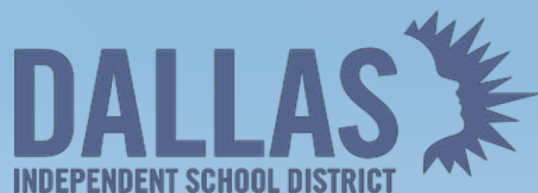


Department of Evaluation and Assessment

Executive Summary Reports 2020-2021

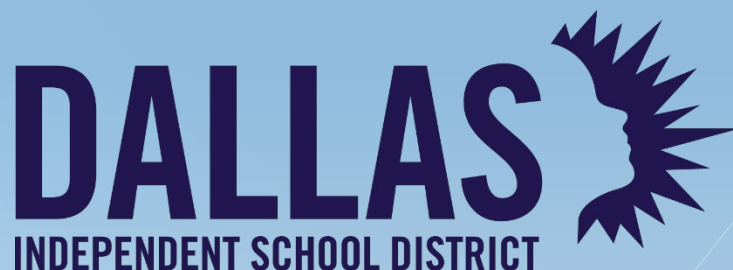


Department of Evaluation and Assessment

Executive Summary Reports 2020-2021

**Cecilia Oakeley, Ph.D. Assistant
Superintendent**

Additional Executive Summary Report Information may be located at: <https://www.dallasisd.org/Page/62222>



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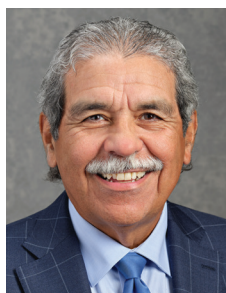
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ASSESSMENT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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

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

Testing

State-Mandated Assessments

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

At grades 5 and 8, students have three opportunities to test; April, May, and June. However, this year due to COVID issues, this requirement was waived, and these students only tested during the May administration. During an administration, students are assessed in reading and math in either English and Spanish.

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

The *STAAR* has a paper version and an online version. In addition, there are options to allow online accommodations (embedded supports). The state is moving toward online testing in 2022-2023. The *STAAR Alt 2* version of the test is administered via paper test while student responses are entered online.

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), previously referred to as No Child Left Behind (NCLB), mandates an annual English-language proficiency assessment of English learners (ELs) in grades K-12 in four language domains {reading (online), writing, speaking (online), and listening (online)}. TEA developed the *TELPAS* to assess ELs in these domains.

Spring testing commenced this year after it was interrupted with the COVID shutdown of the district in-person learning in Spring 2020. Spring *STAAR* and *STAAR-Alt* Grades 3-8 Reading, Math, Writing, Social Studies and Science tests were administered in April and May, with only retesting for *EOC* in June. *TELPAS* was administered this Spring also after only partial testing occurred last Spring with the COVID shutdown.

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

- A total of 61,517 *STAAR EOC* tests were administered 2020-2021, with 4631 for December 2020, 50,968 for Spring 2021, and 6859 for June Retest 2021. Last year a total of 10,011 *STAAR EOC* tests were administered in December 2019; 2493 were tested online, while 7695 on paper-based tests. A total of 941 *STAAR-Alt2 EOC* were administered Spring 2021.
- A total of 153,212 *STAAR* tests were administered for grades 3-8 Spring 2021, with 55,516 in Reading, 51,496 in Math, 18,352 in Writing grades 4 and 7, 8806 in grade 8 Social Studies, and 19,042 in Science for grades 5, 7 PreAP and 8. A total of 1178 *STAAR-Alt2* students were administered grades 3-8 Spring 2021.
- A total of 44,142 students were rated on *TELPAS* this Spring 2021. Before COVID shutdown Spring 2020 the total number of students rated was 36,532 on *TELPAS*, compared to the previous year with a total of 60,740 students were rated on the *TELPAS* in Spring 2019. A total of 611 *TELPAS-Alt* were administered Spring 2021, while 554 *TELPAS-Alt* were administered Spring 2020 with the COVID shutdown.

Measure of Academic Progress

MAP replaced the *TerraNova/SUPERA* standardized norm-referenced achievement test this year for the district's K-2 assessment. There were 58,389 Grade K-2 online tests administered: 29,249 Math in English, 15,263 Reading in English, and 13,877 Reading in Spanish tests administered.

LAS Links Assessments of EL Students

School districts are required to identify EL students in grades PreK-12 using a home language survey. Students identified as having a language other than English were assessed with *LAS Links*. Students in grades PreK-12 who were new to the district and spoke a language other than English were assessed with *LAS Links* and placed in an appropriate instructional program within four weeks of enrollment. *LAS Links* is for Grades 1-12, while Pre *LAS* is for grades EC, PK3, PK4, and KN.

A total of 4402 *LAS Links* were administered (3071 English, 1331 Spanish), while a total of 9820 *PreLAS Links* was administered (5031 English, 4789 Spanish). COVID shutdown the previous Spring interrupted EL testing for the year, but they administered a total of 1591 *LAS Links*, while a total of 1771 *PreLAS Links* was administered (484 English, 1277 Spanish).

Magnet School Application Process and Assessments.

The Assessment office administered the *TerraNova/SUPERA* to students who did not have norm- or criterion-referenced achievement test scores from the previous school year or a MAP score from the fall as part of the process of applying to the Dallas ISD magnet program. Specifically, these services were provided to students who were applying for admission to the district's vanguards, academies, and magnet high schools who met the following criteria: (a) currently enrolled in private, parochial, or other schools (grades K-11), and (b) currently enrolled Dallas ISD students (grades 1-2 and 9-11). Out-of-district students were charged \$100, while in-district students tested free. A total of 315 students were tested with for admission into the magnet program with *TerraNova*; while in 2019-2020 a total of 121 students were tested with *TerraNova* and 10 with *SUPERA*.

The *Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test (NNAT)* is an instrument used by selected district vanguards, academies, and magnet high schools for additional screening of applicants. It is a nonverbal test of general ability commonly used to identify gifted children. The Assessment office provided *NNAT* test booklets, answer documents, and score results for campus officials. A total of 2154 students were tested with paper, and 4 were tested online that had extenuating COVID circumstances remotely, while in 2019-2020 a total of 1,146 students were tested.

The *Math Pre-Assessment* was developed by the Region IV Education Service Center. It is used, along with other assessments, to determine whether students fulfill the requirements needed for entry into five of the vanguards and academies. The Assessment office printed the test booklets, answer documents, and scored the exams. A total of 843 students were tested compared to the previous year with 810.

Early Collegiate Academy and Comprehensive High School Grade 12 Texas Success Initiative Assessment 2 (TSIA2) Testing

Early Collegiate high schools continued testing TSIA this year. A total of 2200 tests were administered, while in 2019-2020 a total 2,175 tests were administered.

Grade 12 students from the comprehensive high schools were administered 2141 tests, while 0 tests were administered last year due to COVID shutdown interrupting spring grade 12 students' window.

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

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

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

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

to award up to two years credit for language.

The following results were observed:

- Nine students were tested for acceleration at the kindergarten level with 5 scoring at or above the 70th percentile, while 6 were tested last year with 3 scoring at or above the 70th percentile.
- At the elementary level, 20 students were tested for acceleration with 3 students scoring 80% mastery in all core areas (reading, math, science, and social studies), while last year 14 were tested with 2 students scoring 80% mastery in all core areas.
- At the middle and high school levels, 41 tests for course credit were administered with 24 students passing with 80% mastery; and 4 tests with prior instruction were administered with 3 students passing with 70% mastery; while last year 8 tests were administered for course credit with 2 students passing with 80% mastery, and 7 tests with prior instruction were administered with 1 student passing with 70% mastery.
- The number of tests administered for the LOTE were: STAMP (22), OPI (1) and AAPPL (2) while last year among COVID shutdown of in person learning tests were administered remotely and in person one on one when needed: STAMP (209), AVANT World Speak (20), and ALIRA (1).
- Twenty-three ACP with CBE assessments were administered to students coming from homeschool situations. Sixteen assessments were passed, thus receiving credit for the courses, while 7 courses did not receive credit.

Campus Test Coordinator Trainings

The Assessment Office provided 10 monthly multiple days Zoom sessions to Campus Test Coordinators (CTC). A new debrief Zoom Test Coordinator session was scheduled after quality control & take in of tests instead of surveys to discuss the complete process of training, preparation, testing and quality control in order to solve concerns immediately.

Role of Districtwide Testing Coordinators

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

- assisting with training CTCs before each test administration on test procedures, test security, online testing setup, online test administration and completion, and quality control of paper and online test materials;
- providing functional planning expertise to campus and district personnel required to meet state testing timelines

and district administered local testing timelines outlined on the district's testing calendar;

- working collaboratively with various departments including, but not limited to, special education, counseling, ESL/bilingual, MTSS, 504 and technology to ensure coherence and alignment of local, state, and national assessments;
- presenting best practices at the Texas Assessment Conference;
- assisting with summarizing testing activities and operations in interim reports, technical reports, and final reports;
- online managing databases (delivery ticket, CTC lists, Out of School TEAMS/TAAS/TAKS, online order forms, meetings), score code corrections, uploading users to state online databases, fixing rejects from uploads of state precode files, working on the out of school testing database, working with computer analyst for list of data needed for uploads to state sites; and
- making recommendations for improvement of operations for each future school year.

Testing Irregularities and Test Monitoring

Testing irregularities fell into two distinct categories, procedural and serious. There was a total of 292 reported irregularities on the TISV Testing Irregularity Security violations) online form, while last year a total of 97 testing irregularities were reported before shutdown of testing in the Spring. All violations were procedural.

Due to continued COVID safety procedures, district monitors were not sent to campuses all year, whereas last year we sent our department staff to monitor December EOC before the complete spring shutdown of testing.

Assessment of Course Performance Return Rate

ACP's were not administered this school year. An alternative online test was administered for district grade/course tests.

Service Center Shipping and Scanning

The Service Center acts as the main distribution hub for all district testing. A total of 18,858 boxes and 6295 envelopes for state testing boxes were shipped from the Service Center to the schools this year.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

This will ensure that the test coordinators have a building knowledge base on successful techniques that they have learned at the beginning of the year trainings, as well as trainings throughout the year.

The NNAT should move to online administration. The NNAT online would provide ease in testing without the paper booklets procedures, scoring and results for magnet testing with such high numbers of assessments administered.

EA20-210-4

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An electronic version of this report and full Assessment 2020-21 report can be found at www.dallasisd.org/Page/888.

For more information, please contact Assessment at assessment@dallasisd.org.

PROGRAM EVALUATION AND DATA ANALYSIS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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

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

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

Research Board Responsibilities

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

On March 13, 2020, in alignment with federal recommendations, the Governor of Texas issued a disaster proclamation certifying that the novel coronavirus COVID-19 posed an imminent threat of disaster for all counties in the state of Texas. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Dallas ISD transitioned students to at-home learning on March 23 following spring break (March 16 – 20) until the end of the 2019-20 school year. To help district students and families access the internet during at-home

learning, the Dallas ISD launched "Operation Connectivity" in May 2020, which provided 23,000 hotspots to families by October 2020. In 2020-21, Dallas ISD delayed the start of the 2020-21 school year until September 8, 2020 and implemented at-home learning districtwide for the first four weeks. The district also modified the school calendar from a six-week schedule to a nine-week schedule. On October 22, 2020, the district announced that campuses would provide in-person and virtual learning throughout the rest of the school year, and parents could choose whether their children participated in in-person or virtual instruction. In-person and virtual instruction included both synchronous and asynchronous learning activities. The district also continued to implement the Center for Disease Control (CDC) as well as state and local COVID safety protocols. Due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, board members suspended all on-campus data collection activities during 2020-21.

In August 2020, board members teamed up with School Leadership and the IT Department to develop and publish the *Dallas ISD Online Interactions Guidelines*. Additionally, board members worked with external researchers to change in-person data collection activities to virtual data collection activities that adhered to the new guidelines. Virtual data collection activities employed by external researchers included participant recruitment via email, web-based administration and collection of participant consent and surveys, and virtual interviews and focus groups via web-based platforms such as Zoom, Google Meet, and Microsoft Teams.

During the 2020-21 school year, board members made several changes to refine the RRB website and online proposal process as well as published a research application and data sharing process flow chart. In addition, board members continued to collaborate with the Office of Legal Services, Procurement Services department, and Volunteer and Partnership Services department to review of third-party Memorandums of Understanding and partnership agreements that request access to student-level data. Furthermore, board members have cooperated with multiple internal Dallas ISD departments and external partners such as RAND Corporation, American Institutes for Research, Westat Corporation, Southern Methodist University, the University of Pittsburgh, Youth Guidance, and the Holdsworth Center to assist in the successful completion of the Wallace Foundation Social Emotional Learning grant, the Montessori school project, the Urban Teachers project, the Network School Improvement project, and the Dallas ISD West Dallas STEM school project.

Proposal Submission

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

Researchers and evaluators must submit an application:

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

Proposal Review

For studies taking place during the 2020-21 school year, between June 2020 and May 2021, 43 proposals and 25 modification requests were submitted (Table 1). During 2019-20, there were 32 proposals submitted.

Out of the 43 proposals submitted, the RRB approved 35 (81%) of proposed studies while rejecting five proposals (12%). Researchers for the remaining three (7%) proposals withdrew their submission for various reasons. Out of the 35 approved proposals, fourteen (40%) were employee graduate research projects. Of the 25 modifications submitted, 23 (92%) were approved while two (8%) were closed.

Table 1: 2020-21 Proposals and Modification Submissions

Status	N	%
Proposals		
Approved	35	81.4
Closed*	3	7.0
Rejected	5	11.6
Total	43	
Modifications		
Approved	23	92.0
Closed*	2	8.0
Total	25	

Source: Research Review Board database dated 06/02/2021.

Note: * = Proposals were withdrawn or closed due to various reasons.

There are several reasons why proposals were rejected. The most common reasons included no clear and direct educational value to the district; and/or poor research design or lack of sufficient information about the study (e.g., program, population, research methods, etc.).

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

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

Data Request

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

During 2020-21, nine new data sharing agreements were submitted by researchers with approved research studies. In addition, twelve data sharing agreements were submitted for renewal by researchers with approved, ongoing research studies. Data fulfillment associated with all active data sharing agreements increased from 206 hours of staff time in 2019-20 to 219 hours of staff time in 2020-21.

RRB Expectations for 2021-22

The Dallas ISD RRB will continue to refine its processes and procedures during the 2021-22 school year. The RRB will also collaborate with the Office of Legal Services to provide feedback to the Texas Education Agency on the model data sharing agreement established by Senate Bill 788.

REFERENCE

Featherston, L. (2020). 2019-20 Dallas ISD Research Review Board. Dallas, TX. Dallas Independent School District.

EA21-116-4

Larry Featherston, Ph.D., Manager, Program Evaluation

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

Evaluation of Bilingual Education and English as a Second Language Programs

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) through programs that embrace student diversity. 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 Department to provide services for ELs who require special education services (ELSPED; see Voss, 2021 for full ELSPED evaluation). Funding in 2020-21 totaled \$10,361,352, an increase from \$8,799,285 in 2019-20. For the full evaluation of programs serving ELs and detailed methodology, see Voss and Kim (2021).

PROGRAMS, SERVICES, and STUDENTS

The Dallas ISD offered a wide variety of programs and services for ELs. First, the district provided three DL programs: One-Way DL [OWDL; prekindergarten (PK) to grade 5/6; 131 campuses], Two-Way DL (TWDL; PK to grade 5/6; 67 campuses), and Secondary DL (SECDL; grades 6 to 12; 9 campuses). Second, elementary school ELs for whom Spanish is not the dominant language or who are Spanish speakers at campuses without a DL program participated in ESL. ESL at the secondary level was 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 who had not yet been reclassified were enrolled in Reading/Language Arts (R/LA) sheltered classes.

The BE/ESL Department also offered services for student populations with high proportions of ELs. For example, students enrolled in US schools fewer than three years were classified as immigrants. Because a large proportion of immigrants typically are also ELs (91% in 2020-21), the BE/ESL Department played a pivotal role in the integration of immigrant students and their families into the district and community.

The district enrolled 67,206 ELs (46% of district) and 5,699 reclassified ELs (4,706 monitored) in 2020-21. From 2019-20, EL enrollment decreased by 2,798 students, and reclassified EL enrollment decreased by 2,160 students. The highest rates of 2020-21 ELs were enrolled for at least the seventh year (44%). Most reclassified monitored students were in grades 10 and 11 (both 26%). The top

language spoken in EL homes was Spanish. Six percent of ELs were parent denials, and one percent were coded as unservable. Table 1 shows the number of students in each program/classification in 2020-21.

Table 1: 2020-21 District Enrollment by Bilingual Education/ESL Program/Classification

Program/Classification	Students N	District %
District	145,386	100.0
All EL	67,206	46.2
All NonEL	77,724	53.5
Monitored	4,706	3.2
EL in OWDL	28,576	19.7
EL in TWDL	3,725	2.6
NonEL in TWDL	2,243	1.5
EL in SECDL	418	0.3
NonEL in SECDL	177	0.1
ESL	4,439	3.1
Sheltered	22,485	15.5
Immigrant	8,187	5.6
ELSPED	5,354	3.7
Parent Denials	3,861	2.7
Unservable	940	0.6

Source: District Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) snapshot demographic data file dated 11/04/20.

Note: Students may be included in more than one category.

In an effort to examine equity in TWDL and SECDL programs, the evaluator explored whether the rates of African American and economically disadvantaged opt-in students in TWDL and SECDL programs were representative of the schools they resided in overall. In 2020-21, 64 percent (African American) and 77 percent (economically disadvantaged) of TWDL and SECDL campuses had lower percentages of African American or economically disadvantaged students, respectively, than at the campus overall.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Dallas ISD transitioned students to at-home learning on March 23 until the end of the 2019-20 school year. On October 22, the district announced that campuses would provide the choice for in-person and virtual learning throughout the rest of the school year. In-person and virtual instruction included both synchronous and asynchronous learning activities.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS/OUTCOMES

What were the characteristics of BE/ESL teachers?

In 2020-21, the district employed 2,714 DL or ESL teachers in elementary schools and 146 DL or ESL teachers in secondary schools. Most teachers at both the elementary level (41%) and secondary level (51%) had been teaching in the district for between one and five years.

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 (Bilingual/DL) or a waiver of teacher certification (ESL). The number of bilingual exceptions decreased by 26 percent since 2018-19 (2018-19: 91 exceptions; 2020-21: 67), and the number of requested ESL waivers decreased 42 percent since 2018-19 (2018-19: 241 waivers; 2020-21: 140).

What were the perceptions of BE/ESL staff members?

DL/ESL Survey

Key findings from the 2020-21 DL ($N = 85$; 62% response rate) and ESL ($N = 103$; 49% response rate) staff member survey include 1) DL and ESL staff members who worked with an instructional specialist in 2020-21 generally said they were provided with beneficial supports (range: 63% to 89%), PD (range: 72% to 84%), and resources (range: 62% to 90%), 2) aggregate teacher ratings of resource/material benefit in 2019-20 were 72 percent very or extremely beneficial, and 77 percent in 2020-21, meaning the department saw improvement but did not meet their goal of a 10 percentage point increase, and 3) 77% of ESL teachers rated PD, in-class support, and provided resources/materials as very or extremely beneficial, which exceeded the department's goal of 75%.

Sheltered Survey

Of the 333 surveyed R/LA teachers (37% response rate) who had at least one sheltered student in their classroom(s) in 2020-21, six percent reported having no sheltered students in their classrooms (an improvement from 17% in 2019-20; Voss, 2020). Of those who indicated that they implemented sheltered instruction, the highest percentages of respondents indicated implementing it daily (61%) or weekly (29%), and most indicated that they used visuals to deepen comprehension (81%) or included targeted vocabulary introduction (70%).

What activities did the BE/ESL Department implement to reach yearly goals?

The BE/ESL Department aimed to reach two primary goals for 2020-21. The first goal was to not see an increase in the percentage of ELs who regressed on their *Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS)* composite from 2021 compared to the percentage of ELs that regressed in 2019. The second goal was to at least maintain the percentage of ELs meeting the Approaches Grade Level or Above (Approaches+) performance standard on *State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR)* in 2020-21 as compared to the rate of ELs meeting Approaches+ in 2018-19.¹ In order to reach these two primary goals, the BE/ESL Department planned

to implement seven activities. Activities included 1) supplemental professional development, 2) supplemental tutoring, 3) summer enrichment programs, 4) engagement in parent workshops and trainings, 5) supplemental resources, 6) the Dual Language Cadre and ESL Leadership Cohort, and 7) the Student Intake Center.

Key 2020-21 findings regarding the activities include 1) 9,886 teachers attended PD (DL: 3,548 ESL: 6,338) and 251 administrators attended PD (DL: 132; ESL: 119); 2) 338 students were tutored in 2020-21 through Title III tutoring efforts; 3) 157 students attended the PK/Bilingual Program, 103 attended the Teaching and Coaching for Accelerated Language Learning program, 302 attended the Newcomers' Program, and 130 attended the Refugee Program; 4) 97 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; 6) no teachers were added to the DL CADRE (68 total) and five teachers were added to the ESL Leadership Cohort (9 total); and 7) 89 percent of parents agreed that the services they received through the Student Intake Center were excellent, which did not meet the department's goal of 95 percent.

What were the academic outcomes for ELs during 2020-21?

General assessment results and patterns are provided below. For specific program/classification results, see the full evaluation (Voss & Kim, 2021).

TELPAS²

For 2021 *TELPAS* composite rates, immigrant students clustered in the beginning and intermediate levels; ESL students clustered in the intermediate level; all ELs, OWDL, TWDL, and sheltered students clustered in the intermediate and advanced levels; and SECDL clustered in the advanced high level.

One- and two-year composite progression rate trends are shown in Table 2. With the exception of OWDL and TWDL ELs, progression rate trends for all programs/classifications either saw very minimal change or increased over two years. The largest two-year progression rate increase was for SECDL (43 percentage point increase).

¹ No 2019-20 STAAR data were available after the assessments were canceled as a result of COVID-19 in spring 2020.

² For information about domain proficiency rates and level movement, see the full evaluation report (Voss & Kim, 2021).

Table 2: 2019 to 2021 TELPAS English Proficiency Progression Rate Trends by Program/Classification

Program/ Classification	2021 %	1 Yr Δ %pts	2 Yr Δ %pts
All ELs	33.4	-4.2	3.3
OWDL	35.1	-7.3	-4.4
TWDL	38.1	-4.5	-2.2
SECDL	69.9	32.9	43.2
ESL	36.7	-2.8	9.2
Sheltered	23.4	-1.7	6.4
Immigrants	34.7	-5.9	-0.2
Parent Denials	28.0	-7.5	1.0

Source: District TELPAS data files dated 05/24/19, 07/19/20, and 07/20/21. PEIMS demographic data files dated 02/26/19, 11/01/19, and 11/04/20.

Note: Ns are available in the full report. 2021 level movement data include students who earned a TELPAS proficiency rating in both 2020 and 2021. Progression = Student moved up at least one level of English proficiency from the previous year or scored Advanced High both years. Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding. 1 Yr Δ %pts = percentage point change from 2020 to 2021. 2 Yr Δ %pts = percentage point change from 2019 to 2021.

For all grade levels overall, all EL groupings except for sheltered students progressed at least one TELPAS proficiency level from 2019 to 2021 at higher rates than they regressed.

ELs overall, as well as DL students in TWDL and SECDL, ESL students overall, sheltered students overall, and immigrant students overall exceeded the BE/ESL Department goal to at least maintain the percentage of ELs who regressed on TELPAS composite from 2019 to 2021.

Measures of Academic Progress Growth (MAP)

For 2021 MAP mathematics beginning-of-year (BOY) to end-of-year (EOY) growth quintiles, all classifications had the highest percentage of scores in the High (80th percentile and above) quintile. Groupings across programs/classifications, test language, and grade levels ranged from 24 (parent denials, grades 2 to 5, English) to 78 (ESL, grades 6 to 8, Spanish). For reading, with few exceptions, most classifications had the highest percentage of scores in the Low (up to the 20th percentile) quintile. Rates of students at the Low quintile across programs/classifications and grade levels ranged from 11 (all ELs, grades 6 to 8, Spanish) to 48 (parent denials, grades 6 to 8, English) percent.

STAAR/End-Of-Course (EOC)

Fewer students tested in 2021 than in 2019 as a result of lingering impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic; results and comparisons should be reviewed with caution.

2021 STAAR rates in each grouping for grades three to five and six to eight at the Approaches+ performance standard ranged from 18 (reading, grades 6 to 8 ESL) to 89 (reading, grades 6 to 8 SECDL EL) percent, and rates at the Meets Grade Level or Above (Meets+) performance standard ranged from eight (reading, grades 6 to 8 ESL) to 65 (reading, grades 6 to 8 SECDL EL) percent. For 2021 EOCs, rates at the Approaches+ performance standard ranged from 15 (English I, ESL) to 91 (English II, SECDL NonEL) percent and rates at the Meets+ performance

standard ranged from five (English I, SECDL EL) to 82 (English II, SECDL NonEL) percent.

With a few exceptions, all two-year trends in Approaches+ and Meets+ attainment rates on the mathematics and reading STAAR and EOC subtests for all grade levels were negative.

Grades Three to Five DL STAAR Reading Outcomes by Testing Language

Rates of grade three to five Approaches+ and Meets+ attainment rates were higher for NonELs than ELs in both OWDL and TWDL, regardless of test language. Rates of grade three to five OWDL students at the Approaches+ and Meets+ performance standard were higher for students who took the subtest in Spanish than in English for both ELs and NonELs. Rates of TWDL students at the Approaches+ and Meets+ performance standard were lower for students who took the subtest in Spanish than in English for both ELs and NonELs. Over two years, Approaches+ and Meets+ rates decreased for all groups.

What were the 2021 STAAR outcomes for reclassified monitored ELs?

Monitored reclassified students as a group performed notably well at the Approaches+ and Meets+ performance standard overall on STAAR and EOC subtests. Overall, monitored students consistently attained the Approaches+ and Meets+ STAAR and EOC performance standards at higher rates than other NonELs and all ELs, regardless of the subject. With a few exceptions, 2021 rates on STAAR and EOCs were lower than 2019 rates for all groupings on all subjects.

What were the 2021 academic outcomes for long-term ELs?

TELPAS

Composite ratings for long-term ELs at all grade levels tended to cluster in the intermediate and advanced level of English proficiency, with higher rates of students proficient at the advanced level in grades six to eight (48%) than those in the lower (43%) and higher grades (38%).

STAAR/EOCs

Rates of long-term ELs at the Approaches+ standard ranged from 47 percent on the English I EOC to 75 on STAAR reading grades in three to five. Rates of long-term ELs at the Meets+ standard ranged from 25 percent on STAAR mathematics and reading in grades six to eight to 49 percent on STAAR reading in grades three to five. Generally, long-term ELs performed similarly on the mathematics and reading STAAR subtests within the same standard, whereas results were mixed for EOCs.

TELPAS by STAAR/EOCs

For all STAAR and EOC subjects, the rates of long-term ELs attaining both Approaches+ and Meets+ increased as TELPAS English proficiency rating increased.

How did EL and monitored student participation in magnet programs compare to NonEL peers?

Qualified ELs were accepted to at least one magnet program at higher rates (71%) than NonELs (67%) and at lower rates than monitored students (74%) and participated in magnet programs at lower rates (25%) than NonELs (42%) and monitored students (80%). Over one year, although the percentage of students who were accepted to at least one magnet program increased for all groups (range: +3 percentage points, NonELs to +16 percentage points, ELs), the percentage that participated decreased for ELs (-31 percentage points) and NonELs (-21 percentage points).

How did Dallas ISD outcomes for ELs compare to other Texas large, urban districts and the state on select TEA accountability measures in 2020-21?

District rates of ELs performing at the higher English proficiency levels on the 2021 TELPAS were generally comparable to or lower than state and other Texas large, urban district rates. District performance level rates of ELs on STAAR and EOCs were generally comparable to or higher than state and other Texas large, urban district rates.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

Continue to examine African American and economically disadvantaged opt-in student participation in TWDL programs. In 2020-21, 64 percent (African American) and 77 percent (economically disadvantaged) of TWDL campuses had lower percentages of African American or economically disadvantaged students, than at the campus overall. Efforts should continue to educate more NonEL parents about the benefits

of TWDL program participation to bring the participation percentages more in line with that of the campus overall.

Explore reasons for lower EL participation in magnet programs. ELs (25%) participated in magnet programs at lower rates than NonELs (42%) and monitored students (80%). Program leadership and evaluators should explore reasons for these findings and plan to appropriately bolster EL participation.

Continue focusing on increasing EL achievement on the STAAR performance standards. With a few exceptions, two-year trends in Approaches+ and Meets+ attainment rates on STAAR and EOCs were negative. Although COVID-19 had an impact on STAAR achievement throughout the district, increasing EL achievement on STAAR was a BE/ESL Department goal prior to COVID-19. Thus, the department should continue to focus on providing academic support to ELs in order to improve attainment rates.

Continue efforts to increase EL progression and reduce EL regression on TELPAS. ELs overall, as well as DL students in TWDL and SECDL, ESL students overall, sheltered students overall, and immigrant students overall, exceeded the BE/ESL Department goal to at least maintain the percentage of ELs who regressed on TELPAS composite from 2019 to 2021. That said sheltered students overall regressed at higher rates than they progressed in 2021. The BE/ESL Department should continue efforts to increase progression rates and reduce regression rates to ensure students are gaining English proficiency.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2020-21, as a result of additional funding through Results-Driven Accountability (RDA), the Dallas Independent School District (ISD) Mental Health Services (MHS) Department formed through the merging of the Youth and Family Centers (YFC) and Psychological and Social Services (PSS) programs. The MHS program seeks to reduce barriers to academic success, promote the wellness of families, and improve access to healthcare and education. The department directly integrates mental health services into the district's function, providing clinical mental health treatment to students and families. During 2020-21, the total MHS program budget was \$15,445,335 and included funding from Title I, Part A (\$1,996,434), Medicaid revenue (\$1,364,654), RDA funds (\$4,268,931), and district general operating funds (\$7,815,316). This was an increase from \$6,716,013 (funding for only YFC) in 2019-20.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Dallas ISD transitioned students to at-home learning on March 23 until the end of the 2019-20 school year. In 2020-21, Dallas ISD delayed the start of the 2020-21 school year until September 8, 2020 and implemented at-home learning districtwide for the first four weeks. On October 22, 2020, the district announced that campuses would provide in-person and virtual learning throughout the rest of the school year, and parents could choose whether their children participated in in-person or virtual instruction. However, MHS continued to provide services to students and families remotely for the 2020-21 school year.¹

PURPOSE AND METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this evaluation was to provide managers and other stakeholders information regarding the operation of the Mental Health Services program across the district. The evaluation described the program's context, process, and outcomes for the 2020-21 school year. Context data included information about the services provided to campus staff members and students. Process data consisted of information about the implementation of the program. Finally, outcome data included results from analyses of mental health diagnoses, attendance, and survey data. Additionally, the evaluation examined the MHS Title I, Part A workscope goals, when applicable.

Data related to sources of program funding and budget information, services provided to students and families, program implementation, mental health diagnoses, and the

MHS Clinic/YFC Client Survey were obtained from MHS staff members. Data related to characteristics of MHS staff members and students, attendance, and the district Climate Survey were obtained from district data files. Frequencies and crosstabs were computed to conduct analyses.²

EVALUATION QUESTIONS/OUTCOMES

What was the context of the 2020-21 Mental Health Services program?

Starting in the 2020-21 school year, YFCs and PSS merged under a new department, Mental Health Services. This department was housed under Student Services. The combined number of staff members increased to 139 fulltime employees (from 68 in YFCs and 43 in PSS in 2019-20).³ The district added 60 clinical staff members (102 in 2020-21 compared to 42 in 2019-20) to the mental health services program in an effort to address all schools and populations in need. These actions reduced caseloads for mental health professionals and provided time for more intensive classroom management support and targeted interventions for high-risk students. The staffing allocation in particular positively impacted campuses as a mental health clinician was assigned to each campus at a minimum of one day per week. Furthermore, 12 schools, identified as targeted campuses through various district data points, received more intensive support by having a mental health professional stationed on the campus every day. Clinic-based services also expanded, supporting increased access to long-term individual, family, and group therapy. Lastly, MHS allocated funds for professional development opportunities for its staff members, including specialized training that emphasized student behaviors and discipline as defined within the RDA manual. This year, the department set the Title I, Part A workscope goal that at least 75 percent of staff members would participate in at least 32 hours of district-provided professional development. The department director reported that the goal was not met, as 75 percent of staff members participated in just 23 hours of professional development in 2020-21.⁴

The Mental Health Services program offered a three-tiered intervention approach. Universal (and less intensive) interventions targeted the entire school or classroom (tier 1). Selective interventions targeted subgroups of students who were at high risk for developing a mental

¹ More detailed information about COVID-19 is available in the full report.

² More detailed methodology is available in the full report.

³ Information from PSS staff members, 05/11/21. Dallas ISD personnel data file, 09/17/19 (2019-20) and 01/05/21 (2020-21).

⁴ As of 08/04/21.

health disorder (tier 2). Tier 3 interventions targeted students already showing clinical symptoms.

The program provided services in three main areas: school-based services, school and clinic services, and clinic-based services. School-based staff members provided universal and selective interventions through behavior support and classroom observations, crisis response, short-term individual therapy, and group counseling with a licensed clinician. School and clinic services included reentry support for students returning from the Disciplinary Alternative Education Program (DAEP) and staff member training and community outreach. Clinic-based services included those provided by clinic-based staff members such as long-term individual, family, and group therapy with a licensed clinician; psychiatric services and evaluation; and alcohol and drug intervention support. Finally, in response to COVID-19, MHS held a virtual symposium entitled Mental Health Matters to provide support and resources for students and parents regarding mental health issues. Results of a post-symposium survey ($N=42$) were positive overall (93% would strongly recommend the symposium to others).

What were the characteristics of Mental Health Services staff members?

A total of 139 administrators, clinicians, and support staff members operated out of campuses, 13 YFC service sites,⁵ and one central administration office in 2020-21.⁶ The number of MHS clinical positions totaled 102 (73% of MHS staff members) in 2020-21 and was comprised of clinicians, psychiatrists, and specialists (Table 1). The number of MHS administrative and support roles totaled 37 (27%) and included all other positions.

Table 1: 2020-21 MHS Staff Members by Role

Job Title	N	%
Director	3	2.2
Coordinator	1	0.7
Administrative Assistant	15	10.8
Analyst	1	0.7
Manager	16	11.5
Psychiatrist	2	1.4
Clinician	98	70.5
Specialist	2	1.4
Billing Assistant	1	0.7

Source: Dallas ISD 2020-21 personnel data file, 01/05/21.

Of the 139 MHS staff members, most were Hispanic (48%) or African American (29%), and 86 percent were female. Eighty-four percent held a master's-level degree or higher. MHS staff members most often had one to five years of local experience (26%).

⁵ A list of the 13 YFC locations is available in Table 2 of the full report.
⁶ Data were pulled from the district personnel data file dated 01/05/21.
⁷ MHS central staff members provided the list of served students on 06/29/21. This was merged with the 10/30/20 Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) demographic data file.

What were the characteristics of students served by Mental Health Services in 2020-21?

MHS program staff members provided 2020-21 data for students served between May 27, 2020 and June 18, 2021.⁷ A total of 6,927 students received clinical services from the Dallas ISD MHS program in 2020-21; 4,117 students received services at school (PSS) and 2,810 students received services at a YFC site. This was less than the 4,704 students served at YFCs in 2019-20.⁸ The decrease in 2020-21 was attributed to the lower number of in-person students districtwide due to the lingering effects of COVID-19. Additionally, there was an increase in therapy denials and drop-outs, as these families indicated that they did not want to participate in teletherapy or that therapy was not a priority this school year.⁹

Of the 6,442¹⁰ students with available demographic data served by MHS in 2020-21 (4% of district students), most were economically disadvantaged (85%), male (54%), and/or Hispanic (66%). In comparison to the district overall, MHS students were also slightly more likely to be male (54% vs. 51%) and more likely to be receiving Special Education (SPED) services (19% vs. 10%).

How many and what types of visits occurred within the Mental Health Services program in 2020-21?

A total of 18,041 contacts were made with Dallas ISD students in schools (4,117 unique visitors and four visits per client). Additionally, a total of 2,810 students received clinical services from YFCs in 2020-21. This did not meet the Title I, Part A workscope goal that 5,000 unique visitors would be served. As mentioned previously, this may have been due to lingering impacts from COVID-19. A total of 30,303 contacts were made with Dallas ISD students and their families at YFCs in 2020-21 (34,943 in 2019-20), bringing the average number of visits per client to 11 (seven in 2019-20). Fair Oaks YFC had the highest number of unique visitors ($N=381$), and Wilmer Hutchins YFC had the fewest unique visitors ($N=155$) in 2020-21. Furthermore, Woodrow/Long YFC received the highest number of visits overall (including repeat visitors) in 2020-21 (3,869 total visits), and Kiosco YFC received the lowest number of visits (1,739 total visits). The average number of recorded visits per client at Seagoville YFC was the highest among all MHS clinics at 20 visits per client. Red Bird YFC had the lowest number of visits per client (seven).

Year-to-year changes from 2019-20 to 2020-21 in the number of unique visitors, total visits, and average visits at YFC sites were also examined. The number of unique visitors decreased at all 11 sites and the number of total visits decreased at 7 YFC sites from 2019-20 to 2020-21. However, the average number of visits per client increased

⁸ Zhang and Mehari (2020).
⁹ Information from program director, 07/13/21.
¹⁰ 485 MHS students were missing in the district PEIMS data file.

at all 11 sites with prior-year visit data (range: +0.4 to +8.2 visits).

The MHS program provided 19 distinct types of clinical service to Dallas ISD students and families at YFCs in 2020-21 (17 types in 2019-20).¹¹ The three most common types overall in 2020-21 were psychotherapy sessions of 60 minutes with clients and/or family members ($N=6,948$ visits, 23% of all recorded services), psychotherapy sessions of 45 minutes with clients and/or family members ($N=6,062$, 20%), and phone consultations ($N=4,450$, 15%). By volume, these three types of services together accounted for 17,460 (58%) of all clinical services provided to MHS clients at YFCs in 2020-21. Further, in 2020-21 the three most common services provided in schools were counseling ($N=7,910$, 44% of all recorded services), case management ($N=7,632$, 42%), and behavior intervention ($N=1,968$, 11%).

How did diagnoses categories differ from 2019-20 to 2020-21, and how did diagnoses differ across grade levels?

As seen in Table 2, the three most common primary mental health diagnoses made for Dallas ISD students visiting a YFC for clinical services in 2020-21 were Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD; $N=10,434$, 35% of all primary diagnoses), Adjustment Disorder ($N=9,042$, 30%), and Depressive Disorder ($N=5,856$, 19%). This is comparable to 2019-20, wherein the three most common primary diagnoses were also ADHD ($N=14,277$, 41%), adjustment disorder ($N=9,054$, 26%), and depressive disorder ($N=6,009$, 17%).¹²

Table 2: 2020-21 Most Common (Top 10) Mental Health Diagnoses Among MHS Students

Primary Diagnoses	N	%
Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder	10,434	34.6
Adjustment Disorder	9,042	30.0
Depressive Disorder	5,856	19.4
Anxiety Disorder	2,458	8.1
Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder	957	3.2
Conduct Disorder	697	2.3
Bipolar Disorder	313	1.0
Developmental Disorders	298	1.0
Impulse Disorders	58	0.2
Schizophrenia	53	0.2

Source: MHS 2020-21 student data file, 06/29/21.

Note: Data included students and their visits from 05/27/20 through 06/18/21. $N=30,166$.

Information on the top primary diagnoses across grade level for 2020-21 was also examined. Overall, primary diagnoses were given most often to students in grades five, nine, and

seven. An ADHD diagnosis was given most often to students in grades five, four, and seven. Additionally, an Adjustment Disorder diagnosis was given most often to students in grades nine, four, five, and six.

In terms of year-to-year change in diagnoses percentages across groups, there was a lower percentage of male students who received a primary diagnosis of Adjustment Disorder (46%) in 2020-21 compared to 2019-20 (53%). For females, a greater percentage of students received a primary diagnosis of Adjustment Disorder (54%) in 2020-21 compared to 2019-20 (47%). Percentages for primary diagnoses were relatively similar across ethnicity from 2019-20 to 2020-21.

How did student outcomes differ between students who received Mental Health Services support versus those who did not?¹³

Attendance rates for students who received MHS support were compared to attendance rates for students who did not receive MHS support (Non-MHS students).¹⁴ For the 2020-21 school year, students had the option of participating in at-home or in-person learning and could transition between the two. This may have impacted the ability to accurately collect attendance data. Attendance rates should therefore be interpreted with caution. The average attendance rate for MHS students was 91.0 percent in 2020-21, which was lower than the average rate of 92.7 percent for non-MHS students.

What were the family perceptions of the Mental Health Services program in 2020-21?¹⁵

A total of 165 adult clients who participated in MHS services with a child completed the MHS Client Survey.¹⁶ Analyses of the survey provided by Grimberg (2021) indicated positive responses overall, with between 85 and 96 percent marking “agree” or “strongly agree” across items. ‘The mental health provider was professional’ and ‘The reception staff was friendly’ were the highest rated items (96% agreed or strongly agreed on both). ‘Treatment had a positive outcome on my child’s academics’ and ‘Treatment had a positive impact on my child’s behavior’ were lowest (both 85%). Thirty-nine respondents (24% of survey respondents) provided open-ended feedback. Thirty respondents’ (77%) feedback centered on praise for YFC clinics and/or MHS staff members.

¹¹ 2019-20 service information can be found in Zhang and Meharie (2020).

¹² Zhang and Meharie (2020).

¹³ Because of the lingering impacts of COVID-19 and many students engaging in remote learning instead of in-person learning, 2020-21 discipline data were not comparable to prior years. Therefore, only attendance rate data were reported. Further, given that the MHS Department formed in 2020-21, comparisons to prior years’ student attendance data are not applicable. However, information for YFC students from previous years can be found in Zhang and Meharie (2020).

¹⁴ District attendance data file, 08/24/21. MHS student data file, 06/29/21. District PEIMS data file, 10/30/20.

¹⁵ Note that this survey was not administered for the YFC program last year due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

¹⁶ The MHS-designed, 10-item MHS Client Survey (administered from 03/25/21 to 04/09/21) data were provided to the evaluator on 05/03/21. The exact number of individuals who had the opportunity to complete the survey was unknown.

How did Climate Survey results of campuses with one-to-one Mental Health Services support differ from campuses without?

Climate Survey favorable response rates provided evidence of an advantage for campuses that received 1:1 support.¹⁷ As seen in Table 3, campuses that received 1:1 support had higher favorable response rates compared to campuses that did not receive 1:1 support across all six scales.

Table 3: 2020-21 District Climate Survey Results by Scale

	Received 1:1 Support (Campus N=11)		Did not Receive 1:1 Support (Campus N=60)	
	N	Avg pos %	N	Avg pos %
Benefits and Priorities	717	73.5	3,499	69.6
Positive Culture and Environment	717	66.8	3,494	62.7
Culture of Feedback and Support	458	68.7	2,321	61.4
College-Going Culture	545	73.5	2,639	72.6
Teacher-Teacher Trust	455	73.4	2,315	72.3
Teacher-Principal Trust	454	69.8	2,314	63.1

Source: District Climate Survey data file, 07/23/21.

Note: Avg pos %=Average percent positive. Some Climate Survey data could not be appropriately classified; thus, they were excluded from analyses when applicable (Maya Angelou; DAEP for middle and high schools; Rosemont; Multiple Careers, and Career Institutes East, North, and West). No Climate Survey data were collected for Hospital and Homebound or Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program (JJAEP) staff members.

In addition, when climate results for the 11 campuses that received support were examined over time, 62 percent of scales increased in the percentages of positive responses from spring 2019 to spring 2021.¹⁸

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

Reduce the number of clinic visits needed for clients to complete treatment. In 2020-21, YFC clients averaged 10.8 visits per client, a sizeable increase from 7.4 visits per client in 2019-20. Going forward, MHS should continue to make efforts to help clients successfully discharge from treatment in fewer required visits.

Increase the response rates of participant surveys. Response rates for the Client Survey (N=165)¹⁹ and Mental Health Matters symposium survey (N=42 out of a possible 703; 6% response rate) were quite low. An increased response rate on surveys would allow services to be improved based on participant feedback.

Increase the number of clients receiving services from YFCs. As students return to campuses in-person full-time for 2021-22, it will be important to increase the number of unique clients receiving services from clinic-based MHS staff members relative to 2020-21 (N=2,810) so that the 2021-22 Title I, Part A workscope goal of serving 5,000 unique visitors can be met.

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

¹⁷ A list of campuses receiving 1:1 support is available in Appendix B of the full report. No campus-level data were available for Barbra Manns High School/DAEP, so the campus was excluded from analyses.

¹⁸ District Climate Survey data file, 06/03/19.

¹⁹ The exact number of individuals who had the opportunity to complete the survey was unknown; thus, calculation of a response rate is unavailable.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Family and Community Engagement (FCE) Department in the Dallas Independent School District (ISD) develops and implements programs and strategies to engage parents and the community in collaborative parent, school, and community partnerships. The FCE Department received \$1,186,425 in Title I funds for the 2020-21 school year to support the Family Engagement program.¹ This was an increase from 2019-20 (\$1,062,425).

On March 13, 2020, in alignment with federal recommendations, the Governor of Texas issued a disaster proclamation certifying that the novel coronavirus, COVID-19, posed an imminent threat of disaster for all counties in the state of Texas. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Dallas ISD transitioned students to at-home learning on March 23 following spring break (March 16 – 20) until the end of the 2019-20 school year. In 2020-21, Dallas ISD delayed the start of the 2020-21 school year until September 8, 2020 and implemented at-home learning districtwide for the first four weeks. On October 22, 2020, the district announced that campuses would provide in-person and virtual learning throughout the rest of the school year, and parents could choose whether their children participated in in-person or virtual instruction. The FCE Department provided virtual programming in 2020-21; other COVID-19 related impacts are described in the relevant sections of the report.

The Family Engagement program continued several of its long-standing programs including the Campus Support Team (CST), Program Support Team (PST), and Fam Jams. The department also continued implementing the Whole School Model (WSM) framework on four campuses from 2019-20 (Cohort 1 Year 2) and five additional campuses in 2020-21 (Cohort 2), in partnership with the Flamboyant Foundation.²

PURPOSE AND METHODOLOGY

The purpose of the evaluation was to summarize the context, process, and outcome data of the Family Engagement programs for the 2020-21 school year. Additionally, the evaluator analyzed the program goals outlined in the 2020-21 Family Engagement Title I, Part A Project Workscope. The evaluator used program documents, interviews, attendance data, and survey data to evaluate the programs.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS/OUTCOMES

What programs did the Family Engagement program continue from 2019-20 to 2020-21?

Several Family Engagement programs provided in 2019-20 continued with some changes in 2020-21.³ The changes are outlined in this report. More detailed program descriptions are available in Garcia- Rincón (2020).

Campus Support Team

Five CST trainers/coaches (trainers) continued to support family engagement activities at the campus level in the 2020-21 school year. CST trainers reported to the Executive Director of the FCE department and were assigned to campuses by network. CST members provided monthly professional development (PD) to campus community liaisons/parent instructors/points of contact, campus-level resources and presentations (e.g., safe and welcoming environments, parent centers, etc.), collaborated with external organizations (in support of family engagement activities), and monitored the campus implementation of the district's Continuum to gauge progress of family engagement activities. In addition, CST trainers provided campus level support for the WSM that included implementation of the Family Engagement Leadership Teams (FELT), PD for teachers and staff members, teacher Home2Home Visits, and family listening interviews. Trainers also planned to provide on-going parent education sessions in each network in 2020-21, but the sessions did not happen because no vendor selection was made.

The FCE Department set the workscope goal that "80 percent of community liaisons/parent instructors/campus contacts will report via the annual satisfaction survey, conducted spring 2021, that the PD provided by the coaches assisted them in their jobs." A total of 228 surveys were completed, but the workscope-related question was not asked. Therefore, the goal could not be examined. However, 94 percent of respondents reported feeling well prepared to implement strategies and content from the session into practice.

In relation to the Continuum, FCE staff members set a second workscope goal that "50 percent of campuses will rate as Tier I on the Parent Engagement Continuum and at least 20 percent of campuses will rate as Tier II at the end

¹ The funding amounts were provided by Special Revenue Funds Management on 02/28/21.

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

³ The Latino Family Literacy Project and Adult Education Track programs were moved into the Bilingual Department for the 2020-21 school year.

of the 2020-21 academic year.” Data provided by CST members on June 9, 2021 showed that 223 campuses were rated on the Continuum. Of those, 16 percent were rated as Tier I and no schools were rated as Tier II. Thus, the goal was not met.

Program Support Team Coordinators

The PST Coordinators continued to support Family Engagement programs in 2020-21. Three of the Coordinators continued to plan and implement a broad range of family engagement activities at the district and network levels (e.g., Parent and Teacher Association/Parent and Teacher Organization efforts, parent conferences, Site-Based Decision-Making training, and Fam Jams). The fourth coordinator focused on supporting the five CST trainers with the coordination of Flamboyant PD, the Home2Home visits, and family listening interviews.

In August 2020, the PST Coordinators hosted the first Virtual Parent Conference (VPC) to prepare parents for the upcoming school year and review expectations for students returning to school either virtually or face-to-face during the COVID-19 pandemic. The conference provided a variety of sessions for six days during a two-week period (3 days per week; 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. each day). Attendance data provided by the PST members indicated that a total of 2,157 parents participated in the conference during week one and 2,197 parents participated during week two, for a combined total of 4,354 parent participants.⁴

VPC parent survey data showed that of the 726 respondents, 96 percent rated the conference sessions as “very good” or “good” and 97 percent would recommend the VPC to other Dallas ISD parents.⁵

What was the context of the Fam Jam sessions in 2020-21 and what were the associated outcomes?

Changes were made to the Fam Jams in 2020-21 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Instead of in-person Fam Jam events by network, they were held virtually for parents from each network, feeder pattern, or campus level within a network. Fam Jams were scaled down into smaller events but continued to offer student performances, community resources and information, workshop sessions on a variety of topics (e.g., Dallas ISD learning platforms, Social Emotional Learning, Mental Health, Cyberbullying, College Readiness, etc.), prizes, and the availability of Spanish interpreters.⁶ Fam Jams were held between November 2020 and May 2021. A total of six Fam Jams were conducted within feeder patterns, two were conducted by school level (elementary/secondary) within a network, and one was conducted for an entire network during the 2020-21 school year (Table 1).

FCE staff members set a third workscope goal that “400 parents will attend each network Fam Jam during the 2020-21 academic year.” Fam Jam attendance data showed that the total number of Fam Jam participants by network was below 400 (Table 1).⁷ Thus, the Fam Jam attendance goal was not met.

Table 1: 2020-21 Fam Jam Session Attendance by Network

Network	Session Types	Sessions n	Participants n
Central	ES and SS	2	353
Northeast	Network	1	122
Northwest	Feeder	2	182
Southeast	Feeder	1	245
Southwest	Feeder	3	267

Source: FCE Department, 05/12/21.
Note: Total N = 1,169 participants. ES = Elementary Schools. SS = Secondary Schools.

Surveys were administered to parents at the end of each Fam Jam event to collect feedback. The data were shared with the evaluator after all Fam Jams were completed.⁸ A total of 1,169 parents completed the Fam Jam surveys in 2020-21. A fourth workscope goal was that “80 percent of parents who respond to the survey will report that they learned how to support learning at home as a result of the event.” The question was not asked in the survey; therefore, the goal could not be examined. However, 99 percent of respondents indicated that the presenters’ knowledge of the topics presented was “good” or “very good.”

What was the context of the Flamboyant Fellowship project in the Dallas ISD in 2020-21 and what were the associated outcomes?

The Dallas ISD again hosted Summit E3, a community liaison/points of contact professional development summit in September 2020, presented by Flamboyant. The summit informed the community liaisons, parent instructors, counselors, and other points of contact about the WSM and provided sessions about a variety of topics, including family engagement strategies.

A total of 274 community liaisons, parent instructors, counselors, and other points of contact attended the E3 Summit.⁹ Summit feedback survey data provided by Family Engagement staff members indicated that of the total number of respondents (N = 166), 89 percent were “very satisfied” or “satisfied” with the summit.¹⁰

2020-21 Whole School Model

In 2020-21, the district continued implementing the WSM at the four elementary schools from 2019-20 (Cohort 1 Year 2) and added five additional campuses (one

⁴ Data provided 10/09/20.
⁵ Data provided by PST members on 10/09/20.
⁶ Although workshops were still offered, there were fewer workshop topics at each Fam Jam.

⁷ Data provided by PST members on 05/12/21.
⁸ Data provided on 05/12/21.
⁹ Data provided by Family Engagement staff members on 12/06/20.
¹⁰ Data provided on 12/06/20.

elementary and four middle schools; Cohort 2).¹¹ CST members helped campus staff members implement the four components of the WSM: 1) the FELT, 2) PD, 3) the Home2Home Visits, and 4) family listening interviews. FCE program staff members reported that campus staff members were overwhelmed, at least in part because of COVID-19. This impacted participation in PD, Home2Home visits, and family listening interviews.

FELT

The FELT worked at the campus level to lead all family engagement efforts. The team at each campus included the principal, two teachers, a community liaison (if available), and the CST trainer. Data provided by Family Engagement staff members showed that a total of 86 Cohort 1 Year 2 and 30 Cohort 2 FELT members attended FELT meetings in 2020-21.¹² The data were for elementary campuses only because middle school campuses chose not to have FELTs on their campuses in 2020-21.

Professional Development

In 2020-21, all teachers in Cohort 1 Year 2 were required to attend two PD sessions.¹³ The session topics were chosen according to campus need. Data provided by CST members showed that PD attendance was highest for teachers from Gonzales ES (100%; Building and Sustaining Trusting Relationships) and lowest for teachers from Saldivar ES (59%; Problem of Practice; Table 2).

Table 2: 2020-21 Cohort 1 Year 2 Teacher Professional Development Attendance

Campus	Bldng Sust			
	Trust Relation %	Academic Partnering %	Problem of Practice %	Commun Care %
Gonzales (N = 32)	100.0	93.7	-	-
McNair (N = 32)	75.0	84.4	-	-
Martinez (N = 47)	-	-	-	89.4
Saldivar (N = 70)	84.3	-	58.6	-

Source: FCE Department, 05/14/21.

Note: Bldng and Sust Trust Relation = Building and Sustaining Trusting Relationships; Commun Care = Community of Care. - = not applicable.

Cohort 2 teachers were expected to attend the three PDs provided to Cohort 1 teachers in 2019-20;¹⁴ however, they only received two PDs (Mindset/Home Visits and Family Listening Interviews) in 2020-21 because of loss of professional development days because of calendar changes due to COVID-19. PD attendance was highest for teachers from Alexander ES (95%; Mindset/Home Visits)

and Storey MS (89%; Family Listening Interviews). Attendance was lowest for MS teachers attending Mindset/Home Visits PD at OW Holmes, Storey, and Zumwalt (all 12% or less; Table 3).

Table 3: 2020-21 Cohort 2 Teacher Professional Development Attendance

Campus	Mindset/Hm Visits %	Fam Listen Interviews %
Alexander (N = 22)	95.4	81.8
Kennedy Curry (N = 52)	36.5	78.8
OW Holmes (N = 52)	1.9	69.2
Storey (N = 35)	11.4	88.6
Zumwalt (N = 33)	12.1	54.5

Source: FCE Department, 06/03/21.

Note: Mindset/Hm Visits = Mindset/Home2Home Visits; Fam Listen Interviews = Family Listening Interviews.

Flamboyant staff members created teacher feedback surveys for elementary and secondary level participants. Presenters administered the surveys after each PD session to each PD participant (including teachers, counselors, and principals).¹⁵ Survey results from all PD sessions were combined and analyzed using frequencies by campus level.¹⁶

Elementary level survey respondents (N= 242) were asked to rate their level of agreement to the statement, "I feel well-prepared to implement strategies and content from the sessions into my practice." Most respondents (95%) indicated that they agreed or strongly agreed that they were well prepared.¹⁷ Secondary level participants (N = 231) were asked to rate the relevance and quality of the training; 84 percent rated the relevance and quality of the training as "excellent" or "very good."

Home2Home Visits

In 2020-21, the Dallas ISD took over the Home Visit Project initiative from the Early Learning Department and changed the name to Home2Home Visits to reflect the virtual nature of visits this school year. The FCE Department was responsible for training all elementary and secondary teachers, tracking the visits, and paying for 100 secondary level teachers to conduct visits.¹⁸

Home2Home visit data, provided by program staff members on May 10, 2021, indicated that a total of 70 elementary teachers conducted a total of 574 Home2Home visits during the 2020-21 school year (Table 4).

The FCE Department set a workscope goal that, "On average, participating secondary teachers will conduct at least six home visits during the 2020-21 academic year." A

¹¹ The five Cohort 2 schools included Birdie Alexander Elementary School (ES), Kennedy Curry, O. W. Holmes, Boude Storey, and Sarah Zumwalt Middle Schools (MS).

¹² Data provided on 06/03/21.

¹³ Teachers from Martinez ES attended one PD in 2020-21.

¹⁴ PDs in 2019-20 included Mindset/Home Visits, Ongoing Communication, and Family Listening Interviews.

¹⁵ The attendance data reported in the tables are reflective only of teachers.

¹⁶ Survey items were not consistent for all PDs. The Problem of Practice PD survey contained fewer items than all other PDs. Family Listening Interview PD survey data were not available for Alexander ES.

¹⁷ Data provided on 05/11/21.

¹⁸ The Early Learning Department paid for elementary school level teachers and collected the data.

total of 31 secondary teachers conducted a total of 410 Home2Home visits for an average of 13 home visits per teacher (Table 4). Thus, the department met the goal.

Table 4: 2020-21 Home2Home Visits by Campus

Campus	Teachers <i>n</i>	Visits <i>n</i>	Average Number of Visits <i>n</i>
Elementary Level			
Alexander	11	110	10.0
Gonzales	28	373	13.3
Martinez	9	18	2.0
McNair	6	35	5.8
Saldivar	16	38	2.4
Total	70	574	8.2
Secondary Level			
Kennedy Curry	8	73	9.1
OW Holmes	5	64	12.8
Storey	12	167	13.9
Zumwalt	6	106	17.7
Total	31	410	13.2

Source: FCE Department, 05/10/21.

Family Listening Interviews

Family listening interviews were conducted virtually in spring 2021 to solicit feedback about family engagement, what parents wanted to see in the future, and about barriers to family engagement. Middle schools chose not to conduct family listening interviews. Thus, the Family Engagement workscope goal that “On average, participating secondary teachers will conduct at least three listening interviews during the 2020-21 academic year.” could not be examined.

Data provided by Family Engagement staff members indicated that a total of 17 teachers at three elementary level campuses, conducted a total of 48 family listening interviews for an average of three visits per teacher (Table 5).

Table 5: 2020-21 Elementary Family Listening Interviews by Campus

Campus	Teachers <i>n</i>	Visits <i>n</i>	Average Number of Visits <i>n</i>
Alexander	2	18	9.0
Gonzales	13	18	1.4
Martinez	-	-	-
McNair	-	-	-
Saldivar	2	12	6.0
Total	17	48	2.8

Source: FCE Department, 05/26/21.

Note: - = no interviews were conducted.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Ensure that workscope goals are included in surveys to measure activity outcomes in 2021-22. Workscope goals could not be examined for Parent Fam Jam feedback surveys or annual satisfaction surveys about campus support teams because the relevant questions were not included in the surveys. Future surveys should be aligned with departmental goals.

Ensure that all cohort groups implement all components of the Whole School Model in 2021-22. Middle schools chose not to have FELTs on their campuses or conduct family listening interviews, and teacher PD attendance was inconsistent. Mindset/Home2Home PD attendance for Cohort 2 teachers at OW Holmes, Storey, and Zumwalt were low (all 12% or less). If campuses choose to participate in the WSM, it is important that all components be implemented with fidelity to meet program objectives and allow for accurate comparisons.

REFERENCE

Garcia-Rincón, R. (2020). 2019-20 Evaluation of the Parent and Family Engagement Program. Dallas, TX. Dallas Independent School District.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Dallas Independent School District (Dallas ISD) developed its own On-Track indicator in 2007-08. Like the Consortium on Chicago School Research (CCSR) indicator,¹ the Dallas ISD indicator combines two factors. A student is considered to be On Track at the end of ninth grade if he or she has 1) accumulated five full course credits and 2) no more than one semester F (that is, one-half of a full credit) in a core subject (English, mathematics, science, or social studies).

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

On March 13, 2020, in alignment with federal recommendations, the Governor of Texas issued a disaster proclamation certifying that the novel coronavirus COVID-19 posed an imminent threat of disaster for all counties in the state of Texas. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Dallas ISD transitioned students to at-home learning on March 23 following spring break (March 16 – 20) until the end of the 2019-20 school year. To help district students and families access the internet during at-home learning, the Dallas ISD launched "Operation Connectivity" in May 2020, which provided 23,000 hotspots to families by October 2020. In 2020-21, Dallas ISD delayed the start of the 2020-21 school year until September 8, 2020 and implemented at-home learning districtwide for the first four weeks. The district also modified the school calendar from a six-week schedule to a nine-week schedule. On October 22, 2020, the district announced that campuses would provide in-person and virtual learning throughout the rest of the school year, and parents could choose whether their children participated in in-person or virtual instruction. In-person and virtual instruction included both synchronous and asynchronous learning activities. The district also continued to implement the Center for Disease Control (CDC) as well as state and local COVID safety protocols.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS/OUTCOMES

What were the On-Track rates of first-time ninth-grade students in 2020-21?

Methodology

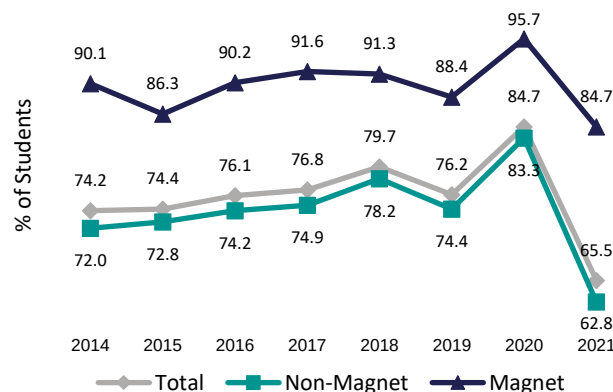
Student characteristics were extracted from the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS)

district data files, and course performance data were extracted from the district course data files. Only non-special education grade nine students who were enrolled in the same school for the fall semester were included.

Results

Overall, the 2020-21 district end-of-year On-Track rate (65.5%) was notably lower than the end-of-year On-Track rates for 2019-20 (84.7%, see Figure 1). End-of-year On-Track rates for magnet schools were markedly higher than those of non-magnet schools for all examined school years, resulting in a *gap* between the two groups. While the *gap* decreased from 2013-14 (18.1 percentage points) to 2019-20 (12.4 percentage points), it increased markedly in 2020-21 (21.9 percentage points).

Figure 1: On-Track End-of-Year Rates of First-Time Ninth-Grade Students by School Type, 2013-14 to 2020-21



Source: District course files dated 06/18/14 (2013-14), 06/25/15 (2014-15), 06/23/16 (2015-16), 06/20/17 (2016-17), 07/11/18 (2017-18), 08/14/19 (2018-19), 07/30/20 (2019-20), and 07/21/21 (2020-21) for students enrolled on the PEIMS snapshot dates of 10/28/13 (2013-14), 10/31/14 (2014-15), 10/30/15 (2015-16), 10/31/16 (2016-17), 10/30/17 (2017-18), 10/26/18 (2018-19), 10/31/19 (2019-20), and 10/30/20 (2020-21).

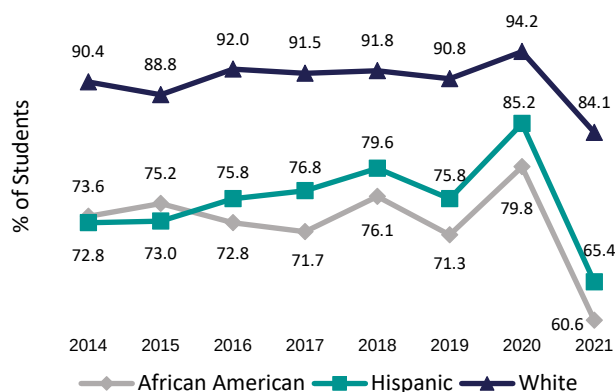
In 2020-21, the districtwide end-of-year On-Track rate of African American students (60.6%) was lower than Hispanic students (65.4%) and White students (84.1%, see Figure 2). Since 2013-14, end-of-year On-Track rates for White students have been higher than those of African American students and Hispanic students, resulting in a gap between the student groups. The gap widened between African American students and White students from 2014-15 (13.6

¹ The CCSR developed an On-Track indicator in 1999 to gauge whether students in their first year of high school were making enough progress to have a reasonable expectation of graduating in four years. Unlike other

indicators, it provides information about progress and performance from a relatively early point in a student's high school career.

percentage points) to 2016-17 (19.8 percentage points) but decreased markedly in 2017-18 (15.7 percentage points) and increased again in 2018-19 (19.5 percentage points). In 2019-20, the gap between the African American students and White students decreased to 14.4 percentage points but increased noticeably to 23.5 percentage points in 2020-21. The gap narrowed between Hispanic students and White students from 2015-16 (16.2 percentage points) to 2017-18 (12.2 percentage points) but increased in 2018-19 (15.0 percentage points). In 2019-20, the gap between the Hispanic students and White students decreased to 9.0 percentage points but more than doubled to 18.7 percentage points in 2020-21.

Figure 2: On-Track End-of-Year Rates of First-Time Ninth-Grade Students by Ethnicity, 2013-14 to 2020-21



Source: District course files dated 06/18/14 (2013-14), 06/25/15 (2014-15), 06/23/16 (2015-16), 06/20/17 (2016-17), 07/11/18 (2017-18), 08/14/19 (2018-19), 07/30/20 (2019-20), and 07/21/21 (2020-21) for students enrolled on the PEIMS snapshot dates of 10/28/13 (2013-14), 10/31/14 (2014-15), 10/30/15 (2015-16), 10/31/16 (2016-17), 10/30/17 (2017-18), 10/26/18 (2018-19), 10/31/19 (2019-20), and 10/30/20 (2020-21).

Overall, magnet high schools (84.7%) had a higher percentage of end-of-year On-Track students compared to non-magnet high schools (62.8%, see Table 1). In 2020-21, three out of 28 (10.7%) non-magnet high schools had end-of-year rates at or above 80 percent, which was a decrease from 2020 ($n = 20$). Eighteen non-magnet high schools had end-of-year On-Track rates below 70 percent, with eight of those schools falling below 60 percent. Seven out of ten (70.0%) magnet high schools had end-of-year rates exceeding 80 percent, which was a decrease from 2019-20 ($n = 10$).

Overall, from 2018-19 to 2020-21, magnet high schools' end-of-year On-Track rates decreased slightly by 3.7 percentage points, while non-magnet high schools and the district decreased markedly in end-of-year On-Track rates (11.6 percentage points and 10.7 percentage points, respectively). From 2018-19 to 2020-21, 24 out of 28 (85.7%) non-magnet high schools had decreases in end-of-year On-Track rates (ranging from 3.4 percentage points to 31.6 percentage points). Eight out of ten (80.0%) magnet high schools had decreases in end-of-year

On-Track rates (ranging from 0.4 percentage points to 13.4 percentage points).

Table 1: Freshman End-of-Year On-Track Rates by School, 2018-19 to 2020-21

	Percent On-Track			2-yr
	2019	2020	2021	Δ
Non-Magnet High Schools				
B. Adams	79.8	81.3	80.3	0.5
Adamson	72.6	90.7	66.8	-5.8
Carter	72.5	70.6	50.9	-21.6
CityLab	86.2	94.0	67.7	-18.5
Conrad	79.6	88.3	63.5	-16.1
Garza Early College	98.2	99.2	83.6	-14.6
Gilliam Collegiate Academy	91.1	92.1	75.0	-16.1
Hillcrest	78.1	90.0	61.6	-16.5
IDEA	77.8	87.7	70.9	-6.9
Jefferson	77.3	84.6	67.4	-9.9
Kimball	75.9	74.8	46.9	-29.0
Lassiter Early College	94.2	92.6	94.6	0.4
Lincoln	65.4	67.3	54.5	-10.9
Madison	88.2	85.1	56.6	-31.6
Molina	76.1	86.9	71.0	-5.1
North Dallas	64.5	83.1	60.7	-3.8
North Lake	-	100.0	69.8	NA
Pinkston	77.6	76.6	70.0	-7.6
Roosevelt	58.2	75.3	46.0	-12.2
Samuell	67.6	88.6	46.0	-21.6
Seagoville	65.3	78.8	43.1	-22.2
Skyline	72.7	81.4	61.7	-11.0
South Oak Cliff	74.0	79.5	69.8	-4.2
Spruce	58.6	67.3	34.5	-24.1
Sunset	69.3	89.1	73.3	4.0
White	73.8	82.5	70.4	-3.4
Wilmer-Hutchins	73.8	82.9	70.3	-3.5
Wilson	86.8	92.2	66.7	-20.1
Non-Magnet Total	74.4	83.3	62.8	-11.6
Magnet High Schools				
Obama	97.7	100.0	94.4	-3.3
Rangel	100.0	98.8	92.4	-7.6
New Tech	33.3	88.5	77.3	44.0
Townview Business	83.8	93.5	87.9	4.1
Townview ESSM	74.2	91.8	65.9	-8.3
Townview Health	95.1	98.1	90.5	-4.6
Townview Law	82.7	95.8	74.6	-8.1
Townview SEM	100.0	97.4	86.6	-13.4
Townview TAG	97.3	99.2	88.3	-9.0
Washington Arts	84.5	94.6	84.1	-0.4
Magnet Total	88.4	95.7	84.7	-3.7
District Total	76.2	84.7	65.5	-10.7

Source: District course files dated 08/14/19 (2018-19), 07/30/20 (2019-20), and 07/21/21 (2020-21) for students enrolled on the PEIMS snapshot dates of 10/26/18 (2018-19), 10/31/19 (2019-20) and 10/30/20 (2020-21).

Note: ESSM = Education and Social Science Magnet. SEM = Science and Engineering Magnet. TAG = Talented and Gifted. - = No data available. NA = Unable to calculate. Schools with 2020-21 end-of-year On-Track rates below 70 percent are highlighted in gray. 2-yr Δ = Difference change in On-Track percentage from 2018-19 to 2020-21. All differences shown in percentage points.

What were the longitudinal trends and 4-year graduation rates of first-time ninth-grade students identified as On-Track?

Methodology

Student leaver records were extracted from the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) district data files and merged with On-Track data files for 2011-12 through 2017-18. Four-year graduation rates were calculated for first-time ninth-grade cohort students identified as On-Track and Not On-Track after excluding students who left the district (e.g. moved, became home schooled, enrolled in a private school, were incarcerated, or deceased).

Results

Overall, the Classes of 2015 to 2020 had a larger proportion of first-time ninth-grade students identified as On-Track (ranging from 78.2% to 81.8%) compared to Not On-Track (ranging from 18.2% to 21.8%, see Table 2). For the Classes of 2015 to 2020, first-time ninth-grade students identified as On-Track had higher 4-year graduation rates than first-time ninth-grade students identified as Not On-Track. Results indicate that a large portion of On-Track students (86.9% to 89.8%) had graduated high school in four years, while only about half (50.7% to 59.5%) of Not On-Track students had graduated high school in four years.

Table 2: Graduation Rates by On-Track Status: Class of 2015 to Class of 2020

Class of	Class Total		Graduated in 4-years	
	N	%	n	%
On-Track				
2015	5,711	78.5	4,995	87.5
2016	6,165	79.4	5,359	86.9
2017	5,818	78.2	5,132	88.2
2018	6,217	79.0	5,503	88.5
2019	6,433	80.9	5,779	89.8
2020*	6,403	81.8	5,690	88.9
Not On-Track				
2015	1,561	21.5	929	59.5
2016	1,595	20.6	859	53.9
2017	1,623	21.8	925	57.0
2018	1,655	21.0	928	56.1
2019	1,515	19.1	823	54.3
2020*	1,421	18.2	720	50.7

Source: District course files dated 06/18/14 (2013-14), 06/25/15 (2014-15), 06/23/16 (2015-16), and 06/20/17 (2016-17) for students enrolled on the PEIMS snapshot dates of 10/28/13 (2013-14), 10/31/14 (2014-15), 10/30/15 (2015-16), and 10/31/16 (2016-17). Student leaver records file dated 08/15/21.

Note: * = Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, traditional student data tracking may have been disrupted and data for the Class of 2020 should be viewed with caution.

RECOMMENDATION

Track and analyze student support services provided to first-time ninth-grade students identified as Not On-Track. Longitudinal analyses of graduation rates indicate that only half of first-time ninth-grade students identified as Not On-track will graduate high school in four years. Identification and tracking of student support services received by Not On-Track students can be examined to determine which support services may be more efficacious.

Investigate what additional student supports were being provided at campuses who had increases in On-Track rates. Based on two-year trends, only three comprehensive schools (Bryan Adams, Lassiter Early College, and Sunset) and one magnet school (Townview Business) had increases in the percentage of On-Track students while all other high schools had decreases in the percentage of On-track students. District leaders should investigate what additional student supports may have been provided at these schools that keep a higher percentage of students On-Track.

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- Featherston, L. (2019). *2018-19 Dallas ISD On-Track Indicator*. Dallas, TX: Dallas Independent School District.
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EA21-153-4

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Dallas Independent School District (Dallas ISD) received federal funds for high-quality summer programming for the summer of 2021 through Title I, Part A, as authorized under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). The Extended Learning Opportunities (ELO) Department hosted pre-kindergarten through grade eight summer camps at high priority campuses during the summer of 2021. The camps were planned using a holistic approach, focusing programming on addressing learning gaps, acceleration, and the emotional needs of students as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. In lieu of the ELO Credit Recovery Program, Campus Reconnection Centers provided opportunities for students in grades 9-12.

The purpose of the 2020-21 Summer Breeze program 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. Data for this report were obtained from interviews with program staff and a review of program documents.

On March 13, 2020, in alignment with federal recommendations, the Governor of Texas issued a disaster proclamation certifying that the novel coronavirus COVID-19 posed an imminent threat of disaster for all counties in the state of Texas. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Dallas ISD transitioned students to at-home learning on March 23 following spring break (March 16 – 20) until the end of the 2019-20 school year. To help district students and families access the internet during at-home learning, the Dallas ISD launched "Operation Connectivity" in May 2020, which provided 23,000 hotspots to families by October 2020. Dallas ISD delayed the start of the 2020-21 school year until September 8, 2020 and implemented at-home learning districtwide for the first four weeks. The district also modified the school calendar from a six-week schedule to a nine-week schedule. On October 22, 2020, the district announced that campuses would provide in-person and virtual learning throughout the rest of the school year, and parents could then choose whether their children participated in in-person or virtual instruction. In-person and virtual instruction included both synchronous and asynchronous learning activities. The district also continued to implement the Center for Disease Control (CDC) as well as state and local COVID safety protocols.

The district allocated \$2,000,000 of Title I, Part A, funding to Summer Learning programs in 2020-21. This amount was the same in 2019-20 (Watson, 2020).

EVALUATION QUESTIONS

How were the Summer Breeze camps implemented?

Teacher Recruitment and Training

Campus principals selected Summer Breeze teachers based on their expertise to address the unique needs of Summer Camp students, including strong Social Emotional Learning skills. Selections were made by May for summer of 2021. Once selected, Summer Camp teachers attended professional development, which included online learning resources developed by the Teaching and Learning Department. Training sessions were held virtually via Zoom on June 1 - 3, 2021 from 4:00 – 6:00 pm. Topics included elementary and middle school curriculum, classroom management, addressing mental and emotional health needs related to the stress of the pandemic, as well as Summer Camp behavioral expectations and basic operational information for the program.

Student Identification

Individual campuses set student eligibility guidelines to determine which students would be invited to attend the summer program. ELO offered suggestions for selection based on Admission, Review and Dismissal (ARD) committee requirements, chronic absences, and program specific criteria, though the eligibility decisions were made by each campus individually. Campuses were instructed to identify roughly 20-30 percent of the student population per grade level (prekindergarten through grade eight) for attendance in the program. This year, for the first time, student promotion and retention were not factors.

Each campus provided ELO with student program enrollment information by June 11, 2021. 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).

Marketing and Parent Communication

The program was marketed to parents as Summer Cool Camp. Marketing materials, including the program invitation sent home to parents, communicated that the Camp's content would be designed to meet the needs of the whole child. Further, students would experience a full day of activities ranging from content-embedded novel engineering to extracurricular activities.

Program Characteristics

Summer camps were held over two weeks, beginning on Tuesday June 22, and ending on Thursday July 1 (for a total of seven days of instruction, with no camp programming held on Fridays). The face-to-face (fully in-person) program ran from 8:00am to 4:00pm, though students were also offered a virtual morning-only option. Transportation, breakfast, lunch, and participation incentives were provided to students utilizing the face-to-face model. The daily schedule included journaling, content lessons, extracurriculars, and personal reflection.

As previously stated, summer 2021 marked the first time that student promotion and retention concerns were not factors in student selection. Because the emphasis for the Summer Camps was no longer on improving content grades, all grades were recorded as “pass” or “fail”. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Texas Education Agency waived promotion/retention and retesting requirements for the 2020–21 school year. Students were promoted to the next grade based on teacher and parent input.

What were the results of the Summer Breeze program?

Enrollment and Attendance

Campus staff members reported daily total attendance numbers for each day of Summer Camp programming to the Extended Learning Opportunities Department via a district-provided Google Form. ELO staff provided access to data to the evaluator.¹ Based on accepted invitations and registrations completed prior to June 22, a total of 10,460 students at the elementary level, and 6,849 at the middle school level were projected to attend the summer camps. Average daily attendance as reported by 80 campuses totaled 4,393 at elementary and 3,143 at middle schools (Tables 1 and 2). At some campuses, a sizable portion of projected students failed to attend, while at others, many more students arrived than expected. Program management responded by adjusting staffing and resources to meet student demand.

At the elementary level (Table 1), most campuses anticipated more students than actual attendance numbers. Five schools saw attendance rates at or above 70 percent of their projected total: Birdie Alexander, Frederick Douglass, Harry Stone, Nancy Cochran, and Stevens Park. Notably, two (Douglass and Stone) saw actual daily attendance figures that were one and a half to two times greater than projected for each camp. At middle schools (Table 2), three campuses had attendance rates at or above 70 percent: Boude Storey, Francisco Medrano, and Sarah Zumwalt.

Table 1: 2021 Summer Camp Projected Enrollment and Daily Average Attendance, Elementary Campuses

Camp Site	Projected Enrollment	Avg. Daily Attendance	Attendance Rate
Anne Frank	256	178	69.5
Annie Webb Blanton	97	51	52.6
Anson Jones	230	124	53.9
Arthur Kramer	231	124	53.7
B.H. Macon	411	153	37.2
Bayles	347	123	35.4
Birdie Alexander	39	31	79.5
C.F. Carr	98	27	27.6
Cedar Crest	118	31	26.3
Cesar Chavez	91	12	13.2
Charles Rice	148	64	43.2
David G. Burnet	61	30	49.2
Eddie B. Johnson	132	42	31.8
Edward Titche	246	110	44.7
Edwin J. Kiest	565	228	40.4
Elisha M. Pease	165	74	44.8
F.P. Caillet	363	171	47.1
Felix G. Botello	273	77	28.2
Frank Guzik	180	73	40.6
Frederick Douglass	37	80	216.2*
Gabe P. Allen	144	40	27.8
George W. Truett	99	44	44.4
H.I. Holland	109	18	16.5
Harrell Budd	229	46	20.1
Harry Stone	51	77	151.0*
J.N. Ervin	457	122	26.7
J.P. Starks	56	22	39.3
Jack Lowe, Sr.	77	31	40.3
Jerry R. Junkins	435	205	47.1
John Neely Bryan	134	23	17.2
John W. Carpenter	157	42	26.8
Jose "Joe" May	158	53	33.5
Julian T. Saldivar	125	79	63.2
L.L. Hotchkiss	171	102	59.6
Leila P. Cowart	198	99	50.0
Leonides Cigarroa	182	48	26.4
Leslie A. Stemmons	107	51	47.7
Lida Hooe	140	22	15.7
Maple Lawn	395	112	28.4
Margaret Henderson	512	136	26.6
Martin Luther King, Jr.	137	51	37.2
Martin Weiss	186	73	39.2
N.W. Harlee	87	58	66.7
Nancy J. Cochran	47	33	70.2
Oran M. Roberts	88	49	55.7
Paul L. Dunbar	103	66	64.1
Robert L. Thornton	100	50	50.0
Ronald E. McNair	91	57	62.6
Rufus C. Burlison	48	28	58.3
San Jacinto	167	68	40.7
Sidney Lanier	184	95	51.6
Solar For Girls	221	87	39.4
Stevens Park	117	87	74.4
T.G. Terry	116	72	62.1
Thomas L. Marsalis	181	107	59.1
Trinity Heights	127	42	33.1
W.W. Bushman	181	100	55.2
Whitney M. Young, Jr.	117	41	35.0
Wilmer-Hutchins	138	54	39.1
Total	10,460	4,393	42.0

Source: Extended Learning Opportunities data file dated 07/20/2021.

Note: * Indicates more students in attendance than projected.

¹ Two campuses did not report attendance data and were omitted from data tables provided below. Various other campuses missed one or more days

of reporting, and their average daily attendance figures were calculated based only on days with reported data.

Table 2: 2021 Summer Camp Projected Enrollment and Daily Average Attendance, Middle School Campuses

Camp Site	Projected Enrollment	Avg. Daily Attendance	Attendance Rate
Benjamin Franklin	202	71	35.1
Billy Earl Dade	288	89	30.9
Boude Storey	186	153	82.3
E.B. Comstock	688	136	19.8
Francisco Medrano	107	99	92.5
Harold W. Lang	571	288	50.4
Kennedy-Curry	180	23	12.8
L.G. Pinkston	384	128	33.3
L.V. Stockard	289	148	51.2
Oliver W. Holmes	174	77	44.3
Piedmont GLOBAL	224	122	54.5
Sam Tasby	312	191	61.2
Sarah Zumwalt	102	84	82.4
Seagoville	379	116	30.6
T.J. Rusk	535	136	25.4
T.W. Browne	338	132	39.1
Thomas C. Marsh	358	180	50.3
W.E. Greiner	615	392	63.7
W.H. Gaston	685	419	61.2
William H. Atwell	232	159	68.5
Total	6,849	3,143	45.9

Source: Extended Learning Opportunities data file dated 07/20/2021.

In 2019, a total of 11,083 students in grades one through twelve attended at least one day of the summer academic program in-person, while in summer 2020, a total of 15,326 students in grades kindergarten through eight enrolled in Virtual Summer School (Watson, 2020). In prior years, student level data were shared with evaluators, which allowed for a count of individual students attending at least one day of the programs. The attendance totals reported in Tables 1 and 2 are not based on individual student data, but on daily totals of attendees as reported by campuses. Further, because individual student-level data for Summer Camp students were not available, analysis of student demographic characteristics was not possible.

Teacher Demographics

To prepare for the 17,309 projected students, the program hired and trained 1,317 teachers. The program designed classrooms with a 1:15 ratio to maximize teacher effectiveness and student engagement. Most teachers were African American (52.0%, $n = 685$). An additional 28.4 percent were Hispanic ($n = 374$), and 16.2 percent of teachers were white ($n = 213$). The remaining 3.4 percent ($n = 45$) were of other or two or more races. A total of 972 teachers (73.8%) were female, while 345 were male.

Summer Camp teachers had an average of eight years' experience teaching in the district. Almost one quarter of teachers (23.9%, $n = 315$) held a graduate-level degree. Additionally, a total of 65 teachers (4.9%) were graduates of an Alternative Certification program.

What are the plans for future summer programs?

Dallas ISD plans to continue to offer summer camps focused on improving students' academic and emotional wellbeing as part of its Mitigating Learning Loss initiative. To help address learning gaps caused by the pandemic, summer camps will also include small group instruction as well as instruction on various technology applications and extracurricular activities. The summer camps will build in emotional check-ins, reflective journaling, and exercise breaks including yoga. Campuses will opt into the program, and participating schools will be announced by April 2022.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Improve the collection of attendance data. Determining which programs are successful requires knowing which students attended and the number of days each attended. Program management should communicate attendance tracking expectations, ensure all campuses adhere to daily attendance tracking procedures, and follow up when procedures are not followed with fidelity.

Take steps to improve attendance projections. The program may consider conducting qualitative research to learn how families made or changed summer program attendance decisions and use these insights to more accurately project enrollment for future summers.

Continue to ensure the program allocates enough resources to accommodate greater than expected enrollment numbers. Predicting student attendance during summer has been a challenge for years. The program should continue to ensure it has the capacity to host more students than its annual attendance projection.

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Watson, C. E. (2020). *2019-20 Evaluation of Summer Learning Programs (EA20-160-2)*. Dallas, TX. Dallas Independent School District.

EA21-160-4

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of the Title I, Part A program is to improve educational quality and to help ensure that all students, particularly those students at risk of not meeting challenging state academic assessment standards, meet the state's student performance standards. In 2020-21, all but five Dallas Independent School District (ISD) schools ($n=221$)¹ received supplemental Title I, Part A funding to support at-risk students. All 2020-21 Dallas ISD Title I schools had schoolwide programs.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic,² the district delayed the start of the 2020-21 school year until September 8, 2020 and implemented at-home learning districtwide for the first four weeks. The district also modified the school calendar from a six-week schedule to a nine-week schedule. On October 22, 2020, the district announced that campuses would provide in-person and virtual learning throughout the rest of the school year, and parents could choose whether their children participated in in-person or virtual instruction. In-person and virtual instruction included both synchronous and asynchronous learning activities. The district also continued to implement the Center for Disease Control (CDC) as well as state and local COVID safety protocols.

In 2020-21, the five schools that were excluded from the Title I school list had a total population of 3,729 students, which was about three percent of the total enrollment ($n=145,720$). Therefore, this report included total district population on all data presented. In 2020-21, there were 18 centrally administered Title I programs³ in the district.

PURPOSE AND METHODS OF THE EVALUATION

The purpose of this evaluation report was to assess demographic and outcome trends. Student performance was assessed based on *Measures of Academic Progress (MAP)*, the *State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR)* 3-8, and *STAAR End-of-Course (EOC)*. Attendance and graduation rates were also reported. Multi-year data were used to examine demographic and outcome trends over the years. Title I, Part A funding information was obtained from the Special Revenue Funds Management department. Demographic characteristics were compiled from district data files.

Outcome results for 2020-21 should be reviewed with caution due to the continued COVID-19 concerns.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS/OUTCOMES

What was the amount of funding for the Title I Program?

A total of \$85,405,880 was allocated to Title I, Part A for the 2020-21 school year. Of the \$85,405,880, \$72,520,970 was distributed directly to schools, and \$12,884,910 was allocated to centrally administered projects that supported schools. This was a decrease of \$1,717,696 from 2019-20. When reviewed by workscope, the largest amount was budgeted for Differentiated Instructional - Technology Support (\$8,741,431) followed by Resident Teachers (\$2,593,174) and Summer Learning (\$2,000,000).

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

In 2020-21, there were 10,021 full-time teachers in the district. Of the 10,021 teachers, 70 percent were female, while 30 percent were male. Thirty-five percent were African American, 33 percent were Hispanic, and 28 percent were white. The proportion of Hispanic teachers increased by one percentage point every year from 2016-17 (29%) to 2020-21 (33%). Eleven percent were new to the district in 2020-21. Most had Bachelor degrees (67%), while 23 percent had Master or doctoral degrees.

In 2020-21, Dallas ISD served 145,720 students in early childhood (EC) to grade 12, a decrease of 7,774 students from 2019-20 (from $n=153,494$ to $n=145,720$ - Figure 1). Like last year, the largest decreases were in the elementary grades (range of n decrease: five to 949 for 2019-20 and 197 to 3,011 for 2020-21). Prekindergarten (PK) enrollment showed the largest decrease this year (n decrease=-3,011 from 2019-20 to 2020-21), followed by grade five (n decrease=-1,145) and grade nine (n decrease=-1,347). Decreases in student enrollment were somewhat expected due to COVID-19 concerns. As of early October 2020, the Dallas Morning News reported that school enrollment was

¹ Source: Special Revenue Funds Management: 11/05/20.

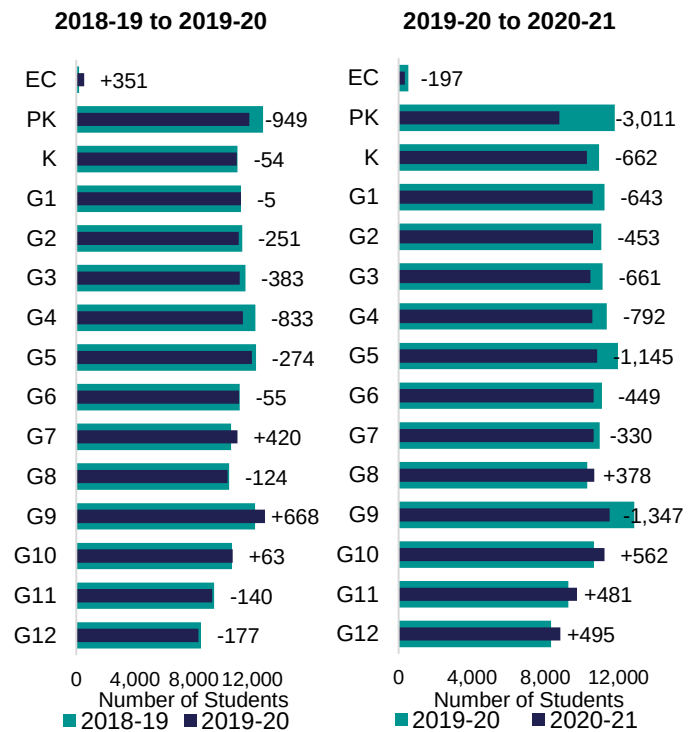
² On March 13, 2020, in alignment with federal recommendations, the Governor of Texas issued a disaster proclamation certifying that the novel coronavirus COVID-19 posed an imminent threat of disaster for all counties in the state of Texas. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Dallas ISD transitioned students to at-home learning on March 23 following spring

break (March 16 – 20) until the end of the 2019-20 school year. To help district students and families access the internet during at-home learning, the Dallas ISD launched "Operation Connectivity" in May 2020, which provided 23,000 hotspots to families by October 2020.

³ Number counts were based on information from Special Revenue Funds Management: 02/28/21.

down across North Texas districts, and PK has been particularly impacted.⁴

Figure 1: Student Enrollment Changes by Grade



Source: Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) demographic files: 10/26/18, 10/28/19, and 10/30/20.
Note: K=kindergarten. G=grade. n=155,237 in 2018-19, 153,494 in 2019-20, and 145,720 in 2020-21.

Did students achieve at or above grade level on reading and mathematics, as measured by MAP?

For the English and Spanish administrations combined, the overall percentage of students at or above grade level in 2020-21 ranged from 39 percent to 54 percent for reading and from 36 percent to 59 percent for mathematics (Table 1). It would be hoped that the percentage of students at or above grade level would increase throughout the year. Results showed some positive changes for mathematics from 2020-21 beginning (BOY) to middle (MOY) to end (EOY) of school year but not for reading.

In most comparisons, African American students scored the lowest, and both African American and Hispanic students scored lower than white students. The percentage of special education students at or above grade level was the lowest among student groups. For grades K to 11 combined, about 55 percent of students in reading and 53 percent of students in mathematics did not score at grade level at the end of the 2020-21 school year.

Table 1: 2020-21 MAP Results At or Above Grade Level

	BOY		MOY		EOY		BOY to
	n	%	n	%	n	%	EOYΔ
							(%pts)
Reading							
G K-1	9,078	49.7	9,447	50.1	17,617	45.6	-4.1
G 2-5	35,619	48.6	35,845	49.6	34,335	49.3	0.7
G 6-9	32,183	47.5	31,058	42.6	27,697	39.4	-8.1
G 10-11	14,242	54.4	13,174	54.0	10,708	48.2	-6.2
G K-11	91,122	49.2	89,524	47.8	90,357	45.4	-3.8
Mathematics							
G K-1	9,365	40.9	9,668	44.9	18,372	49.0	8.1
G 2-5	37,816	35.5	38,179	43.9	36,701	42.3	6.8
G 6-9	31,893	38.7	31,299	44.9	28,346	46.6	7.9
G 10-11	13,779	46.2	12,874	53.6	10,684	59.0	12.8
G K-11	92,853	38.7	92,020	45.7	94,103	46.8	8.1

Source: PEIMS demographic file, 10/30/20. District MAP data files, 11/05/20 for BOY, 03/09/21 for MOY, and 06/23/21 for EOY.
Note: MAP scores at or above grade level=at or above the 50th percentile. The English and Spanish administrations were combined. K students were tested for EOY only. Δ=difference. %pts=percentage points.

Did students achieve Approaches Grade Level or Above, Meets Grade Level or Above, or Masters Grade Level on STAAR 3-8 subtests?

In 2020-21, the overall percentage of students that met the performance standards on STAAR subtests ranged from 45 percent (social studies) to 63 percent (reading) at Approaches+, 16 percent (social studies) to 35 percent (reading) at Meets+, and six percent (social studies) to 18 percent (reading) at Masters (Figure 2).

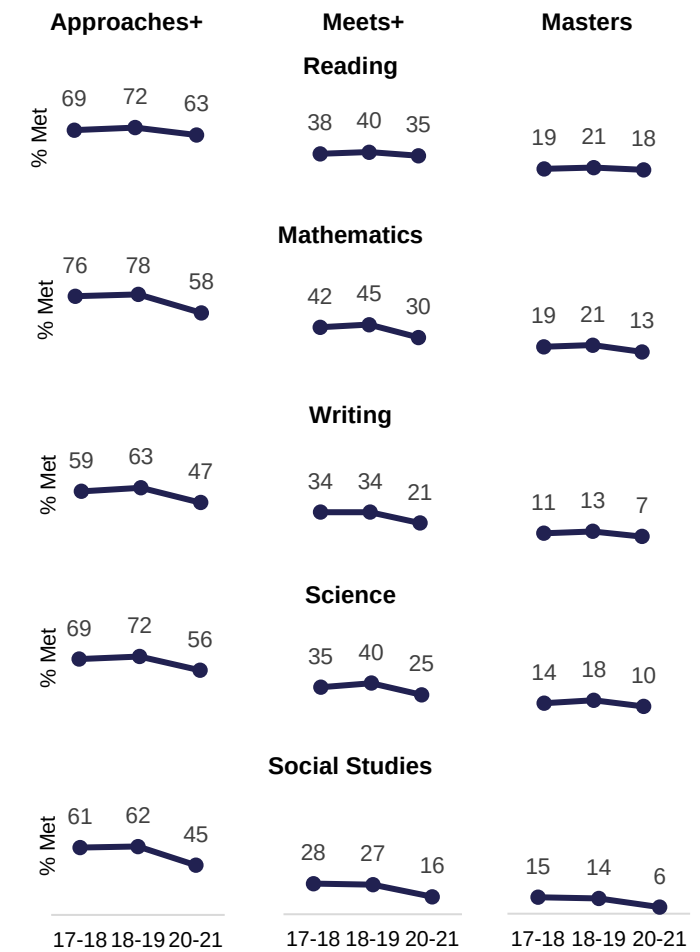
For all subjects and grade levels, the percentages of students that met the performance standards (Approaches+, Meets+, and Masters) decreased from 2018-19 to 2020-21. For reading and mathematics, percentages at Approaches+, Meets+, and Masters were lower for grades six to eight combined than for grades three to five combined. In most comparisons, African American students scored the lowest, and both African American and Hispanic students scored lower than white students. The percentage of special education students was the lowest among student groups.

In 2020-21, the percentages of grade-six students that met the performance standards were about the same between students housed in an elementary school and those in a middle school⁵ or higher for students housed in an elementary school.⁶ In 2018-19, the percentages for grade-six students housed in an elementary school were higher than for students housed in a middle school across subjects and performance standards. However, year-to-year comparisons should be viewed with caution because some schools were categorized differently in 2020-21 due to grade configuration changes.

⁴ Source: Dallas Morning News as of 10/05/20 (<https://www.dallasnews.com/news/education/2020/10/05/covid-19-concerns-lead-to-sharp-drop-in-pre-k-enrollment-across-north-texas-districts/>)

⁵ This included reading at Approaches+ and Masters and for mathematics at Masters.
⁶ This included reading at Meets+ and mathematics at Approaches+ and Meets+.

Figure 2: 2017-18 to 2020-21 Overall STAAR Results by Subject



Source: PEIMS demographic files, 10/30/17, 10/26/18, and 10/30/20. District STAAR data files, 06/20/18, 06/13/19, and 06/28/21.
Note: Results included all administrations through May of each year and STAAR Alternate 2. Although all scores were included, some students' test scores in 2017-18 might have been adversely affected by the online testing issues that occurred in April and May 2018. See Appendix C of the full report for the number of students tested for each category.

When 2020-21 STAAR results for Dallas ISD were compared with the state across subjects and grade levels, the percentages of Dallas ISD students that met the performance standards were lower than students at the state level in 59 of 63 comparisons. When 2020-21 results were compared to 2018-19, the percentages of both Dallas ISD students and students at the state level decreased in 62 of 63 comparisons.

Did students achieve Approaches Grade Level or Above, Meets Grade Level or Above, or Masters Grade Level on STAAR EOC subtests?

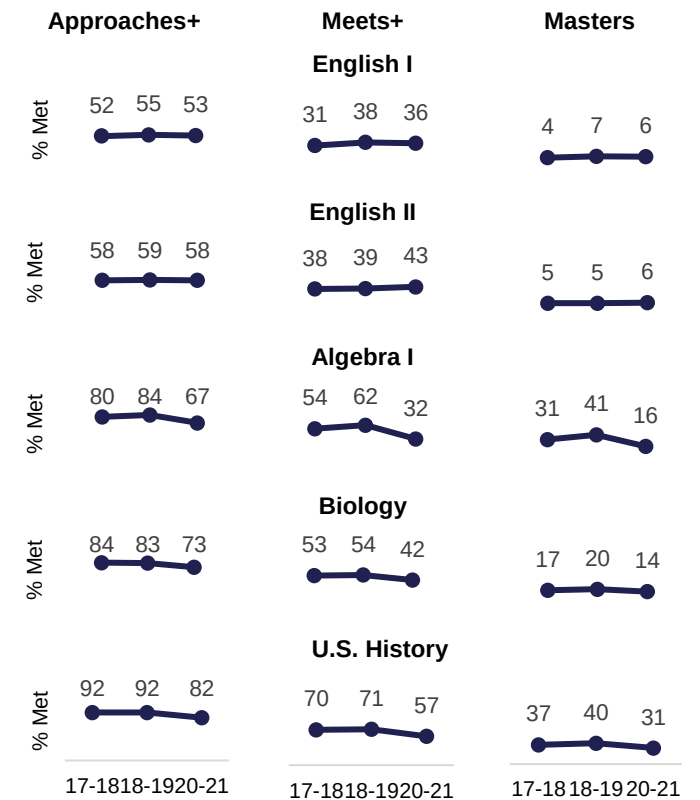
In 2020-21, the overall percentage of students that met the performance standards on STAAR EOC subtests ranged from 53 percent (English I) to 82 percent (U.S. History) at Approaches+, 32 percent (Algebra I) to 57 percent (U.S.

History) at Meets+, and six percent (English I and English II) to 31 percent (U.S. History) at Masters (Figure 3).

Overall, the percentages of students at Approaches+, Meets+, and Masters were lower for 2020-21 than for prior years (2017-18 and 2018-19) for all subjects except for English II at all performance standards and English I at Masters. In most comparisons, African American students scored the lowest, and both African American and Hispanic students scored lower than white students. The percentage of special education students was the lowest among student groups.

When 2020-21 STAAR EOC results for Dallas ISD were compared with the state by subject, the percentages of Dallas ISD students that met the performance standards were lower than students at the state level in all 15 comparisons. When 2020-21 results were compared to 2018-19, the percentages of Dallas ISD students decreased in 13 of 15 comparisons, while the percentages of students at the state level decreased in nine of 15 comparisons.

Figure 3: 2017-18 to 2020-21 Overall STAAR EOC Results by Subject

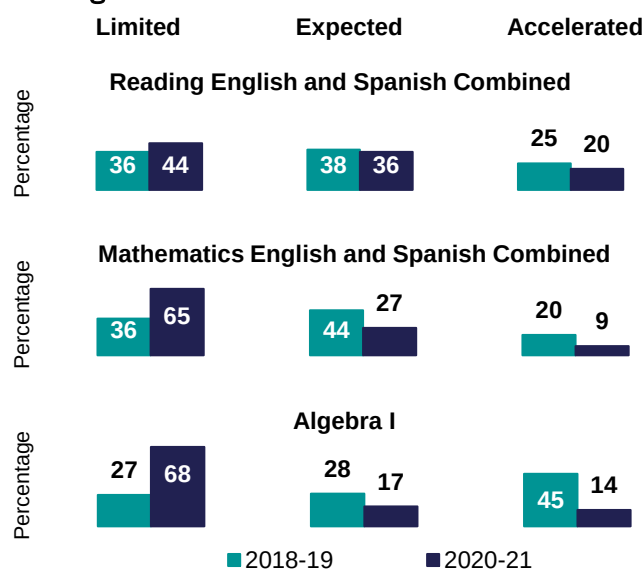


Source: PEIMS demographic files, 10/30/17, 10/26/18, and 10/30/20. District STAAR EOC data files, 06/20/18, 06/04/19, and 06/17/21.
Note: Results included December and May administrations for each year and STAAR EOC Alternate 2. For Algebra I, some eighth-grade students took the assessment (20% to 37%). See Appendix D of the full report for the number of students tested for each category.

Did students improve in reading and mathematics, as measured by STAAR/STAAR EOC progress measures?

For STAAR reading, 36 percent of students attained Expected progress and 20 percent attained Accelerated progress in 2020-21 (Figure 4). For STAAR mathematics, 27 percent of students attained Expected progress and nine percent attained Accelerated progress. For both reading and mathematics, the overall percentages of students with Expected or Accelerated progress were lower for 2020-21 (56% and 36%, respectively) than for 2018-19 (63% and 64%, respectively). For STAAR EOC Algebra I, 17 percent of students attained Expected progress and 14 percent attained Accelerated progress. Like STAAR reading and mathematics, the overall percentage of students with Expected or Accelerated progress for Algebra I was lower for 2020-21 (31%) than for 2018-19 (73%). Overall, about half of students with Expected progress achieved Meets+ for STAAR reading and mathematics (52% and 47%, respectively), while 82 percent of students with Expected progress achieved Meets+ for Algebra I.

Figure 4: 2018-19 to 2020-21 Overall STAAR/STAAR EOC Progress Measure Results



Source: PEIMS demographic files, 10/26/18, and 10/30/20. District STAAR data files, 06/13/19 and 07/12/21. District STAAR EOC data files, 06/04/19 and 07/12/21.

Note: Results did not include STAAR Alternate 2. For 2020-21 STAAR reading and mathematics, progress measures were available for grades 5 to 8. Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding. For Algebra I, some eighth-grade students took the assessment (20% to 37%).

What were the attendance rates and graduation rates of the Title I students?

In 2020-21, the overall attendance rate for all students in EC to grade 12 combined was 92 percent, which was a three-percentage point decrease from prior four school years (2016-17 to 2019-20). Attendance rates for high school students in each grade (grades nine to 12) did not meet or exceed the state's 90 percent standard for course credit or final grade. The four-year longitudinal graduation rate for the class of 2020 was 82 percent for all students combined, three percentage points lower than for the class of 2019 (85%).

Additional Title I Reports

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

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

The goals of the Early Learning Department are to improve kindergarten (K) readiness and to ensure that all students are performing at or above grade level in reading and mathematics by the end of grade two. The budget for the department in 2020-21 was \$26,296,009, an increase from 2019-20 (\$22,309,917).

The purpose of this report is to summarize the 2020-21 context, process, and outcomes of the Dallas Independent School District (ISD) Early Learning initiatives.¹ Contextual information about the services provided to children from birth through grade two was gathered through review of internal documents and interviews with Early Learning central staff members. Process information was examined through analyses of *Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS)* and teacher retention data. Outcome data included results of the *CIRCLE, Texas Kindergarten Entry Assessment (TX-KEA), Measures of Academic Progress (MAP),* and *State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR)*. When applicable, the report also examined early learning related goal progress measures and student outcome goals.

On March 13, 2020, in alignment with federal recommendations, the Governor of Texas issued a disaster proclamation certifying that the novel coronavirus COVID-19 posed an imminent threat of disaster for all counties in the state of Texas. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Dallas ISD transitioned students to at-home learning on March 23 following spring break (March 16 – 20) until the end of the 2019-20 school year. The start of the 2020-21 school year was delayed until September 8, 2020; at-home learning was implemented districtwide for the first four weeks. On October 22, 2020, the district announced that campuses would provide in-person and virtual learning throughout the rest of the school year, and parents could choose whether their children participated in in-person or virtual instruction.²

EVALUATION QUESTIONS/OUTCOMES

What was the context of the Early Learning programs and the related 2020-21 initiatives?

The first Early Learning Department goal was increasing K readiness through the provision of educational services to children from birth to age five through the expansion of the prekindergarten (PK) program. The second was to ensure that all students were performing on grade level in reading and mathematics by the end of grade two. Thus, early learning staff members endeavored to increase demand for and access to PK through increased enrollment, extend the continuum of care through community resources to support children from birth, increase classroom quality, and support reading and language acquisition and mathematical concepts mastery in K and beyond.

To increase access and demand through enrollment, the district piloted full-day three-year-old PK at five campuses and continued to add partner sites. The number of PK partnerships increased from 32 in 2018-19, to 37 in 2019-20, and to 39 in 2020-21.³ To expand the continuum of care, the Dallas ISD continued to operate the Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY) program for children from three to five years old.⁴ Early learning staff members also fostered community partnerships with Concilio and PK partnership sites.⁵

To improve classroom quality, the Early Learning Department continued using PK and K through grade-two specialists. Specialists provided individual support for teachers. The district employed 41 PK specialists, 66 K through grade-two specialists (55 of whom also supported grade-three classrooms at selected high-need campuses), four special education/talented and gifted specialists, two bilingual specialists, and 19 campus lead specialists. Specialists participated in professional development (PD) and then provided teachers with training.⁶ Department staff members also provided 2020 summer PD for PK through grade-two teachers, PK partnership teachers, and teaching assistants at the Early Learning Expo.

Another attempt to improve quality was a focus on assessing teacher-student interactions. The *CLASS*, an observation instrument, was administered by Southern

¹ Detailed methodologies are available in the full report. Portions of this report have been adapted from Hinkley and Rowles (2019) and Tyree and Hinkley (2020).

² More detailed information about changes due to COVID-19 is available in the full report.

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

⁴ For more information about the HIPPY program, see the HIPPY evaluation report (Tyree, 2020).

⁵ For more information about Concilio, see <https://www.theconcilio.org/>.

⁶ A list of training given to and provided by specialists is available in the full report.

Methodist University (SMU) to measure the quality of teacher-student interactions.⁷

Finally, to ensure that students were performing on grade level in reading and mathematics by the end of grade two, there was an increased focus on reading and language acquisition⁸ as well as provision of supplemental mathematics manipulatives to students. Teachers also continued to receive specialist coaching and other PD.

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

In 2020-21, 40,583 students enrolled in early childhood education through grade two, a decline from 45,549 in 2019-20. A similar pattern of decline was observed in K (10,938 in 2019-20 to 10,276 in 2020-21). Over half of the 2020-21 students were male (51%) and/or Hispanic (68%), and most were economically disadvantaged (88%). English learners comprised 48 percent of students. Seventy-nine percent of students who attended Dallas ISD PK in 2019-20 returned to Dallas ISD for K in 2020-21. This means that over a fifth of 2019-20 PK students did not remain in the district in 2020-21. Sixty-nine percent of students were continuously enrolled from 2017-18 (their K year) to 2020-21 (most students' grade-three year).

What were the early learning teacher retention rates?

A sizeable proportion of early learning teachers were no longer teaching in early learning grades or left the district over the past three years. Of the 2017-18 early learning teachers, 66 percent continued to teach in an early learning grade level in 2018-19, but this rate dropped to 52 percent after two years and to 47 percent after three years. The early learning teacher retention rate was slightly higher for 2018-19 teachers, with 67 percent of early learning teachers remaining in an early learning grade level in 2019-20, and 58 percent continuing after two years. In comparison to 2018-19, a higher percentage (73%) of 2019-20 teachers continued teaching an early learning grade level in 2020-21. This means the district has provided PD and extended support to many early learning teachers who have moved to non-early learning positions in the district or who have left the Dallas ISD, though the retention rates of early learning teachers have improved over time.

What was the quality of early learning instruction as measured by CLASS?⁹

Consistent with past years, overall results of CLASS indicated that district teachers were strongest in emotional support (99% of PK teachers and 92% of K through grade-two teachers met the threshold in spring 2021,

respectively) and classroom organization (97% of PK teachers and 90% of K through grade-two teachers) and weakest in instructional support (81% of PK teachers and 75% of K through grade-two teachers). Over time, the percentage of teachers who met or exceeded quality thresholds trended upward from fall 2020 to spring 2021 for all three domains for all grades. When reviewed by grade and for grades K through two combined, the average scores of the observed teachers were at or above the quality thresholds for both semesters on all three domains (emotional support, classroom organization, and instructional support) with the exception of grade-one teachers in instructional support for fall 2020.

In spring 2021, 80 percent of PK teachers and 71 percent of K through grade-two teachers met or exceeded the quality threshold in all three domains. Compared to spring 2019 and 2020, increased percentages of teachers met or exceeded the quality threshold for each domain and for all three domains combined in 2021 with few exceptions. From spring 2020 to spring 2021, there was a substantial increase in the percentage of PK and K through grade-two teachers who met the threshold for instructional support (+21 percentage points). Even so, 19 percent of PK and 25 percent of K through grade-two teachers did not meet the threshold.

How did early learning student scores change throughout the 2020-21 school year?

On the Literacy Screener, the new K-readiness standard within TX-KEA, 8,622 students were tested, and 69 percent of tested students were K ready. A higher percentage of Dallas ISD PK students (71%) were K ready than No DISD PK students (45%). Even so, 29 percent of DISD PK students did not meet the K-ready standard on TX-KEA.

More K students than PK, grade-one and grade-two students scored at or above their respective standards at the beginning, middle and end of year in 2020-21 (BOY, MOY and EOY, respectively) with the exception of PK mathematics and BOY grade one mathematics (Table 1). The percentage of PK students scoring *On Track* on CIRCLE increased from BOY to EOY on vocabulary (42% to 68%) and mathematics (58% to 74%). The percentage of K students scoring *On Track* on TX-KEA increased from BOY to EOY on vocabulary (59% to 69%) and mathematics (39% to 67%). This met the board-approved student progress measure that 40 percent of K students would score at or above grade level on TX-KEA EOY mathematics.¹⁰ The percentage of grade-one students scoring at or above grade level on MAP decreased from BOY to EOY on reading (50% to 43%) and increased from BOY to EOY on mathematics (41% to 44%). The percentage of grade-two students scoring at or above grade level on MAP decreased

⁷ For more information, see <http://teachstone.com/classroom-assessment-scoring-system/>.

⁸ K through grade-two teachers at 56 campuses attended House Bill Three Reading Academies which provided training on concepts and methods that support the science of teaching reading (see Mickelson, 2021).

⁹ SMU conducted CLASS observations in person and virtually.

¹⁰ Goal progress monitor 3.2 was revised from 55 percent to 40 percent in 2020-21 because of learning loss due to COVID-19.

from BOY to EOY on reading (48% to 45%) and mathematics (38% to 35%).

In comparison to 2019-20, the percentage of students who scored at or above grade level was lower in 2020-21 for PK and K students, with the exception of BOY PK mathematics, and higher for grade-two students.

Table 1: 2019-20 and 2020-21 Percentage of Students Performing At or Above Grade Level on Reading and Mathematics Assessments by Grade

Exam	BOY		MOY		EOY	
	2019	2020	2019	2020	2019	2020-
	-20	-21	-20	-21	-20	21
	%	%	%	%	%	%
PK						
CIRCLE-V	46.9	42.2	60.8	51.1		67.7
CIRCLE-M	56.7	57.9	66.5	64.5		73.8
K						
TX-KEA-V	61.1	58.7	74.6	73.4		69.3
TX-KEA-M	49.1	39.2	65.0	54.6		67.0
Grade One*						
MAP-R		49.6		50.1		43.1
MAP-M		41.1		44.8		43.7
Grade Two						
MAP-R	46.2	48.1	49.3	49.7		44.6
MAP-M	35.9	37.5	31.1	38.5		35.0

Source: Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) district database: 10/31/19 (2019-20) and 10/30/20 (2020-21). CIRCLE: 05/08/20 (2019-20) and 06/29/21 (2020-21). TX-KEA: 10/29/19 (2019-20 BOY mathematics), 02/13/20 (2019-20 BOY and MOY except for BOY mathematics), 10/28/20 (2020-21 BOY), 02/02/21 (2020-21 MOY), and 06/30/21 (2020-21 EOY). MAP: 02/11/20 (2019-20 BOY and MOY), 11/05/20 (2020-21 BOY), 02/03/21 (2020-21 MOY), and 06/23/21 (2020-21 EOY). None of these assessments were given at EOY in 2019-20.

Note: % = Percentage of students On Track (CIRCLE and TX-KEA) or at or above the 50th percentile on MAP. V = the vocabulary subscale of TX-KEA and CIRCLE, a component of the reading assessment given over time. M = mathematics. R = the reading subscale of MAP. * = MAP was not administered in grade one in 2019-20. Grey = the assessment was not administered in that timeframe. Ns are available in the full report.

The board-approved goal progress measure that 35 percent of grade-two African American students would score at or above the 50th percentile on EOY MAP reading was not met (33%). The board-approved goal progress measure that 30 percent of grade-two African American students would score at or above grade the 50th percentile on EOY MAP mathematics was not met (22%).

Did student reading and mathematics performance differ by Dallas ISD PK enrollment status?

Comparisons between DISD PK and No DISD PK groups on MAP showed that students who attended district PK attained at or above grade level (the 50th percentile) in reading and mathematics at higher rates than those who did

not attend district PK (Table 2). On STAAR reading and mathematics, students who attended district PK attained Approaches Grade Level or Above (Approaches+) or Meets Grade Level or Above (Meets+) at higher rates than those who did not attend (Table 2).

Table 2: 2020-21 Percentage of Students At or Above the 50th Percentile, Approaches+, or Meets+ on Assessments by Cohort and PK Enrollment Status

		DISD	No DISD
Exam (n)	Total N	PK %	PK %
Kindergarten Data for 2020-21 K Cohort			
MAP Reading	7,351	45.9	38.4
MAP Math	7,862	52.9	42.5
Grade-One Data for 2019-20 K Cohort			
MAP Reading	7,269	41.3	34.9
MAP Math	7,364	41.6	34.8
Grade-Two Data for 2018-19 K Cohort			
MAP Reading	6,629	42.4	38.9
MAP Math	6,777	33.9	29.9
Grade-Three Data for 2017-18 K Cohort			
STAAR Reading Approaches+	6,007	59.4	58.5
STAAR Reading Meets+	5,894	30.4	27.6
STAAR Math Approaches+	6,026	60.3	54.9
STAAR Math Meets+	5,913	26.1	22.0

Source: PEIMS district data file dated 10/30/20. MAP data file dated 06/23/21. STAAR data file dated 06/28/21.

Note: % = Percentage of students at or above the 50th percentile on MAP and Approaches Grade Level or Above (App+) or Meets+ on STAAR. Math = mathematics. Approaches+ results included Alternate 2. Alternate 2 test scores are not assessed for the Meets+ performance standard, resulting in a difference in the number of students tested for Approaches+ and Meets+.

Did students attain Approaches or Meets Grade Level or Above scores as measured by STAAR?

On 2020-21 STAAR reading, 61 percent of grade-three students scored Approaches+, which was lower than state results for Approaches+ (66%). Thirty-two percent scored Meets+. This did not meet the board-approved student outcome goal that 40 percent of grade-three students would achieve Meets+ on STAAR reading.¹¹ In comparison to 2018-19, a lower percentage of grade-three students performed at Approaches+ and Meets+ in 2020-21 with minimal exceptions.

On 2020-21 STAAR mathematics, 58 percent of grade-three students scored Approaches+, which was lower than state results for Approaches+ (61%). Twenty-six percent (25.8%) scored Meets+. When rounded, this met the board-approved student outcome goal that 26 percent of grade-three students would achieve Meets+ on STAAR mathematics.¹² In comparison to 2018-19, a lower percentage of grade-three students performed at Approaches+ and Meets+ in 2020-21.

¹¹ Goal two was revised from 42 percent to 40 percent in 2020-21 because of learning loss due to COVID-19.

¹² Goal three was revised from 44 percent to 26 percent in 2020-21 because of learning loss due to COVID-19.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Continue efforts to retain Dallas ISD PK students in the district. Over twenty percent of 2018-19 and 2019-20 PK students did not remain in the district the following year for K. Efforts to increase enrollment (partnership sites, etc.) should continue. There was a substantial decrease in enrollment in 2020-21 due to COVID-19 and the Early Learning Department launched a marketing campaign aimed at increasing enrollment; these additional efforts should also continue.

Continue efforts to retain Dallas ISD early learning teachers in early learning grades. Although retention rates for early learning teachers continue to improve over time, over a quarter of 2019-20 teachers did not continue teaching an early learning grade in 2020-21. Of the 2017-18 early learning teachers, over half were not teaching an early learning grade after three years. Due to the PD and extended support provided to early learning teachers, the Early Learning Department should continue efforts to retain early learning teachers in early learning grades.

Continue to implement the early learning initiatives with a focus on language and literacy development to drive K readiness and on-level performance by the end of grade two. The percentage of students scoring at or above grade level on TX-KEA Emergent Literacy: Reading at BOY declined from 2019-20 to 2020-21 for students in grade K (72% to 55%). Grade-two student performance on MAP reading increased from 2019-20 to 2020-21 BOY (46% to 48%) but decreased from 2020-21 BOY to EOY (48% to 45%). Grade-two student performance on MAP mathematics followed a similar pattern and increased from 2019-20 to 2020-21 BOY (36% to 38%) but decreased from 2020-21 BOY to EOY (38% to 35%). The Early Learning

Department should continue its focus on increasing K readiness and ensuring students are on grade level by the end of grade two. In particular, the district should continue increasing K readiness by increasing access to and the quality of PK. As in previous years, a higher percentage of students who attended Dallas ISD PK (71%) were K ready in comparison to those who did not attend (45%).

Continue to train teachers to provide more effective instructional support for students. Overall, the district performed well on CLASS with an upward trend in scores over time; however, 19 percent of PK teachers and 25 percent of K to grade two teachers did not meet the quality threshold for instructional support in spring 2021. Thus, the department should continue efforts to improve these scores.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Homeless Education Program (HEP) was designed to serve homeless students and their families, primarily within the Dallas Independent School District (ISD). The purpose of the HEP was to facilitate the enrollment, attendance, and academic success of homeless students. Primary program services included Drop-In Centers at 18 Dallas ISD campuses, removing enrollment barriers for homeless students, and working with the Dallas ISD Student Transportation Services Department to ensure homeless students could attend their schools of origin. The HEP also provided homeless students with tools to help them succeed, such as school and hygiene supplies. Additionally, the HEP provided mentoring experiences and afterschool programs. Tutoring services were provided through After8toEducate (After8). Finally, the HEP strove to reduce the stigma and stereotypes surrounding homelessness by educating teachers, school staff members, and the community about homelessness and the HEP.

The HEP is federally funded through the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, which is a U.S. federal law that provides funding and protections for homeless individuals. The total budget for the 2020-21 school year was \$613,184 (\$431,290 from the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act and \$181,894 from Title I, Part A),¹ an increase from \$499,329 during the 2019-20 school year.

PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION

The purpose of this evaluation was to describe the context, process, and outcomes of the HEP program in 2020-21.² Specifically, the evaluation reports 1) characteristics of the Dallas ISD homeless students, 2) services the HEP provided, 3) changes in the status of homeless students from 2019-20 to 2020-21, and 4) academic achievement results for homeless students in the Dallas ISD. This evaluation did not report data on discipline referrals. Because of the lingering impacts of COVID-19 and many students learning at home instead of on campus, 2020-21 discipline data were not comparable to prior years.

METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Students were classified as homeless if they and/or their families fit into one of four categories: 1) two or more families living in one home because of financial issues,

domestic violence, or other factors (i.e., “doubled up”); 2) family living in motels, often paying on a week-to-week basis; 3) family living in homeless shelters; or 4) unaccompanied youth with no guardian or permanent residence (e.g., couch surfing³ or living out of a car).

For the purposes of this evaluation, there were no substantive differences between the Dallas ISD students identified as “homeless” and those identified as “McKinney-Vento” in the Dallas ISD district database.⁴ Thus, these students were combined into one group of students for this evaluation.

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

Finally, because of the transient nature of homeless students in the Dallas ISD, this evaluation reports data for homeless students who were enrolled at any time during the school year. Thus, homeless student analyses were conducted using the end-of-year (EOY) district demographic file (June 21, 2021). Districtwide analyses were conducted using active students enrolled on the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) date (October 30, 2020).

EVALUATION QUESTIONS/OUTCOMES

What were the characteristics of Dallas ISD homeless students?

Methodology

The evaluator conducted descriptive analyses to summarize the characteristics of homeless students.⁵

Results

Throughout the 2020-21 school year, 4,390 homeless students enrolled in the Dallas ISD. Data by grade are presented in Table 1. These students made up approximately three percent of the total district population. Homeless students in the Dallas ISD were more likely to be in grades EC-5 (57%) than in the district overall (50%). Conversely, a smaller percentage of homeless students

¹ As reported by Special Revenue Funds Management on 02/28/21.

² Portions of this report were adapted from Rowles (2019) and Mickelson (2020).

³ Couch surfing refers to staying temporarily in a series of others' homes, often without paying.

⁴ Staff members were funded by McKinney-Vento funds or Title I, Part A funds. The funding source of the staff members with which each homeless student interacted determined the classification of the student.

⁵ PEIMS demographic data file dated 10/30/20, EOY demographic data file dated 06/21/21.

(23%) were in grades nine to 12 than the district overall (28%).

Table 1: 2020-21 Homeless Student and District Student Enrollment by Grade

Grade	Homeless Students (N = 4,390)		District Students (N = 145,720)	
	n	%	n	%
Grades EC-5				
EC	12	0.3	334	0.2
PK	517	11.8	8,777	6.0
K	399	9.1	10,276	7.1
1	351	8.0	10,586	7.3
2	341	7.8	10,610	7.3
3	301	6.9	10,474	7.2
4	298	6.8	10,572	7.3
5	283	6.4	10,829	7.4
Total	2,502	57.0	72,458	49.8
Grades 6-8				
6	333	7.6	10,640	7.3
7	274	6.2	10,644	7.3
8	282	6.4	10,678	7.3
Total	889	20.3	31,962	21.9
Grades 9-12				
9	370	8.4	11,513	7.9
10	254	5.8	11,228	7.7
11	186	4.2	9,739	6.7
12	189	4.3	8,820	6.1
Total	999	22.8	41,300	28.4

Source: PEIMS demographic file dated 10/30/20 and EOY demographic file dated 06/21/21.

Note: EC = Early childhood. PK = prekindergarten. Grade level percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

A larger percentage of homeless students were African American (38%) compared to the district overall (21%), and a smaller percentage were Hispanic (54%) than the district overall (71%). A smaller percentage were considered English learners (37%) than the district overall (46%). Other characteristics of homeless students were similar to the district overall.

What services did the HEP provide in 2020-21?

Methodology

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

Results

The HEP worked with Dallas ISD Student Transportation Services, Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART), and the transportation services of nearby districts to ensure that all homeless students had consistent transportation to their school of origin. In 2020-21, the HEP fulfilled 82 in-district transportation requests.⁶ In addition, the HEP split transportation costs with other school districts to transport

167 students that either lived within the Dallas ISD boundary and attended other school districts or lived within other school district boundaries and attended the Dallas ISD.

In partnership with Promise House⁷ and Focus on Teens,⁸ two Dallas-based non-profit organizations, the HEP provided Drop-In Centers at 17 Dallas ISD high school campuses and one middle school campus. The Drop-In Centers served as hubs for homeless students to access helpful and necessary materials, such as food, backpacks, uniforms, hygiene items, and school supplies. Drop-In Center leaders also referred students to additional services (e.g., mental health services) and organized presentations from outside agencies about numerous topics (e.g., college admissions, career options, etc.). The Drop-In Centers also worked with the Food and Childhood Nutrition Services Department to provide students with healthy breakfasts. Beyond the Drop-In Centers, the HEP worked to ensure that homeless students were provided the same enrichment opportunities and experiences that other students received, including access to sports teams, afterschool programs, and summer camps. Throughout spring semester, the HEP provided virtual field trips to students across the district.

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

Finally, the HEP assisted homeless students and their families through efforts to reduce the stigma and stereotypes surrounding homelessness. The program provided training sessions and videos to help educate teachers, campus staff members, and the community on the rights and issues of homeless individuals, the services the HEP provided, and what role individuals could play in assisting the homeless community. After the February winter storm left many households without power or water, department staff members instructed campus leaders about recognizing different types of homeless situations and the process of identifying students as homeless.

What was the status of homeless students in 2020-21 compared to 2019-20?

Methodology

For homeless students during the 2019-20 school year, the evaluator used frequency analyses to determine if homeless students stayed within the Dallas ISD, moved elsewhere, or changed homeless status for the 2020-21 school year.¹⁰

Results

Of the students who were homeless in 2019-20 ($n = 3,964$), 3,135 (79%) stayed in the Dallas ISD in 2020-21 and 829

⁶ The department was available to accept transportation requests from August 2020 through May 2021.

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

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

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

¹⁰ Demographic data files dated 05/29/20 (2019-20) and 06/21/21 (2020-21).

(21%) were no longer enrolled. Of the 4,390 Dallas ISD students who were homeless in 2020-21, 457 were also flagged as homeless in 2019-20 (10%), and 3,933 were newly flagged as homeless (90%). Of the 3,933 students who were newly flagged as homeless in 2020-21, 2,139 were in the Dallas ISD during the 2019-20 school year (54%) and 1,794 were newly enrolled (46%)

How did attendance rates and graduation rates for homeless students in 2020-21 compare to the past rates?

Methodology

The evaluator conducted descriptive analyses to compare the semester attendance rates for homeless students in the Dallas ISD during the 2018-19, 2019-20, and 2020-21 school years with the district overall.

To analyze graduation rates, the evaluator conducted descriptive analyses to compare the 2018-19, 2019-20, and 2020-21 annual graduation rates for homeless students in the Dallas ISD with the district overall.

Results

Attendance¹¹

The 2020-21 fall and spring semester attendance rates for homeless students were 88 percent and 91 percent, respectively (Table 2). Results should be reviewed with caution because of the lingering impacts of COVID-19. These rates were slightly lower than the semester rates for homeless students during the 2018-19 and 2019-20 school years. The rates were lower than the overall district rate of 91 percent for the fall 2020-21 semester and 94 percent for the spring 2020-21 semester.

Table 2: 2018-19 through 2020-21 Homeless and District Overall Attendance

Year	Sem	Homeless		District	
		N	%	N	%
2018-19	Fall	2,595	92.5	151,684	95.5
	Spring	2,574	92.3	151,430	95.2
2019-20 ¹	Fall	3,610	91.9	153,393	94.9
	Spring	3,878	88.3	145,224	91.4
2020-21	Fall	3,777	91.2	141,368	93.9
	Spring				

Source: District PEIMS data files dated 10/26/18 (2018-19), 10/31/19 (2019-20), and 10/30/20 (2020-21). EOY demographic files dated 05/28/19 (2018-19), 05/29/20 (2019-20), and 06/21/21 (2020-21). District attendance files dated 06/04/19 (2018-19), 01/24/20 (2019-20), and 08/24/21 (2020-21).

Note: Sem = Semester. ¹Spring 2020 rates were not included due to recording changes after the district transitioned to at-home learning on 03/23/20. Data were analyzed by semester, thus these data may differ when compared to reports from prior years.

¹¹ Because some students were learning remotely after spring 2020 and continued to do so in 2020-21, which could lead to discrepancies in the data, results should be reviewed with caution.
¹² EOY demographic files dated 05/28/19 (2018-19), 05/29/20 (2019-20), and 06/21/21 (2020-21). District graduation files dated 07/08/19 (2018-19),

Graduation Rate

Of the 159 homeless seniors enrolled at the end of the 2020-21 school year, 87 percent graduated. This rate was lower than the 2018-19 rate for homeless students (89%; N = 130) and higher than the 2019-20 rate (83%; N = 110). However, the graduation rates of homeless students were consistently lower than the district overall rates year by year (91% in 2018-19, N = 8,502; 89% in 2019-20, N = 8,325; and 89% in 2020-21, N = 8,777).¹²

What were the academic achievement outcomes for homeless students?

Methodology

For students in grades kindergarten (K), one, and two, the evaluator conducted frequency analyses to determine the percentage of students at or above the 50th percentile on the EOY *Measures of Academic Progress Growth (MAP)* in reading and mathematics.¹³ The evaluator conducted frequency analyses to determine the percentage of students at the Approaches Grade Level or Above (Approaches+) and Meets Grade Level or Above (Meets+) standards on the *State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR; grades 3-5 and 6-8)*, and all subjects for *STAAR End-of-Course (EOC)*.

Results

MAP

Homeless students underperformed the district on the percentage of students scoring at or above the 50th percentile on MAP across grades in reading (K homeless: 37%, N = 209; K district: 48%, N = 8,378; grade one homeless: 30%, N = 185; grade one district: 43%, N = 9,232; grade two homeless: 37%, N = 179; grade two district: 45%, N = 9,217). The same pattern was true for mathematics (K homeless: 44%, N = 216; K district: 55%, N = 8,918; grade one homeless: 31%, N = 195; grade one district: 44%, N = 9,385; grade two homeless: 24%, N = 177; grade two district: 35%, N = 9,403).

STAAR/STAAR EOC

Tables 3 and 4 show the percentages of homeless and district students at Approaches+ and Meets+ on STAAR and STAAR EOCs in 2020-21. Homeless students scored at Approaches+ at rates ranging from 37 percent (English I EOC) to 68 percent (US History EOC). Homeless students scored at Meets+ at rates ranging from 12 percent (Algebra I EOC) to 41 percent (US History EOC). For all grade levels (grades 3-5, 6-8, and 9-12) and assessments examined, a higher percentage of district students scored at Approaches+ and Meets+ than homeless students.

06/17/20 (2019-20), and 07/21/21 (2020-21). Homeless student graduation Ns and rates include only seniors that were enrolled at the end of the year.
¹³ District PEIMS demographic file dated 10/30/20 and EOY demographic file dated 06/21/21. MAP district data file dated 06/23/21.

Table 3: 2020-21 Percentage of Homeless and District Students at Approaches+ on STAAR and STAAR EOC

	Homeless		District	
	Tested N	App+ %	Tested N	App+ %
STAAR (Grades 3-5)				
Reading	578	54.2	28,366	64.2
Mathematics	581	44.9	28,416	61.7
STAAR (Grades 6-8)				
Reading	589	46.5	26,470	61.5
Mathematics	535	44.5	22,413	54.3
STAAR EOC (Grades 9-12)				
Algebra I	225	49.8	7,058	56.3
Biology	222	61.7	10,145	72.9
English I	292	36.6	11,335	52.5
English II	190	40.0	10,649	58.0
US History	125	68.0	8,874	82.1

Source: District PEIMS demographic file dated 10/30/20 and EOY demographic file dated 06/21/21. STAAR district data file dated 07/12/21. STAAR EOC district data file dated 07/12/21.

Note: App+ = Approaches+. US = United States. Data include all versions of STAAR and first and second administrations of all versions of STAAR EOCs.

Table 4: 2020-21 Percentage of Homeless and District Students at Meets+ on STAAR and STAAR EOC

	Homeless		District	
	Tested N	Meets+ %	Tested N	Meets+ %
STAAR (Grades 3-5)				
Reading	563	26.8	27,739	37.4
Mathematics	566	18.2	27,789	33.2
STAAR (Grades 6-8)				
Reading	566	16.3	25,946	32.8
Mathematics	512	18.9	21,892	24.9
STAAR EOC (Grades 9-12)				
Algebra I	217	12.0	6,862	20.8
Biology	214	22.9	9,948	41.8
English I	284	17.6	11,143	35.4
English II	186	22.6	10,473	43.0
US History	123	40.7	8,713	56.8

Source: District PEIMS demographic file dated 10/30/20 and EOY demographic file dated 06/21/21. STAAR district data file dated 07/12/21. STAAR EOC district data file dated 07/12/21.

Note: US = United States. Data include all versions of STAAR and first and second administrations of all versions of STAAR EOCs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on provision of services, attendance, graduation, and student achievement results, the evaluator made two recommendations.

Continue to provide crucial services to homeless students. The HEP was successful in providing supplies, transportation, and other services to students as they experienced periods of in-person and/or virtual learning during the 2020-21 school year. The HEP should continue these efforts to support students.

Strengthen the academic supports available for homeless students. Rates of academic achievement on the MAP, STAAR, and STAAR EOCs were lower than the district overall. The HEP should work with campuses to ensure that students identified as homeless are consistently provided quality, targeted academic supports that could decrease the gap in academic achievement between homeless students and the district overall.

REFERENCES

Mickelson, N. (2020) 2019-20 Evaluation of the Homeless Education Program. Dallas, TX. Dallas Independent School District.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Dallas Independent School District's (Dallas ISD) Refugee School Impact program provides educational and social support to refugee students and their families to help ease their entry into the United States and particularly to Dallas ISD. The Refugee School Impact program was overseen by the Youth and Family Centers department from 1999 through 2020, and it is under Dual Language English as a Second Language (ESL) Department in 2020-21. The program goals include: 1) improving refugee student school performance and enhancing socio-cultural skills; 2) addressing significant barriers refugee students and families face in adjusting to school and community; and 3) providing educators with on-going professional development opportunities to enhance their understanding of the cultural and linguistic diversity of refugee children and their families. In 2020-21, the Refugee School Impact program received \$126,579 through Title III funding, the same amount as in 2019-20 and 2018-19 (Zhang, 2020 & Zhang, 2019). However, the Refugee School Impact program was funded through Title I during the previous years.

The Dallas ISD Refugee School Impact offerings include the following:

- tutoring programs – individual and small group instructional support,
- translation and interpretation services for school-related purposes,
- transition services and assistance with educational placement,
- mental health referrals,
- summer school program,
- parent conferences and school orientation meetings for parents on school related topics,
- resources for addressing cultural awareness and diversity,
- assistance with extra-curricular activities, and
- staff development training to inform and educate school professionals about needs unique to the refugee population.

Refugee students and families who have been in the United States for less than one year receive the highest program priority. However, the program may serve refugees who have resided in the United States for up to five years. Data in this report represent those served by the program who fall into both categories.

On March 13, 2020, in alignment with federal recommendations, the Governor of Texas issued a disaster proclamation certifying that the novel coronavirus

COVID-19 posed an imminent threat of disaster for all counties in the state of Texas. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Dallas ISD transitioned students to at-home learning on March 23 following spring break (March 16 – 20) until the end of the 2019-20 school year. To help district students and families access the internet during at-home learning, the Dallas ISD launched "Operation Connectivity" in May 2020, which provided 23,000 hotspots to families by October 2020. In 2020-21, Dallas ISD delayed the start of the 2020-21 school year until September 8, 2020 and implemented at-home learning districtwide for the first four weeks. The district also modified the school calendar from a six-week schedule to a nine-week schedule. On October 22, 2020, the district announced that campuses would provide in-person and virtual learning throughout the rest of the school year, and parents could choose whether their children participated in in-person or virtual instruction. In-person and virtual instruction included both synchronous and asynchronous learning activities. The district also continued to implement the Center for Disease Control (CDC) as well as state and local COVID safety protocols.

PURPOSE AND METHOD

The purpose of this evaluation was to describe the program's context, process, and outcomes for the 2020-21 school year. It is worth mentioning that the fiscal year of the Refugee School Impact program was from October 1st, 2020 through September 30th, 2021. Data in this report included the first three quarters (10/01/2020 through 6/30/2021) of the 2020-21 school year.

Data on program budget, program activities, and services were obtained from the Refugee School Impact program manager. Data on promotion rate, results of *State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR)* and *STAAR End of Course (EOC)* were extracted from district data files. Frequency and crosstab analyses were computed.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS/OUTCOMES

What were student characteristics?

After removing duplicates and invalid student identification numbers, the refugee student data file included 285 students who received instructional and transitional support services during the 2020-21 school year (Table 1). Served students included first year refugee students enrolled in Dallas ISD.

Table 1: 2020-21 Characteristics of Served Refugee Students

	<i>n</i>	%
Gender		
Female	151	53.0
Male	134	47.0
Ethnicity		
Asian	122	42.8
African American	86	30.2
Hispanic	9	3.2
White	8	2.8
Other	60	21.1
Special Groups		
Eco.Dis.	281	98.6
At Risk	261	91.6
English Learners	277	97.2
Special Education	5	1.8

Source: Refugee student data file 07/13/21. District demographic data file 06/14/21.

Note: N=285. Eco.Dis.= Economically disadvantaged. An overlap occurs among special groups. Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Served Students by Campus

Refugee students were enrolled at 18 Dallas ISD schools. McShan Elementary School (ES), Conrad High School (HS), Tasby Middle School (MS), and Lang MS accounted for 227 of the refugee students or 79.6 percent (Table 2).

Table 2: 2020-21 Served Refugee Students by Campus (Top 10)

Campus	<i>n</i>	%
McShan ES	154	54.0
Conrad HS	27	9.5
Tasby MS	24	8.4
Lang MS	22	7.7
Lowe ES	18	6.3
Truett ES	17	6.0
Gill ES	6	2.1
Hotchkiss ES	4	1.4
Stone, J ES	3	1.1
Skyline HS	2	0.7
Other	8	2.8

Source: Refugee student data file 07/13/21. District demographic data file 06/14/21.

Note: N=285. ES=elementary school. MS=middle school. HS=high school. Other=Adams HS (n=1), Seagoville HS (n=1), Spruce HS (n=1), Franklin MS (n=1), Hill MS (n=1), Stevens Park ES (n=1), Titche ES (n=1), and Frank ES (n=1).

Served Students by Grade

Refugee students were enrolled in prekindergarten through grade 12. Refugee students in grades three (n=60) and four (n=36) constituted the largest group of students served, followed by those in grade one (n=33), grade two (n=31) and grade five (n=26) (Table 3).

Table 3: 2020-21 Served Refugee Students by Grade

Grade	<i>n</i>	%
Prekindergarten	2	0.7
Kindergarten	17	6.0
1	33	11.6
2	31	10.9
3	60	21.1
4	36	12.6
5	26	9.1
6	16	5.6
7	15	5.3
8	17	6.0
9	15	5.3
10	7	2.5
11	4	1.4
12	6	2.1

Source: Refugee student data file 07/13/21. District demographic data file 06/14/21.

Note: N=285. Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

To what extent did the program meet the outlined goals?

The Refugee School Impact program had 10 stated goals aligned with program activities for 2020-21 (Table 4).

Table 4: 2020-21 Outlined Goals of the Refugee School Impact Program

Category	Outlined Goals	Goals Met (YES/NO)
# of students receiving support services	250	YES
# of parents receiving support services	100	YES
# of students receiving SUP. instruction	150	NO
# of students enrolled in summer school	100	YES
# of students receiving tutoring services	50	YES
# of students receiving mental health Svc.	20	YES
% of student promotion	90	YES
# of parent orientation sessions	5	YES
# of P.D. training sessions	5	YES
# of TESOL training sessions	6	NO*

Source: Refugee student data file 07/13/21. District demographic data file 06/14/21.

Note: N=285. SUP=Supplemental. Svc=Service. P.D.=Professional development. TESOL=Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages. *TESOL session was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Student Support

The outlined program goal of providing support services to 250 individual refugee students was met. A total of 285 refugee students received support services through parent/teacher conferences, translation/interpretation, counseling, school enrollment, immunization update, online learning and hotspot application, and information on COVID-19 testing in 2020-21.

The goal of providing support services to 150 students for direct supplemental instruction was not met. A total of 135 students received direct supplemental instruction (tutoring, ESL instruction, and classroom instruction) and 27 students received mental health services.

Parent Support

The goal of providing support services to 100 parents was met. A total of 193 parents received support services from the Refugee School Impact program. Support services provided to parents included school orientation sessions, immunization updates, and provision of basic school supplies such as uniforms, dictionaries, and backpacks. Program staff members also acted as liaisons whenever schools needed to contact parents of refugee students. A total of 24 refugee parents or guardians attended 10 school orientation sessions and 17 participated in parent-teacher conferences between October 2020 and May 2021.

Professional Development

The Refugee School Impact program offered professional development opportunities to Dallas ISD staff members throughout the 2020-21 school year. Topics included workshops, summer program payroll documentation, consultation, and webinars. Professional development sessions were offered on 19 dates from October 2020 through June 2021 at Skyline HS, Conrad HS, Tasby MS, McShan ES, Lowe ES, and Truett ES. A total of 160 school staff members (principals, teachers, counselors, and other staff) received professional development in 2020-21. However, the Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) training was cancelled in 2020-21, to ensure the safety of participants during the pandemic.

Summer School Program

The goal of enrolling 100 students in summer school was met. A total of 105 students in grades kindergarten through five enrolled in the 2021 summer school program. The program was held virtually for Jill ES and Truett ES students and in-person for McShan ES students from 8am to 2pm Monday through Thursday, July 12 through July 22, 2021. The program focused on literacy, language, mathematics, science, and social studies and was based on state standards. In addition, the summer school program provided a virtual field trip to the Dallas Museum of Arts. Students also took neighborhood walks to familiarize themselves with the neighborhoods in which their schools were located to learn how to walk to school safely.

Students enrolled in summer school were from three different schools including McShan ES ($n=94$), Truett ES ($n=10$), and Gill ES ($n=1$). Students in grade three ($n=37$), grade two ($n=18$) and grade one ($n=15$) comprised the largest groups, followed by grade four ($n=14$) and grade five ($n=12$) (Table 5).

Table 5: 2020-21 Summer School Program Participants by Grade

Grade	<i>n</i>	%
Kindergarten	9	8.6
1	15	14.3
2	18	17.1
3	37	35.2
4	14	13.3
5	12	11.4

Source: Refugee student data 07/26/21. District demographic data file 06/21/21.

Note: $N=105$. Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Promotion Rate

Of the 679 served refugee students in the district, promotion data were available for 496 students enrolled in 2020-21. The average promotion rate for served refugee students was 98.8 percent, and 96.2 percent for the district overall.

What were the program outcomes for academic achievement on STAAR and STAAR EOC assessments?

STAAR Results

Out of 516 served refugee students in the district, 251 took the STAAR reading test in grades three through eight and 57.8 percent were at the Approaches+ Level¹ (62.9% for district overall). There were 235 students who took the STAAR mathematics test and 61.3 percent were at the Approaches+ Level (58.4% for district overall) (Table 6).

Table 6: 2020-21 Percentage of Served Refugee Students at Approaches+ Level for STAAR Reading and Mathematics

Grade	Reading		Mathematics	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
3	35	60.0	36	52.8
4	42	64.3	42	59.5
5	45	51.1	45	66.7
6	45	62.2	47	80.9
7	43	48.8	20	25.0
8	41	61.0	45	60.0
All	251	57.8	235	61.3

Source: District STAAR data file dated 07/12/21. District demographic data file dated 06/14/21.

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

STAAR EOC Results

There were 60 students from grades nine through 12 who took the STAAR EOC English I test and 35.0 percent were at the Approaches+ Level (52.5% for district overall). Fifty-nine took the English II test and 49.2 percent were at the Approaches+ Level (58.0% for district overall). Forty-two students took the Algebra I test and 52.4 percent were at

¹ Approaches+=Approaches Grade Level or Above.

the Approaches+ Level (56.3% for district overall). Table 7 shows STAAR EOC results by grade and subject.

Table 7: 2020-21 Percentage of Served Refugee Students at Approaches+ Level for STAAR EOC English I, English II, and Algebra I

Grade	Subject	<i>n</i>	%
English I			
9-12 Combined		60	35.0
English II			
9-12 Combined		59	49.2
Algebra I			
9-12 Combined		42	52.4

Source: District STAAR EOC data file dated 07/12/21. District demographic data file dated 06/14/21.

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

RECOMMENDATIONS

Encourage refugee students to participate in support services provided by the district. The goal of providing support services to 150 students for direct supplemental instruction was not met in 2020-21. To ensure refugee students benefit from support services offered, and to improve refugee students' academic performance including on STAAR and STAAR EOC, Refugee School Impact program staff members should encourage refugee students to participate in support services including direct supplemental instruction, such as tutoring, English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction, and classroom instruction.

Continue to encourage refugee students and their families to take advantage of the resources available. Attendance data indicated that only 24 parents attended school orientation and 17 parents participated in parent-teacher conferences. Refugee School Impact program staff members should keep in contact with refugee parents to ensure that they are aware of services and resources offered by the district and encourage them to participate.

REFERENCE

Zhang, J. (2020). 2019-20 Evaluation of Refugee Support Service Program. Dallas, TX: Dallas Independent School District.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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

State criteria for identifying At-Risk students are defined by Texas Education Code (TEC) §29.081. Students who meet any of the criteria are to be reported through the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) in the fall of each school year. Among the 14 criteria are English learners (EL) or students of limited English proficiency (LEP), students who failed a state assessment, or students who were retained. The district is required to submit the District Improvement Plan (DIP), two Campus Improvement Plans (CIP), and the local evaluation of state compensatory education strategies, activities and programs to the Texas Education Agency (TEA) annually.

For SCE funds to be allocated to a campus, services provided to students must be described in the district and campus improvement plan. A district's SCE allotment may be used for costs such as program and student evaluation; instructional materials, equipment, and other supplies required for quality instruction; supplemental staff expenses; salaries for teachers of At-Risk students; and reduced class size and individualized instruction.

The scope of the evaluation includes the program context, implementation, and results of the SCE Program budget for 2019-20. It outlines how SCE direct cost funds were used for supplemental services and programs, as described in district and campus improvement plans and in budget allocations and expenditures. The report also describes the characteristics of the 2019-20 At-Risk student population in Dallas Independent School District (Dallas ISD), and compares the MAP performance, graduation rates, and dropout rates of At-Risk and Not-At-Risk students.

On March 13, 2020, in alignment with federal recommendations, the Governor of Texas issued a disaster proclamation certifying that the novel coronavirus COVID-19 posed an imminent threat of disaster for all counties in the state of Texas. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Dallas ISD transitioned students to at-home learning on March 23 following spring break (March 16 – 20) until the end of the 2019-20 school year. To help district students and families access the internet during at-home

learning, the Dallas ISD launched "Operation Connectivity" in May 2020, which provided 23,000 hotspots to families by October 2020. In 2020-21, Dallas ISD delayed the start of the 2020-21 school year until September 8, 2020 and implemented at-home learning districtwide for the first four weeks. The district also modified the school calendar from a six-week schedule to a nine-week schedule. On October 22, 2020, the district announced that campuses would provide in-person and virtual learning throughout the rest of the school year, and parents could choose whether their children participated in in-person or virtual instruction. In-person and virtual instruction included both synchronous and asynchronous learning activities. The district also continued to implement the Center for Disease Control (CDC) as well as state and local COVID safety protocols. Due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, Dallas ISD opted to administer the *State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR)* online for the 2020-21 school year.

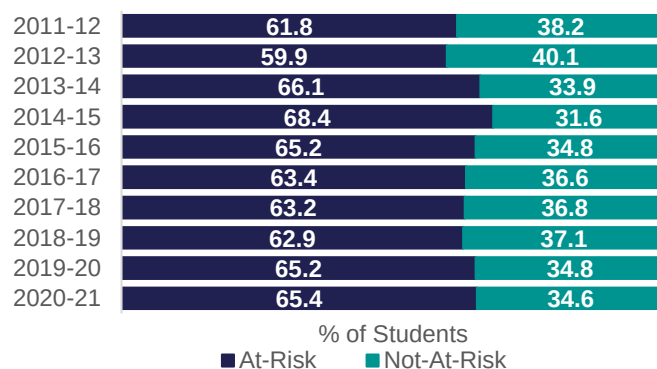
EVALUATION QUESTIONS/OUTCOMES

What were the demographic characteristics of 2020-21 Dallas ISD At-Risk students?

Results

During the 2020-21 school year, a total of 94,468 Dallas ISD students were identified as At-Risk, representing 65.4 percent of the district's grades Early Childhood (EC) - 12 enrollment (N=144,437). As shown in Figure 1, the percentage of At-Risk students increased between 2012-13 and 2014-15. From 2014-15 through 2018-19, there was a gradual decline in the percentage of At-Risk students but the percentage increased in 2019-20 and 2020-21.

Figure 1: 2011-12 through 2020-21 District Student Population by At-Risk Status



Source: TEA 2012 AEIS and 2013 to 2020 TAPR reports. District At-Risk indicator data files dated 08/19/21.

The largest percentages of At-Risk students were in grades 6 through 12 (Table 1). A larger proportion of At-Risk students were identified as Hispanic compared to the overall district student population. Similarly, a larger proportion of At-Risk students were identified as EL compared to the overall district student population. The most common At-Risk indicators for Dallas ISD students in 2020-21 were ELs, grade-level retention, and two or more course failures.

Table 1: 2020-21 Student Enrollment by Grade

Grade	District	At-Risk	
	N	N	%
EC	398	119	29.9
PK	8,973	4,279	47.7
KN	10,301	5,009	48.6
1	10,595	5,458	51.5
2	10,560	5,745	54.4
3	10,460	5,859	56.0
4	10,514	6,029	57.3
5	10,804	7,400	68.5
6	10,476	7,820	74.6
7	10,578	8,008	75.7
8	10,664	7,937	74.4
9	11,296	8,625	76.4
10	10,862	8,669	79.8
11	9,194	6,994	76.1
12	8,762	6,517	74.4
Total	144,437	94,468	65.4

Source: District student data file, 05/24/21.

Note: Data from the district student data file may differ from data obtained from the TAPR report.

What programs and services were funded by the SCE Program?

2019-20 SCE Funding

In 2019-20, the district received an SCE program allotment of \$213,050,262 from the state. The minimum direct cost requirement was 55 percent for the 2019-20 school year, or \$117,177,644. The district budgeted \$84,597,700 in direct cost to support programs/services for At-Risk students, and actual expenditures totaled \$99,346,724.

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

District Improvement Plan

The 2020-21 DIP was reviewed for SCE components. Like previous years, the DIP contained broad statements regarding strategies and activities targeting At-Risk students, with detailed plans to be set at the campus level.

Campus Improvement Plans

A review of 27 CIPs (five comprehensive high schools, seven middle schools, and fifteen elementary schools) showed that all schools conducted a needs assessment as required and set achievement targets aligned with campus needs assessments. The percentage of At-Risk students at sampled schools ranged from 17 to 91 percent. Strategies

utilized to provide assistance to struggling students included culturally relevant and responsive teaching strategies, social and emotional skills training, mentorships, increased parental involvement and student engagement, differentiated instruction, increased use of data for progress monitoring and identification of individual students' strengths and weaknesses, greater emphasis placed on quality instruction, and in-school and out-of-school tutoring. Greater emphasis was also placed on increased school culture and climate, teacher professional development, teacher proficiency, education, and use of Personalized Learning Communities (PLCs).

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

STAAR Achievement Outcomes and Performance Gaps

In 2021, the percentage of At-Risk students at Approaches+ on STAAR 3-8 and STAAR EOC varied by grade level and subject (Table 2). Overall, the percentage of At-Risk students at Approaches+ was lower than the percentage of Not-At-Risk students on nearly all STAAR 3-8 and STAAR EOC tests, resulting in a performance gap between the two groups. On the 2021 STAAR Mathematics test in grade 3, the percentage of At-Risk students at Approaches+ was four percentage points higher than the percentage of Not-At-Risk students and in grade 4, the percentage of At-Risk students at Approaches+ was two percentage points higher than the percentage of Not-At-Risk students.

Table 2: 2020-21 STAAR 3-8/STAAR EOC Approaches+ Rates and Performance Gaps

Subject	Grade	At-Risk	Not-At-Risk	Diff.
		%	%	%
Reading	3	58.2	62.9	-4.7
	4	55.8	58.6	-2.8
	5	68.8	83.9	-15.1
	6	45.6	82.5	-36.9
	7	53.4	84.0	-30.6
English I EOC	8	59.9	87.9	-28.0
		44.6	83.8	-39.2
English II EOC		50.5	90.2	-39.7
Mathematics	3	59.2	54.8	4.4
	4	56.3	54.0	2.3
	5	65.2	78.7	-13.5
	6	55.9	81.3	-25.4
	7	44.8	71.1	-26.3
Algebra I EOC	8	38.3	62.6	-24.3
		60.9	83.0	-22.1
Science	5	47.7	70.7	-23.0
	8	47.5	78.2	-30.7
Biology EOC		66.8	92.1	-25.3
Social Studies	8	35.6	69.7	-34.1
US History EOC		77.5	96.9	-19.4
Writing	4	43.3	47.8	-4.5
	7	39.2	80.2	-41.0

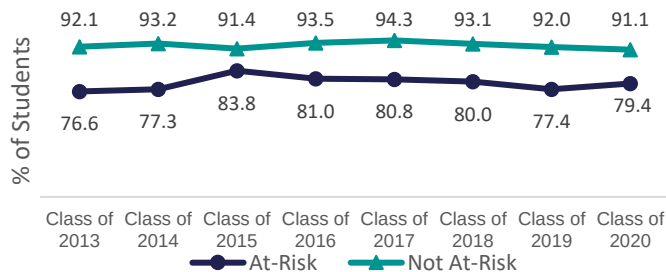
Source: District STAAR data file dated 07/12/21 and STAAR EOC data file dated 07/29/21.

Note: Diff.=Difference between student groups.

High School Graduation and Completion Rates

For the Class of 2020, there was a slight increase in graduation rates for At-Risk students (77.4% to 79.4%) while Not-At-Risk students' graduation rates decreased slightly (92.0% to 91.1%, Figure 2). Overall, graduation rates of At-Risk students are lower than those of Not-At-Risk students, resulting in a gap between the two groups. The gap for the Class of 2020 decreased markedly due to a 2.0-point increase in the At-Risk student graduation rate and a 0.9-point decrease in the Not-At-Risk student graduation rate.

Figure 2: Graduation Rates by Cohort and At-Risk Status: Class of 2013 to Class of 2020

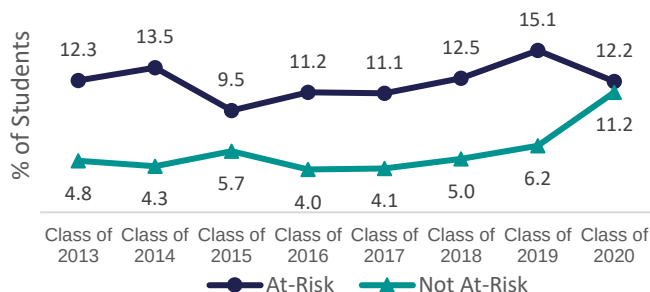


Source: TEA Completion, Graduation, and Dropout data.

Note: Data reported are the federal graduation rates. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, traditional student data tracking may have been disrupted and data for the Class of 2020 should be viewed with caution.

For the Class of 2020, there was a noticeable decrease in dropout rates for At-Risk students (15.1% to 12.2%) while Not-At-Risk student dropout rates increased markedly (6.2% to 11.2%, Figure 3). The Class of 2020 dropout rate for At-Risk students was lower than the prior two graduating classes. Dropout rates of At-Risk students were higher than those of Not-At-Risk students for all years, resulting in a gap between the two groups.

Figure 3: Dropout Rates by Cohort and At-Risk Status: Class of 2013 to Class of 2020



Source: TEA Completion, Graduation, and Dropouts data.

Note: Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, traditional student data tracking may have been disrupted and data for the Class of 2020 should be viewed with caution.

RECOMMENDATIONS

As recommended in previous years, designate a full-time SCE program administrator. At its current level of funding, with an overall budget of approximately \$213 million, oversight would help to ensure that funds are used efficiently and effectively.

As recommended in previous years, require central organizations to apply for SCE funds. In 2011-12 and 2012-13, central organizations that received SCE funds were required to submit Project Workscopes to the district's Budget Services department. That requirement was discontinued in 2014-15. Reinstatement would provide documentation for the use of SCE funds and facilitate evaluation of services and activities supported by central SCE expenditures.

As recommended in previous years, ensure adequate funding and support is provided through SCE to decrease At-Risk student dropout rates. The dropout rate for the Class of 2020 At-Risk students (12.2%) continues to be higher than Not-At-Risk students over the past eight classes (4.0% to 11.2%).

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EA21-301-4

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Dallas Independent School District (ISD) provides specialized services and accommodations to students with disabilities. Federal laws and State of Texas accountability systems provide a framework that helps shape and guide special education (SPED) programming within the district. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the district transitioned to at-home learning beginning after spring break on March 23, 2020. In 2020-21, Dallas ISD delayed the start of the 2020-21 school year until September 8, 2020 and implemented at-home learning districtwide for the first four weeks. On October 22, 2020, the district announced that campuses would offer in-person and virtual learning (both synchronous and asynchronous learning activities) throughout the rest of the school year. The total budget for 2020-21 SPED services in the Dallas ISD was \$65,877,857, an increase from \$61,597,547 in 2019-20 and from \$60,210,915 in 2018-19.

The purpose of this report was to describe the SPED program, to summarize trends in the characteristics and academic performance of students served by SPED, and to summarize feedback from stakeholders. In particular, this evaluation aimed to: 1) report funding and budget information; 2) summarize district performance on the Texas Education Agency Results-Driven Accountability (RDA) report; 3) summarize the characteristics of SPED students; 4) summarize the characteristics of SPED teachers and the SPED professional development they were offered; 5) report trends in academic achievement for SPED students; 6) report trends in the dropout rates and attendance rates of SPED students; and 7) summarize stakeholder perceptions of program-related components.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS/OUTCOMES

How did the SPED program perform on the 2020 RDA Report?

Table 1 provides a summary of Dallas ISD SPED-related performance levels (PLs) for the past three years¹. In summary, two areas on the 2018 Dallas ISD SPED program PBMA²s report were assigned a PL indicator of zero, and five program areas were assigned a PL indicator of three or above (Significant Disproportionality, or SD is considered more severe than numeric PL assignments). In the 2019 RDA report, more program areas were assigned a PL of zero ($N=5$), while five were again assigned PLs of three or above. In the 2020 RDA report, Dallas ISD SPED program

areas addressing SPED student STAAR performance received no PL assignment because of the suspension of the administration of the STAAR in 2019-20.

The 2020 RDA report showed one SPED program area assigned a PL of zero (SPED Regular Class $\geq 80\%$ Rate Among Ages 6 to 21), while three SPED program areas received a PL indicator of three or higher: 1) SPED Representation: African American, Identified with Emotional Disturbance as a Primary Disability; 2) SPED Out of School Suspensions and Expulsions ≤ 10 Days Rate Among Ages 3 to 21; and 3) SPED Out of School Suspensions and Expulsions >10 Days Rate Among Ages 3 to 21.

Table 1: 2018-2020 Dallas ISD Special Education Related PBMA/RDA Performance Level Assignments

PL Assignment	2018	2019	2020
0	2	5	1
1	5	4	2
2	8	8	2
3 or SD Year 3	5	5	3

Source: Texas Education Agency 2018, 2019 and 2020 Dallas ISD PBMA/RDA reports.

Note: SD = Significant Disproportionality. Detailed information about the calculation of rates and assignment of performance levels can be found in the 2020 TEA RDA Manual available on the TEA website.

What were the characteristics of students served by SPED?

The SPED population in the Dallas ISD totaled 14,095 in 2020-21 (9.7% of district enrollment). The number and percentage of students served in the program increased each year between 2014-15 and 2019-20 (from 7.3% to 9.4%). Although both districtwide and SPED enrollment counts dipped in 2020-21, the percentage of students enrolled in SPED continued to increase in 2020-21.

Similar to 2019-20, a higher percentage of African Americans received SPED services (27.5%, Table 2) relative to their representation in general education enrollment (20.2%). Although males and females were equally represented in the general education population, two-thirds of special education students were male (67.0%). While more than a third (38.0%) of special education students were English learners (EL), this rate was lower compared to ELs in the general education population (46.9%).

¹ A performance level of zero indicates that the state standard was met. Areas not meeting the standard are assigned PLs of one to three, with higher numbers indicating areas of greater concern.

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

Table 2: 2020-21 Characteristics of SPED Students

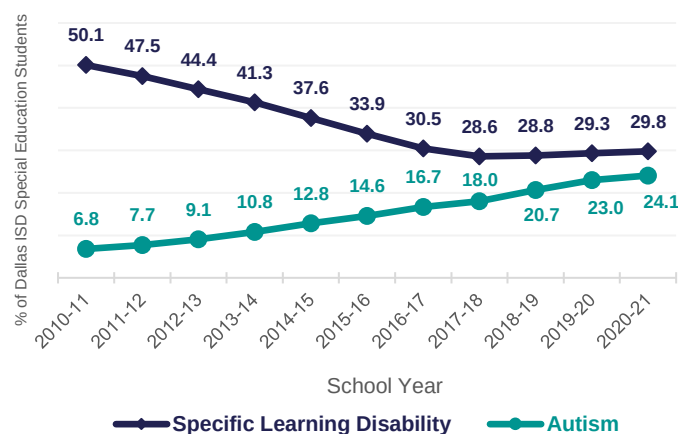
Group	Special Education (N=14,095)		General Education (N=131,625)	
	n	%	N	%
Ethnicity				
Hispanic	9143	64.9	93,678	71.2
African American	3873	27.5	26,595	20.2
White	624	4.4	6,598	5.0
Other	455	3.2	4,754	3.6
Sex				
Female	4,656	33.0	66,831	50.8
Male	9,439	67.0	64,794	49.2
Student Groups				
Econ Dis	12,193	86.5	111,103	84.4
English Learner	5,551	39.4	61,771	46.9
Homeless	286	2.0	2,713	2.1

Source: District PEIMS snapshot demographic data file for 10/30/20 (2020-21).

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

In 2020-21, specific learning disability and autism were the two most common primary disabilities of SPED students. The overall percentage of SPED students identified with a specific learning disability as a primary disability declined since 2010-11, while the rate of those identified with autism steadily rose between 2010-11 and 2020-21, from 6.8 percent to 24.1 percent (Figure 1).

Figure 1: 2010-11 to 2020-21 Percentage of Dallas ISD SPED Students with Autism and Specific Learning Disability as Primary Disability



Source: District PEIMS snapshot demographic data file for 10/30/20 (2020-21) and Mejia, 2020 (2010-11- to 2019-20).

What were the characteristics of SPED teachers?

A total of 1,208 SPED teachers served the district in 2020-21. Over four years, the rate of district SPED teachers increased by 2.2 percentage points; the number of general education teachers decreased by 2.2 percentage points.

Seventy-seven percent of 2020-21 district SPED teachers were female. A smaller percentage of SPED teachers were Hispanic (11.3%) compared to general education teachers

(35.4%), while a higher percentage of SPED teachers were African American (53.9%) compared to general education teachers (32.7%). A higher percentage of SPED teachers held a master's degree (30.6%) compared to general education teachers (21.1%). The average length of teaching experience of district SPED teachers was 8.5 years.

What professional development opportunities did the SPED department offer in 2020-21?

From data provided by program leadership, the evaluator identified 68 unique topics covered in SPED professional development sessions provided during 2020-21. Themes included 1) SPED policy and compliance issues, 2) early childhood/prekindergarten SPED needs, 3) classroom organization for specialized SPED programs, 4) SPED technology rollout, 5) new SPED teacher orientation, 6) Review 360, 7) assistive technology, 8) accommodations, 9) behavior issues, 10) virtual teaching and learning, 11) academic assessments, and 12) data entry and analysis (across multiple SPED-related platforms).

What were stakeholder perceptions regarding the SPED department?

An online survey was administered in 2020-21 to solicit feedback from district SPED teachers, SPED teacher assistants, principals, and assistant principals on issues including the customer service experience with the SPED department and understanding of SPED policy, procedures, and resource access, both before and during at-home learning. Of the 2,674 individuals invited to complete the SPED Customer Service Survey, 1,363 (1,087 teachers or teacher assistants, 274 principals or assistant principals, and two who identified as "other – unspecified") at least partially completed the survey, for an overall response rate of 51 percent.

Perceptions About Student Support Teams (SSTs)

A higher percentage of campus administrators than SPED teachers agreed or strongly agreed that campus SSTs met regularly to discuss student concerns (teachers: 45%; administrators: 76%), and that SSTs met regularly specifically to discuss, recommend, and review progress on appropriate interventions before referring students for an initial SPED evaluation (teachers: 44%; administrators: 74%). Survey findings also indicated a low rate of SPED teacher awareness of the presence and activities of campus SSTs, possibly indicating some under-engagement of SPED staff members at the campus level.

Core 4

Ratings of the SPED department on all Core 4 domains (Focused, Fast, Flexible, and Friendly) were generally positive (range: 78% to 89%). Approximately 90 percent of respondents from both participant groups agreed or strongly agreed both in 2020-21 and in 2019-20 that staff members at the SPED central office were friendly.

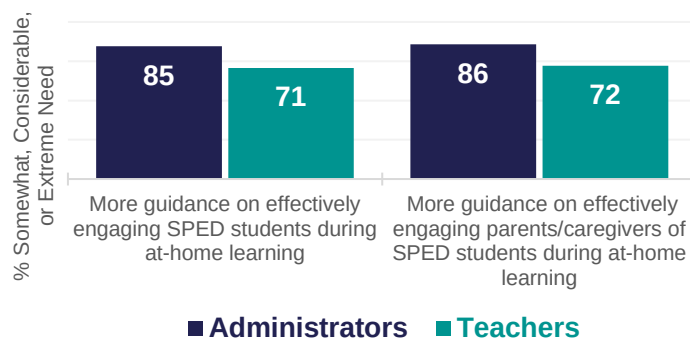
Technology and Online Platforms: Levels of Need

Seventy percent of SPED teacher and 85 percent of administrators indicated a need for more effective online teaching resources for at-home learning. More than half of both groups reported a need for more training on Microsoft Teams and Google Classrooms. These rates were similar to those found for spring of 2020.

In addition, administrators and SPED teachers indicated that students needed more reliable internet connectivity (teachers: 71%; administrators: 75%), and technology (hardware) resources (teachers: 64%; administrators: 69%). Higher rates of SPED teachers (60%) than administrators (53%) needed more reliable technology (hardware) and internet connectivity (teachers: 51%, administrators: 43%) for themselves.

Both SPED teachers and campus administrators expressed a need for more guidance on engaging students and parents during at-home learning (71% to 86%, Figure 2).

Figure 2: 2020-21 SPED Student and Parent Engagement Needs



Source: 2020-21 SPED Customer Service Survey.

What were the activities and perceptions of SPED evaluators?

The evaluator collaborated with SPED program leadership to design and administer an online survey to solicit feedback on the activities and perceptions of 2020-21 SPED evaluators (diagnosticians and LSSPs). Of the 114 invited to participate in this Survey, 71 completed the survey at least partially (63%).

Parent Referrals for SPED Evaluations and MTSS Interventions in Referrals

The percentage of SPED evaluators reporting that at least half of the referrals they received for initial individual evaluations were made through parent requests in 2020-21 remained at a rate of around two out of every three referrals, though there was some improvement from 2019-20, at 64 percent in 2020-21, down from 70 percent in 2019-20. Also, and similar to 2018-19 and 2019-20 survey findings, a high rate of respondents (82%) reported that few (25% or fewer)

referral folders for 2020-21 initial individual evaluations showed adequate MTSS interventions (2019-20: 76%; 2018-19: 82%).

Workspace on Campus

The proportions of evaluators who agreed or strongly agreed that they had space on campus to conduct student evaluations with fidelity was comparable to 2019-20 (62% in 2020-21, down from 68% in 2019-20). Fewer evaluators in 2020-21 also reported having an assigned workspace on campus compared to 2019-20 (44% in 2020-21 versus 60% in 2019-20). In 2020-21, 32 percent indicated that they were frequently asked to support their campus in matters unrelated to their job as an evaluator (21% in 2019-20).

Supplies on Campus

Most SPED survey respondents indicated that they could reasonably fulfill their printer- and copy-related needs on campus with their Secure Print Cards (83%) and that they had reasonable access to the assessment kits needed to complete their work duties (76%). These rates were slightly lower in 2019-20 (a 7-percentage-point decrease for each). A notably smaller rate of respondents (41%) shared that they had reasonable access to the protocols (such as the *WISC*³) needed to complete their job duties. This rate was also a decrease from the rate (57%) reporting adequate access to protocols in 2019-20.

Professional Support and Collaboration

In 2019-20, 86 percent of SPED evaluators indicated that monthly SPED collaboration meetings addressed their need for professional collaboration adequately; this percentage declined in 2020-21 (69%).

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

STAAR

For *STAAR* 3-8 Reading, from 2018-19 to 2020-21, all grade levels except grade eight showed declines in the percentages of SPED students achieving the Approaches Grade Level or Above (Appr+) performance standard (grade 8 students showed a 1.0 percentage point increase). The largest decline was seen for grade four students in Reading, where in 2018-19, 42.3 percent of SPED students achieved the Appr+ performance standard while 35.5 percent did so in 2020-21.

The percentage of SPED students achieving the Appr+ performance standard in Mathematics in 2020-21 showed larger declines from 2018-19 compared to the declines for Reading. In Mathematics, grade eight SPED students showed the largest decline from 2018-19 in the percentage achieving at the Appr+ level (54.0% in 2018-19 down to 37.9% in 2020-21). Declines in the percentage of SPED students in Writing, Science, and Social Science in 2020-21

³ *WISC* stands for *Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children*

ranged from 6.6 percentage points from 2018-19 (grade 7 Writing) to 11.7 percentage points (grade 5 Science).

Results for *STAAR EOCs* were more mixed compared to those for *STAAR 3-8*. Algebra I, Biology, and US History each showed declines from 2018-19 in the percentages of students scoring at the Appr+ level (-8.5, -4.1, and -7.5 percentage points, respectively, Table 15). However SPED students did show increases on the percentages scoring at Appr+ for both English 1 (5.9 percentage points) and English II (7.9 percentage points).

Compared to SPED students statewide, Dallas ISD SPED students did better in 2020-21 in terms of percentages achieving at the Appr+ level in all *STAAR 3-8* and *STAAR EOC* subjects except US History.

Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) Growth

SPED student performance on *MAP* Reading and Mathematics assessments showed patterns similar to performances on *STAAR* in these subject areas: average CGPs were higher in Mathematics for all grade levels compared to Reading, with the exception of grade two, where students showed better performance in Reading (average CGP for Reading in grade two was 48.1, compared to 44.5 for Mathematics).

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

The SPED annual dropout rate for the Class of 2019 was 15.4 compared to districtwide rate of 10.6. The dropout rate for the class of 2018 was 11.2 percent. The overall attendance rate among SPED students (early childhood through grade 12 for 2020-21 was 92.0 (93.1% for 2019-20). General education students showed an overall attendance rate of 92.3 in 2020-21 (94.4% in 2019-20).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Continue to stress to all campuses the importance of regular SST meetings for the identification of students needing services. Thirty-eight percent of SPED teachers did not have enough information to rate their SST, suggesting possible under-engagement of SPED staff members in SST campus activities (43% in 2019-20). Stressing the crucial role that regular SST meetings play in the effective and efficient functioning of MTSS may also help to address the finding that a high percentage of referrals for initial evaluations came from parents.

Continue working to ensure that SPED evaluators have workspaces they need on campuses. Less than half (44%) of SPED evaluators reported they had an assigned workspace on campus (60% in 2019-20), indicating that approximately 40 percent would benefit from improved on-campus space allocation to serve students properly.

Continue working to ensure that SPED evaluators have needed supplies. Forty-one percent (down from 57% in 2019-20) of SPED evaluators reported they had reasonable access to needed protocols (e.g., *WISC*). This finding indicates 59 percent of respondents needed improved access to supplies.

Work to ensure more opportunities for professional collaboration for SPED evaluators. In 2020-21, 69 percent of SPED evaluators indicated that monthly SPED collaboration meetings addressed their need for professional collaboration adequately (86 percent in 2019-20). Ensuring adequate professional collaboration for SPED evaluators with one another and with other integral SPED staff members will help ensure that current and potential SPED students and their families are effectively and efficiently supported.

Review and enhance the technological resources of teachers and students to ensure uninterrupted SPED services during possible future periods of at-home learning. Many SPED teachers (70%, up from 61% in 2019-20) and campus administrators (85%, up from 74% in 2019-20) reported needing more effective online teaching resource options for at-home learning and more guidance on effective use of Microsoft Teams and Google Classrooms. Other needs mentioned included more reliable internet connectivity and more reliable, age-appropriate technology (hardware) resources for students.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The College Access Program (CAP) was created in 2010 by Dallas Independent School District (ISD) to increase student college applications, scholarship applications, participation in college entrance exams, and parental involvement in the college admissions and financial aid processes. The program has been managed by a college access coordinator within the Dallas ISD Postsecondary Partnerships and Programs department. The four CAP vendors selected for the 2020-21 school year were Academic Success Program (ASP), Education is Freedom (EIF), Southern Methodist University (SMU), and The Princeton Review (TPR). In 2020-21, the CAP program served 36 high school campuses. CAP vendors provided supplemental assistance to students and parents. This assistance included: 1) completing college applications; 2) completing financial aid applications; 3) registering and preparing for the SAT, ACT, and TSIA tests; 4) completing college and scholarship application essays; 5) completing Dallas County Promise Pledges; and 6) attending college fairs. CAP received \$2,350,000 through Title IV funds in 2020-21 and 2019-20. This was an increase from 2,325,000 in 2018-19 when funded through Title I.

On March 13, 2020, in alignment with federal recommendations, the Governor of Texas issued a disaster proclamation certifying that the novel coronavirus COVID-19 posed an imminent threat of disaster for all counties in the state of Texas. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Dallas ISD transitioned students to at-home learning on March 23 following spring break (March 16 – 20) until the end of the 2020-21 school year. To help district students and families access the internet during at-home learning, the Dallas ISD launched "Operation Connectivity" in May 2020, which provided 23,000 hotspots to families by October 2020. In 2020-21, Dallas ISD delayed the start of the 2020-21 school year until September 8, 2020 and implemented at-home learning districtwide for the first four weeks. The district also modified the school calendar from a six-week schedule to a nine-week schedule. On October 22, 2020, the district announced that campuses would provide in-person and virtual learning throughout the rest of the school year, and parents could choose whether their children participated in in-person or virtual instruction. In-person and virtual instruction included both synchronous and asynchronous learning activities. The district also continued to implement the Center for Disease Control (CDC) as well as state and local COVID safety protocols.

During the 2020-21 school year, the CAP program continued to provide services to students in-person or virtually. CAP vendors provided services to those students

who opted for virtual learning through one-on-one virtual meetings, virtual workshops, and virtual student advisement meetings. However, CAP vendors had difficulty reaching the CAP students, holding workshops, and conducting classroom visits due to the pandemic.

PURPOSE AND METHOD

The purpose of this evaluation was to examine the effectiveness of the CAP program based on the outlined program goals. This evaluation examined: 1) characteristics of students who participated in the CAP program, 2) the extent to which CAP vendors met outlined program goals, 3) the extent to which the CAP participation changed from 2018-19 to 2020-21, and 4) the relationship between CAP participation and college enrollment for 2017-18 through 2019-20 seniors.

Data on sources of program funding and budget, number of CAP students, number of CAP schools served, Texas Application for State Financial Aid (TASFA), and CAP staff meetings with counselors were obtained from program staff. College application information was obtained from program staff and the ApplyTexas website. Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) was obtained from Department of Education website. Dallas County Promise Pledge information was obtained from a website shared between Dallas ISD and the Dallas County Community College District. CAP student characteristics and SAT/ACT/TSIA results were obtained from district data files. 2019-20 senior college enrollment information was obtained from the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) data file. Frequency and crosstab analyses were computed.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS/OUTCOMES

What were the characteristics of the students served in 2020-21?

During the 2020-21 school year, 10,659 students in grades nine through 12 utilized the CAP vendor services. However, 638 students were missing in the district demographic file dated 06/14/21, leaving 10,021 students in the file for analyses. Since the CAP program focused on supporting senior students, most participants were enrolled in grade 12 (65.8%; 54% in 2018-19 and 60% in 2019-20). The majority of students were Hispanic (71.7%) followed by African American (21.3%). There was a slightly higher percentage of CAP female students than districtwide high

school female students (53.4% vs. 50.6%) and a slightly lower percentage of CAP at risk students than districtwide high school students (53.3% vs. 62.9%). The percentage of economically disadvantaged CAP students was about the same as the district overall (81.3% vs. 81.4%, respectively) (Table 1).

Table 1: 2020-21 CAP Student Characteristics

	CAP Enrollment		District HS Enrollment	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Grade				
Grade 9	335	3.3	11,103	28.2
Grade 10	1,182	11.8	10,662	27.1
Grade 11	1,909	19.0	9,014	22.9
Grade 12	6,595	65.8	8,534	21.7
Gender				
Male	4,670	46.6	19,405	49.4
Female	5,351	53.4	19,908	50.6
Ethnicity				
Asian	131	1.3	395	1.0
African American	2,136	21.3	7,894	20.1
Hispanic	7,185	71.7	28,378	72.2
White	365	3.6	1,783	4.5
Other	204	2.0	863	2.2
Student Groups				
Eco.Dis.	8,145	81.3	32,012	81.4
At Risk	5,338	53.3	24,729	62.9

Source: CAP data provided by program manager 07/20/21. District demographic data file 06/14/21.

Note: *N*=10,021 excludes 638 students who were not found in the district demo file dated 06/14/21. Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

The percentages of Hispanic (71% each in 2018-19 and 2019-20) and African American (23% in 2018-19 and 22% in 2019-20) as well as female (53% each in 2018-19 and 2019-20) CAP students remained relatively unchanged during the last three years. The percentage of economically disadvantaged students decreased from 78 percent in 2018-19 to 77 percent in 2019-20, and increased to 81.3 percent in 2020-21, while percentage of at-risk students increased from 50 percent in 2018-19 to 70 percent in 2019-20 and decreased to 53.3 percent in 2020-21.

To what extent did CAP vendors meet 2020-21 program goals?

College Application

The program goal of 97 percent of participants submitting a college application was not met. Overall, 84 percent of 2020-21 seniors completed at least one college application (95% in 2018-19 and 92% in 2019-20). College application rates by campus ranged between 52 percent and 100 percent. Three of the seven (43%) campuses served by ASP, five of the 26 (19%) campuses served by EIF, none

of the campus served either by SMU or TPR met this CAP goal.

Seniors' self-reported data indicated 51,251 college applications were submitted during the 2020-21 school year. Of those, 19,500 applications (38%) were accepted by colleges or universities. ASP reported the highest percentage of acceptances (44%), followed by SMU (35%), TPR (30%), and EIF (26%).

Financial Assistance

Overall, 2020-21 seniors did not meet the program goal of 69 percent completing a FAFSA. It is worth mentioning that during the previous years, the CAP reports included the combined completion rate of FAFSA and TASFA. During the 2020-21 school year, the FAFSA completion rate has become the district goal; thus, the FAFSA completion rate was reported separately from TASFA in this report. The FAFSA completion percentage ranged between 36 percent and 98 percent. Four of the seven (57%) campuses served by ASP, 10 of the 26 (38%) campuses served by EIF, one of the two (50%) campuses served by SMU, and the one (100%) campus served by TPR met the CAP goal of 69 percent of seniors completing an application.

The overall combined completion rate of FAFSA and TASFA increased from 69 percent in 2018-19 to 70 percent in 2019-20 (Lorenz, 2019, Zhang, 2020) and decreased to 67 percent in 2020-21. By campus, in 2020-21, Rangel had the highest percentage of seniors completing FAFSA and TASFA application (100%), followed by Garza (94%), Townview: SEM (91%) and Smith New Tech (91%).

The percentage of all seniors assisted by a CAP vendor who self-reported that they were offered at least one scholarship decreased from 19 percent in 2018-19 to 10 percent in 2019-20 and to eight percent in 2020-21. When reviewed by campus, in 2020-21, Townview: TAG reported the highest percent of seniors with a scholarship (61%), followed by Townview: Pub Svc. (56%), Townview: SEM (46%) and Townview: Health (42%).¹

SAT/ACT/TSIA

The program goal of 95 percent of 2020-21 seniors taking the SAT, ACT or TSIA was not met. Overall, 90 percent of 2020-21 seniors took either the SAT, ACT or TSIA. Four of the seven (57%) campuses served by ASP, nine of the 26 (35%) campuses served by EIF, one of the two (50%) campuses served by SMU, and the one (100%) campus served by TPR met this CAP goal. The percentage of seniors taking one of the above-mentioned assessments remained largely stable over the past three years, with 93 percent each in 2018-19 (Lorenz, 2019) and 2019-20 (Zhang, 2020).

¹ Since this is self-reported data, results should be viewed with caution.

Dallas County Promise Pledges

The CAP goal was that 98 percent of seniors should complete the Dallas County's Promise Pledge. Overall, 89 percent of CAP students completed the Dallas County Promise Pledge. Nine of 31 (29%) participating campuses met the program goal. In 2019-20 school year, 99 percent of CAP students completed their Dallas County Promise Pledges, and 29 of 31 (94%) participating campuses met the program goal of 95 percent. 2020-21 was the second year to report Dallas County's Promise Pledge completion.

CAP Staff Meetings with Counselors

The program goal of CAP staff meeting with counselors at least three times was met. The CAP staff visited 30 campuses from September 2020 through June 2021. Meetings covered a range of topics, such as college placement exam updates, college readiness goals, graduation requirements, financial aid information, and college registration with Dallas County Community College District (DCCCD). The 2020-21 school year was the second year to report CAP staff meetings with campus counselors.

To what extent did CAP participation change from 2017-18 to 2020-21 school years?

The total number of students served by CAP vendors decreased from 14,428 in 2018-19 to 10,659 in 2020-21 (Table 2).

Table 2: 2018-19 through 2020-21 Students Served by CAP Vendor

	2018-19		2019-20		2020-21	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
ASP	4,007	28	2,418	18	872	8
EIF	9,243	64	10,080	76	9,153	86
SMU	1,178	8	792	6	559	5
TPR*					75	1
Total	14,428	100	13,290	100	10,659	100

Source: 2018-19 and 2019-20 CAP information taken from Lorenz (2019) and Zhang (2020). 2020-21 CAP participation data on 07/20/21.

Note: *N*=10,659 includes 638 students not found in the district demographic file dated 06/14/21. *2020-21 was the first year TPR provided service to Dallas ISD students.

On average, students receiving CAP services were served 3.8 times by CAP vendors in 2020-21. The average number of times students were served by vendor ranged from 2.9 (TPR) to 4.3 (SMU). It is worth pointing out that the average for each of the previous years was 4.7, which is a decrease of almost a whole point. During the 2020-21 school year, students visited CAP vendors most commonly once (36%), followed by five to nine times (19%). In past years, Lorenz (2019) and Zhang (2020) reported that most students

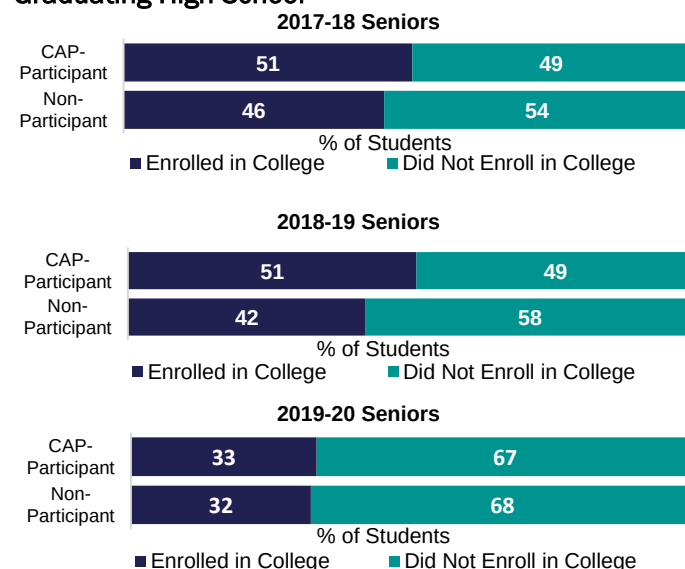
visited CAP vendors once (2018-19, 37%) and twice or five to nine times (2018-19, 17%) and students visited CAP vendors most commonly once (2019-20, 34%), followed by five to nine times (2019-20, 20%).

What was the relationship between CAP participation and college enrollment for 2017-18, 2018-19 and 2019-20 seniors?

The number of Dallas ISD seniors who participated in CAP program has decreased slightly from 7,475 in 2017-18 to 7,081 in 2019-20. While the number of participants varied slightly from year to year, the percentage of seniors who participated in the program has remained stable (88%, 89%, and 88%) over the same timeframe.

The 2020-21 National Student Clearinghouse data file contained college enrollment information for 98 percent (*N*=8,127) of the 2019-20 Dallas ISD graduates, 33 percent of the CAP participants, and 32 percent of the non-participants who enrolled in college within one year of graduation². College enrollment remained stable from 2017-18 to 2018-19 (51%, respectively) and decreased by 18 percentage points for CAP participants and by 14 percentage points for non-participants (Figure 1).

Figure 1: 2017-18 through 2019-20 Percentages of Students Enrolled in College within One Year of Graduating High School



Source: CAP participation data file 07/15/20, district demographic data file 05/29/20, and National Student Clearinghouse data file 06/15/21. Prior year information was taken from Lorenz (2019) and Zhang (2020).

Note: *N* = 7,285 CAP participants in 2017-18. *N* = 730 non-participants in 2017-18. *N* = 7,298 CAP participants in 2018-19. *N* = 867 non-participants in 2018-19. *N* = 7,081 CAP participants in 2019-20. *N* = 960 non-participants in 2019-20.

² A 2013-14 report on postsecondary outcomes indicated that Dallas ISD graduates sometimes delayed enrollment in college by one or two years. If the National Student Clearinghouse data for this report were analyzed in future years, enrollment numbers between CAP participants and non-

participants might be different. This report can be found at <http://www.dallasisd.org/cms/lib/TX01001475/Centricity/Domain/98/Evaluation/14-15/AtaGlance/EA15-107-04-At-a-Glance-Postsecondary.pdf>.

The 2019-20 seniors who participated in CAP were as likely to enroll in four-year (25% vs. 26%) and two-year colleges (8% vs. 6%) as non-participants. Percentage of CAP participants enrolled in 4-year colleges has remained mostly unchanged from 2017-18 to 2019-20. However, the percentage of non-participants enrolled in 4-year colleges has decreased each year.

In 2019-20, seniors who visited CAP vendors 10 or more times were more likely to enroll in a four-year college than those who visited less frequently or non-CAP participants. There was a slightly higher percentage of CAP participants with 10 or more visits enrolled in two-year colleges than non-CAP participants (8% vs. 6%). The 2019-20 CAP seniors with one to nine visits had a slightly higher percentage with two-year college enrollment than non-CAP participants (9% vs. 6%), while there were higher percentages of two-year college enrollment for CAP students than non-CAP participants in 2017-18 (25% vs. 11%) and 2018-19 (27% vs. 15%).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Continue to identify ways to overcome impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on college application rates.

Overall, 84 percent of 2020-21 seniors completed at least one college application, below the program goal of 95 percent. The college application rate decreased from 95 percent in 2019 to 92 percent in 2020 and to 84 percent in 2021. The CAP program continued to provide services to students virtually and/or in-person during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, CAP vendors had difficulty reaching CAP students, accessing student information, and assisting students with college application paperwork. As a result, some students' college applications and other admissions information were not processed in a timely manner. Program staff should coordinate with CAP vendors to find ways to overcome the decline in these percentages.

Continue to identify ways to overcome the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on FAFSA application completion rates.

In 2020-21, increasing the percentage of seniors who completed a FAFSA application became a district goal. However, 63 percent of 2020-21 seniors completed a FAFSA application (70% in 2019-20), which was below the program goal of 69 percent for 2020-21. It should be noted that due to the COVID-19 pandemic, FAFSA applications were challenging for CAP vendors to

coordinate with students. Students needed to complete all the required paperwork before submitting applications to institutions for verification during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, students had difficulty retrieving IRS tax transcripts, certificates, and other documents. As a result, some students' financial aid applications were not processed in a timely manner and were delayed. It should be noted that 2020-21 was the first year that FAFSA was reported separately from TASFA, and program staff had to work closely with CAP vendors to ensure seniors were aware of all resources available.

Continue to identify ways to increase SAT/ACT/TSIA participation rates to overcome declines due to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In 2020-21, 90 percent of seniors took one of the college entrance exams; 58 percent of campuses (21 out of 36 campuses) did not meet the participation rate goal of 95 percent. The overall percentage of seniors taking one of the college entrance tests decreased from 93 percent each in 2019-20 and 2018-19 to 90 percent in 2020-21. In the 2020-21 school year, CAP vendors continued to provide services through one-on-one virtual meetings, virtual workshops, and virtual student advisement meetings for students who opted for virtual learning. However, CAP vendors had difficulty engaging with the CAP students, holding workshops, and conducting campus visits during the pandemic. Program staff should coordinate with CAP vendors to ensure students take advantage of district resources, provide adequate support as possible, assist seniors with registration, and help prepare students for the test.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2020-21 Differentiated Instructional and Technology Support program in the Dallas Independent School District (ISD) is the result of a recent merge of the Differentiated Instructional Support for the District Needs program and the Coaching for Technology Integration program. The goal is to provide instructional support to Dallas ISD campuses. To accomplish this goal, Network Coordinators (NCs) and instructional lead coaches (ILCs) served as the bridge between School Leadership (SL) and campuses – with NCs and ILCs providing instructional support to Dallas ISD teachers, campus instructional coaches (CICs), principals, and assistant principals (APs). NCs provide leadership training to campus staff while ILCs report to feeder pattern executive directors (EDs) and work with content and instructional experts from Teaching and Learning (T&L) to provide training for curriculum development in four content areas: reading, mathematics, social studies, and science. With the support of ILCs, each campus developed a structured plan for campus staff to design lessons that increase the use of technology within content instruction. The budget for the 2020-21 Differentiated Instructional and Technology Support program was \$8,741,431 from Title I funds, an increase of \$750,605 from the previous year.

A total of 68 ILCs provided instructional support to campuses. Example supports include: 1) assisting with the implementation of district curricula, 2) developing action plans, 3) providing feedback for reaction plans, 4) on-site coaching of teachers, 5) designing and providing on-site support activities to increase efficiencies in the use of the changing technology tools and resources, and 6) providing technology support to all the content ILCs.

Nine NCs provided leadership training to campus staff and each NC supported their three Executive Directors from their assigned network (e.g., Central, Southeast, and Northeast). NCs provided support to Dallas ISD campuses. Example supports include: 1) designing, coordinating, and delivering professional development on various topics; 2) coordinating principal and AP meetings with EDs and ILCs within their network; 3) locating, analyzing, and presenting various types and levels of data; 4) coordinating with other departments for network and campus-level trainings.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS/OUTCOMES

What were the characteristics of ILCs and NCs in 2020-21?

During the 2020-21 school year, of the 68 ILCs worked in the Dallas ISD, the majority were female (84%) and more

than half (60%) were African American. Most ILCs (70%) held a master's degree. In addition, 100 percent of ILCs remained in their role for the entire 2020-21 school year. In addition, of the nine NCs who worked in the district, the majority were female (71%) and 43 percent were each White or African American. Most NCs (57%) held a bachelor's degree. In addition, 86 percent of NCs were retained as district NCs for the 2020-21 school year.

What was the distribution of ED and ILC campus visits by network during the 2020-21 school year?

During the 2020-21 school year, 1,597 ED/SL visits and 4,059 ILC visits were conducted on Dallas ISD campuses (Table 1). The largest percentage of visits occurred in the Central (ED/SL: 42.9%; ILC: 34.0%) and Northwest (ED/SL: 20.7%; ILC: 14.3%) networks, and the smallest percentage occurred in the Magnet (ED/SL: 3.9%; ILC: 3.4%) and Transformation (ED/SL: 0.6%; ILC: 4.8%) networks. ED spot observations were not reported in 2020-21 because of incomplete data.

Table 1: 2020-21 ED/SL and ILC Visits by Network

Network	ED/SL Visits		ILC Visits	
	N	%	N	%
ACE	130	8.1	184	4.5
Central	685	42.9	1,382	34.0
Magnet	63	3.9	139	3.4
Northeast	317	19.8	441	10.9
Northwest	331	20.7	580	14.3
Southeast	29	1.8	550	13.6
Southwest	32	2.0	589	14.5
Transformation	10	0.6	194	4.8
District	1,597	100.0	4,059	100.0

Source: Campus Coaching Tracker data files.

Note: Some percentages do not sum to 100 due to rounding.

What professional development opportunities were offered and completed by ILCs in 2020-21?

Three ILC Summit Sessions were held. Attendees included 73 ILCs on January 11, 2021, 64 on February 8, 2021; and 58 on April 19, 2021.

What were the perceptions of EDs, ILCs, NCs, CICs, and APs regarding the implementation of the Differentiated Instructional and Technology Support program in 2020-21?

Similar to 2019-20, survey responses regarding the Differentiated Instructional and Technology Support program were generally positive.

Executive Director Survey

Of the 21 EDs invited, 11 (52%) completed at least part of the survey. The most common service that EDs assigned to their reading and mathematics ILCs included guiding, planning, and modeling support for PLCs (91%). The most common service that EDs assigned to their Science ILCs included developing instructional practices (46%).

When describing two strengths of the 2020-21 ILC model (11 responses), EDs most frequently mentioned the content knowledge of the ILCs ($n = 5$, 46%), coaching support ($n = 3$; 27%), and the data/need informed ILC assignment ($n = 2$; 18%). Regarding the supports that would be beneficial for the ILC model for the 2021-22 school year (11 responses), EDs most often mentioned technology support (ILCs; $n = 3$; 27%) and adding more ILCs in certain content areas (e.g., Social Studies and Science; $n = 2$; 18%).

Instructional Lead Coach Survey

Fifty-one (75%) of the 68 invited ILCs completed at least part of the survey. Per ILCs, the three most common services frequently or very frequently requested by EDs included reviewing and interpreting campus data (96%); guiding, planning, and modeling support for PLCs (94%); and developing instructional practices (94%).

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

- Guiding, planning, and modeling support for PLCs (CICs: 92%; APs: 86%) and training campus administrators on instructional practices (CICs: 86%; APs: 82%) were two services that ILCs frequently or very frequently provided to both CICs and APs.
- While 84 percent of ILCs reported frequently or very frequently leading PD sessions for CICs, a smaller percentage (67%) frequently or very frequently led PD sessions for APs. In contrast, 75 percent of ILCs reported they frequently or very frequently helped implement curriculum for APs, compared to 96 percent of ILCs for CICs.

ILC respondents highly rated the helpfulness of the services that they received from program. Sixty-five percent of ILCs rated the PD collaboration with the T&L department as moderately or extremely helpful. Eighty-two percent agreed the collaboration between T&L and ILCs provided content resources that effectively provided instructional support to campuses. In addition, most ILC survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed that 1) APs (96%), CICs (100%), and principals (98%) were receptive to the service(s) that they provided, and 2) the ILC model was effective at providing instructional support to campuses (94%).

Network Coordinator Survey

Of the 9 NCs invited to complete the survey, 7 (78%) completed at least part of the survey. NCs reported that the three most common services frequently or very frequently

requested by ILCs reviewing campus data (86%); leading PD sessions (57%); and develop action plans (50%).

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

- Reviewing campus data (CICs: 71%; APs: 86%), guiding, planning and modeling PLCs (CICs: 43%; APs: 57%) and developing instructional practices (APs: 72%) were three services that NCs frequently or very frequently provided to CICs and APs.
- NCs reported frequently or very frequently developing instructional practices for APs (72%) and led PD sessions for APs (57%). Similarly, 14 percent of NCs reported that they frequently or very frequently provided technology/blended learning support for CICs, compared to 29 percent of NCs for APs.

All NCs reported that the weekly NC meetings were either moderately helpful (29%) or extremely helpful (71%). NC respondents also reported that they experienced some improvement or a lot of improvement in the following skills: autonomy (14%), collaboration (57%), flexibility (29%), and PD (57%). NC respondents also reported that they need more support in the following areas: developing knowledge and competency (57%), collaboration (29%), and coaching skills (14%). All NC survey respondents agreed to strongly agreed that the ILC model was effective at providing instructional support to campuses and almost all NCs agreed to strongly agreed that Principals (100%), APs (100%) and CICs (86%) were receptive to the services they provided.

Campus Instructional Coach Survey

Of the 347 CICs invited to complete the survey, 119 (34%) completed at least part of the survey. During 2020-21, 92 percent of CIC respondents reported that an ILC had provided services to them or their campuses, and 59 percent reported that their ILCs provided support often.

The most frequent service that ILCs provided CICs was to help implement district curriculum (42%). In addition, most CICs expressed favorable views about their experiences with the Differentiated Instructional and Technology Support program. Regarding the quality of services provided by ILCs, the majority of CICs (67%) rated the technology support they received from ILCs as either helpful or very helpful. Additionally, Most CICs agreed or strongly agreed that ILCs provided services met the needs of their campuses (83%) and responded to their campus needs in a timely manner (83%). Finally, the majority of CICs (79%) agreed or strongly agreed that the ILC structure was effective.

- Eighty-one percent of CICs reported they improved in knowledge from this year's ILC support.
- Seventy-nine percent of CICs improved in providing feedback as a result of the ILC support they received this year.

- Seventy-seven percent of CICs reported that they improved in data and coaching skills as a result of this year's ILC support.

CICs considered the most successful support (119 responses) to be PD sessions that ILCs provided ($n = 44$; 37%), followed by frequent and timely communication with ILCs ($n = 22$; 19%) and curriculum and lesson support that the ILCs provided ($n = 20$; 17%). In addition, CICs reported that the two most important ways that ILCs can continue to support CICs (119 responses) included continuing to provide PD session for their growth ($n = 64$; 54%) and more frequent and timely communication between ILCs and CICs ($n = 28$; 24%).

Assistant Principal Survey

Of the 467 APs invited to complete the survey, 170 (36%) completed at least part of the survey. Eighty-eight percent reported that their ILCs provided services to their campuses, with the three most common services provided to APs being: help to implement curriculum (47%), developing instructional practices (44%), and providing feedback on action plans (40%).

The majority of APs (71%) agreed or strongly agreed that ILC structure was effective at providing instructional support to their campuses. When describing the skills that improved from the ILC model, AP respondents reported that they experienced at least some to a lot of improvement in their knowledge (63%), providing feedback (58%), coaching (57%), and analyzing data (56%).

When APs described the two most important ways that ILCs can continue to support APs (170 responses), APs most frequently mentioned that ILCs can continue to develop and lead PD sessions ($n = 45$; 27%), followed by coaching teachers and CICs ($n = 42$; 25%), and review and interpret campus data ($n = 26$; 15%). In addition, regarding the two most successful supports APs received from ILCs, APs most frequently mentioned providing PD session ($n = 43$; 25%), followed by data support ($n = 36$; 21%), and lesson planning and instructional support ($n = 30$; 18%).

What percentage of campuses have created a structured campus technology plan for staff during the 2020-21 school year?

In 2020-21, the Differentiated Instructional and Technology Support program supported the development of a structured

campus technology plan for Dallas ISD campus staff and program staff members provided end-of-year data to the program evaluator. A frequency analysis was conducted and showed that a total of 230 (100%) Dallas ISD campuses created a structured campus technology plan for campus staff.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Improve the tracking of ED spot observation data. Missing or incomplete data prevented the ED spot observations from being used in the 2020-21 evaluation of the program. Differentiated Instructional and Technology Support program staff members should determine how the Campus Coaching Tracker file can be used more effectively to track ED spot observations during the school year. These data could be invaluable for monitoring the impact of these supports over time.

Continue using ILCs in their current roles. In 2020-21, most EDs, ILCs, NCs, CICs, and APs had positive views of the ILC model and reported that the ILC model was effective at providing instructional support to campuses. Thus, ILCs should continue to focus on providing direct campus instructional support that empowers and builds capacity within CICs and APs.

Further support ILCs by continuing to build their knowledge and skills. In 2020-21, most ILCs reported that the ILC Summit Sessions were helpful but also reported that they needed additional support to further develop their knowledge and competency (e.g., using technology). Differentiated Instructional and Technology Support program staff members should determine how to fine tune PD sessions and provide more resources for ILCs, as needed.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In its second year of implementation, the 2020-21 Extended Learning Opportunities (ELO) Safety Initiative continued with its primary objective of providing a safe, healthy working environment for all after-school employees, students, and visitors on 50 high-need campuses. In 2020-21, the ELO Safety Initiative addressed two challenges from 2019-20 that included 1) building the capacity of the After-School Safety Coordinator [now called Site Coordinator (SC)], and 2) disseminating pertinent information to SCs, after-school district staff members, parent-pay vendors, and partners. In 2020-21, \$585,000 in Title IV, Part A funds supported the ELO Safety Initiative that included supplemental pay for 50 SCs (one per campus).¹

On March 13, 2020, in alignment with federal recommendations, the Governor of Texas issued a disaster proclamation certifying that the novel coronavirus, COVID-19, posed an imminent threat of disaster for all counties in the state of Texas. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Dallas Independent School District (ISD) transitioned students to at-home learning on March 23 following spring break (March 16 – 20) until the end of the 2019-20 school year. In 2020-21, Dallas ISD delayed the start of the 2020-21 school year until September 8, 2020 and implemented at-home learning districtwide for the first four weeks. On October 22, 2020, the district announced that campuses would provide in-person and virtual learning throughout the rest of the school year, and parents could choose whether their children participated in in-person or virtual instruction. The district also continued to implement the Center for Disease Control (CDC), as well as state and local COVID safety protocols. The ELO department provided both in-person and virtual programing in 2020-21.

PURPOSE AND METHODOLOGY

The purpose of the evaluation was to summarize the context and process information about the ELO safety program for the 2020-21 school year.² The evaluator also analyzed the program goals defined in the 2020-21 ELO Title IV, Part A Workscope. The evaluator used program documents, interviews, attendance data, and survey data to evaluate the program. The ELO program continued to be impacted by COVID-19; changes are described in the relevant sections of the report.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS/OUTCOMES

How was the ELO Safety Initiative implemented during the 2020-21 school year?

In 2020-21 the ELO department implemented the Safety Initiative with three modifications from 2019-20. First, the ELO department hired a part-time After-School Safety Specialist to support all campuses with after-school programs. Second, ELO central staff members developed safety training modules housed on the ELO After-School Safety website for all SCs, after-school district staff members, parent-pay vendors, and partners. The website served as a hub for District safety resources, training modules, feedback, updates, and overall general information about after-school safety. Third, to avoid the confusion about the safety and site coordinator roles experienced in the 2019-20 school year, the After-School Site Coordinator and After-School Safety Coordinator positions were streamlined into one position.

A total of 63 SCs were hired in 2020-21, of these, only 50 remained for the entire school year. Forty-eight of the 63 were funded through the ELO budget and the remaining 15 were paid for through Accelerating Campus Excellence (ACE) campus budgets.³ As in 2019-20, finding individuals who could commit to working extended hours was a problem, even though campuses were allowed flexibility by splitting the role between two or more people. A total of 12 campuses had multiple site coordinators.

Some campuses attempted to fill the SC role using teacher assistants (TAs); however, this was problematic from a budget perspective. TAs in the SC role received compensation at the overtime (time and a half) rate, which greatly impacted the number of safety coordinators the ELO department was able to afford. Even so, two campuses hired TAs as a last resort because the number of program participants exceeded the 1:10 teacher/student ratio requirement.⁴ ELO staff members wanted to be able to hire TAs as SCs because of their availability and willingness to work the extended hours. However, these issues were not resolved during discussions with the Dallas ISD Compensation Department; thus, ELO leadership could not hire additional TAs for the 2020-21 school year.

¹ The funding amounts were provided by Special Revenue Funds Management on 02/28/ 21. This is a decrease from last year (\$1,099,633) because some components of the 2019-20 workscope were removed in 2020-21.

² Portions of this report have been adapted from Garcia-Rincón (2020).

³ ELO central staff members were responsible for training SCs from ACE campuses.

⁴ Elementary schools with TAs included Chapel Hill and Ronald E. McNair.

Aside from TAs and teachers, several other types of campus staff members filled the SC role in 2020-21. SCs included 35 teachers, five counselors, four librarians/media specialists, two TAs, two instructional coaches, one Professional Learning Community Facilitator, and one office manager. Seven of the after-school SCs also served as daytime SCs, meaning that they were already trained for the SC role.

Of the 50 after-school campuses, a total of 32 were served by site coordinators, 15 had vacancies because a professional staff member was not willing to serve as the site coordinator, and three reported not needing a site coordinator.

SCs supported campus staff members, students, and visitors during after-school hours (Monday through Friday from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m.) for the 2020-21 school year. They had two major roles. First, they managed the after-school programs implemented by several program providers by overseeing the teachers who were on site or working directly with providers when there were no on-site teachers.⁵ Second, they ensured the safety of all program participants (staff members and students) by:

- developing an after-school safety plan and procedures specific to their campus,
- providing access to facilities within the building,
- ensuring the code of conduct was carried out in accordance with Dallas ISD policy,
- monitoring external guests and visitors,
- serving as the cardiopulmonary resuscitation- (CPR)-certified designee,
- administering first-aid,
- conducting monthly emergency drills,
- tracking student health concerns,
- serving as point of contact for vendor-led programs, and
- serving as the point of contact for crisis events in the community.

To document this work, SCs submitted a monthly checklist of their emergency drills, program walk-throughs, and safety plans. The ELO department Title IV workscope included several safety-related goals based on these job responsibilities. The first two goals were that 100 percent of campuses would have an accessible list of student health concerns by November 2020 and that SCs would develop a safety plan and procedures for their campus by February 2021. According to data provided by ELO central staff members, 100 percent of campuses had student health concern lists by the November deadline and 100 percent

developed a safety plan and procedures by February 2021.⁶ Thus, both goals were met.

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, vendors and visitors were not allowed on the campuses during the 2020-21 school year. This restriction included individuals who were to conduct the Dallas ISD Safety Assessments at campuses. Because the assessments could not be conducted, the workscope goal that 85 percent of campus sites would pass the Dallas ISD Safety Assessment by May 2021 was unable to be examined. Instead, all SCs submitted monthly checklists that included safety requirements.

What professional development was provided to Site Coordinators and after-school teachers in 2020-21?

Site Coordinators

The ELO Safety Initiative supported specialized, mandatory professional development (PD) for SCs. The initiative provided two PD sessions (Onboarding and CPR/First Aid/Blood Pathogen) and online refresher modules.

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, in 2020-21, the ELO department first provided SCs with on-demand virtual training about COVID-19, child abuse, and trauma informed care (the latter two provided by the Dallas Advocacy Center).

Virtual onboarding training occurred in August 2020 and September 2020. The training covered safety and the roles and responsibilities of the SCs. The major safety topics discussed included fire drill protocols, environmental health, general health services, emergency management, and student services. Other topics included student registration; student attendance; programs, schedules, and lesson plans; working with vendors, volunteers, and parents; and check-out procedures for parents.

In addition to onboarding training, SCs attended in-person CPR and Blood Pathogen certification courses (valid for two years). Staff members in the Dallas ISD Risk Management, ELO, and Health Services Departments provided the trainings which were required to be completed by December 2020 for fall hires.

ELO central staff members provided the evaluator PD attendance data for the year.⁷ Of the 63 SCs, 100 percent attended the mandatory COVID-19 and Onboarding training and 94 percent attended CPR/First Aid and Blood Pathogen training.

⁵ In-person after-school program providers included Boys and Girls Club, the City of Dallas, Dallas After-School Achievers, and the Young Men's Christian Association. Additionally, one program provided virtual activities.

⁶ Data provided on 05/10/21.

⁷ Data provided on 05/10/21.

After-school Teachers

The ELO Safety Initiative also provided two PD opportunities (one about COVID-19 and the other about academic enrichment) and online refresher modules for after-school teachers in 2020-21. The training was required to be completed by March 31, 2021.⁸ Data provided by ELO central staff members showed that of the 95 after-school teachers, 75 (79%) from the 50 campuses completed the COVID-19 training.⁹

Fifty-four of the 95 after-school teachers were Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) teachers. Of the 54 STEM teachers, 36 (67%) attended the National Mathematics and Science Initiative (NMSI) virtual training session on March 27, 2021 and 34 (63%) attended the second NMSI virtual training session on April 17, 2021. These percentages did not meet the Title IV workscope goal that 75 percent of after-school teachers would participate in two PD sessions by March 31, 2021.¹⁰

The ELO Title IV workscope included a goal that 70 percent of teachers would find training helpful. However, the ELO department decided not to give the PD-related surveys in an effort to reduce demands on teachers during testing time. Thus, this goal could not be examined.

What were the results of the ELO Safety Initiative survey?

The evaluator created a six-item survey in collaboration with ELO central staff members and administered it in April 2021 to all 50 designated SCs using the Qualtrics survey platform.¹¹ The purpose of the survey was to collect feedback regarding the experiences of the ELO After-school SCs for the 2020-21 school year.

A total of 37 SCs responded to the survey (74%). In general, the majority of the SCs responded favorably to questions about the implementation of the ELO program and their role as the after-school SC in 2020-21 (Table 1). Most strongly agreed or agreed that the PD provided by the ELO department effectively supported them in their role as a SC (92%). Although positive overall, the lowest percentage of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that adequate staff were provided to maintain a 10:1 student to teacher ratio in all after-school classrooms (81%).

Table 1: 2020-21 After-School Site Coordinator Survey Favorable Responses

Question	Strongly Agree/Agree	
	n	%
After-school Site Coordinators received the necessary training and resources to implement fire and emergency drills in 2020-21.	31	83.8
Adequate staff was provided to maintain a 10:1 student to teacher ratio in all after-school classrooms.	30	81.1
I believe that monthly meetings supported me in my role as a Site Coordinator in 2020-21.	32	86.5
The ELO Department has provided all the necessary supports to help me meet all my duties and responsibilities as a Site Coordinator effectively.	32	86.5
The Site Coordinator professional development provided by the ELO department effectively supported me in my role as a Site Coordinator in 2020-21.	34	91.9

Source: Spring 2021 Site Coordinator Survey.

Note: A total of 37 respondents completed the survey.

SCs were able to recommend changes to improve the implementation of the ELO SC role in 2021-22. Thirty-one respondents (84% of survey respondents) made recommendations. Eight respondents recommended changes pertaining to training, including starting training earlier in the year and providing more hands-on demonstrations of emergency drills. Eight respondents provided feedback around daily duties. Specifically, respondents reported having too much paperwork (e.g., daily checklists) and that the attendance system was tedious and might be better implemented separately by each program on a campus. Last, seven respondents gave feedback around communication; it needed to be consistent, infrequent but with detail, adhere to the calendar, inform SCs of changes, and allow for interaction between SCs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Improve recruitment efforts to fill vacant After-School Safety Coordinator positions. Of the 50 after-school campuses, 15 had vacancies because a professional staff member was not willing to serve as the site coordinator. The ELO staff members should work to ensure all after-school campuses have a Site Coordinator to ensure the safety of students and staff members at after-school programs.

⁸ In addition to the training they received, teachers were also informed about the after-school safety standards and expectations by their SCs.

⁹ Data provided on 05/10/21.

¹⁰ Data provided on 05/10/21.

¹¹ Email addresses for survey respondents were provided by ELO staff members.

Use participant feedback to improve the implementation of the ELO After-School Site Coordinator role in 2021-22. The most common recommendations for improvement were in the areas of training (n=8), daily duties (n=8), and communication (n=7). ELO department staff members should work to address these concerns in 2021-22.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Accelerating Campus Excellence (ACE) initiative was formed in 2015-16 on the principle that transforming schools through strong leadership and effective teachers enveloped in an environment of high expectations for students and staff members. To accomplish this goal, the Dallas Independent School District (ISD) provided competitive stipends to incentivize top teachers and principals to relocate to some of the district's most challenged campuses.

In 2020-21, all ACE campuses were identified as part of the 80 High Priority Campuses (HPC). The district expanded the ACE program to 23 campuses including four campuses from the original first cohort (ACE 1.0; Anne Webb Blanton, Billy Earl Dade, Umphrey Lee, and Sarah Zumwalt). The four campuses from the second cohort (ACE 2.0; C.F. Carr, J.N. Ervin, Thomas J. Rusk, and Edward Titcher) participated in their fourth year of the program. The seven campuses from the third cohort (ACE 3.0; Cesar Chavez, Paul L. Dunbar, L.L. Hotchkiss, Maple Lawn, Martin Luther King, Jr., Elisha M. Pease, and Joseph J. Rhoads) participated in their third year of the program. Additionally, eight new campuses joined the ACE program (ACE 4.0; John Neely Bryan, Rufus C. Burleson, Cedar Crest, Nancy J. Cochran, Frederick Douglass, Eddie Bernice Johnson, George W. Truett, and Wilmer-Hutchins Elementary). All ACE campuses implemented the same ACE program model beginning in 2020-21. Leadership teams of 12 to 14 teachers at these campuses were offered stipends for eight hours of weekly leadership work in professional development, curriculum alignment, data analysis, positive culture building, and the development of strong parent and community partnerships.

The ACE program aimed to improve student achievement by striving to accelerate learning through a focus on three general components: People, Learning, and Expectations. To support acceleration in the three areas, ACE campuses prioritized balanced literacy, social and emotional development, and professional learning communities (PLCs) with strong data practices.

To accelerate factors related to people, ACE campuses were staffed with strong administrators and effective teachers. The program goal was to recruit, retain, and develop strong teachers as measured by (1) a minimum of 60 percent of teachers on ACE campuses with Proficient I or above Teacher Excellence Initiative (TEI) effectiveness levels, (2) annual teacher retention rates at or above district retention rates, and (3) fourth or fifth quintile scores on the Culture of Feedback and Support section of the district Climate Survey.

To accelerate factors related to learning, ACE staff members participated in supplemental professional

development opportunities and committed to excellence in both academic and social-emotional learning. The program goal was to (1) Improve rates of kindergarten to grade eight students reading and mathematics on grade level as measured by *NWEA Measures of Academic Progress (MAP)*; i.e., rates of Average Quintile and above students at or above district rates), (2) close the achievement gap in assessment scores (i.e., within ten percentage points of district rates on fall and spring *Assessments of Course Performance (ACPs)* and *State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR)*), and (3) close the achievement gap for reading and mathematics growth (i.e., within at least ten percentage points of district rates of students with Expected and Accelerated ratings on *STAAR* reading and mathematics progress measures).

To accelerate factors related to expectations, ACE campuses emphasized relationships among campus community members. The program goal was to increase positive student expectations and parent engagement as measured by having (1) disciplinary offenses at or below the district average, (2) attendance rates at or above 96 percent, (3) Student Experience survey positive response rates at or above district averages, and (4) parent perception positive response rates at or above district averages.

On March 13, 2020, in alignment with federal recommendations, the Governor of Texas issued a disaster proclamation certifying that the novel coronavirus COVID-19 posed an imminent threat of disaster for all counties in the state of Texas. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Dallas ISD transitioned students to at-home learning on March 23 following spring break (March 16 – 20) until the end of the 2019-20 school year. To help district students and families access the internet during at-home learning, the Dallas ISD launched "Operation Connectivity" in May 2020, which provided 23,000 hotspots to families by October 2020. In 2020-21, Dallas ISD delayed the start of the 2020-21 school year until September 8, 2020 and implemented at-home learning districtwide for the first four weeks. The district also modified the school calendar from a six-week schedule to a nine-week schedule. On October 22, 2020, the district announced that campuses would provide in-person and virtual learning throughout the rest of the school year, and parents could choose whether their children participated in in-person or virtual instruction. In-person and virtual instruction included both synchronous and asynchronous learning activities. The district also continued to implement the Center for Disease Control (CDC) as well as state and local COVID safety protocols.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS/OUTCOMES

What was the source and amount of funding for the ACE program?

The total budget for the 2020-21 ACE program was \$18,850,774 which was a \$10,760,454 increase from \$8,090,320 in 2019-20. This budget was funded through district general operating funds. The cornerstone of the ACE program was recruiting highly effective teachers and leadership teams to work at ACE campuses. The budget included \$15,600,844 for additional personnel and teacher stipends, \$380,250 for uniforms, and \$2,869,680 for professional development and extra duty pay.

What were the student, teacher, and principal characteristics of ACE campuses?

Students

In 2020-21, there were a total of 11,967 students at ACE campuses compared to 6,422 in 2019-20. Over half of 2020-21 students in ACE campuses were male (51%) and a higher proportion were identified as economically disadvantaged (97%) compared to the district (85%, Table 1). ACE campuses also had a larger proportion of African American (48%) students compared to the district (21%) but had a smaller proportion of Hispanic (47%) students compared to the district (71%). ACE campuses had a smaller proportion of students identified as English learners (ELs; 38%) compared to the district (46%), and had a similar proportion enrolled in special education (9%) compared to the district (10%). Student characteristics were mostly comparable for ACE cohorts, although a slightly higher proportion of African American students were enrolled at ACE 3.0 campuses (54%) and ACE 1.0 campuses (49%) than at ACE 2.0 campuses (46%) and ACE 4.0 campuses (42%). In addition, a slightly higher proportion of Hispanic students were enrolled at ACE 4.0 campuses (52%) and ACE 2.0 campuses (50%) than at ACE 1.0 campuses (47%) and ACE 3.0 campuses (40%).

Teachers

In 2020-21, the 835 teachers on ACE campuses were 78 percent female, 83 percent African American or Hispanic (52% and 31%, respectively), and 27 percent held at least a master's degree (Table 2). Over half of teachers (54%) had received a TEI effectiveness level of Proficient I or above, which was lower than the program objective (60%). However, ACE campuses had a higher proportion of teachers who earned a TEI effectiveness level of Proficient I or above compared to the district (48%). A higher rate of ACE 4.0 teachers (64%) than ACE 1.0, ACE 2.0, and ACE 3.0 teachers (47%, 53%, and 49% respectively) earned TEI effectiveness ratings of Proficient I or higher.

Table 1: 2020-21 ACE Student Characteristics

	ACE Overall (N = 11,967)	
	N	%
Sex		
Male	6,140	51.3
Female	5,827	48.7
Race/Ethnicity		
African American	5,718	47.8
Hispanic	5,632	47.1
White	134	1.1
Other/Missing	483	4.0
Special Student Groups		
Economically Disadvantaged	11,571	96.7
English Learner	4,541	37.9
Special Education	1,121	9.4

Source: District Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) demographic data dated 10/30/20.

Table 2: 2020-21 ACE Teacher Characteristics

	ACE Overall (N = 835)	
	N	%
Sex		
Male	187	22.4
Female	648	77.6
Race/Ethnicity		
African American	434	52.0
Hispanic	259	31.0
White	126	15.1
Other/Missing	16	1.9
Highest Degree Earned		
Associate's	7	0.8
Bachelor's	557	66.7
Master's	219	26.2
Doctoral	10	1.2
Other/Missing	42	5.0
TEI Effectiveness Level^a		
Below Proficient I, No Level, or N/A	382	45.7
Proficient I, II, or III	398	47.7
Exemplary I or higher	55	6.6

Source: District personnel file dated 01/05/21 and teacher effectiveness level data file from the Dallas ISD Data Analytics and Control department dated 01/26/21.

Note: Totals include teachers and instructional leads. Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding.

Principals

There were 23 ACE principals with the majority identifying as female (65%), African American (52%), and Hispanic (35%). Most principals held at least a master's degree (78%). Assigned principals remained with their assigned ACE campus throughout the academic year.

What were the outcomes related to the people component of the ACE program?

Teacher Retention

Overall, teacher retention rates for all ACE cohorts (23% to 73%) were lower than the district rate (77%). Among ACE 1.0 campuses, Blanton and Lee had the highest teacher retention rate (84% and 79%, respectively) while Zumwalt and Dade had the lowest teacher retention rates (65% and 64%, respectively). Among ACE 2.0 campuses, Rusk and Ervin had the highest teacher retention rate (75% and 73%, respectively) while Carr and Titche had the lowest teacher retention rates (63% and 58%, respectively). Among ACE 3.0 campuses, King had the highest teacher retention rate (97%) while Rhoads and Hotchkiss had the lowest teacher retention rates (54% and 53%, respectively). Among ACE 4.0 campuses, Cedar Crest had the highest teacher retention rate (48%) while Wilmer-Hutchins Elementary School had the lowest teacher retention rates (4%).

District Campus Climate Survey

Overall, 12 of the 23 ACE campuses (52%) had scores in the fourth or fifth quintile (most positive) on the Culture of Feedback and Support section of the spring 2021 climate survey. In spring 2021, three out of four ACE 1.0 campuses (Blanton, Lee, and Dade), two out of four ACE 2.0 campuses (Carr and Ervin), four out of seven ACE 3.0 campuses (Chavez, Dunbar, King, and Pease), and three out of eight ACE 4.0 campuses (Burlison, Cochran, and Johnson) had scores in the fourth or fifth quintile. Due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the district cancelled the administration of the spring and fall 2020 Climate Survey.

What were the outcomes related to the learning component of the ACE program?

Due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, Dallas ISD opted to administer the STAAR online for the 2020-21 school year.¹ Additionally, the district cancelled the administration of local assessments and surveys including the district fall 2020 Climate Survey and ACPs.²

NWEA Measures of Academic Progress

Overall, ACE students who performed at the Average Quintile or above in reading had mixed trends for the three assessment periods. EOY Reading - English results showed that one (Martin Luther King Jr.) out of 23 (4.3%) ACE campuses met the goal of having higher than the district rate for the percentage of students reading at the Average Quintile or above. However, 12 out of 23 (52.2%) ACE campuses had increases in the percentage of students reading at the Average Quintile or above from BOY to EOY (range: 1% to 23%). EOY Reading - Spanish³ results showed that 10 out of 19 (52.6%) ACE elementary

campuses met the goal of having higher than the district rate for the percentage of students reading at the Average Quintile or above. Overall, 12 out of 19 (63.2%) ACE elementary campuses had increases in the percentage of students reading at the Average Quintile or above from BOY to EOY (range: 2% to 25%).

Overall, ACE students who performed at the Average Quintile or above in mathematics had mixed trends for the three assessment periods. EOY Mathematics results showed that two (Blanton and Truett) out of 23 (8.7%) ACE campuses met the goal of having higher than the district rate for the percentage of students at the Average Quintile or above in mathematics. However, 22 out of 23 (95.7%) ACE campuses had increases in the percentage of students performing at the Average Quintile or above in mathematics from BOY to EOY (range: 2% to 29%).

State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness

The 2020-21 ACE objective for STAAR was to achieve rates of students at each performance standard within at least ten percentage points of district rates. Overall, two out of the 23 (9%) ACE campuses met the goal of achieving rates of students within at least ten percentage points of the district for all subjects at the Approaches+, Meets+, and Masters Grade Level performance standard. In reading, 14 out of the 23 (61%) ACE campuses met the goal of achieving rates of students within at least ten percentage points of the district at all three performance standards. Fourteen out of the 23 (61%) ACE campuses met the goal of achieving rates of students within at least ten percentage points of the district at all performance standards in mathematics while nine out of the 23 (39%) ACE campuses met the goal of achieving rates of students within at least ten percentage points of the district at all three performance standards in writing. In science, 14 out of the 23 (61%) ACE campuses met the goal of achieving rates of students within at least ten percentage points of the district at all three performance standards. Notably, all three ACE middle school campuses exceeded the district rates for social studies at all three performance standards.

What were the outcomes related to the expectations component of the ACE program?

ACE program leadership designated disciplinary offenses, attendance rates, Student Experience survey results, and Parent/Guardian survey results as metrics to evaluate the 2020-21 expectations component of ACE. Due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, Dallas ISD suspended normal disciplinary tracking for 2020-21.

¹ Due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, TEA cancelled the STAAR administration for the 2019-20 school year.

² Due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the district cancelled the administration of the district spring 2020 Climate survey, Student

Experience survey, Parent/Guardian survey, and spring ACPs for the 2019-20 school year.

³ MAP Reading - Spanish is only administered in Kindergarten to 5th grade.

Attendance Rates

In 2020-21, ACE campuses had an average attendance rate of 94 percent. Overall, eight out of the 23 (35%) ACE campuses met the program objective of having attendance rates at or above 96 percent. All ACE 1.0 and ACE 3.0 campuses exceeded the overall district attendance rate (92%). In addition, three of the four (75%) ACE 2.0 and six of the eight (75%) ACE 4.0 campuses exceeded the overall district attendance rate. While the attendance rate for the district has declined from 2019-20, the attendance rate for ACE 1.0 increased slightly and the attendance rate for ACE 3.0 remained the same.

Student Experience Survey

Overall, ACE students generally responded favorably on the districtwide student survey. Overall, ACE 1.0, ACE 2.0, and ACE 4.0 elementary schools (86%, 85%, and 85% respectively) met the objective of exceeding the overall favorable rate for the district at the elementary school (80%) level. ACE 2.0 middle schools and ACE 3.0 elementary schools favorable response rates (72% and 77%, respectively) were slightly lower than the district rates. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, some administration protocols were waived in response to remote/hybrid learning. Additionally, some campuses had lower participation rates than in prior years. Campuses were only included in analyses if their participation rates were 52 percent or greater. Results should not be compared to prior years and should be reviewed with caution.

Parent/Guardian Survey

Overall, parent perceptions of ACE cohorts were generally positive. Overall, 20 out of the 23 (87%) ACE campuses met the goal of meeting or exceeding the district positive response rate (88%). Notably, all ACE 3.0 campuses met the objective of meeting or exceeding the district positive response rate.

What were the 2020 ACE state accountability ratings?

The ultimate goal of the ACE program was for all ACE campuses to earn or maintain a passing accountability rating letter grade. Due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, TEA suspended calculation of accountability ratings for the 2020-21 school year. As a result, all districts and campuses received a 2021 State Accountability Rating of *“Not Rated: Declared State of Disaster.”*

RECOMMENDATIONS

As recommended in previous years, evaluate long-term outcomes. As ACE students move into higher grades at other campuses, long-term outcomes should be evaluated to examine lasting benefit of ACE participation. This could include examining dosage of years enrolled on ACE campuses and comparing ACE students with similar students who were not enrolled on ACE campuses on long-term achievement outcomes (e.g., assessments, college and career readiness, graduation rates, and college enrollment).

Monitor the impact of participation in alternative school calendars. Beginning in 2021-22, five ACE campuses (Bryan ES, Ervin ES, Pease ES, Truett ES, and Wilmer-Hutchins ES) will implement an intersession school year calendar and two ACE campuses (Rusk MS and Maple Lawn ES) will implement a school day redesign school year calendar while the remaining seventeen ACE campuses will remain on a traditional school year calendar. The use of alternative school year calendars is one district initiative aimed at mitigating learning loss due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, it will be important for district leadership and program managers to monitor the impact of participation on achieving ACE program goals.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The goal of the Dallas Independent School District (ISD) Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) initiative is to provide campus staff members with SEL training and implementation support. The 2020-21 budget for the SEL initiative was \$3,210,455, an increase from \$2,512,214 in 2019-20 (Hinkley, 2020).

In response to COVID-19, Dallas ISD transitioned students to at-home learning from March 12, 2020 until the end of the 2019-20 school year. In 2020-21, Dallas ISD delayed the start of the 2020-21 school year until September 8, 2020 and implemented at-home learning districtwide for the first four weeks. On October 22, 2020, the district announced that campuses would provide in-person and virtual learning throughout the rest of the school year and parents could choose how their children participated in instruction.

PURPOSE AND METHODS OF THE EVALUATION

This report summarized the context, process, and outcome data for the 2020-21 SEL initiative.¹ Context data included information about the services provided to campus staff members and students collected from SEL central staff members. Process data included implementation rubric data completed together by district SEL coordinators and campus staff members and professional development (PD) satisfaction data. Outcome data included analyses of student (in-district retention, Student Experience and SEL Student survey, and academic) and teacher (in-district retention, absence, and Climate Survey) data. The evaluators used frequencies to summarize all outcome data by implementation level.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS/OUTCOMES

What was the context of the 2020-21 SEL initiative?

SEL in the Dallas ISD

In the Dallas ISD, the SEL initiative focused on building “the skills, knowledge and attitudes students and adults need to be successful in school, work, and life.”² In 2017-18, district SEL staff members began providing SEL training to campus staff members. Beginning in 2018-19, staff-member SEL training continued with a new focus on introducing SEL concepts to students. To foster SEL at the campus level, in 2020-21, the SEL Department continued partnering with the

Partnerships for Social and Emotional Learning Initiative (PSELI) and Building Assets, Reducing Risks (BARR) at selected campuses and began offering SEL support services to all campuses in the district at one of three levels: Intensive, Moderate, or Consultation Only.

Elements of comprehensive SEL in the Dallas ISD

In December 2020, the SEL Department updated the elements of the district approach to SEL to include: climate and culture (engagement with signature practices, respect agreements, and calming areas/strategies), explicit skills instruction (a dedicated time and curriculum to teach SEL), content integration (integrating SEL into core curricula), and family engagement. Focus on these four areas subsequently made up the day-to-day work of the SEL Department staff members, who directly supported campuses with SEL implementation efforts.

Systems for Effective Implementation

The five recommended systems and supports for effective SEL implementation were suggested across all campuses; however, these components were more consistently implemented at PSELI, BARR, Intensive, and Moderate campuses because Consultation Only campuses interacted less consistently with the SEL Department. Even so, these systems were implemented at varying levels at campuses that received more support. First, campus steering committees fostered SEL by planning, leading, and supporting campus SEL implementation, and set goals around the four elements of comprehensive SEL. Second, campus champions added SEL leadership and capacity to campuses. They served as steering committee members and SEL experts, provided feedback, and served as a bridge between campuses and the SEL Department. Third, district SEL coordinators served as a link between campuses and the SEL Department and provided implementation and coaching support for campuses and the goals campuses set around the four elements of comprehensive SEL.³ Beginning in 2020-21, all campuses had a district SEL coordinator assigned via network as potential support; however, that support varied based on the campuses selected level of SEL support. Fourth, since 2018-19, all campuses implementing SEL ideally designated times in the schedule and a specific curriculum for teaching SEL standards, as reflected in the elements of comprehensive SEL mentioned previously. In 2020-21, all campuses were expected to conduct explicit SEL instruction for 45 minutes each week. In 2020-21, most elementary campuses continued using the Harmony SEL curriculum to

¹ Portions of this report were adapted from Hinkley (2019, 2020).

² Documentation provided by the SEL program manager on 09/20/18.

³ Staff members (both campus and central) also could attend various district-level virtual trainings related to SEL.

teach SEL.⁴ Middle school campuses had several curriculum options including the Positive Action Kits used in 2019-20, and Random Acts of Kindness, Everfi, and Facing History and Ourselves. High school campuses used one of two curricula: Community Matters: A Facing History Approach to Advisory from Facing History and Ourselves or Everfi. Fifth, SEL was embedded into the social studies and reading and language arts curricula in 2018-19 and the math and science curricula in 2019-20. Even so, in 2020-21 SEL Department staff members reported that teachers were still being trained on intentional integration of the SEL standards and skill-building into the academic curricula.

PSEL Study and Comparison Campuses

In 2017-18, the Dallas ISD began participating in the multi-year PSEL Study (funded by the Wallace Foundation). The study was designed to examine the impact of consistent SEL implementation during in- and out-of-school time (OST). Seven PSEL Study and seven PSEL Comparison campuses participated in the two-phase study. Across phases, each campus worked with an OST partner provided by Big Thought to provide OST programming.⁵ In phase I, the study campuses received SEL support while the comparison campuses did not. However, in response to COVID-19 and its impacts, the Wallace Foundation decided to allow all districts participating in PSEL to begin providing SEL support to Phase II campuses one year earlier than planned (if the district chose to do so). Dallas ISD chose to begin supporting Phase II campuses earlier; thus, all 14 sites received SEL support in 2020-21. All PSEL campuses were expected to engage with the systems for effective implementation mentioned previously including working with a district SEL coordinator, having steering committees, campus champions, and designated times and methods for explicit SEL instruction. In 2020-21, Phase II sites received SEL implementation support and funding to help support campuswide SEL implementation [\$10,000 per campuses for online PD (registration fees to attend virtual SEL training, conferences, etc.) and \$5,000 per campus for SEL supplies (SEL-related books for staff, classroom supplies, etc.)].⁶

SEL Partnership/BARR Campuses

SEL Partnership/BARR (BARR) campuses used the BARR curriculum, an SEL curriculum designed to assist with the transition to high school.⁷ In 2019-20 and 2020-21, BARR campuses included W.H. Adamson, H. Grady Spruce, W.T. White, and Woodrow Wilson high schools. These campuses also selected a level of district SEL support. Adamson,

White, and Woodrow selected the Moderate level and Spruce selected the Intensive level.

SEL Partnership Campuses (SEL Partners)

In the past, only some campuses were formally involved in the SEL initiative. In 2020-21, all campuses were required to select one of three levels of SEL support (Intensive, Moderate, or Consultation Only). Intensive campuses (39 campuses) received direct support from SEL Department staff members and committed to working to further SEL on their campuses. Moderate campuses (122 campuses) made the same commitments and still received direct support with SEL, however, it was less often. Consultation Only campuses (68 campuses) did not receive direct, regular support, however, they were provided with SEL-related PD assistance and resources.

COVID-19

When the district transitioned to at-home learning in spring 2020, the SEL Department supported staff members, students, and families and collaborated with partners (SEL Dallas, Big Thought, etc.). To support staff members, the department posted information on the SEL webpage, conducted webinars, and created monthly newsletters.⁸ All of this work has continued in 2020-21. Additionally, the SEL Department partnered with the Mental Health Services and Counseling Department to deliver Maslow Before They Can Bloom trainings for administrators, secondary teachers, and elementary teachers. The trainings were designed to highlight key considerations around the impact of COVID-19, trauma, and racism/inequality issues as they started their school year.

To support students and families, the SEL Department posted daily activities for all grades on the At-Home Learning website.⁹ The activities remained available and applicable in 2020-21. The SEL Department also created videos modeling SEL practices for dissemination on districtwide social media and YouTube¹⁰. In 2020-21, the department continued to add videos to the YouTube playlist including videos about mindfulness, brain breaks, and other SEL related practices. In addition, the family engagement coordinator developed videos with family-focused content¹¹ and department staff offered online resources and virtual discussion groups/activities to share information/resources with parents and caregivers.

⁴ More information regarding the Harmony SEL curriculum (previously called Sanford Harmony) can be found at <https://www.harmonysel.org/>.

⁵ Student attendance at after-school programming was not mandatory.

⁶ The district also supported Phase I sites with flexible classroom seating and other calming supplies for each classroom.

⁷ More information about BARR can be found at www.barrcenter.org.

⁸ To explore this website, see <https://www.dallasisd.org/Page/66052>.

⁹ To explore the SEL portion of the At-Home Learning website, see <https://sites.google.com/dallasisd.org/athomelearningplans/helpful-parent-resources/social-and-emotional-learning>.

¹⁰ To explore the SEL videos, see <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLpyhyA1qUPMZvbqEhZsLZYPnxQXXd8D2k>.

¹¹ To explore these videos, see https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLpyhyA1qUPMaaO_NImRaEsXZ02JCezbB.

How was the SEL initiative implemented in 2020-21?

A rubric was developed by Evaluation and Assessment and SEL central staff members to measure SEL implementation by campus.¹² Overall, the mean score was 65.2 out of a possible 105 points (standard deviation = 14.0; range: 22.0 to 99.0). The rubric was reliable (21 items; $\alpha = .85$).¹³ Implementation tended to be rated lower at PSEL sites than elementary level SEL Partner sites. Implementation was also lower at BARR sites compared to high school level SEL Partner sites. Across campus levels, there was some evidence of decreased percentages of campuses at the low implementation level and increased or the same percentages at the medium implementation level (elementary and middle school). There was no consistent pattern in change of implementation level at the high school level.

The SEL Department provided 46 types of PD across five categories. Overall, most attendees (at least 90% across categories and questions) rated the PD they received positively (four or five on a five-point scale). This met the department goal that 85 percent of participants would report being satisfied with PD sessions. Participants were most often satisfied with summer PD (97% or greater across questions) but were less commonly, though still highly, satisfied with RDA training (90% to 93% across questions).

How did 2020-21 student outcome data vary by SEL implementation level?

Readers should not attribute causation based upon the results presented in this section. All results are descriptive and have not been experimentally examined. Additionally, the number of campuses within groups widely varied; thus, readers should use caution when comparing among groupings. Finally, variation because of the continued impacts from COVID-19 cannot be accounted for; therefore, results should be viewed with additional caution.

Results provided mixed evidence of an advantage for SEL programs. For example, high or medium implementation campuses outperformed low implementation campuses across campus levels on some, but not all, 2020-21 outcomes (Table 1), some *Measures of Academic Progress Growth (MAP)* assessments at the High Average growth quintile (range: -7 percentage points from medium to low implementation levels on grade one Spanish reading to +17 percentage points from the high to low implementation level on grade two Spanish reading), some *State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR)* 3-8 and *End-of-Course (EOC)* assessments (range: 6 percentage points lower, high to medium implementation grade five

science Approaches+, grade 6-8 mathematics Approaches+, and grade seven writing Meets+ to 58 percentage points higher, high to low implementation, English II Meets+).¹⁴ Examining change over time also indicated some small support for SEL (Table 1). For STAAR, fewer students completed the assessments in 2020-21 than in past years because of lingering impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic. Results should be reviewed with caution. With few exceptions, across implementation levels and assessments, students demonstrated two-year rate decreases at both the Approaches+ and Meets+ standards.

Table 1: 2020-21 Student Non-Assessment Outcomes by SEL Implementation Level

Outcome	2020-21			1-Year Change*		
	High	Med	Low	High	Med	Low
Elementary Schools						
Reenroll (%)	84.8	84.1	84.0	1.9	-0.4	0.7
Self-eff (%)	54.8	56.9	56.2	-	-	-
Self-man (%)	62.5	64.7	61.1	-	-	-
Soc Aw (%)	65.8	66.8	63.3	-	-	-
Sup Rel (%)	83.3	84.2	82.6	-	-	-
Stu Exp (%)	82.8	79.9	73.6	-	-	-
Middle Schools						
Reenroll (%)	89.1	89.7	85.4	-	3.1	2.4
Self-eff (%)	57.2	49.3	49.6	-	-	-
Self-man (%)	76.2	70.1	67.1	-	-	-
Soc Aw (%)	66.6	62.4	59.5	-	-	-
Sup Rel (%)	81.3	79.0	78.3	-	-	-
Stu Exp (%)	74.0	71.1	71.0	-	-	-
High Schools						
Reenroll (%)	89.4	87.0	N/A	-	2.9	-
Self-eff (%)	37.0	37.5	N/A	-	-	-
Self-man (%)	72.0	71.8	N/A	-	-	-
Soc Aw (%)	63.0	62.6	N/A	-	-	-
Sup Rel (%)	78.0	78.0	N/A	-	-	-
Stu Exp (%)	77.0	74.2	74.6	-	-	-

Source: PEIMS demographic data: 10/26/18 (2018-19), 10/31/19 (2019-20), and 10/30/20 (2020-21). Reenrollment data: 10/31/19 (2018-19 to 2019-20) and 11/02/20 (2019-20 to 2020-21). SEL Survey data: 11/16/20 (2020-21). Student Experience Survey data: 07/12/21 (2020-21).

Note: * Change in reenrollment is from 2018-19 to 2019-20 and 2019-20 to 2020-21. Med = medium. Reenroll = reenrollment year over year. % = percentage points. Eff = efficacy. Man = management. Soc Aw = social awareness. Sup Rel = supportive relationships. - = no prior measure was available for change calculations.

How did 2020-21 campus staff member outcome data vary by SEL implementation Level?

Readers should not attribute causation based upon the results presented in this section. All results are descriptive and have not been experimentally examined. Additionally, the number of campuses within groups widely varied; thus, readers should use caution when comparing among groupings. Finally, variation because of the continued

¹² In 2020-21, an OST rubric was developed for PSEL campuses participating in OST work; because of the small number of campuses involved, those data were not reported.

¹³ Cronbach, 1951; 0.70 is considered acceptable, 0.80 is considered good, and 0.90 or higher is considered excellent. Only campuses implementing SEL were included in analyses.

¹⁴ Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) demographic data files dated 10/26/18 (2018-19) and 10/30/20 (2020-21). Approaches+ = Approaches Grade Level or Above. Meets+ = Meets Grade Level or Above. STAAR data files dated 09/11/19 (2018-19) and 06/28/21 (2020-21). STAAR EOC data files dated 08/27/19 (2018-19) and 06/17/21 (2020-21). MAP data file dated 06/23/21 (2020-21).

impacts from COVID-19 cannot be accounted for; therefore, results should be viewed with additional caution.

Some support was found for a possible SEL advantage for campus staff members. High and medium SEL implementation campuses outperformed low implementation campuses on several of the measured 2020-21 staff member outcomes, especially at the high school level (Table 2). Some changes over time also showed greater increases over two years for medium implementation campuses at the middle and high school levels compared to low implementation campuses.

Table 2: 2020-21 Campus Staff Member Outcomes by SEL Implementation Level

Outcome	2020-21			2-Year Change*		
	High	Med	Low	High	Med	Low
Elementary Schools						
Retention (%)	87.6	90.1	88.1	0.8	5.2	5.1
Absen (Days)	12.1	15.6	13.4	-1.3	2.8	1.2
Clim PCE (%)	78.6	75.0	77.2	3.6	2.3	7.4
Clim TTT (%)	75.5	82.6	85.6	-8.6	0.3	8.4
Clim TPT (%)	81.9	76.7	92.9	0.1	0.4	23.5
Middle Schools						
Retention (%)	77.0	84.5	78.9	-	7.7	4.5
Absen (Days)	18.5	17.5	15.0	-	1.8	-2.7
Clim PCE (%)	59.7	62.2	58.2	-	6.1	8.6
Clim TTT (%)	78.7	70.4	66.3	-	-0.6	7.7
Clim TPT (%)	56.2	61.8	57.5	-	-0.4	-5.0
High Schools						
Retention (%)	91.5	86.8	-	-	2.8	-
Absen (Days)	25.1	15.5	17.7	-	-1.2	-5.9
Clim PCE (%)	95.3	64.0	58.8	-	14.3	-4.6
Clim TTT (%)	85.0	74.1	72.1	-	9.1	-8.9
Clim TPT (%)	100.0	68.5	52.5	-	9.0	-31.7

Source: Retention: 12/19/19 (2018-19 to 2019-20) and 10/13/20 (2019-20 to 2020-21). Absences: 06/13/19 (2018-19) and 06/21/21 (2020-21). Climate Survey: 06/03/19 (spring 2019) and 07/23/21 (spring 2021).

Note: * Change in retention is from 2018-19 to 2019-20 and 2019-20 to 2020-21. All other changes are from 2018-19 to 2020-21. Med = medium. Retention = returning to teach year over year. Absen = absences. % = percentage points. Clim = climate survey. PCE = Positive Culture and Environment. TTT = Teacher-Teacher Trust. TPT = Teacher-Principal Trust.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Continue to provide support to schools as students return to in-person learning. As students return to campuses in-person full-time for 2021-22, it is important that the department continue to support campuses with SEL implementation so that campus staff members and students can grow in their SEL skills and be successful.

Work to improve self-efficacy in students across campus levels. Self-efficacy was consistently the lowest competency on the SEL Student Survey (range: 37% high implementation high schools to 57% medium implementation elementary schools and high implementation middle schools). SEL department staff members should support teachers in improving the self-efficacy of their students.

Ensure consistent implementation by campus support level. There was shifting of campuses within support levels during 2020-21. There was also inconsistency in elements of programmatic implementation (e.g. only half of campuses having steering committees). The department should work to ensure that campuses are classified appropriately into support levels and receive/implement the elements required for each level of support.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY¹

The Dallas Independent School District (ISD) hired Collier Educational Consulting to conduct an audit of the district special education (SPED) program in 2017. A key finding of the culminating report was that English learners (ELs) who were dually-identified as receiving SPED services (ELSPED) required additional, targeted supports. The report further highlighted the need to improve student identification and service provision for ELSPED students. Thus, the Bilingual/English as a Second Language (BE/ESL) Department began collaborating with the Reading/Language Arts, Social Studies, and SPED Departments at the end of the 2017-18 school year to provide services for district ELSPED students. The purpose of this collaboration was to 1) develop and support embedded ELSPED differentiation for all learners in the general education curriculum; 2) facilitate collaboration among campus-based educators, administrators, parents, and ELSPED specialists; 3) assist campuses in planning and implementing services for ELSPED students at all grade levels; and 4) create and conduct professional development. For the full evaluation of programs serving ELSPED students and detailed methodology, see the full report (Voss, 2021).

The ELSPED program aimed to support and assist ELSPED students and their teachers.² Twenty-one ELSPED instructional specialists assisted campuses to plan and implement services designed to meet the needs of ELSPED students at all grade levels. They also created and conducted professional development opportunities for teachers, administrators, and other campus-based staff members throughout the district. Because EL and SPED services are not mutually exclusive, improving student identification and providing services and targeted support to ELSPED students continued to be an important focus for the district in 2020-21.

In 2020-21, 22 campuses³ were targeted for extra ELSPED support because 1) they enrolled high numbers of ELSPED students or 2) they showed high achievement gaps in 2019 *State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness* (STAAR) outcomes for ELSPED students compared to students in general education or to students in special education who were not ELs (NonEL SPED). To meet the linguistic and special education needs of ELSPED students at the 22 campuses, Title I funds were used to support

multi-departmental leadership and provide instructional specialists at these campuses.

Dallas ISD delayed the start of the 2020-21 school year until September 8, 2020 and implemented at-home learning districtwide for the first four weeks. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Dallas ISD transitioned students to at-home learning on March 23 following spring break (March 16 – 20) until the end of the 2019-20 school year. On October 22, 2020, the district announced that campuses would provide in-person and virtual learning throughout the rest of the school year, and parents could choose whether their children participated in in-person or virtual instruction. In-person and virtual instruction included both synchronous and asynchronous learning activities.

The purpose of this report was to provide data for campus, program, and district stakeholders to determine the effectiveness of the ELSPED program in meeting the needs of ELSPED students in the Dallas ISD. The budget for the 2020-21 ELSPED program was \$1,778,308 from Title I funds, an increase of \$489,226 from 2019-20.⁴

EVALUATION QUESTIONS/OUTCOMES

What were the characteristics of 2020-21 ELSPED students?

Of the 67,206 ELs and 13,772 SPED students in the Dallas ISD, 5,435 (8% of ELs; 39% of SPED) were dually-identified as ELSPED in 2020-21, accounting for almost four percent of all district students ($N = 145,386$). In general, the distribution of students in most grades was comparable across all EL and SPED classifications. The percentage of ELSPED students by grade level gradually increased from prekindergarten (PK; 1%) to Grade 5 (11%) and then gradually decreased to Grade 12 (5%). Overall, the number of ELSPED (+6%) and NonEL SPED (+8%) students increased over the last two years, the number of all SPED students remained relatively consistent, and the number of ELs and the district overall decreased over two years. Student characteristics for ELSPED students were generally comparable to SPED students overall and to NonEL SPED students with respect to sex (67% male) and comparable to ELs with respect to race/ethnicity (mostly Hispanic). In addition, the highest percentage of district ELSPED students was enrolled in the Northwest network

¹ This executive summary was adapted from Barton and Voss (2020b).

² For the evaluation of programs for district ELs and SPED students, see Voss and Kim (2021) and Meján (2021), respectively.

³ For a complete list of ELSPED supported campuses, see Appendix A of the full report (Voss, 2021).

⁴ Provided by program staff members on 04/05/21. Special Revenue Funds Management also provided the budget amount as of 02/28/21; Title I funds were reported as \$1,927,104.

(24%), and the lowest percentages were enrolled at Early Learning and magnet campuses (<1% for both).

What were stakeholder perceptions regarding ELSPED services and training in 2020-21?

Title III ELSPED Survey

Of the 64 staff members emailed an invitation to complete the survey, 29 (45%) completed at least part of the survey. Because a small number of Campus Instructional Coaches (CICs; $n = 1$) and administrators ($n = 0$) completed the survey, the results for all groups were aggregated in this section. Because of the low survey response rate, survey results are provided for informational purposes and should be reviewed with caution.

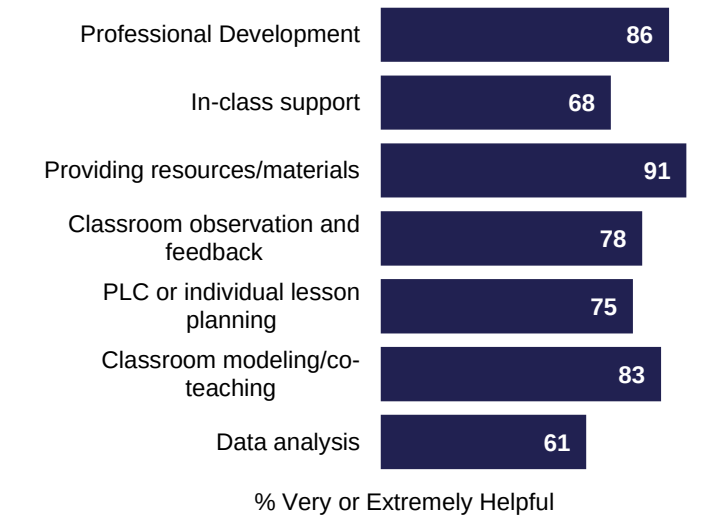
Most survey respondents reported that they participated in professional development that addressed the needs of ELSPED students (76%), and they had favorable views regarding the collaboration of the Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC) and Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) committees. Specifically, 56 percent of respondents rated LPAC and ARD collaboration as a high or very high priority on their campuses. Most respondents also reported that the LPAC and ARD committees collaborated frequently or very frequently (72%), were at least moderately effective at collaborating (73%), and were at least moderately important for student success (80%).

In addition, most (86%) survey respondents reported that they worked with the ELSPED instructional specialists at least once. The highest rate of respondents (40%) reported that they worked with the specialist more than 10 times. Regarding the supports that ELSPED specialists provided in 2020-21, survey respondents most frequently reported that ELSPED specialists provided resources/materials (68%) and Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) or individual lesson planning (63%).

Most survey respondents who worked with an ELSPED specialist rated the supports they received as very or extremely helpful (range: 61% to 91%; Figure 1). The BE/ESL Department also set a goal to have 40 percent of teachers and CICs and 60 percent of administrators rating the aggregated helpfulness of supports provided by the ELSPED specialists as very or extremely helpful. Overall, teachers and CICs met the department's goal (78%), whereas the administrator goal could not be assessed as no administrators completed the survey.

Figure 1: 2020-21 Title III ELSPED Survey – Helpfulness of Supports from ELSPED Instructional Specialists

Rate how helpful each of the following supports were from your ELSPED Instructional Specialist(s) in 2020-21.



Source: 2020-21 Title III ELSPED Survey, administered spring 2021.
Note: Rates do not include results for respondents who responded that they did not work with an ELSPED Instructional Specialist. For Ns and detailed survey response rates by question, see Appendix C in the full report. PLC = Professional Learning Community.

One-on-one professional development (95%) and campus-wide professional development (94%) were the highest rated professional development opportunities, followed by PLCs (74%). In addition, most respondents reported that supplies and resources for classroom implementation (67%) and online resources (e.g., Ellevation, Rosetta Stone, Duolingo, Imagine Learning; 67%) were very or extremely helpful resources for impacting student achievement.

What professional development opportunities were provided for campuses about the needs of ELSPED students?

While the number of professional development session types and attendance varied, the districtwide (as opposed to campus-based) sessions accounted for the most sessions ($n = 19$) and the largest number of attendees ($n = 332$) in 2020-21.

What were the assessment outcomes for ELSPED students in 2020-21?

The BE/ESL Department aimed to reach two primary goals for 2020-21. The first goal was to not see an increase in the percentage of ELSPED students who regressed on their *Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS)* composite from 2021 as compared to the percentage of ELSPED students that regressed from 2019.⁵

⁵ 2019 level movement data include students who earned a *TELPAS* proficiency rating in both 2018 and 2019. 2021 level movement data

include students who earned a *TELPAS* proficiency rating in both 2020 and 2021.

The second goal was to at least maintain the percentage of ELSPED students meeting the Approaches Grade Level or Above (Approaches+) performance standard on STAAR in 2021 as compared to the rate of ELSPED students meeting Approaches+ in 2019.

TELPAS and TELPAS-Alternate (TELPAS-Alt)

2021 TELPAS composite ratings for ELSPED students at all grade levels tended to cluster in the intermediate level of English proficiency, and 59 to 70 percent of ELSPED students who took the TELPAS in 2020 and 2021 remained at the same proficiency level. 2021 ELSPED students overall exceeded the BE/ESL Department goal to at least maintain the percentage of students who regressed on TELPAS composite from 2019 to 2021 (regression rates decreased by 5%). Generally, two-year trends varied.

Overall, 593 ELSPED students took the TELPAS-Alt in 2021. Twenty-three percent of students earned the highest proficiency rating (basic fluency) on the 2021 TELPAS-Alt districtwide, a four-percentage-point increase over two years. Proficiency rating movement patterns for TELPAS-Alt were relatively similar across the elementary, middle, and high school levels for 2021 ELSPED students, with over 40 percent of students progressing to a higher proficiency level and about a third remaining at the same proficiency level.

Measures of Academic Progress (MAP)

Beginning-of-year (BOY) to end-of-year (EOY) mathematics MAP growth quintile rates of ELSPED students clustered in either the Low (up to the 20th percentile) quintile (range: 18%, grades 2 to 5, Spanish to 35%, grades 2 to 5, English) or the High (80th percentile and above) quintile (range: 23%, grades 2 to 5, English to 64%, grades 2 to 5, Spanish). BOY to EOY reading MAP growth quintile rates of ELSPED students clustered in the Low quintile (range: 32%, grade 1, English to 55%, grades 6 to 8, English). Overall, for both mathematics and reading, ELSPED quintile rates tended to be closer to rates for NonEL SPED students and SPED students overall than they were to those for ELs overall.

STAAR/End-Of-Course (EOCs) and STAAR Alt 2

Fewer students tested in 2021 than in 2019 as a result of lingering impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic; results and comparisons should be reviewed with caution.

STAAR. 2021 rates of grade three to five and grades six to eight ELSPED students scoring at the Approaches+ performance standard across subjects and grade levels were consistently among the lowest of all groups examined; percentages ranged from 28 (grades six to eight reading) to 44 (grades three to five mathematics) percent. For both grade level groupings, ELSPED student rates tended to be closer to rates for NonEL SPED students and SPED students overall than they were to those for ELs overall.

EOC. Rates of ELSPED students scoring at the Approaches+ performance standard across subjects on EOCs were generally among the lowest of all groups examined, ranged from 20 (English I) to 49 (Algebra I) percent, and tended to be closer to rates for NonEL SPED students and SPED students overall than they were to those for ELs overall.

STAAR and EOC Alt 2. In 2021, 11 to 17 percent of students who took STAAR subtests and 11 to 15 percent of students who took EOCs were administered the *Alternate 2* version. Rates of students at the Approaches+ performance standard on the *Alternate 2* version were higher than for the standard version on all tests and ranged from 86 to 100 percent.

How did Dallas ISD outcomes for ELSPED students compare to other Texas large, urban districts and the state on select TEA accountability measures in 2020-21?

District rates of ELSPED students performing at the higher English proficiency levels on the 2021 TELPAS were generally comparable to or lower than state and other Texas large, urban district rates.

District performance level rates of ELSPED students on TELPAS-Alt, STAAR, and EOCs were generally comparable to or higher than state and other Texas large, urban district rates, with some exceptions. STAAR and EOC *Alternate 2* comparisons were mixed

RECOMMENDATIONS

Continue efforts to increase awareness of ELSPED identification and policies. Twenty-four percent of survey respondents reported that they did not participate in professional development that addressed the needs of ELSPED students. Program leadership should continue efforts to increase districtwide awareness of ELSPED policies and practices.

Continue using ELSPED specialists in their current roles. Most survey respondents expressed positive views regarding the professional development opportunities, support, and resources that they received from ELSPED specialists. Thus, ELSPED specialists should continue to assist campuses with meeting the needs of ELSPED students.

Continue efforts to improve the percentage of ELSPED students earning the highest English proficiency ratings. While the rates of ELSPED students who progressed at least one TELPAS proficiency level increased from 2020 to 2021, district rates of ELSPED students performing at the higher English proficiency levels on the TELPAS were generally comparable to or lower than the state and other large urban Texas districts. BE/ESL program staff members should continue their efforts to

improve the rates of students progressing at least one level a year to narrow the gap with statewide results at the highest English proficiency levels.

Bolster efforts to improve assessment ratings of ELSPED students. Compared to other classifications of students, rates of ELSPED students were generally among the lowest of all groups examined on *MAP*, *STAAR Approaches+*, and *EOCs*. BE/ESL program staff members should continue their efforts to improve the assessment ratings of ELSPED students to narrow the gap between ELSPED students and other classifications of students.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) professional development (PD) and PD instructional coordinators program is to provide training to mathematics, science, and wellness teachers, instructional coordinators, and principals on content and instructional practices that will support all students' access to high-quality instruction. The STEM PD and PD Instructional coordinators program aims to provide high-quality, personalized professional development trainings, and to improve mathematics and science content knowledge of teachers, instructional leadership teams, and principals.

The program sought to improve the knowledge of teachers, instructional leadership teams, and principals regarding effective instructional practices that address the needs of students with different learning styles within a mathematics or science classroom, particularly for students with disabilities and students with special needs. Program goals include: 1) increasing student achievement consistent with the challenging state academic standards; 2) improving the quality and effectiveness of teachers, principals and other school leaders; 3) increasing the number of teachers, principals and other school leaders who are effective in improving student academic achievement in schools; and 4) providing low-income and minority students greater access to effective teachers, principals and school leaders. In 2020-21, the STEM PD and PD instructional coordinators program received \$782,317.00 through Title II funding. Measurable program goals for the STEM PD and PD instructional coordinators program in 2020-21 were as follows:

- Two STEM PD sessions will be held during the fall and spring semesters of the 2020-21 school year, and
- STEM PD sessions will cover two-thirds of comprehensive campuses in the district.

On March 13, 2020, in alignment with federal recommendations, the Governor of Texas issued a disaster proclamation certifying that the novel coronavirus COVID-19 posed an imminent threat of disaster for all counties in the state of Texas. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Dallas ISD transitioned students to at-home learning on March 23 following spring break (March 16 – 20) until the end of the 2019-20 school year. To help district students and families access the internet during at-home learning, the Dallas ISD launched "Operation Connectivity" in May 2020, which provided 23,000 hotspots to families by October 2020. In 2020-21, Dallas ISD delayed the start of

the 2020-21 school year until September 8, 2020 and implemented at-home learning districtwide for the first four weeks. The district also modified the school calendar from a six-week schedule to a nine-week schedule. On October 22, 2020, the district announced that campuses would provide in-person and virtual learning throughout the rest of the school year, and parents could choose whether their children participated in in-person or virtual instruction. In-person and virtual instruction included both synchronous and asynchronous learning activities. The district also continued to implement the Center for Disease Control (CDC) as well as state and local COVID safety protocols.

PURPOSE AND METHOD

The purpose of this evaluation was to provide an overview of the program's context and process, as well as assess progress towards program goals during the 2020-21 school year¹.

Data on program budget were obtained from program funding workscope. Data on program participants, training sessions, and other program activities were obtained from program managers. Participant data received on 04/12/21 were merged with the district personnel data file dated 04/29/21. Perceptual data were obtained from an evaluator-designed survey administered in late spring. Frequency and crosstab analyses were computed. Open-ended responses were analyzed qualitatively for common themes and patterns.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS/OUTCOMES

What were the characteristics of the STEM PD participants and PD instructional coordinators?

A total of 1,039 mathematics and science teachers, instructional coordinators, and administrators participated in the STEM PD program in 2020-21. Overall, mathematics and science teachers ($n=857$) comprised the largest group (82.5%). Instructional coaches and administrators accounted for 16.2 percent ($n=168$). Of the STEM PD participants, 72.6 percent were female, 36.9 percent were African American, and 35.1 percent were Hispanic. More than twenty-nine percent held a master's-level degree or higher. Over 57 percent had between one to 10 years of experience within the district, and 33.4 percent had 11 or more years of experience within the district (Table 1).

¹ 2020-21 was the first year the STEM PD and PD instructional coordinators program was evaluated.

Table 1: 2020-21 STEM PD Participant Characteristics

	<i>n</i>	%
Job Category		
Mathematics/science teachers	857	82.5
Instructional coaches	87	8.4
Administrators	81	7.8
Other	14	1.3
Gender		
Female	754	72.6
Male	285	27.4
Ethnicity		
African American	383	36.9
Hispanic	365	35.1
White	228	21.9
Asian	49	4.7
Other	14	1.4
Education Level		
Bachelor's	632	60.8
Master's	287	27.6
Doctorate	20	1.9
Other	100	9.6
Years of Local Experience		
<1 year	97	9.3
1-5 years	389	37.4
6-10 year	206	19.8
11-20 years	244	23.5
21+ years	103	9.9

Source: Program participant data received on 04/12/21. District personnel data file dated 04/29/21.

Note: N=1,039. "Other" in job category includes teacher assistants (n=7), librarians (n=4), counselors (n=2), and a substitute teacher (n=1). Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

To what extent did the program meet outlined goals?

The program goal to hold two STEM PD sessions in 2020-21 was met. The STEM PD science and wellness division provided a total of 66 training sessions to elementary, middle, and high school teachers; instructional coordinators; and principals from August 17, 2020 through May 26, 2021. The training sessions included districtwide curriculum and resources, six-week at-a-glance content professional learning sessions (SWAGs), new teacher academy, and online self-paced courses (Table 2).

The STEM PD science and wellness sessions focused on: 1) locating digital/virtual science curriculum resources on PowerSchool Learning (LMS)², reviewing curriculum resources for use in a synchronous or asynchronous virtual learning environment; 2) learning on connecting science standards to phenomenon, and examining how this interdisciplinary approach was specific, observable, and related to real-world events; and 3) modeling and teaching proper safety procedures and practices as well as planning, implementing, and supervising appropriate science activities. Additionally, the new teacher academy training

session focused on introducing teachers to the science Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS).

Table 2: 2020-21 STEM PD Science and Wellness Sessions and Attendance

Description	Session	Participant
Elementary School		
Curriculum and Resources	6	87
SWAG (3rd-6th Six Weeks)	4	115
Out Teach: Anchoring Instruction in Outdoor Phenomena	4	28
Elementary Digital Cut Ups	1	21
Dallas Arboretum: Our Planet & Beyond	4	21
All Elementary Schools	19	272
Middle School		
Curriculum and Resources	6	77
SWAG (3rd-6th Six Weeks)	4	36
Elementary Digital Cut Ups	1	14
Dallas Arboretum: Our Planet & Beyond	4	17
All Middle Schools	15	144
High School		
Curriculum and Resources	12	101
SWAG (3rd-6th Six Weeks)	4	38
PASCO Biology Virtual Workshop	2	21
All High Schools	18	160
New Teacher Academy 2020		
Elementary Science & Wellness	1	5
Middle Science & Wellness	1	28
High School Science and Wellness	2	26
All New Teacher Academy	4	59
Online Self-Paced Course in Cornerstone		
Elementary/middle/high school	10	97
Total	66	732

Source: STEM PD program data 05/25/21.

Note: SWAG=six-week at-a-glance content professional learning.

PASCO=an approved vendor for Science PD.

The STEM PD mathematics division provided a total of 34 sessions to elementary, middle, and high school teachers; instructional coordinators; and principals from August 25, 2020 through April 27, 2021. The training sessions included: six-week at-a-glance content professional learning sessions (SWAGs), STAAR Academy, STAAR EOC Academy, new teacher academy, equity in mathematics & social justice, and online self-paced module (Table 3).

² PowerSchool Learning Management System (LMS) is a platform where science teachers find teacher guides and teacher resources for science teaching.

Table 3: 2020-21 STEM PD Mathematics Sessions and Attendance

Description	Session	Participant
Elementary School		
SWAG (4 th & 5 th Six Weeks)	2	48
STAAR Academy	4	176
Touring around the digital tools	1	87
All Elementary Schools	7	311
Middle School		
SWAG (2nd-6th Six Weeks)	5	130
STAAR Academy	3	49
Touring around the digital tools	1	87
Data analysis and curriculum talks	2	61
All Middle Schools	11	327
High School		
SWAG (4 th & 5 th Six Weeks)	2	8
STAAR EOC Academy	2	10
All High Schools	4	18
New Teacher Academy 2020		
Elementary/middle/high school	3	60
Equity in Mathematics & Social Justice		
Elementary/middle/high school	3	197
Online Self-Paced Module		
Elementary/middle/high school	6	40
Total	34	953

Source: STEM PD program data 05/26/21.

Note: SWAG=six-week at-a-glance content professional learning.
STAAR=The State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness.
EOC=End of Course.

The program goal to provide PD sessions to two-thirds of comprehensive campuses in the district was met in 2020-21. Mathematics teachers, science teachers, instructional coordinators, and principals from 186 out of 189 district comprehensive schools (98.4%) participated in the training sessions during the school year.

What were the participants' perceptions about STEM PD training sessions?

A STEM PD training survey was developed to solicit participants' feedback about the quality and usefulness of training sessions. The survey included 11 close-ended questions and three open-ended questions and was hosted on Qualtrics (an online survey platform) from April 19 through May 17, 2021. The survey used a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from "Strongly Agree" to "Strongly Disagree".

Out of 1,039 STEM PD participants who were invited to complete the survey, 230 (22%) completed the online survey. Mathematics and science teachers comprised the largest group ($n=181$), followed by instructional lead coaches and campus instructional coaches ($n=26$), and administrators ($n=11$) (Table 4). Due to the less than optimal response rate, the reader should be cautious about generalizing survey results.

Table 4: 2020-21 STEM PD Survey Participant Characteristics

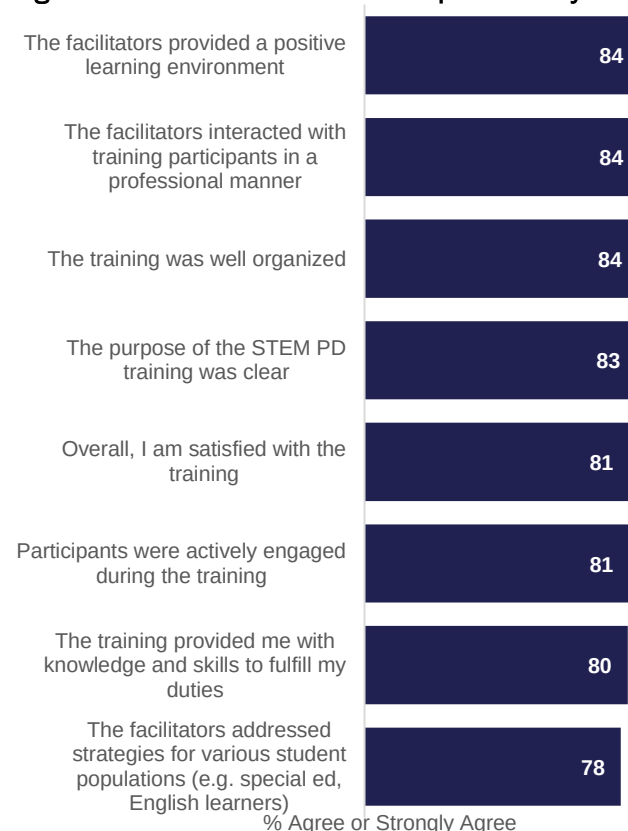
Job Category	<i>n</i>	%
Teacher	181	78.7
Campus Instructional Coach	9	3.9
Instructional Lead Coach	17	7.4
Administrator	11	4.8
Librarian	1	0.4
Other	11	4.8
Total	230	100

Source: STEM PD survey data 05/17/21.

Note: $N=230$.

Respondents "strongly agreed" or "agreed" that facilitators provided a positive learning environment (84%) and interacted with training participants in a professional manner (84%). Respondents also agreed or strongly agreed that the training was well organized (84%), the purpose of the training was clear (83%), and the training provided knowledge and skills to fulfill teachers' duties (80%). However, only 78 percent respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the training addressed strategies for various student populations such as special education and English learners (Figure 1).

Figure 1: 2020-21 STEM PD Participant Survey Results



Source: STEM PD survey file, 05/17/21.

Note: $N=230$.

Participating in virtual PD training sessions during the pandemic could be challenging in many ways. The first open-ended question asked about challenges STEM PD

participants encountered during this time. Participants (total respondents=49) listed several challenges including adjusting to virtual platform ($n=14$), scheduling conflicts with their daily duties ($n=8$), and lack of resources ($n=3$).

Another open-ended question asked STEM PD participants what they like best about the PD training. Survey participants (total respondents=88) indicated they enjoyed presenters' professionalism and knowledge ($n=20$), the fresh and innovative ideas the training provided ($n=17$), active engagement with peers and facilitators ($n=15$), resources provided for teaching ($n=13$), and the entire training sessions ($n=10$). When asked what suggestions they would like to make for future trainings, STEM PD participants (total respondents=54) indicated that they would like to see more options for PD training ($n=8$), continuation of virtual trainings ($n=7$), more PD training sessions throughout the year ($n=6$), and in-person training in the future ($n=5$).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Examine PD content to ensure participants receive training on strategies to address the needs of all student populations in the district. Survey results showed that one of the survey items, "The facilitators addressed strategies for various student populations (e.g. special ed. English learners)," received the lowest positive perception score (78%) in the survey. The STEM department should make sure school staff receive adequate training that addresses the unique needs of all students in the district.

Update STEM PD contact files on an ongoing basis. STEM PD survey invites were sent to all PD participants. However, some teachers indicated the survey was not applicable to them or they never participated in any PD sessions from fall 2020 through spring 2021. STEM PD managers should ensure teacher contact information is updated throughout the school year to improve information accuracy.

EA21-621-4

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report was to provide context and process evaluation information related to three federally funded Dallas Independent School District (Dallas ISD) Human Capital Management (HCM) programs: Teacher Residency Program, Teacher Recruitment and Retention, and Dallas ISD Alternative Certification program. The Teacher Residency program was funded through Title I, Part A at \$2,593,174, an increase of \$88,525 from 2019-20's budget of \$2,504,649 (Watson, 2020). The amount of Title II, Part A funding the district budgeted for Teacher Recruitment and Retention in 2020-21 was \$2,122,147, an increase of \$300,000 from 2019-20's budget of \$1,822,147 (Watson, 2020). Alternative Certification was budgeted \$794,774 of Title II funding in 2020-21. This figure was unchanged from 2019 20 (Watson, 2020).

The focus of the 2020-21 evaluation was to determine the level of implementation of the grant-funded programs and to examine participant perceptions of the programs, as applicable. Data for this report were obtained from interviews with program staff members assigned to each grant component, a review of internal documents, and analyses of available survey data.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS/OUTCOMES

How was the Teacher Residency program implemented?

Context of the Program

The primary purpose of the Teacher Residency Program was to increase student achievement by improving teacher and student support at campuses with the highest need. Resident Teachers provided a range of services to schools and students by providing co-teaching assistance, small group instruction, substitute teaching, help with formative assessments and diagnosis of student needs, along with support for classroom management.

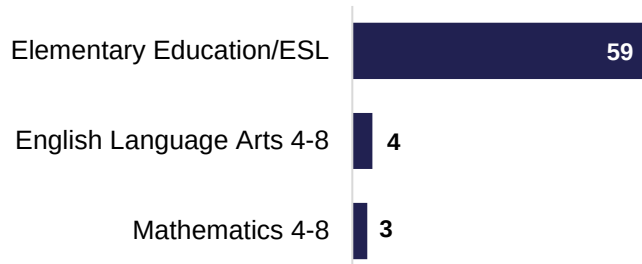
Throughout the school year, a persistent need exists in Dallas ISD for certified teachers in critical shortage areas, especially at high needs campuses. Specifically, vacancies are highest in the areas of elementary bilingual, secondary mathematics and science, and special education and English as a second language (ESL) at all levels. More pipelines are needed to help address this need and bring more teachers into the district. Resident Teachers are hired from Relay Graduate School of Education and serve in co-teaching roles in classrooms on high-needs campuses until they graduate and become full-time teachers of record. The goal is for resident teachers to complete all training on

one campus so that they can transition into a teacher role at the same campus where they were trained. The expectation is that this will help improve student outcomes because they are trained to meet the needs of their assigned campus.

2020-21 Resident Teachers

By August 2020, HCM hired 66 resident teachers to serve in critical shortage roles (bilingual, mathematics, science, Special Education, and ESL) (Figure 1). The departmental goal was to transition 90 percent of resident teachers into full-time teaching roles in high-needs campuses by August of 2021. These data will be available in Fall 2021.

Figure 1: 2020-21 Number of Resident Teachers by Role



Number of Resident Teachers (N = 66)

Source: Human Capital Management internal records retrieved 04/23/21.

Going back a year to the 46 2019-20 resident teachers, 89 percent ($n = 41$) were hired for the 2020-21 school year as full-time teachers of record in Dallas ISD. The departmental goal was 90 percent. This rate was unchanged from the previous year, as 89 percent ($n = 24$) of the 27 2018-19 resident teachers were hired for the 2019-20 school year as full-time teachers of record (Watson 2020).

Response to Impact of COVID-19

Throughout the academic year, resident teachers continued to support campuses' implementation of at home and in person learning. Teacher training activities and meetings continued as in previous years, through virtual learning platforms.

How was the Teacher Recruitment and Retention program implemented?

Context of the Program

HCM staff members were responsible for recruiting and screening highly qualified teachers to meet the state certification and federal legislative requirements. HCM's Campus Staffing Team routinely recorded resignations in

Oracle, which notified HCM's Talent Acquisition Team¹ of openings that needed to be filled. The Talent Acquisition Team was responsible for using the information to connect candidates with campus principals.

HCM staff members attended 90 recruitment events and visits between September 2020 and May 2021 (66 during the 2019-20 year) (Watson, 2020), including university job fairs, the Association of Latino Professionals for America (ALPFA) Dallas Chapter, National Association for Bilingual Education (NABE), and virtual international recruitment visits with Spain and Mexico. The department participated in 69 virtual job events. The department continued an initiative expanding the use of early contracts to attract and retain the most qualified candidates. As of May 1, 2021, HCM had issued 97 early contracts to applicants for teaching positions in the 2021-22 school year. This was a decrease of 50 from the 147 issued in 2020-21 (Watson 2020).

The hiring process consisted of two components. The first component was the application process, which took place prior to a principal recommendation. The second component of the hiring process was the hiring and onboarding occurring after principal recommendation. The HCM Campus Staffing Team managed the hiring process, ensuring that all candidates met district and state policies.

2020-21 Teachers Recruited and Retained

As of May 2021, HCM employees hired 2,287 new teachers.² The total number of new 2019-20 hires as of May 2020 was 1,760 (Watson, 2020). The total number of new 2018-19 hires as of May 2019 was 1,936 (Watson, 2019).

To recruit and retain international talent for critical-needs areas, in 2020-21, the district processed 332 new H1-B visas in addition to extending existing visas. This was an increase of 39 visas over the 293 processed in 2019-20 (Watson 2020). HCM offered a permanent residence process, known as "PERM," to help teachers qualify to begin the permanent residence process and potentially provide sponsorship.³ HCM accepted 26 candidates to PERM in 2020-21, joining the 31 PERM candidates in 2019-20 and 31 candidates added in 2018-19.

For a seventh year, HCM partnered with the TechTeach Program, a Texas Tech University initiative⁴ that requires students to student-teach a full year, rather than a semester, before graduating. TechTeach participants student-teach four days a week and, then come together at a central Dallas facility to take classes together as a cohort for the

remaining weekday each week. Courses are available online, supplementing the in-person classes⁵ led by Texas Tech faculty; this allows students to simultaneously complete courses and student-teach throughout the year. Dallas ISD's partnership enables TechTeach participants in the Dallas Fort Worth (DFW) area to student-teach in Dallas ISD. Currently, all participants are bilingual candidates, creating a beneficial pipeline for one of the district's greatest needs. Currently, 16 district teachers were hired as TechTeach alumni.

Response to Impact of COVID-19

The Teacher Recruitment and Retention team continued to increase the applicant pool and provide principals with highly effective teachers by attending and creating virtual recruitment events. From holding virtual job fairs to facilitate principals interviewing applicants to holding virtual interviews, HCM maintained this crucial function to ensure preparedness for the school year despite travel constraints.

How was the Dallas ISD Alternative Certification program implemented?

Context of the Program

In 2020-21, Alternative Certification staff members used Title II funds to supplement the recruitment, screening, and training efforts of the program. Alternative Certification staff members first screened intern candidate applications for program eligibility. If accepted into the application pool, candidates were granted a phone interview. Upon passing the phone interview, candidates were invited to an on-site interview, which included a group interview and a one-on-one interview with an Alternative Certification staff member. The final pool of candidates attended a seven-week pre-service training program prior to program acceptance.

During the pre-service program, Alternative Certification staff members trained on teaching techniques and best practices; interns received field experience in classrooms. A new policy required interns to pass a content examination in the certification area before teaching in the program. After pre-service training, interns were assigned to a campus, a mentor, and a teacher effectiveness coordinator. Mentor teachers were required to observe and provide continual feedback. Teacher effectiveness coordinators observed interns at least three times during the year. During observations, coordinators provided support and immediate feedback to allow interns to monitor progress and adjust their teaching practices.

¹ HCM's Talent Acquisition Team consisted of one student teacher coordinator, one data coordinator, seven recruitment coordinators, and the Talent Team Leader. Recruitment coordinators were primarily responsible for specific recruitment activities, such as marketing or special events.

² The data were collected in May 2020. This number only includes teachers new to the district. That is, it does not include internal transfers, in which a teacher moved from one campus to fill a vacancy at another campus.

³ To qualify, teachers must have a standard Texas teacher certification, at least two years of teaching experience in Dallas ISD, and be rated Proficient I or higher under the Teacher Excellence Initiative (TEI). Once selected, the district continued to pursue the teacher's permanent residence process if legal avenues were available.

⁴ More information about the TechTeach Program can be found in this Texas Tech article: <http://today.ttu.edu/2013/10/innovative-techteach-program-aims-to-better-prepare-teaching-candidates>.

⁵ In-person classes shifted to virtual instruction in March 2020.

Interns were fully certified as teachers after passing the *Assessment of Classroom Effectiveness (ACE)* and committee approval. The committee reviewed principal and mentor teacher recommendations and decided whether an intern should become certified, stay in the program for one more year, or be denied certification.

2020-21 Alternative Certification Interns

A total of 127 interns enrolled in the Alternative Certification program between summer 2020 and spring 2021 (see Table 1). For comparison, 134 interns enrolled between summer 2019 and spring 2020 (Watson, 2020). A total of 93 interns enrolled between summer 2018 and spring 2019 (Watson, 2019).

Table 1: 2020-21 Enrolled Interns by Certification Area

Certification Area	Interns N
Core Subjects Early Childhood-6 & Science of Teaching Reading (STR)	52
Social Studies 7-12	20
Core Subjects Early Childhood-6 & STR with Bilingual	11
Core Subjects Early Childhood-6 & STR with English as a Second Language	11
English Language Arts and Reading 7-12 with English as a Second Language	10
Languages Other Than English: Spanish	6
Science 7-12	6
Art Early Childhood-12	4
Core Subjects Early Childhood-6/Special Ed & STR with Bilingual	3
Mathematics 7-12	2
Music Early Childhood-12	1
Social Studies 7-12 with English as a Second Language	1
Total	127

Source: Alternative Certification internal records retrieved 04/15/21.

Interns were asked to take a survey to rate their satisfaction with the Alternative Certification program and the level of support they received during their time in the program. A total of 26 interns responded to the survey. Most interns ($n = 21$; 80.8%) indicated that after their experience in the program, they felt “well prepared” for the realities of the classroom. All remaining interns ($n = 5$; 19.2%) indicated that after their experience in the program, they felt “sufficiently prepared” for the realities of the classroom.

Of those who completed the Alternative Certification program in 2019-20, 81.3 percent ($n = 26$) continued to teach in Dallas ISD during the 2020-21 school year. From the 2018-19 cohort, 66.3 percent ($n = 67$) continued to teach in Dallas ISD during the 2020-21 school year. As for those

who completed the program in 2017-18, 63.3 percent ($n = 69$) continued to teach in Dallas ISD during the 2020-21 school year.

Response to Impact of COVID-19

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Dallas ISD Alternative Certification offered a virtual test preparation platform and virtual pre-service training platform for interns. Through these virtual platforms, the Alternative Certification Teacher Program also offered Content Study Groups to teacher candidates to support them with content test and Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities exam support. The Alternative Certification Teacher Program transitioned to a virtual video-based observation platform to better support candidates in meeting field-based experience requirements. Additionally, the Dallas ISD Alternative Certification Teacher Program candidates completed over 150 hours of pre-service training via a virtual platform.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the key findings, along with the transition to remote work, the following recommendations are offered for stakeholders.

Continue utilizing remote work tools to supplement recruitment and training efforts. Departments should examine successful practices (increased efficiency, cost effectiveness, or other benefits) during the remote and hybrid work period since March 2020 and consider incorporating these practices on a more permanent basis.

Determine whether teachers hired through alternative certification programs are successful. As more Dallas ISD teachers are being hired through alternative certification programs, it will be important to ascertain that the programs are producing high-quality teachers by tracking teachers’ effectiveness through TEI or other measures.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2018-19, the Dallas Independent School District (ISD) replaced the Response to Intervention (RTI) system with the widely used Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) framework. The goal of the MTSS framework is to utilize available resources to address the academic, social, emotional, and behavioral development of all students (Carta & Young, 2019; NASP, 2009). This framework provides students with high-quality support by (a) identifying the needs of each student as early as possible, (b) designing interventions based on evidence-based practices, (c) providing appropriate instruction based on student needs, and (d) continually monitoring student progress (Carta & Young, 2019).

In Dallas ISD, MTSS program staff members provide campus personnel with procedures and guidelines for identifying students early who are struggling in the areas of academics¹, language², and/or engagement.³ Support for these students is provided in a tiered manner depending on the needs of each student. All students automatically receive Tier 1 support,⁴ which consists of core instructional curricula and programs (i.e., no intervention or special instruction is provided). Tier 1 support is the foundation for all other supports and optimizes the likelihood that all students will achieve school success. If students exhibit problems that could impact long-term success, they are placed in Tier 2, which provides additional intervention and specialized instruction. The Tier 2 interventions are directly aligned with areas identified through universal screening⁵ and are provided to students in addition to the Tier 1 support. While students who respond favorably to Tier 2 interventions are returned to Tier 1, students who do not achieve desired outcomes in Tier 2 may be moved to Tier 3. Tier 3 interventions are intended for fewer students than Tier 2 and include more intensive, frequent, and individualized interventions that may be offered in addition to the core and Tier 2 interventions. Students who continue to struggle in Tier 3 may be referred by the campus Student Support Team (SST) for specialized services outside MTSS. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, MTSS program leadership intended Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions to be administered either online or in-person during the 2020-21 school year with as little disruption as possible.

In 2019-20, the Dallas ISD began using the *Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) Reading and Mathematics Growth* assessments as universal screeners to measure academic achievement and growth in reading and mathematics. These nationally normed, standardized computer adaptive achievement tests are administered three times per year to students in grades one to 11. The *MAP* assessments and progress monitoring are used by MTSS to strengthen Tier 1 instruction and were partial determinants of which tier of support students receive.⁶

The purpose of this evaluation was to describe MTSS implementation with respect to program development in 2020-21 and MTSS-related training and to examine student assessment outcomes. The 2020-21 budget for the MTSS program totaled \$577,626 in Title II funding, an increase from \$565,626 in 2019-20.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS/OUTCOMES

What MTSS-related training was provided to 2020-21 Dallas ISD staff members?

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, all MTSS-related training activities provided to Dallas ISD staff members in 2020-21 were conducted virtually. Between July 20, 2020 and June 30, 2021, 3,822 Dallas ISD staff members attended one or more MTSS-related trainings. The most frequently attended workshops were related to *MAP Growth* (60 virtual sessions; 3,407 participants), and 7,773 participants completed at least one of the new self-paced online sessions related to *MAP Growth*.

What Dallas ISD students were served by the MTSS program in 2020-21?

Districtwide Use of *MAP Growth* Assessments

The rates of students for whom *MAP Growth* score data were available varied by grade level, testing window (BOY, MOY, and EOY), and assessment. For reading, between 66 percent (grades 9 and 11) and 86 percent (grade 1) were tested at BOY, between 59 percent (grade 11) to 89 percent (grades 1 and 2) were tested at MOY, and between 45 percent (grade 11) to 87 percent (grades 1 and 2) were

¹ Academics include issues related to reading and mathematics.

² Language includes issues related to listening, speaking, reading, and writing across all content areas.

³ Engagement includes issues related to academic disengagement, aggression, attendance, bullying, disruption to the classroom environment, and personally destructive behavior.

⁴ Students receiving specialized services (e.g., special education and dyslexia) also receive Tier 1 support.

⁵ Universal screening is the process of assessing all students to identify those who exhibit lower than expected academic outcomes.

⁶ Other factors used to determine tier placement include existing assessments (e.g., *State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness*) and teacher observations.

tested at EOY. For mathematics, between 65 percent (grades 9 and 10) and 90 percent (grade 4) were tested at BOY, between 58 percent (grade 11) and 91 percent (grades 1 and 2) of students were tested at MOY, and between 47 percent (grade 11) to 89 percent (grades 1 and 2) of students were tested at EOY.

Tier 2 and Tier 3 Interventions

In 2020-21, 13,326 Tier 2 intervention plans were created in the PowerSchool, and of these, 4,901 (37%) plans were at least partially implemented and monitored⁷ for 3,633 students. In addition, 269 Tier 3 intervention plans were created in PowerSchool, and 106 (39%) of the plans were at least implemented and monitored for 91 students.

Students for whom an intervention plan was created, most commonly had one plan (Tier 2: 76%; Tier 3: 92%). A greater proportion of academic intervention plans focused on reading (73% for Tier 2 and 83% for Tier 3) than mathematics (27% for Tier 2 and 17% for Tier 3).

Consistent with districtwide demographics, each tier included more Hispanic students than African American students, and more African American students than White students. However, compared to districtwide demographics (71% Hispanic and 21% African American), proportionally fewer Hispanics students (65% Tier 2 and 62% Tier 3) and proportionally more African American students (29% Tier 2 and 35% Tier 3) received a tier plan.

How were trends in 2020-21 *MAP Growth* related to MTSS implementation?

The relationship between *MAP Growth* scores and MTSS implementation of Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions⁸ was explored by means of three *MAP Growth* variables.

First, the Rasch Unit (RIT) is a standardized, equal-interval score that represents the level at which a student is ready to learn at the time of assessment. It can be compared to other RIT scores regardless of student age or grade.⁹

Second, the Conditional Growth Percentile (CGP) represents the extent to which student achievement changed from one testing window to the next, relative to change for other students who are similar in starting achievement level, grade, and number of instructional weeks between testing windows. The evaluators used the following quintiles to measure achievement for each testing window (i.e., achievement quintile) and to track growth across testing windows (i.e., growth quintiles): Low (up to 20th percentile), Low Average (21st to 40th percentile), Average (41st to 60th percentile), High Average (61st to 80th percentile) or High (81st percentile and above).

Third, the RIT score threshold was used to analyze Spanish *MAP Growth* reading data. Because national norms were unavailable for the 2020-21 *MAP Growth* Spanish reading assessments, the evaluators used thresholds provided by the vendor to identify grade one through grade six students who were at risk for future reading difficulties (i.e., scoring below the 40th percentile).

RIT Scores

For English reading and mathematics, the mean RIT scores for Tier 2 and Tier 3 students were lower than Tier 1 students at each *MAP* administration window; however, Tier 2 and Tier 3 students experienced more gains from BOY to EOY at each achievement quintile (+5 to +15 points for English reading and +9 to +14 points for mathematics) than Tier 1 students (+3 to +4 points for English reading and +5 to +12 points for mathematics).

For Spanish reading, the mean RIT scores for Tier 2 and Tier 3 students were generally higher than Tier 1 students at each *MAP* administration window, but the gains for Tier 2 and Tier 3 students (+4 to +12 points) were slightly lower than Tier 1 students (+6 to +13 points) at each achievement quintile except one.

The smaller numbers of Tier 2 and Tier 3 students compared to Tier 1 students preclude firm conclusions.

CGP Scores

Overall, Tier 2 and Tier 3 students in the two lowest performing achievement quintiles experienced similar growth (<5% difference) from BOY to EOY in English reading and mathematics as Tier 1 students in the same achievement quintiles.

However, for English reading, 41 percent of Tier 2 and Tier 3 students in the low achievement quintile exceeded (high average or high growth) *MAP Growth* targets from BOY to EOY, compared to 35 percent of Tier 1 students.

- In particular, 30 percent of Tier 2 and Tier 3 students in the low achievement quintile experienced high growth compared to 25 percent of Tier 1 students.
- Likewise, the percentage of Tier 2 and Tier 3 students in the low achievement quintile that experienced low growth (32%) was smaller than Tier 1 students (40%).

These results indicate that students with the greatest needs (i.e., Tier 2 and Tier 3 students in lowest performing achievement quintiles) benefited from the additional tiered support from the MTSS program, as measured by *MAP Growth* scores.

⁷ An intervention plan was considered at least partially implemented and monitored if the student completed the assessment chosen by the teacher for the intervention at least once.

⁸ Tier was defined as the highest tier attained by a student during the entire year for a subject, regardless of how long or how many times the student remained at any one tier.

⁹ In 2020-21, Tier 1 students included Grades 1-11, and Tier 2 and Tier 3 students included Grades 1-9.

It should be noted that due to the significantly smaller sample size of Tier 2 and Tier 3 students compared to Tier 1 students, especially for those in the average and higher performing achievement quintiles, findings in this section should be interpreted with caution.

RIT Score Thresholds

The percentage of Tier 2 and Tier 3 students who met the NWEA stated threshold of scoring above the 40th percentile on the Spanish *MAP Growth* reading assessment (i.e., not considered at risk for later reading difficulties) increased from 41 percent at BOY to 47 percent at EOY, whereas the percentage of Tier 1 students remained consistent from BOY to EOY (62%).

What were Dallas ISD campus-based staff member perceptions regarding the procedures, training, and support from the MTSS department in 2020-21?

To assess perceptions regarding the procedures, training, and support from the MTSS department, the 2020-21 MTSS Feedback Survey (20 items) was administered to district staff members who had participated in at least one MTSS-related training during the 2020-21 school year. The purpose of the survey was to solicit respondents' feedback regarding the quality and usefulness of MTSS training they received as well as their perceived ability to implement the MTSS framework. Of the 3,753 individuals who received an email invitation to complete the survey, 1,252 (33%) provided at least partial responses.

The highest percentage of respondents (57%) reported participating in one or two MTSS training sessions in 2020-21. Twelve percent reported participating in zero trainings, potentially indicating that 1) participants forgot they attended a MTSS-related training and/or 2) training content focused on specific skills that did not prominently include broader discussion of the MTSS framework.

MTSS Knowledge

Between 53 percent and 73 percent of respondents reported having at least some knowledge about the PowerSchool MTSS Intervention Module, the purpose of MTSS, and using *MAP* as a universal screener. Between 49 percent and 59 percent reported at least some knowledge of academic, engagement, and language interventions.

Implementation of MTSS

Between 21 percent and 29 percent indicated that they used academic, engagement, and language interventions at least a moderate amount. While the majority of respondents (65% to 69%) reported that support from the MTSS department prepared them (well or very well) to implement elements of MTSS, lower percentages (58% to 66%) reported that they implemented these elements sometimes or often.

MTSS Training Usefulness

A high percentage of respondents indicated that the MTSS trainings they attended were at least somewhat useful (71%). These ratings were higher for respondents who had attended two or more MTSS-related training sessions (76%).

For the 374 participants (30% of sample) who answered what improvements could be made to the support they received from the MTSS department, the most commonly articulated themes were (a) the desire for additional MTSS trainings throughout the year (38%); (b) providing additional hands-on activities (14%); (c) need for more user-friendly trainings (9%); and (d) trainings with additional content on existing topics related to MTSS (9%).

I'm not sure if they already have this but step-by-step videos of creating a plan, monitoring the plan, and finalizing the intervention plan. I feel this would be beneficial for new teachers. [Teacher]

Perceptions about MTSS Implementation

Over a quarter of respondents (28%) indicated that they thought MTSS was implemented very or extremely effectively on their campuses in 2020-21.

For the 336 participants (27% of sample) who answered how the implementation of MTSS can be improved on their campus, the most common themes were the need for additional training (32%), additional MTSS resources (16%), and more feedback and guidance after interventions are implemented (14%).

We can improve the implementation of MTSS on our campus by providing more follow-up training for teachers regarding how to create a plan and training on how to effectively choose the right interventions to meet student needs. [Assistant Principal]

Tier 2 and Tier 3 Interventions

Between 56 percent and 63 percent of survey respondents reported giving students virtual Tier 2 or Tier 3 interventions. Of these respondents, a quarter or more reported that academic (29%), language (25%), and engagement (30%) interventions were very or extremely effective.

For the 264 participants (21% of sample) who responded about the challenges implementing virtual Tier 2 or Tier 3 interventions, the most common themes were inconsistent student engagement (26%), not having enough training or knowledge to effectively implement virtual Tier 2 or Tier 3 interventions (15%), and limited time to implement the interventions (13%).

Most of the challenges are due to students at home on a virtual plan. They do not have adequate support at home; therefore, I have no control over what a student does from home. I am very tech savvy; however, recreating ways to support kids in need of interventions was more challenging this year. Thankfully, my teammates and reading coach helped a lot. [Teacher]

RECOMMENDATIONS

Continue improving documentation and tracking related to MTSS implementation. While over 13,326 Tier 2 and 269 Tier 3 intervention plans were created in the PowerSchool MTSS Intervention Module, less than 40 percent of these plans were at least partially implemented and monitored in 2020-21. Because some survey respondents reported that they did not have enough training, knowledge, or time to implement the virtual interventions, MTSS program staff members should continue their efforts to support teachers and improve student tracking when interventions are implemented. Evaluators and stakeholders should also work together to elevate systems and processes to allow more rigorous and complete future analyses. This could provide additional insight into the effectiveness of the MTSS platform.

Continue to improve consistency in MAP Growth implementation. Although the Dallas ISD has committed to using *MAP Growth* as universal screeners for reading and mathematics, the percentage of students screened in the second year of implementation rarely exceeded 90 percent for any grade or either subject. On average, the percentage of students tested also trended downward as grade level increased. As more students return to in-person learning for the 2021-22 school year, stakeholders should work to improve communication and training with respect to *MAP Growth* administration to continually improve the process.

Continue monitoring MAP Growth progress among Tier 2 and Tier 3 students. In 2020-21, students with the greatest needs (i.e., Tier 2 and Tier 3 students in lowest performing achievement quintiles) benefited from the additional tiered support from the MTSS program, as measured by *MAP Growth* scores, compared to their Tier 1 peers. Stakeholders should use lessons learned from this second year of *MAP Growth* implementation to improve assessment processes and necessary assignment to Tier 2 and Tier 3 plans to ensure at-risk students receive the extra help they need.

Improve frequency and content of MTSS training. While the number of Dallas ISD staff members who completed at least one MTSS-related training increased in 2020-21, some survey respondents expressed the need for additional trainings, hands-on activities, and resources for creating, implementing, and monitoring intervention plans. Because the usefulness ratings for MTSS training sessions were higher for participants who had completed two or more

trainings, it is likely that participants viewed the content as more useful as exposure to the content increased beyond a single training session. MTSS program staff members should continue to survey stakeholders to determine the topics and resources that would be most beneficial and offer trainings as frequently as possible.

Improve ease and understanding of MTSS Implementation. Survey respondents expressed concerns about the user-friendliness of MTSS tools because some trainings felt rushed or included too much information in a short period of time. To improve the learning experience, some teachers may benefit from (a) receiving information over a longer period of time, (b) having additional opportunities to practice using the MTSS platform, (c) having access to additional resources at trainings (e.g., exemplar intervention plans), and (d) having access to more campus-level support from MTSS experts or central staff members. This could provide teachers with critical guidance and feedback as interventions are implemented throughout the school year.

Provide additional support for implementing Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions in various learning environments. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the transition to at-home learning, many Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions were implemented virtually in 2020-21. This presented teachers with many challenges related to inconsistent student engagement (e.g., students turning off cameras or not attending sessions). Because survey respondents described that actively engaged students responded well to Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions, were more confident, progressed faster than before the interventions, and improved their *MAP Growth* scores, MTSS program staff members should explore how additional resources and strategies can be used to actively engage Tier 2 and Tier 3 students across remote, hybrid, and in-person settings.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Dallas Independent School District (Dallas ISD) Dyslexia Services program, funded by a budget of \$1,419,019 (an increase from \$1,243,117 in 2019-20), provides campus-based services districtwide for students with dyslexia. The mission of the Dyslexia Services program is “to assist students with dyslexia in the attainment of independent literacy skills by providing services and support to students, their parents, and school personnel through identification, instruction, and community awareness.”¹

Dyslexia is one of the most common language-based learning disabilities; among those exhibiting reading difficulties, 70 to 80 percent are believed to have some form of dyslexia. Estimates place the percentage of people who have dyslexia between 5 and 10 percent;² depending on the definition, this percentage can reach as high as 17 percent.³

Dallas ISD Dyslexia Services has expanded notably over the past four years. In 2016-17, with 14 dyslexia evaluators serving districtwide, programming was primarily video based, and no dyslexia interventionists were employed. In 2020-21, 179 staff members comprised the Dallas ISD Dyslexia Services department, with 147 dyslexia interventionists serving one to three campuses each (189 campuses in total), and 27 dyslexia evaluators identifying students and prescribing accommodations.

This evaluation examined: 1) the program budget; 2) program components; 3) the identification process and available programming; 4) characteristics of district students with dyslexia; 5) efforts to identify dyslexia early; 6) characteristics of program staff members; 7) dyslexia-related professional development; 8) education and support provided to parents of students with dyslexia; 9) growth in literacy skills and trends in reading and writing achievement for students with dyslexia, and 10) perceptions of interventionists working in the context of the hybrid teaching and learning environment that the district instituted in 2020-21.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS/OUTCOMES

What were the components of the Dyslexia Services program?

Before 2017-18, video-based programming was the primary method of support for identified students until 2017-18,

when the district amplified efforts to expand and enhance services, including increased use of the following systems.

Wilson Reading System. The *Wilson Reading System* (*Wilson*), which focuses on reading, spelling, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension, is currently the most widely used structured literacy program in the district for students with dyslexia. The *Wilson System* is an intensive literacy program provided by a highly-trained teacher – a dyslexia interventionist – to individual students or to small groups in kindergarten through grade eight for 45 minutes a day, four to five days a week. Dyslexia interventionists earn special certification to provide *Wilson Reading System* instruction and support to students. The *Wilson Reading System*.

Other Literacy Programs for Dyslexic Learners. The district also uses 1) the *Esperanza Spanish Language Program* (*Esperanza*) for Spanish literacy (elementary grades); 2) the Multisensory Teaching Approach (MTA).

Support for Teachers and Parents

Dyslexia interventionists also work with teachers, providing training in MTA, a teaching method specially designed for learners with dyslexia that directly involves students in seeing, hearing, saying, and writing during instruction (Birsh, 2019). Dyslexia interventionists lead trainings twice per year for campus staff members on dyslexia characteristics. They also provide regular support to parents of students with dyslexia through sessions on supporting continued student growth in the summer and on additional available community supports.

How are students with dyslexia in the Dallas ISD identified, and how many students received dyslexia programming and support?

Identification Process

Dyslexia potentially can be identified as soon as a child begins learning to read, and, generally, the sooner dyslexia is identified and intervention provided, the more promising the developmental trajectory.⁴ District students can be referred for assessment through a campus staff member or committee, or by a parent. According to Texas House Bill (HB) 1886, grade one students must be screened for reading difficulties like dyslexia by mid-school year. In 2019-20, campuses used the *Texas Kindergarten Entry*

¹ <https://www.dallasisd.org/Page/52188>, retrieved 09/28/18.

² A January 2019 report by the American Institutes for Research (AIR) similarly noted that the prevalence of dyslexia in the United States “has not been determined definitively but [that] the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development estimates the rate at approximately 10%” (p. ix).

³ University of Michigan Dyslexia Help Center, <http://dyslexiahelp.umich.edu/answers/faq>.

⁴ See <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/dyslexia/diagnosis-treatment/drc-20353557> for more information.

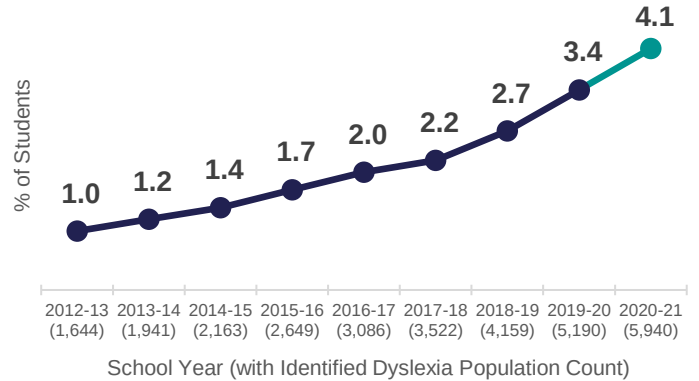
Assessment System (TX-KEA) for kindergarten students; *Istation's Indicators of Progress (ISIP)* in grade one; *Measures of Academic Progress Growth (MAP)* for grade two; and MAP, *State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR)*, or *Common Assessments* for middle school students. Campuses review screening data and grades to assess whether dyslexia may be present.

When dyslexia is suspected and other interventions [like through the Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) framework]⁵ were provided but unsuccessful, parent consent for a dyslexia assessment is obtained, and a variety of additional student data are reviewed, as applicable. After a dyslexia evaluator assesses the student, student support teams and parents meet to determine if the student requires dyslexia services. If so, an Individual Accommodations Plan (IAP)⁶ is created for the student and interventions begin. If the student is identified with dyslexia and needing special education (SPED) services, dyslexia accommodations are integrated into the Individual Education Plan (IEP).

Longitudinal Trends in Dyslexia Identification

The rate of district students identified with dyslexia increased from 1.0 percent in 2012-13 to 4.1 percent in 2019-20 (Figure 1). Increases will likely continue due to increased dyslexia staff and improved universal screening.

Figure 1: 2012-2020 Percentages and Number of Dallas ISD Students Identified with Dyslexia



Source: 2019-20 evaluation report (2012-13 through 2019-20; Mejan, 2020). Dallas ISD PEIMS demographic snapshot data file for 10/30/20 (2020-21).

Note: Counts and percentages reflect those of students enrolled on the PEIMS snapshot date (late October) of each year.

Program Placement

As in 2018-19 (78%) and 2019-20 (74%), most students needing Dyslexia Services received *Wilson Language* programming (81%, Table 1). *Esperanza* was the second-most-commonly used dyslexia program over the past three years.

⁵ See Springer and Kim (2020).

Table 1: 2018-19 to 2020-21 Program Placement of Dallas ISD Students with Dyslexia

Dyslexia Program	2018-19 (N=2,287)		2019-20 (N=1,112)		2020-21 (N=1,172)	
	N	%	n	%	N	%
Wilson Language	1,777	77.7	820	73.7	948	80.9
Esperanza	313	13.7	226	20.3	208	17.7
MTA/Alphabetic Phonics	139	6.1	21	1.9	16	1.4

Source: Dyslexia Services, November 2019 (2018-19 and 2019-20) and July 2021 (2020-21).

Note: N=number of students identified that year and receiving programming. Percentages may not add to 100.0 because a limited number of students were placed in Other dyslexia-related programs.

What were the characteristics of students served by Dyslexia Services?

In 2020-21, 5,940 district students were identified with dyslexia. Over half of these students were male (59%; 51% districtwide). The rate of 2020-21 English learners (ELs) with dyslexia (42%) was lower than EL students districtwide (46%). Also, 35 percent of students with dyslexia received SPED services, while districtwide, excluding students with dyslexia, SPED-enrolled students represented 8.6 percent. SPED program leadership attributed this difference to a continuum of severity in dyslexia symptoms and the possibility of concurrent disabilities.

What progress was made in 2020-21 to meet the Dyslexia Services early identification goal?

The goal of Dyslexia Services was to identify and effectively support students with dyslexia as early as possible.

Increases in Dyslexia Services Staffing

To meet the goal of early identification, the program increased the number of staff members who provide dyslexia services. Shortly before 2017-18, the district hired a Dyslexia Services program director. In 2017-18, the program added 22 dyslexia interventionists. In both 2019-20 and 2020-21, the program employed 147 dyslexia interventionists and 27 lead dyslexia evaluators. The Dyslexia Services program received in spring 2021 approval for funds to hire and place additional interventionists at most Dallas ISD high school campuses beginning in 2021-22.

Roles and Dispersion of Staff Members

Dyslexia interventionists, the largest group of Dyslexia Services staff members (N=147), are certified teachers with specialized dyslexia training. Interventionists work with identified students to provide supplemental multisensory instruction, most commonly through the *Wilson Reading System*, and continually assess their achievement levels. Further, interventionists train teachers to provide effective curricular accommodations for identified students, according to IAP or IEP guidelines. Interventionists served

⁶ IAPs are also called section 504 plans and provide accommodations for students not meeting the criteria for SPED but require accommodations to receive a free and appropriate public education (FAPE).

one or two campuses each, and 179 district campuses were assigned an interventionist either full- or half-time.

Dyslexia evaluators ($N=27$) identify needs and prescribe appropriate accommodations and services for students with dyslexia. Including the program director, coordinators, staff supervisors, and administrative assistant, 179 employees served the Dyslexia Services department as of spring 2021. Increased numbers of Dyslexia Services staff members and the type, intensity, and dispersion of services provided districtwide has likely contributed to increased and earlier identification of students with dyslexia.

What types of dyslexia-related training was provided to staff members in 2020-21?

Training for Dyslexia Services Central Staff Members

Attendance at regular professional development (PD) sessions was required of all program staff members. Topics covered for Dyslexia Services staff member PD in 2020-21 included the following: 1) Introduction to Section 504, 2) EdPlan overview, 3) Socio-Emotional Learning (SEL), 4) Behavioral training, 5) Tech Tools, 6) Virtual Learning, 7) Speed of Trust, and 8) *Wilson Reading* Program training. In addition, interventionists and evaluators met regularly for collaboration and mentoring.

Training for Campus Staff Members

Sessions provided to campus staff members in 2020-21 covered the following topics: 1) Definition of Dyslexia, 2) Characteristics of Dyslexia, 3) Referrals, 4) Accommodations, 5) Simulation, and 6) Resources.

What services and supports did Dyslexia Services offer to parents of students in 2020-21?

Sessions for parents in 2020-21 included 1) Definition of Dyslexia, 2) How to Help at Home, 3) Inspiring Leaders, 4) Foundations of Reading, 5) Accommodations, 6) Simulation, and 7) Resources.

How did students with dyslexia perform and grow in literacy skills and reading and writing achievement in 2020-21?

Wilson Word Identification and Spelling Test (WIST)

The average beginning-of-year (BOY) Fundamental Literacy Ability Index (FLAI) score across all grade (two through eight) levels was 66.8 (66.9 in 2018-19). By the end of year (EOY) assessment for 2020-21, the average FLAI score among these students was 74.7 (75.2 in 2018-19): an increase of 7.9 points (8.3 point increase in 2018-19).

STAAR

The percentage of students with dyslexia (who were not also flagged as receiving special education services) that tested at the Approaches+ and Meets+ achievement level dropped slightly in 2020-21 (43.2%) from 2018-19 (52.7%). There was a slight increase in the percentage of students

with dyslexia that scored at the Masters level, from 5.7 percent in 2018-19 to 5.9 percent in 2020-21. Progress measures showed some evidence of limited growth in reading performance from 2018-19 (41.0%) to 2020-21 (47.2%) for these students. Writing scores for students with dyslexia at Approaches+ decreased from 29.9 percent scoring in 2018-19 to 18.0 percent in 2020-21.

Measures of Academic Progress (MAP)

From BOY to EOY, students with dyslexia performed similarly to those not identified with dyslexia in grade one (41.7 and 42.5 average Conditional Growth Percentile, respectively). The greatest difference between these two student groups was seen in grade four, where the average Conditional Growth Percentile from BOY to EOY was 52.9 for students not identified with dyslexia and 43.7 for those identified with dyslexia.

What were the experiences of Dyslexia Services interventionists during the spring 2020 districtwide transition to at-home learning?

In spring 2021, with input from Dyslexia Services staff members, the evaluator design and administer a survey to solicit interventionists' feedback about their experiences teaching their distance-learners. The survey was sent to all interventionists on May 4, 2021 and closed on May 18, 2021. Of the 138 interventionists invited, 123 (89%) completed the survey.

Engagement with Students and Parents

Distance-learner engagement with dyslexia interventionists varied widely in 2020-21. While 61 percent of respondents (a 7-percentage point improvement from 2019-2020) reported that at least half of their distance-learners logged in each day, 14 percent indicated that only a quarter or fewer of these students did so, and 25 percent reported that 26 to 50 percent of students logged in daily.

The most common reasons that interventionists reported parents gave for their child not logging in each day were: no parental supervision (69%), poor internet connectivity (59%), parents forgot (32%), and lack of adequate technological resources (21%).

Overall, more than half (56%) reported that it was easy or very easy to communicate with their students' parents, and slightly less than half (49%) reported that communication with their distance learning students was easy (43%) or very easy (6%).

Interventionists' Perceptions About Adequacy of Services Provided to Distance-Learners

Most interventionists (78%) reported that they believed they were able to support their distance learners less adequately than they could on-campus learners. A small percentage of interventionists (5%) reported that they felt they could actually support their distance-learning students more

adequately than they could their in-person students, and 16 percent reported that the quality of service they felt they could provide was about the same for students in both learning arrangements.

Reasons interventionists gave for why they believed the quality of service they provided their students was lesser this year compared to last included: 1) distractions in students' homes ($n=37$); 2) students did not log in at all or did not log in on time ($n=18$); 3) the Wilson Program is not designed for distance learning; it is designed for face-to-face instruction ($n=16$); and 4) students had unreliable technology and/or students encountered technical difficulties that they were ill-equipped to handle such as microphone or camera issues ($n=15$).

Resources which interventionists identified as those they lacked and that would have helped them provide more effective services to distance learners included: 1) more teaching resources appropriate for distance learning ($n=11$ responses with this theme; 2) a large screen or projector for those teaching in-person and distance learners simultaneously ($n=11$); 3) ensure all students have appropriate working technology for distance learning ($n=10$); 4) a microphone for interventionists ($n=9$); and 5) parent support to keep distance learners on track and focused ($n=9$).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Review ways to improve online engagement in instruction to support students during possible future at-home learning. Sixty one percent of interventionists indicated that at least half of their distance-learners logged in each day, 14 percent reported that a quarter or fewer of these students did so, and 25 percent reported that 26 to 50 percent of their students logged in daily. While these rates showed some improvement from spring of 2020, the program should continue its efforts to mitigate barriers to student engagement.

Ensure adequate instructional and technological support for dyslexia interventionists. Resources which interventionists identified as those they lacked and which would have helped them provide more effective services to distance learners included: 1) more teaching resources designed for or otherwise more appropriate for distance learning ($n=11$ responses with this theme, 2) a large monitor or projector for those teaching in-person and distance learners simultaneously ($n=11$); and 3) a microphone for interventionists to speak in to when teaching in-person and distance learners simultaneously ($n=9$).

Review communication and technological hurdles with students and caregivers during at-home learning. Overall, only slightly more than half (56%) of interventionists reported that it was easy or very easy to communicate with parents of their students, and slightly less than half (49%) reported that communication with distance learning students was easy or very easy. The most common reasons that parents gave for their child not logging in each day were: 1) no parental supervision (69% reported this), 2) poor internet connectivity (59% reported this), parents forgot (32%), and lack of adequate technological resources (21%).

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Achieving in the Middle (AIM) initiative was launched in the 2019-20 school year by the School Leadership Department. In 2020-21, the AIM initiative continued to implement five core components to support 17,822 middle school students at 23 middle school campuses; however, AIM core components shifted slightly from 2019-20. They included recruitment and retention of high-quality leaders (formally strategic staffing); strategic instructional practice (formally instructional excellence); a transformative, positive culture (formally a positive, responsive culture); enrichment opportunities; and supportive partnerships. This evaluation focused predominantly on the first three components. The budget for the AIM initiative in 2020-21 was \$10,426,379, an increase from \$10,084,036 in 2019-20.

The purpose of this report was to summarize the 2020-21 context, process, and outcomes of the Dallas Independent School District (ISD) AIM initiative.^{1,2} Contextual information about the AIM initiative was gathered through review of internal documents and interviews with School Leadership Department central staff members. Process information was examined through interviews with AIM initiative staff members and assistant principal (AP), counselor, and Instructional Lead Teacher (ILT) surveys. Outcome data included the districtwide Campus Climate Survey, *Measures of Academic Progress Growth (MAP)*, and *State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR)* data.

On March 13, 2020, in alignment with federal recommendations, the Governor of Texas issued a disaster proclamation certifying that the novel coronavirus COVID-19 posed an imminent threat of disaster for all counties in the state of Texas. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Dallas ISD transitioned students to at-home learning on March 23 following spring break (March 16 – 20) until the end of the 2019-20 school year. The start of the 2020-21 school year was delayed until September 8, 2020; at-home learning was implemented districtwide for the first four weeks. On October 22, 2020, the district announced that campuses would provide in-person and virtual learning throughout the rest of the school year, and parents could choose whether their children participated in in-person or virtual instruction.³

EVALUATION QUESTIONS/OUTCOMES

What were the AIM student characteristics?

A total of 17,822 grade-six to grade-eight students were involved in AIM during 2020-21. Over half were male (56%), Hispanic/Latino (69%), and/or economically disadvantaged (92%). Over half of students were English Learners (51%), and 14 percent were enrolled in special education.

What was the context of the AIM initiative in 2020-21?

Twenty-three middle schools were included in the AIM initiative in 2020-21. To implement the recruitment and retention of high-quality leaders component of AIM, the School Leadership Department implemented a Distributed Leadership Model (DLM) beginning in 2019-20. The DLM separated physical spaces and provided additional staff members including up to three APs and counselors per campus and added ILTs to coach and support other teachers in core content areas. As of November 2020, there were 21 APs, 21 counselors, and 78 ILTs. The additional staffing allowed for the continuation of Content Leadership Teams (CLTs), consisting of APs and ILTs, that helped teachers refine instruction.

To foster strategic instructional practice and promote student achievement, students were provided with opportunities for additional tutoring while campus staff members were provided with professional development (PD) and other supports. AIM principals and one AP, one ILT, and one counselor from each campus met in September 2020 for an AIM 2.0 Feedback and Focus Group. Then, three AIM PD conferences were held in the spring. The PD conference held in January 2021 targeted principals, APs, ILTs, Campus Instructional Coaches (CICs), and counselors.⁴ PD conferences in March and April 2021 targeted APs, ILTs, and CICs.⁵ During the three spring conferences, AIM staff members were presented with a synthesis of AIM 1.0, AIM partnerships, and AIM 2.0 adjustments and goals; content training including the Addressing the Misconception protocol related to Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS); a review of student data such as STAAR and *Common Assessment Four*; and goals for 2020-21 End-of-Year (EOY) assessment results. Other supports provided to teachers included Professional

¹ Portions for this report are modified from Tyree (2020).

² Detailed methodologies are available in the full report.

³ More detailed information about changes due to COVID-19 is available in the full report.

⁴ Some Executive Directors (EDs), principals, Instructional Lead Coaches (ILCs), coordinators, and teachers also attended.

⁵ Some EDs, principals, ILCs, coordinators, and teachers also attended.

Learning Communities (PLCs). PLCs used Look Forward and Look Back Weekly Data Meetings to align instruction with TEKS standards and help teachers identify gaps in student knowledge and clear action steps to address those gaps.

Last, to foster a transformative, positive culture, campus staff members were provided PD which focused on schoolwide systems and structures, and a joyful environment. Systems and structures training included practices to structure each segment of a student's day with a routine (i.e., arrival, dismissal, lunch, transitions, and celebrations), and to structure physical environments through classroom organization techniques (e.g., seating charts). These routines and organizational strategies were bolstered by staff communicating clear expectations to promote good behavior. Campus staff members also received PD about encouraging a joyful environment (e.g., narrating positive behavior and displaying student work) and modeling positive relationships with adults and students.

How was the ILT component of AIM implemented during the second year of the initiative?

ILTs taught one to two class periods per day and spent the rest of their time preparing for meetings with their PLCs and coaching the two to 17 teachers assigned to them according to content area (and in most cases, grade level).⁶ ILTs worked closely with APs and in some cases CICs, to ensure lessons aligned with Texas Education Agency guidelines and the district curriculum. ILTs also worked with their PLC CLTs to collaborate on teacher support plans and coaching schedules.

ILTs received a PD summer coaching conference and three PD sessions in spring 2021. The three-day summer session conducted by Engage2Learn provided ILTs with a coaching academy focused on competencies such as small group instruction, communication, digital learning, etc. ILTs were trained on these competencies, given ratings for each competency, and given feedback for how to improve throughout the 2020-21 school year.⁷ Also, ILTs received districtwide PD focused on AIM techniques and skills based on the Get Better Faster 90-Day Program.⁸ Additionally, ILTs attended the three spring 2021 PD conferences with APs and CICs that were mentioned previously. After receiving PD, ILTs supported teachers through direct coaching (observation and feedback cycles) and grade and/or content-level PLCs organized by CLTs to provide the PD they received from AIM central staff members to their teachers.

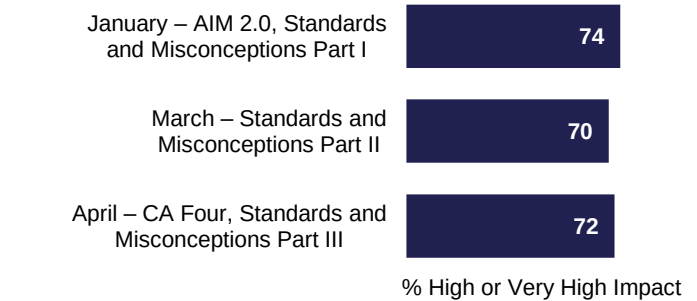
⁶ In some cases, ILTs taught more than two class periods per day depending on the staffing needs for that campus.

What were the perceptions of assistant principals, counselors, and ILTs on AIM campuses?

AP Survey

Of the 73 APs who were sent a survey, 43 responded (59%). APs were most commonly assigned one to two ILTs (91%) and 11 or more teachers who were not ILTs (88%). APs most commonly reported PLCs being held daily (61%) and attending daily (56%). PLCs most often covered lesson plan development (98%), data digs (93%), and Student Expectations (SEs) and TEKS (93%). Between 70 and 74 percent of APs rated the PD sessions as high impact or very high impact (Figure 1).

Figure 1: 2020-21 AIM Assistant Principal Survey Responses About the Impact of Professional Development



Source: AIM AP survey administered spring 2021.
Note: CA = *Common Assessment*. Standards = Priority Standards. Ns (range: 32 to 40) are available in Appendix D of the full report. Responses marked “not applicable” were excluded.

Overall AP satisfaction with colleague collaboration was high. APs reported being somewhat to extremely satisfied with the collaboration with their ILTs (88%), principals (79%), and counselors (77%). Open-ended responses (*N* = 28) indicated successes were the Addressing the Misconception protocol (*n* = 6), collaborating and developing best practices (*n* = 5), consistency (*n* = 5), identifying critical SEs, TEKS, and priority standards (*n* = 5), and using data digs to inform student and teacher progress (*n* = 5). Reported challenges were due to COVID-19 and virtual learning (*n* = 10) and time constraints (*n* = 5).

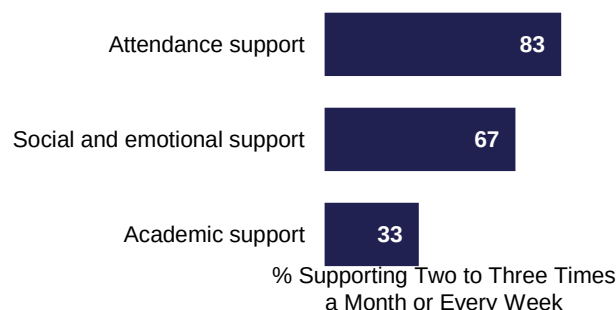
Counselor Survey

Of the 19 counselors who were sent a survey, 12 responded (63%). Counselors most commonly reported guiding students in multiple grades (33%). Most counselors were assigned between 201 to 300 students (58%) Counselors most commonly met with students weekly (42%).

Counselors most commonly reported providing attendance, social and emotional, and academic supports to students two to three times a month or every week (Figure 2).

⁷ For more information about Engage2Learn, see <https://engage2learn.org/>.
⁸ Bambrick-Santoyo (2016).

Figure 2: 2020-21 AIM Counselor Survey Responses for Frequency of Supports Provided to Students Two to Three Times a Month or Every Week



Source: AIM Counselor survey administered spring 2021.

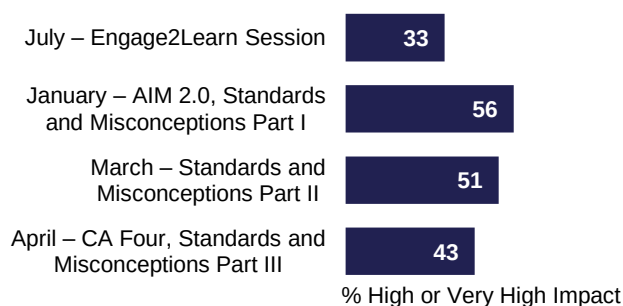
Note: $N = 12$ (Appendix E of the full report).

Counselors most frequently reported collaborating with twenty or more teachers (42%). Overall counselor satisfaction with colleague and parent/guardian collaboration was high (range: 75% to 100%). A majority of counselors reported being supported a great deal or a lot by their APs (83%). As the sample size was small ($N = 12$), the open-ended themes were not reported to maintain the anonymity of the respondents.

ILT Survey

Of the 78 ILTs who were sent a survey, 54 responded (69%). ILTs most commonly served between one to five teachers (59%) and met with the teachers they served daily or a few times a week (80%). Between 33 and 56 percent of ILTs rated the four PD sessions as high impact or very high impact (Figure 3).

Figure 3: 2020-21 AIM ILT Survey Responses About the Impact of Professional Development



Source: AIM ILT survey administered spring 2021.

Note: CA = *Common Assessment*. Standards = *Priority Standards*. Ns (range: 49 to 54) are available in Appendix F of the full report. Responses marked “not applicable” were excluded.

Overall satisfaction with PD was higher than impact ratings. Most ILTs reported being satisfied (either satisfied or very satisfied) with the quality of the feedback and support they received from the CLT (69%), the PD (67%), and the collaboration with school administrators (63%).

Open-ended responses ($N = 54$) indicated successes were building teacher relationships and growing teachers ($n = 12$), lesson planning/time to develop lessons with teachers' input ($n = 11$), and collaboration around best practices (especially with pandemic circumstances; $n = 10$). Challenges reported were virtual teaching/adjusting to new technology requirements ($n = 13$), lack of one-on-one coaching opportunities and live observations ($n = 9$), and time constraints/management ($n = 9$).

What were the AIM campus staff member perceptions of school climate and culture?

Staff member responses to the spring 2021 Climate Survey showed favorable response rates across scales. Of the six scales of the Climate Survey, College Going Culture (74%), Beliefs and Priorities (72%), and Teacher-Teacher Trust (72%) received more favorable response rates than Teacher-Principal Trust (66%), Positive Culture and Environment (64%), and Culture of Feedback and Support (63%). In comparison to spring 2019, favorable response rates increased in spring 2021 across all six scales.

Did AIM students score at or above MAP and STAAR standards?

MAP

For the English and Spanish administrations combined, the overall percentage of students at or above the 50th percentile on EOY MAP was 23 percent on reading and 29 percent on mathematics.⁹

STAAR

Fifty-three percent of AIM students achieved Approaches Grade Level or Above (Approaches+) on STAAR reading and 46 percent met the Approaches+ standard in mathematics in 2020-21.¹⁰ For the Meets Grade Level or Above (Meets+) standard, 22 percent met the standard in reading and 16 percent met the standard in mathematics. From 2018-19 to 2020-21, AIM student STAAR performance decreased in reading and mathematics.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Determine the optimal range for the ILT-to-teacher ratio.

There was a wide range of ILT-to-teacher ratios across AIM campuses (two to 17 teachers per ILT). Of the 54 ILT survey respondents, some ILTs reported challenges with the lack of one-on-one coaching opportunities and live observations ($n = 9$) and with time constraints/management ($n = 9$). A large ILT-to-teacher ratio may negatively impact the time allotted for and quality of support provided by the ILTs to teachers and may potentially impact student outcomes.

Continue allotting time for AIM staff members to collaborate. APs most commonly reported being satisfied

⁹ Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) demographic data were dated 10/30/20 (2020-21). MAP data were dated 06/23/21 (2020-21 EOY).

¹⁰ PEIMS district data files dated 03/08/19 (2018-19) and 10/30/20 (2020-21). STAAR data files dated 01/23/20 (2018-19) and 06/28/21 (2020-21). No STAAR data were available in 2019-20.

with the collaboration with ILTs (88%) and ILTs most commonly reported being satisfied with the collaboration with school administrators (63%). Both APs (*n* = 5) and ILTs (*n* = 10) listed collaboration around best practices as a success of AIM. AIM staff members reported benefits for opportunities to collaborate; thus, efforts to allow time for collaboration should continue.

Refine the AIM PD to have greater impact, especially on ILTs. Thirty-three to 56 percent of ILTs and 70 to 74 percent of APs responded that the PD sessions they received were impactful. AIM leaders should identify why the PD sessions

were not perceived as more impactful, especially for ILTs, and adjust the PD accordingly.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Texas Legislature House Bill (HB) 3 requires that all Texas Kindergarten (K) through grade-three teachers and administrators attend HB 3 Reading Academies to learn evidence-based content and methods that best support the science of teaching reading. The Dallas Independent School District (ISD) has become an authorized provider of HB 3 Reading Academies through the Texas Education Agency (TEA), allowing the district to conduct training using Early Learning specialists. All elementary campuses will participate in HB 3 Reading Academies over three years (Year 1 in 2020-21, Year 2 in 2021-22, or Year 3 in 2022-23). HB 3 Reading Academies will play a central role in meeting the Dallas ISD Board Goal that 56 percent of students score at the Meets Grade Level or Above (Meets+) standard on grade-three *State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR)* reading by 2025.

The total budget for the 2020-21 HB 3 Reading Academies program was \$1,511,794 with \$1,200,000 supporting stipends and supplemental pay for teacher work required beyond the school day. An additional \$8,400 provided supplemental pay for librarians and campus coaches that attended Saturday professional development (PD) sessions, \$302,283 provided funds to hire additional staff to support the HB 3 Reading Academies program, and \$1,111 went toward printing facilitator guides and materials.

PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION

The purpose of the 2020-21 HB 3 Reading Academies evaluation was to examine context, process, and outcome data. Context data included a summary of the program. Process data included beginning of year (BOY), middle of year (MOY), and end of year (EOY) teacher surveys, a BOY administrator survey, and post-PD survey data. Outcome data included student academic outcomes including *Measures of Academic Progress Growth (MAP)* and *STAAR* reading. Detailed methodology is available in the full report.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS/OUTCOMES

What was the context of the HB 3 Reading Academies?

The 86th Texas Legislature passed HB 3 in 2019.¹ The bill required all Kindergarten through grade-three teachers and principals to complete Reading Academy training by 2022-23. Dallas ISD planned to train staff members in three one-year cohorts (2020-21, 2021-22, and 2022-23). The goal of the HB 3 Reading Academies was to increase teacher knowledge of evidence-based methods of teaching reading and ensure these methods were implemented in classrooms, thereby increasing student achievement in reading. Ultimately, the program served to push the district toward achieving Student Outcome Goal 2 as set by the Board of Trustees that 56 percent of students score at the Meets+ standard on grade-three *STAAR* reading by 2025.

Implementation during Year 1 in the Dallas ISD began with teachers and administrators at 56 high-priority elementary campuses; Year 2 will target 51 elementary campuses and any teachers new to Year 1 campuses, and Year 3 will target 45 elementary campuses and any teachers new to Year 1 and Year 2 campuses.

Based on job requirements, participants completed one of three learning pathways. General and special education teachers completed the English Language Arts pathway, bilingual general education and bilingual special education teachers completed the Biliteracy pathway, and campus administrators completed the Administrator pathway. Each pathway consisted of 12 PD modules.² While five of the modules on the Biliteracy pathway included content specifically for English learners, the content was available to participants in other pathways.

The Dallas ISD applied for and was approved to serve as an authorized provider for HB 3 Reading Academies PD. HB 3 Reading Academy cohort leaders implemented two different PD models (comprehensive and blended). Comprehensive coaches could lead up to 60 participants in person. Implementation of the comprehensive model for the 2020-21 school year required adapting the face-to-face model to a primarily virtual asynchronous format due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, comprehensive coaches

¹ More information about HB 3 can be found at <https://tea.texas.gov/about-tea/government-relations-and-legal/government-relations/house-bill-3>.

² Modules included: Introduction/Scope and Sequence; Science of Teaching Reading; Establishing a Literacy Community; Using Assessment Data to Inform Instruction; Oral Language/Vocabulary; Phonological Awareness; Alphabet Knowledge/Handwriting; Decoding, Encoding, and Word Study; Reading Fluency; Reading Comprehension; Written Composition; and Tiered Supports.

were able to complete in-person observations and coaching to assess implementation of HB 3 Reading Academy content in classrooms. Blended facilitators could coordinate online learning for up to three cohorts of participants with up to 100 participants per cohort.

All campus administrators participated in the blended model and completed the HB 3 PD and other requirements online. Every teacher at single-gender campuses and teachers at some Transformation campuses participated in the blended model. Teachers at other Transformation campuses and all teachers at other campuses participated in the comprehensive model and received PD, coaching, and feedback through in-person sessions.

What were the characteristics and completion rates of teachers and administrators who participated in HB 3 Reading Academy Cohort 1?

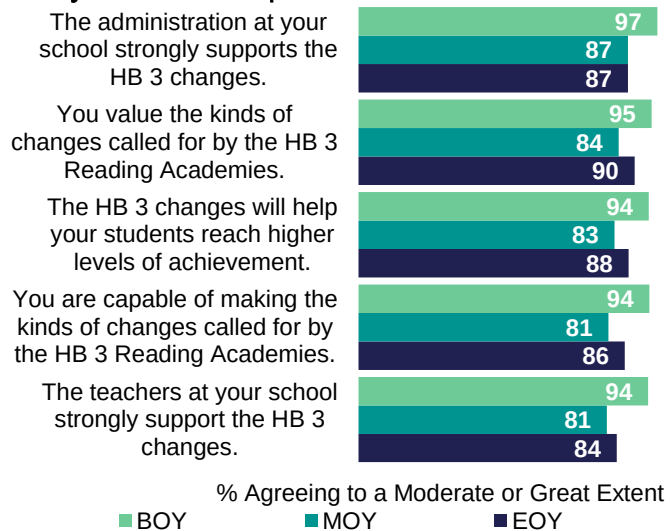
HB 3 Reading Academy Cohort 1 included 702 teachers in the English Language Arts pathway, 334 teachers in the Biliteracy pathway, and 168 administrators in the Administrator pathway.³ For teachers in the English Language Arts and Biliteracy pathways combined, most HB 3 Reading Academies teachers were female (83%) and had obtained a bachelor's degree (64%). Nearly 43 percent of teachers were Hispanic and 32 percent were African American. The Cohort 1 teachers had taught, on average, 11.4 years of in the state of Texas. Administrators were predominantly female (79%) and most were African American (53%). Nearly 82 percent had obtained a master's degree.

Overall, 99 percent of teachers (N = 1,004) and 100 percent of administrators (N = 166) completed the Reading Academy program.⁴

What were the participant perceptions of the HB 3 Reading Academies?

Fifty-eight percent of teachers responded to the BOY survey (N = 950). Response rates at MOY and EOY were 41 percent (N = 968) and 56 percent (N = 939), respectively. The teacher BOY perceptions of the HB 3 Reading Academies were positive (Figure 1), ranging from 94 percent (teachers strongly support HB 3 changes) to 97 percent (administration strongly supports HB 3 changes). Across all items, the percentages dropped between 10 to 13 percent on the MOY survey. The percentages of agreement rose slightly on four of the five perception items from the MOY survey to the EOY survey with the largest gain in the respondent valuing the HB 3 changes (84% to 90%). Even so, the levels of agreement with items about their perceptions of the HB 3 Reading Academies on all BOY items were higher than on the MOY and EOY surveys.

Figure 1: 2020-21 BOY, MOY, and EOY Teacher Surveys – HB 3 Perceptions

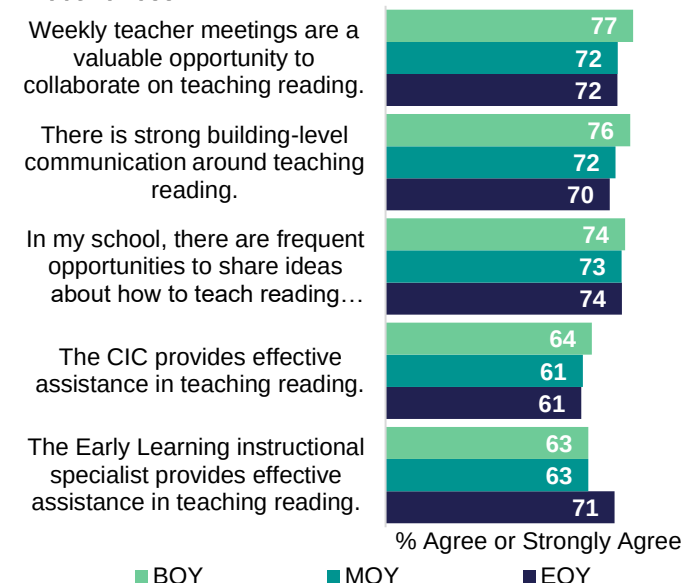


Source: Data received from Early Learning on 01/06/21 (BOY), 03/02/21 (MOY), and 06/21/21 (EOY).
Note: Response options included not at all, to a small extent, to a moderate extent, and to a great extent. Ns are available in Appendix A of the full report.

The percentages of teachers that agreed or strongly agreed with items regarding campus collaboration and coach effectiveness are presented in Figure 2. BOY percentages ranged from 63 percent (Early Learning instructional specialist provides effective assistance) to 77 percent (weekly teacher meetings are a valuable opportunity to collaborate on teaching reading). While the percentages of responses on most MOY and EOY items remained similar to or were lower than the percentages on the BOY survey, lower percentages of teachers on the BOY and MOY surveys than on the EOY survey agreed or strongly agreed that the Early Learning specialist was effective in helping them teach reading (63%, 63%, and 71%, respectively).

³ Participant list dated 10/28/20 and district personnel file dated 10/10/21. | ⁴ EOY participation data dated 08/20/21.

Figure 2: 2020-21 BOY, MOY, and EOY Teacher Surveys – Campus Collaboration and Coach Effectiveness



Source: Data received from Early Learning on 01/06/21 (BOY), 03/02/21 (MOY), and 06/21/21 (EOY).

Note: Response options included strongly disagree, somewhat disagree, neither agree nor disagree, somewhat agree, and strongly agree. Ns are available in Appendix A.

At the end of the year, teachers selected up to three Reading Academy modules that were most impactful on their teaching. Participants selected the modules on phonological awareness ($N = 214$); decoding, encoding, and word study ($N = 202$); and reading comprehension ($N = 201$) most often. Conversely, participants viewed the modules on written composition ($N = 40$), using assessment data to inform instruction ($N = 39$), and establishing a literacy community ($N = 36$) as least impactful.

Thirty-seven percent of administrators ($N = 131$) rated their perceptions of the Reading Academies on the BOY survey. Ninety-six percent agreed that they were capable of supporting HB 3 changes, 98 percent valued the HB 3 changes, and all agreed that the changes would help students gain higher levels of reading achievement.

Administrators also responded to campus collaboration and coach effectiveness items (like those in Figure 2). Across items, administrators were more positive than teachers. Eighty percent of teachers or more responded positively to all but one item. Percentages ranged from 79 percent agreeing that the Campus Instructional Coach (CIC) provided effective assistance in teaching reading to 94 percent agreeing that weekly teacher meetings were effective times to collaborate on issues related to teaching reading.

Last, administrators were asked about their belief that they could influence specific areas of their job. Response percentages were high, ranging from 94 percent of

administrators responding that they could motivate teachers a lot or to a great extent, to 100 percent responding that they could create a positive learning environment in their school.

Teachers and administrators were also asked to complete post-PD surveys. Eighty-two percent of session participants reported that the session content was relevant to their teaching that they would incorporate elements of the session in their teaching.

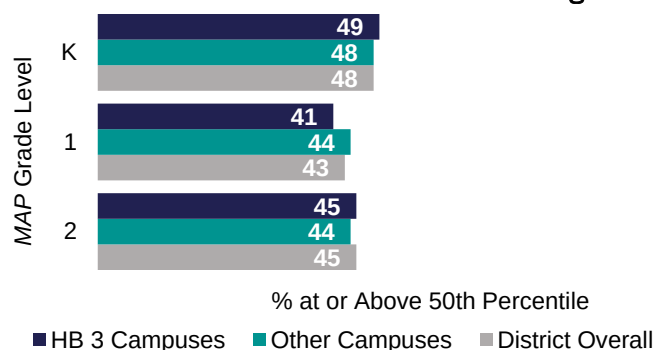
What were the student outcomes at campuses that had and had not completed HB 3 Reading Academies?

Results should be viewed with caution because HB 3 campuses were selected due to previous low performance and teachers may not have received all PD in time to implement it in the 2020-21 school year.

MAP

In general, the proportions of students scoring at the 50th percentile were similar for students at HB 3 Reading Academy Campuses and at other district campuses (Figure 3). Forty-nine percent of K students at HB 3 Reading Academy campuses scored at the 50th percentile, one percentage point higher than K students at other campuses (48%). The proportions were similar for grade two (45% vs. 44%) but slightly lower for students at HB 3 Reading Academy campuses in grade one (41% vs 44% at other campuses).

Figure 3: 2020-21 Percentages of Students at or Above the 50th Percentile on EOY MAP Reading



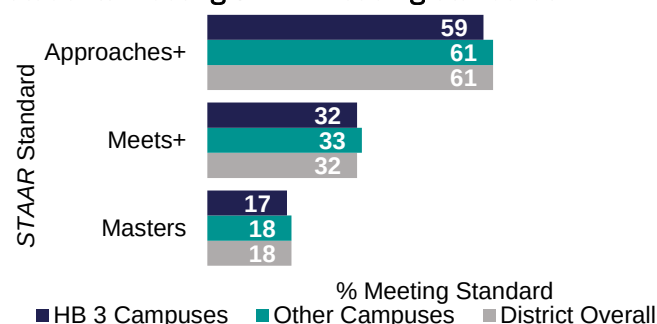
Source: MAP EOY data file dated 06/23/21 and district PEIMS demographic file dated 11/13/20.

Note: Ns are available in Appendix D of the full report.

STAAR

The proportions of students at HB 3 Reading Academy campuses meeting each reading standard were similar to the proportions at other district campuses (Figure 4). Fifty-nine percent of the students at HB 3 Reading Academy campuses and 61 percent of the students at other district campuses met the Approaches+ standard. Thirty-two percent of HB 3 Reading Academy students and 33 percent of other district students met the Meets+ standard; 17 percent of HB 3 Reading Academy students and 18 percent of other district students met the Masters standard.

Figure 4: 2020-21 Percentages of Grade-Three Students Meeting STAAR Reading Standards



Source: STAAR data file dated 07/12/21 and district PEIMS demographic file dated 11/13/20.

Note: Ns are available in Appendix D of the full report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the survey results and student achievement findings, the evaluator made three recommendations.

Survey all participants at the BOY, MOY, and EOY timepoints. The change in teacher perceptions of the program was evident across survey timepoints during Year 1. Administrators, whose perceptions may have been broader or different, were only surveyed at BOY. Future

program years should include the BOY, MOY, and EOY perceptions of administrators who direct the reading instruction on their campuses.

Continue to monitor the performance of students at Cohort 1 HB 3 Reading Academy campuses. The academic achievement of students at HB 3 Reading Academy campuses was similar to students at other district campuses on MAP and STAAR reading. However, because training lasted all year, participants were not able to completely incorporate the Reading Academy content into their classroom teaching during the 2020-21 school year. Future evaluations should continue to monitor student reading achievement during Year 2 and Year 3 as Cohort 1 teachers continue to employ concepts from the Reading Academies.

Consider Year 1 survey and academic achievement results in light of the district response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The 2020-21 school year included students that learned remotely, in person, or transitioned between the two. Teachers instructed virtually and in person. Their ability to effectively implement Reading Academy concepts in classrooms may have been hampered. Survey responses and student achievement results should be reviewed with these caveats in mind.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

With an increased need for building digital fluency in instruction because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Dallas Independent School District (ISD) Professional and Digital Learning (PDL) Department is committed to facilitating and providing useful resources and professional development (PD) opportunities to district staff members to support their use of technology. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Dallas ISD transitioned students to at-home learning on March 23, 2020 until the end of the 2019-20 school year. To help district students and families access the internet during at-home learning, the Dallas ISD launched "Operation Connectivity" in May 2020, which provided 23,000 hotspots to families by October 2020. In 2020-21, Dallas ISD delayed the start of the 2020-21 school year until September 8, 2020 and implemented at-home learning districtwide for the first four weeks. On October 22, 2020, the district announced that campuses would provide in-person and virtual learning throughout the rest of the school year, and parents could choose whether their children participated in in-person or virtual instruction. In-person and virtual instruction included both synchronous and asynchronous learning activities.

The purpose of this report was to provide context and process information pertaining to two selected Instructional Technology workscopes, Academic Technology and Instructional Effectiveness. Context information included information obtained from interviews with the program directors and a review of program documentation. Process information include analyses of available PD survey data.¹

The Academic Technology program focuses on designing, creating, and managing robust digital learning resources and providing online trainings and individualized supports to district staff members as needed. The Instructional Effectiveness program works to build the capacity of Teaching and Learning and campus staff members to leverage technology for teaching and learning by providing content-specific supports. Both programs also offered PD sessions throughout the year over diverse technology-related topics.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS/OUTCOMES

What was the source and amount of funding for the selected Instructional Technology programs?

The Academic Technology program was funded through Title IV, Part A at \$215,000. The Instructional Effectiveness program was funded at \$782,317 through Title II, Part A funds.²

How were the selected Instructional Technology programs implemented in 2020-21?

Context of the Programs

During the 2020-21 school year, the PDL Department aimed to provide ongoing digital learning resources about utilization and integration of technology in instruction. Within the PDL Department, both the Academic Technology and Instructional Effectiveness programs implemented various projects throughout the school year to support and meet the needs of the district campus and central staff members with the use of technology. The projects included online resources, self-paced learning opportunities, and PD sessions.³

Academic Technology

The Academic Technology program supported teachers with instructional resources including digital integration training and digital applications. The two largest foci of the program were learning management systems resources and individualized trainings based on the needs and interests of partner departments' key stakeholders. The program was implemented by one program director, one coordinator, and two academic technology specialists.⁴ They created and managed the instructional technology curriculum and instructional websites and delivered PD sessions.

Learning Management Systems Resources

The program specialists created easy to access materials, such as tutorial websites and videos to support technology initiatives in the district. Online resources on learning management systems were either added from outside sources or created and managed on the district website

¹ Detailed methodology is available in the full report.

² Provided by Special Revenue Funds Management on 02/28/21. Title IV funded two specialists and Title II funded two coordinators who all reported to program directors in the PDL Department.

³ The PDL department staff members also assisted with providing trainings to district personnel in support of other departments including trainings

about Title IX Compliance, Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS), *Measures of Academic Progress (MAP)*, pregnancy-related services, and Cultural Intelligence.

⁴ Toward the end of the school year, the PDL Department went through a reorganization and the coordinator and specialists reported directly to the Executive Director.

throughout the school year to support teachers, instructional staff members, and administrators. The resources allowed staff members to effectively utilize the systems and included quick guides with visual aids on how to operate or troubleshoot specific technology tools used for instruction. The specialists also provided PD sessions on these resources, which are discussed in more detail in the next section.

Partner Departments Key Stakeholders Training

The program specialists provided partner departments with key stakeholder trainings, which were provided to 343 staff members across 65 sessions.⁵ District staff members from various departments including Teaching and Learning, Information Technology, and Evaluation and Assessment received training and support on the use of technology. Trainings were provided mainly on a one-on-one basis or in small groups as requested and covered an array of topics including how to develop and improve virtual training materials, online courses or webinars, and digital assets that build the capacity of teaching and learning staff members.

Instructional Effectiveness

The Instructional Effectiveness program was implemented by one program director, one program manager, and one coordinator.⁶ The program primarily focused on supporting campus staff members with content-specific digital materials and integrating technology in both classroom and at-home learning environments by introducing new digital tools and resources continuously throughout the year. Also, the program staff members developed and managed resources to support new teachers in the district.

Content-Specific Supports

Each program staff member supported teachers of specific content areas and principals in individual, group, or virtual settings. Most commonly, the supports were provided to help campus staff members use digital resources in each subject area and effectively adapt and integrate technology into the content to maximize student learning and achievement. A total of 19 content areas were supported (most commonly Career and Technical Education, Reading Language Arts, Mathematics, and School Leadership) over 59 sessions supporting 2,209 participants.⁷

Support for New Teachers

The New Teacher Academy was offered virtually from August 21 through August 25, 2020 to teachers who were new to the district. The Instructional Effectiveness program staff members provided training covering diverse topics including teaching in a virtual space, district policies and procedures, introductory summaries of each department in

the district, and racial equity. A total of 1,172 teachers participated in the event. Additionally, the trainings remained available through the district website for new teachers who were unable to attend the event.⁸

What professional development opportunities were offered through the selected Instructional Technology programs in 2020-21 and what were participant perceptions?

Professional Development Sessions

The Instructional Technology programs (i.e., Academic Technology and Instructional Effectiveness) provided PD opportunities as a team to support effective technology use in instruction and learning management from June 8, 2020 to April 30, 2021. The programs publicized available PD sessions each month through an online catalog published on the district website and in Weekly Administrative Information Packets. The topics of PD sessions for each month were selected based on the reported needs of teachers and staff members.

In 2020-21, a total of 81 PD sessions over a variety of technology-related topics were provided to 51,295 participants including teachers, instructional staff members, administrators, and central staff members.⁹ Because of the increased utilization of technology in instruction for both in-person and at-home learning, all PD sessions focused on how to effectively integrate technology into instruction.

The Academic Technology staff members focused on providing trainings on education technology applications and learning management systems such as Google Meet, Google Classroom, and Microsoft Teams. The applications allowed teachers and staff members to implement effective delivery and management of instruction. Of the 20 topics and 47 total sessions provided, the most frequently provided sessions covered Nearpod (8 sessions) and Google Classroom (6 sessions). The PD sessions on Google Classroom (22%) and Google Basics (21%) had the highest attendance rates of all Academic Technology sessions. Attendance ranged from 1 to 4,244 participants across the sessions and median number of attendees ranged from 1 to 1,485.

The Instructional Effectiveness program staff members offered PD sessions on various topics including different tools to use for instruction, promoting student engagement, and digital citizenship. Some session topics on instructional tools overlapped with the PD session topics provided by Academic Technology because of increased user needs and demands. Of the 20 topics and 34 total sessions provided, the staff members most frequently provided sessions on Zoom (7 sessions) and Nearpod (4 sessions).

⁵ This information was provided by the program coordinator on 06/04/21.

⁶ Toward the end of the school year, the PDL Department went through a reorganization and these positions were restructured.

⁷ In addition, the program assisted with providing trainings on other areas including Title IX and Core 4 Ambassador training in support of other

departments. A total of 73,672 staff members received supports. This information was provided by program coordinator on 06/11/21.

⁸ This information was provided by program director on 12/15/20.

⁹ Some participants attended multiple sessions. This information was provided by program coordinator on 06/11/21.

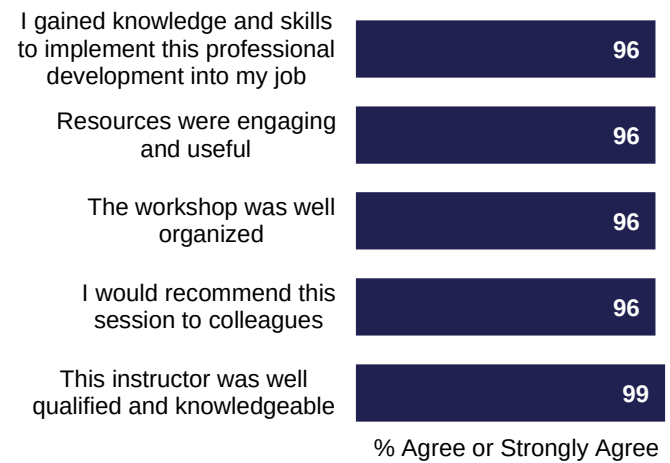
The PD sessions on digital citizenship (24%) and Zoom (23%) had the highest attendance rates of all Instructional Effectiveness sessions. Attendance ranged from 2 to 6,835 across the sessions and median number of attendees ranged from 3 to 1,865.

Participant Perceptions

All PD attendees were asked to complete a satisfaction survey at the end of the session. A total of 2,209 unique attendees responded to the surveys across PD sessions. When examining respondent roles, teachers accounted for the highest percentage of respondents across the trainings as the PD session topics were often directly related to teaching and learning (*n* = 2,001; 91%). The same participant could have attended PD sessions across programs; when the surveys were examined by program, a total of 1,053 unique participants responded to the Academic Technology PD surveys and 1,625 unique participants responded to the Instructional Effectiveness PD surveys. Some PD participants attended multiple sessions within each program. Thus, they may have completed the survey and been included in satisfaction and open-ended response analyses more than once. When reviewed by program (Academic Technology or Instructional Effectiveness), a total of 1,325 surveys were completed for the Academic Technology PD sessions and 2,320 surveys were completed for the Instructional Effectiveness PD sessions.

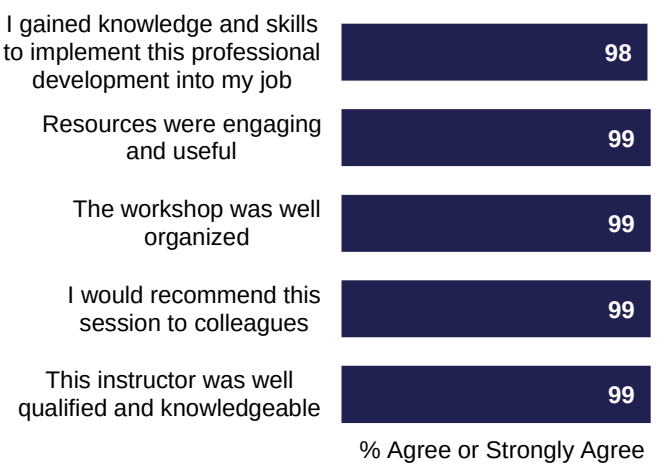
Because of the large number of various sessions, all PD perception responses are reported in aggregate by program. Overall, both programs received high satisfaction ratings (87% or more agreed or strongly agreed across questions). A slightly higher percentage of participants reported satisfaction with the sessions provided by the Instructional Effectiveness program (range: 92% to 99%) than with the sessions provided by the Academic Technology program (range: 87% to 99%). More than 96 percent of the survey respondents for both programs agreed or strongly agreed that they gained knowledge and skills to implement what they learned in their job, resources were engaging and useful, the session was well organized and offered a positive atmosphere, they would recommend the session to their colleagues, and their instructor was well qualified and knowledgeable. Across programs, slightly lower percentages of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they had enough time in the training (Academic Technology: 87%; Instructional Effectiveness: 92%) and that the training was appropriate for participants with different skill levels (Academic Technology: 90%; Instructional Effectiveness: 95%). Figures 1 and 2 show key participant perceptions of the PD sessions provided by each program. Full survey details with response rates are provided in the full report.

Figure 1: 2020-21 Selected Instructional Technology Programs Professional Development Feedback Survey – Satisfaction with Academic Technology PD Sessions



Source: PD Feedback Survey data provided by the PDL Department on 06/01/21.
Note: *N* = 1,325. Complete questions and response rates are available in Appendix A of the full report. Participants may have attended multiple sessions; thus, they may have completed the survey more than once. All sessions were provided online from 06/08/20 to 04/30/21.

Figure 2: 2020-21 Selected Instructional Technology Programs Professional Development Feedback Survey – Satisfaction with Instructional Effectiveness PD Sessions



Source: PD Feedback Survey data provided by the PDL Department on 06/01/21.
Note: *N* = 2,320. Complete questions and response rates are available in Appendix A of the full report. Participants may have attended multiple sessions; thus, they may have completed the survey more than once. All sessions were provided online from 06/08/20 to 04/30/21.

Participants also shared open-ended feedback. Complete open-ended questions and number of responses are available in the full report. When asked about recommendations for improvement, participants most frequently made comments that were either neutral or

positive about the session or their trainer but did not provide actionable recommendations (Academic Technology $n = 263$; Instructional Effectiveness $n = 531$). The most commonly articulated suggestions for improvement of PD sessions were to extend the time of the training session (Academic Technology $n = 123$; Instructional Effectiveness $n = 235$), cover fewer topics within a training (Academic Technology $n = 46$; Instructional Effectiveness $n = 67$), and allow time for practice during the session (Academic Technology $n = 31$; Instructional Effectiveness $n = 51$).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Continue the supports that meet the needs of staff members. PDL department staff members have been responsive to the needs and demands of the district campus and central staff members with the increased amount of technology usage as evidenced by the positive feedback

provided by PD participants. Stakeholders should stay attentive to staff member training and resource needs and continue to provide adequate supports for the use of instructional technology.

Extend the time, or decrease the content, of each PD session. Survey respondents wanted more time in the sessions (Academic Technology $n = 123$; Instructional Effectiveness $n = 235$), and also wanted more time to practice (Academic Technology $n = 31$; Instructional Effectiveness $n = 51$). Providing longer trainings or following the third most common recommendation and covering fewer topics within a training (Academic Technology $n = 46$; Instructional Effectiveness $n = 67$), could provide more time for depth and practice. Stakeholders are encouraged to ensure participants have enough time to learn and practice their new skills by increasing the session time or decreasing the amount of information that is covered.

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

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to provide context and process evaluation information related to key components of the Assessment for Learning program. The focus of the 2020-21 evaluation was to provide context and determine the level of implementation of the grant components, perceptions of staff who participated in grant activities, and the impact of the program on student achievement. Data for this report were obtained from interviews with program staff members, a review of internal documents, and analyses of available survey and student achievement data. Dallas ISD used \$186,357 in Title II grant funds to implement the program in 2020-21. The program hired a coordinator to directly support campuses, lead professional development sessions, and coach teachers and campus leaders.

The focus of the 2020-21 evaluation was to determine the level of implementation of the grant-funded programs and to examine participant perceptions of the programs, as applicable. Data for this report were obtained from interviews with program staff members assigned to each grant component, a review of internal documents, and analyses of available survey data.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS/OUTCOMES

How was the Assessment for Learning program implemented?

Program Characteristics

In 2021-21, the Assessment for Learning program took place on eleven campuses: Ben Milam, Kiest, Zaragoza, Stevens Park, Connor, and Tatum Elementary Schools; Franklin and Spence Middle Schools; and Woodrow Wilson, Molina, and Adamson High Schools. A total of 139 teachers, across all grade levels and content areas, implemented the program in their classrooms. Assessment for Learning utilized an innovative and highly communicative approach to teaching that emphasizes formative assessment throughout instruction.

Formative assessment is a planned, ongoing process used by students and teachers during learning and teaching to elicit and use evidence of student learning to improve student understanding of intended content area learning outcomes and support students to become self-directed learners. Effective use of the formative assessment process requires students and teachers to integrate and embed the following practices in a collaborative and respectful classroom environment: clarifying learning goals and success criteria within a broader progression of learning; eliciting and analyzing evidence of student thinking;

engaging in self-assessment and peer feedback; providing actionable feedback; and using evidence and feedback to move learning forward by adjusting learning strategies, goals, or next instructional steps (Fisher, Frey, & Hattie, 2018). Teachers operate in daily feedback loops where students and teachers answer the following questions: Where am I going? Where am I now? How do I close the gap? or Where to next? (Sadler, 1998).

Campus Walks and Observations

Assessment for Learning program staff utilize the Formative Assessment Rating Rubrics and Observation Protocol (FARROP) to determine implementation of the ten dimensions of formative assessment in classrooms. The Assessment for Learning coordinator conducted a total of four campus walks throughout the year (November, February, March, and May). Because the program's results were noted informally and did not involve collecting quantitative measures, an analysis of results was not possible.

In addition, program staff and campus leaders provided coaching and training for teachers in the year three pilot program through observations and POD (Plan, Observe, Debrief) cycles. A POD cycle is a one-and-a-half-day process where teachers plan together, observe each other's classrooms, and receive feedback from one another and their trainer. In previous years, the program conducted formal POD cycles in November, January, and March. However, due to the shortage of substitute teachers in 2020-21, formal POD cycles were impossible. Instead, campuses engaged in "mini-PODs" where they used conference or PLC time to observe each other. At other campuses, teachers recorded video of lessons and used the POD protocol to give each other feedback after viewing.

Teacher Training

The Assessment for Learning program provided several traditional professional development opportunities throughout the year in addition to the ongoing observation and coaching cycles. A total of 1,137 district teachers, principals, and central staff members attended an online presentation by Doug Fisher on September 1, 2020. A total of 2,532 district teachers, principals, and central staff members attended a professional development session led by formative assessment expert John Hattie on January 4, 2021. Further, 4,236 district teachers, principals, and central staff members attended training with John Almarode on improving distance learning, on March 10, 2021. Assessment for Learning teachers also had access to asynchronous digital training materials throughout the year.

via Schoology, a learning management system managed by PowerSchool.

Simultaneous Learning

Teachers within the Assessment for Learning program implement simultaneous learning, with distance and in-person students in the same classroom at the same time. Through this approach, the program seeks to create an equitable environment through shared culture, access, and expectations for both in-person and distance learners. Teachers were trained to design the physical classroom environment to support both distance and in-person learners while selecting appropriate videoconferencing tools to leverage screen sharing for equitable access. Teachers established norms and expectations for both cohorts of students without attempting to plan two different courses.

Simultaneous Learning emphasized providing clear learning goals, success criteria, and expectations and building in opportunities for collaboration, feedback, and assessment. Teachers explained the learning goals, success criteria, norms, and expectations. They emphasized assigning student roles to promote agency and collaboration, while building in opportunities for teacher- and student-led small groups. Teachers were encouraged to intentionally create moments of relationship-building within and across modalities of in-person and distance learning.

What were teacher perceptions of the Assessment for Learning program?

Methodology

The Assessment for Learning program utilized Google Forms to craft and administer a feedback survey exploring teachers' evolving implementation of Assessment for Learning practices. The program manager provided an online survey link to Assessment for Learning teachers at three different points throughout the year. The beginning-of-year (BOY) survey link was open from September 10, 2020 to November 17, 2020. The middle-of-year (MOY) survey link was open from January 23, 2021 to March 7, 2021. The end-of-year (EOY) survey link was open from May 24, 2021 until June 18, 2021. The purpose of the survey was to collect feedback related to participants' individual experiences working in the Assessment for Learning program. The survey included one demographic item and 10 items with Likert-type response options rating staff perceptions of the program. All Assessment for Learning teachers ($n = 124$) were selected to receive the survey. Program staff shared raw survey data with the program evaluator. The evaluator used frequency analyses to determine rates of positive responses for each scaled item, along with the number and percentage of responses per category for other items.

Results

A total of 115 respondents completed at least one survey, resulting in a 93 percent response rate, though participation dropped sharply as the year progressed (61 teachers responded during the MOY survey window, and 12 teachers responded during the EOY survey window.)

Overall, the proportion of teachers who indicated that they incorporated each behavior into their teaching increased over the course of the school year. The largest increases were seen in posting success criteria that tells students what successful learning will look like (61.8% at BOY versus 83.3% at EOY, an increase of 21.5 percentage points) and providing opportunities for students to set goals, reflect, and monitor their own progress (42.6% at BOY versus 75.0% at EOY, an increase of 32.4 percentage points). At the beginning of the year, 76.5 percent of teachers reported that they modeled how to use mistakes, failure, and struggle as opportunities for growth. By the end of the year, 91.7 percent of teachers reported "often" or "usually" doing so. The formative assessment skill rated least implemented at the beginning of the year (28.7% at BOY), teaching students how to give and receive feedback, increased by 13 percentage points by the end of the year (41.7% at EOY).

How did participation in the Assessment for Learning program affect student achievement?

Methodology

The NWEA *Measures of Academic Progress* (MAP) assessments are universal screeners administered to Dallas ISD students in grades one through ten at the beginning (BOY), middle (MOY), and end (EOY) of the school year. MAP data consists of several variables used to describe student performance and academic growth over time by subject. The Rasch Unit (RIT) score represents the level at which students are ready to learn at the time of assessment. The RIT score is a standardized, equal-interval score that can be compared to other RIT scores regardless of student age or grade. The second MAP Growth variable used for this report was the Conditional Growth Percentile (CGP). The CGP represents the extent to which student achievement changed from one testing window to the next, relative to change for other students who are similar in starting achievement level, grade, and number of instructional weeks between testing windows. For each subject assessed, CGPs for each student are calculated with respect to a large, nationally-normed sample obtained by NWEA and can be calculated whenever a student takes a MAP assessment in a new testing window (e.g., BOY to MOY, MOY to EOY, BOY to EOY). A CGP at the 50th percentile indicates that the RIT score increase from the prior testing window represents the median amount, or expected level, of progress for that grade level¹.

The evaluator used student-level MAP data files dated November 5, 2020 (BOY), March 30, 2021 (MOY), and June

¹ For more information, see <https://community.nwea.org/docs/DOC-1630>.

23, 2021 (EOY) and merged them with the district demographic data files pulled closest to the dates of the *MAP Growth* data files for each testing window. The evaluator selected a sample of 50 grades one through 11 Assessment for Learning teachers. Students were flagged as participants if they were identified by district course files as being taught by one of these teachers. To construct comparison groups of comparable classrooms not implementing the program, classrooms of the same grade on the same campus as implementing teachers were chosen whenever possible. In the case of Ben Milam Elementary, where the entire campus was implementing the program, eight teachers from the same grade levels at Lipscomb Elementary were selected. This campus was chosen based on similarity of campus-level demographic and achievement criteria used to create state accountability comparison groups. Students were selected into the sample if they had valid *MAP* scores for all three test administrations (English language only in Reading, as English and Spanish *MAP* Reading assessments are not directly comparable). In the cases where students appeared on rosters for both AfL and non-AfL teachers (such as high school students taking courses from multiple teachers on a campus), the student was omitted from the study. The evaluator then used frequency and crosstabs analyses to calculate the average *MAP* RIT and CGP scores by subject, grade, and student group. The evaluator conducted *t*-tests of mean RIT scores to ascertain if the program made a statistically significant difference in the participants' academic growth as measured by *MAP* results. Also, the evaluator used Cohen's *d* to examine if differences were practically meaningful. Finally, the evaluator conducted chi-square tests of independence to determine if a significant association existed between AfL participation and growth threshold rates as illustrated by the CGP score.

Results

At all grade levels, RIT scores for reading and mathematics generally remained unchanged or increased from BOY to MOY and from MOY to EOY. For each assessment and testing period, mean RIT scores generally increased for higher grade levels, as expected due to the nature of the assessment (scores are given on a single continuum of RIT scores from grades one through 11).

While AfL students' overall mean Reading RIT across all grades was five points higher than non AfL students at BOY (210 versus 205), the mean RIT for AfL students increased by three points by MOY (210 to 213), while increasing by four points for non-AfL students (205 to 209). From MOY to EOY, AfL students across all grades lost the previous gains, with an overall mean RIT score of 210, the same as at BOY. For non-AfL students, the overall mean EOY RIT score was three points higher than at BOY (205 versus 208). Notably, students at grades one through three saw larger gains from BOY to EOY than upper grades: 11 to 18 points for AfL students and nine to 15 points for non-AfL students. In

addition, AfL students at grade eight saw a loss of six points (206 to 200) from BOY to EOY, while non-AfL students gained one point during this time period (227 to 228).

While there were slight differences in mean RIT scores, *t*-test and effect size analyses of the differences between AfL and non-AfL students' mean RIT Reading scores at BOY, MOY, and EOY showed no statistical or practical significance.² For BOY, $t(20) = 0.17$, $p = 0.86$, *Cohen's d* = 0.19. For MOY, $t(20) = 0.22$, $p = 0.82$, *Cohen's d* = 0.18. For EOY, $t(20) = 0.28$, $p = 0.78$, *Cohen's d* = 0.10.

Overall mean Mathematics RIT scores for AfL students was three points higher at BOY than for non-AfL students (212 versus 209). From BOY to MOY, the mean RIT increased by eight points for both AfL students (212 to 220) and non-AfL students (209 to 217). From MOY to EOY, AfL students across all grades gained two points (220 to 222). For non-AfL students, the mean RIT score also increased by three points from MOY to EOY (217 to 220). Again notably, students at lower grades, this time one through three, saw notable gains from BOY to EOY, 15 to 23 points for AfL students and 11 to 16 points for non-AfL students. Again, *t*-test and effect size analyses of the differences between AfL and non-AfL students' mean RIT Mathematics scores at BOY, MOY, and EOY showed no statistical or practical significance. For BOY, $t(20) = 0.37$, $p = 0.72$, *Cohen's d* = 0.13. For MOY, $t(20) = 0.28$, $p = 0.78$, *Cohen's d* = 0.09. For EOY, $t(20) = 0.32$, $p = 0.76$, *Cohen's d* = 0.08.

To measure growth across testing periods, the evaluator divided CGP scores into three categories based on NWEA's definition of meeting expected growth. Students with a CGP below the 45th percentile "failed to meet" nationally-normed growth expectations. Those with a CGP between the 46th and 55th percentile "met" expectations, and those with a CGP above the 55th percentile "exceeded" those expectations for growth.

For reading, the percentage of AfL students who met or exceeded growth thresholds by MOY was 55.4 percent which was lower by 2.5 percentage points compared to Non-AfL students (57.9%). For mathematics, the percentage of AfL students who met or exceeded growth thresholds by MOY was 71.1 percent which was higher by 1.7 percentage points compared to Non-AfL students (69.4%). There were no significant differences between students of AfL and Non-AfL teachers in meeting or exceeding growth expectations (2.5 percentage points or less). Further, a chi-square test of independence showed that there was no significant association between AfL participation and growth threshold rates in either Reading ($X^2 = 5.03$, $p = .08$) or Mathematics ($X^2 = 0.49$, $p = .78$).

For reading, the percentage of AfL students who met or exceeded growth thresholds by EOY was 34.2 percent which was lower by 4.8 percentage points compared to

² A *p*-value less than 0.05 (typically ≤ 0.05) is statistically significant. A *p*-value higher than 0.05 (> 0.05) is not statistically significant. Cohen's *d*

values of .20, .50, and .80 are considered small, medium, and large, respectively (Cohen, 1992).

Non-AfL students (39.0%). For mathematics, the percentage of AfL students who met or exceeded growth thresholds by EOY was 49.4 percent which was lower by 1.5 percentage points compared to Non-AfL students (50.9%). There were no significant differences between students of AfL and Non-AfL teachers in meeting or exceeding growth expectations (4.8 percentage points or less). Further, a chi-square test of independence showed that there was no significant association between AfL participation and growth threshold rates in either Reading ($X^2 = 5.03$, $p = .08$) or Mathematics ($X^2 = 0.26$, $p = .88$).

What are the plans for the future of the Assessment for Learning program?

Methodology

Evaluation of the Assessment for Learning program included interviews with program management and a review of internal documents. The purpose of the interviews was to gather information about program requirements and activities. Follow-up information was collected by email.

Results

The Assessment for Learning Design Team was an advisory group consisting of program management, representatives from the Teaching and Learning and Evaluation and Assessment departments, AfL campus principals, and AfL teachers. The Design Team met four times during the year, in November, December, February, and June, providing feedback on program implementation, sharing campus and classroom challenges and solutions, and advising program management on program expansion plans.

On Saturday June 12, 2021, the program held an Assessment for Learning Summit on Zoom. The event lasted from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm and was open to all AfL teachers and principals. Three guest presenters joined district staff for author- and teacher-led breakout rooms, and discussions around books supplied to attendees upon registration. Formative assessment expert John Almarode addressed learning goals, success criteria, and feedback. Author Anthony Muhammad discussed equity and transforming school culture. Author and educational consultant Dr. Nicole Law presented on culturally

responsive pedagogy and visible learning. A total of 198 district staff members attended.

While the program was implemented by at least some teachers at 11 campuses in 2020-21, the district is seeking to expand the program to include additional high priority campuses in 2021-22. Additionally, the program will expand to campus-wide implementation at several existing AfL campuses including Adamson and Wilson High Schools, Spence Middle School, and Conner, Stevens Park, Tatum, and Zaragoza Elementary Schools. Program management and district leadership are closely monitoring data to see if these practices could potentially be scaled district-wide as early as 2022-23.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

Formalize campus walk feedback. Currently, campus walk data is captured through non-standardized observer notetaking. Formalizing the campus walk feedback process to include an observation checklist would allow for quantitative analysis of the quality of instruction observed, including tracking change over time.

Continue strong collaboration practices, including design team, PODs, and campus walks. Applying new formative assessment approaches across schools is challenging because it aims to fundamentally change the relationship between teachers and students. A formal approach to collaboration and sharing of best practices between teachers and campus administrators increases the chance for success.

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