

MEMORANDUM

December 10, 2020

TO: Anna White
Executive Director, Multilingual Programs

FROM: Allison Matney, Ed.D.
Officer, Research and Accountability

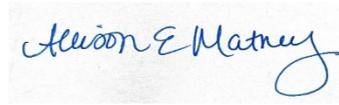
SUBJECT: **2020 IMMIGRANT STUDENT PROGRAM EVALUATION REPORT**

Many of the district's students are recent immigrants who have been in the United States for three years or less. "Immigrant" children or youth, as defined under the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), and later the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 (ESSA), are "individuals who are aged 3 through 21; were not born in any state; and have not been attending schools in any one or more states for more than 3 full academic years" (P.L. 115-224 Title III, Part B, § 3201(5)). There have been over 10,000 immigrant students enrolled in HISD each of the past six years. This report summarizes data from programs dedicated to serving district immigrant students during the 2019–2020 school year.

Key findings include:

- A total of 15,935 immigrant students were enrolled in the district for at least part of the 2019–2020 school year. About one in ten of district students overall, and one in four English learners, were either current or former immigrants in 2019–2020.
- More than half (55%) of immigrant students came from three Central American countries, Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala.
- Data from the District Level Assessments (DLAs) on STAAR 3-8 and EOC subjects showed that immigrant students had lower passing rates than either ELs or the district overall. Passing rates on the DLAs improved the longer an immigrant student was enrolled in U.S. schools.
- On the district's Renaissance 360 assessment, immigrant students had a higher percentage at the Urgent Intervention level, and fewer at the At/Above Benchmark level, than either EL students or the district overall.
- Immigrant students had fewer reported disciplinary incidents but were retained at a higher rate than ELs or the district overall. Immigrant students also had a higher annual (grade 7–12) dropout rate than ELs or the district, and their four-year graduation/dropout data was worse than that of ELs.
- Finally, immigrant students appear to have deficits regarding their post-secondary preparedness, as they lagged both ELs and the district on five different measures (attendance at non-zoned campus, Career and Technical Education program participation, magnet status, Advanced Placement course enrollment, and Advanced Placement test participation).

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

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Allison E. Matney". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping 'y' at the end.

AEM

Attachment

cc: Grenita Lathan, Ph.D.
Yolanda Rodriguez
Khalilah Campbell



RESEARCH

Educational Program Report

IMMIGRANT STUDENT PROGRAM EVALUATION REPORT
2019 - 2020



2020 BOARD OF EDUCATION

Susan Deigaard

President

Wanda Adams

First Vice President

Judith Cruz

Second Vice President

Patricia K. Allen

Secretary

Daniela "Dani" Hernandez

Assistant Secretary

Kathy Bluford-Daniels

Holly Maria Flynn

Elizabeth Santos

Anne Sung

Grenita Lathan, Ph.D.

Interim Superintendent of Schools

Allison Matney, Ed.D.

Officer

Department of Research and Accountability

Kevin Briand, Ph.D.

Senior Research Specialist

Venita Holmes, Dr.P.H.

Research Manager

Houston Independent School District
Hattie Mae White Educational Support Center
4400 West 18th Street Houston, Texas 77092-8501

www.HoustonISD.org

It is the policy of the Houston Independent School District not to discriminate on the basis of age, color, handicap or disability, ancestry, national origin, marital status, race, religion, sex, veteran status, political affiliation, sexual orientation, gender identity and/or gender expression in its educational or employment programs and activities.

IMMIGRANT STUDENT PROGRAM EVALUATION REPORT 2019–2020

Executive Summary

Program Description

There are approximately 200,000 students in Houston ISD, and many of them are recent immigrants who have been in the United States for three years or less. "Immigrant" children or youth, as defined under the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), and later the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 (ESSA), are "individuals who are aged 3 through 21; were not born in any state; and have not been attending schools in any one or more states for more than 3 full academic years" (P.L. 115-224 Title III, Part B, § 3201(5)). In recent years, the number of immigrant students in the district has increased dramatically, with over 10,000 enrolled in each of the past six years. In fact, about one in nine of the district's students in 2019–2020 were either current or former immigrants (i.e., immigrant students whose three-year status had expired). For English learners (ELs), the numbers are even more striking; one in four current ELs were either immigrant or former immigrant students in 2019–2020. This report summarizes data from programs dedicated to serving district immigrant students during the 2019–2020 school year.

The report includes the following information:

- enrollment and demographic data for immigrant students;
- a brief review of what immigrant programs and services the district has provided in recent years;
- academic performance of immigrant students;
- Immigrant student data in school attendance, discipline, promotion, graduation/dropout rates, and school mobility; and
- data relating to immigrant students' preparedness for post-secondary education.

Highlights

- A total of 15,935 immigrant students were enrolled in the district for at least part of the 2019–2020 school year.
- Eleven percent of district students were either current immigrants or had been an immigrant at some point in time. Twenty-six percent of EL students were either current or former immigrants.
- More than half (55%) of immigrant students came from three Central American countries: Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala.
- Because of the district's closure due to COVID-19, results from statewide assessments (STAAR 3–8, STAAR End of Course, and TELPAS) were unavailable. Instead, data from two of the district's interim assessments is reported.
- Data from the DLA STAAR 3–8 showed that immigrant students had lower passing rates than either ELs or the district overall, in all subjects tested and in both English and Spanish. Passing rates did tend to improve for students in their second or third year of immigrant status.

- Immigrants also had lower passing rates on the DLA STAAR EOC assessments, and there was also evidence for improved performance for immigrants in their 2nd or 3rd-year of immigrant status.
- On the district's Renaissance 360 assessment, immigrant students had a higher percentage at the Urgent Intervention level, and fewer at the At/Above Benchmark level, than either EL students or the district overall.
- Immigrant students had fewer reported disciplinary incidents, but were retained at a higher rate than ELs or the district overall. Attendance rates for immigrants were similar to those for other students.
- Immigrant students had a higher annual (grade 7–12) dropout rate than ELs or the district, and their four-year graduation/dropout rates were worse than those of EL students.
- There was some evidence that school mobility differed for immigrant students, as a higher percentage of them attended more than one campus during the school year. In terms of days missed, a higher percentage of immigrant students missed more than 30 days of school than either of the comparison groups (EL students and the district overall), but this finding was limited to 1st-year immigrant students.
- Finally, immigrant students appear to have deficits regarding their post-secondary preparedness, as they lagged behind both ELs and the district on five different measures (attendance at the students' non-zoned campus, Career and Technical Education program participation, magnet status, Advanced Placement course enrollment, and Advanced Placement test participation).

Recommendations

1. Implementing sheltered instruction strategies is not sufficient for immigrant English learners enrolled at secondary campuses, so Multilingual will work collaboratively with curriculum to ensure that immigrants whose language proficiency levels are at the Beginning and Intermediate level receive focused, systematic language development that includes English language vocabulary, grammar, syntax, and mechanics to support content-based instruction and accelerated English acquisition.
2. Principal appointed SI Coaches will support principals to monitor achievement for immigrant students. The Multilingual Programs team will support and build capacity in SI Coaches throughout the year to ensure that the coaches have the expertise to provide campus administrators and teachers with professional development related to immigrant EL needs and supports, feedback and development for teachers of ELs, and oversee the implementation of the EL instructional plan for the campus.

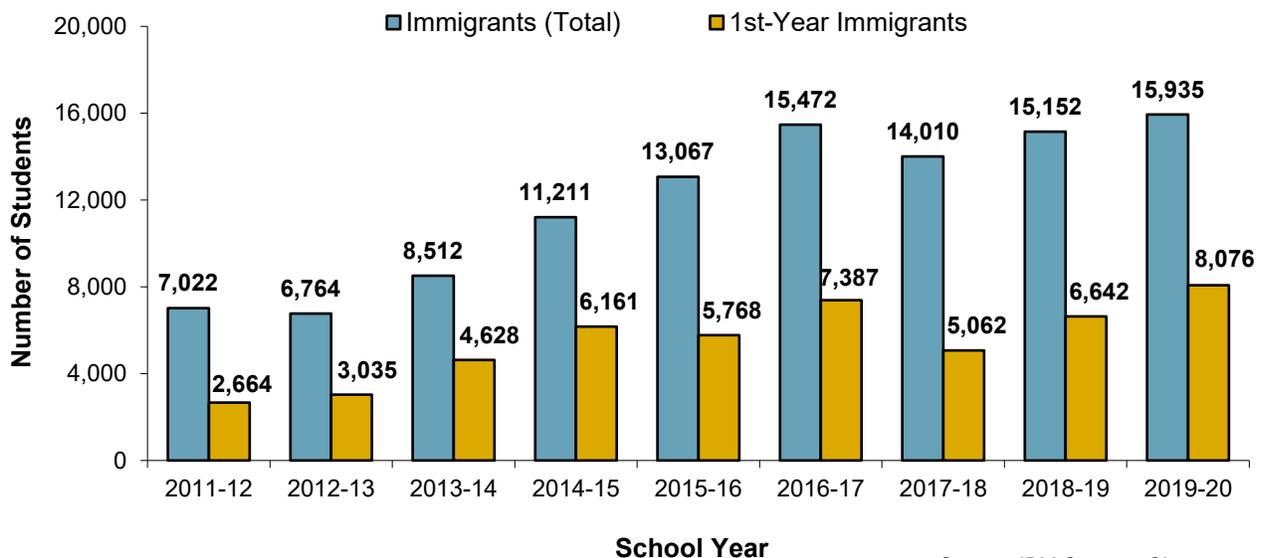
Introduction

There are approximately 200,000 students in Houston ISD, and many of them are recent immigrants who have been in the United States for three years or less. "Immigrant" children or youth, as defined under the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), and later the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 (ESSA), are "individuals who are aged 3 through 21; were not born in any state; and have not been attending schools in any one or more states for more than 3 full academic years" (P.L. 115-224 Title III, Part B, § 3201(5)). In recent years, the number of immigrant students in the district has increased dramatically, with over 10,000 enrolled in each of the past six years (see **Figure 1**). In fact, about one in nine of the district's students in 2019–2020 were either current or former immigrants (i.e., immigrant students whose three-year status had expired). For English learners (ELs) the numbers are even more striking; one in four current ELs were either immigrant or former immigrant students in 2019–2020 (see **Appendix A**, p. 16)¹ This report summarizes data from programs dedicated to serving district immigrant students during the 2019–2020 school year.

Immigrant & Newcomer Program Background

Immigrant students can have widely varying backgrounds, which offers challenges to educators. They may be ELs, and 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) due to gang and drug-related violence in those home countries. Without proper instructional supports, these students are at risk of falling behind academically. To address the needs of the most challenged of these recent immigrants, the district has specialized programs for immigrant students, particularly for those in their first year in U.S. schools (newcomers). These programs are designed to accommodate and educate immigrant EL students, and assist them in adapting to a new country, language, and school.

Figure 1. Number of immigrants and newcomers (first-year immigrants) by year, 2011–2012 to 2019–2020.



Source: IBM Cognos, Chancery

Immigrant & Newcomer Program Details

The district’s program for immigrant students has undergone a number of changes in recent years. This section of the report summarizes the trajectory that has been followed since 2015–2016, and also provides an overview of initiatives that have been occurring for a longer period.

Specialized Schools: The district has for many years had one middle school (Las Americas MS) and one high school (Liberty High School) that are focused on serving immigrant students. Las Americas MS is a newcomer campus that serves recent immigrant and refugee students who are ELs or who have limited experience with formal education. Students acquire English skills while receiving instruction in core academic content areas via English as a second language (ESL), as well as acculturation into the U.S. school system. It is intended to provide a transitional program before students enter the mainstream curriculum at other campuses. Enrollment is limited and on a first-come-first-served basis. Liberty HS has a program that focuses on newly arrived immigrant students who are overage, allowing them to balance full-time work and family responsibilities with earning a high school diploma.

Districtwide Immigrant & Newcomer Program: In 2015–2016, the district began a program at a limited number of campuses for first-year immigrants (newcomers). Prior to this, efforts were focused on the two specialized campuses just mentioned, while newcomers at other campuses received services based on their EL status and/or English-proficiency level, as needed. However, over the next few years, various changes were made to this program, as summarized in **Table 1** below.

Throughout each iteration of the newcomer/immigrant program, certain aspects have remained more or less constant. These three types of interventions have been offered: support services and resources for students and their parents, staff/teacher training, and some effort to provide newcomers with orientation

Table 1. Summary of Districtwide Newcomer & Immigrant Program Components, 2015–2016 to 2019–2020

	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19 & 2019-20
Hub Campuses	Three tiers: hub HS campuses accepted zoned students+transfers (3), standalone HS accepted only zoned students (4), MS campuses were all standalone (14). Other campuses not included.	Two tiers: hub MS (5)/HS (4) campuses accepted zoned students+transfers, standalone MS (11)/HS (10) accepted only zoned students. Other campuses not included.	No hub campuses, all campuses in district were standalone (zoned students only).	No hub campuses, all campuses in district are standalone (zoned students only).
Specialized Curriculum	"School-within-a-school"; immigrant students not segregated from other students but received specialized curriculum/schedule (MS/HS only). Intensive English language development via ESL.	No specialized curriculum beyond that offered to other ELs. Program focussed on providing support/resources for students + parents while offering teacher training	No specialized curriculum beyond that offered to other ELs. Program focussed on providing support/resources for students + parents while offering teacher training	New curriculum for immigrants at MS/HS levels in reading & language arts; other content areas use ESL methodology. Elementary campuses offer bilingual or ESL services as needed.
Orientation for new students	Orientation to new school, community, and society	Orientation to new school, community, and society	unknown	3-part video provided for secondary students
Staff Training	QTEL	QTEL	QTEL	data unavailable
Support Services	Counseling, tutoring, career education, transportation, health services; parent resources/education; resources/materials for students	Counseling, tutoring, career education, transportation, health services; parent resources/education; resources/materials for students	Counseling, tutoring, career education, transportation, health services; parent resources/education; resources/materials for students	Counseling, tutoring, career education, transportation, health services; parent resources/education; resources/materials for students

to their new school/community/society. The specifics have varied from year to year, e.g., for most of this time period Quality Teaching for English Learners (QTEL) training was emphasized for teachers of newcomers, but that specific training is no longer offered. However, overall, these three elements have been present regardless of what other changes were made to the program.

Two components of the newcomer/immigrant program have changed significantly during this time period. One is the inclusion of “hub” campuses to serve new immigrants. Under this strategy, a small number of campuses served students zoned to that campus as well as newcomers who were zoned to another campus. “Standalone” campuses only accepted immigrants who were zoned to that school. Any specialized services available for those immigrant students would be provided at only these hub and standalone schools and not at others. This protocol is no longer used for newcomers or other immigrant students. Instead, each district campus deals only with their zoned students, and services are expected to be available for immigrant students regardless of which campus they attend.

The second component of the newcomer program to change has been the use of a specialized curriculum for newcomer students. In 2015–2016, there was a specialized curriculum for newcomers at the hub and standalone campuses in the program (“school within a school” concept, see Table 1). For two subsequent years, there was no specialized curriculum for newcomers beyond that offered to other EL students. However, a newly revised curriculum for immigrants in middle and high school was implemented in the 2018–2019 school year. There were specific courses for new immigrants in the area of reading and language arts, with ESL methodology used for other content areas. Note that in the current version of the immigrant/newcomer program, there was no specialized curriculum for immigrants at the elementary level. Immigrant students at those grade levels received bilingual or ESL services as needed.

In conclusion, the immigrant/newcomer program provided during the 2019–2020 school year can be summarized as follows: First, there are no hub campuses, and immigrants attend the schools they are zoned to. Second, there is a set of support services and parent resources/education. Third, professional development is offered for teachers and staff who work with immigrant students, but largely falls within the scope of differentiated or “sheltered instruction” techniques that may be used with immigrant students, but which may be applied to various student populations. Finally, a new curriculum was developed and implemented in 2018–2019 for immigrants and newcomers in middle and high school. This is used for English language arts and reading, with ESL methodology used for other content areas. There is still no specialized curriculum for immigrant students at the elementary level; those students receive either bilingual or ESL services at their campus, but all other services described previously are available.

Immigrant students may be grouped together or may be mixed in with other non-immigrant students, depending on enrollment figures at a particular campus. Instead of isolating immigrants in a small number of specialized campuses, the current emphasis (as far as curriculum and instruction are concerned) is on providing differentiated instruction for immigrant students where appropriate (sheltered instruction). Such a strategy means that so long as staff are adequately trained, immigrant students should receive appropriate instruction regardless of which campus they attend.

Methods

Participants

There were 15,935 immigrant students enrolled in the district in 2019–2020 (note this is cumulative enrollment and includes withdrawals). More than half (55%) of newcomer students originated from three Central American countries: Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala (**Table 2**). The majority were Eng-

Table 2. Demographics of Immigrant Students Enrolled During 2019–2020

Home Country	Number	Percent	Home Language	Number	Percent
Honduras	4,651	29%	Spanish	12,077	76%
El Salvador	2,277	14%	English	833	5%
Guatemala	1,868	12%	Arabic	460	3%
Mexico	1,517	10%	Pashto	241	2%
Afghanistan	555	3%	Swahili	184	1%
India	477	3%	Mandarin	165	1%
Venezuela	427	3%	Farsi	143	1%
Nigeria	283	2%	Telugu	133	1%
Other Countries	3,880	24%	Vietnamese	121	1%
	Number	Percent	Hindi	114	1%
English Learner	13,951	88%	Urdu	87	1%
Econ Disadvantaged	13,054	82%	Tigrinya	75	<1%
Special Education	276	2%	Portuguese	75	<1%
Gifted/Talented	538	3%	Other	1,227	8%
Male/Female	8,446/7,489	53%/47%	Total	15,935	

Source: IBM Cognos cumulative enrollment, 2019-2020

lish Learners (ELs, 88%), qualified for free or reduced lunch (82%), with more males than females (53% vs. 47%). Two percent qualified for special education, and three percent for gifted and talented programs. Most immigrants had Spanish as their home language (76%), with English and Arabic as the next most common languages.

Data Collection & Analysis

- Immigrant student enrollment figures were obtained from Chancery records via IBM Cognos queries. Enrollment is cumulative for the 2019–2020 school year, and includes all students with immigrant status who were enrolled at any point during the school year. Student performance data (see below) is reported for any of the 15,935 immigrant students for whom data could be found.
- Student performance data were collected on eight types of measures. The first set of data came from immigrant student performance on interim district-level assessments (DLAs), which are STAAR-like curriculum-based assessments created by HISD's Curriculum Department. HISD uses the DLAs as a benchmark assessment for all STAAR-tested grades/courses, and administers these during a December testing window. The DLAs are intended to be a cumulative assessment of student learning in preparation for STAAR, and DLA scores are highly correlated with performance on the actual STAAR assessment (Houston Independent School District, Student Assessment Department; personal communication, 1/8/2020). The present report includes DLA results for reading and mathematics (English and Spanish) for grades 3-8, and for the five EOC subjects. Comparison data came from results for district EL students and for the district overall. **Appendix B** (see pp. 17-19) provides further details on both of the district interim assessments analyzed for this report.
- The second interim assessment included in this report is the Renaissance Star 360® (R360). This assessment is a comprehensive, nationally normed pre-K to Grade 12 interim and formative assessment suite that is used for universal screening; progress monitoring; and evaluating student growth. The present report includes R360 results for reading and mathematics in both English and Spanish. For 2019–2020, only data for the BOY (9/3 through 9/24) and MOY (1/6 through 1/29) testing windows was available (see Appendix B, pp. 17-19)

- Other performance measures reported included: school attendance and discipline, a measure of student mobility (number of campuses attended), student retention/promotion results, dropout and graduation results.
- Finally, a number of data sources were used in an attempt to quantify immigrant students' preparedness for post-secondary education, including: choice of zoned versus non-zoned school, Career and Technical Education (CTE) program enrollment, attendance at a magnet school or program, and enrollment in Advanced Placement (AP) courses.

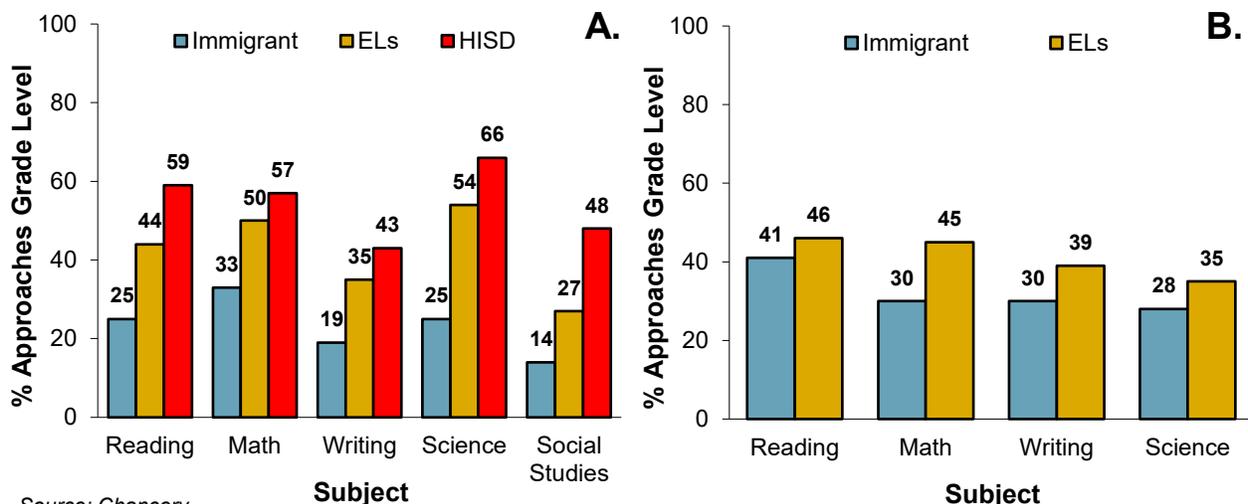
Results

How did immigrant students perform on the DLA STAAR 3–8 and DLA EOC assessments?

Figure 2 shows the percent of immigrant students who scored equivalent to met standard (Approaches Grade Level) for the reading and mathematics sections of the grade 3-8 DLA assessment in 2020. Results for the Spanish and English language versions of the tests are included. Results are also shown for all EL students, as well as all students districtwide. Districtwide Spanish-language results are not included, since these are equivalent to the EL student Spanish-language results. Further details, including performance by grade level, can be found in **Appendices C** and **D** (pp. 20 & 21).

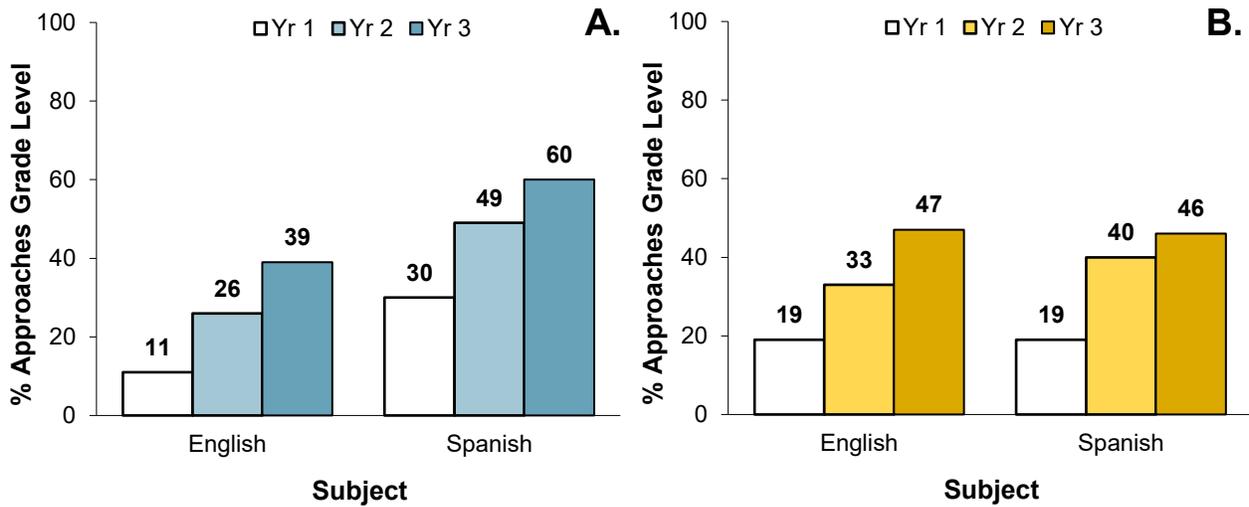
- English DLA STAAR results (Figure 2a) show that immigrant students performed worse than EL students, who in turn performed worse than did district students overall. This was true for all subjects tested.
- Spanish DLA STAAR results are shown in Figure 2b. Immigrant students also had lower passing rates than ELs, but on the reading and science assessments the gaps were much smaller than was the case for the English DLA STAAR.
- Further analyses of results for immigrant students is shown in **Figure 3** (see p. 8). In these charts, data are shown for immigrants based on year of immigrant status.

Figure 2. Percentage of immigrant and EL students who met Approaches Grade Level standard on DLA STAAR tests (December testing window), district data in red (A. English, B. Spanish)



Source: Chancery, DLA December 2019

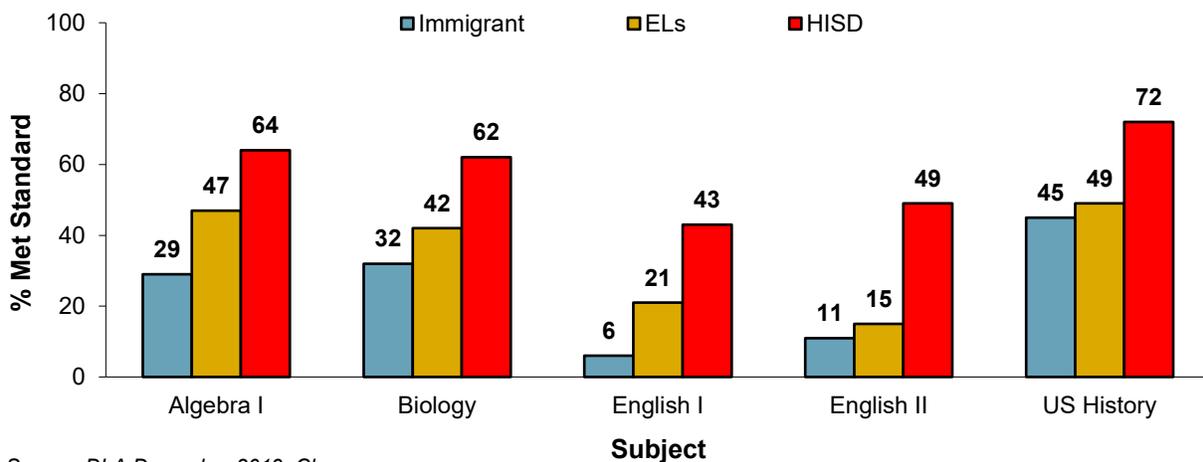
Figure 3. Percentage of immigrant students who met Approaches Grade Level standard on DLA STAAR reading (A) and mathematics tests (B) in 2020, by year of immigrant status



Source: Chancery, DLA December 2019

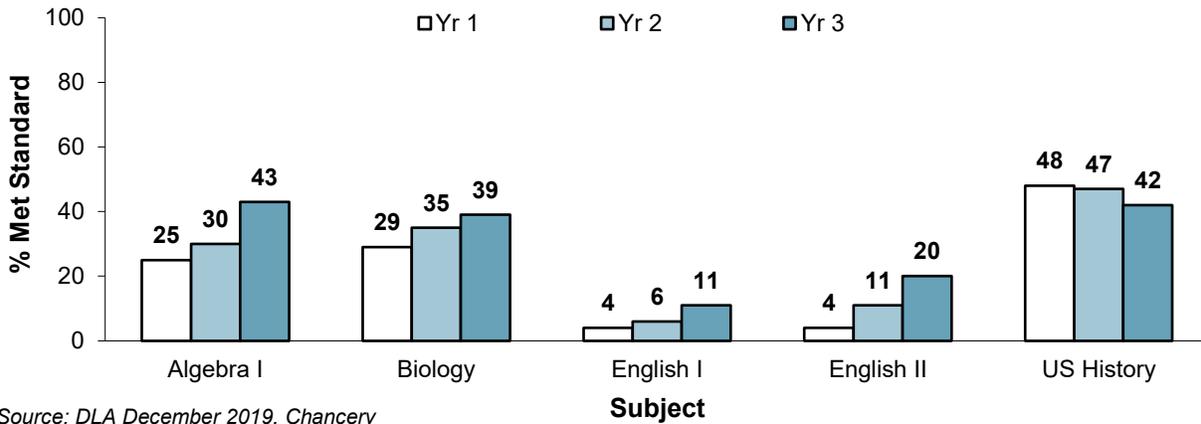
- Results for both DLA STAAR reading and mathematics show that performance improved the longer an immigrant student was enrolled. By their third year of immigrant status, immigrants' Spanish DLA STAAR performance was actually better than that of ELs (+14 and +1 percentage points for reading and mathematics, respectively). English STAAR performance still showed gaps (-5 and -3 percentage points, respectively), although these were smaller than they had been for first-year immigrants.
- Results for the DLA STAAR EOC exams are shown in **Figure 4**. The overall pattern is consistent with that seen with the DLA STAAR 3–8 tests. Namely, immigrant students had lower passing rates than EL students, who in turn did worse than district students overall (see **Appendix E**, p. 22).
- However, the gaps for immigrants relative to ELs were smaller on the DLA EOC exams than on the DLA STAAR 3–8. The median gap for English DLA STAAR 3–8 tests was 17 percentage points (see Figure 2), whereas for the DLA EOC tests, the median gap size was only 10 percentage points.

Figure 4. Percentage of immigrant and EL students who met Approaches Grade Level standard on DLA STAAR End-of-Course tests, 2020 (December testing window)



Source: DLA December 2019, Chancery

Figure 5. Percentage of immigrant students who met Approaches Grade Level standard on DLA STAAR EOC tests in 2020, by year of immigrant status



Source: DLA December 2019, Chancery

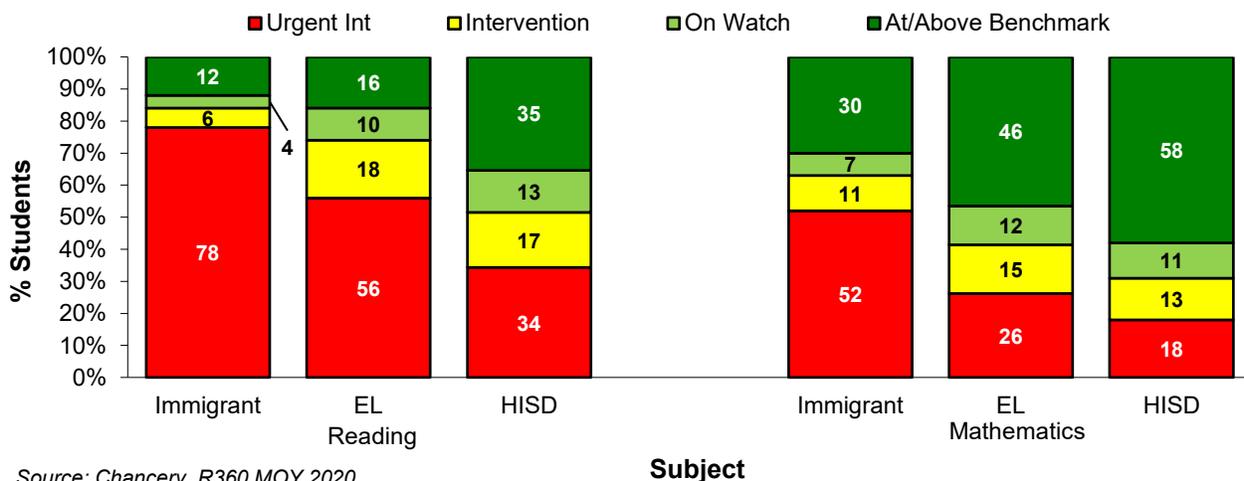
- As was done with the DLA STAAR 3–8 data, the DLA EOC results for immigrant students were further analyzed to see whether year of immigrant status had any influence. These data are shown in **Figure 5**.
- Most of the DLA EOC subjects showed the same pattern as was observed with the DLA STAAR 3–8 assessments. Namely, there was an improvement in passing rate with year of immigrant status. The only subject where this was not true was U.S. History, which saw a small decline in performance.

How did immigrant students perform on the Renaissance 360 assessment?

This section summarizes R360 performance for immigrant students. Data shown are the percentage of students who scored at each of the four intervention levels during the MOY testing window (January of 2020).

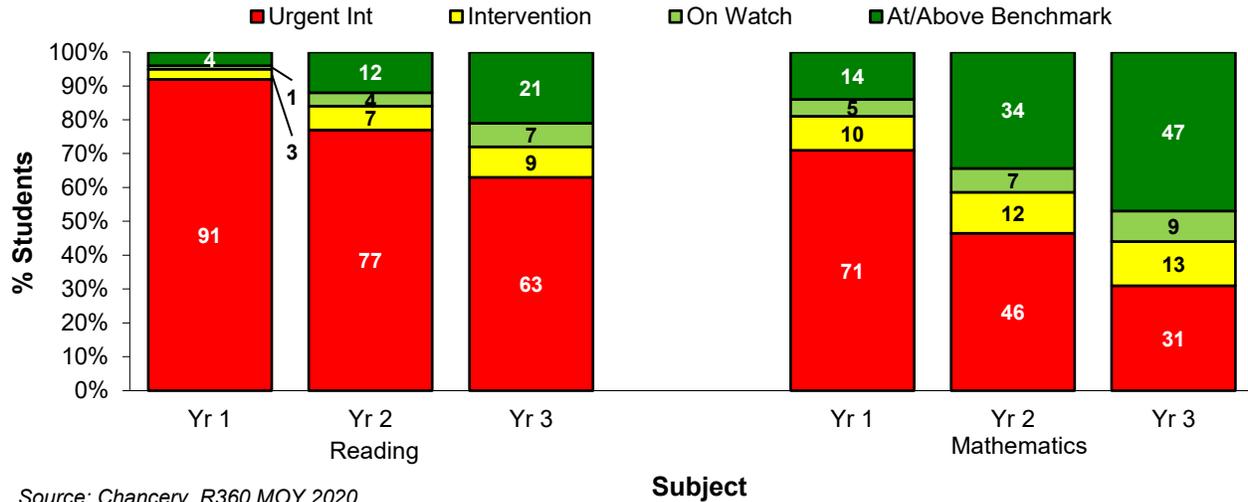
- Figure 6** shows the percentage of immigrant students at each intervention level in the R360 reading and mathematics assessments. Results are shown for immigrant students, all EL students, and all students districtwide (see also **Appendix F**, p. 23).

Figure 6. Immigrant student R360 performance 2020: percent of students at each intervention level on R360 reading and mathematics assessments (English only, MOY testing window)



Source: Chancery, R360 MOY 2020

Figure 7. Percent of immigrant students at each intervention level on R360 reading and mathematics assessments (English only, MOY testing window) by year of immigrant status



Source: Chancery, R360 MOY 2020

- Immigrant students as a group had a higher percentage at the Urgent Intervention level, and a lower percentage at the At/Above Benchmark level, than either of the other two comparison groups.
- Both immigrants and EL students showed poorer performance on the R360 than did the district overall.
- **Figure 7** shows R360 data for immigrant students only, based on year of immigrant status. As with the DLA data, results indicate an improvement in R360 performance for immigrant students in years 2 and 3.

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

District student attendance and discipline data from 2019–2020 were analyzed to determine whether there was any difference between the patterns shown by immigrant students and others in the district. Attendance data from all students with a minimum of 30 days enrolled in the district were included (students who withdrew were also included in the analyses).

- Student attendance records for 2019–2020 showed that the average attendance rate for immigrant students was 96.4%, which did not differ from comparable rates for EL students (96.8%) or all students districtwide (96.4%).
- Student discipline data were extracted from district records using the appropriate PEIMS Disciplinary Action Codes (all grades included), and a summary is shown in **Table 3**.

Table 3. Number and Percent of Student Subject to Disciplinary Actions in 2019–2020

Student Group	Number of Students			Number of Incidents			
	# Enrolled	# Disciplined	% Disciplined	ISS	OSS	DAEP	Total # Incidents
Immigrants	15,935	740	4.6%	890	611	60	1,561
ELs	75,534	4,376	5.8%	5,826	4,881	636	11,343
HISD	225,171	16,635	7.4%	20,497	19,346	2,650	42,493

Source: IBM Cognos Discipline Report 8/7/20

Table 4. Retention and Promotion Data for Immigrant Students, English Learners, and All District Students in 2019–2020

Student Group	#		# Retained	% Retained	Yr 1	Yr 2	Yr 3
	Students	Promoted					
Immigrants	10,541	10,064	477	4.5%	6.8%	3.0%	1.5%
ELs	59,771	57,492	2,279	3.8%			
HISD	151,088	145,328	5,760	3.8%			

Source: Promotion Standards File 2019-2020

- As Table 3 shows, a total of 740 immigrant students received some type of disciplinary action in 2019–2020, equivalent to 4.6% of all immigrant students enrolled. Comparable rates for EL students and the district overall were higher (5.8% and 7.4% respectively), and both rates were significantly greater than rates observed for immigrant students ($p < .0001$).

Did immigrant students differ from other students in terms of grade retention?

Promotion and retention data for 2019–2020 were analyzed to compare outcomes for immigrants, ELs, and all students districtwide. Students were included in the analysis if they were in grades PK through 8 in 2019–2020, and were shown as having a grade level assigned to them for the following school year (2020–2021). Results of the analyses are shown in **Table 4**.

- Only 4.5 percent of immigrant students were retained at the end of the school year. However, this rate was higher than the corresponding retention rates for either ELs or the district overall (both 3.8%). Both of these differences were statistically significant ($p < .0005$). There was also an effect due to year of immigrant status, with 1st-year immigrants being retained more frequently.

Did immigrant students differ from other students in their dropout or graduation rates?

- Annual dropout rate data for 2020 (grades 7–12) showed that the percentage of immigrant students who dropped out was 11.3 percent, which was significantly greater ($p < .0001$) than comparable rates for ELs (6.0 percent) or the district overall (3.4 percent).
- Four-year completion rate data for the class of 2019 are shown in **Table 5**. Both immigrant students and ELs has lower graduation rates, and higher dropout rates, than did the district overall. Immigrant student graduation and dropout rates did differ significantly from those for EL students.
- The dropout rate for immigrant students was higher (+3.6 percentage points) than in the previous year, and their graduation rate was lower (-2.6 percentage points). This was also the case for EL students.

Table 5. Four-Year Completion Rates for Class of 2019: Immigrant Students, ELs, and Overall District Performance

Student Group	Number of Students					Percent of Students			
	# Cohort	# Grad	# Dropout	# Continue	# GED	% Grad	% Dropout	% Continue	% GED
Immigrants	1,247	569	423	255	0	45.6	33.9	20.4	0.0
ELs	1,954	1,022	598	332	2	52.3	30.6	17.0	0.1
HISD	13,342	10,566	1,864	829	83	79.2	14.0	6.2	0.6

Source: TEA Completion Rate roster class of 2019, Chancery

Table 6. Student Mobility: Number and Percent of Students Attending More Than One Campus, and Number and Percent of Students Who Missed at Least 30 Days of School

Student Group	# Students	Percent of Students Attending > 1 Campus		Percent of Students Missing 30 Days or More School				
		# >1 Campus	% >1 Campus	# Missed 30 Days	% Missed 30 Days	Yr 1	Yr 2	Yr 3
Immigrants	15,886	470	3.0%	5,566	35.0%	48.8%	24.8%	17.5%
ELs	73,611	1,440	2.0%	17,305	23.5%			
HISD	222,740	5,074	2.3%	49,969	22.4%			

Source: Chancery, PEIMS ADA file 2019-2020

Did immigrant students differ from other students in terms of student mobility?

Student mobility was measured in two ways. First, cumulative enrollment records (PEIMS ADA file for 2019–2020) were used to calculate the percentage of students who attended more than one campus during the year. Second, attendance records were used to identify students who missed at least six weeks (30 days) of school throughout the year. Data for both of these measures are shown in **Table 6**.

- Mobility based on number of campuses attended was significantly higher for immigrant students (3.0%) compared to EL students (2.0%) and the district overall (2.3%). and the district overall. Based on the number of school days missed, there was also a significant deficit for immigrant students. Over a third of them missed at least six weeks of classes. This is not surprising, as immigrant students may be more likely to first enroll at any point throughout the school year.
- This latter assumption is supported by further analyses of immigrant mobility based on year of immigrant status. When immigrant mobility is analyzed based on this factor, in fact only 1st-year immigrants appear to be affected (see Table 6). Forty-eight percent of 1st-year immigrants missed at least 30 days of school in 2019–2020, compared to rates of 24.8 and 14.5 percent for immigrants in their 2nd or 3rd year of immigrant status. The latter rate is actually lower than those shown by ELs (23.5%) or the district overall (22.4%).

Did immigrant students differ from other students in terms of post-secondary education preparedness?

An important set of outcomes is related to how well students are being prepared for post-secondary education opportunities. For this, four sources of data were used: enrollment at non-zoned schools, participation in a CTE program, student magnet status or participation in a magnet program, enrollment in AP courses, and AP test performance. Data from each of these is discussed below.

- Non-zoned schools: School choice is an important aspect of enrollment in the district, as students may enroll outside of their zoned campus in various charter, magnet, or alternative schools. A rough measure of the degree to which these options are being utilized is to calculate the percentage of students who are enrolled at a campuses outside the one they are zoned to (see **Table 7**, p. 13).
- Data in Table 7 show that immigrant students are much less likely to attend a non-zoned school, and this tendency does not seem to be eliminated by length of time in U.S. schools. Immigrant students are less likely than other students, including ELs, to attend non-zoned campuses whether in their 1st, 2nd, or 3rd-year of immigrant status.

Table 7. Student Enrollment at Non-Zoned Campuses During 2019–2020 (Grades 6 to 12 Only, Data As Of 9/22/2020)

Student Group	# Students	# Zoned	# Not Zoned	% Not Zoned	Yr 1	Yr 2	Yr 3
Immigrants	3,703	2,508	1,195	32.3%	21.6%	33.0%	31.6%
ELs	18,245	10,587	7,658	42.0%			
HISD	94,586	44,437	50,149	53.0%			

Note: Data reported are from 2020-2021 (extracted 9/22/20), since school zone data from the previous year were not available

Source: Chancery, PEIMS ADA file 2019-2020

- CTE program participation: A growing body of research demonstrates the importance of CTE program participation in preparing students for post-school success, whether that involves more advanced education and training or employment in a field they have studied. **Table 8** summarizes data on CTE program participation of immigrant students during 2019–2020.
- Of all immigrant students enrolled in grades 9–12, 39.2 percent participated in a CTE program during 2019–2020. This was significantly lower than the corresponding rates for EL students and district students (55.7 and 58.6 percent, respectively).
- For immigrants, CTE participation did increase the longer students were in school. Students in their 3rd year of immigrant status had a participation rate (53.9%), about the same as that for ELs.

Table 8. Student Enrollment in CTE Program During 2019–2020 (Grades 9 to 12 Only, Coherent Sequence Participants)

Student Group	# Students	# CTE	% CTE	Yr 1	Yr 2	Yr 3
Immigrants	3,013	1,182	39.2%	24.4%	46.4%	53.9%
ELs	10,025	5,585	55.7%			
HISD	52,566	30,793	58.6%			

Source: Chancery, IBM Cognos EOY roster 5/29/20

- Magnet student status: **Table 9** summarizes data on district magnet program participation during 2019–2020. Enrollment and magnet status counts include all students in grades K through 12, and were extracted from a Chancery end-of-year roster (5/29/20).
- Districtwide, 29.4 percent of students were listed as magnet program participants in 2019–2020. For immigrant students, magnet participation was only 10.4 percent, while for ELs the rate was 18.0.
- Data showed that immigrant student magnet participation increased marginally with length of time in school. Only 8.1 percent of 1st-year immigrants were listed as magnet, but this rate improved to 11.1 percent for 2nd-year immigrants and 9.3 percent for 3rd-year immigrants. Note that these latter percentages are still below the participation rates for ELs or district students overall.

Table 9. Student Magnet Status During 2019–2020 (Grades K to 12 Only)

Student Group	# Students	# Magnet	% Magnet	Yr 1	Yr 2	Yr 3
Immigrants	9,871	1,030	10.4%	8.1%	11.1%	9.3%
ELs	63,589	11,467	18.0%			
HISD	191,009	56,144	29.4%			

Source: Chancery, IBM Cognos EOY roster 5/29/20

Table 10. AP Course Enrollment During 2019–2020 (Grades 8 to 12 Only)

Student Group	# Students	# Enrolled AP	% Enrolled AP	Yr 1	Yr 2	Yr 3
Immigrants	3,866	412	10.7%	7.1%	10.5%	16.5%
ELs	13,853	1,832	13.2%			
HISD	66,305	17,167	25.9%			

Source: Chancery, IBM Cognos EOY roster 5/29/20

- Advanced Placement course enrollment: **Table 10** summarizes data on student enrollment in AP courses during 2019–2020. Enrollment counts include all students in grades 8 through 12, and were extracted from a Chancery end-of-year roster (6/3/2019). AP course enrollment was obtained from Chancery records via IBM Cognos (data queried on 10/7/2020).
- Immigrant student AP course enrollment in 2019–2020 was lower than that for ELs or the district overall. By their 3rd year of immigrant status, AP course enrollment had improved to 16.5 percent, exceeding the EL student rate, but this was still well below the district average participation rate.
- Advanced Placement test performance: Finally, **Table 11** shows data on AP test performance during 2019–2020. Results showed that immigrants had a higher proportion of exam results with a score of 3 or higher than either ELs or the district overall.
- However, only 5.6 percent of immigrant students enrolled during the year took an AP test, which was lower than the rate for either ELs (6.9%) or the district (19.6%). This rate did increase for immigrants in their 2nd or 3rd-year of immigrant status.

Table 11. AP Test Performance During 2019–2020 (Grades 9 to 12 Only)

Student Group	AP Performance			Students Tested					
	# Tests	% 1 or 2	% 3 or Better	# Enrolled	# Tested	% Tested	Yr 1	Yr 2	Yr 3
Immigrants	210	33.3%	66.7%	3,796	212	5.6%	2.6%	5.9%	10.2%
ELs	769	55.7%	44.3%	11,501	796	6.9%			
HISD	11,195	59.8%	40.2%	58,692	11,483	19.6%			

Source: # of students tested includes tests with no valid score,
of tests includes only AP exams with scores 1-5

Source: Chancery, IBM Cognos AP data, 9/4/20

Discussion

The district has a large and growing population of immigrant students. Programs and services available for these students have varied in recent years, and the present report attempts to provide a snapshot of how immigrant students are doing on a number of performance measures. On most measures of academic performance, immigrant students lag behind both ELs as well as other students districtwide. There is some indication that they do better the longer they have been enrolled. For example, DLA STAAR 3–8 and DLA EOC results show clear evidence that students in years two and three do better than students who are in their first year. However, performance gaps still persist on English DLA STAAR assessments for 3rd-year immigrant students. Results from the R360 also showed performance deficits for immigrant students, with improved performance for 3rd-year immigrants.

A notable set of findings concerns performance of immigrants at the secondary level. Specifically, a number of measures used to assess post-secondary readiness indicated sizeable and persistent gaps for immigrant students compared to other students, including ELs. These measures include enrollment at non-zoned schools, CTE participation, magnet status, AP course enrollment, and AP test participation. Taken together, these findings suggest that immigrant students at the secondary level may be missing out on opportunities to improve their options post-high school. It is essential that the district increase efforts in these areas to address this issue.

Much of the immigrant student enrollment in the district continues to originate in three Central American countries: Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala. More than half (55%) of the district's immigrant students in 2019–2020 came from those countries. This region has long suffered from instability, beginning with civil wars in the 1980s, and the resulting population displacement and economic problems. Despite peace accords, this instability has continued, leading to a continued surge in migration from these regions. Thereafter, natural disasters (hurricanes, earthquakes, drought and crop failure) have added to the problems faced by those countries, which now face an epidemic of violence and gang activity. U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) encountered 76,020 unaccompanied minors at the southwest border in fiscal year (FY) 2019, which was an increase from FY2018 level of 50,036. These numbers declined significantly in FY2020, as only 30,557 were reported encountered by CBP through September 2020 (source: CBP.GOV). While numbers had already been declining prior to the COVID-19 outbreak, border restrictions between the U.S. and Mexico, as well as those in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras may have contributed to a decrease the number of potential immigrant students entering the Houston area. While the total number of immigrant students increased during the 2019–2020 school year, it is possible that the 2020–2021 school year will see a decline in immigrant student enrollment. Indeed, the number of 1st-year immigrant students who were newly enrolled by October 15th of the school year was 3,789 for 2018–2019 and 6,989 for 2019–2020. As of the start of the 2020–2021 school year, only 639 1st-year immigrants students were enrolled in HISD by November 9, 2020. This trend, if it continues throughout the year, will impact the manner in which the district delivers services to its immigrant student population.

Endnotes

1. Figure 1 shows the number of immigrant students in 2019–2020 as 15,935, whereas Appendix A shows an immigrant enrollment of 14,020. The discrepancy between these two figures derives from the fact that two different data sources were used. Figure 1 shows cumulative enrollment over the entire school year (i.e., students who were enrolled at any point, including withdrawals). Appendix A uses the fall PEIMS snapshot, which includes only students enrolled as of October 31, 2019.

References

U.S. Department of Education. (2015). Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015. Retrieved from <https://www.congress.gov/bill/114th-congress/senate-bill/1177/text>.

<https://www.cbp.gov/newsroom/stats/sw-border-migration/usbp-sw-border-apprehensions-fy2019>

<https://www.cbp.gov/newsroom/stats/sw-border-migration/usbp-sw-border-apprehensions-fy2020>

Appendix A

District Immigrant Student Enrollment: Number and Percentage of Students Enrolled in 2019-2020 Who Were Current (Years 1-3) or Former Immigrants

Enrollment Status	# Students	% Students
HISD Enrolled	209,309	
Current Immigrant	14,020	6.70%
Current/Formal Immigrant	23,514	11.23%
EL Enrolled	71,156	
EL Immigrant	12,345	17.35%
EL Current/Formal Immigrant	18,538	26.05%

Data were extracted from fall PEIMS records covering the years 2004-2005 through 2019-2020.

Appendix B

Explanation of Assessments Included in Report

Annual district program reports usually utilize data from three main statewide assessments: State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness for grades 3–8 (STAAR 3-8), STAAR End-of-Course Assessments (STAAR EOC), and for English learners, results from the Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS). Because of school closures caused by the COVID-19 outbreak, data from these were unavailable for the 2019–2020 school year. Instead it was decided to use results from two of the district’s interim assessments.

District-level assessments (DLAs or benchmarks) are STAAR-like curriculum-based assessments created by HISD’s Curriculum Department. They are administered both online and on paper. The district uses the DLA’s as a benchmark assessment for all STAAR-tested grades/courses, and administers these during a December testing window. DLA is intended to be a cumulative assessment of student learning in preparation for STAAR, and DLA scores are highly correlated with performance on the actual STAAR assessment (Houston Independent School District, Student Assessment Department; personal communication, 1/8/2020). Data from the DLAs provide school leaders, and teachers key formative information regarding student learning. These data can also inform the evaluation of program effectiveness, use of instructional resources, staff development needs, and areas of curricular strengths and weaknesses.

DLA results for each grade and subject are scored as percent correct, and are then converted into STAAR-equivalent performance levels (i.e., Approaches Grade Level, Meets Grade Level, Masters). This conversion uses the most rigorous percent correct performance levels from the last four years of equivalent STAAR-tested grades/courses. Note that although the official testing window for the DLA’s is in December, campuses have the flexibility to administer the assessments whenever they see fit. The data analyzed for this report included results from 242,360 assessments administered in December, as well as an additional 20,049 that were administered in January. Students may take each assessment multiple times, but analyses used only the latest results for each student and subject.

The second interim assessment included in this report is the Renaissance Star 360 ® (R360). This assessment is a comprehensive, nationally normed pre-K to Grade 12 interim and formative assessment suite that is used for universal screening; progress monitoring; and evaluating student growth. The R360 includes assessments in Early Literacy (EL), Reading, and Math in both English and Spanish. It is administered online in three different windows during the school year: beginning (BOY), middle (MOY) and at the end of the year (EOY). For 2019–2020, only data for the BOY (9/3 through 9/24) and MOY (1/6 through 1/29) testing windows was available. As with the DLAs, students may take each assessment multiple times, but only results from the latest test are included in this report.

Results for the R360 are reported as a percent correct, which is used to place the student into one of four categories: At/Above Benchmark, for students who scored at or above the 40th percentile rank score; On Watch for students who performed between the 25th and 39th percentiles, Intervention for students who performed between the 10th and 24th percentiles, and Urgent Intervention for students who performed below the 10th percentile rank score.

The R360 is also highly correlated with results from the STAAR assessments, as can be seen in summaries included within **Table B1** and in **Figure B1**. The analyses summarized here include results from R360 and STAAR administrations from the 2018–2019 school year. For R360, data from the MOY test-

Appendix B (continued)

ing window in 2018–2019 was used, and included results for both reading and math in English and Spanish. Campus-level results were analyzed, with the main variable being the percentage of students on each assessment who scored at the On Watch level or better (i.e., 25th percentile or better). For STAAR 3–8 and EOC exams, the main variable (again, summarized at the campus level) was the percentage of students who reached the Approaches Grade Level standard (English and Spanish reading and math for STAAR 3–8, English I/II combined and Algebra I for EOC). Table B1 shows the correlation coefficients between these two measures, while Figure B1 shows the scatterplots for the same data. It can be seen that the R360 and STAAR/EOC results are highly correlated. Where this pattern appears to break down is those cases where one or both measures were subject to a ceiling effect, specifically the Spanish language assessments and Algebra I.

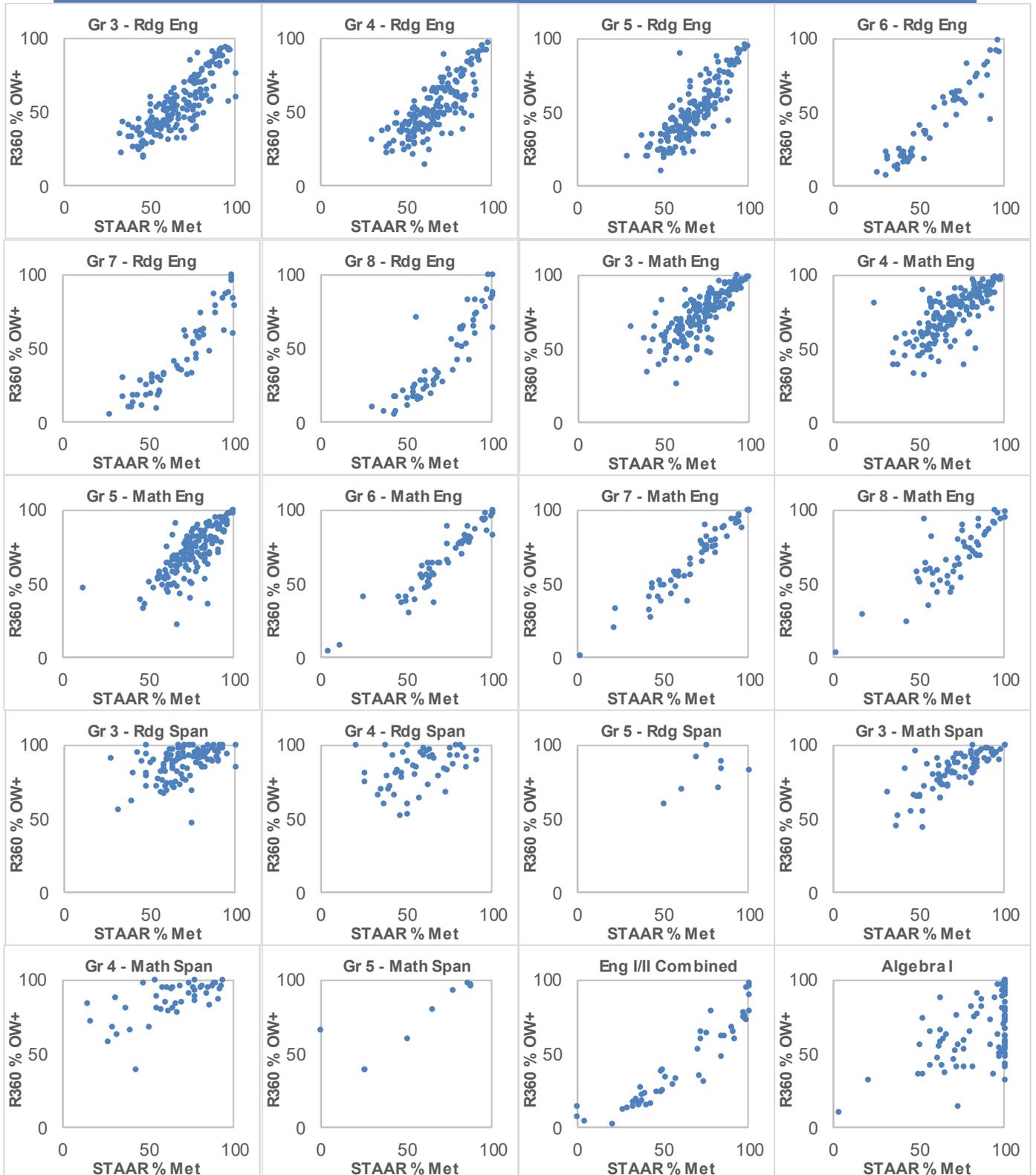
Table B1. Correlation Between STAAR 3-8 and EOC Performance, and Results for Comparable R360 Assessments, 2019–2020 School Year

Grade Level	Subject	Language	# Campuses	R360 % OW+	STAAR % Appr	r
3	reading	E	172	54.9	66.9	0.81
3	reading	S	107	88.0	69.3	0.45
3	math	E	171	74.2	71.8	0.77
3	math	S	83	83.3	71.9	0.77
4	reading	E	170	53.3	66.4	0.80
4	reading	S	50	84.2	57.1	0.40
4	math	E	169	73.5	68.9	0.73
4	math	S	45	86.6	63.6	0.61
5	reading	E	173	50.6	67.8	0.83
5	reading	S	8	81.3	75.5	0.48
5	math	E	173	72.1	76.7	0.75
5	math	S	9	74.6	55.8	0.84
6	reading	E	56	44.4	59.7	0.94
6	math	E	56	66.5	71.3	0.95
7	reading	E	58	45.9	68.4	0.92
7	math	E	57	67.4	68.4	0.96
8	reading	E	58	44.6	70.9	0.91
8	math	E	54	68.5	71.0	0.82
EOC	English I/II	E	49	43.5	60.0	0.93
EOC	Algebra I	E	96	67.7	87.1	0.51

Note: STAAR 3-8 and EOC results from spring 2019 (1st administration only for STAAR 3-8). R360 results are from the January 2019 testing window. Results are summarized at the campus level. Cases where results for both measures showed 0% are excluded from the analyses..

Appendix B (continued)

Figure B1. Scatterplots Showing Relationship Between STAAR 3-8 and EOC Performance and R360 Performance: Results for Spring 2019



Appendix C

English Grade 3-8 DLA Performance of Immigrant Students and Comparison Groups: Number Tested and Percent Meeting Approaches Grade Level Standard By Grade Level, and Subject, (2020 Data)

Program	Grade	Reading		Mathematics		Writing		Science		Soc Studies	
		# Tested	% Appr								
Immigrant Students	3	424	37	456	39						
	4	418	35	432	55	394	32				
	5	412	34	461	42			492	33		
	6	515	17	504	31						
	7	504	14	517	23	468	8				
	8	541	21	556	12			538	17	540	14
Total		2,814	25	2,926	33	862	19	1,030	25	540	14
English Learners	3	3,693	44	3,924	48						
	4	4,929	50	4,867	64	4,875	45				
	5	5,425	53	5,481	59			5,604	61		
	6	3,539	24	3,373	49						
	7	3,219	34	3,212	43	3,055	18				
	8	3,017	53	2,731	19			2,871	41	2,898	27
Total		23,822	44	23,588	50	7,930	35	8,475	54	2,898	27
HISD	3	11,941	52	12,223	74						
	4	13,747	59	13,634	70	13,472	53				
	5	14,821	65	14,827	78			14,797	69		
	6	10,300	43	9,892	72						
	7	10,587	57	10,426	69	9,927	29				
	8	10,698	75	8,422	72			9,361	60	10,098	48
Total		72,094	59	69,424	57	23,399	43	24,158	66	10,098	48

Source: DLA STAAR student data files December 2019, Chancery

* Indicates fewer than 5 students tested

Appendix D

Spanish Grade 3-8 DLA Performance of Immigrant Students and Comparison Groups: Number Tested and Percent Meeting Approaches Grade Level Standard By Grade Level, and Subject, (2020 Data)

Program	Grade	Reading		Mathematics		Writing		Science	
		# Tested	% Appr	# Tested	% Appr	# Tested	% Appr	# Tested	% Appr
Immigrant Students	3	561	48	505	28				
	4	375	37	338	39	363	30		
	5	305	35	261	23			224	28
	Total	1,241	41	1,104	30	363	30	224	28
English Learners	3	3,522	51	2,946	42				
	4	1,922	39	1,780	52	1,913	39		
	5	718	40	599	37			481	35
	Total	6,162	46	5,325	45	1,913	39	481	35

Source: DLA STAAR student data files December 2019, Chancery

* Indicates fewer than 5 students tested

Appendix E

DLA STAAR End-of Course Results: Number Tested and Number and Percentage Meeting the Approaches Grade Level Standard (Spring 2020 Data Only, All Students Tested)

Grade	Algebra I		Biology		English I		English II		US History	
	Tested	% Appr	Tested	% Appr	Tested	% Appr	Tested	% Appr	Tested	% Appr
Immigrant	998	29	1,023	32	763	6	669	11	442	45
English Learners	2,890	47	2,702	42	2,731	21	1,942	15	1,345	49
HISD	10,163	64	10,135	62	10,215	43	10,406	49	6,760	72

Source: DLA STAAR EOC student data files December 2019, Chancery

Appendix F

R360 Performance for Immigrant Students & Comparison Groups: Number Tested and Number and Percentage of Students at Each Intervention Level by Grade Level (Data From January 2020 Testing Window)

Program	Grade	Enrollment 2020	English Reading					English Mathematics				
			# Tested	% UI	% I	% OW	% AB	# Tested	% UI	% I	% OW	% AB
Immigrant- Students	K-5	8,626	2,566	59	10	6	25	3,249	30	11	8	51
	6-12	6,187	4,328	90	4	2	4	3,941	71	12	6	12
	Total	14,813	6,894	78	6	4	12	7,190	52	11	7	30
English Learners	K-5	41,444	19,161	38	20	14	27	20,870	16	13	12	60
	6-12	22,136	18,722	74	15	6	5	16,490	40	18	13	29
	Total	63,580	37,883	56	18	10	16	37,360	26	15	12	46
HISD	K-5	97,707	56,364	27	16	13	43	64,592	14	12	10	64
	6-12	93,331	69,001	40	18	13	29	52,617	23	14	13	50
	Total	191,038	125,365	34	17	13	35	117,209	18	13	11	58

Source: R360 MOY student data file 2020, Chancery