent ($n = 48$ of 57) were "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with the quality of the professional development they received. Most (87.7%, $n = 50$ of 57) teachers reported that they had adequate time to prepare to teach the curriculum. Overall, 84.2 percent of those who responded reported that they felt adequately supported to teach the CAP program.

While 82.5 percent ($n = 47$ of 57) of CAP teachers felt that, overall, the quality of the curriculum was high, 14 of the 57 respondents (24.6%) reported that they "disagreed" or

“strongly disagreed” that the curriculum design was appropriate to address the unique needs of CAP students. Less than a quarter (22.8%, $n = 13$ of 57) of teachers reported that they adhered to the provided curriculum as written at all times. These teachers indicated that they differentiated their instruction and relied on a variety of lesson components, some outside the provided CAP curriculum, in order to keep their students engaged.

Low attendance was a concern throughout the program. Indeed, 96.4 percent ($n = 53$ of 55) of surveyed teachers reported that they were involved in making phone calls to families of students who had registered for the program but did not attend the first day or more. After speaking with parents, a total of 42.3 percent of these teachers ($n = 22$ of 52) “disagreed” or “strongly disagreed” that parents were well informed about the logistics of transportation offered. Some teachers indicated that parents “forgot the start date” or “forgot about the program” entirely ($n = 14$). Others stated that students or families had changed their minds about attending since registering, had decided to attend a different summer camp, or had misunderstood the purpose of the program. Parents also frequently cited transportation issues to teachers ($n = 17$), including lack of understanding about routes and pickup locations.

Did CAP program participation increase the reading fluency and accuracy of participating students?

Dallas ISD dyslexia interventionists assessed CAP students using an Oral Reading Fluency (ORF) assessment. ORF requires students to read aloud from an unpracticed passage while noting their results through a running record.

A major program goal was to increase CAP students’ ORF Rate as measured by words-correct-per-minute (WCPM), reading accuracy and comprehension. The pre-program ORF assessment was conducted before the end of the 2018-19 school year, while the post-program assessment was conducted on the final day of the summer program. This approach allowed a six-week gap between the pre-assessment and the beginning of the program, so the possibility of “summer slide” may have occurred before CAP interventions began for students.

Between the pre- and post-assessments, grade-three students ($n = 65$) improved their WCPM by an average of 8.8 words per minute (27.7 to 36.5 WCPM). Students in grade six ($n = 103$) increased by an average of 4.7 words per minute (91.9 to 96.6 WCPM), and grade-nine students ($n = 68$) increased by an average of 12.2 words per minute (96.6 to 108.8 WCPM). Unsurprisingly, the largest gains were noted for students attending all ten days of the program.

The reading accuracy of grade-three students ($n = 65$) improved by an average of 7.8 percentage points (71.8% to 79.6% accurate). Students in grade six ($n = 103$) increased by an average of 0.7 percentage points (92.3% to 93.0% accurate), and grade-nine students ($n = 68$)

increased by an average of 1.8 percentage points (94.7% to 96.5%) between the pre- and post-assessments.

Reading comprehension pre- and post-assessment data was collected for 162 students, who answered five questions each. Grade-three students ($n = 19$) improved their reading comprehension scores by an average of 0.6 items correct (2.6 to 3.2). Students in grade six ($n = 80$) increased by an average of 0.2 items correct (3.0 to 3.2), and grade-nine students ($n = 63$) increased by an average of 0.7 items correct (1.6 to 2.3) between the pre- and post-assessments.

What impact did participation in the CAP program have in meeting grade level benchmarks?

District Fall 2019 *Assessment of Course Performance* (ACP) data files for reading/language arts courses were used to assess academic growth post-program participation in reading/language arts. Evaluators conducted one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) for CAP participants to ascertain if attending the program made a difference in the participants’ reading abilities. No significant statistical or practical differences were found between the scores of students who attended less than half, 50 to 90 percent of program days, 100 percent of program days, and those who did not attend. Across grade levels and attendance categories, averages were below 70 (59.2 to 66.8), the passing standard for the exam.

Did students’ self-perception as readers show a positive increase over the duration of the program?

To measure students’ self-perceptions and agency as readers, evaluators constructed a reading self-perception survey. Items explored students’ beliefs about their psychological and physiological responses to reading, their interest in reading, their view of themselves as readers, and their self-perceived reading comprehension level. Students took the survey at each CAP program site on their first day of the program (pre-survey) and again on the final day of the program (post-survey). Survey data was analyzed for students who completed both the pre- and post-survey and who also had at least a 50 percent attendance rate.

Grade Three

A total of 53 grade-three students were included in the analyses. Third graders gave more positive responses to every item in the survey on the post-survey compared to the pre-survey. Notably, at the beginning of the CAP program, 33.3 percent of third graders reported that they liked to read out loud in class. By the end of the two-week intensive program, 64.8 percent reported that they “liked” or “loved” to read out loud in class, potentially indicating an improvement in self-confidence as well as a reduction in anxiety. Survey items exploring reading comprehension ability (e.g., “It is easy for me to understand the stories...,” “I can figure out the meaning of a hard word...,” and “I can

easily understand the main idea...,”) each improved by 16.7 percentage points.

Grade Six

The student sample for analyses in grade six included 96 students. Compared to grade three, increases in positive responses between the pre- and post-surveys were modest. However, students’ perceptions of difficulty in reading may have improved over the course of the program. Less than half (49.0%) of grade six students indicated that they “mostly” or “totally” agreed that books read in class were “easy” before attending the CAP program, while 65.6 percent reported that they “mostly” or “totally” agreed that the books read in class were “easy” at the end of the summer program. This was an increase of 16.6 percentage points. It is noteworthy that the reading level of materials used in the CAP program were more appropriate to the students’ level of reading proficiency, which may have influenced their opinions about the difficulty of books. Similarly, when asked whether they found it easy to understand the stories read in class, less than half (47.9%) of students in grade six agreed that they did at the beginning of the program, while 60.4 percent (and increase of 12.5 percentage points) agreed that they did after attending. More grade six students (60.4% vs 65.6%, an increase of 5.2 percentage points) reported that they viewed themselves as “good” readers after attending the program.

Grade Nine

A total of 31 grade-nine students attended at least five days (50%) of the program and had complete pre- and post-surveys available for analyses. The most notable positive differences in the pre- and post-surveys of grade nine students were in items exploring students’ personal relationship and psychological response to reading. After attending the CAP program, 64.5 percent of grade nine students reported that they liked to read (an increase of 12.9 percentage points), and over half (51.6%, an increase of 16.1 percentage points) reported that they looked forward to starting a new book. A total of 67.7 percent of grade nine students (up from 51.6%, an increase of 16.1 percentage points) indicated that they felt calm when they read, and 71.0 percent (an increase of 12.9 percentage points) reported that they thought reading could be relaxing.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Dallas ISD transitioned students to at-home learning from March 23, 2020 (following Spring Break) to the end of the school year.

Based on the key findings, along with the district’s transition to at-home learning, the following recommendations are offered for stakeholders for the CAP program in summer 2020.

Improve the accuracy of parent contact information. Teachers reported difficulty in contacting families via telephone who had registered for the program but didn’t attend, many times because telephone numbers were incorrect, disconnected, or no telephone number was listed. Further, large numbers of mailed program materials were returned due to incorrect or invalid mailing addresses. It is crucial that the program work to ensure complete and accurate contact information for registered families, especially given the change to virtual learning in 2020.

Address attendance data portal issues. Complete and accurate attendance data is critical to the evaluation of the program’s effectiveness. A major benefit of the CAP program’s move to a virtual learning format is the included attendance features in Google Classroom. The importance of documenting attendance should be communicated to all CAP program teachers and administrators.

Rethink the timing of the program. The program may be able to eliminate some of 2019’s attendance challenges due to families forgetting about the program or making other plans over the course of the summer by holding CAP earlier. Further, beginning the program right after the school year ends can reduce learning loss and allow for larger academic gains. CAP is planned to run from June 1 to June 19 in 2020.

Improve the timing of ORF baseline data collection. The gap of several weeks between the end of the school year and the CAP program meant that baseline ORF data were collected before students potentially exhibited learning loss, commonly referred to as “summer slide.” Collecting ORF baseline data at the start of the program rather than at the end of the school year will provide a more accurate picture of the reading levels at which students begin their CAP programming. Due to the closure of schools, baseline ORF data will be collected at the beginning of the program in 2020.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Bilingual Education/English as a Second Language (BE/ESL) Department aimed to provide supplemental assistance to immigrant students and families to increase language proficiency and academic achievement to help prepare them to become active participants in education and the community. Title III defines immigrant children and youth as those aged three to 21 who were not born in any state and have not been enrolled in any United States schools for more than three full academic years. The budget for the Immigrant Services program within the Dallas Independent School District (ISD) was \$876,149 from Title III, Part A funds,¹ an increase from \$846,223 in 2018-19.

The purpose of this report was to provide data for campus, program, and district stakeholders to evaluate the effectiveness of programs designed to serve district immigrants. Changes resulting from the spring 2020 COVID-19-related transition to at-home learning were addressed within each section, as applicable.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS/OUTCOMES

What were district services for immigrant students in 2019-20?

Methodology

The evaluator interviewed program administrators and reviewed program documents to summarize services for immigrants in 2019-20.

Program Description

Because a large proportion of immigrants typically also are English learners (ELs) (93% in 2019-20), the BE/ESL Department plays a pivotal role in the integration of immigrant students and their families into the district and community.² With awarded 2019-20 supplemental Title III funds, the department aimed to 1) provide supplemental instructional resources, 2) assist in development of tutoring plans for improved English proficiency and academic achievement, 3) develop supplemental summer enrichment opportunities, 4) connect parents with needed referrals to services, 5) deliver classes for ELs and their parents including district information sessions and ESL classes, and 6) increase parental participation in trainings and activities

through the Margaret and Gilbert Herrera Student Intake Center.

Immigrants who are new to the country in K to grade 12 and have never attended US schools are welcomed to the district at the Margaret and Gilbert Herrera Student Intake Center. This center supports these students and their families to bolster academic success. Along with registration and assessment services, the center provides orientation services for immigrant families as they transition into the district and community. The intake center also provides follow-up support to students through professional development and instructional coaching for teachers of ELs, literacy fairs on select Saturdays throughout the year, and summer enrichment programs for newcomer students.

To prepare immigrant students in the first year in US schools who do not speak Spanish or English for academic success, the district also offers a one-year Newcomer Program at four designated Dallas ISD campuses.³ This program focuses on English acquisition and is for students at mixed grade levels. Certified teachers provide instructional services to identified students in a multi-age setting using sheltered instruction methods and strategies. Because the students served by the Newcomer Program in 2019-20 were a small subsection of immigrant students, they were not highlighted as a separate group in analyses in this report. Instead, they were included in results for the general immigrant student population.

What were the characteristics of 2019-20 immigrant students?

Methodology

The evaluator conducted frequency analyses to summarize participant characteristics and enrollment rates using the district Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) demographic data files.⁴

Results

Most of the 8,862 immigrant students reported to the state in 2019-20 (approximately 6% of district enrollment) were Hispanic (84%), followed by African American (7%) and Asian (5%). Immigrants were from 133 different countries, with the largest proportions from Mexico (31%), Honduras (25%), and El Salvador (16%). About 40 percent of

¹ No general operating funds were dedicated specifically to the Immigrant Services Program in 2019-20; they were instead granted to the Bilingual/ESL Department as a whole.

² EL Immigrant students: 2017-18: 91%; 2018-19: 92%.

³ McShan, Lowe, Hotchkiss, and Rodgers. All campuses have one teacher allocation for the newcomer program, except for McShan, which has two teachers allocated.

⁴ District PEIMS snapshot dates were 10/27/17 (2017-18; file date 10/30/17), 10/26/18 (2018-19; file date 02/26/19), and 10/28/19 (2019-20; file date 11/01/19).

immigrants were considered at-risk, and 84 percent were economically disadvantaged. Fifty-seven percent of immigrant students were enrolled in PK to grade five and 43 percent in grades 6 to 12, with the highest rate of immigrant students enrolled in grade nine (14%). Most (93%) immigrant students were classified as ELs. The rate of immigrant students enrolled in the Dallas ISD has increased in recent years, with an increase of 44 percent (+2,719 students) from 2018-19 to 2019-20 and 45 percent (+2,751 students) from 2017-18 to 2019-20.

What activities did the BE/ESL Department implement to reach yearly goals?

The BE/ESL Department aimed to reach two primary goals for the immigrant program in 2019-20. The first goal was to increase the percentage of immigrant students meeting the Approaches Grade Level or Above (Approaches+) performance standard on *State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR)* in 2019-20 by three percentage points over the rate of students meeting Approaches+ in 2018-19. The second goal was to increase the percentage of immigrant students who improved their *Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS)* composite by at least one level from 2018-19 to 2019-20 by three percentage points over the percentage that progressed by at least one level from 2017-18 to 2018-19. Although the BE/ESL Department worked toward reaching both goals in 2019-20, attainment of the STAAR-related goal was not examined in this evaluation because Texas Education Agency cancelled STAAR in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. To reach the two primary goals, the BE/ESL Department planned to implement five activities, including 1) professional development (PD), 2) supplemental tutoring, 3) summer enrichment programs, 4) supplemental resources, and 5) Student Intake Center trainings and activities.

Key 2019-20 findings regarding these activities include: 1) most (90%) immigrant professional development participants indicated they were likely to bring the content from the sessions to their classrooms/campuses; 2) no campuses requested tutoring services for immigrant students in 2019-20; 3) 273 students attended the Newcomers' Summer Language Enrichment program; 4) the BE/ESL Department distributed resources including books, parent guides, dictionaries, and manipulatives; and 5) 1,588 parents attended activities and trainings at the Student Intake Center in 2018-19 and 1,735 attended in 2019-20, a one-year attendance increase of nine percent.

What were the academic outcomes for immigrant students during the 2019-20 school year?

Methodology

The academic outcome examined was the *Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS)*. The evaluator used frequency analyses to determine 1) the percentage of immigrant students who earned each English proficiency rating (beginning, intermediate, advanced, advanced high) for the composite score and for each domain (listening, speaking, reading, writing); 2) the percentage of students who progressed, stayed the same, or regressed at least one level among composite and domain ratings from 2019 to 2020; and 3) one-year trends.

Results

Because of the transition to at-home learning and the resulting incomplete testing in all domains required to calculate composite scores for all students, spring 2020 composite TELPAS results represented 62.4 percent of test takers.⁵ Therefore, the 2019-20 results, trends from previous years, and goal attainment should be reviewed with caution and are provided for informational purposes only.

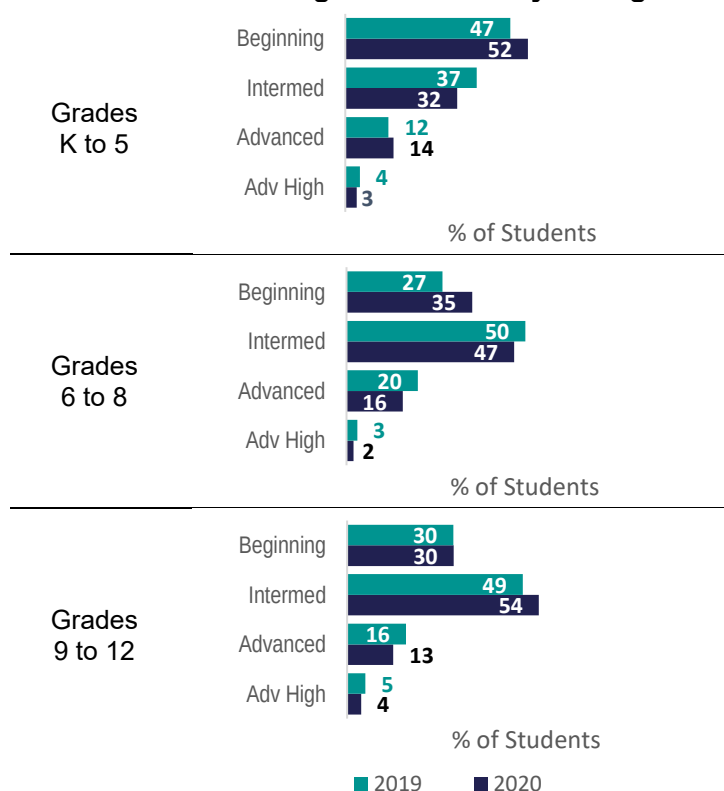
As shown in Figure 1, composite English proficiency ratings for immigrant students who were ELs generally lagged all ELs and clustered around the beginner and intermediate levels on the 2020 TELPAS (range: 82%, grades 6 to 8 to 84%, K to grade 5 and grades 9 to 12). One-year trends in English proficiency rates for immigrant students varied, and often rates remained somewhat consistent from 2019 to 2020.

⁵ Of students who were assessed on at least one domain, the percentages of test takers on each spring 2020 TELPAS domain were as follows: Listening: 94%; Speaking: 94%; Reading: 95.5%; and Writing: 67.5%.

Figure 1: 2019 and 2020 TELPAS English Proficiency Ratings by Grade Level: Immigrant Students

All Immigrant Students

2020 TELPAS English Proficiency Ratings



Source: District TELPAS data files dated 05/24/19 (2019) and 07/19/20 (2020). District PEIMS snapshot demographic data file dated 11/01/19.

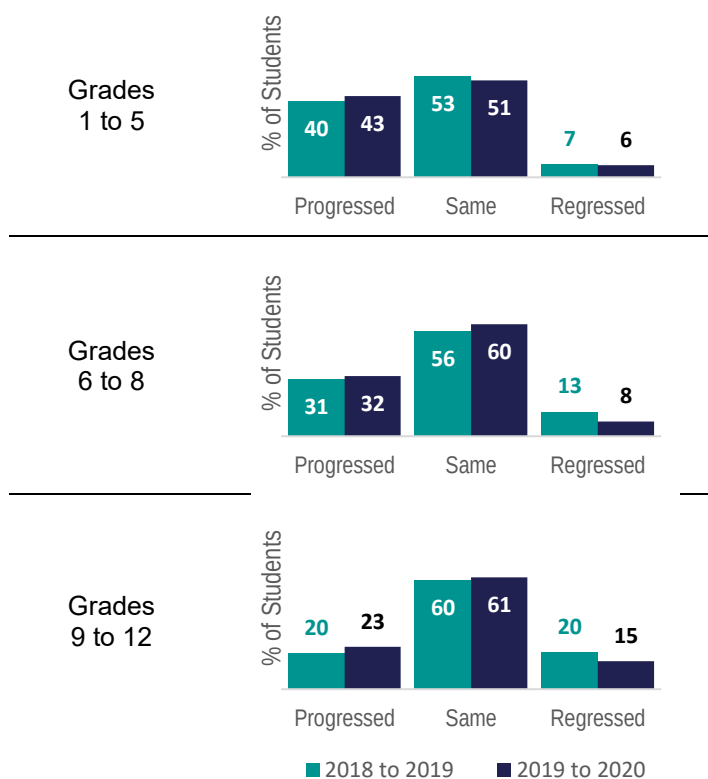
Note: 2019 TELPAS ratings obtained from Palladino et al. (2019). 2019 and 2020 TELPAS ratings include students enrolled on the respective PEIMS snapshot dates. Because of the spring 2020 transition to at-home learning, composite TELPAS results for 2020 represent 62.4 percent of test takers; 2020 results and trends from previous years should be reviewed with caution and are provided for informational purposes only. Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding.

Over half of immigrant students (range: 51% to 61%) remained at the same proficiency level (Figure 2). Immigrant students progressed at higher rates than they regressed in all grade level groupings. At all grade levels, progression rates for immigrant students exceeded those for all ELs by 5 to 11 percentage points, and regression rates were lower than for all ELs by 4 to 11 percentage points. Immigrant students overall exceeded the goal of a one-year three percentage point increase in the rate of students progressing at least one TELPAS proficiency level from 2019. Progression rate increases ranged from one (grades 6 to 8) to three (K to grade 5 and grades 9 to 12) percentage points.

Figure 2: 2019 to 2020 TELPAS English Proficiency Level Movement by Grade Level: Immigrant Students

All Immigrant Students

2019 to 2020 TELPAS Level Movement



Source: District TELPAS data files dated 05/24/19 (2019) and 07/19/20 (2020). District PEIMS snapshot demographic data file dated 11/01/19.

Note: 2018 to 2019 TELPAS Level Movement data obtained from Palladino et al. (2019). TELPAS ratings include students enrolled on the respective PEIMS snapshot dates. Level movement data include students who earned a TELPAS proficiency rating in both years. Because of the spring 2020 transition to at-home learning, composite TELPAS results for 2020 represent 62.4 percent of test takers; 2020 results and trends from previous years should be reviewed with caution and are provided for informational purposes only. Progressed = Student moved up at least one level of English proficiency from the previous year. Same = Student remained at the same proficiency level from the previous year. Regressed = Student moved down at least one level of English proficiency from the previous year. Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding.

Rates for immigrant students across all grade levels and TELPAS domains clustered around the beginning and intermediate levels (range: 72% to 92%). The highest rates of immigrant students at the advanced and advanced high levels were in grades 9 to 12 (range: 13% to 35%), and rates at the advanced and advanced high levels were highest for the listening (range: 23% to 28%) domain. For both the reading and writing domains, immigrant student rates at the advanced and advanced high levels increased as grade level increased.

One-year trends in domain proficiency rates for immigrant students varied and ranged from the largest decreases for grades 9 to 12 in reading (beginning: -10 percentage points) to the largest increase also in grades 9 to 12 in reading

(intermediate: +12 percentage points). For immigrant students in all grade levels overall, rates of students at the advanced and advanced high proficiency levels for the listening domain increased slightly more over one year than for the speaking, reading, and writing domains.

Over 40 percent of immigrant students across all domains who took the *TELPAS* in 2019 and 2020 remained at the same proficiency level (range: 40% to 63%). Except for grades 9 to 12 in the speaking domain, immigrant students progressed (range: 22% to 52%) at higher rates across all domains and grade levels than they regressed (range: 4% to 19%). For immigrant students overall, progression rates were higher in 2020 than in 2019 in listening, speaking, and reading, and were lower in writing.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the key findings, the following recommendations are offered for stakeholders.

Continue to support immigrant student identification and reporting in Dallas ISD. Immigrant student enrollment in the Dallas ISD has increased over the last few years (+44% since 2018-19), and that finding may in part be attributed to more rigorous identification of immigrant students and more consistent reporting in the district demographic files. Continuing efforts to accurately identify and report the number of immigrant students will help the Immigrant Program receive adequate funding and bolster their ability to provide the appropriate amount and type of services to support all immigrant students.

Proactively identify immigrant students in need of tutoring. No campuses requested tutoring funds for immigrant students in 2019-20, despite availability of funding from the BE/ESL Department. Program staff members should take measures to seek out immigrant students who may need tutoring services, such as through periodically reviewing available data or seeking out teacher recommendations to identify students.

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.

Continue to provide activities and trainings for parents of immigrant students. The Student Intake Center hosted events such as parent orientation sessions and Family Literacy Fairs during the 2019-20 school year. From 2018-19 to 2019-20, parent activities and trainings saw a nine percent attendance increase, exceeding the BE/ESL Department goal of a three percent increase in attendance. To keep parents engaged with the academic success of their immigrant children, the BE/ESL Department should continue to focus efforts on increasing parent attendance in these activities.

Explore weakest areas of English proficiency for enhanced focus. 2020 *TELPAS* domain data should be viewed with caution because of the transition to at-home learning in March 2020 and incomplete data for some students, primarily as a result of the low percentage of completed assessments in the writing domain (68% of test takers). Nonetheless, future evaluations should continue to examine these domains to develop plans to target the weakest areas. Efforts could further improve the rates of students progressing at least one level a year.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Support Services for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer or Questioning (LGBTQ) Youth program began during the 2018-19 school year through the creation of Gay-Straight Alliances (GSAs) at 16 Dallas Independent School District (ISD) campuses. GSAs are student-run groups that provide safe spaces for LGBTQ students and straight-student allies to socialize and learn to advocate for policies that make schools safer for LGBTQ youth. In addition to supporting GSAs, the program also promoted the Out for Safe Schools (OSS) program, which provided teachers and other Dallas ISD staff members with training in harassment intervention and creating an LGBTQ-inclusive environment.¹ Staff members who completed the training received an OSS badge, which was worn with the Dallas ISD identification badge and identified the staff member as an LGBTQ ally. This training continued in 2019-20. The program was not funded during previous school years. This year, the program was funded with \$96,028 from Title IV, Part A.²

This evaluation examined GSA implementation and activities on campuses, GSA student-member experiences, and OSS training attendance. The district transitioned to at-home learning beginning March 23, 2020 because of COVID-19. Changes to programming as a result of the transition are detailed in the relevant components of the report.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS/OUTCOMES

How were GSAs implemented during the 2019-20 school year?

Methodology

The evaluator received a list of campus GSAs from the Support Services for LGBTQ Youth coordinator on January 13, 2020. GSA sponsor training session attendance data were received on July 09, 2020. The evaluator calculated the number of sponsors and who attended each training session.

To document GSA activities, the evaluator interviewed three GSA faculty sponsors, observed three GSA meetings, and surveyed participating students. Because of the district transition to at-home learning in response to the COVID-19

pandemic, GSA sponsor interviews and meeting observations were cancelled after March 23, 2020.

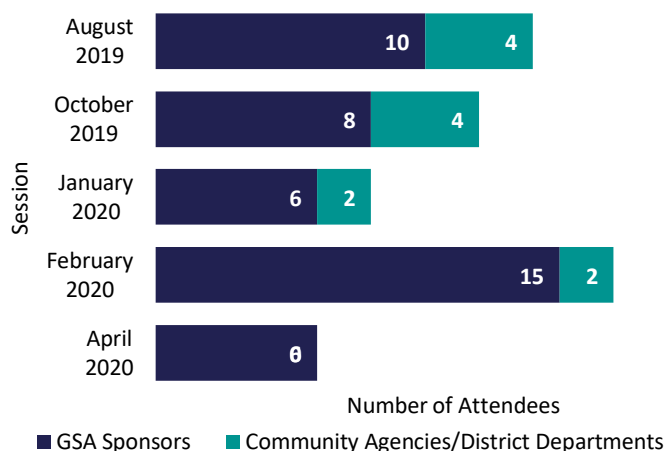
Results

GSA Formation and Support

The program aided in forming GSAs at 16 high school campuses during the 2018-19 school year.³ During the 2019-20 school year, three additional campuses formed GSAs: J. L. Long Middle School, Irma Lerma Rangel Young Women's Leadership School, and Harry Stone Montessori Academy.

The Support Services for LGBTQ Youth provided five training sessions for GSA sponsors throughout the school year (Figure 1). Trainings included overviews of the Support Services for LGBTQ Youth and GSAs; presentations by representatives from Big Brothers Big Sisters, the Dallas Police Department, and the American Civil Liberties Union; discussion of the 2020 Teen Pride festival; and self-care tips for GSA students and sponsors. Sponsors could attend more than one training. While the training was designed for GSA sponsors, representatives from community agencies and staff members with other district departments also attended. The first four sessions were conducted in person; the April 2020 session was attended virtually.

Figure 1: 2019-20 GSA Sponsor Training Session Attendance



Source: Support Services for LGBTQ Youth on 07/09/20.

¹ Support Services for LGBTQ Youth coordinated with the Resource Center to provide OSS training. More information on the Resource Center can be found here: <https://www.myresourcecenter.org/>.

² Reported on 02/28/20.

³ 2018-19 campuses included Bryan Adams High School, W. H. Adamson High School, CityLab High School, Emmett J. Conrad High School,

Hillcrest High School, Thomas Jefferson High School, Justin F. Kimball High School, Moises E. Molina High School, Franklin D. Roosevelt High School, Seagoville High School, Skyline High School, Spruce High School, Sunset High School, Yvonne A. Ewell Townview Magnet Center, Booker T. Washington High School for the Visual and Performing Arts, and Woodrow Wilson High School.

GSA Activities

GSA sponsors provided spaces for GSA meetings, coordinated presentations with outside organizations and Support Services for LGBTQ Youth, but generally allowed students to lead meetings and direct the activities that the group pursued. Presentations from outside agencies included LGBTQ rights in schools and LGBTQ experiences in law enforcement. Other activities ranged from social and artistic (e.g., writing letters to GSA members at other campuses, homecoming parade floats, hallway decorations, and creating designs for ceiling tiles), to learning the history of LGBTQ people and issues, to activist (e.g., writing letters to campus administrators to promote gender-neutral restrooms).

How did GSA student members perceive LGBTQ issues on their campuses and the effectiveness of GSA activities during the 2019-20 school year?

Methodology

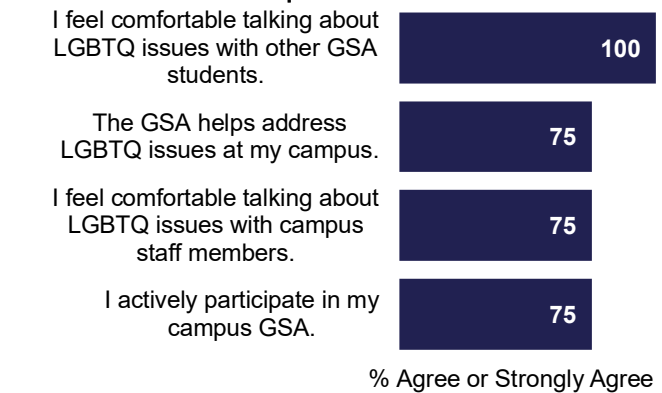
In partnership with the LGBTQ Support Services coordinator, the evaluator developed a 19-item student survey addressing perceptions of GSA activities, perceptions of the campus environment, and experiences with harassment and bullying. The surveys were originally intended to be completed on Scantron sheets. Because surveys could neither be delivered nor picked up after spring break because of district building closures due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the evaluator created an electronic version of the survey to be delivered during virtual GSA meetings.⁴ The evaluator used frequency analyses to summarize the percentage of students who responded positively to each campus environment item (agree or strongly agree). For harassment and bullying items, the evaluator calculated the percentage of students who responded affirmatively.

Results

GSA Activities and Campus Environment

Twelve students completed the survey; due to the small number of respondents, results should be viewed with caution as they may not be fully representative of all GSA students. Most students reported that they actively participated in their campus GSA (75%; Figure 2) and had attended six or more GSA meetings over the course of the school year (58%). All students reported that they felt comfortable talking with other GSA students about LGBTQ issues, and 75 percent felt comfortable talking about LGBTQ issues with campus staff members. Seventy-five percent of respondents indicated that the GSA helped address LGBTQ-related campus issues.

Figure 2: 2019-20 GSA Student Survey Campus Environment Item Responses

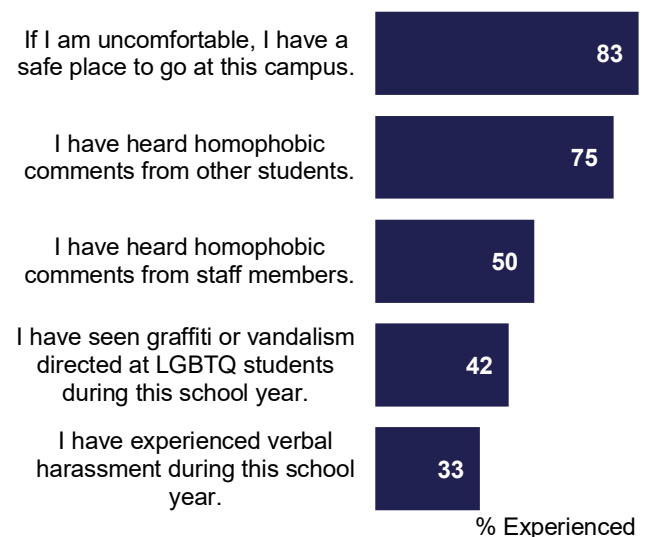


Source: GSA Student Survey administered 04/09/20 to 06/09/20.
Note: Number of respondents = 12.

Harassment and Bullying

While no students reported that they experienced physical harassment or cyberbullying during the 2019-20 school year, 75 percent had heard homophobic comments from other students, and 50 percent reported hearing homophobic or negative comments about gender expression from campus staff members, though the comments occurred rarely (Figure 3). Forty-two percent of respondents had seen graffiti or vandalism directed toward LGBTQ students at their campus, and 33 percent were directly harassed verbally. Over 83 percent of the respondents indicated that, if uncomfortable, they had a safe place to go at their school; however, 17 percent did not have a safe place to go.

Figure 3: 2019-20 GSA Student Survey Harassment and Bullying Item Responses



Source: GSA Student Survey administered 04/09/20 to 06/09/20.
Note: Number of respondents = 12.

⁴ The online survey included one additional open-ended response item asking students to describe the GSA activities that they had participated in during the school year. The survey was administered 04/09/20 to 06/09/20.

No responding students reported receiving a discipline referral and one student (8%) reported experiencing homelessness during the 2019-20 school year.

What were the attendance outcomes for Dallas ISD staff members at OSS training sessions during the 2019-20 school year?

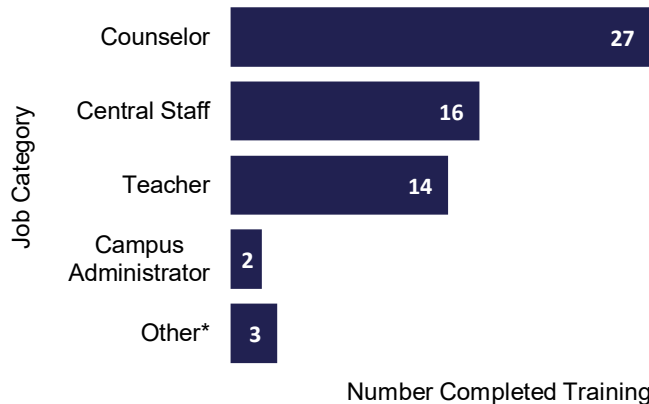
Methodology

The evaluator received a list of district staff members who received OSS training during the 2019-20 school year on June 24, 2020 and merged these data with the district personnel file dated April 7, 2020. The evaluator calculated the number of staff members who completed the training by job category.

Results

Exactly 62 district staff members completed OSS training and became recognized as LGBTQ allies during the 2019-20 school year. The number of staff members by job category is shown in Figure 4. The largest number of attendees were counselors ($n = 27$), central staff members ($n = 16$), and teachers ($n = 14$). Two attendees were campus administrators.

Figure 4: 2019-20 District Staff Members Completing OSS Training



Source: Support Services for LGBTQ Youth on 06/24/20 and district personnel file dated 04/07/20.

Note: Information on three district staff members could not be matched in the district personnel file. *Other included media specialists and a registrar.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Encourage OSS training for all district employees at the campus level, particularly campus administrators and members of the Dallas ISD Police Department. The OSS training ensures that district staff members are understanding of LGBTQ issues, can provide a safe space for LGBTQ youth, and are provided with LGBTQ harassment intervention strategies. Such roles on campus should not be limited to counselors and teachers. Support Services for LGBTQ Youth should develop strategies to increase the number of on-campus administrators and police who can serve in these capacities. This may provide support for the 17 percent of students of students who reported having no safe place on campus.

Promote completion of the GSA student survey to GSA sponsors. It is important to gauge the experiences of LGBTQ youth in the Dallas ISD, and the GSA survey is an important part of that objective. While the transition to at-home learning prohibited the collection of the physical surveys, few students ($n = 12$) completed the survey electronically. Because the survey relies on GSA sponsors for distribution to students, it is imperative to communicate to the sponsors the importance of getting as many responses as possible from students at secondary campuses across the district.

EA20-633-4

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The goal of the Coaching for Technology Integration program was to help campus instructional staff and administrators improve their understanding of 1) ways of thinking and working directly with technology tools and resources, 2) how teaching and learning is changed when technologies are used, and 3) the way technology and subject area content influence and constrain each other. The approach is based on the interactions between three major knowledge categories: pedagogy, content, and technology. This work was supported using Blended Learning (BL) Instructional Lead Coaches (ILCs) to bridge instruction, content, and technology by providing onsite campus support to campus instructional staff and administrators. The program received \$1,099,610 in Title IV funding for the 2019-20 school year.¹

The purpose of this evaluation was to summarize program implementation, professional development (PD), perceptions of the program, and the use of teacher-created landing pages. The evaluator used program documents, interviews, observations, and surveys to evaluate the program. The district transitioned to at-home learning beginning March 23, 2020. Resulting changes in program implementation are discussed in the next section of the report.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS/OUTCOMES

How was the Coaching for Technology Integration program implemented during the 2019-20 school year?

The 2019-20 Coaching for Technology Integration program supported the districtwide initiative to have one device per student by creating a BL environment across the entire district. In 2018-19, the Instructional Technology (IT) Department began implementing 1:1 device use by distributing Chrome books to each middle school student. In 2019-20, 34 high schools received Chrome books for each student. Some elementary schools received digital devices (Kindles, grades K-2; Chrome books, grades 3 to 6, as applicable) for each of their students in 2019-20. Complete implementation at the elementary level was planned for the future; however, individual devices were distributed to many more elementary students after spring break to ensure

students had access to a device during the district’s move to at-home learning.²

In addition to providing devices, the initiative was supported through the use of BL ILCs, whose roles were restructured in 2019-20. The changes between 2018-19 and 2019-20 are described in Table 1.

Table 1: Blended Learning ILC Role Changes from 2018-19 to 2019-20

Blended Learning ILCs...	
2018-19	2019-20
were not assigned to a network.	were each assigned to a network.
reported to the 2018-19 ILC program ED.	reported directly to EDs from their assigned network.
focused on supporting campuses that used BL instruction.	focused on supporting campuses from a content lens, as well as with BL technology.

Source: Interview with program director, 10/10/19.

In 2019-20, a total of nine BL ILCs provided onsite campus support to Campus Instructional Coaches (CICs), Principals, Assistant Principals (APs), and teachers (Monday-Thursday).³ While the BL ILCs focused on BL technology support, they also provided content support to the campuses in their assigned network.

BL ILCs supported campuses by:

- designing and providing on-site support activities to increase efficiencies in the use of the changing technology tools and resources,
- developing and delivering training to campus administrators and instructional staff,
- providing support to CICs to reinforce BL pedagogy through new routines and procedures to better integrate technology,
- providing differentiated support and PD for campus administrative teams to improve campus data-driven decision making and support school instructional design,
- providing BL support to all the content ILCs so they could expose their campuses to BL, and

¹ The funding amount was provided by Special Revenue Funds Management on 02/28/20.

² The district also provided hot spots, as possible, to give students internet access; however, hot spot distribution during the district’s move to at-home learning is beyond the scope of this report.

³ BL ILCs spent time with their Executive Director (ED) on Fridays. BL ILCs received campus support assignments from their network ED.

- preparing CIC conference presentations with other ILCs to ensure that BL was included and that CICs could then take BL-related information back to their campuses.

BL ILCs also assisted campuses that participated in technology-related partnership grants. These included the private Verizon Innovative Learning (VIL) grant at seven campuses and the Middle School Innovation Zone (MIZ) grant, a TEA grant, at four campuses.

ILC responsibilities shifted after at-home learning began on March 23, 2020 because of COVID-19. The program manager reported that ILCs focused on supporting campuses with technology by troubleshooting virtual classrooms, working with CICs to troubleshoot any student technology needs, hosting virtual Professional Learning Communities as needed, and hosting virtual PD sessions for CICs and campuses as needed.

Blended Learning ILC Observations

To better understand the BL ILC role, the evaluator conducted half-day observations (one each) with three of the nine BL ILCs in 2019-20 (between December 2019 and February 2020). In general, BL ILCs were observed collaborating with others to support campus staff. One BL ILC was observed working with VIL coaches to support Medrano and Cary middle schools. The same BL ILC then visited Comstock Middle School to assist with Imagine Learning software training for six newly hired MIZ teachers, and to check in with the CIC about any concerns.

The second BL ILC and another ILC were observed assisting with the Dallas Blended Learning and Equity Support Middle School Cohort Foundations Workshop, a training for a cohort of six middle schools selected to participate in a pilot program to implement the BL model.⁴ The workshop was presented by Education Elements and provided foundational information about blended learning.

The third BL ILC and two other ILCs were observed assisting with a BL training provided by VIL presenters for four VIL middle school campuses.⁵

What BL professional development was provided to CICs in the 2019-20 school year?

The BL ILCs worked with 64 ILCs to provide PD for the CIC Conferences using BL so that CICs could then expose their campuses to BL. ILCs provided training to the CICs at two full-day CIC conferences.⁶ CICs attended one content (English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, or Social Studies) and two Choice sessions at each conference.⁷

Of the 350 CICs, 38 percent ($n = 133$; 91 elementary, 17 middle, and 25 high school level) participated in the October 2019 CIC Conference, which included 11 available Choice sessions. The most attended Choice sessions included Coaching: Observation and Feedback ($n = 50$, 38%), Google Toolbox: Tools for Tracking ($n = 42$, 32%), and Coaching in the Moment ($n = 32$, 24%).

Twenty-five percent ($n = 89$, 64 elementary, 15 middle, and 10 high school level) of the 350 CICs attended the January 2020 CIC Conference. The most attended Choice sessions included Map Data and Reports ($n = 28$, 31%), Google Toolbox ($n = 20$, 22%), and Let's Get This Write ($n = 15$, 17%).

What were the perceptions of the Coaching for Technology Integration Program during the 2019-20 school year?

Perceptions of BL ILCs

A survey about perceptions of ILCs was administered in May 2020 and responses were received from 8 EDs, 51 APs, 219 CICs, and 65 ILCs as part of the Differentiated Instructional Support for District Needs Program evaluation (Barton, 2020). Results applicable to this project are provided.

Prior to at-home learning, almost half (49%) of ILCs indicated that they provided technology/BL support to their CICs. Regarding BL ILCs specifically, 75 percent of CICs, 62 percent of ILCs, and 37 percent of EDs reported that technology use was adequately supported. Many CICs (68%) responded that the technology supports received from their ILC in 2019-20 were helpful or very helpful. Over 50 percent of the APs agreed or strongly agreed that the ILCs provided technology support that met the needs of students (53%), teachers (55%), and CICs (55%).

CIC Perceptions of CIC Conferences

Program staff members provided the evaluator with CIC feedback results from the two CIC conferences. The October 2020 conference data showed that, overall, 77 percent of the 133 CICs in attendance were satisfied or very satisfied with the Choice session training provided. Ninety-two percent of the 89 CICs that attended the January 2020 CIC conference were satisfied or very satisfied with the Choice sessions provided.

What percentage of teachers created landing pages during the 2019-20 school year?

The Learning Management System (LMS), a technology system adopted by the District in 2018, could be used by

⁴ Pilot program schools included: Dade, Holmes, Kennedy-Curry, Piedmont, Seagoville, and Young Men's Leadership Academy.

⁵ VIL training was provided to Atwell, Lang, Medrano, and Quintanilla middle schools.

⁶ Conferences occurred in October 2019 and January 2020. Additional conferences were scheduled in November 2019 and March 2020 but

canceled because of damage to district buildings after widespread storms and CICs needing to be on campus to prepare for spring testing, respectively.

⁷ Conference attendance was not mandatory for the CICs.

teachers to access the curriculum provided by the Teaching and Learning department, create lessons for each class, and give class assignments to students. Assignments were provided to students through a landing page for each class created in each teacher's LMS. Students could use their devices to access and complete assignments virtually as well as view their grades.

In 2019-20, a districtwide goal of the Coaching for Technology Integration program was to increase the number of middle and high school teachers who created landing pages. Program staff members provided end-of-year data about the number of middle and high school teachers who created landing pages for each class that they taught.⁸ In 2019-20, 56 percent of classes had landing pages created by teachers (class *N* = 14,427). This was slightly higher than the 55 percent of classes that had pages (class *N* = 12,138) in 2018-19.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Continue to provide campuses with blended learning and technology support through BL ILCs. Ongoing technology support and training will be imperative as the district seeks to build buy-in for BL, expand BL in the future,

and help campus staff through COVID-19-related technology challenges. BL ILCs were observed assisting vendors in providing BL training to campus staff members, and campus staff members positively rated BL ILC support. Over 50 percent of the APs indicated that they agreed or strongly agreed that the ILCs provided technology support that met the needs of students (53%), teachers (55%), and CICs (55%). Most CICs (68%) responded that the technology support received from their ILC in 2019-20 was helpful or very helpful.

Continue to provide CIC Conferences and encourage CIC attendance. Of the 350 CICs, 38 percent (*n* = 133) participated in the October 2019 CIC Conference and 25 percent (*n* = 89) attended the January 2020 CIC conference. Increased CIC attendance will allow CICs to further expose their campuses to BL and grow BL proficiency in the district.

REFERENCE

Barton, M. (2020). 2019-20 Evaluation of the Differentiated Instructional Support for District Needs Program. Dallas, TX. Dallas Independent School District.

EA20-634-4

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⁸ The number of middle and high school teachers was provided; however, the number of courses taught was not. The number of courses taught was calculated using estimates provided by department staff indicating that, at

minimum, teachers taught six classes at the middle school level and five at the high school level.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Achieving in the Middle (AIM) initiative was launched in the 2019-20 school year by the School Leadership department. The AIM initiative provided support to middle school students through five core components: strategic staffing; instructional excellence; a positive, responsive culture; enrichment opportunities; and supportive partnerships. This evaluation focused on the first three components. The budget for the AIM initiative in 2019-20 was \$10,084,036. The purpose of this report was to summarize the 2019-20 context, process, and outcomes of the Dallas Independent School District (ISD) AIM initiative.¹ Contextual information about the AIM initiative was gathered through review of internal documents and interviews with School Leadership department central staff members. Process information was examined through interviews with AIM initiative staff members, meeting observations, and surveys. Outcomes included fall attendance and *Assessments of Course Performance (ACP)* data. The report would typically examine spring outcome data, however, the Dallas ISD transitioned to at-home learning in response to the COVID-19 pandemic beginning March 23, 2020 (after spring break). As most end-of-year assessments were canceled, segments of evaluation questions relating to those assessments were omitted from the report.² After the transition to at-home learning, the department continued to support district families, and ILTs and PLCs continued to support the teachers they served.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS/OUTCOMES

What was the context of the AIM initiative in 2019-20?

Methodology

Information about the context of the AIM initiative was gathered from the March 7, 2019 board briefing presentation, interviews with AIM central staff members and the EOD program director, meeting documents, and PD observations.

Results

Twenty-three middle schools were included in the AIM initiative in 2019-20. To implement the strategic staffing component of AIM, the School Leadership department implemented a Distributed Leadership Model (DLM). The

DLM included two components: segmenting physical spaces and providing additional staff. Staffing included additional Assistant Principals (APs) and counselors at each campus (one AP and counselor per grade level) and added core content Instructional Lead Teachers (ILTs). As of January 2020, School Leadership hired 21 APs, 22 counselors, and 76 ILTs to supplement existing staffing for the DLM. The additional staffing allowed for the creation of Content Leadership Teams (CLTs), consisting of APs and ILTs. CLTs helped teachers determine where to focus their instruction.

To foster instructional excellence, students were provided with opportunities for additional tutoring while campus staff members were provided with professional development (PD) and other supports. All campus leadership staff members participated in PD about the fundamentals of the DLM, techniques and routines for a positive and responsive culture, and the AIM techniques and skills for content instruction (the Get Better Faster 90-Day Program for teachers; Bambrick-Santoyo, 2016). ILTs also received additional monthly training that they then relayed to the teachers they served. Teachers were also supported through direct ILT coaching (observation and feedback cycles) and grade and/or content level Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) organized by CLTs. CLTs trained teachers in PLCs using Look Forward and Look Back Weekly Data Meetings (WDMs) that aligned instruction with Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) standards and helped teachers identify gaps in student knowledge and then determine clear action steps to address those gaps.

To foster a positive, responsive culture, campus staff members were provided PD which focused on schoolwide systems and structures, a joyful environment, restorative practices and social and emotional learning (SEL). Systems and structures training included practices to structure each segment of a student's day with a routine (e.g., arrival, dismissal, lunch, transitions, and celebrations), and to structure physical environments through classroom organization techniques (e.g., seating charts). These routines and organizational strategies were bolstered by staff communicating clear expectations to promote good behavior. Campus staff members received PD about encouraging a joyful environment (e.g., narrating positive behavior and displaying student work) and modeling positive relationships with adults and students. Finally,

¹ Some methodologies are provided here, but more details are available in the full report.

² *State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR)* and spring *Measures of Academic Progress (MAP)* and ACPs were intended to be

used as measures of student achievement for the 2019-20 school year, but these end-of-year assessments were canceled after the transition to at-home learning.

teachers were taught to use SEL techniques including welcoming rituals, restorative circles, and brain breaks.

What were the AIM student characteristics?

Methodology

To determine AIM student characteristics, the evaluator analyzed Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) data.³

Results

Of the 18,688 2019-20 AIM students, over half were male (56%), and most were either Hispanic (69%) or African American (26%) and economically disadvantaged (93%). Also, over half of the AIM students were English learners (51%), and 13 percent were enrolled in special education.

How was the ILT component of AIM implemented during the first year of the initiative?

Methodology

To examine implementation of the ILT component of the AIM initiative, the evaluator interviewed AIM central staff members, reviewed documentation from the summer kickoff and observed and/or reviewed documentation from the monthly ILT PD meetings. The evaluator also requested information from AIM leadership staff members about changes due to the switch to at-home learning.

Results

School Leadership sought teachers with a Teacher Excellence Initiative rating of Proficient I or higher to apply to ILT positions. Most ILTs taught one to two class periods per day and spent the rest of their time preparing for meetings with their PLCs and coaching the two to eleven teachers assigned to them according to content area (and in most cases, grade level). ILTs worked closely with APs and in some cases, CICs, to ensure lessons aligned with Texas Education Agency guidelines and the Board of Trustees' policies. ILTs also worked with their PLC CLTs to collaborate on teacher support plans and coaching schedules.

To transition teachers into ILT roles, School Leadership central staff members delivered PD sessions to ILTs (the campus leadership PD and monthly trainings mentioned in the context section).⁴ After receiving PD, ILTs provided the PD to their teachers and used this information to coach teachers in various techniques and skills in PLC meetings as well as one-on-one classroom observation and feedback cycles.

After the switch to at-home learning in March 2020 due to COVID-19, Network Coordinators oversaw virtual ILT PD on topics including topics such as technology talk, how to implement lessons virtually, best practices for using

at-home tools, and other content-specific topics. ILTs continued individual and campus-level coaching via Zoom meetings where they provided feedback on modeling videos and lesson activities. ILTs also visited their teachers' Zoom sessions with students and provided coaching "in-the-moment" and co-teaching.

What were the perceptions of the ILTs and teachers served by the ILTs?

Methodology

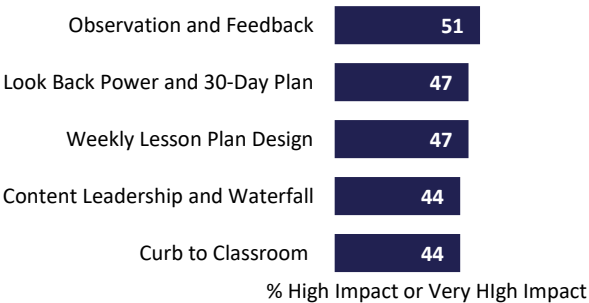
To understand ILT perceptions of the AIM initiative and teacher perceptions of the ILTs that supported them, the evaluator developed two surveys in partnership with AIM central staff members. The surveys were administered during the spring 2020 semester using emails with a survey link along with follow-up reminders. Frequency and descriptive analyses were conducted for rating-scale items on the surveys. Content analyses were conducted to examine the open-ended items. Responses were categorized into themes and tabulated. Some open-ended responses included information that fit into more than one theme.

Results

AIM ILT Survey

Of the 76 ILTs who were sent a survey, 60 responded (79%). ILTs most commonly served between one to five teachers (58%) and met with the teachers they served daily (80%). A sizeable proportion of ILTs rated all PDs as "high impact" or "very high impact" (44% to 51%; Figure 1).

Figure 1: 2019-20 AIM ILT Survey Responses About Perceptions of Professional Development



Source: AIM ILT survey administered spring 2020.
Note: Ns are available in Appendix D of the full report. N/A responses were excluded.

Overall satisfaction with PD was higher than impact ratings. Over 74 percent of ILTs reported being satisfied (either "satisfied" or "very satisfied") with the quality of the PD, collaboration with school administrators, and the quality of feedback and support they received from the CLT. Open-ended success responses (N = 43) indicated successes were development of effective instructional

³ The PEIMS data file was dated 10/31/19.

⁴ A list of specific topics covered in each monthly PD is available in the full report.

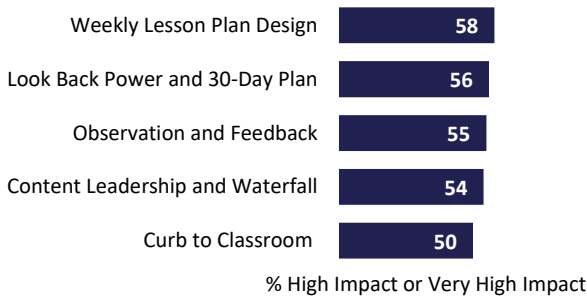
strategies and content delivery ($n = 14$), collaboration and discussion ($n = 10$), and teacher growth ($n = 9$). Challenges reported ($N = 44$) were time limitations ($n = 12$), balancing teaching and ILT duties ($n = 9$), and the workload assigned to ILTs ($n = 8$).

AIM ILT Teacher Survey

Teacher surveys were sent to 1,164 active email addresses; however, there were 464 teachers reportedly served by ILTs. After removing invalid emails and those who marked that they were not served by an ILT, 318 were included in the analyses (69% response rate).

Teachers most commonly reported meeting with their ILTs every day (42%). When asked about the impact of the PD provided by ILTs, about half of teachers reported all PDs had a “high impact” or “very high impact” on their success for the academic year (50% to 58%; Figure 2).

Figure 2: 2019-20 AIM ILT Teacher Survey Perceptions of Professional Development



Source: 2019-20 AIM ILT teacher survey administered spring 2020.
Note: Ns are available in Appendix E of the full report. N/A responses were excluded.

When asked about their overall satisfaction with the ILT component of AIM, many teachers reported being “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with the collaboration with school administrators (73%), feedback and support from ILTs (69%), and the quality of PD (68%). Teachers most commonly reported their ILTs providing them with PLC support (87%), working with campus administration on instructional practices (68%), and assistance with implementation of district curriculum (63%). When asked about the quality of ILT supports, many teachers “agreed” or “strongly agreed” that ILTs knew or found answers to questions (78%), presented suggestions positively (77%), and fostered a relationship that enhanced their teaching (70%).

Open-ended success responses ($N = 210$) indicated that the most common successes were observation and feedback cycles ($n = 44$), collaboration between ILTs and teachers in PLCs and the support network PLCs provided teachers ($n = 39$), and making engaging lessons/lesson

planning ($n = 25$). Challenges ($N = 205$) included time constraints of teachers and ILTs ($n = 11$), ILTs not fulfilling the duties of the role ($n = 10$), not enough observation/coaching from ILTs ($n = 9$), and too many meetings/meetings were too long ($n = 9$). When asked about the changes in the ILT-teacher relationship after the switch to at-home learning ($N = 273$), teachers most frequently reported that there were no changes ($n = 131$).⁵ However, the most frequently reported changes were less frequent ILT-teacher meetings ($n = 34$), a decline in the quality of interpersonal communication between ILTs and teachers ($n = 17$), and a change in communication medium between ILTs and teachers ($n = 13$).

How satisfied were the teachers with the Education Opens Doors curriculum?

Methodology

To understand teachers’ perceptions of the EOD curriculum (designed to support college, career, and military readiness),⁶ the evaluator received data from an EOD customer service survey distributed to teachers implementing the EOD curriculum. The survey was designed by the Dallas ISD School Leadership Assistant Superintendent, the EOD Director of Programs, and the EOD Data Manager. Only the teachers who selected an AIM campus as their place of employment were included in these analyses. The survey was administered during a four-week window from mid-February through mid-March 2020 through an email with a survey link along with weekly follow-up reminders. Frequency and descriptive analyses were conducted for rating-scale items on the surveys.

Results

Twenty-nine teachers across AIM campuses implemented the EOD curriculum. The response rate for AIM EOD teachers was 45 percent. Teachers most commonly reported teaching EOD curriculum five to six class periods per week (46%) to an average of either 16 to 20 or 31 or more students per EOD class (31%, for both). All respondents “strongly agreed” that they felt accountable implementing the EOD curriculum, were comfortable asking for support, and were satisfied with the support provided by Impact Managers.⁷ Most (92%) of teachers reported having positive relationships with their Impact Managers. Overall, 54 percent of teachers reported being “greatly satisfied” with the EOD program. More teachers were satisfied with in-person coaching and support (100%) and email/phone support (92%) than with technology support (62%). When asked about the perceived impact of implementing the EOD curriculum, 92 percent of teachers reported student engagement “somewhat improved” or “greatly improved” and 77 percent reported improved job satisfaction and relationships with students (62%). Eighty-five percent of

⁵ A response to this question was required while the questions about successes and challenges did not require a response; thus, the number of responses differ.
⁶ For more information on Education Opens Doors, see <https://educationopensdoors.org/>.

⁷ EOD’s Impact Managers provide training and support to teachers who implement the EOD program including classroom observations, coaching and consultation.

teachers responded that they would use the EOD curriculum next year and 92 percent said that they would recommend EOD to other educators.

What were the student attendance rates for AIM campuses?

Methodology

The evaluator analyzed AIM school student attendance rates for the fall 2019 semester. First, the evaluator calculated the number of days attended out of the number of days enrolled. Next, frequency analyses were conducted. Results from fall 2018 were also examined to provide a pre-program comparison.⁸

Results

In fall 2019, the overall attendance rate for AIM students was 95.4 percent. This was comparable to the fall 2018 attendance rate (95.3%).

Did AIM students score at or above ACP standards?

Methodology

To measure AIM student academic performance, the evaluator merged PEIMS demographic data files with fall ACP data files for the 2018-19 and 2019-20 school years.⁹ The evaluator conducted a frequency analysis of ACP reading and mathematics scale scores of 70 or higher (passing rates) for AIM students. For comparison purposes, the evaluator also examined fall 2018 passing rates and calculated one-year change rates in percentage points.¹⁰

Results

Between 35 to 72 percent of AIM students passed (a scale score of 70 or higher) the reading ACPs and between 44 to 91 percent passed the mathematics ACPs in 2019-20. From 2018-19 to 2019-20, student ACP passing rates generally decreased in reading (9 of 12 assessments) and mathematics (4 of 7 assessments) at AIM campuses with some exceptions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Continue use of the ILT model to support teachers. Most survey respondents “agreed” or “strongly agreed” that ILTs provided them with quality support.

Clearly define the ILT role and specific expectations assigned to the role. Of the 60 ILT survey respondents, some reported that they had difficulty balancing their ILT duties with other duties assigned to them ($n = 9$) and that the workload assigned to ILTs was too heavy ($n = 8$). Considering some teachers also reported ILTs not fulfilling their duties ($n = 10$), a clear definition of the ILT role as well as specific expectations considering the number of teachers assigned to the ILT and ILT teaching loads should be provided to staff members at the beginning of each school year.

Determine the optimal range for the ILT-to-teacher ratio. There was a wide range of ILT-to-teacher ratios across AIM campuses (2 to 11 teachers per ILT). A large ILT-to-teacher ratio may negatively impact the quality of support provided by the ILT and potentially impact student outcomes.

Refine the AIM PD according to ILT and teacher needs. Some PD sessions were more often rated as impactful by ILTs and teachers than others. AIM leaders should identify why ILTs and teachers perceived certain PD sessions as being more impactful or not and tailor the PD sessions accordingly.

REFERENCES

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⁸ PEIMS data files dated 03/08/19 (2018-19) and 10/31/19 (2019-20). Fall attendance data files dated 05/07/19 (2018-19) and 01/24/20 (2019-20).

⁹ PEIMS data files dated 03/08/19 (2018-19) and 10/31/19 (2019-20). District student fall ACP files dated 07/22/19 (2018-19) and 02/20/20 (2019-20). For more information on ACPs, see Jimenez, 2018.

¹⁰ Because ACP exams are scaled each year based upon the current year's results, readers should exercise caution when comparing year-to-year results. One-year passing rate comparisons are provided for informational purposes only; percentage point changes included in full report.