

What is the Doss Mandarin FLI Program?

The Doss Elementary Mandarin Foreign Language Immersion (FLI) program began in the 2013–2014 academic year. Students may apply to participate in the partial immersion program beginning in their kindergarten year. The program served 61 students in kindergarten and 1st and 2nd grades. Each year, the program will add a grade. The oldest students may elect to continue their Mandarin studies at Murchison Middle School and Anderson High School.

Why were parents of students in the Doss Mandarin FLI surveyed?

The Austin Independent School District (AISD) Office of Academics provided an evaluation of program efforts at the conclusion of the program’s first year. Parents’ feedback was solicited regarding the overall program quality, teachers’ communication, children’s performance, parents’ concerns, program challenges, and children’s or program successes and accomplishments. This report provides descriptions of the survey items and parents’ responses.

Who completed the parent survey?

The survey was open to all parents of students participating in the Mandarin FLI program at Doss. The survey was conducted online, and invitations to participate were distributed to parents’ email addresses on file at the campus. Additional participation recruitment occurred through school announcements and reminders by Doss administrators and teachers. The survey was available to participants for a period of 2 weeks in May.

To provide each program-affiliated parent an opportunity to provide feedback about the Mandarin FLI’s first year implementation, survey invitations were distributed to all parents who had an email address on file at the school office. When multiple parent email addresses were on file for a particular student, all available parent email addresses were sent an invitation (i.e., two parents or more may have received invitations to complete the survey about a single student’s experiences). In addition, when parents had multiple children enrolled in the program in one or more grade levels, parents received one invitation per child. Each invitation was directly linked to a specific student. The results could then be disaggregated by grade level, to allow for specific findings pertaining to grade 3 experiences as opposed to kindergarten experiences, for example. Given that multiple parents may have completed a survey about their shared child, results were weighted by the number of people who completed the survey for a particular student. In that way, particular families’ experiences did not over shadow other families’ experiences simply because one family had two or three parents who completed the survey and the other family had one parent who completed the survey.

Table 1 illustrates the characteristics of responding families and the students represented. The majority of families invited to participate in the survey chose to respond. The sample was sufficient to draw conclusions about family experiences in year 1 of the Doss Mandarin FLI program. Students who attended the program were largely homogeneous with regard to race and ethnicity (Asian, $n = 5$ [9.6%]; Black or African American, $n = 1$ [1.9%]; Hispanic, $n = 3$ [5.8%]; two or more races, $n = 1$ [1.9%], White, $n = 42$ [80.8%]). Few students were economically disadvantaged, English language learners, or receiving special education services.

Table 1. Characteristics of Students Whose Families Participated in the Parent Survey

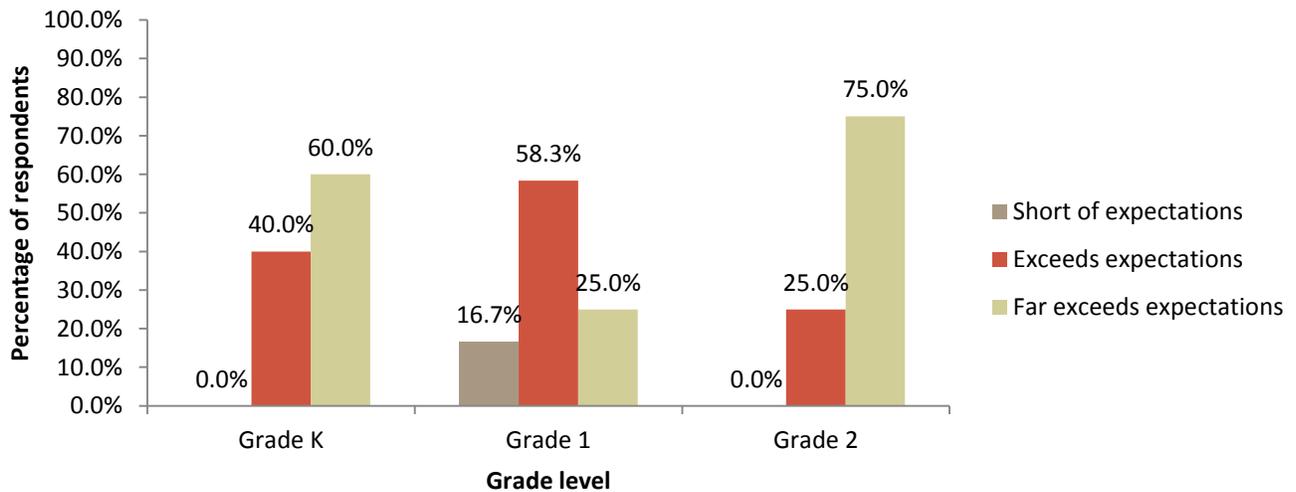
Characteristic	Number
Individual survey invitations	114
Families completing survey	43
Non-responding families	6
Kindergarteners represented	18
Grade 1 students represented	20
Grade 2 students represented	17
Female/Male students represented	25/27
Economically disadvantaged students represented	0
At-risk students represented	5
Gifted or talented students represented	0
English language learners represented	2
Students receiving special education services represented	1

Source. AISD Student Information Systems, as of August, 2014

How successful was the first year of the Doss Mandarin FLI program, overall?

Parents reported that the first year of the Doss Mandarin FLI program was successful from their perspective. Parents in grade 2 and kindergarten reported feeling that the program either far exceeded or exceeded their expectations, while 23.5% of parents from grade 1 reported that the year fell short of their expectations.

Figure 1. How successful was the first year of the Doss Mandarin Foreign Language Immersion (FLI) program, overall? More than 60% of kindergarten and 2nd-grade parents felt the first year of the program far exceeded their expectations.

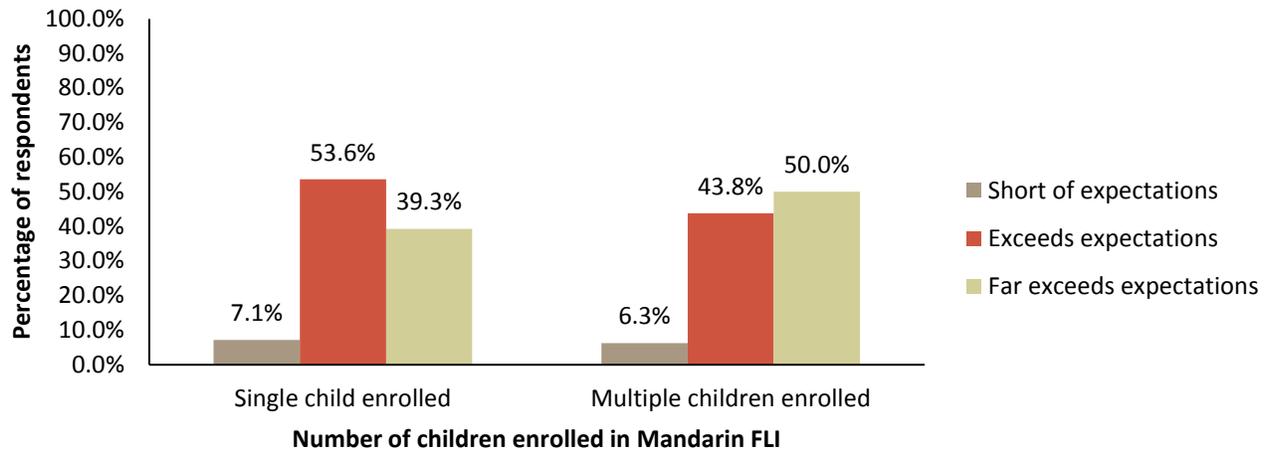


Source. 2013 AISD Doss Mandarin FLI Program Parent Survey

The responses to this item were also examined by two additional factors: gender of the student and whether or not the rater had multiple children enrolled in the program. Interestingly, survey participants with multiple children rated the program higher than did those with one child enrolled. Figure 2 illustrates the differences in ratings. It is possible that children with siblings who were also learning Mandarin had greater opportunities

to practice their new vocabulary development or that families saw a stronger influence of the immersion program when multiple children were involved.

Figure 2. How successful was the first year of the Doss Mandarin Foreign Language Immersion (FLI) program, overall? Parent respondents with multiple children in the program rated the experience higher than did parents with a single child.

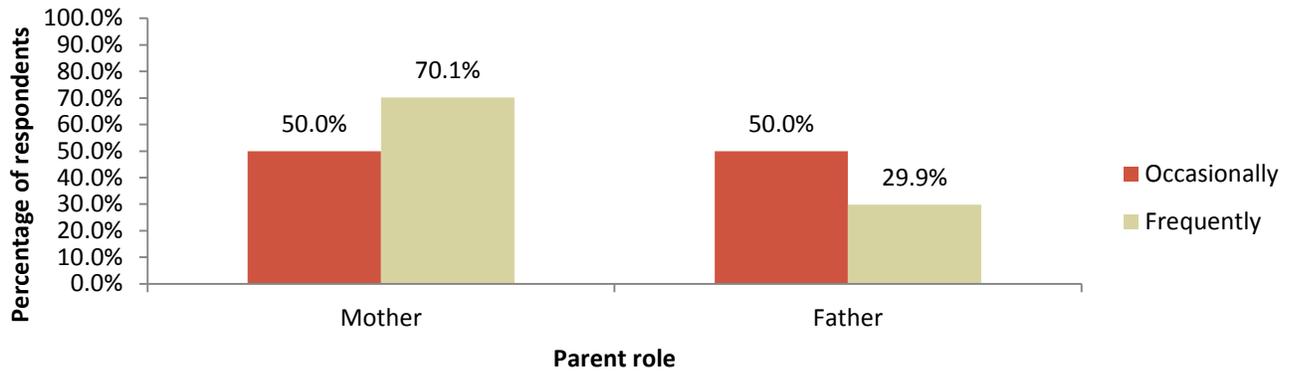


Source. 2013 AISD Doss Mandarin FLI Program Parent Survey

Has your child benefited from participation in the Doss Mandarin FLI program?

Parents felt their child benefited *frequently* from program participation (Figure 3). A few parents indicated *occasional* benefit, while no parents rated the benefit lower (other options were *seldom* and *never*). Parents of male and female students rated this item similarly to one another. Parents of students who had a sibling enrolled were more likely than were parents of students without a sibling to report a higher level of benefit to their children. A difference in ratings occurred between when the gender of the parent completing the survey was analyzed. Fathers responded less favorably than did mothers (90% of mothers rated frequent benefit to the child and 9.6% rated occasional benefit to the child, while 80% of fathers rated frequent benefit and 20% rated occasional). Qualitative responses to the open-ended question probing how parents gauged their child's benefit did not provide significant insight into how frequent benefit and benefiting occasionally may have been differentially determined, but the most typical responses pertained to the children's confidence, engagement, and enthusiasm. For example, parent comments included "She is communicating with her sibling in Chinese fairly often. She is excited about the program"; "The amount of Chinese my child can speak after 1 year far exceeds our expectations"; "They like that it is different, but they don't truly love it and struggle more than I like to see"; and "This is a long-term investment, I don't know that there are big benefits that we can see yet."

Figure 3. Has your child benefited from participation in the Doss Mandarin Foreign Language Immersion (FLI) program?

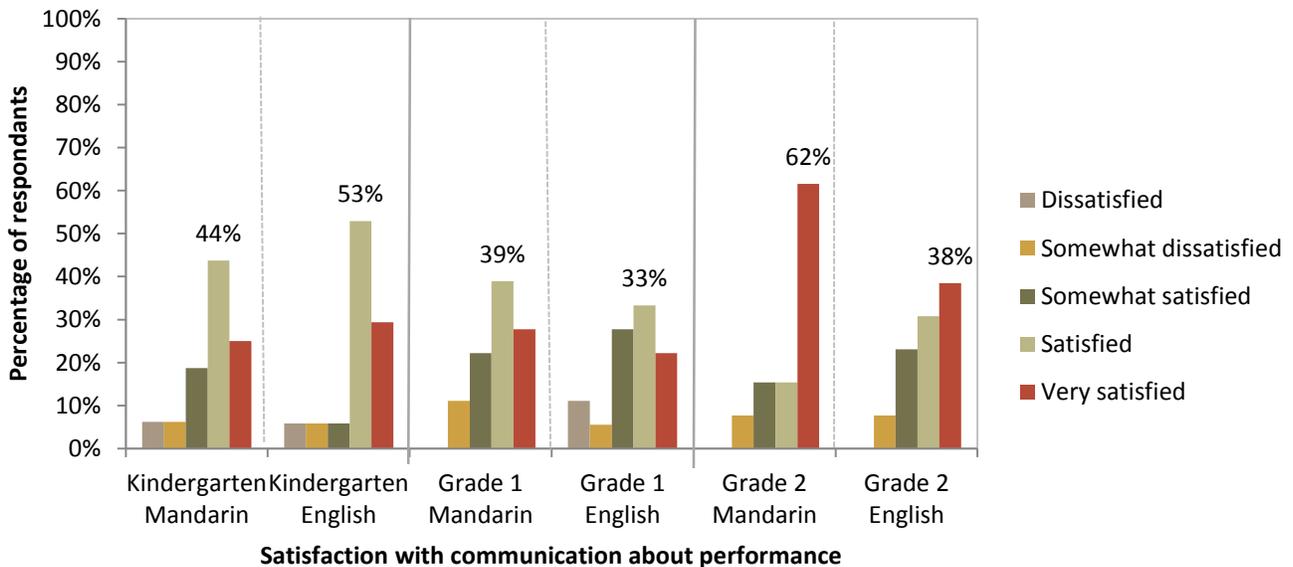


Source. 2013 AISD Doss Mandarin FLI Program Parent Survey

Were parents satisfied with communication about their child’s progress in the Doss Mandarin FLI program, based on grade level and language of instruction?

Parents reported on their level of satisfaction with communication received regarding their child’s progress in the English and in the Mandarin portions of the FLI program at Doss (Figure 4). In that context, parents appeared to evaluate their satisfaction differently across grade levels. For example, parents of grade-2 students were most satisfied. Grade-2 teachers received the highest ratings in both English (38% rated *very satisfied*) and in Mandarin (62% rated *very satisfied*). Far less consensus was found among grade-1 parents, whose highest ratings in Mandarin and English were *satisfied* (39% and 33%, respectively). Parents who had more than one child in the program were more likely to indicate *very satisfied* (41.2%) than were parents who had only one child in the program (20%). Parents with only one child enrolled selected *satisfied* most often (46.7%), whereas only 20.4% of parents with more than one child selected *satisfied*.

Figure 4. Parents’ Satisfaction with Communication about Their Child’s Progress in the Doss Mandarin Foreign Language Immersion (FLI) Program, Based on Grade Level and Language of Instruction



Source. 2013 AISD Doss Mandarin FLI Program Parent Su

Did parents feel they received the tools and resources to support their children’s success in the program?

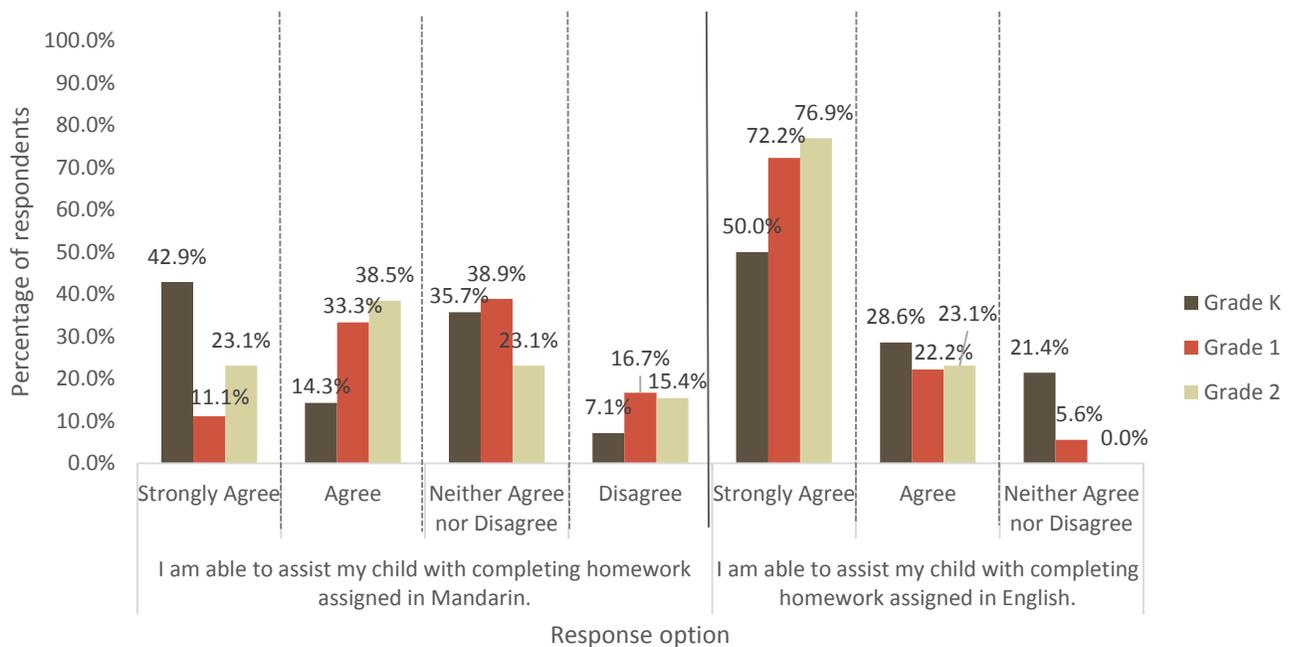
Parents of students in grade 2 were most likely to feel they had been supported with the tools and resources to help their children be successful in the immersion program. In grade 2, 61.5% of parents selected the most favorable category (*clearly describes my feelings*) and 60.0% of kindergarten parents did so, compared with only 42.1% of grade-1 parents.

Tools and resources for students in the immersion program included parents’ support to assist their children with homework in Mandarin (Table 2). Parents were asked to respond to five homework-related items using a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). Parents felt that homework expectations were reasonable (76% responded agree or strongly agree), and they were able to assist their child with completing the assignments. Again, the pattern was observed whereby grade-2 parents expressed the highest satisfaction, followed by kindergarten parents, and then grade-1 parents (Figure 5). Although a few parents selected the *disagree* response option regarding Mandarin homework, no parents selected *disagree* pertaining to English homework. Assisting one’s child to complete homework in a language in which parents are not well versed is understandably difficult. Still, parents reported that their children received a reasonable amount of homework and that the homework was of a decent quality (84% responded to the quality item with *agree* or *strongly agree*).

Table 2. Were homework practices useful to parents?

Item	Response Option	Grade K	Grade 1	Grade 2	Total
There are clear expectations about homework.	<i>Strongly Agree</i>	33.3%	27.8%	50.0%	36.2%
	<i>Agree</i>	46.7%	38.9%	35.7%	40.4%
	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	20.0%	27.8%	7.1%	19.1%
	<i>Disagree</i>	0.0%	5.6%	7.1%	4.3%
The quality of the kinds of homework assigned in Mandarin is acceptable.	<i>Strongly Agree</i>	40.0%	33.3%	61.5%	43.5%
	<i>Agree</i>	40.0%	44.4%	38.5%	41.3%
	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	20.0%	16.7%	0.0%	13.0%
	<i>Disagree</i>	0.0%	5.6%	0.0%	2.2%
I am able to assist my child with completing homework assigned in Mandarin.	<i>Strongly Agree</i>	42.9%	11.1%	23.1%	24.4%
	<i>Agree</i>	14.3%	33.3%	38.5%	28.9%
	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	35.7%	38.9%	23.1%	33.3%
	<i>Disagree</i>	7.1%	16.7%	15.4%	13.3%
I am able to assist my child with completing homework assigned in English.	<i>Strongly Agree</i>	50.0%	72.2%	76.9%	66.7%
	<i>Agree</i>	28.6%	22.2%	23.1%	24.4%
	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	21.4%	5.6%	0.0%	8.9%
	<i>Disagree</i>	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
The amount of homework assigned in Mandarin is appropriate for my child.	<i>Strongly Agree</i>	37.5%	27.8%	46.2%	36.2%
	<i>Agree</i>	43.8%	55.6%	53.8%	51.1%
	<i>Neither Agree nor Disagree</i>	6.3%	5.6%	0.0%	4.3%
	<i>Disagree</i>	12.5%	11.1%	0.0%	8.5%

Figure 5. Comparison of Parents' Perception of Homework Assistance in English Versus in Mandarin.



Source. 2013 AISD Doss Mandarin Foreign Language Immersion (FLI) Program Parent Survey

Did parents have any concerns about the Doss Mandarin FLI program at the end of year 1?

Despite the fact that parents reported feeling satisfaction with the Mandarin FLI program overall, they also had concerns they did not feel were being addressed. This question specifically pertained to parents' concerns regarding the program itself. A separate question probed whether they had any concerns specific to their child's participation or progress. Among parents of grade-2 students, the response pattern flipped from earlier questions: 53.8% had concerns they did not feel were being addressed, while only one-third of kindergarten and grade-1 parents did. The following are examples of concerns expressed by parents:

"I think mixing socially will become more important as the kids age, and I think it could easily be done for the incoming 3rd-grade class with little to no issues. Since 3rd grade already changes classes, all that has to be done is for the school to take each science/math grouping and split them into the number of total 3rd-grade classes and then divide them up across the English/history classes. For example, since there are four classes in 3rd grade, you would have groups of five kids as such: Science/Math / Class 1 Group A, B, C, D / Class 2 Group A, B, C, D / Class 3 Group A, B, C, D / Class 4 Group A, B, C, D (Mandarin class) / English/History / Class = 1A, 2B, 3C, 4D / Class = 1B, 2C, 3D, 4A / Class = 1C, 2D, 3A, 4B / Class = 1D, 2A, 3B, 4C."

"The only complication this would cause is a minor one—ensuring that report cards are coordinated rather than just a teacher handing a big stack to their partner teacher. Effectively, the teachers would now need to bunch them in sets of five. Easy. There is no reason in my mind that this could not be implemented in 3rd grade and I strongly suggest that it is."

"Having part-time teachers causes multiple problems: 1) 'This is the way I do it' dominates the philosophy of teachers used to having their own room all day, and the collaborative nature was not evident during the first half of the school year in 2nd grade. 2) Focus on part time as a benefit as the teacher is toward the end of her tenure should never be considered—and in fact is misaligned with

what is critical for the success of this program—teachers who are dedicated to the long journey, being collaborative versus owning a classroom outright, and challenging kids to do more and new things. 3) Feedback to parents is fragmented, conflicting, and inconsistent—and often more generic than it should be.”

“AISD continued funding commitment through all 6 years of immersion. Particularly concerned no budget has been brought for testing for the immersion program yet.”

“I am worried about my child being segregated from the rest of the kids his age and only being in class with the same kids year after year. I hope they find a way to mingle the kids with other classes during English subjects. I’m also worried about what my child will be able to do with this great new language skill when he enters middle school. I am hoping there is a proper place for continuing his learning of Mandarin.”

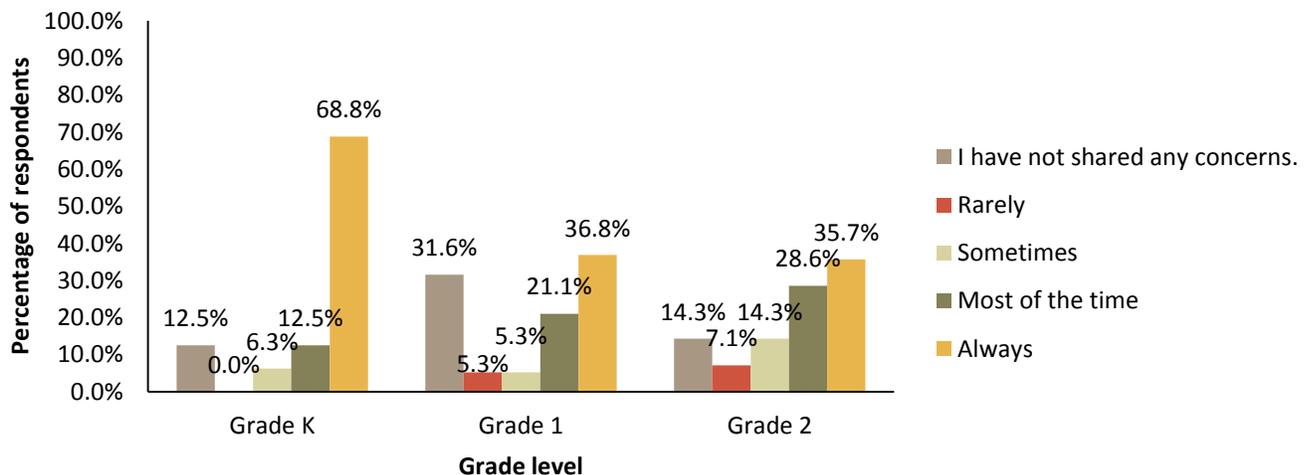
“I worry about the longevity of the program. This year I have a child entering the kinder level and the boy to girl ratio was very skewed. Although this is not a concern for me because I have a boy, I would be very concerned if I had a girl. I also think that parents looking at the program for next year are going to be hesitant to the lopsidedness of the program and the commitment requirements. I am also concerned about the marketing to get new families interested in the program. I had 2 years to decide, I think that there are many parents that do not even know the program existed. Also, I worry about the class size with regards to attrition. Specifically at the kinder and 1st-grade level.”

“Want to ensure Murchison is preparing for advanced Chinese when kids matriculate.”

Did parents perceive program and campus staff as open and receptive to communication or suggestions?

Most parents perceived staff from the FLI program and from the campus as open and receptive to feedback (Figure 6). However, it is interesting to note that while the parents of grade-1 students rated the program lower on many other survey items than did other parents, a higher percentage of grade-1 parents (31.6%) than of parents in other grades reported they had not shared any concerns with the administration. Sixty-four percent of grade-2 parents who reported the highest satisfaction on other items said that administrators were responsive most of the time or always. The vast majority of kindergarten parents (81.3%) said that administrators were responsive most of the time or always.

Figure 6. Have you felt the school administration responsive to your feedback or suggestions?



Source. 2013 AISD Doss Mandarin Foreign Language Immersion (FLI) Program Parent Survey

Did parents have concerns about their child’s participation or progress?

One-third of parents across all three grades had concerns about their child’s progress in the program. Among those who did, parents varied by grade level as to whether they believed the teacher knew of the problem. Of note was that parents of male students (75%) were more likely than parents of female students to have made the teacher aware of the problem.

Concerns about their child’s progress included:

“I am concerned about not having enough time in the regular school day to address the extra intervention needs of some students with learning challenges in both English and Chinese.”

“I feel that my child was unfairly labeled by the Mandarin teacher and that she essentially wrote him off.”

“Yes, I spoke to them both about it this week, as I just found out about it. Ability to challenge and/or differentiate for both my child and others (i.e., get them to do more as a team if they are ready to do so).”

“My concern are we doing enough at home to make him successful in the classroom? Evening drills or exercises. I read to him in English. What about Mandarin? Tapes, videos. Do we need to find time for this now?”

Is your child receiving tutoring?

Only six students in kindergarten through grade 2 were receiving tutoring at the time of the survey. Of the six, only two overlapped with the students whose parents indicated they had concerns about their child’s progress. One student received tutoring in English, and five received it in Mandarin. Three students received tutoring in kindergarten and two received it in grade 2.

Do you have specific suggestions for the Doss Mandarin FLI program?

Parents shared many suggestions for the Doss Mandarin FLI program, including:

“Integration with other grade-level students. Some benchmark assessment for language proficiency at beginning of the year and throughout the year, as parents we don’t really know how well they are learning the language.”

“Not at this time. I appreciate the school’s flexible approach as we learn together what’s best for the kids.”

“1) The 3rd grade inter-mixing for English/History would be a huge benefit (per my description earlier). 2) More videotaping of the classroom so we can see the children's progress first hand. 3) Less preparing for ‘performances’ outside of school for the benefit of the parents—which causes the other subjects to be sacrificed (e.g., science in particular). 4) Higher expectations of parents both during the school year and in the summer. Learning a language ‘is’ challenging, and parents need to expect to manage more homework and sacrifice some of their free time. 5) A robust summer program development that works for working parents. It’s frustrating to see so many Doss camps offered just for 2.5 hours, when very few families are in a situation to accommodate that logistically—there is a great opportunity to combine a camp with instruction in the morning and Chinese ‘play’ in the afternoon, like the Lilypad camp. Even if the afternoon is in English, and was focused on art/PE/music... rather than on Chinese, it would make it a feasible option for working parents. Partnering with Anderson high school to offer this would be a great venue and also offer the inspiration of having the high school students as teacher aids and afternoon play instructors.”

“A well-tenured experience English counterpart may be a solid addition. Chinese pounds their head so when they go to English, their energy swells—controlling the class, ensuring and showing English is as important.”

“As the homework load increases, I’d like access to a parent portal that describes in more detail each assignment. I’ve noticed with more difficult assignments we’ve received clear communication ... I just want to be sure it continues. Also, more formal adoption of an online buddy system with Doss, Murchison, and AHS students and staff would be helpful and can serve to build community throughout the area.”

“Currently feedback is welcome but mostly only discussed at open meetings of the whole Chinese immersion groups. We only had parent-teacher conferences in the beginning of the year with teacher initiated conferences the rest of the year. The 1st-grade class in the second half of the year was having PARENTs check and correct homework and then initial that it was done without sending the homework back for teacher for review EXCEPT for Chinese homework. Having the parents check and correct homework as teachers seems like a neglect of the teaching opportunity, [especially] in this first year of homework. I am happy to assist in homework completion, but it is critical that the teacher judge the work and assess the progress and weaknesses of that work. This was done without the parents’ input. Teachers need to check the homework.”

“No—this year has been a great success! We feel fortunate to have this opportunity and to be part of the program!”

“Develop more structured plans/ideas for parents on how they can help students maintain what they’ve learned during the academic year. I know funding is a challenge, but proactive planning can help tremendously with knowledge retention. This helps the student, teachers, and AISD in making sure that the FLI program is as successful as possible.”

“English teachers must be strong, organized, and efficient in this program. Please hire the right people.”

“I can’t think of anything other than some afterschool opportunities with the middle and high school kids.”

“I’d love to see more interactions across the grades ... especially so the younger kids see the older kids speaking.”

“Keep up the good work.”

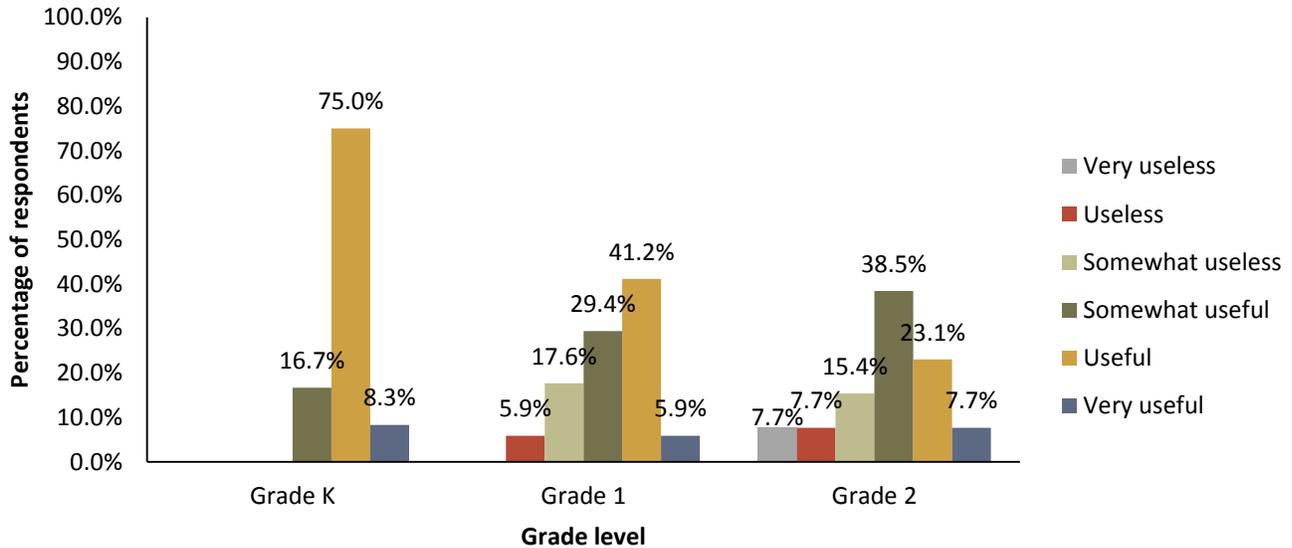
Have the parent immersion meetings throughout the year been useful to you?

Parents reported the parent meetings to be useful more than not useful (Figure 7). Nearly fifty-three percent (52.9%) of parents across all grades rated the parent nights as *very useful* or *useful*, whereas 7.2% rated the evenings as *useless* or *very useless*. Worth noting, however, was the additional 40.5% who found the usefulness to waiver between *somewhat useful* or *somewhat useless*. The lukewarm reception of the immersion meetings by parents suggests that they are open to this form of information transfer and involvement, but the quality of content and format of the evenings could be revised and improved. A needs assessment may be helpful. Parents’ gender also accounted for differences in perception about the immersion meetings’ utility. Fathers found the meetings to be much more useful than did mothers: 24.0% of fathers rated the meetings very useful, compared with 5.9% of mothers. Similarly, nearly 39.2% of mothers rated them somewhat useful, compared with only 20.0% of fathers.

Doss administrators asked for parents’ feedback about the program informally and formally throughout the year’s initial year of implementation. Parents asked to create a committee to provide ongoing dialogue

regarding program planning and implementation. The methods through which the program elicited parental input continuously may have influenced the perceived usefulness of the parent immersion meetings. Administrators indicated that the parent immersion nights will gradually become more focused as a natural progression of the program and of the students' growing linguistic abilities and maturation.

Figure 7. Have parent immersion meetings throughout the year been useful to you?

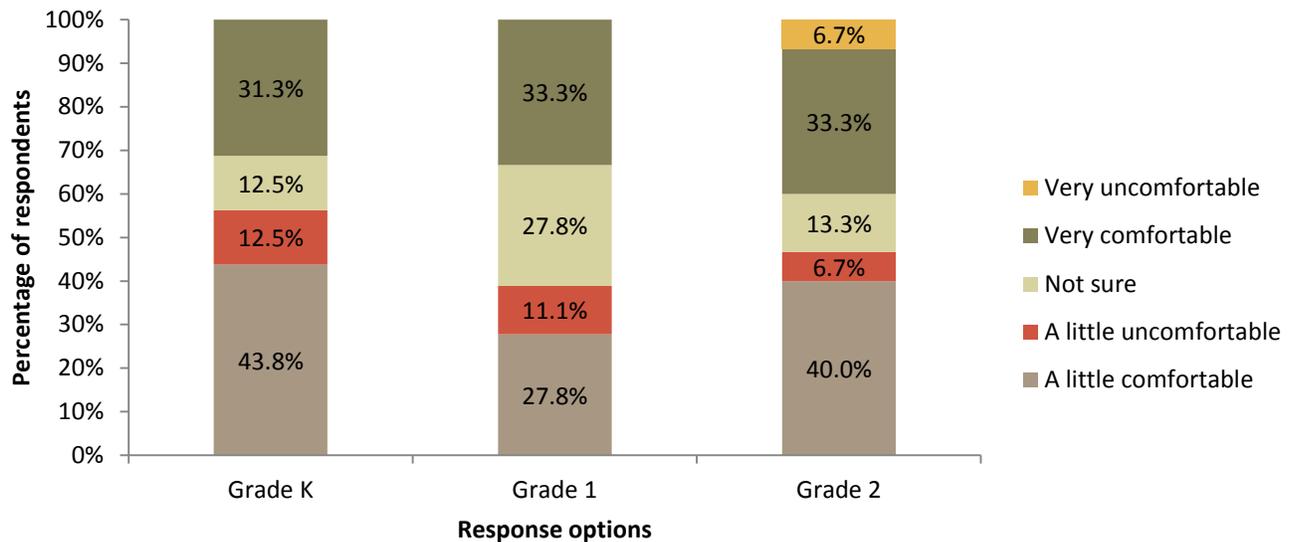


Source. 2013 AISD Doss Mandarin FLI Program Parent Survey

Do you feel comfortable that you understand your child's proficiency level in Mandarin?

Parents would benefit from additional support to understand their child's proficiency level in Mandarin (Figure 8). One-third expressed feeling *very comfortable*. The approximate 40% in kindergarten and grade 2 and the less than 30% in grade 1 who indicated feeling *a little comfortable* probably could be shifted to a place of clearer understanding with minor communication clarifications or by adding additional comparison groups (i.e., to determine how proficient early elementary students typically are after 1 year of Mandarin immersion or how proficient other 1st-grade students are). On the other hand, the percentages 1st-grade parents who were unsure how comfortable they were with understanding their child's proficiency level and the percentage who were only a little comfortable with it (27.8%) were equal, while 11.1% of parents were a little uncomfortable by the end of year. Across grade levels, helping parents to better understand their child's proficiency level in Mandarin is recommended.

Figure 8. Do you feel comfortable that you understand your child's proficiency level in Mandarin?



Source. 2013 AISD Doss Mandarin FLI Program Parent Survey

Did you make the “right” decision by enrolling your child in the Doss Mandarin FLI program?

Among the response options provided, nearly all parents selected yes. Parents pointed out an error in survey design on this item. The two response options provided for this survey item read yes and no, with a follow-up open-ended response that asked how they made the determination that their decision had been the right one or not. Several parents used the open-ended response item to say that if an option had been included that read “undecided,” they would have used that option rather than yes or no. Future versions of parent surveys should include the undecided response option for this question. It should be clear from the description of the error that this item’s responses should be interpreted cautiously because it was not possible to tease out how many parents would have changed their selection if the undecided option had appeared on the survey.

Responses from parents regarding what evidence helped them know they had or had not made the right choice included:

“As parents, we have observed the return on investment of lots of painful evenings. Not every night has been stressful to the degree described in an earlier box. There has been a positive influence on our child’s younger sibling. Our child is proud of the accomplishments made this year, and we are too! We realize that this was the first year of a long journey... like the Chinese saying outside one teacher’s office... ‘A 1000 mile journey begins with ONE step.’ We are not naive to believe that such a journey will come without some bumps & bruises... and this is true for our home... We know that the Doss Mandarin FLI program is a great gift to our family & the life trajectory for our children.”

“Because we’ve started our child in the program as a kindergartner, her expectations are that this is normal and that makes her learning experience richer for not having to radically adjust after already having been through a more typical school year. She has absorbed the program easily and remains excited to be a part.”

“[Our daughter] has excellent teachers. She is getting all of the ‘education’ of a typical AISD kindergartner PLUS the exposure to a new language. Because we are part of a subset of students at Doss we have appreciated getting to know most of the families in the [kindergarten] class through special activities outside of school as well as Doss organized events (heritage night, end-of-the-year

celebration, parent meetings). It is evident in the words/actions of Ms. Griffin and all of the teachers involved in the Mandarin FLI program that they are 100% committed and invested to making this program a success for our children. Thank you!”

“Child has learnt a lot and enjoys the program.”

“He's extremely happy, motivated and we feel very supported by his teachers and the school. My initial concerns have all been allayed after going through the program this year. I'm thrilled we were encouraged to apply.”

“His ability to speak Chinese while not missing a beat in English. The fact that our three kids regularly talk to each other in Chinese and help each other.”

“I do not know yet. I want to see how his math and science skills stack up against his peers. We have high expectations of him and want to know that all areas of his learning are being paid attention to, not just language.”

“I would have checked the 'undecided' box if there had been one. There are the first year kinks to work out - we'll evaluate after the second year.”

“Mostly I'm depending on studies that support the value of bilingual education. I think this is a great opportunity that will pay dividends down the road.”

“No evidence, just intuition.”

What has been the biggest challenge for your family about participating in the Doss Mandarin FLI program this school year?

Parents revealed a number of challenges encountered through the first year of the program. The most common topic was the homework portion of the program. Parents often commented on the quantity, but they also commented on the difficulties that arose because parents did not know Mandarin. Parents could neither feel of adequate assistance to their children nor review the child's work for accuracy, as they typically would with subjects taught in English. Comments included:

“We as parents want to go ‘above and beyond’ with immersing ourselves in Chinese language, culture, etc. But there are only so many hours in the day :)”

“The time needed to complete homework was excessive. After a busy day at school it is hard to have an hour and a half of homework each night. It is not that the work is not all important, but it is a lot. Homework consisted of: Reading minimum of 20 minutes, spelling words, Excel Math, Extra Math/Moby Math, Quizlet and Better Chinese. It would be nice to have some of the Math Drill Practice completed while at school. I personally see the value of reading but didn't like it framed as homework. We read each day for ‘fun.’”

“The fact that we as parents don't speak Mandarin ourselves.”

“The biggest challenge is knowing that additional homework is going to be coming and worrying about how we'll be able to help out more.”

“The amount of time the kids have to spend on homework and the juggling we have to do as a two-working parent household. The technological support/apps are great but it took a while to figure out all the technology and a communication strategy with the teacher.”

“The amount of homework. This is more of a second grade problem and an issue because we have a large family. The added homework in Chinese put us over the edge a few nights.”

“Technology—took me a while to figure out how best to use Quizlet.”

“Not speaking Chinese ourselves, we as parents can’t help with homework like we can with the English subjects.”

“Not being able to speak Mandarin, we can only provide limited help with that part of the education.”

“My child is slower doing work in Chinese than she is in English. She has missed her centers time (free time during Chinese class) quite often this year because of that. This is the part of her day that she looks forward to the most, as a kindergartener. Given that this is the last year of her life when she can truly ‘play’ in class, I hate that she has to miss it. I feel that she is being deprived of something that makes her happy because of a decision I made for her.”

“It is our hope that some of these things can be worked out so that parents can forego the need to pay for tutoring since we are in no way able to give help with homework.”

What was your favorite part of participating in the Doss Mandarin FLI program?

Parents shared a number of positive aspects of participating in the program. Comments included:

“Amazing support from the staff and principal.”

“Being part of the beginning of something with the potential to be very special.”

“Everything! The other families and kids, the enthusiasm, the learning, all of it!”

“Friends in class. Bond with other parents. Quality of teachers.”

“Having my child really learning a second language! My hope for the district is that there will be continued resources through middle and high school so that they can build upon their elementary foundation.”

“Hearing how much our children love Chinese! Seeing how fast they are learning both to read, write, and speak.”

“Hearing my daughter talk in Chinese to her friends while playing, hearing twinkle twinkle in Chinese after I have tucked her into bed, an unexpected singing of Chinese happy birthday to Grandma - which included my 3-year-old singing (who we assume was taught the words by her older sister). Becoming part of a caring group of families and teachers, who are all committed to the Doss mandarin program and the success and happiness of our kids.”

“It’s amazing watching your kids learn something that you don’t know. It’s fun to watch them learn things you do know—but it’s illuminating and life-affirming observing them at age 7 to 8 learning things that you could never learn. I’m so happy with AISD that they started this program and that my husband and I took the leap of faith to enroll our children in it. It’s been fantastic for the most part. While I have some concerns, those [are] FAR outweighed by the benefits.”

“My child loved the projects and special lessons done in 2nd grade—both the English and Chinese. I love the program and am thrilled that my child has had such a great year. I am thrilled that my son will be in the program next year. Without this Mandarin Chinese Program, we would not be staying in AISD. This program and its high quality is the reason we are staying in AISD.”

“My child loves learning the language very enthusiastic about being able to speak Chinese. She really enjoys learning the new words and characters. She says she is happy being in the program, which is a comfort to me.”

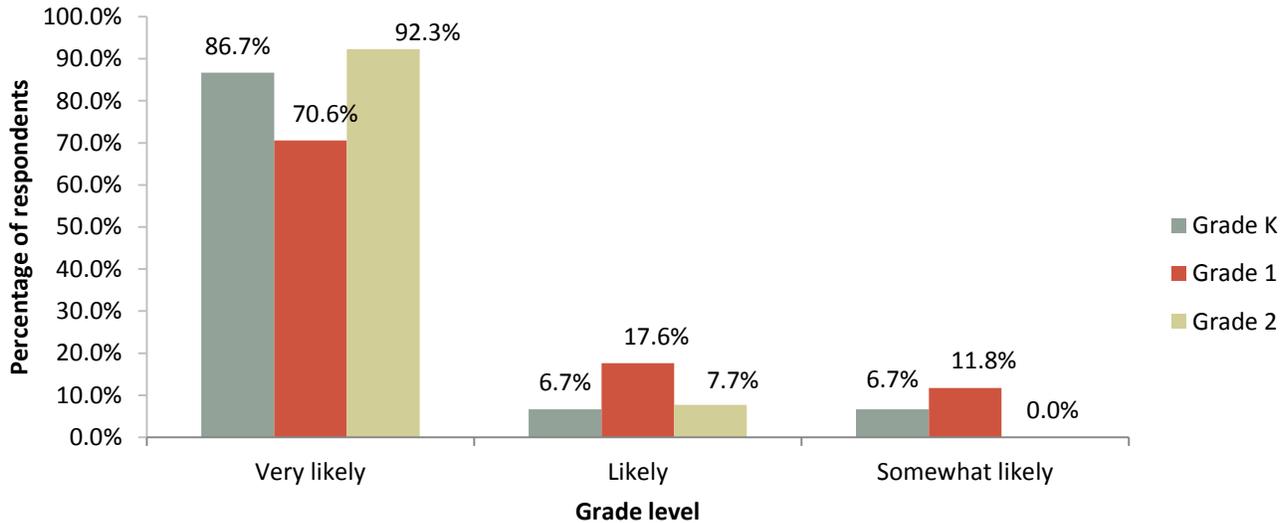
“This 2nd-grade class is truly an amazing group of kids. It has been incredible to see the teamwork in the classroom. My son really enjoys working all together as a team in learning the language. Having the option of immersion in a public school is incredible. The parents and students involved all care about their education and that is a great inner community to be a part of. I am so grateful that he is learning Mandarin at such a young age not only because of its brain power enrichment but also to help him be a better world citizen.”

“When she learned to say ‘I love’ the members of my family and said it all the time.”

Would you recommend the Doss Mandarin FLI program to others, if asked?

All the responding families would recommend the program to others in the community (Figure 9). The majority of parents at each grade level considered themselves *very likely* to recommend the program after participating in its first year of implementation.

Figure 9. How likely is it that you would recommend the Doss Mandarin Foreign Language Immersion (FLI) program to your friends or others in the community if asked?



Source. 2013 AISD Doss Mandarin FLI Program Parent Survey

How will AISD use parents’ responses about the Doss Mandarin FLI program?

Program support. The Doss campus administrators and Foreign Language Department will use parents’ feedback to consider allocation of funding, staffing, professional development opportunities and other supports and resources.

Program evaluation. It has been recommended that the program be examined longitudinally for student gains and program impact. Parents’ responses from year 1 would be used as a baseline to compare additional progress in program development over time.

District research. When examining the effectiveness of other foreign language instructional models across other campuses in the district, having clear parent input regarding what works well and what can be improved provides a picture of ways that AISD can foster foreign language acquisition for students at all grade levels.

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