



# English Learner Summer School Students' Beginning-of-Year (BOY) Performance

## INTRODUCTION

Every summer Austin Independent School District (AISD) provides a state-required, month-long summer school for English learners (ELs). The program is for students entering kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> grade, and is designed to prepare ELs for success in future grades. Summer school is offered at six elementary schools, three north and three south. The sites change each year and transportation to and from campuses is offered.

This report examined the Fall 2018 early reading performance of ELs who attended the 2018 summer school, compared with the performance of a group of ELs who did not attend summer school. The comparison group of ELs was matched to have the same proportion of economic disadvantage as the group of summer school ELs. Students entering kindergarten were assessed with the Texas Kindergarten Entry Assessment (TX-KEA), which is composed of several subtests designed to gauge students' readiness for kindergarten. Students entering 1<sup>st</sup> grade were assessed with the iStation indicators of progress (ISIP), which include five domains of early reading ability. Since two different assessments were administered at the beginning of the year (BOY) depending on grade level the following results are presented by grade level.

## SUMMER SCHOOL STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

A total of 1,135 students attended the 2018 summer school program. Of these students, 599 were entering kindergarten, 529 were entering 1<sup>st</sup> grade, and seven were entering 2<sup>nd</sup> grade in the 2018–2019 school year. Unfortunately, not all students returned after the summer break. Of the 599 entering kindergarteners, 477 students were enrolled in the Fall of 2018, 91 students did not show up for the 2018–2019 school year, and 24 students withdrew at some point during the fall semester. Of the 536 1<sup>st</sup>- and 2<sup>nd</sup>-grade students, 473 were enrolled in the Fall, 49 did not show up for the 2018–2019 school year, and 14 withdrew at some point during the fall semester. Additionally, seven students were missing all data. This resulted in an 84% retention rate of students from summer school to the following school year. Because summer school was intended for students entering kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> grade, the seven 2<sup>nd</sup>-grade students were not included in the analysis.

The majority of students who attended summer school were Hispanic (80%). The racial breakdown of the remaining students was as follows: 16% Asian, 3% White, 2% Black or African American, 1% two or more races, and 0.2% American Indian or Alaska Native. In addition, the majority (82%) of the summer school students were economically disadvantaged.

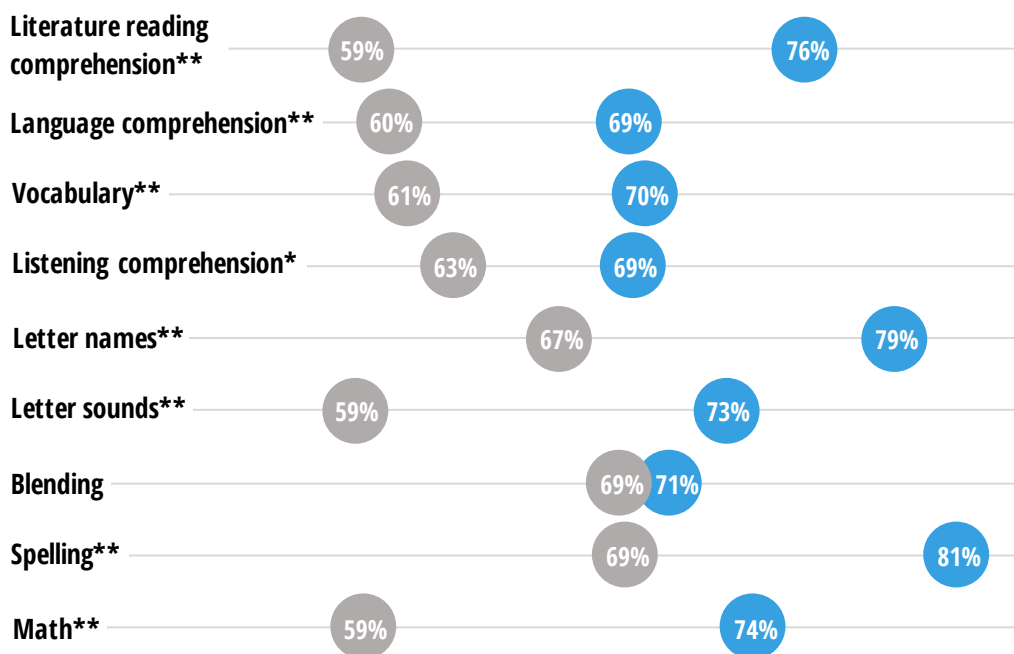
## KINDERGARTEN BOY PERFORMANCE

This section discusses the performance of the current kindergarten students' performance on the TX-KEA assessment of kindergarten readiness administered at the beginning of the 2018–2019 school year. For more information on TX-KEA, see the sidebar. ELs who attended summer school were compared with similar ELs who did not attend summer school. The comparison group of ELs was selected at random, with the requirement of the same proportion of economically disadvantaged (79%) students as the group of ELs who attended summer school.

ELs who attended summer school outperformed the similar ELs who did not attend summer school on all the TX-KEA subtests (Figure 1). All but one subtest (blending) had statistically significant differences in performance for the two groups. The number of students tested for each subtest varied slightly because students were not required to take all subtests. Figure 1 presents the proportion of students classified as on track for each subtest. The majority of ELs who attended summer school were assessed to be kindergarten ready at the BOY testing. The ELs who did not attend summer school performed up to 17 percentage points lower on the subtests than did ELs who did attend summer school.

Figure 1.

### Summer School ELs Outperformed ELs Who Did Not Attend Summer School on All Subtests.



Source. AISD student TX-KEA records

Note. Statistical significance is indicated by asterisks. \*\* indicates significance at the 0.001 level and \* indicates significance at the 0.05 level.

## TX-KEA

The Texas Kindergarten Entry Assessment (TX-KEA) is administered to AISD kindergarteners in the fall and is used to screen children's school readiness upon entry to kindergarten. The University of Texas Health Science Center's Children's Learning Institute, the Texas Education Agency, and the U.S. Department of Education collaborated in the development of the test. The Children's Learning Institute received a grant in Fall 2017 to expand the TX-KEA into a progress-monitoring tool for kindergarteners.

TX-KEA is a criterion-referenced test designed to assist school staff with determining whether students meet specific academic standards and development levels. The test assesses kindergarten readiness across six domains: language, literacy, math and science, executive functioning, social emotional skills, and academic motor skills. The test results are used to guide instruction and help teachers identify students in need of further diagnostic assessment and intervention.

The test is available in both English and Spanish. The results presented in this report represent the best performance for a student in either language. Thus, if a student took the test in both English and Spanish, the higher performance of the two would be the data included in the analysis. For more information on TX-KEA, see <https://www.texaskea.org>.

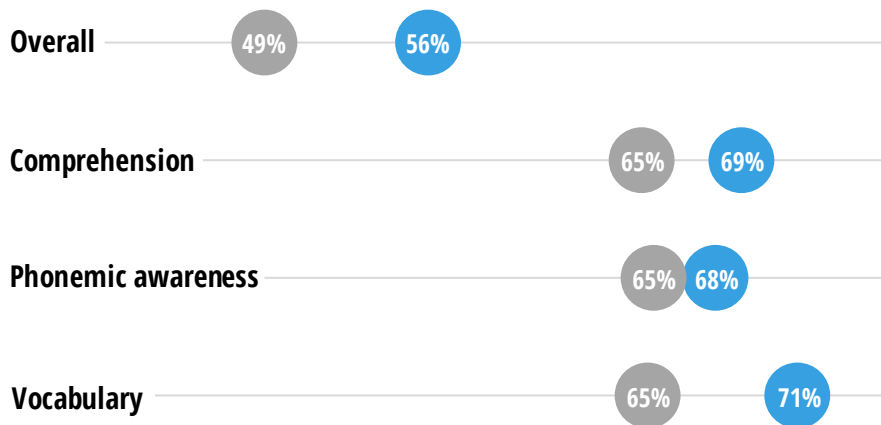
## 1<sup>st</sup>-Grade BOY Performance

This section discusses the performance of 1<sup>st</sup>-grade ELs on ISIP administered at the beginning of the 2018–2019 school year. For more information on ISIP, see the sidebar. As with the analysis for kindergarten students, 1<sup>st</sup>-grade ELs who attended summer school were compared with 1<sup>st</sup>-grade ELs who did not attend summer school. The proportion of economically disadvantaged ELs in 1<sup>st</sup> grade was slightly higher (82%) than that of the kindergarten ELs (79%). A group of 1<sup>st</sup>-grade ELs was randomly selected with the same proportion of economic disadvantage as the comparison group for this analysis. Additionally, only three subtests and the overall rating were used in the analysis due to low numbers of students tested in the other subtests.

ELs who attended summer school outperformed ELs who did not attend summer school on the 1<sup>st</sup>-grade ISIP reading tests (Figure 2). However, the differences between groups were not as large as those seen in the kindergarten groups, and no differences between groups were statistically significant. Figure 2 shows the percentage of ELs who were classified into tier 1, indicating they were performing at grade level, for the three subtests and overall, on early reading skills.

Figure 2.

### Summer School ELs Outperformed ELs Who Did Not Attend Summer School Overall and on the Three Subtests.



Source. AISD student ISIP records

Note. All group comparisons are not statistically significant.

## Conclusions

Overall, based on the BOY testing results, summer school for ELs had a positive impact on their kindergarten readiness and early reading skills. The impact appears to be greater for ELs entering kindergarten than for ELs entering 1<sup>st</sup> grade.

The differential impact could be due to several factors. First, different assessments were given to kindergartners and 1<sup>st</sup>-grade students. The two assessments measure different content skills. TX-KEA is an assessment designed to measure overall kindergarten readi-

## iStation Indicators of Progress (ISIP)

The assessment AISD uses to assess early reading skills is iStation indicators of progress (ISIP). ISIP is a nationally norm-referenced test designed to assist teachers with determining whether students are on track for early reading standards. The test is designed for continuous progress monitoring of skills identified as predictors of later reading success and to help teachers identify students at risk for reading difficulties.

ISIP provides information on five critical early reading domains: phonemic awareness, alphabetic knowledge and skills, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. The tests are scored into one of three tiers. Tier 1 indicates performing at grade level. Tier 2 indicates performing moderately below grade level, and tier 3 indicates performing seriously below grade level. The assessment is given at the beginning of the year (BOY), middle of year (MOY), and end of year (EOY). Students are not required to take all five domains.

The test is available in both English and Spanish. Students can take the test more than once during each testing window. The results presented in this report represent the best performance for a student in either language and of multiple attempts. Thus, if a student took the test in both English and Spanish, and more than once, the best performance would be included in the analysis. For more information on ISIP, see <https://www.istation.com/Reading>.

ness rather than just early reading skills, which ISIP is designed to measure. Second, the content covered in summer school might have been different for ELs entering kindergarten than for ELs entering 1<sup>st</sup> grade. With that said, it is possible that earlier intervention had a stronger impact than did a slightly later intervention, resulting in larger differences between summer school ELs and non-summer school ELs in kindergarten performance. At this time, the reason for the differences seen between the performance of ELs entering kindergarten and ELs entering 1<sup>st</sup> grade is unclear. However, it is clear that summer school improved the performance of ELs entering kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> grade, compared with the performance of similar ELs who did not attend the summer program. These results are consistent with literature that cites the importance of reading interventions to prevent or reduce summer reading skill loss, particularly for low-income students (McCombs et al., 2011).

## References

McCombs, J. S., Augustine, C., Schwartz, H., Bodilly, S., McInnis, B., Lichter, D., & Cross, A. (2011). *Making summer count: How summer programs can boost children's learning*. Pittsburg, PA: RAND Corporation. Retrieved from <https://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/Documents/Making-Summer-Count-How-Summer-Programs-Can-Boost-Childrens-Learning.pdf>

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