2021-22

DALLAS INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Evaluation of the Special Education for Emergent Bilinguals Program

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2017, the Dallas Independent School District (ISD) hired Collier Educational Consulting to conduct an audit of the district special education (SPED) program (Collier, 2017). A key finding of the culminating report was that Emergent Bilinguals (EBs)[1] who were dually-identified as receiving SPED services (EBSPED) required additional, targeted supports. The report further highlighted the need to improve student identification and service provision for EBSPED students.

Thus, the Dual Language/English as a Second Language (DL/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 EBSPED students. The purpose of this collaboration was to 1) develop and support embedded EBSPED differentiation for all learners in the general education curriculum; 2) facilitate collaboration among campus-based educators, administrators, parents, and EBSPED specialists; 3) assist campuses in planning and implementing services for EBSPED students at all grade levels; and 4) create and conduct professional development (PD).

During the 2019-20 school year, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Dallas ISD transitioned students to at-home learning on March 23 until the end of the school year. In 2020-21, Dallas ISD delayed the start of the school year until September 8, 2020 and implemented at-home learning for the first four weeks. In 2021-22, the district returned to in-person instruction for all students, with minimal exceptions. The district offered virtual learning to a small subset of students who met eligibility requirements. To help mitigate learning loss and further support students, the district offered three different school calendars in 2021-22 and other supports.[2] Because of these variations in instructional time, and support activities, results should be reviewed with caution.[3]

The purpose of this report was to provide data for campus, program, and district stakeholders to determine the effectiveness of the EBSPED program in meeting the needs of EBSPED students in the Dallas ISD.[4] In 2021-22, the budget for the EBSPED program was $1,927,104 from Title I funds, which was the same as 2020-21.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS/OUTCOMES

What services were provided to EBSPED students in 2021-22?

The EBSPED program aimed to support and assist EBSPED students and their teachers.[5] Because EB and SPED services are not mutually exclusive, improving student identification and providing services and targeted support to EBSPED students continued to be an important focus for the district in 2021-22. In 2021-22, EBSPED program staff members created and conducted PD opportunities for teachers, administrators, and other campus-based staff members throughout the district to help ensure the success of EBSPED students.

Additionally, 21 campuses[6] were targeted for extra EBSPED support because 1) they enrolled high numbers of EBSPED students or 2) they showed high achievement gaps in 2021 *State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness* (*STAAR*) outcomes for EBSPED students compared to students in general education or to students in special education who were not EBs (NonEB SPED).

To meet the linguistic and special education needs of EBSPED students at the 21 campuses, Title I funds were used to support multi-departmental leadership and provide 18 Instructional Specialists at these campuses. The 18 EBSPED Instructional Specialists assisted campuses to plan and implement services designed to meet the needs of EBSPED students at all grade levels.[7]

What were the characteristics of 2021-22 EBSPED students?

Of the 68,386 EBs and 14,013 SPED students in the Dallas ISD, 5,815 (9% of EBs; 41% of SPED) were dually-identified as EBSPED in 2021-22, accounting for four percent of all district students (*N* = 143,294).

In general, the distribution of students in most grades was comparable across all EB and SPED classifications, and the percentage of EBSPED students by grade level ranged from two percent to 11 percent.

[1] To align with state terminology changes made in the 2020-21 school year, Emergent Bilinguals has replaced the term English learners (ELs).
[2] Additional information can be found at https://www.dallasisd.org/timetolearn and https://www.dallasisd.org/esser.
[3] More detailed information about the 2021-22 EBSPED Programs and program changes due to COVID-19 can be found www.dallasisd.org/Page/888.
[4] This executive summary was adapted from Voss (2021).
[5] For the evaluation of programs for district EBs and SPED students, see Voss and Kim (2022) and Sands (2022), respectively.
[6] For a complete list of EBSPED supported campuses, see Appendix A of the full report (Voss, 2022).
[7] In addition to the 18 EBSPED Instructional Specialists funded through Title I, four EBSPED Instructional Specialists were funded through Title III.

Overall, the number of EBSPED students increased over the last two years (+9 percentage points), the number of NonEB SPED and EB students decreased (-5 and -2 percentage points, respectively), and the number of all SPED students stayed about the same.[8]

What were stakeholder perceptions regarding EBSPED services and training in 2021-22?

Key findings from the 2021-22 EBSPED (*N* = 37; 42% response rate) survey include:

- Most staff members who worked with an EBSPED instructional specialist in 2021-22 reported that they participated in PD that addressed the needs of EBSPED students (70%).
- Less than half of respondents indicated that the differentiated DL or ESL curriculum was very or extremely effective at meeting the needs of EBSPED students (44%), which did not meet the DL/ESL's goal of 65 percent.
- Respondents reported that the Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC) and Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) committees were at least moderately important for student success (67%); were at least moderately effective at collaborating (61%); were a high or very high priority on their campuses (50%); and collaborated frequently or very frequently (48%).
- The highest rate of respondents (43%) reported working with an EBSPED specialist more than 10 times.
- Respondents most frequently reported that EBSPED specialists provided classroom observation/feedback (68%), resources/materials (65%) and in-class support (59%).
- Most respondents rated one-on-one PD (74%) as very or extremely helpful, whereas less than half of respondents rated campus-wide PD (40%) and PLCs (47%) as helpful.
- Most respondents reported that supplies and resources for classroom implementation (70%) and online resources (e.g., Ellevation, Rosetta Stone, Duolingo, Imagine Learning; 60%) were very or extremely helpful.
- Most respondents rated the supports they received from an EBSPED specialist as very or extremely helpful (range: 70% to 81%; Figure 1). The goal to have 70 percent of respondents rating the aggregated helpfulness of all supports as very or extremely helpful was met (74%).

Figure 1: 2021-22 EBSPED Survey - Helpfulness of Supports



Source: 2021-22 EBSPED Survey, administered spring 2022.
Note: Rates do not include results for respondents who responded that they did not work with an EBSPED Instructional Specialist. For *N*s and detailed survey response rates by question, see Appendix C in the full report. PLC = Professional Learning Community.

What PD opportunities were provided for campuses about the needs of EBSPED students?

A total of 300 teachers and four administrators attended EBSPED-related PD sessions in 2021-22. While the number of PD session topics varied, districtwide sessions accounted for the most sessions (*n* = 19) followed by campus-based sessions (*n* = 3). Additionally, 95 percent of PD participants reported that the PD session met their needs, which met the DL/ESL Department's goal of at least 80 percent.

What were the assessment outcomes for EBSPED students in 2021-22?

TELPAS.

2022 EBSPED students overall did not meet the DL/ESL Department goal to see a two percentage-point increase in the percentage of EBSPED students who stayed the same or progressed on their *TELPAS* composite from 2021 to 2022 (rates decreased by 1%).

- 2022 *TELPAS* composite ratings for EBSPED students at all grade levels tended to cluster in the intermediate level of English proficiency.
- One- and two-year trends for *TELPAS* composite ratings varied. The largest decrease was for grades 9 to 12 over two years at the intermediate level (-11 percentage points), and the largest increase was for grades 9 to 12 over two years at the advanced level (+6 percentage points).
- For 2022 *TELPAS* level movement[9], 57 to 64 percent of EBSPED students remained at the same proficiency level. For all grade levels overall, EBSPED students progressed at higher rates (27%) than they regressed

[8] Additional student characteristics information can be found in the full report (Voss, 2022).

[9] 2022 *TELPAS* level movement rates reflect movement from 2021 to 2022.

(14%), and this pattern was most pronounced in grades one to five (30% vs 13%).

- One- and two-year trends for *TELPAS* level movement[10] varied. The largest decrease was for grades 9 to 12 over one year (-6 percentage points), and the largest increase was for grades 6 to 8 over one year (+8 percentage points).

TELPAS for Dallas ISD vs State and other large, urban Texas districts. Rates of Dallas ISD EBSPED students performing at the higher English proficiency levels on the 2022 *TELPAS* were generally comparable or lower than state and other comparison district rates.

TELPAS-Alternate (TELPAS-Alt)

Overall, 687 EBSPED students took the *TELPAS-Alt* in 2022.

- Twenty-four percent of students earned the highest proficiency rating (basic fluency) on the 2022 *TELPAS-Alt* districtwide, a one percentage-point increase over one year and no change over two years.

- 2022 *TELPAS-Alt* proficiency rating movement[11] patterns were relatively similar across the elementary, middle, and high school levels, with over 45 percent of students progressing to a higher proficiency level and about a third remaining at the same proficiency level. One- and two-year trends were mixed.

TELPAS-Alt for Dallas ISD vs State and other large, urban Texas districts. Rates of Dallas ISD EBSPED students performing at the higher English proficiency levels on the 2022 *TELPAS-Alt* were generally mixed when compared to state and other comparison district rates.

Measures of Academic Progress Growth (MAP)

For 2022 *MAP* mathematics beginning-of-year (BOY) to end-of-year (EOY) growth quintiles:

- EBSPED students on the English subtest tended to cluster in the Low quintile at all grade levels (30% to 39%).

- EBSPED students on the Spanish subtest tended to cluster in either the Low (46%) or High quintile (31%)

For 2022 *MAP* reading BOY to EOY growth quintiles:

- EBSPED students on the English and Spanish subtests tended to cluster in the Low quintile at all grade levels (English: 40% to 60%; Spanish: 44%).

STAAR/End-Of-Course (EOCs)

Table 1 shows 2021 and 2022 rates of EBSPED students at each *STAAR* and *EOC* performance standard.[12]

- From 2021 to 2022, EBSPED student percentage-point changes on all mathematics-related *STAAR* and *EOC* subtests were positive (+1 to +8 percentage points) and were mixed for reading-related subtests (-1 to +9 percentage points).

Table 1: 2021 and 2022 *STAAR* and *EOC* EBSPED Ratings by Subject, Performance Standard, and Grade Level Grouping

	Approaches+		Meets+		Masters	
	2021	2022	2021	2022	2021	2022
Grade Level	%	%	%	%	%	%
Mathematics						
Math 3-5	36.1	37.6	12.2	13.3	3.5	4.7
Math 6-8	24.6	32.8	5.8	7.1	0.6	1.2
Algebra 1	42.9	45.4	13.6	17.0	3.3	6.6
Reading						
Reading 3-5	28.5	27.3	9.7	11.2	3.7	4.5
Reading 6-8	18.6	27.3	4.8	7.5	1.6	2.9
English I	10.8	18.2	4.4	6.6	0.2	0.0
English II	16.3	16.2	7.2	6.3	0.0	0.2

Source: *STAAR* and *EOC* source files can be found in the full report (Voss, 2022).
Note: Rates include scores for *STAAR* and the first and second administrations of *EOCs* for students enrolled on the respective PEIMS snapshot dates. *STAAR Alternate 2* scores were not included; thus, Approaches+ data differ from those presented in prior evaluations. No data were available for 2020.

STAAR/EOC for Dallas ISD vs State and other large, urban Texas districts. District performance level rates of EBSPED students on *STAAR* and *EOCs* were mixed when compared to the state and other Texas large, urban district rates.

STAAR Alternate 2 (Alt 2)

In 2022, 11 to 21 percent of students who took *STAAR* subtests and seven to 12 percent of students who took *EOCs* were administered the *Alt 2* version.

Rates of students at the Approaches+ performance standard on the *Alt 2* version were higher than for the standard version on all tests and ranged from 83 to 100 percent.

STAAR/EOC Alt 2 for Dallas ISD vs State and other large, urban Texas districts. District performance level rates of EBSPED students on *STAAR* and *EOC Alt 2* were

[10] One-year trends reflect level movement change from 2021 to 2022 (2022) as compared to level movement change from 2020 to 2021 (2021). Two-year trends reflect level movement change from 2021 to 2022 (2022) as compared to level movement change from 2019 to 2020 (2020).
[11] 2022 *TELPAS* level movement rates reflect movement from 2021 to 2022.
[12] *STAAR* and *EOC* performance standards include Approaches Grade Level or Above (Approaches+), Meets Grade Level or Above (Meets+), and Masters Grade Level (Masters)

generally mixed when compared to the state and other Texas large, urban district rates.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Examine the effectiveness and perceptions of differentiated DL and ESL curriculum. Less than half (44%) of surveyed teachers and CICs indicated that the differentiated Dual Language or ESL curriculum was very or extremely effective at meeting the needs of EBSPED students. Program leadership should continue efforts to explore the effectiveness of the differentiated curriculum for EBSPED students and the perceptions surrounding it.

Continue using EBSPED specialists in their current roles. Most survey respondents expressed positive views regarding the support and resources that they received from EBSPED specialists, and the DL/ESL Department exceeded their goal of having 70 percent of respondents rating the helpfulness of all supports provided by the EBSPED specialists as very or extremely helpful (74%). That said, less than half of respondents rated campus-wide PD (40%) and PLCs (47%) received from EBSPED specialists as helpful. Thus, EBSPED specialists should continue to provide teachers with effective supports while working to improve the helpfulness of PD opportunities.

Continue efforts to improve the percentage of EBSPED students earning the highest English proficiency ratings. 2022 EBSPED students overall did not meet the DL/ESL Department goal to see a two percentage-point increase in the percentage of EBSPED students who stayed the same or progressed on *TELPAS* composite from 2020 to 2022. Additionally, district rates of EBSPED 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. DL/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 EBSPED students. EBSPED students generally clustered in the Low quintile for 2022 *MAP* BOY to EOY growth quintiles and one-year trends in *STAAR* and *EOC* reading-related subtests were mixed. When compared to the state and other large urban Texas districts, Dallas ISD EBSPED rate comparisons on *TELPAS-Alt, STAAR/EOCs,* and *STAAR/EOC Alt 2* were generally mixed. Thus, DL/ESL program staff members should continue their efforts to improve the assessment ratings of EBSPED students.

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