Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS)

Spring 2018 Results

Austin Independent School District
Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to provide information on the results of the Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS) Spring 2018 administration in the Austin Independent School District (AISD). This document summarizes the results for grade levels, language programs, and years in U.S. schools.

TELPAS is a state-required assessment of English language proficiency, administered to English learners (ELs) in kindergarten through 12th grade. TELPAS assesses ELs in four domains: listening, speaking, writing, and reading. A proficiency rating is provided for each domain in one of four levels: beginning, intermediate, advanced, and advanced high. Additionally, a composite rating is provided in one of four levels: beginning, intermediate, advanced, and advanced high.

TELPAS went through some major changes for the Spring 2018 administration. The reading portion of the assessment was dramatically shortened, and the listening and speaking portions were changed to item-based standardized assessments. These changes required new standards, or cut scores, to be set. In addition, for the first time, students with admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committee exemptions for one or two of the domains received composite ratings. Furthermore, the weighting for each domain in the calculation of the composite rating was changed to equal weights for each domain. All of these changes resulted in an assessment that is not comparable to the assessment administered in the spring of 2017. Due to this incomparability, the yearly progress measure was not provided this year.

These changes had an impact on the distribution of composite ratings for all grade levels. The percentage of ELs attaining advanced high was substantially lower than in the previous year. From 3rd grade through 8th grade, more than half of the ELs at each grade level received composite ratings of advanced or advanced high. ELs in 5th, 6th, 8th, and 12th grades had the highest percentages of attaining advanced or advanced high composite ratings. These changes in the distribution of the composite ratings were due to the change in the weighting of the domains and the changes to the listening and speaking tests. Listening and speaking were previously holistically rated and each domain only accounted for 10% of the composite rating. The speaking test appears to have had the biggest impact on the composite ratings. Across all grade levels, the percentages of ELs attaining advanced high on the speaking test were much lower than those of the other three domains. When this test was equally weighted with the other three domains, the resulting composite ratings decreased. This decrease in the percentage of ELs in grades 3 through 12 attaining advanced high on the speaking domain test was seen statewide, a decrease of 43 percentage points from 2017 to 2018. Additionally, although not as dramatic, the percentage of ELs attaining advanced high on the listening domain test, in grades 3 through 12, decreased by 29 percentage points between 2017 and 2018. These decreases on the speaking and listening domain tests resulted in a 15 percentage point decrease in the composite ratings for ELs achieving advanced high statewide.

Greater percentages of ELs at low-poverty campuses than at high-poverty campuses had advanced or advanced high TELPAS composite ratings; however, at the secondary
level, the number of ELs at low-poverty campuses was very small. At elementary schools, lower percentages of Spanish-speaking ELs than of ELs speaking other languages attained advanced or advanced high TELPAS composite ratings. However, this trend was reversed at the middle school level and the difference was negligible at the high school level.

For all programs, the percentages of ELs with advanced or advanced high ratings progressively increased as the ELs advanced in grade level up to 8th grade, and 71% to 83% of students reached advanced or advanced high proficiency in English by 5th grade.

The goal is for ELs to attain advanced high after 5 years in a BE or ESL program, which is reflected in the percentages of elementary ELs attaining advanced or advanced high composite ratings increasing as the years in U.S. schools increases. At the elementary level, the highest percentage of ELs attaining advanced or advanced high were students who had been in U.S. schools for 5 years. At the secondary level, the percentages of ELs attaining advanced or advanced high composite ratings were higher the longer the students had been in U.S. schools.
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Background

The Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS) is the annual state-required assessment for English learners (ELs). TELPAS assesses English acquisition and proficiency for kindergarten through grade 12 in four domains: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. TELPAS is directly aligned with the Texas English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS). Additionally, the ELPS are directly aligned with the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), the state-required curriculum. In kindergarten through grade 1, all four domains are holistically rated based on classroom observations and student-teacher interactions. In grades 2 through 12, reading, listening, and speaking are standardized online assessments. The writing for grades 2 through 12 is holistically rated based on writing collections completed by the student within the collection window, which was February 12th through April 6th, for the 2018 administration.

After the 2016–2017 school year, the blueprint for the reading test domain was dramatically shortened. Additionally, the 2017–2018 school year was the first year of administration for the standardized listening and speaking domains, which were previously holistically rated. These changes required new standards to be set through the standard setting process. This process established cut scores that define the performance levels, or English language proficiency, for the shortened reading and for the standardized listening and speaking domains. Additionally, these major changes in the assessment resulted in the assessment not being comparable to last year’s assessment; therefore, yearly progress was not reported. Students’ English proficiency in each one of the four domains is classified into one of four performance levels: beginning, intermediate, advanced, and advanced high. For more information on TELPAS, see https://tea.texas.gov/student.assessment/ell/telpas/.

TELPAS Composite Rating

Before the 2017–2018 school year administration, an EL had to have been assessed in all four domains to receive a composite rating. The 2018 administration allowed for a composite rating to be calculated if the student was assessed in at least two domains and had admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committee exemptions from taking the other domains. This change offered the opportunity to assess students who previously would not have received a composite rating. In addition, this required changes to the calculation of the composite rating.

Previously, the composite rating was only provided if all four domains had been completed and was determined by weighting the four domains as follows: 10% listening, 10% speaking, 50% reading, and 30% writing. This year, the composite rating, when all four domains are completed, is determined by weighting the four domains as follows: 25% listening, 25% speaking, 25% reading, and 25% writing (see sidebar for calculation of the composite rating when one or two of the domains are not completed). There are four composite proficiency levels: beginning, intermediate, advanced, and advanced high.

Performance on TELPAS

Examining 2018 TELPAS composite ratings by grade level (Figure 1), the percentages of students with advanced or advanced high ratings tended to be higher at upper elementary than at lower elementary grades, which is consistent with gradual language acquisition of ELs as they matriculate through school. From 3rd grade through 8th grade, more than half
of ELs at each grade level received composite TELPAS ratings of advanced or advanced high. **At grades 5, 8, and 12, the highest percentages of ELs attained advanced high ratings** (Figure 1). These results are consistent with last year’s results. Many ELs are reclassified as English proficient (EP) by 5th grade because they are determined by their campus committee to have met the TEA criteria. In the middle school grades (6 through 8) and beginning of high school (grades 9 and 10), the percentages of ELs attaining advanced or advanced high ratings were not as high as for ELs in 5th grade, but that may be due to the enrollment of some ELs in U.S. schools for the first time. Lastly, in 11th and 12th grade, the majority of ELs received advanced or advanced high TELPAS composite ratings.

Overall, the percentage of ELs attaining intermediate and advanced composite ratings increased substantially compared with the percentages seen in the 2017 results. Additionally, the percentage of 9th-grade ELs receiving a beginning composite rating decreased by more than half, whereas the percentage receiving an intermediate rating almost doubled (Figure 1). In Appendix A, Figure A1 shows the 2017 overall TELPAS composite ratings for all ELs tested in AISD at each grade level. Figure A2 in Appendix A shows the 2018 overall TELPAS composite ratings for all ELs in AISD at each grade level. The impact on the overall TELPAS composite rating from the change to the domain weights can be seen at all grade levels.

**Figure 1.** Spring 2018 TELPAS Composite Ratings, by Grade Level

The changes seen in the distribution of the composite ratings is likely due to the change in the weighting of the four domains to equal weighting, and the change from holistically rating the listening and speaking domains to an item-based standardized test. Figures 2 through 5 show the distribution of ratings for listening, speaking, writing, and reading, respectively. The distribution of ratings for listening exhibits a similar pattern to the overall composite ratings, with a somewhat smaller percentage of ELs attaining an advanced rating, compared with the composite rating percentages (Figure 2). **Examination of the distribution of ratings for speaking reveals a very different pattern than that of the composite ratings, with low percentages of ELs receiving advanced high ratings and much larger percentages receiving intermediate and beginning ratings, compared with the composite** (Figure 3). The writing portion of TELPAS remained the same as in previous years, when it was holistically rated, although it is now equally weighted with the
other domains. A large percentage of ELs attained advanced high in writing (Figure 4). The reading portion of TELPAS was dramatically shortened, and new cut scores were created for the 2018 administration. Figure 5 shows the distribution of ratings for the reading domain. The distribution for the reading domain ratings was similar to that of the listening domain, with slightly lower percentages of students attaining advanced or advanced high.

**Figure 2.**
**2018 AISD ELs’ TELPAS Listening Ratings, by Grade Level**

**Source.** AISD student TELPAS 2018 records

**Figure 3.**
**2018 AISD ELs’ TELPAS Speaking Ratings, by Grade Level**

**Source.** AISD student TELPAS 2018 records
**Figure 4.**
2018 AISD ELs' TELPAS Writing Ratings, by Grade Level

**Source.** AISD student TELPAS 2018 records

**Figure 5.**
2018 AISD ELs' TELPAS Reading Ratings, by Grade Level

**Source.** AISD student TELPAS 2018 records
The 2018 administration of TELPAS allowed EL students who had ARD committee exemption from one or two domains to receive a composite rating. Of the 19,401 EL students who received composite ratings, only 2% had ARD exemptions. The majority of ELs with exemptions had exemptions from more than two of the domains and therefore did not receive a composite rating. Of the four domains, reading had the most exemptions with 336, writing had 324, speaking had 261, and listening had 250. **Overall, 346 ELs had at least one ARD exemption, and of those, only 83 received a composite rating.** Of the 83 ELs who received a composite rating, three ELs attained advanced high, 14 attained advanced, 36 attained intermediate, and 30 attained a beginning rating.

Table 1 compares the 2018 TELPAS performance of ELs in schools where 75% or more of students were economically disadvantaged (from a high-poverty campus) with the performance of ELs in schools where 25% or fewer students were economically disadvantaged (from a low-poverty campus). Economic disadvantage was determined by eligibility for free or reduced-price meals, and consequently, the number of economically disadvantaged students on a campus was directly related to parents’ willingness to request free or reduced-price meals assistance. At the secondary level, the number of ELs at low-poverty campuses was very low, which could be inaccurately low due to parents’ not choosing to request free or reduced-price meal assistance. The majority of ELs in AISD (88%) were eligible for free or reduced-price lunch in 2017–2018. Results show that TELPAS performance tended to be higher at low-poverty schools than at high-poverty schools. These results were similar to those found in 2017.

Table 2 compares TELPAS performance of ELs who speak Spanish at home with the performance of ELs who speak other non-English languages. At the elementary level, a larger percentage of ELs who speak other languages achieved advanced or advanced high levels of English proficiency, such as Korean (85%), Mandarin (74%), and Vietnamese (73%), compared with Spanish-speaking ELs, resulting in a 16 percentage point difference between ELs who speak another language at home and those who speak Spanish; however, the number of ELs speaking these languages at home were too small at the middle and high school level to make any meaningful comparisons. This effect seemed to reverse once ELs reached middle school. At middle school, a larger percentage of Spanish-speaking ELs (15%) than of ELs who spoke another language achieved advanced or advanced high levels on TELPAS. At high school, the difference was negligible (2%). **Fifty-one percent of ELs in middle school with a home language other than Spanish had 3 years or less in U.S. schools, whereas only 12% of Spanish-speaking ELs had 3 years or less in U.S. schools.**
Figure 6 shows percentages of elementary ELs for each grade level and in each type of language program who had either an advanced or advanced high composite TELPAS rating in 2018. For all programs, the percentages of students with advanced or advanced high ratings progressively increased as the students advanced in grade level, and 71% to 83% of students reached advanced or advanced high proficiency in English by 5th grade. The main difference between these program outcomes was related to their goals: the dual language (DL) program has the intrinsic goal of maintaining or developing the partner language, and consequently, students reach 5th grade with some proficiency in English and in Spanish, Mandarin, or Vietnamese. The percentage of 5th-grade ELs attaining advanced high was similar in all programs, between 22% to 27%. For the number of students tested, see Table B1 in Appendix B. ELs whose parents denied language programs displayed a non-linear pattern; however, interpretation of this pattern should be done with caution, as the number of students is very small (see Table B1 in Appendix B).

Evaluation of performance on TELPAS by the years in U.S. schools is another way to assess language acquisition. Figures 7 through 9 display the percentage of ELs attaining advanced or advanced high composite ratings for each school level. The percentages of elementary ELs attaining advanced or advanced high 2018 TELPAS composite ratings were higher the longer students had been in U.S. schools (Figure 7). The highest percentage of elementary ELs attaining advanced or advanced high composite ratings had been in U.S. schools for 5 years. The percentage of elementary ELs attaining advanced or advanced high decreased by 11 percentage points for those who had been in U.S. schools for 6 or more years compared, with ELs who had been in U.S. schools for 5 years. ELs who had the fewest years in U.S. schools had the lowest percentage of attaining advanced or advanced high composite ratings, likely due to many students entering school for the first time as kindergartners. The percentages of middle school ELs attaining advanced or advanced high composite ratings were higher the longer the students had been in U.S. schools, with the highest percentage for those students who had been in U.S. schools for 6 or more years (Figure 8). Consistent with elementary school ELs, middle school ELs newest to U.S. schools had the lowest percentages attaining advanced or advanced high composite ratings; however, when looking at home language, students whose language was not Spanish had higher percentages than did...
Spanish-speaking ELs of attaining advanced or advanced high rating with 3 years or less in U.S. schools (see Appendix D, Figures D1 and D2). The impact of these non-Spanish-speaking ELs’ performance on TELPAS is not reflected in the overall performance of middle school ELs because they only represented 9% of the ELs in middle school. The same pattern was seen with high school ELs: higher percentages of ELs attained advanced or advanced high composite ratings the longer the students were in U.S. schools, 6 or more years (Figure 9). Those high school ELs newest to U.S. schools had the lowest percentages of attaining advanced or advanced high composite ratings, consistent with the patterns seen at elementary and middle school. ELs attaining advanced or advanced high in reading and writing followed the same pattern as seen for the composite ratings (see Appendix C, Figures C1 through C6). Inconsistent patterns were seen in the listening and speaking domains at the elementary level (Appendix C, Figures C7 through C12). Rather than increased percentages of ELs attaining advanced or advanced high as years in U.S. schools increased, decreases were seen at 4 years in U.S. schools for listening, and at 2 years in U.S. schools for speaking. Additionally, the percentages of ELs attaining advanced or advanced high across school levels were lower for listening and speaking than for the other two domains. This could be due to a number of factors, such as the change from a holistic to an item-based standardized test or trouble with using the technology required for these two domains’ tests (i.e., microphones and recording devices).

Figure 7. Percentage of AISD Elementary School Students’ TELPAS 2018 Advanced or Advanced High Composite Ratings by, Years in U.S. Schools

Source. AISD TELPAS 2018 records

Figure 8. Percentage of AISD Middle School Students’ TELPAS 2018 Advanced or Advanced High Composite Ratings, by Years in U.S. Schools

Source. AISD TELPAS 2018 records
Conclusions

The changes to the 2018 TELPAS did have an impact on the distribution of composite ratings, as well as the distribution of domain ratings. The speaking domain appeared to have the largest influence on the composite ratings due to the substantial decrease from 2017 seen in the percentage of students attaining an advanced high rating in this domain. The decrease in speaking ratings from 2017 to 2018 could have been due to the technological changes required for a standardized test, such as microphones and the process of recording answers. Additionally, the reluctance of middle and high school students to speak in front of their peers and instead clicking through the test could have been a factor in the decrease in speaking ratings seen in 2018. This decrease in the percentage of ELs in grades 3 through 12 attaining advanced high on the speaking domain test was seen statewide, a decrease of 43 percentage points from 2017 to 2018. Additionally, although not as dramatic, the percentage of ELs attaining advanced high on the listening domain test, in grades 3 through 12, decreased by 29 percentage points between 2017 and 2018. These decreases on the speaking and listening domain tests resulted in a 15 percentage point decrease in the composite ratings for ELs achieving advanced high statewide. For the statewide summary reports by year, see https://tea.texas.gov/student.assessment/ell/telpas/rpt/sum/.

Although a decrease was seen from 2017 to 2018 in the percentage of ELs attaining advanced high composite ratings, after 3rd grade, the majority of students attained advanced or advanced high. This finding is consistent with the prior year’s results. Additionally, for all programs, the percentages of students with advanced or advanced high ratings progressively increased as students advanced in grade level to grade 8, with 71% to 83% attaining advanced or advanced high proficiency in English by 5th grade.

Recommendations

The changes made to the 2018 TELPAS resulted in the inability to provide yearly progress. It is recommended that AISD investigate other means of assessing progress made in English proficiency. It is also recommended that a comparison of current and future AISD TELPAS and statewide results be conducted to examine performance trends. Future research should examine the TELPAS results relative to the STAAR/end-of-course (EOC) results.
Appendix

Appendix A: TELPAS 2017 and 2018 Composite Ratings by Grade Level

Figure A1.
Spring 2017 TELPAS Composite Ratings, by Grade Level

Figure A2.
Spring 2018 TELPAS Composite Ratings, by Grade Level

Source. AISD student TELPAS 2017 records
## Appendix B: TELPAS 2018 Results for ELs, by BE/ESL Program, Grades 1 Through 5

Table B1. 
**Elementary ELs’ TELPAS 2018 Numbers Tested, by Grade Level and BE/ESL Program**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade level</th>
<th>Late-exit number tested</th>
<th>One-way DL number tested</th>
<th>Two-way DL number tested</th>
<th>ESL number tested</th>
<th>Denials number tested</th>
<th>All ELLs number tested</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kindergarten</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>1,329</td>
<td>281</td>
<td>424</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>2,191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 1</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>1,376</td>
<td>272</td>
<td>388</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>2,219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 2</td>
<td>239</td>
<td>1,350</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>398</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>2,215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 3</td>
<td>406</td>
<td>1,185</td>
<td>283</td>
<td>366</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>2,263</td>
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<td>Grade 4</td>
<td>503</td>
<td>1,052</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>358</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>2,197</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grade 5</td>
<td>499</td>
<td>1,030</td>
<td>217</td>
<td>343</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>2,113</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source.* AISD TELPAS 2018 records  
*Note.* Total numbers tested may not add up to all ELs tested due to miscodes in the program designation.
Appendix C: TELPAS 2018 Results for ELs, by Domain and School Level

Figure C1.
Percentage of AISD Elementary Students’ TELPAS 2017 Advanced or Advanced High Reading Ratings, by Years in U.S. Schools

Source. AISD TELPAS 2018 records

Figure C2.
Percentage of AISD Middle School Students’ TELPAS 2017 Advanced or Advanced High Reading Ratings, by Years in U.S. Schools

Source. AISD TELPAS 2018 records

Figure C3.
Percentage of AISD High School Students’ TELPAS 2018 Advanced or Advanced High Reading Ratings, by Years in U.S. Schools

Source. AISD TELPAS 2018 records
Appendix C: TELPAS 2018 Results for ELs, by Domain and School Level

Figure C4.
Percentage of AISD Elementary Students' TELPAS 2018 Advanced or Advanced High Writing Ratings, by Years in U.S. Schools

Source. AISD TELPAS 2018 records

Figure C5.
Percentage of AISD Middle School Students' TELPAS 2018 Advanced or Advanced High Writing Ratings, by Years in U.S. Schools

Source. AISD TELPAS 2018 records

Figure C6.
Percentage of AISD High School Students' TELPAS 2018 Advanced or Advanced High Writing Ratings, by Years in U.S. Schools

Source. AISD TELPAS 2018 records
Appendix C: TELPAS 2018 Results for ELs, by Domain and School Level

Figure C7.
Percentage of AISD Elementary Students' TELPAS 2018 Advanced or Advanced High Listening Ratings, by Years in U.S. Schools

Source. AISD TELPAS 2018 records

Figure C8.
Percentage of AISD Middle School Students' TELPAS 2018 Advanced or Advanced High Listening Ratings, by Years in U.S. Schools

Source. AISD TELPAS 2018 records

Figure C9.
Percentage of AISD High School Students' TELPAS 2018 Advanced or Advanced High Listening Ratings, by Years in U.S. Schools

Source. AISD TELPAS 2018 records
Appendix C: TELPAS 2018 Results for ELs, by Domain and School Level

Figure C10.
Percentage of AISD Elementary Students' TELPAS 2018 Advanced or Advanced High Speaking Ratings, by Years in U.S. Schools

Source. AISD TELPAS 2018 records

Figure C11.
Percentage of AISD Middle School Students' TELPAS 2018 Advanced or Advanced High Speaking Ratings, by Years in U.S. Schools

Source. AISD TELPAS 2018 records

Figure C12.
Percentage of AISD High School Students' TELPAS 2018 Advanced or Advanced High Speaking Ratings, by Years in U.S. Schools

Source. AISD TELPAS 2018 records
Appendix D: TELPAS 2018 Results for Middle School ELs, by Home Language

Figure D1. Percentage of AISD Middle School ELs with Advanced or Advanced High Composite Ratings, by Years in U.S. Schools for ELs Whose Home Language Is Other Than Spanish

Source. AISD TELPAS 2018 records

Figure D2. Percentage of AISD Middle School ELs with Advanced or Advanced High Composite Ratings, by Years in U.S. Schools for ELs Whose Home Language Is Spanish

Source. AISD TELPAS 2018 records