

# BILINGUAL EDUCATION AND ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE, 2009–2010, RESEARCH BRIEF

October, 2010



AUSTIN INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT  
Department of Program Evaluation

## PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Texas law requires that every student with a primary home language other than English, who is identified as limited English proficient (LEP; i.e., English language learner [ELL]) be provided with a full opportunity to participate in a bilingual education (BE) or English as a second language (ESL) program. To ensure educational equity, the law also states that districts must seek certified teaching personnel and assess these students' achievement in the state-mandated Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) curriculum. Students identified as LEP have access to several programs in Austin Independent School District (AISD), depending upon their grade level, level of English proficiency, and parents' preference. The goal of the BE program is to enable ELLs to become competent in comprehension, speaking, reading, and writing through the development of literacy and academic skills in the students' primary language. The goal of the ESL program is to develop students' literacy through the integrated use of second-language instructional methods.

## PROGRAM FUNDING

The two largest sources of district funding for BE/ESL programs were the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Title III, Part A grant (\$3.5 million) and local district funds (\$1.5 million). The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) State Fiscal Stabilization Fund (SFSF) supplemented the BE/ESL programs, which usually were covered by local funds for several summer school programs for ELLs (\$841,587). The district also used NCLB Title I (Improving Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged), Part A funds (\$615,947) and Texas Education Agency (TEA) reimbursement funds (\$160,160) to support these summer school programs. ARRA Title I funds (\$67,147) were used to fund the initial planning and development of AISD's 2010–2011 dual-language program. The Center for Research on the Educational Achievement and Teaching of English Language Learners (CREATE) grant funds (\$13,550) provided professional development training to 7<sup>th</sup>-grade teachers on 8 middle school campuses to improve content knowledge of ELLs.

Overall, the BE/ESL program cost per ELL enrolled was \$206, approximately a \$27 increase from \$179 per ELL enrolled in 2008–2009. This amounted to an approximate \$660,000 increase in spending (based on total ELL enrollment). The additional cost was covered through a \$1,150,899 rollover from Title III A funds from the previous year.

In Fall 2009, 84,676 students were enrolled in early education (EE) through 12<sup>th</sup> grade in AISD; of these, 24,593 (29%) were identified as LEP. The number of ELLs enrolled in AISD increased by 1% from 24,257 students in 2008–2009.

## ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNER DEMOGRAPHICS, 2009–2010

- The BE program served 15,367 ELLs (62% of all ELLs). The ESL program served 8,347 ELLs (34%).
- 75% of ELLs were in EE through 5<sup>th</sup> grade; 13% of ELLs were in 6<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup>; 12% of ELLs were in 9<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grade.
- 63 languages other than English were reported as being spoken primarily at home.
- 93% of ELLs spoke Spanish.
- 2% of ELLs spoke Vietnamese.
- Korean ( $n = 194$ ), Arabic ( $n = 143$ ), and Burmese ( $n = 120$ ) were highly represented languages among ELLs.
- 93% of ELLs were eligible for free or reduced-price lunch.
- 11% of ELLs were immigrants.
- 7% of ELLs received special education services.
- 4% of ELLs did not participate in either a BE or ESL program due to parental denial of service.

## Ethnic Background

- 93% of ELLs were Hispanic.
- 5% of ELLs were Asian.
- 1% of ELLs were White, and less than 1% of ELLs were African American or Native American.

The full summary report can be found at the following link:  
<http://www.austinisd.org/inside/accountability/evaluation/reports.phtml>

## STUDENT ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

NCLB legislation (2001) requires districts that accept Title III, Part A funds to be accountable for their ELLs learning English. In Texas, ELLs' proficiency is assessed annually using the Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS) for kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade. The four domains assessed by the TELPAS are listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Students receive a proficiency score and rating (i.e., beginning, intermediate, advanced, advanced high) on each domain. Table 1 presents students' composite TELPAS ratings by grade level. Figure 2 presents students' average TELPAS score by domain.

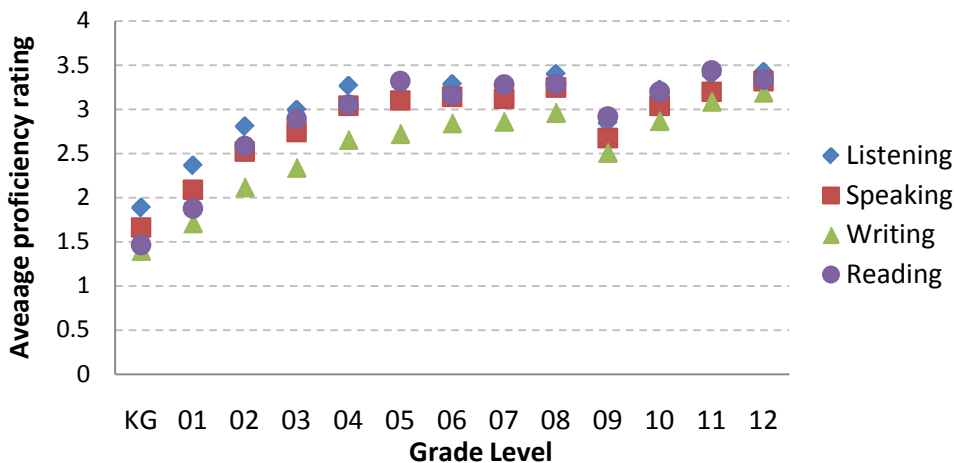
**Table 1. Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS) Composite Ratings for English Language Learners (ELLs), by Grade Level, 2009–2010**

Grade level	Number of ELLs	TELPAS beginning	TELPAS intermediate	TELPAS advanced	TELPAS advanced
Kindergarten	3,044	72%	14%	8%	5%
1	2,981	49%	25%	14%	11%
2	2,960	17%	33%	25%	24%
3	2,739	14%	23%	26%	37%
4	2,204	7%	23%	28%	41%
5	1,582	6%	14%	24%	55%
6	1,250	6%	15%	39%	40%
7	1,144	4%	15%	33%	46%
8	906	6%	12%	26%	52%
9	989	15%	16%	26%	36%
10	799	3%	15%	28%	33%
11	532	2%	11%	27%	56%
12	451	3%	12%	29%	45%

Source. AISD TELPAS records, 2009–2010

Note. Percentages may not sum to 100% because the “no rating available” category has been excluded.

**Figure 1. Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System Ratings (TELPAS) by Language Domain and Grade Level, Spring 2010**



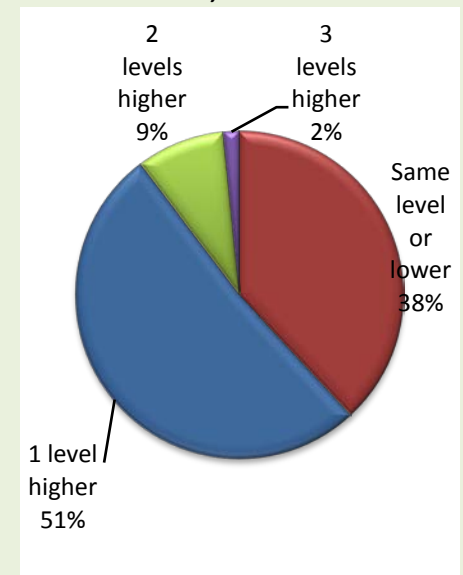
Source. AISD TELPAS records, 2010

## Key Findings

To meet the Texas Annual Measurable Achievement Objective (AMAO) standards, at least 45% of district ELLs in kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade must have earned a yearly progress indicator of 1 or higher (i.e., students must have progressed by at least one proficiency level or maintained a rating of advanced high from year to year).

Sixty-two percent of kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup>-grade ELLs gained at least one proficiency level or remained at advanced high proficiency.

**AISD Students' Yearly Progress on TELPAS, 2009–2010**



- *Ninth-grade students continued to score lower than did other students on all domains of the TELPAS.*
- *On average, writing continued to be students' lowest domain of performance on the TELPAS for all grade levels.*

### TELPAS COMPOSITE SCORES AND RATINGS

Composite range	Numeric value	Rating category
1.0 – 1.5	1	Beginning
1.6 – 2.5	2	Intermediate
2.6 – 3.5	3	Advanced
3.6 – 4.0	4	Advanced High

## STUDENT ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

The state-mandated Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) tests are administered annually to students in mathematics (math; grades 3 through 11); in reading (grades 3 through 9); in English language arts (ELA; grades 10 and 11), in writing (grades 4 and 7); in science (grades 5, 8, 10, and 11); and in social studies (grades 8, 10, and 11). English and Spanish versions of the TAKS are available for students in grades 3 through 5.

Although ELLs' TAKS scores have continued to improve over the years, the achievement gap persisted between the academic performance of ELLs and that of other AISD students across most grade levels and subject areas in 2009–2010.

### Math

The percentage of AISD ELLs who met standard on the math TAKS test was near or the same as the percentage of ELLs statewide who met standard across all grade levels, except for grades 5 and 8, where a lower percentage of AISD ELLs met standard than did ELLs statewide (-4% pts. and -6% pts., respectively). At most grade levels, percentage point gains from 2008–2009 to 2009–2010 showed the district's progress toward improving the academic achievement of ELLs in math. Students at the elementary level consistently had the highest passing rates. Both middle and high school ELLs' overall passing percentages continued to lag behind those of elementary ELLs, particularly at 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade; however, this trend was applicable statewide. Overall, ELLs at all grade levels made gains with respect to the percentage passing math TAKS, except for 8<sup>th</sup> grade ELLs, who had a loss of 3 percentage points compared with the previous year. With the exception of 8<sup>th</sup> grade, secondary-level ELLs made greater gains with respect to the percentage passing math TAKS than did elementary ELLs.

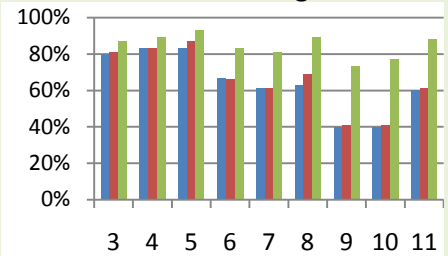
### Reading/English Language Arts

The percentage of elementary and middle school AISD ELLs who met standard on the reading/ELA TAKS test was near or the same as the percentage of ELLs statewide, with the exception of 6<sup>th</sup> grade, in which fewer AISD ELLs met standard than did ELLs statewide (-3% pts.). However, a greater percentage of high school ELLs than ELLs statewide met standard (i.e., 9<sup>th</sup> grade +2% pts., 10<sup>th</sup> grade +5% pts., and 11<sup>th</sup> grade +13% pts.). Please note that the percentage of AISD 11<sup>th</sup>-grade students passing the reading/ELA TAKS represented cumulative exam periods, while the percentage of statewide ELLs passing was based on the primary test date; therefore, statewide ELLs were generally underrepresented.

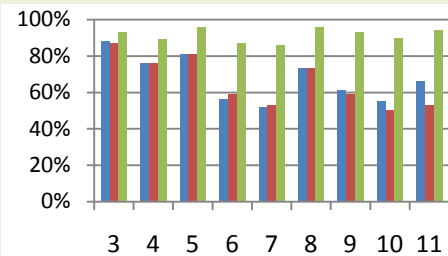
High school ELLs had some of the largest passing rate increases in the reading/ELA TAKS from the previous year, particularly at 9<sup>th</sup> grade, where students had a 10 percentage point gain. Data showed that 3<sup>rd</sup>-, 6<sup>th</sup>-, and 8<sup>th</sup>-grade AISD ELLs experienced a drop in the percentage passing the reading/ELA TAKS, although ELLs in the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade passed at near or the same rate as ELLs did statewide.

## TAKS Exams, 2010

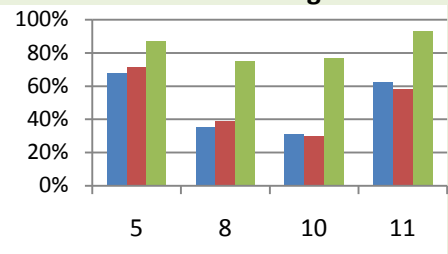
Math TAKS Passing Rates



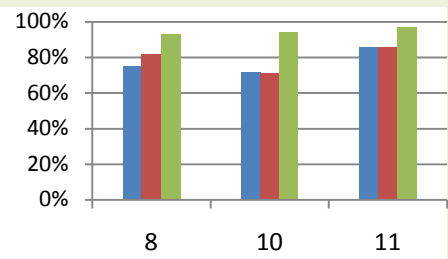
Reading TAKS Passing Rates



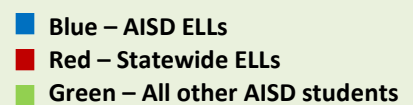
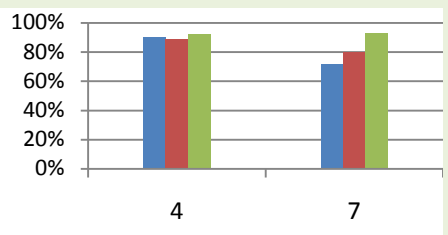
Science TAKS Passing Rates



Social Studies TAKS Passing Rates



Writing TAKS Passing Rates



## Science

A lower percentage of AISD ELLs passed the science TAKS in 5<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade than did ELLs statewide; however, at all grade levels, students had gains with respect to the percentage passing science TAKS compared with the percentage passing the previous year, demonstrating the district's progress toward improving the academic achievement of ELLs in science. Although passing rates increased for students at all grade levels, science TAKS passing rates continued to be quite low compared to those of other subject areas, particularly at 8<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade.

## Social Studies

AISD ELLs' social studies TAKS passing rate was lower than the statewide ELLs' rate for 8<sup>th</sup> grade (-7% pts.). However, the largest gain in social studies TAKS passing rates, compared with rates the previous year, was at 8<sup>th</sup> grade (+13% pts.). The high passing rate among 11<sup>th</sup> graders was maintained, and even improved slightly over the previous year's rate.

## Writing

The achievement gap in writing between 4<sup>th</sup>-grade AISD ELLs and all other AISD students was minimal (2% pts. gap). However, in 7<sup>th</sup> grade, the achievement gap widened to 21 percentage points, and the passing rate on the writing TAKS for AISD ELLs was 8% lower than the statewide ELLs' passing rate. The writing TAKS passing rates improved among 4<sup>th</sup>- and 7<sup>th</sup>-grade ELLs, compared with rates the previous year.

## BE/ESL PROGRAM EXIT

The number of students exiting the BE/ESL programs increased by 14% ( $n = 256$ ) from 2008–2009 to 2009–2010. As shown in Table 2, at least half of the students who exited BE/ESL each year did so between 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade. This pattern can be explained in part by the district's late transition model, the goal of which is to have students performing on grade level in English by the end of 5<sup>th</sup> grade after approximately 5 to 7 years in the BE/ESL programs.

**Table 2. Exited English Language Learners (ELLs), 2009–2010**

Grade level	Number of students	Percentage
1, 2 & 3	279	13
4	571	27
5	259	12
6	209	10
7	299	14
8	182	9
9	105	5
10	82	4
11	103	5
12	24	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,113</b>	<b>100</b>

Source. AISD student records



## Exiting Requirements

In accordance with state mandate TAC §89.1225(i), ELLs may qualify to exit the BE/ESL programs no earlier than 1<sup>st</sup> grade. In AISD, it is preferred that ELLs spend a minimum of 2 years in BE/ESL; however, students may exit as early as 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> grade if the following criteria have been met: (a) the student scored fluent in English speaking on the Language Assessment System Links (LAS Links) test, (b) the student scored above 40<sup>th</sup> percentile on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) English reading and language arts assessments, and (c) the campus Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC) and student's parents have agreed the student will be successful in an all-English classroom.

ELLs exiting BE/ESL services at the end of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade or later must meet the following requirements: (a) students must have passed the English language version of the reading/ELA TAKS, (b) students must have scored advanced on the speaking and reading sections of the TELPAS, (c) students must have scored advanced high on the writing portion of the TELPAS or passed the writing TAKS in English, and (d) students must have scored fluent in English speaking on the LAS Links. Additionally, the campus LPAC and the students' parents must approve transitioning the student to all-English classes.