

2019-20

Evaluation of the Virtual Summer School Program

DEPARTMENT OF EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT

*Michael Hinojosa, Ed. D.
Superintendent of Schools*



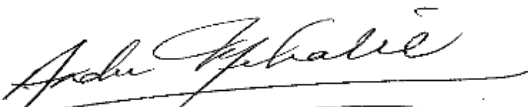
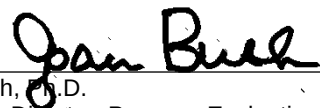
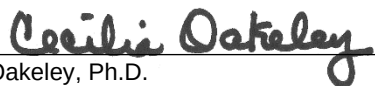
2019-20

Evaluation of the Virtual Summer School Program

Approved Report of the Department of Evaluation and Assessment

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

EL	English learner
ELO	Extended Learning Opportunities Department
ISD	Independent School District
PEIMS	Public Education Information Management System
MAP	<i>Measures of Academic Progress</i>
STAAR	<i>State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness</i>
TEKS	Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills

Evaluation of the Virtual Summer School Program

DEPARTMENT OF EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT

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.

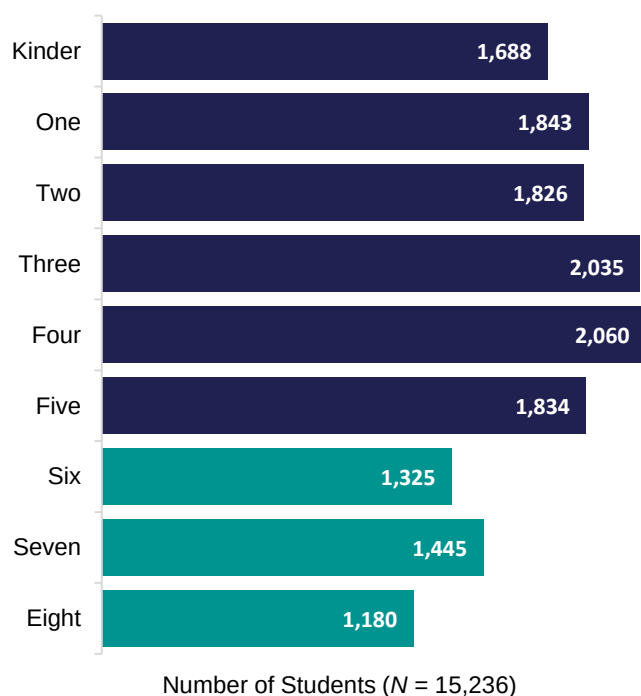
What were the results of the Virtual Summer School program?

Attendance, Enrollment, and Demographics

Campus staff members recorded attendance via a district-provided 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 E1. 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 E1: 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.

Continue blending synchronous and asynchronous learning.

Continue offering supplemental activities for students outside of core programming.

2019-20

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PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

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PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION

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.

¹All Dallas ISD high school students were able to complete coursework in a prescriptive or original credit format. Additionally, students previously enrolled in the Reconnection Centers and Phoenix Program had the ability to complete any coursework that was not completed during the 2019-20 school year.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS AND RESULTS

What are the characteristics of effective online learning programs?

Based on current research on best practices, the following components are key for virtual learning programs for primary and secondary grade level students: (a) building a sense of community; (b) fostering autonomy in students; (c) using multiple methods for assessing student learning; (d) maintaining frequent communication with students and their parents; and (e) participating in social and learning activities outside of the online environment (DiPietro, *et al*, 2008; Ferdig, 2006; Hawkins, *et al*, 2012; Mayes, *et al*, 2011; Savery, 2005).

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (2009) emphasizes the importance of “creating a caring community of learners” (p. 16) as the development of positive relationships contributes to the developmental and learning process of students. Continuing summer learning programs on the same campuses that students attend during the regular school year, with the same teachers and principals when possible, helps to contribute to a beneficial sense of community and neighborhood identity.

When kindergarten through grade eight students participate in asynchronous self-paced learning environments, they are afforded the ability to practice and demonstrate more autonomous behavior in completing their coursework. This feature of virtual learning requires students to demonstrate an increased level of motivation for completing coursework in an environment where there is reduced level of in-person supervision by an instructor (Austin, *et al*, 2010; Cavanaugh, 2001). However, if students lack motivation or parental oversight, then student outcomes may be adversely affected (Cavanaugh, 2001).

Utilizing multiple methods of assessing student progress, programs should identify what a student is able to achieve independently and in collaboration with others. By providing a combination of synchronous and asynchronous curricula, as well as opportunities for both independent and group tasks, programs can provide students with the most beneficial framework for learning (DiPietro, 2010).

Within a virtual elementary learning program, prompt and frequent communication is imperative in building a relationship between teachers and their students, as well as the families of each student. To enhance communication with students, virtual instructors should welcome input from students and parents and provide timely feedback to their questions (Mayes, *et al*, 2011). This reciprocal relationship is especially important for families of students who are considered at-risk (Rice, 2006).

Social and learning activities for virtual learners which take place outside the online environment help increase student enthusiasm for the virtual learning program while providing social-emotional benefits (Savery, 2005). Asynchronous enrichment activities may be offered in the arts, athletics, or puzzles and games. This factor may be especially important when planning summer virtual learning, during a time which students traditionally regard as reserved for relaxation and entertainment.

What was the amount of funding for the Virtual Summer School program?

Methodology

The amount of funding allotted for each of the summer programs was obtained primarily from the Summer Learning workscope for Title I, Part A. Additional information was obtained from the Special Revenue Funds Management Department and ELO staff.

Results

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.

How was the Virtual Summer School program implemented?

Methodology

The evaluator consulted ELO staff and reviewed internal ELO program records and planning materials to summarize program operational details.

Results

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 scores² on district common assessments; and (4) low scores on the mid-year MAP assessment. Students in grades prekindergarten through one were

² Assessment scores below satisfactory or passing, which varied by assessment.

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 math 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-Z³, 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 skills⁴. 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 leveled⁵ 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

³ Reading A-Z is a product of Cambium Learning Group.

⁴ ST Math is a product of Mind Research Institute.

⁵ The Reading A-Z application recognizes 29 reading levels between grades prekindergarten and eight.

required to meet the Approaches+ standard on STAAR.⁶ 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?

Methodology

Enrollment and Demographics

Campus staff members recorded attendance via a district-provided an online platform and provided access to data to the evaluator. The evaluator merged these data with the student demographic file dated May 29, 2020 and conducted descriptive and frequency analyses to determine student enrollment rates and demographic characteristics. Because Virtual Summer School was offered at nearly all Dallas ISD elementary and middle school campuses, overall enrollment is presented in aggregate by grade level. Student attendance data collected by program staff 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.”

⁶ Spring 2020 administration of the STAAR was canceled as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, this requirement was waived for 2019-20.

Promotion and Retention

The evaluator merged 2019-20 Virtual Summer School enrollment data collected by ELO staff with student enrollment data for the 2020-21 school year, obtained from the district student demographic file dated September 21, 2020. Crosstab analyses were then conducted to examine student promotion rates.

Classroom Observations

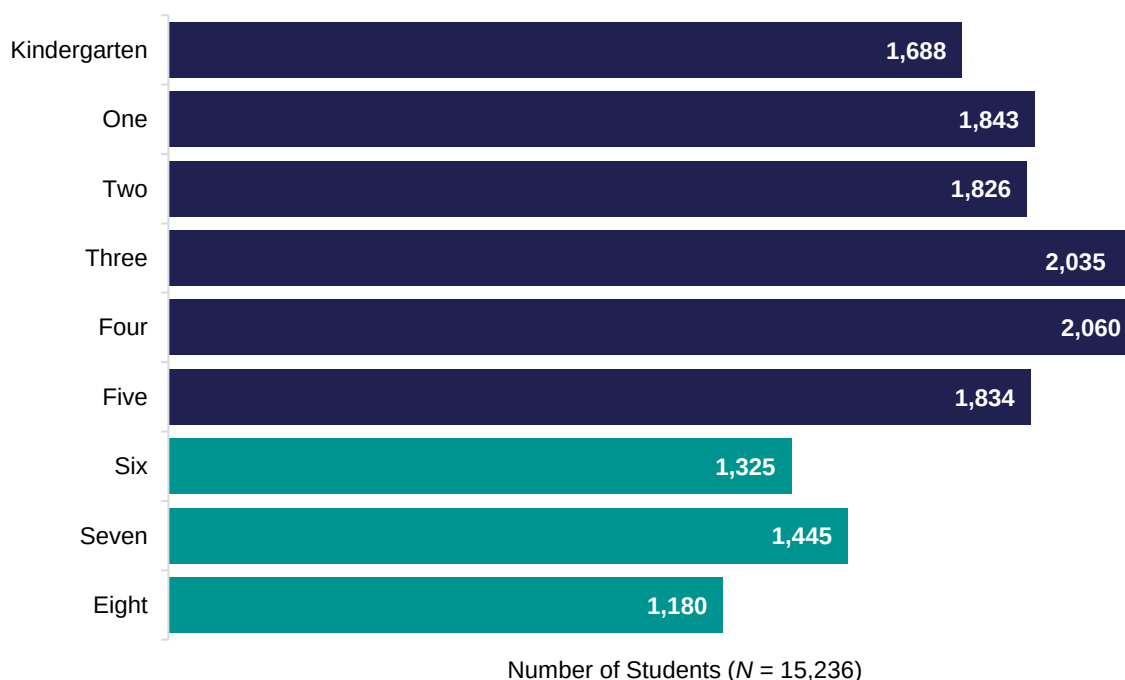
The evaluator observed teacher-conducted Google Classroom sessions in both reading and mathematics across a variety of campuses and grade levels using a standardized observation rubric in order to assess program implementation and quality. The summer observation instrument is presented in Appendix A.

Results

Enrollment and Demographics

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 (see Table 1). 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%).

Table 1: 2020 Virtual Summer School and Regular School Year Student Demographics Grades K-8

Demographic Variable	Virtual Summer School (N = 15,236)		Regular School Year, K-8 (N = 84,540)	
	n	%	n	%
Race				
Asian	114	0.7	955	1.1
African American	3,297	21.6	17,701	20.9
Hispanic	11,121	73.0	58,999	69.8
American Indian/Alaska Native	34	0.2	155	0.2
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	4	0.0	29	0.0
Two or More Races	217	1.4	1,653	2.0
White	449	2.9	5,048	6.0
Sex				
Female	6,896	45.3	41,453	49.0
Male	8,340	54.7	43,087	51.0
Special Student Groups				
EL	8,584	56.3	40,773	48.2
Special Education	1,716	11.3	9,170	10.8
Economically Disadvantaged	14,017	92.0	72,677	86.0

Source: Data retrieved from the district summer attendance file dated 08/04/20 and merged with the district demographic data file dated 05/29/20.

Note: Virtual Summer School students are not included in the “regular school year” student counts. Some percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Promotion and Retention

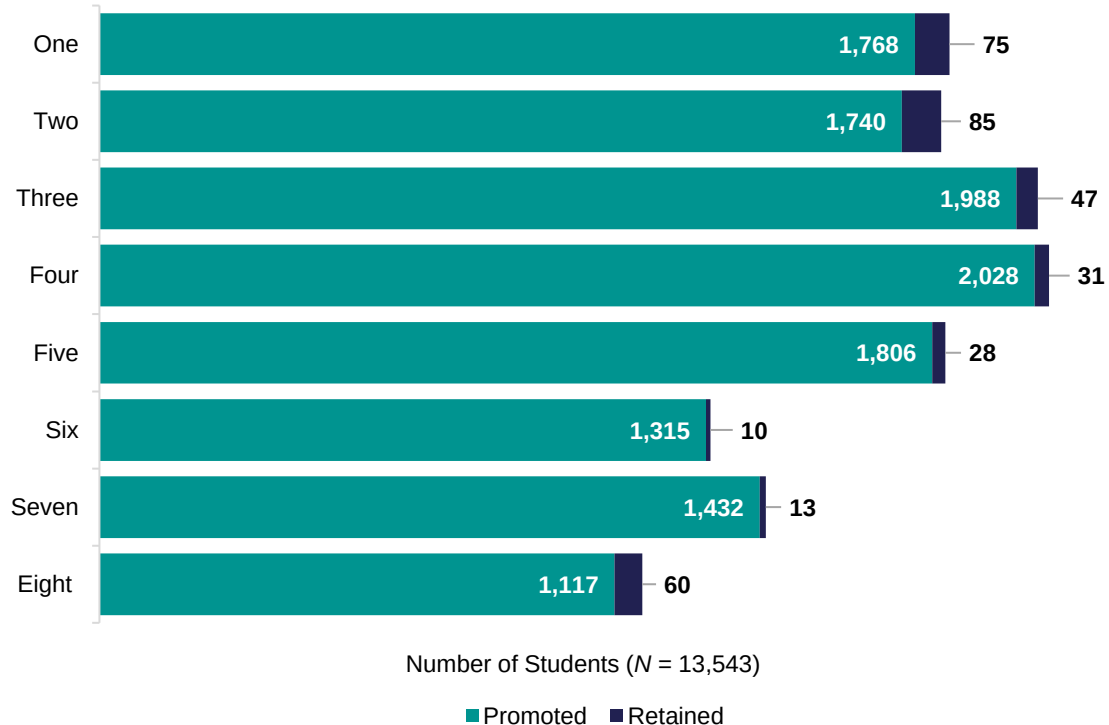
Overall, 13,194 of the 13,543⁷ students (97.4%) in grades one through grade eight who enrolled in the program were promoted to the next grade at the beginning of the 2020-21 school year while 349 students were retained (2.6%). The number of students promoted and retained at each grade level is shown in Figure 2. In 2018-19, 9,688 of the 11,082⁸ 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

⁷ Of the 13,548 students who attended the program in summer 2020, five students left the district before September 21, and were not included in the promotion and retention numbers.

⁸ Of the 11,083 students who attended the program in summer 2019, one fifth grader left the district before September 16 and was not included in the promotion and retention numbers.

1,358 students were retained (12.3%) (Watson, 2019). In 2017-18, 6,406 of the 7,101 grade one through grade eight students who attended the program (90.2%) were promoted to the next grade at the beginning of the 2018-19 school year while 695 students were retained (9.8%) (Mickelson, 2018).

Figure 2: 2019-20 to 2020-21 Virtual Summer School Promotion and Retention by Grade



Source: Data retrieved from the district summer enrollment file dated 08/04/20 and merged with District Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) demographic data file dated 09/21/20.

Note: Includes only students required to attend Virtual Summer School. Prekindergarten and kindergarten students were not required to attend.

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?

Methodology

The evaluator utilized SurveyMonkey, an online survey development tool, to design and administer a parent survey. The evaluator provided an online link to a survey in English and Spanish to parents of Virtual Summer School students. The survey link was made available on the welcome screen of the district's Virtual Summer School website. Information about the survey was also communicated to parents via a district telephone call out on July 9, 2020. The survey link remained open until July 23, 2020. The purpose of the survey was to collect feedback related to families' personal experiences with the Virtual Summer School program. Surveys included three demographic items, 11 items with Likert-type response options rating student and parent perceptions of the program, two items asking parents to rate their overall experience as well as their perception of their student's experience, a question regarding other summer plans in the absence of the program, a question regarding plans for next summer, and one open-ended item asking for additional feedback. Because the survey invitation was not sent to individual email accounts of parents, it was not possible to track respondents and accurately calculate a response rate for the 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. Because parents were not required to answer all survey items, total number of responses per item varied. The evaluator used frequency analyses to determine the rates of positive responses for each scaled item, along with number and percentages of responses per category for other items. Responses to one open-ended survey item soliciting additional comments were analyzed for common themes and patterns. Appropriate quotations that captured the essence of significant themes were flagged for inclusion in this report. Results of all survey items along with a complete distribution of responses is presented in Appendix B.

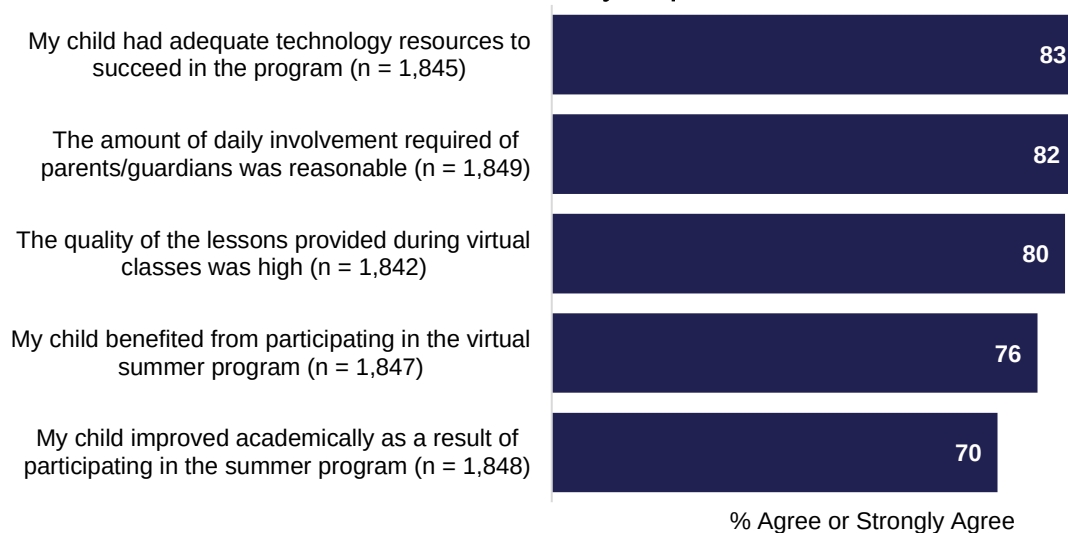
Results

The percentages of parents responding positively ("agree" or "strongly agree") to various Likert-scaled items are summarized in Figure 3. As shown in Figure 3, 82.7 percent of parents surveyed ($n = 1,526$ of 1,845) 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.

Figure 3: 2020 Virtual Summer School Parent Survey Responses



Source: Virtual Summer School parent surveys administered 07/09/20 to 07/23/20.

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, including inconsistent connectivity ($n = 19$), hotspots running out of data ($n = 15$), students lack of proficiency using their devices ($n = 14$), required applications and programs not being pre-installed on district-issued devices ($n = 9$), and student password or login issues ($n = 7$). A total of six parents reported experiencing technical issues without elaborating on specifics. Forty two parents (8.7%) reported frustration with other implementation issues including an insufficient amount of academic work ($n = 19$), students' inability to remain engaged in lessons at home ($n = 9$), and students and/or instructors talking over one another in Zoom sessions ($n = 7$). Seven additional parents reported general frustration with implementation without providing specific detail. A total of 10 parents (2.1%) stated that they wished class sessions (typically set at 30 minutes to an hour) were longer. Additionally, eight parents (1.7%) expressed that they wished the program lasted longer than three weeks. A total of four parents (0.8%) commented

that in future, it would be helpful for teachers to record Zoom sessions for students to review sessions after allocated class times have ended. A total of 51 parents (10.6%) used the opportunity to express concerns regarding the potential return to in-person learning in the 2020-21 school year, with 11 of those stating that due to a variety of health factors, their children would not return to campuses until the pandemic ends.

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

Methodology

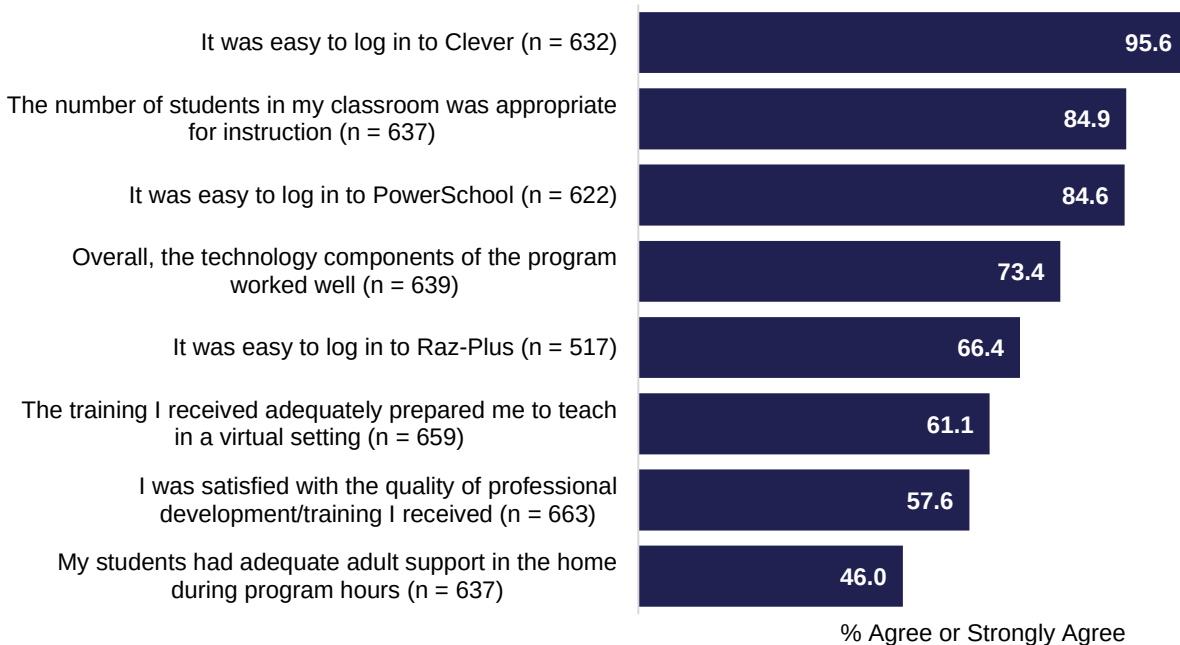
The evaluator utilized SurveyMonkey, an online survey development tool, to craft and administer a teacher and campus staff survey. The evaluator provided an online survey link to Virtual Summer School teachers and campus staff on June 24, 2020. The survey link remained open until July 8, 2020. The purpose of the survey was to collect feedback related to participants' personal experiences working in the Virtual Summer School program. Surveys included one demographic item, 18 items with Likert-type response options rating staff perceptions of the program, and two open-ended items asking for additional feedback. All Virtual Summer School teachers, administrators, and support staff ($n = 1,486$) were selected to receive the survey. The survey was designed to be administered anonymously, as the evaluator chose not to collect names, email addresses, and IP addresses of respondents, because survey results were shared with ELO departmental staff. The evaluator used frequency analyses to determine rates of positive responses for each scaled item, along with number and percentage of responses per category for other items. Correlation analyses was used to explore relationships among responses to various survey items. Responses to open-ended survey items soliciting additional comments were analyzed for common themes and patterns. Appropriate quotations that captured the essence of significant themes were flagged for inclusion in this report. Results of all survey items, along with a complete distribution of responses is presented in Appendix C.

Results

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 ($n = 4$). Figure 4 shows the percentage of respondents who indicated that they agreed or strongly agreed with each selected item. Overall, the majority of respondents (73.4%, $n = 469$) felt the technology component of the program worked well. Respondents indicated that while they were satisfied with the ease of logging in to PowerSchool (84.6%, $n = 526$) or Clever⁹ (95.6%, $n = 604$), they reported less satisfaction with Raz-Plus¹⁰ (66.4%, $n = 344$). 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%, $n = 293$).

⁹ Clever is a web-based single sign on service for teacher and student accounts, provided free for school districts.

¹⁰ Raz-Plus is an online blended learning platform for English Language Arts, associated with Reading A-Z.

Figure 4: 2020 Virtual Summer School Staff Survey Responses

Source: Evaluation and Assessment staff survey results file dated 08/12/20.

Two survey items were open-ended questions. The first open-ended item asked for additional feedback regarding training and preparation. A total of 87 teachers provided substantive comments to this item. 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. Additionally, 18 teachers (31.6%) explained that in order to implement ST Math, they were forced to seek out external training resources from the Internet on their own to prepare to teach. The additional training time along with heavy preparation requirements for instructional time led many teachers to feel unsatisfied with the compensation they received, as the hourly commitment needed to implement the program successfully was significantly greater than expected. The issue of inadequate compensation given the time commitment needed was cited by 15 teachers (17.2%). Four teachers mentioned that they would have liked to have access to a document camera to make online instruction easier, especially in mathematics. Also, six mathematics teachers expressed that they were not made aware ahead of time what manipulatives their students would have available, which made planning difficult. Four bilingual teachers expressed that it was difficult to find adequate time to teach in both languages given the allotted class time, and suggested that in the future, two teachers should be assigned to bilingual classrooms. Two of these teachers also mentioned that Reading A-Z lacked a strong selection of Spanish language books, though it included satisfactory amount of English language books.

The second open ended item asked for additional feedback regarding logistics and support. A total of 55 teachers provided substantive comments to this item. Teachers expressed frustration with district

leadership's changing grade expectations ($n = 8$; 14.5%); number of graded assignments expected ($n = 7$; 12.7%); and confusion or communication issues due to conflicting messages coming from different levels of program administration ($n = 7$; 12.7%). The majority of teachers who responded ($n = 34$; 61.8%) expressed that they experienced at least some technical difficulty, especially during the first week of instruction, but 12 (21.8%) expressed that staff from the Information Technology or ELO departments were of great help in resolving these issues. The prevailing sentiment from respondents was that while implementation was not without issues, some of which were major (ST Math training being chief among these), the experience of participating in the program this summer was positive and beneficial overall.

KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

KEY FINDINGS

The 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 for attendance based on qualifying academic criteria. 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). Expenditures for the program totaled \$1,135,492.79.

- 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.”
- 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; 349 students were retained (2.6%).
- The results of virtual classroom 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.
- A total of 84.5 percent ($n = 1,562$ of 1,849) of surveyed parents of Virtual Summer School students were satisfied or very satisfied with the amount of instructional support teachers provided to students. 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.
- Most teacher survey respondents (73.4%, $n = 469$) felt the technology components of the program worked well. Teachers were generally satisfied with the number of students in classrooms (84.9%, $n = 541$), but fewer than half of teachers responding to the survey felt that their students had adequate adult support in the home during the program (46.0%).
- Two-thirds of teachers who commented on challenges they encountered during training cited 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 (DiPietro, 2010). 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 (Savery, 2005). Consider retaining supplemental offerings in STEM while expanding to include arts-based activities and materials for students at home.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Summer Observation Checklist – 2020 Virtual Summer School Google Classrooms

1. **Date**
2. **Time**
3. **Campus**
4. **Grade Level**
5. **Teacher Name**
6. **Number of students observed**
7. **Number of adults observed**
8. **Program quality (Yes/No):**
 - The teacher is managing the online space appropriately (mute function used for non-speakers, screen sharing used properly when needed, chats addressed)
 - Do students appear to have the necessary materials available to participate?
 - Students are engaged in learning (active or passive, but clearly observed to be on task and non-disruptive)
 - Students are friendly, relaxed, and respectful to one another
 - Students have opportunities to contribute opinions, ideas, and/or concerns to discussions
 - The teacher is working as a facilitator of student project-based learning rather than lecturing
 - Teachers use positive behavior management techniques
 - Teachers clearly communicate goals, purpose, and expectations of tasks
 - Teachers are equitable and inclusive in their interactions with students, working to engage any student who appears isolated, and not favoring a particular student or small cluster of students
 - Activity is well organized, with clear objectives
 - Activity challenges students intellectually, creatively, developmentally, and/or physically

Appendix B

Appendix B, Table 1: 2020 Virtual Summer School Parent Survey Results-General

Survey Item	Strongly Agree <i>n</i> (%)	Agree <i>n</i> (%)	Disagree <i>n</i> (%)	Strongly Disagree <i>n</i> (%)	Undecided/ No Opinion <i>n</i> (%)
My child enjoyed the virtual summer school experience. (<i>n</i> = 1,851)	622 (33.6)	817 (44.1)	182 (9.8)	112 (6.1)	118 (6.4)
The program was a positive educational opportunity for my student. (<i>n</i> = 1,847)	636 (34.4)	860 (46.6)	150 (8.1)	93 (5.0)	108 (5.8)
My child benefited from participating in the virtual summer program. (<i>n</i> = 1,847)	585 (31.7)	813 (44.0)	201 (10.9)	100 (5.4)	148 (8.0)
The enrollment process for summer programming was easy to complete. (<i>n</i> = 1,845)	611 (33.1)	816 (44.2)	125 (6.8)	61 (3.3)	232 (12.6)
The amount of daily involvement required of parents/guardians was reasonable. (<i>n</i> = 1,849)	526 (28.4)	984 (53.2)	141 (7.6)	79 (4.3)	119 (6.4)
My child had adequate technology resources to succeed in the program. (<i>n</i> = 1,845)	632 (34.3)	894 (48.5)	144 (7.8)	64 (3.5)	111 (6.0)
My child's teacher(s) provided adequate instructional support. (<i>n</i> = 1,849)	780 (42.2)	782 (42.3)	120 (6.5)	73 (3.9)	94 (5.1)
My child improved academically as a result of participating in the summer program. (<i>n</i> = 1,848)	405 (21.9)	880 (47.6)	242 (13.1)	111 (6.0)	210 (11.4)
The level of student engagement during the Zoom virtual classes was high (<i>n</i> = 1,846)	490 (26.5)	939 (50.9)	245 (13.3)	74 (4.0)	98 (5.3)
The quality of the lessons provided during virtual classes was high (<i>n</i> = 1,842)	487 (26.4)	987 (53.6)	217 (11.8)	66 (3.6)	85 (4.6)

Source: Evaluation and Assessment parent survey results file dated 08/12/20.

Note: Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Appendix B, Table 2: 2020 Virtual Summer School Parent Survey Results-Alternative Location

If the Dallas ISD summer programs were not available, my child probably would have been:	<i>n</i> (%)
In a different, non-district summer program	205 (11.6)
In an in-person summer program	195 (11.0)
Participating in parent-selected academic activities	443 (25.1)
Without any academic activities	925 (52.3)

Source: Evaluation and Assessment parent survey results file dated 08/12/20.

Appendix B, Table 2: 2020 Virtual Summer School Parent Survey Results-Reenrollment

Based on this year's experience, do you plan to enroll your student in a Dallas ISD summer program in 2021?	<i>n</i> (%)
Yes	862 (46.7)
No	217 (11.8)
Undecided	765 (41.5)

Source: Evaluation and Assessment parent survey results file dated 08/12/20.

Appendix C

Appendix C: 2020 Virtual Summer School Staff Survey Results

Survey Item	Strongly Agree n (%)	Agree n (%)	Disagree n (%)	Strongly Disagree n (%)	Undecided/ No Opinion n (%)
I was satisfied with the quality of professional development/training I received (n = 663)	105 (15.8)	277 (41.8)	182 (27.5)	67 (10.1)	32 (4.8)
The curriculum was easy for me to understand (n = 658)	195 (29.6)	300 (45.6)	103 (15.7)	42 (6.4)	18 (2.7)
The pacing guides were easy for me to understand (n = 650)	179 (27.5)	320 (49.2)	72 (11.1)	39 (6.0)	40 (6.2)
The training I received adequately prepared me to teach the program's curriculum (n = 655)	98 (15.0)	256 (39.1)	187 (28.6)	72 (11.0)	42 (6.4)
The training I received adequately prepared me to teach in a virtual setting (n = 659)	111 (16.8)	292 (44.3)	155 (23.5)	60 (9.1)	41 (6.2)
I had adequate curricular or administrative resources to implement all aspects of the program (n = 660)	145 (22.0)	318 (48.2)	127 (19.2)	46 (7.0)	24 (3.6)
I had adequate technology and connectivity (Internet) resources to implement all aspects of the program (n = 660)	228 (34.6)	340 (51.5)	45 (6.8)	35 (5.3)	12 (1.8)
It was easy to log in to PowerSchool (n = 622)	241 (38.7)	285 (45.8)	74 (11.9)	17 (2.7)	5 (0.8)
It was easy to log in to Raz Plus (n = 517)	123 (23.8)	221 (42.8)	96 (18.6)	59 (11.4)	18 (3.5)
It was easy to log in to Clever (n = 632)	309 (48.9)	295 (46.7)	13 (2.1)	10 (1.6)	5 (0.8)
Overall, the technology components of the program worked well (n = 639)	162 (25.4)	307 (48.0)	109 (17.1)	39 (6.1)	22 (3.4)
My students had adequate technology and connectivity (Internet) resources to complete the program (n = 639)	122 (19.1)	312 (48.8)	139 (21.8)	46 (7.2)	20 (3.1)
The number of students in my classroom was appropriate for instruction (n = 637)	195 (30.6)	346 (54.3)	56 (8.8)	26 (4.1)	14 (2.2)
My students had adequate adult support in the home during program hours (n = 637)	79 (12.4)	214 (33.6)	207 (32.5)	84 (13.2)	53 (8.3)
I was satisfied with the virtual clock-in process (n = 640)	201 (31.4)	321 (50.2)	67 (10.5)	37 (5.8)	14 (2.2)
Questions I had were answered satisfactorily by program staff (n = 631)	156 (24.7)	323 (51.2)	70 (11.1)	24 (3.8)	58 (9.2)
My needs were addressed in a timely manner when reported to program staff (n = 625)	167 (26.7)	316 (50.6)	61 (9.8)	24 (3.8)	57 (9.1)

Source: Evaluation and Assessment staff survey results file dated 08/12/20.

Note: Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.