

Secondary Dual Language Academic Performance Summary Report, 2019–2020

Austin Independent School District

Introduction

The purpose of this report is to provide information about the academic performance of secondary students enrolled in the secondary Dual Language program (DL) in the Austin Independent School District (AISD). This document summarizes program characteristics and student characteristics, performance on the Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS), enrollment in advanced placement (AP) courses and performance on AP exams, for the 2019–2020 school year. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, academic course performance, performance on the State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness (STAAR) tests and performance on the end-of-course (EOC) tests could not be reported because the data did not exist.

At the secondary school level, the DL program offers students two courses taught in Spanish each year: a core content and a Spanish-language course. The program is intended for all students who have participated in a DL program in elementary school, students coming from Spanish-speaking countries or homes, and students who have participated in a Spanish immersion program. Students enrolled in secondary DL have the opportunity to earn high school and college-level course credit. During the 2019–2020 school year, ten middle schools offered DL (Bedichek, Burnet, Covington, Lamar, Lively, Martin, Paredes, Bertha Sadler Means, Small, and Webb). Students can continue DL in high school in a limited format at four early college high schools (Akins, Crockett, Navarro and Travis). Next school year, 2020–2021, Gus Garcia will be the eleventh middle school added offering DL, and in 2021–2022 Dobie Middle School will be the twelfth. A goal of the AISD Multilingual Department is to expand DL to more schools in the future.

Results

Student Characteristics

Overall, 1,345 students were enrolled in secondary DL in 2019–2020, and 781 students were enrolled in both recommended courses of the DL program. Due to extenuating circumstances, such as lack of appropriate teachers, some schools only offered one DL course to some grade levels. The majority of students were emergent bilinguals (67%; formerly known as English learners) and Hispanic (93%). Other students enrolled included 81 White students, five students of two or more races, four Asian students, three black students and two American Indian or Pacific Islander students. The majority were also classified as economically disadvantaged (81%).

In 2019–2020, the secondary DL program spanned from sixth- to tenth-grade. This school year, 404 students were enrolled in 6th grade DL followed by 386 in 7th grade, 372 in 8th grade, 129 in 9th grade and 54 in 10th grade DL. At the secondary level, the other English language

education program for emergent bilinguals is English as a Second Language (ESL).

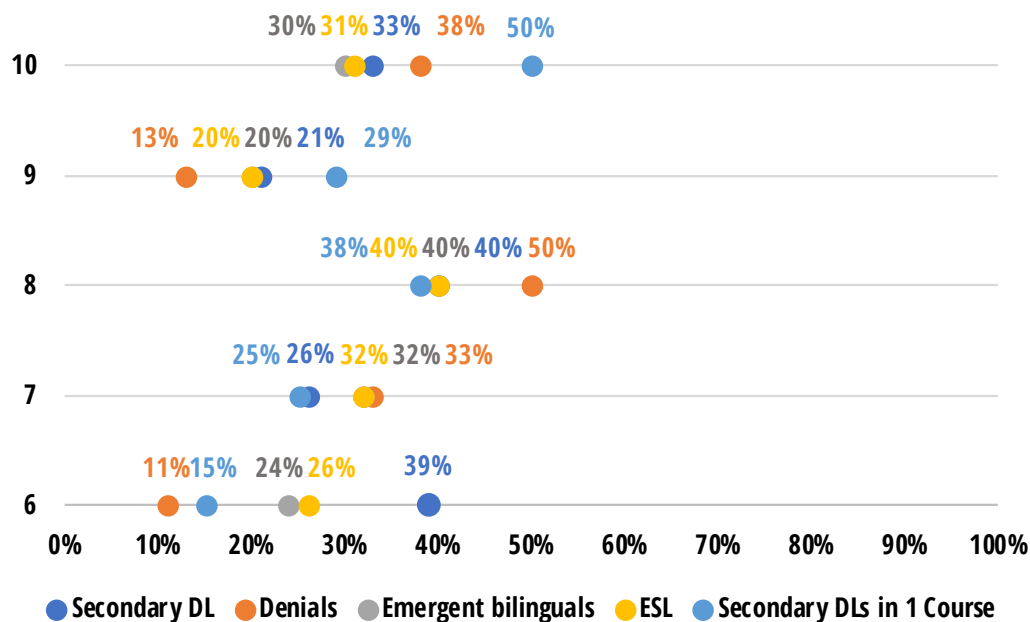
TELPAS

To understand how the secondary DL students performed on English proficiency, TELPAS scores for secondary DL students were analyzed in comparison with scores for similar student populations in grades 6 through 10. These populations included: secondary students in DL, secondary students in only 1 DL course, secondary students in ESL, secondary denial students (i.e., emergent bilingual students whose parents opted out of ESL or DL), and all emergent bilinguals at AISD. A total of 6,280 emergent bilingual secondary students took TELPAS this year, including 5,674 ESL students, 508 DL students, 369 DL students in 1 DL course and 95 denials.

First, students' English proficiency progress since last school year, 2018–2019, was examined. In 6th grade, a higher percentage of DL students than of other students advanced one or more levels in English proficiency (measured by composite TELPAS score) between school years (Figure 1). In grades 8 and 9, secondary DL students showed higher or equal percentages of proficiency progress than did all other students except denials and 1 course DLs, respectively. However, in 7th and 10th grade, secondary DL students made less progress than half of the other subgroups.

Figure 1.

Percentage of Students Whose English Proficiency Progressed at Least One Proficiency Level on TELPAS, by Grade Level and Student Subgroup



Source. AISD TELPAS records 2020; Secondary DL = 289, Denials = 51, Emergent bilinguals = 3,971 and ESL = 3,622, Secondary DLs in 1 Course = 223.

Students in secondary DL outperformed students in ESL, on all subscales of TELPAS at all grade levels, except for 10th grade listening and 7th grade speaking (Figures 2–6). Generally, secondary DL students outperformed secondary DL students only enrolled in 1 DL course

TELPAS

TELPAS is the annual state-required assessment for emergent bilinguals. TELPAS assesses English acquisition and proficiency in four domains: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. TELPAS is directly aligned with the Texas English Language Proficiency Standards.

There are four composite proficiency levels: beginning, intermediate, advanced, and advanced high.

To achieve the advanced high composite proficiency rating, a student must receive a composite score greater than or equal to 3.5 or a minimum proficiency level 3 (advanced) in all four domains.

To achieve the advanced composite proficiency rating, a student must receive a composite score greater than or equal to 2.5 or a minimum proficiency level 2 (intermediate) in all domains or a minimum proficiency level 3 (advanced) in at least half of the domains assessed.

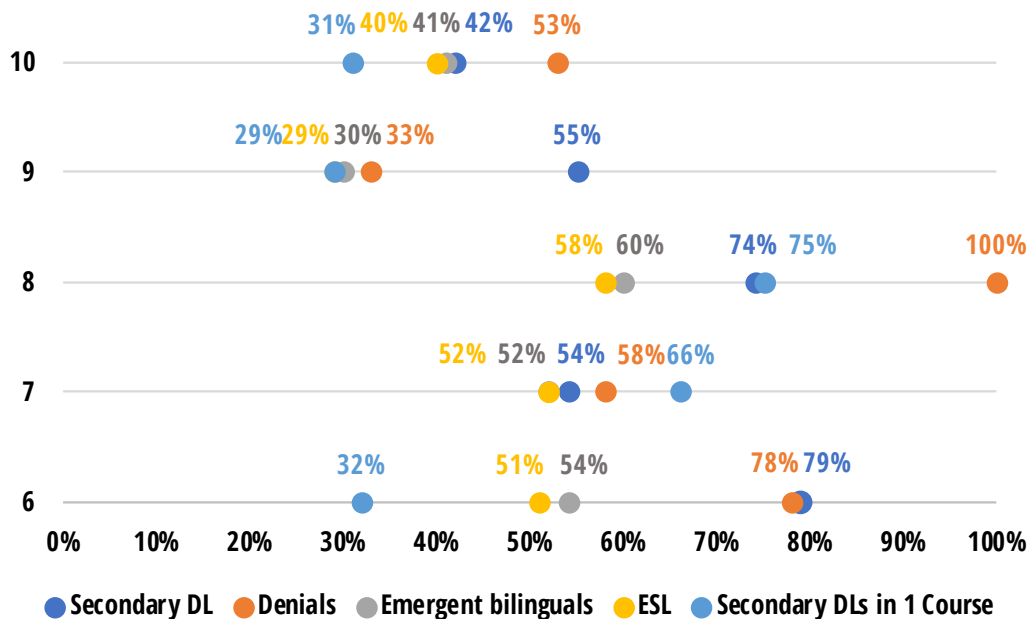
To achieve the intermediate composite proficiency rating, a student must receive a composite score greater than or equal to 1.5 or a minimum proficiency level 2 (intermediate) in at least half of the domains assessed.

For more information, see <https://tea.texas.gov/student-assessment/testing/telpas/telpas-resources>.

for 2019–2020, except for writing in 7th and 8th grade, reading in 10th grade, speaking in 7th and 10th grade and listening in 10th grade. Students in the denial subgroup occasionally outperformed DL students.

Figure 2.

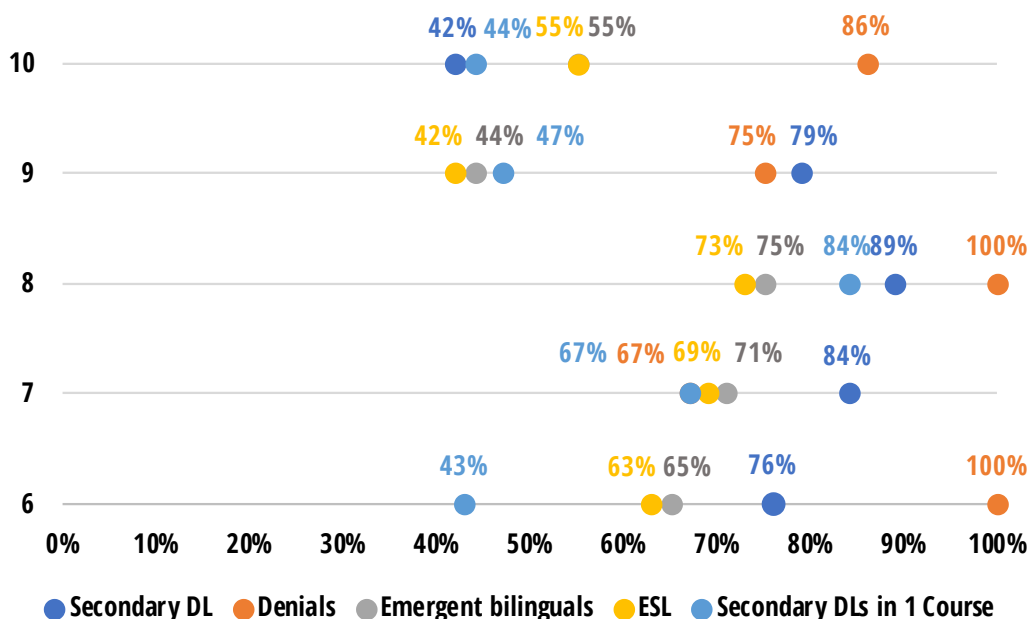
Percentage of Students Who Scored Advanced/Advanced High on TELPAS Composite Ratings, by Grade Level and Student Subgroup



Source. AISD TELPAS records 2020; Secondary DL = 296, Denials = 71, Emergent bilinguals = 4,684, ESL = 4,321, and Secondary DLs in 1 Course = 246.

Figure 3.

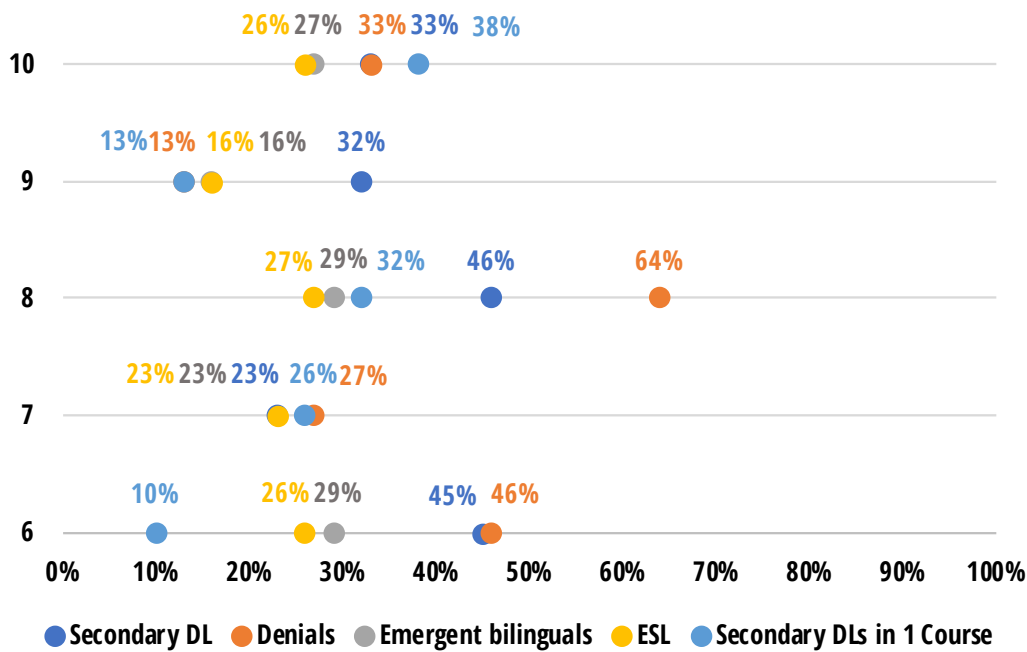
Percentage of Students Who Scored Advanced/Advanced High on TELPAS Listening Ratings, by Grade Level and Student Subgroup



Source. AISD TELPAS records 2020; Secondary DL = 508, Denials = 93, Emergent bilinguals = 6,280, ESL = 5,674, and Secondary DLs in 1 Course = 368.

Figure 4.

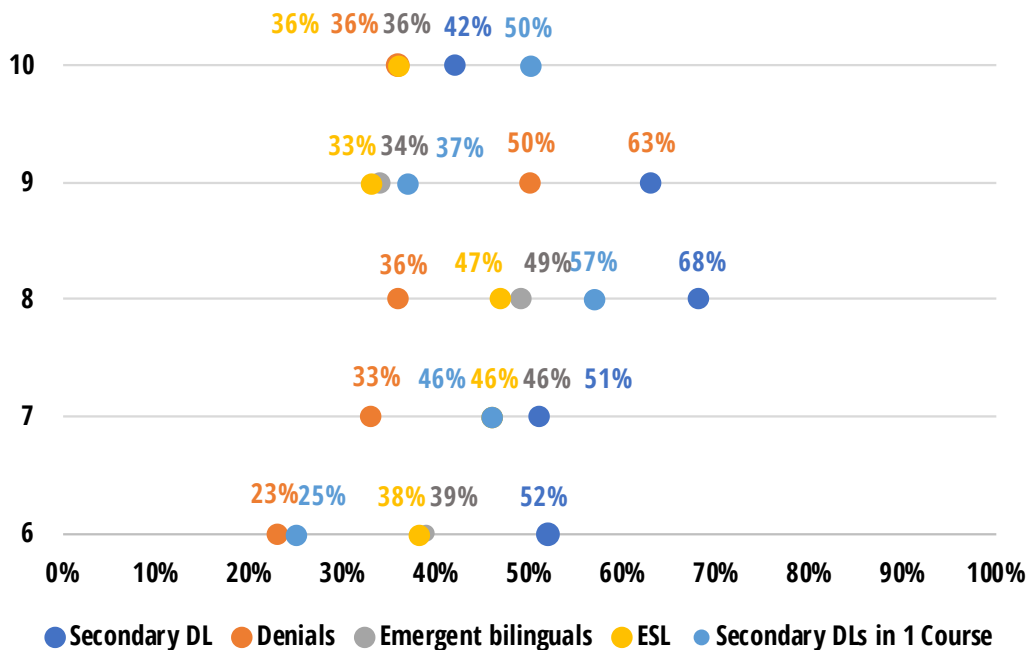
Percentage of Students Who Scored Advanced/Advanced High on TELPAS Speaking Ratings, by Grade Level and Student Subgroup



Source. AISD TELPAS records 2020; see “Listening” subscale for student counts as they are equivalent.

Figure 5.

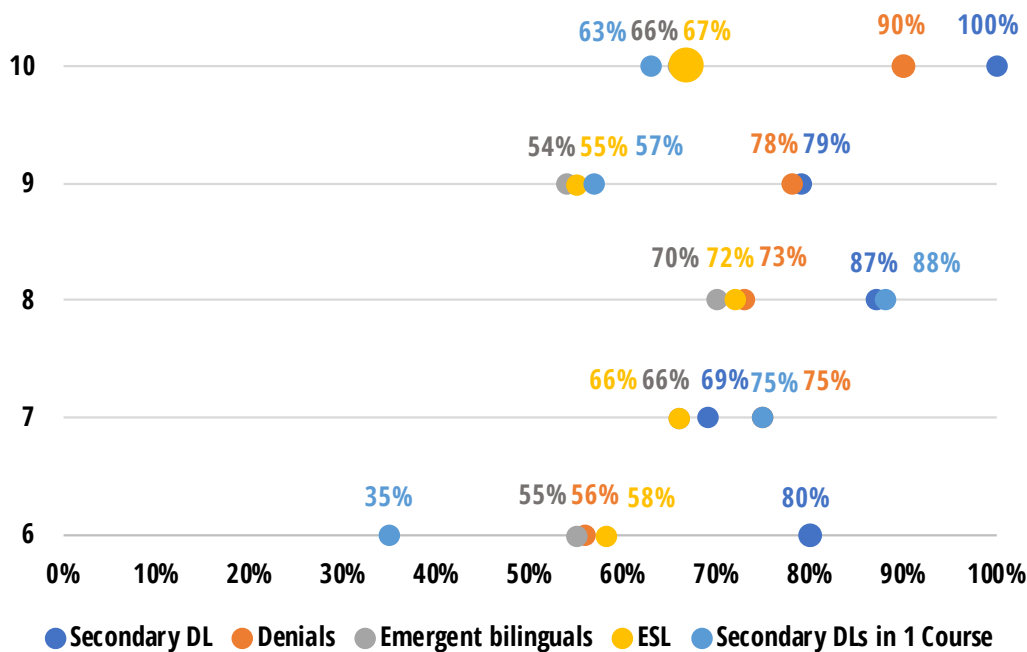
Percentage of Students Who Scored Advanced/Advanced High on TELPAS Reading Ratings, by Grade Level and Student Subgroup



Source. AISD TELPAS records 2020; Secondary DL = 508, Denials = 95, Emergent bilinguals = 6,274, ESL = 5,666, and Secondary DLs in 1 Course = 369.

Figure 6

Percentage of Students Who Scored Advanced/Advanced High on TELPAS Writing Ratings, by Grade Level and Student Subgroup



Source. AISD TELPAS records 2020; Secondary DL = 296, Denials = 74, Emergent bilinguals = 4,756, ESL = 4,389, and Secondary DLs in 1 Course = 248.

Advanced Placement Courses and Exams

AP courses are offered at both the middle and high school levels for students at AISD. At the middle school level, several pre-AP courses and the Spanish Language and Culture AP course are offered. At the high school level, many more options for AP classes are available. As part of the secondary DL program requirements, DL students are enrolled in the AP Spanish Language and Culture course and encouraged to take the corresponding AP exam to earn college credit.

Middle and high school students enrolled in AP courses can earn college credit by taking an AP exam and scoring a 3 or higher on a 1 to 5 scale. The number of credits earned depends on the score received (i.e., 3, 4, or 5). Of the secondary DL students, 125 8th grade and three high school students took AP exams this school year. Only three DL students took a second AP exam other than the AP Spanish Language and Culture exam so results for other exams are not reported. Of all secondary DL students in grades 8 through 10 ($n = 282$), just less than half (45%) took one or more AP exams. In comparison, 170 secondary students only enrolled in 1 DL course were enrolled in an AP course, and 60 of those students took one or more AP exam (35%). Out of non-DL emergent bilingual students who were enrolled in an AP course in grades 8 through 10 ($n = 157$), only 41 students took one or more AP exam (26%). Eighty-one percent of secondary DL students who took the AP Spanish exam scored a 3 or higher and earned college credit. In comparison, only 76% of secondary students enrolled in only 1 DL course ($n = 54$) and 93% non-DL emergent bilingual students ($n = 14$) scored a 3 or higher on the AP Spanish exam.

Conclusion

Fifteen percent fewer students took TELPAS this year compared to last year, likely due to the challenges associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. Results from TELPAS showed secondary DL students scored higher in English proficiency than did their non-DL counterparts on the vast majority of subscales and grade levels. When DL students were outperformed, it was often by denial students. This is not entirely surprising, as denial students may have parents who denied their entry into a bilingual education program because they believed their child was English proficient. Additionally, there were instances where secondary DL students only enrolled in 1 DL course (of the 2 recommended) outperformed secondary DL students in 2 courses. It is difficult to make assumptions about these findings as it is likely that the students only in 1 DL course were in 2 DL courses the years prior. Hence, they may not be lacking more than a semester or two of a full DL course load. On the other hand, some of the students only enrolled in 1 DL course may come from schools that repeatedly fail to offer the full DL course load over multiple grade levels.

Interestingly, English proficiency scores on all subscales except writing (which continues to climb) seemed to spike in 8th grade and subside in 9th and 10th grades. It is possible that the rigor of high school dampens students' ability to focus on their English proficiency. Also likely is that higher grade levels may contain more newcomer emergent bilingual students who have not yet had enough time in U.S. schools to reach English proficiency, and/or long-term emergent bilingual students who have struggled to gain English proficiency for more than 6 years. Hence, grades 9 and 10 may be where the DL program should focus extra resources, especially considering these students will soon need to be career- and/or college-ready.

Another interesting finding was in TELPAS progress scores. English proficiency progress appeared to volley up and down every other grade level for all emergent bilingual students. It may be that the transition from lower middle school to upper middle school and then to high school is challenging. Transition points throughout school are sometimes related to poorer academic outcomes (Evans, Borriello & Field, 2018).

Lastly, secondary DL students participated in AP exams in higher proportions than did secondary DL students only enrolled in 1 DL course and non-DL emergent bilingual students and received a slightly higher percentage of passing scores. This is a testament to the program's ability to expose students to college credit opportunities. Obtaining college credit in high school is a factor associated with postsecondary credential rates, especially for underrepresented students (Hoffman, 2003).

References

- Evans, D., Borriello, G. A., & Field, A. P. (2018). A review of the academic and psychological impact of the transition to secondary education. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 9, 1482.
- Hoffman, N. (2003). College credit in high school: Increasing college attainment rates for underrepresented students. *Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning*, 35(4), 42–48.