

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.

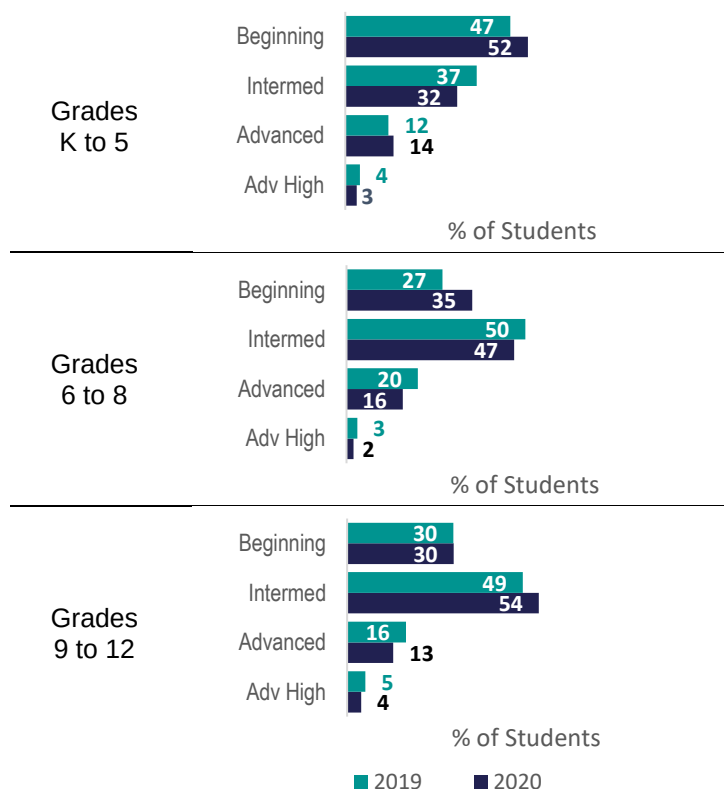
As shown in Figure 1, composite English proficiency ratings for immigrant students who were ELs generally lagged all ELs and clustered around the beginner and intermediate levels on the 2020 TELPAS (range: 82%, grades 6 to 8 to 84%, K to grade 5 and grades 9 to 12). One-year trends in English proficiency 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.

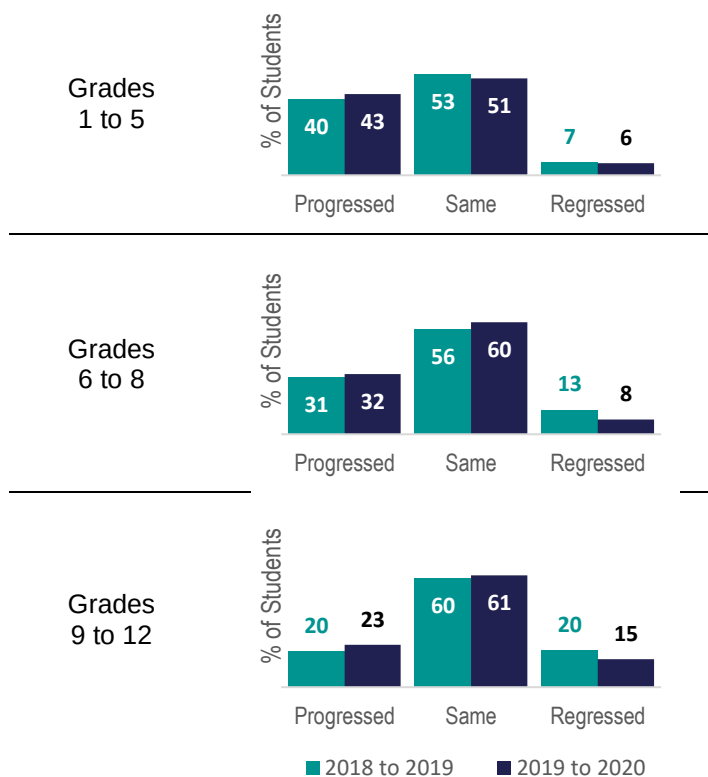
Note: 2019 TELPAS ratings obtained from Palladino et al. (2019). 2019 and 2020 TELPAS ratings include students enrolled on the respective PEIMS snapshot dates. Because of the spring 2020 transition to at-home learning, composite TELPAS results for 2020 represent 62.4 percent of test takers; 2020 results 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.

REFERENCES

- 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 Bilingual and English as a Second Language Programs. Dallas, TX: Dallas Independent School District.

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