

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 unserveable. 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
Unserveable	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
OVDL	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.

REFERENCES

- Barton, M. & Voss, S. (2020) 2019-20 Evaluation of the Special Education for English Learners Program. Dallas, TX: Dallas Independent School District.
- Palladino, D., Mickelson, R., Hinkley, S., & Voss, S. (2019) 2018-19 Evaluation of the Bilingual and English as a Second Language Programs. Dallas, TX: Dallas Independent School District.
- Voss, S. (2020) 2019-20 Evaluation of the Title III Immigrant Program. Dallas, TX: Dallas Independent School District.

EA20-126-4

Sydney Voss, Ph.D., Evaluation Analyst II

©2020 Dallas Independent School District (Dallas ISD)

Mail a written request for permission to use or reproduce any part of this document to:

Dallas ISD Department of Evaluation and Assessment; H. B. Bell School Support Center; 2909 Buckner Blvd.; Box10; Dallas, TX 75228

An electronic version of this report and full 2019-20 report can be found at www.dallasisd.org/Page/888.

For more information, please contact Program Evaluation at evaluation@dallasisd.org.