MEMORANDUM   November 16, 2017

TO: Gracie Guerrero
            Assistant Superintendent, Multilingual Programs

FROM: Carla Stevens
            Assistant Superintendent, Research and Accountability

SUBJECT: **NEWCOMER IMMIGRANT ENGLISH-LANGUAGE LEARNER (ELL) PROGRAM
            EVALUATION 2017**

Many of the English Language Learner (ELL) students in the district are recent immigrants who have been in the United States for three years or less. The number of first-year immigrants increased by 177 percent between 2011–2012 and 2016–2017. In an attempt to address the needs of the most challenged of these recent immigrants, the district has implemented a Newcomer Program for immigrant ELLs in their first year in U.S. schools. The program assists new immigrant students to adapt to a new country, language, and school, and in 2016–2017 was implemented in fourteen high schools and sixteen middle schools. Included in the report are results from TELPAS, the Achieve 3000 reading assessment, and a district-developed writing assessment based on TELPAS (piloted in 2016–2017). Also included are attendance and disciplinary data for newcomer students, and a summary of training and support offered for teachers at campuses participating in the program. Finally, the performance of 2nd-year immigrants (who participated in year one of the program in 2015–2016) is reviewed.

Key findings include:
- A total of 2,224 newcomer students were enrolled at the 30 participating campuses in 2016–2017 (1,448 in high school, 796 in middle school).
- More than half (55%) of these newcomer students came from just three countries: El Salvador (611), Honduras (432), and Guatemala (211).
- Sixty-nine teachers and three administrators at newcomer campuses attended Quality Teaching for English Language Learners (QTEL) training, which was intended to facilitate teachers' and schools' engagement with newcomer students.
- A variety of measures (TELPAS, STAAR, EOC) showed that newcomer students lagged behind other ELLs in terms of English language proficiency and academic performance, but did not differ greatly from newcomers at campuses that did not participate in the program.
- Both the writing and reading (Achieve 3000) assessments showed gains in English proficiency by participating newcomer students.
- Attendance rates for participating newcomers did not differ from those of other students, but there was evidence that they had more positive outcomes in terms of discipline and dropout rate.

Further distribution of this report is at your discretion. Should you have any further questions, please contact me at 713-556-6700.

Carla J. Stevens CJS

Attachment
cc: Grenita Lathan

HOUSTON INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

RESEARCH
Educational Program Report

NEWCOMER IMMIGRANT PROGRAM EVALUATION REPORT
2016 – 2017

HISD | Research and Accountability
ANALYZING DATA, MEASURING PERFORMANCE.

2017 BOARD OF EDUCATION

NEWCOMER PROGRAM EVALUATION REPORT
2016–2017

Executive Summary

Program Description

There are approximately 68,000 students in Houston ISD labeled as "English language learners", or ELLs. Many of these students have the additional obstacle of being recent immigrants who have been in the United States for three years or less. In recent years, the number of immigrant ELLs in the district has increased dramatically, and the number of first year immigrants has increased by 177 percent since 2011–2012. Without proper instructional supports, these students are at risk of falling behind academically. In an attempt to address the needs of the most challenged of these recent immigrants, the district has implemented a Newcomer Program for immigrant ELLs in their first year in U.S. schools. This report summarizes data from this program for the 2016–2017 school year.

The Newcomer Program in HISD is an English as a Second Language (ESL) based program designed to accommodate and educate newly arrived immigrant ELL students. The program assists new immigrant students to adapt to a new country, language, and school, and has been implemented in 14 high schools and 16 middle schools (referred to in this report as "Newcomer campuses"). The program does not provide a specialized instruction or schedule to newcomer students beyond what is offered to other ELLs. Instead, it focuses on providing needed support and resources to newcomer students and their parents, while offering specialized trading for teachers of newcomers. The main components of the program involve:
- providing orientation to the new school, community and society;
- intensive English language development via ESL methodology;
- training for teachers and staff who work with first year immigrant ELLS;
- support services (e.g., counseling, tutoring, career education, transportation, health services);
- resource materials for students (hi-lo readers, Xtra libraries, Emerge kits); and
- parent resources/education.

Highlights

- A total of 2,244 newcomer students were enrolled at the 30 participating campuses (1,448 in high school and 796 in middle school). An additional 490 newcomers were at campuses that did not participate in the program.

- More than half (55%) of these newcomer students came from three countries: El Salvador (611), Honduras (432), and Guatemala (211). The majority of participating newcomers were economically disadvantaged (71%) and Spanish-speaking (76%), and 91% of them were ELLs.

- One hundred-fourteen teachers and 22 administrators and other staff attended Quality Teaching for English Learners (QTEL) training offered by the district. Sixty-nine of these teachers were at participating newcomer campuses and the remainder at non-participating campuses.

- Multilingual Programs Department staff provided support for the participating newcomer campuses; staff logs showed 1,050 outreach sessions with students and 239 orientation sessions for parents.

- Newcomer students at participating campuses showed slightly lower English proficiency on TELPAS in comparison with newcomers from other campuses, and both newcomer groups were less proficient than ELLs as a group.

- Eighty-four participating newcomer students had complete sets of pre/post test results on the district-developed writing assessment, and there was evidence that they improved their writing proficiency over the course of the year.

- Newcomers showed larger pre/post lexile score gains (98 vs. 63 lexile points) on the Achieve 3000 reading assessment than non-newcomers.

- Attendance rates for newcomers did not differ significantly from those of either other newcomers at non-participating campuses, or non-newcomer students in grades 6-12. Discipline date showed that newcomer students (hub and standalone combined) had a lower rate of disciplinary incidents than non-newcomers (14.93% versus 18.11%).

- QTEL trainings did not appear to have any influence on the TELPAS performance of students whose teachers participated in 2016-2017, but there was some evidence that students of teachers who had been trained in 2015-2016 had somewhat lower performance.

- Finally, second-year immigrants who had been in the newcomer program in 2015-2016 did have higher rates of progress on the TELPAS, lower rates of disciplinary incidents in 2016-2017, and also had a lower annual dropout rate in 2015-2016.

Recommendations

1. In order to continue to build teacher capacity, it is recommended that key individuals at each campus be identified as QTEL leads to support the follow up of teacher learning. The district should also explore building district capacity so that this type of training can be offered in-house in order to decrease costs associated with this specialized training and offer flexibility with scheduling.

2. In order to monitor the linguistic progress of Newcomer students, it is recommended that additional trainings of the TELPAS Tri-part be offered. It is also recommended that an on-line system, such as On Track, be utilized to track the students' linguistic progress.

3. So that progress can be adequately measured, ensure that enough students participate in similar achievement measures so that a comparison can be made.

Introduction

There are approximately 68,000 students in Houston ISD labeled as "English language learners", or ELLs. Many of these students have the additional obstacle of being recent immigrants who have been in the United States for three years or less. In recent years, the number of immigrant ELLs in the district has increased dramatically, and the number of first year immigrants has increased by 177 percent since 2011–2012 (from 2,664 to 7,387, see **Figure 1**). Without proper instructional supports, these students are at risk of falling behind academically. In an attempt to address the needs of the most challenged of these recent immigrants, the district has implemented a Newcomer Program for immigrant ELLs in their first year in U.S. schools. This report summarizes data from this program for the 2016–2017 school year, which is its second year of implementation.

Newcomer Program Background

The Newcomer Program in HISD is an English as a Second Language (ESL) based program designed to accommodate and educate newly arrived immigrant ELL students. The program assists new immigrant students to adapt to a new country, language, and school. "Immigrant" children or youth, as defined under the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), are "individuals who are aged 3 through 21; were not born in any state; and have not not been attending schools in any one or more states for more than 3 full academic years" (P.L. 107-110 Title III, Part C, § 3301(6)). Although these students may arrive in HISD at any grade level, the Newcomer Program focuses on students in high school and middle school only.

Immigrant students can have widely varying backgrounds, which offers challenges to educators. They may simply be ELLs or they may also have refugee status. In addition to age differences, immigrants can have disparate experiences in formal educational settings, and some may arrive in school having experienced trauma due to events occurring before or during their move to this country. This may be particularly true with populations of immigrant students from Mexico and Central America (i.e., Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala). The upsurge in the number of immigrants from those countries has been driven by recent increases in gang and drug-related violence in those home countries, compounding problems caused by continuing economic difficulties.

Figure 1. Number of immigrants and newcomers (first-year immigrants) by year, 2011 to 2017.

Source: IBM Cognos, Chancery
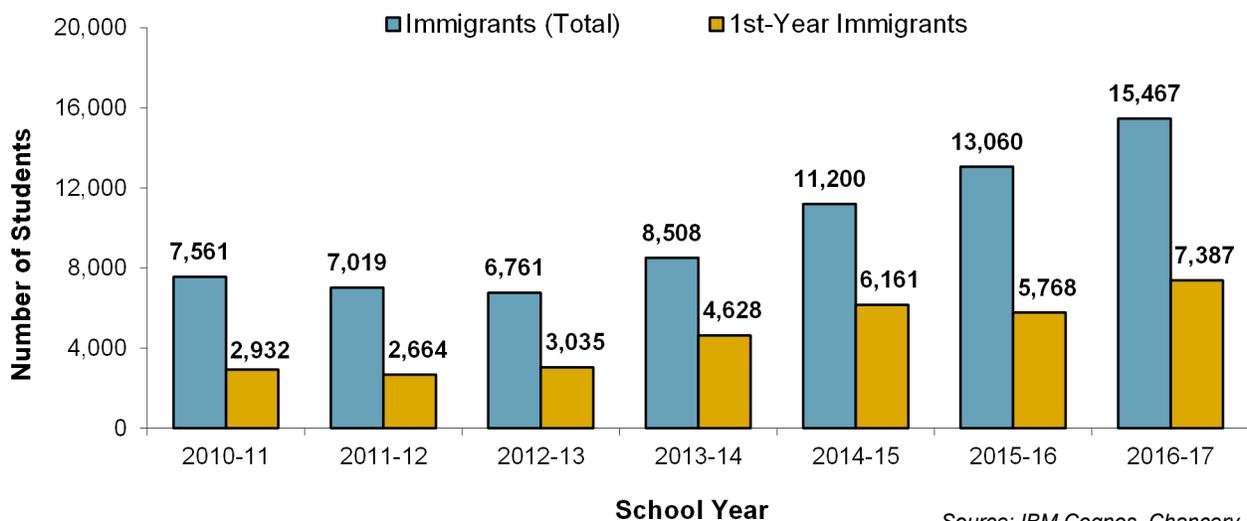
Newcomer Program Details

The Newcomer Program is implemented in a total of fourteen high schools and sixteen middle schools (see **Table 1**). The program does not provide a specialized instruction or schedule to newcomer students beyond what is offered to other ELLs. Instead, it focuses on providing needed support and resources to newcomer students and their parents, while offering specialized training for teachers of newcomers. The main components of the program involve:
- providing orientation to the new school, community and society;
- intensive English language development via ESL methodology;
- training for teachers and staff who work with first year immigrant ELLS;
- support services (e.g., counseling, tutoring, career education, transportation, health services);
- resource materials for students (hi-lo readers, Xtra libraries, Emerge kits; **Appendix A**, p 13); and
- parent resources/education.

The Newcomer Program has two tiers of campuses. Four high schools (Austin, Chavez, Sam Houston, and Westbury) are hub campuses serving newcomer students zoned to their school, but they also accept students who transfer from other campuses. There are also five middle schools which act as hubs (Black, Fondren, Fonville, Navarro, and Hartman MS). Ten other high schools and eleven other middle schools (see list below) are standalone campuses that serve only newcomers who are zoned to their campus. **Appendix B** (p. 14) provides a list of hub campuses and the middle and high schools which they can accept transfer newcomer students from.

All campuses have the same set of interventions, as outlined above. The main division between campuses in terms of how they treat their newcomer students is that at some campuses, newcomers are grouped into a cohort with a common schedule and classes. Other campuses do not group their newcomers in this manner, but otherwise have the same set of supports. Note that this "cohort" grouping of students cuts across both middle and high school levels, and across the hub and standalone campuses.

Methods

Participants

There were 2,244 newcomer students served by the program in 2016–2017 (1,448 in high school and 796 in middle school). An additional 490 newcomer students were at campuses that did not participate in the newcomer program; these students served as a comparison group for analyses of student performance data (see below). A breakdown of the number of students served by campus is provided in **Table 1** (see p. 5). All newcomers were first year immigrant ELLs. More than half (55%) of newcomer students came from three Central American countries: El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala (**Table 2**, p. 5). The majority qualified for free or reduced lunch (71%), with more males than females (55% vs. 45%). Also, most newcomers had Spanish as their home language (76%).

Teachers at participating campuses were designated as newcomer teachers if they attended QTEL training (Quality Teaching for English Learners) offered by the district, and taught newcomer students in at least one subject (see Table 1 for counts of newcomer teachers). The QTEL training was provided in three separate training sessions in the fall of 2016 (lasting either four- or five-days). On-site training was provided for teachers in middle school and high school. An additional three four-day sessions were offered in June of 2017. The QTEL sessions were intended to develop teacher expertise in engaging newcomer students in challenging, supportive instruction and strengthening the expertise of school adminis-

Table 1. Number of Newcomer Students Enrolled at Participating Campuses, 2016–2017, and Number of QTEL-Trained Teachers At Those Campuses

Campus	# Newcomers	# Teachers (Others)	Campus	# Newcomers	# Teachers (Others)
Austin HS *(H)*	68	4 (0)	Navarro MS (H)	12	3 (0)
Bellaire HS *(SA)*	80	1 (0)	Ortiz MS (SA)	37	1 (0)
Black MS *(H)*	25	1 (0)	Pershing MS (SA)	34	0 (0)
Burbank MS (SA)	35	0 (0)	Revere MS (SA)	143	3 (0)
Chavez HS *(H)*	72	0 (0)	Scarborough HS (SA)	34	1 (0)
Clifton MS (SA)	30	1 (0)	Sharpstown HS (SA)	148	5 (0)
Deady MS (SA)	38	0 (0)	Sugar Grove Acad (SA)	98	1 (0)
Edison MS (SA)	24	1 (0)	Tanglewood MS (SA)	39	1 (0)
Fondren MS (H)	39	3 (0)	Waltrip HS (SA)	45	2 (0)
Fonville MS (H)	53	0 (0)	Welch MS (SA)	32	0 (0)
Furr HS *(SA)*	72	0 (0)	Westbury HS (H)	138	12 (0)
Hartman MS *(H)*	31	0 (0)	Westside HS (SA)	101	4 (0)
Houston MTSC *(H)*	117	7 (2)	Wisdom HS (SA)	430	8 (1)
Lamar HS *(SA)*	51	1 (0)	*Subtotal*	*2,244*	*69 (3)*
Long Academy (SA)	126	5 (0)	*Liberty HS (NC)*	*128*	*15 (2)*
Madison HS *(SA)*	61	2 (0)	*Other Schools*	*490*	*30 (17)*
Milby HS *(SA)*	31	2 (0)			

Source: IBM Cognos cumulative enrollment, 2016-2017   *H= Hub Campus, SA = Standalone Campus, NC = Newcomer Center*

trators in supporting the newcomer program. A total of 69 teachers from the Newcomers campuses attended QTEL training, as did 3 administrators and other staff. In addition, 30 teachers and 17 other staff from non-Newcomer campuses attended QTEL training.

Data Collection & Analysis

- The Multilingual Programs Department provided of a list of teachers attending the QTEL training as well as other related professional development sessions, and teacher's employee ID codes were retrieved from the district's Chancery database. Multilingual Programs department specialists main-

Table 2. Demographics of Newcomer Students at Participating Campuses, 2016–2017

Home Country	Number	Percent	Home Language	Number	Percent
El Salvador	611	27%	Spanish	1,698	76%
Honduras	432	19%	Arabic	110	5%
Guatemala	211	9%	Swahili	57	3%
Mexico	201	9%	Urdu	28	1%
Cuba	62	3%	Farsi	26	1%
Congo	53	2%	Vietnamese	22	1%
Iraq	40	2%	French	14	1%
Afghanistan	37	2%	Mandarin	14	1%
Other Countries	597	27%	Portugese	11	<1%
	Number	**Percent**	Amharic	9	<1%
Econ Disadvantaged	1,601	71%	Pashto	8	<1%
Special Education	11	<1%	Somali	7	<1%
Gifted/Talented	2	<1%	Other	240	11%
Male/Female	1,239/1,005	55%/45%	**Total**	**2,244**	

Source: IBM Cognos cumulative enrollment, 2016-2017

tained logs of support and training provided to teachers and participating campuses. Additional logs tracked outreach support provided to students and their parents.

- Student performance data were collected on five measures. The first was a district-developed writing assessment based on the Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS) rubric, which was intended to assess growth in English writing. Newcomer ESL teachers at hub and standalone campuses were trained in the use of this rubric. Students were rated at the completion of each six-week class cycle, and were judged as being at one of four proficiency levels (i.e., Beginning, Intermediate, Advanced, or Advanced High), with students further differentiated within each level ("early", "moderate", or "ready").

- The second set of student assessment data came from a reading assessment, Achieve 3000, which was licensed to all hub and standalone campuses. The program assesses a student's lexile level in English and adjusts reading assignments. Students are reassessed according to a specific timeframe and their lexile level is adjusted as their reading skills develop. This followed the same timeline as did the writing assessment, i.e. students were tested at the end of each grading cycle.

- The writing and reading assessments were being used for the first time during 2016–2017, and thus results represent a baseline and cannot be compared to student performance from previous years.

- TELPAS results are reported, specifically, the level of English language proficiency exhibited by newcomer students. Comparisons were made of the performance of newcomers at participating campuses to that of newcomers who did not attend these schools. **Appendix C** (see p. 15) provides further details on each of the assessments analyzed for this report.

- State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR 3-8) and End-of-Course (EOC) assessment results are reported for newcomer students tested in the spring of 2017, for all subjects.

- Additional data came from district disciplinary and attendance records for 2016-2017.

Results

How many newcomer teachers received QTEL training?

- A total of 69 teachers from the Newcomers campuses attended QTEL training, as did 3 administrators and other staff. In addition, 30 teachers and 17 other staff from non-Newcomer campuses attended QTEL training (see Table 1, p. 5).

- There were 48 Newcomer teachers from high schools, and 21 from middle schools. For non-Newcomers schools the corresponding figures were 5 and 25, respectively.

How much support was provided to newcomer students and parents according to activity logs?

- Data from support logs submitted by Multilingual Program department staff were collated, and a summary of the results is provided here.

- A total of 1,050 outreach/support sessions were held with newcomer students from fall 2016 through May of 2017. An additional 239 orientation sessions with parents were also held.

Figure 2. 2016 TELPAS performance of newcomer students, first-year immigrants from other (non-participating) campuses, and all ELLs districtwide: A. Overall proficiency level in 2017, B. Percent of students making gains in proficiency between 2016 and 2017
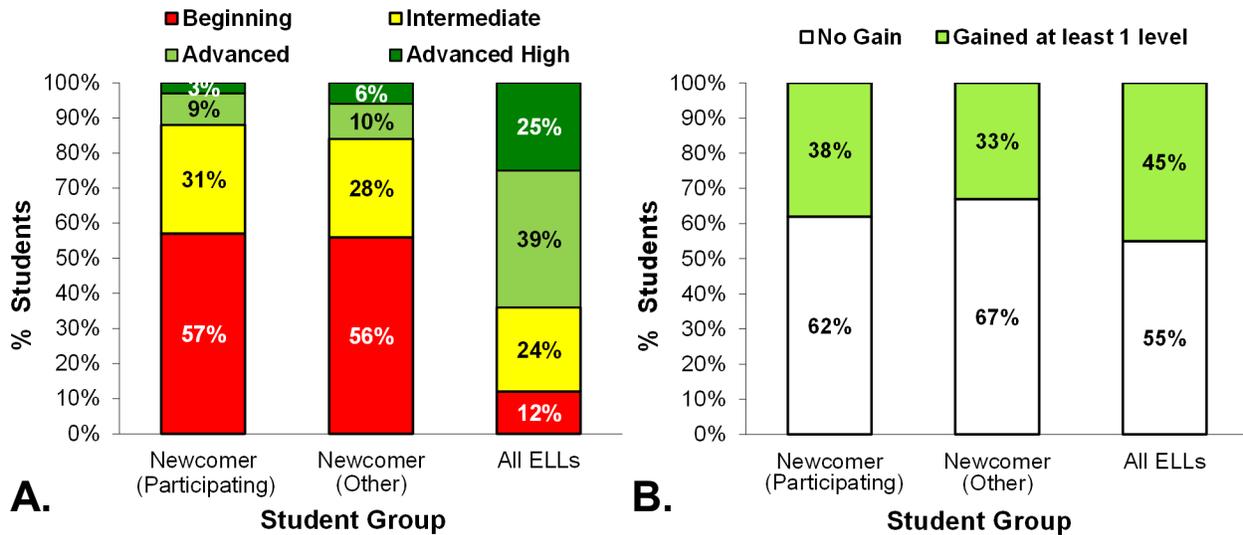
Source: Chancery, TELPAS data file 5/8/17

What was the TELPAS performance of students in the newcomer program?

Figure 2 shows TELPAS results for 2017 for three student groups: newcomer students at participating campuses, newcomer students at other campuses, and all ELL students districtwide. In all cases, data are limited to students in grades 6 through 12. For details see **Appendices D** and **E**, pp. 16-17.

- Unsurprisingly, both groups of newcomer students had lower levels of overall English proficiency, as compared to ELLs as a group.

- Newcomers at participating campuses had slightly lower scores than other newcomers at non-participating campuses, with fewer students scoring Advanced or better (12% vs. 16%).

- Newcomers also did worse than ELLs overall in terms of yearly progress, but participating newcomers showing more progress between 2016 and 2017 than did non-participating newcomers (38% vs. 33%, *see endnote #1, p. 12*).

Figure 3. Percentage of newcomer and ELL students who met Approaches Grade Level standard on STAAR tests, 2017, Grades 6-8
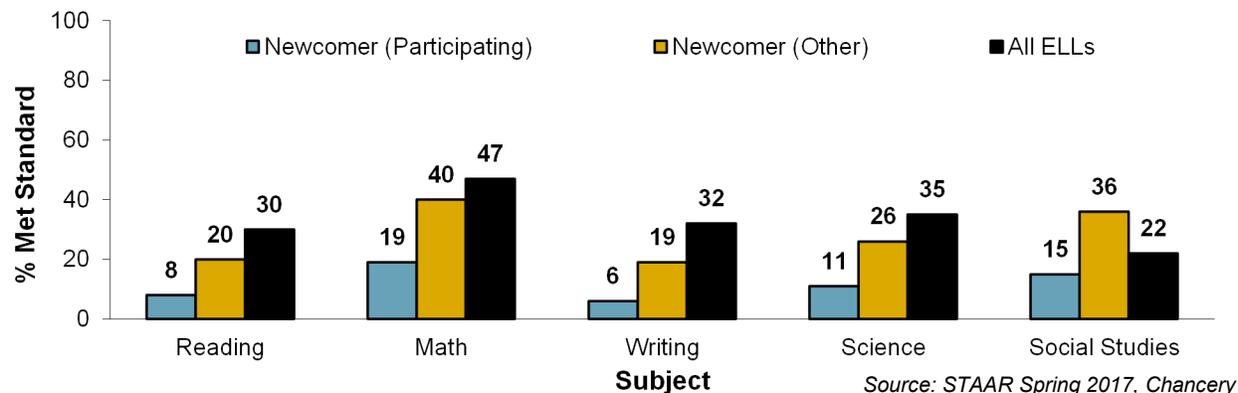
Source: STAAR Spring 2017, Chancery

Figure 4. Percentage of newcomer and ELL students who met Approaches Grade Level standard on STAAR End-of-Course tests, 2017

Source: STAAR EOC 6/2/17, Chancery
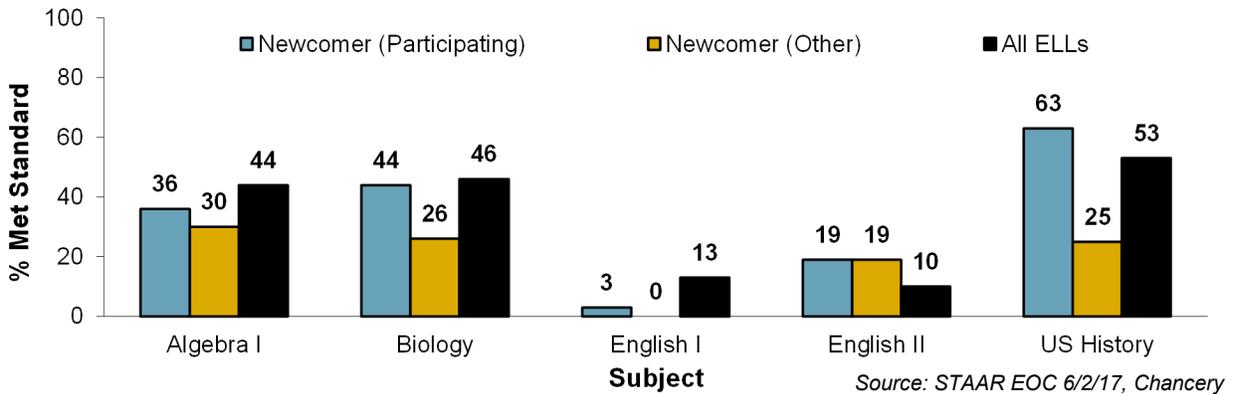
How did newcomer students perform on the STAAR 3-8 and EOC assessments?

Newcomer students were tested on both the STAAR 3-8 and the EOC assessments in the spring of 2017, and this section summarizes their performance in comparison with all ELLs districtwide. Summary results for STAAR 3-8 are shown in **Figure 3** (see p. 7). Further details are provided in **Appendices F** and **G** (pp. 18-19).

- Participating newcomer students had lower passing rates than those at non-participating campuses, and both groups of newcomers did less well than ELLs overall in all subjects except social studies.

- Results for the EOC exams are shown in **Figure 4** (above). In contrast with the STAAR 3-8 results, participating newcomers had higher passing rates than non-participating newcomers, in nearly all subjects (with the exception of English II).

How did newcomer students perform on the district-developed writing assessment?

The district-developed writing assessment was only administered to students in the newcomer program (hub or standalone) and only at certain campuses, so there is no districtwide comparison data available. As indicated previously, the writing assessment was administered at the conclusion of each six-week grading period. However, since newcomer students arrived at various points throughout the year (and many left before school year ended), there were not many with data from both the 1st and 6th grading periods. Instead it was decided to use data from students with results from the 2nd and 6th grading periods, since there were a reasonable number of such students, and the assessments were far enough apart that student growth could conceivably be measured. A summary of the data is shown in **Figure 5**.

Figure 5. Number of newcomer students who improved, showed no improvement, or who performed worse on EOY versus BOY writing assessments
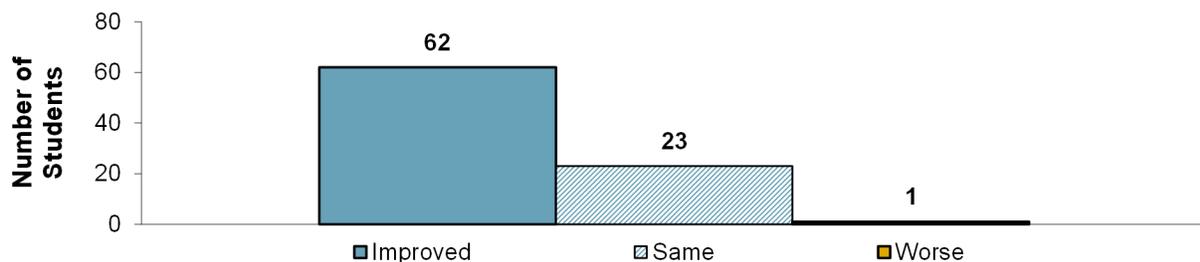
Source: Multilingual Programs Dept

- On the writing assessment, there were 86 newcomer students at participating campuses with both beginning-of-year (BOY, 2nd grading period) and end-of-year (EOY, 6th grading period) scores.

- Of these 86 students, 62 showed improvement from BOY to EOY assessment, while 1 showed a decline in their writing performance and 23 showed no improvement. The difference (62 improved versus 1 who showed negative growth) was significant (Chi-squared =57.1, p < .001).

How did newcomer students perform on the Achieve 3000 reading assessment?

The Achieve 3000 reading assessment is administered at the end of every grading cycle. Analysis was limited to those students who had two different administrations, with at least 30 days between them. There were 597 newcomer students who had both pre- and post-test data, as well as an additional 1,565 other non-newcomers. A summary of the data is shown in **Figure 6**.

Figure 6. Mean lexile gain shown by newcomer and non-newcomer students in 2016-2017 (minimum or 30 days between pre- and post-test administrations)
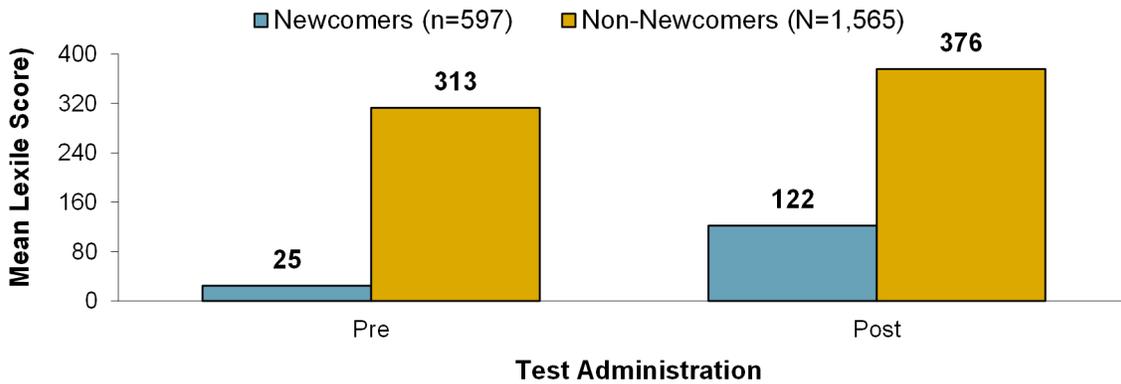
- Newcomers had lower lexiles in reading than did the non-newcomers at both pre-and post-test. However, the newcomers showed a greater lexile gain (98 lexile points) than did non-newcomers (63 lexile points).

- Further analysis of newcomer performance showed that the size of their lexile gain was related to the number of Achieve 3000 activities they had engaged in (see **Figure 7**). Newcomers who had 50 activities or more showed larger gains than those with fewer than 50 activities during the year.

Figure 7. Mean lexile gain shown by newcomer as a function of the number of Achieve 3000 activities engaged in
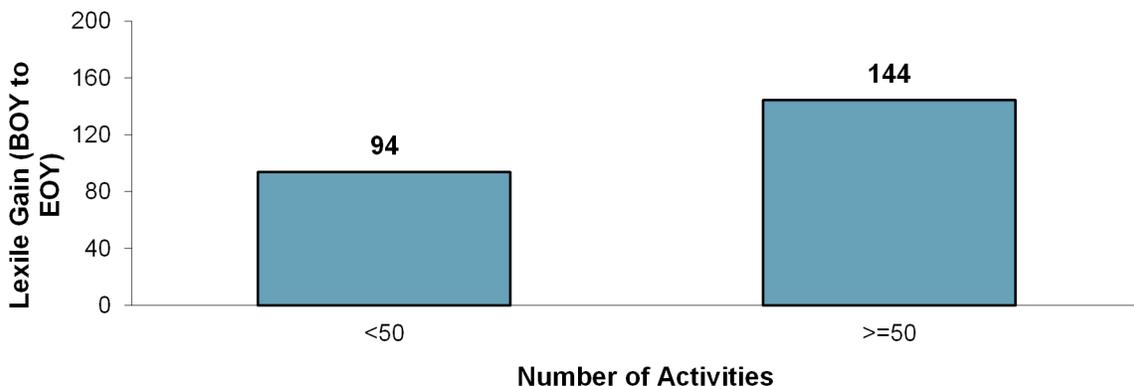
| Table 3. Number and Percent of Student Subject to Disciplinary Actions in 2016–2017								
Student Group	Number Enrolled	Number of Incidents)					Students (Unduplicated)	
		ISS	OSS	DAEP	Expelled	Total # Incidents	Total # Students	Total % Students
Newcomers (Participating)	2,244	409	201	17	0	627	335	14.93
Other Newcomers	490	43	38	4	0	85	41	8.37
Non-Newcomers	101,436	26,879	20,705	2,124	52	49,760	18,374	18.11

Source: TEA Discipline File 2016-2017

Did newcomer students differ from other students in terms of school attendance or discipline?

Student attendance and discipline data from 2016–2017 were analyzed to determine whether there was a difference between the patterns shown by newcomer students and others in the district.

- Attendance records (2016-2017 PEIMS ADA file) showed that the average attendance rate for participating newcomer students (94.6 percent) did not differ significantly from comparable rates for other newcomer students (95.8%) or non-newcomer students in grades 6 to 12 (94.5%).

- Student discipline data were extracted from district records using the appropriate PEIMS Disciplinary Action Codes (grades 6 to 12 only).

- As **Table 3** shows, there were 335 participating newcomer program students who received any type of disciplinary action in 2016–2017, equivalent to 14.93% of all newcomer program students enrolled. This rates were significantly higher than the rate shown by newcomers from non-participating campuses (8.37%).

- The 14.93% disciplinary rate for newcomers at participating campuses was significantly lower than the disciplinary rate for all non-newcomers in the district (18.11 percent, grades 6-12 only, $p < .00005$).

Did QTEL training for teachers have an effect on their students' English language proficiency?

As indicated earlier there were 99 teachers who attended QTEL training during 2016-2017. In addition, there were 36 teachers who had attended QTEL training during the previous school year. This section summarizes data from two performance measures related to English language proficiency for ELL students, in order to assess whether students taught by teachers who received this training gained any advantage compared to students of untrained teachers. Both measures are based on TELPAS, one being a Comparative Growth Measure (see endnote #2, p. 12) and the second being the percentage of ELL students who made progress on TELPAS between 2015-2016 and 2016-2017. Results are summarized in **Table 4** (number of teachers receiving scores in parentheses).

Table 4. TELPAS Performance of Students Taught by Teachers Trained or Not Trained in QTEL: Comparative Growth and Yearly Progress				
Year of QTEL Training	Comparative Growth (Average Student Score)		TELPAS Yearly Progress (Percent Who Gained)	
	Trained	Not Trained	Trained	Not Trained
2016-2017 QTEL Training	48.8 (17)	51.1 (176)	35.8 (43)	37.1 (445)
2015-2016 QTEL Training	34.3 (4)	51.5 (173)	28.3 (15)	37.4 (431)

- Comparative growth measures are shown in the left two columns. For teachers trained in QTEL in 2016-2017, students of teachers who were trained did not differ from students of teachers who were not trained (average scores of 48.8 and 51.1 respectively).

- For teachers trained in QTEL in 2015-2016 and who were still in the district in 2016-2017, there appeared to be a difference in performance, with students of teachers who had previously been trained not performing as well as teachers who had never been trained (average scores of 34.3 and 51.5 respectively), but this difference was not significant statistically.

- The two rightmost columns show TELPAS yearly progress for students taught by teachers trained in QTEL versus students whose teachers did not receive training. For newly trained (2016-2017) teachers, there was no difference between students of trained (35.8 percent making progress) or untrained teachers (37.1 percent).

- However, teachers who had been trained during the previous year had fewer students make progress in 2016-2017 (28.3 percent) as compared to students of untrained teachers (37.4 percent). This difference was statistically significant ($p < .03$).

How did former newcomers perform in the year after participating in the program?

The 2015-2016 school year was the first year of implementation for the newcomer program. Of interest is whether any of the newcomer students from that year benefited from their participation the following year. Accordingly, the roster of newcomer students from 2015-2016 (i.e., who were now second-year immigrants during 2016-2017) was used to assess how they did on various measures compared to other students who had not been served: former newcomers from non-participating campuses, and all ELLs in grades 6-12. Summary data are shown in **Table 5**.

- Both groups of previous newcomers were lower than the district on overall TELPAS proficiency, with only 27 and 26 percent respectively scoring Advanced or better versus district ELLs with 64 percent.

- On TELPAS yearly progress, both groups of newcomer did better than district ELLs, with 56 and 52 percent making gains over the previous year, compared to only 45 percent for district ELLs.

- Previous newcomers had a lower rate of disciplinary actions, with only 15.4 percent of students being disciplined in 2016-2017 versus 21.7 percent of all ELLs in grades 6-8.

- School attendance rates did not differ between previous newcomers and ELLs in grades 6-8. However, the annual dropout rate for newcomers in participating campuses (5.1 percent) was nearly half that for newcomers from non-participating campuses (9.2 percent, $p < .0005$).

Table 5. Performance of Second Year Newcomers in 2016-2017: TELPAS Advanced or Advanced High, TELPAS Yearly Progress, Percent of Students Disciplined, Percent Attendance, and Annual Dropout rate (Gr 7-12)					
Student Group	**TELPAS 2017**		**Discipline**	**Attendance**	**Dropouts**
	% A/AH	**% Gained**	**% Students**	**% Attendance**	**Annual 7-12**
Newcomers (Year 2)	27	56	15.4	93.9	5.1
Other Newcomers (Year 2)	26	52	11.8	94.0	9.2
All ELLs (Gr 6-12)	64	45	21.7	94.2	5.0

Discussion

The goal of the district's Newcomer program is to accommodate and educate newly arrived immigrant ELL students. Based on immigrant student enrollment, 30 secondary campuses were selected to participate, 14 high schools and 16 middle schools. Under the program, newcomer students receive specialized assistance and supports within an existing campus, rather than be segregated from the general student population in a separate facility.

Results of this evaluation report of year-two of the program can be summarized as follows. The specialized QTEL training which was offered to teachers at the newcomer campuses was attended by 69 teachers, with only eight campuses reporting no teachers attending. Over one-thousand outreach and support meetings were held with newcomer students during the year, along with 239 orientation sessions for parents. In comparison with newcomer students from non-participating campuses, newcomers from the selected campuses did not show any particular pattern of better or lower performance on various assessments (TELPAS, STAAR, or EOC), in some cases showing superior performance and in others doing less well. Overall, large gaps still existed for all newcomer students in terms of their English language proficiency. The district-designed writing assessment was successful in detecting gains in proficiency between BOY and EOY testing for those newcomers for whom data were available. Newcomers lagged behind non-newcomers on the achieve 300 reading assessment but did show larger lexile gains. There was evidence that participation in the newcomer program led to lower rates of disciplinary incidents not only for current-year newcomers, but also for second-year immigrants who would have participated during 2015-2016. Finally, dropout data for 2015-2016 showed that newcomers at participating campuses were about half as likely to dropout as newcomers from non-participating campuses.

The number of newcomer students in the district will likely remain high in 2017-2018, so there will continue to be a need for these types of services. Data reported here shows that most newcomers were still at the lowest level of English proficiency at year's end, and there was little to indicate major gains in academic performance. However, it does appear that newcomer students at participating campuses have better disciplinary and dropout outcomes than those at non-participating campuses. These are important indicators that suggest the program may be effective at keeping students in school.

Endnotes

[1]   TELPAS Yearly Progress data requires that students be tested in two consecutive school years. In the present case, this would require that TELPAS data be available from both 2017 as well as from 2016. Although newcomer students are considered to be in their first year in U.S. schools, nevertheless TELPAS Yearly Progress data is available for some of them because of the way in which newcomer students are identified. An immigrant student is still considered to be in their first year if they were enrolled in the previous year for fewer than 60 consecutive days. For the newcomers covered in this report, this would include those who enrolled after February 24, 2016. However, this date is prior to the 2016 testing window for the TELPAS, and thus there are a few newcomer students who have data from both years. The number of newcomer students this situation applies to is small, as Appendix E will bear out. While over 1,700 newcomers were tested on TELPAS in 2017 (see Appendix D), only 67 were tested in both 2016 and 2017 (see Appendix E).

[2]   Comparative Growth (CG) measures the progress of a teacher's students on a given assessment compared to all other students within the same school district who start at the same test score level. Comparative Growth relies on the use of standardized assessments in certain grades and subjects, and is computed using two consecutive years of students' scores, when these are available. In the case of CG for TELPAS, students were grouped into cohorts based on their TELPAS reading scale score from 2016, and then each cohort was sorted based on the scale score in 2017. A students score is their percentile ranking within this cohort, and a teachers score is equivalent to the median ranking for all students linked to them. Thus the expected average score for a teacher would be 50, with scores above this indicating positive growth for their students relative to the average teacher, and score below 50 representing lower than average growth.

Appendix A

Resource Materials Provided for Students

Resource materials provided for newcomer students included Hi-Lo readers, Xtra libraries, and Emerge kits for classrooms. Hi-Lo is a term used to refer to books that are "high interest, low readability". These books are written at a lower lexile level, but include grade-level appropriate content that is of interest to young readers (http://www.sdlback.com/hi-lo-reading). Xtra libraries are a component of the System 44 reading program (http://www.hmhco.com/products/system-44/shop/system44-xtra.htm), which is aimed at challenged readers in grades 3-12.

Emerge kits (http://www.proedinc.com/customer/productView.aspx?ID=7232) are sets of books which include grade-level content that are written at emergent and beginner reader levels. Included with each Emerge set is teaching support for every title included in the set, lesson plans, guided reading questions, and tools for assessing students' comprehension.

Finally, the program purchased some Inside the USA kits (available through National Geographic Learning) to replenish ones which had been purchased during the first year of the program. This kit is aimed at reading, writing, and language instruction for newcomers and preliterate students.

Appendix B

Middle and High School Hub Campuses (With Corresponding Campuses Which They Are Permitted to Accept Newcomer Transfers From), As Well As Standalone Campuses Serving Zoned Newcomer Students

Hub Campus	Transfer Campus	Hub Campus	Transfer Campus
Austin HS	Wheatley HS	Black MS	Gregory-Lincoln 6-8
	Yates HS		Hamilton MS
Chavez HS	Sterling HS		Hogg MS
Houston MTSC	Heights HS		Lanier MS
	Kashmere HS	Fondren MS	Lawson MS
	North Forest HS		Meyerland PVA MS
	Northside HS		B Reagan K-8
	Washington HS	Fonville MS	Forest Brooks MS
Westbury HS	Worthing HS		Henry MS
Navarro MS	Cullen MS		Key MS
	Fleming MS		Williams MS
	Holland MS	Hartman MS	Attucks MS
	Marshall MS		Stevenson MS
	McReynolds MS		Thomas MS
			Woodson MS

Standalone High Schools	Standalone Middle Schools
Bellaire HS	Burbank MS
Furr HS	Clifton MS
Lamar HS	Deady MS
Madison HS	Edison MS
Milby HS	Long Academy
Scarborough HS	Ortiz MS
Sharpstown HS	Pershing MS
Waltrip HS	Revere MS
Westside HS	Sugar Grove MS
Wisdom HS	Tanglewood MS
	Welch MS
Liberty HS (Newcomer Center) *	

Note: Liberty High School has had a long-standing program for newcomer students, but is not included in any of the analyses for the newcomer program (either as a participating or non-participating campus). This is because it is a specialized program aimed at mostly overage students who are trying to complete their high school credits and graduate. All of the students enrolled at Liberty are classified as seniors, and it was determined that this group of newcomer students was sufficiently unique that they should not be compared to other recent immigrants from across the various secondary grade levels.

Appendix C

Explanation of Assessments Included in Report

The Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS) is an English language proficiency assessment which is administered to all ELL students in kindergarten through twelfth grade, and which was developed by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) in response to federal testing requirements. Proficiency scores in the domains of listening, speaking, reading, and writing are used to calculate a composite score. Composite scores are in turn used to indicate where ELL students are on a continuum of English language development. This continuum, based on the stages of language development for second language learners, is divided into four proficiency levels: Beginning, Intermediate, Advanced, and Advanced High.

The State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) is a state-mandated, criterion-referenced assessment used to measure student achievement. STAAR measures academic achievement in reading and mathematics in grades 3–8; writing at grades 4 and 7; social studies in grades 8; and science at grades 5 and 8. The STAAR passing standard for 2017 and the foreseeable future is "Approaches Grade Level".

For high school students, STAAR includes end-of-course (EOC) exams in English language arts (English I, II), mathematics (Algebra I), science (Biology), and social studies (U.S. History). In 2015–2016, a new "Student Standard" was introduced for passing EOC exams. This measure is what is reported here for the EOC results. Under the Student Standard, all students taking EOC exams will not necessarily be held to the same passing standard. Instead, the passing standard applicable will be determined by the standard that was in place when a student first took any EOC assessment. This standard will be maintained throughout the student's school career. Thus, for students who first tested prior to 2015–2016, the Student Standard is the Level II: Satisfactory Phase-in 1 Standard for 2012-2015. For those who first tested in 2015–2016, it is the 2016 Progression Standard (now knows as "Approaches Grade Level").

For 2016-2017, the newcomer division adapted the TELPAS writing rubric to assess newcomer student growth in English writing. The purpose of this rubric is to assess incremental growth in English writing development. The assessment has four proficiency levels corresponding to the four TELPAS levels (beginning, intermediate, advanced, and advanced high), and within each of these levels there is a further segmentation into early, moderate and ready categories of performance, for a total of twelve progressive steps. For the 2016-2017 school year, the writing assessment was only used in 21 of the newcomer campuses as a pilot study in order to examine its efficacy.

The Achieve 3000 reading assessment was used at all hub and standalone campuses and was used in secondary ESL classes for newcomers. Achieve 3000 is designed to offer linguistic supports for ELLs. It assesses a student's lexile level in English and adjusts reading assignments accordingly. Students were assessed at the end of each six-week grading period and the lexile level of their reading assignment were adjusted as their skill developed.

Appendix D

Composite TELPAS Results: Number and Percent of Students at Each Proficiency Level in 2017, by Grade and Student Group

Newcomers (Participating Campuses)

Grade	# Tested	Beginning		Intermediate		Advanced		Advanced High		Composite Score
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
6	166	108	65	36	22	15	9	7	4	1.5
7	189	118	62	57	30	12	6	2	1	1.4
8	185	103	56	53	29	20	11	6	3	1.6
9	681	431	63	202	30	38	6	10	1	1.4
10	229	105	46	89	39	26	11	9	4	1.7
11	95	21	22	41	43	19	20	14	15	2.2
12	17	2	12	4	24	6	35	5	29	2.8
Total	1,562	888	57	482	31	136	9	53	3	1.6

Newcomers (Other Campuses)

Grade	# Tested	Beginning		Intermediate		Advanced		Advanced High		Composite Score
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
6	57	25	44	22	39	7	12	3	5	1.6
7	55	27	49	18	33	4	7	6	11	1.7
8	66	31	47	20	30	10	15	5	8	1.8
9	72	57	79	9	13	5	7	1	1	1.3
10	21	13	62	6	29	1	5	1	5	1.5
11	3	0	0	2	67	1	33	0	0	2.1
12	0	0	--	0	--	0	--	0	--	--
Total	274	153	56	77	28	28	10	16	6	1.6

All ELLs

Grade	# Tested	Beginning		Intermediate		Advanced		Advanced High		Composite Score
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
6	3,613	310	9	873	24	1,564	43	866	24	2.7
7	2,894	303	10	631	22	1,198	41	762	26	2.7
8	2,667	341	13	525	20	1,039	39	762	29	2.7
9	3,132	699	22	782	25	1,016	32	635	20	2.4
10	1,832	246	13	535	29	643	35	408	22	2.5
11	1,221	71	6	302	25	492	40	356	29	2.8
12	1,154	85	7	296	26	441	38	332	29	2.7
Total	16,513	2,055	12	3,944	24	6,393	39	4,121	25	2.6

Source: TELPAS data file 5/8/17, Chancery

Appendix E

TELPAS Yearly Progress: Number and Percent of Students Gaining One or More Levels of English Language Proficiency in 2017, by Grade and Student Group

Newcomers (Participating Campuses)

Grade Level	Cohort Size	Gained 1 Proficiency Level		Gained 2 Proficiency Levels		Gained 3 Proficiency Levels		Gained at Least 1 Proficiency Level	
	N	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
6	8	2	25	1	13	0	0	3	38
7	6	4	67	0	0	0	0	4	67
8	8	3	38	0	0	0	0	3	38
9	23	7	30	1	4	0	0	8	35
10	7	3	43	0	0	0	0	3	43
11	4	0	0	1	25	0	0	1	25
12	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	58	19	33	3	5	0	0	22	38

Newcomers (Other Campuses)

Grade Level	Cohort Size	Gained 1 Proficiency Level		Gained 2 Proficiency Levels		Gained 3 Proficiency Levels		Gained at Least 1 Proficiency Level	
	N	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
6	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
7	2	0	0	1	50	0	0	1	50
8	2	1	50	0	0	0	0	1	50
9	2	1	50	0	0	0	0	1	50
10	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
11	0	0	--	0	--	0	--	0	--
12	0	0	--	0	--	0	--	0	--
Total	9	2	22	1	11	0	0	3	33

All Ells

Grade Level	Cohort Size	Gained 1 Proficiency Level		Gained 2 Proficiency Levels		Gained 3 Proficiency Levels		Gained at Least 1 Proficiency Level	
	N	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
6	3,168	1,227	39	50	2	0	0	1,277	40
7	2,420	1,103	46	47	2	0	0	1,150	48
8	2,136	1,023	48	42	2	0	0	1,065	50
9	2,094	879	42	44	2	1	<1	924	44
10	1,425	605	42	24	2	0	0	629	44
11	1,030	481	47	12	1	0	0	493	48
12	946	453	48	10	1	0	0	463	49
Total	13,219	5,771	44	229	2	1	<1	6,001	45

Source: TELPAS data file 5/8,17, Chancery

Appendix F

STAAR 3-8 Results: Number Tested and Percent Meeting Approaches Grade Level Standard by Grade Level and Subject (Spring 2017, First Testing Only)

Newcomers (Participating Campuses)

Grade	Reading		Mathematics		Writing		Science		Social Studies	
	Tested	% Met	Tested	% Met	Tested	% Met	Tested	% Met	Tested	% Met
6	199	9	198	24						
7	239	6	239	12	231	6				
8	244	10	242	22			253	11	258	15
Total	**682**	**8**	**679**	**19**	**231**	**6**	**253**	**11**	**258**	**15**

Newcomers (Other Campuses)

Grade	Reading		Mathematics		Writing		Science		Social Studies	
	Tested	% Met	Tested	% Met	Tested	% Met	Tested	% Met	Tested	% Met
6	74	20	74	43						
7	62	19	62	37	62	19				
8	85	20	81	38			89	26	90	36
Total	**221**	**20**	**217**	**40**	**62**	**19**	**89**	**26**	**90**	**36**

All ELLs

Grade	Reading		Mathematics		Writing		Science		Social Studies	
	Tested	% Met	Tested	% Met	Tested	% Met	Tested	% Met	Tested	% Met
6	3,587	28	3,583	51						
7	2,896	32	2,868	42	2,913	32				
8	2,639	30	2,542	46			2,635	35	2,647	22
Total	**9,122**	**30**	**8,993**	**47**	**2,916**	**32**	**2,635**	**35**	**2,647**	**22**

Source: STAAR student data files spring 2017, Chancery

Appendix G

STAAR End-of Course Results: Number Tested and Number and Percentage Meeting the Approaches Grade Level Standard (Spring 2017 Data Only, All Students Tested)

Newcomers (Hub Campuses)										
Grade	**Algebra I**		**Biology**		**English I**		**English II**		**US History**	
	Tested	% Met	Tested	% Met	Tested	% Met	Tested	% Met	Tested	% Met
Newcomer (Participating)	522	36	258	44	541	3	161	19	87	63
Newcomer (Other)	46	30	39	26	45	0	16	19	4	25
All ELLs	4,349	44	3,497	46	5,159	13	4,396	10	1,751	53

Source: STAAR EOC 6/2/17, Chancery