

## MEMORANDUM

January 10, 2022

TO: Anna White  
Executive Director, Multilingual Programs

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

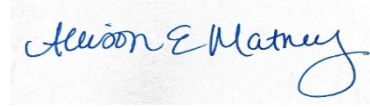
SUBJECT: **2021 IMMIGRANT STUDENT PROGRAM EVALUATION REPORT**

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 11,000 immigrant students enrolled in HISD each of the past seven years. This report summarizes data from programs dedicated to serving district immigrant students during the 2020–2021 school year.

Key findings include:

- A total of 11,834 immigrant students were enrolled in the district for at least part of the 2020–2021 school year. About one in ten of district students overall, and one in four English learners, were either current or former immigrants in 2020–2021.
- More than half (57%) of immigrant students came from three Central American countries, Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala.
- Data from the STAAR 3-8 and EOC assessments showed that immigrant students had lower passing rates than either ELs or the district overall. Passing rates on the STAAR 3-8 improved the longer an immigrant student was enrolled in U.S. schools.
- Immigrant ELs had lower overall English language proficiency than did other ELs but showed equivalent levels of yearly progress. Overall English proficiency also improved for immigrant students in their 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> year in school.
- Immigrant students 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 four different measures (attendance at non-zoned campus, 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.

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AEM

Attachment

cc: Millard L. House II

Dr. Rick Cruz

Dr. Khalilah Campbell

Khechara Bradford

Dr. Shawn Bird



# RESEARCH

Educational Program Report

IMMIGRANT STUDENT PROGRAM EVALUATION REPORT  
2020 – 2021



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# IMMIGRANT STUDENT PROGRAM EVALUATION REPORT 2020–2021

## 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 11,000 enrolled in each of the past seven years. In fact, about one in ten of the district's students in 2020–2021 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; between one in four and one in five current ELs were either immigrant or former immigrant students in 2020–2021. This report summarizes data from programs dedicated to serving district immigrant students during the 2020–2021 school year.

The report includes the following information:

- enrollment and demographics data for immigrant students;
- a brief review of what immigrant programs and services the district has provided in recent years;
- performance of immigrant students on State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR 3–8) and End-of-Course (EOC) exams;
- performance of immigrant EL students on the Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS);
- Immigrant student data in school attendance, discipline, promotion, graduation/dropout rates, and school mobility; and
- data relating to immigrant student preparedness for post-secondary education.

### Highlights

- A total of 11,834 immigrant students were enrolled in the district for at least part of the 2020–2021 school year.
- About one tenth of district students were either current immigrants or had been an immigrant at some point in time. Between a quarter and a fifth of EL students were either current or former immigrants.
- More than half (57%) of immigrant students came from three Central American countries: Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala.
- Data from the English STAAR 3–8 showed that immigrant students had lower passing rates than either ELs or the district overall, in all subjects tested. Passing rates did tend to improve the longer an immigrant student was enrolled in U.S. schools. Immigrant student performed similarly to EL students on the Spanish language STAAR.

- Immigrants also had lower passing rates on the STAAR EOC exams, however, there did not appear to be any evidence for improved performance over time.
- Immigrant ELs had lower overall English language proficiency than did other ELs, but showed equivalent levels of yearly progress. Overall English proficiency also improved for immigrants in their 2nd or 3rd year in school.
- School attendance rates for immigrants were similar to those for other students. Immigrant students showed higher retention rates than either EL students or the district overall, and their retention rate improved with years in U.S. schools.
- 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 ELs.
- There was some evidence that school mobility differed for immigrant students, as a higher percentage of them missed more than 30 days of school than either of the comparison groups (EL students and the district overall), but this finding was eliminated for 3rd-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 four different measures (attendance at non-zoned campus, magnet status, Advanced Placement course enrollment, and AP test participation).

### Recommendations

1. Immigrant students did not perform as well as district students, including ELs, on several performance measures. This is not surprising, but it is notable that some of these measures (e.g. STAAR) show improvement for immigrant students in their second or third year in school. However, persistent performance gaps exist on EOC passing rates, and on a number of post-secondary readiness indicators. This suggests that secondary-level immigrant students are at particular risk of either not graduating, or of not being sufficiently prepared for post-secondary educational opportunities. It is recommended that the district continue to work towards improving programming for immigrant students at the secondary level. This includes scheduling emergent bilingual students in the right courses, hiring certified personnel, and ensuring that school office teams, department teams, administrators, and teachers are trained to support teachers of immigrant students.

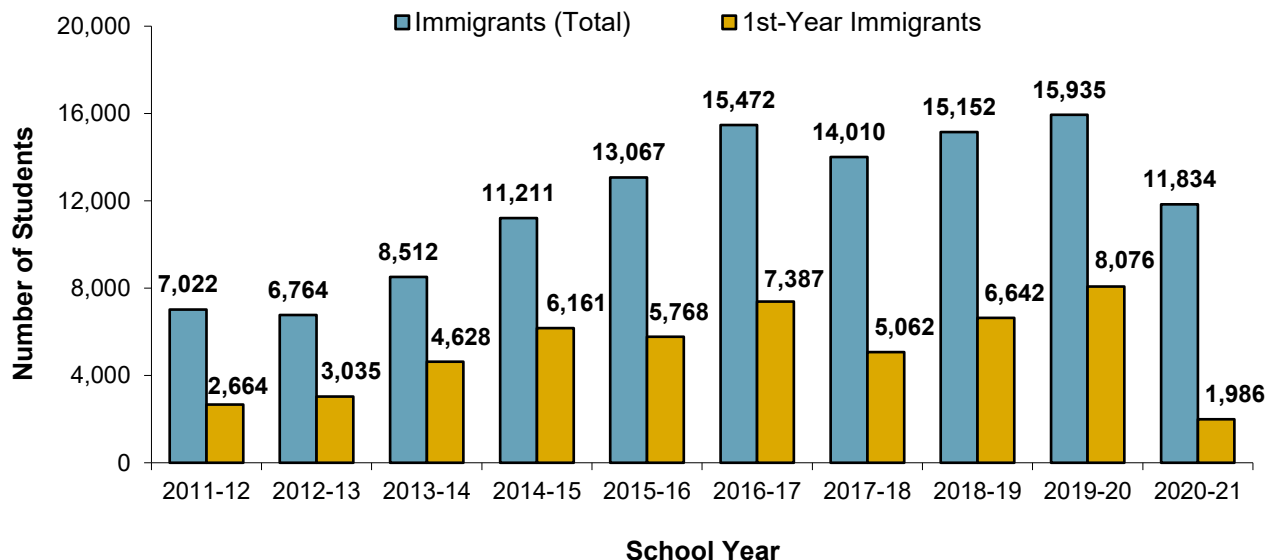
## Introduction

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 11,000 enrolled in each of the past seven years (see **Figure 1**). In fact, about one in ten of the district's students in 2020–2021 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; between one in four and one in five current ELs were either immigrant or former immigrant students in 2020–2021 (see **Appendix A**, p. 16)<sup>1</sup> This report summarizes data from programs dedicated to serving district immigrant students during the 2020–2021 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 recent increases in gang and drug-related violence in those home countries (Shifter, 2012; UNICEF) 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 2020–2021.**



**Immigrant & Newcomer Program Details**

The district’s program for immigrant students has undergone a number of changes in recent years. In this section, we attempt to summarize the trajectory that has been followed since 2015–2016, as well as provide an overview of initiatives that have been occurring for a longer period.

**Specialized Schools:** The district has 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 a four-year span, a series of changes was 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 to their new school/community/society. The specifics may have varied from year to year, e.g., initially

**Table 1. Summary of Districtwide Newcomer & Immigrant Program Components, 2015–2016 to 2020–2021**

	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19 to Present
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	Sheltered Instruction
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



Quality Teaching for English Learners (QTEL) training was emphasized for teachers of newcomers, but that is no longer offered. Multilingual Programs instead offers sheltered instruction training through the professional development team and through experts like Seidlitz Education, which include courses for teachers who serve Newcomers (some examples can be found [here](#)). 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 for 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 2020–2021 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 11,834 immigrant students enrolled in the district in 2020–2021 (note this is cumulative enrollment, and includes withdrawals). This was a 25 percent decline from the previous year. More than

**Table 2. Demographics of Immigrant Students Enrolled During 2020–2021**

Home Country	Number	Percent	Home Language	Number	Percent
Honduras	3,660	31%	Spanish	9,037	76%
El Salvador	1,566	13%	English	638	5%
Guatemala	1,486	13%	Arabic	297	3%
Mexico	1,119	9%	Pashto	188	2%
Afghanistan	434	4%	Swahili	132	1%
India	355	3%	Vietnamese	103	1%
Venezuela	306	3%	Farsi	100	1%
Nigeria	175	1%	Telugu	100	1%
Other Countries	2,733	23%	Mandarin	96	1%
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>	Hindi	86	1%
English Learner	10,467	88%	French	74	1%
Econ Disadvantaged	9,517	80%	Japanese	63	1%
Special Education	256	2%	Urdu	59	<1%
Gifted/Talented	319	3%	Other	861	7%
Male/Female	6,203/5,631	52%/48%	<b>Total</b>	<b>11,834</b>	

Source: PowerSchool cumulative immigrant enrollment, 2020-2021

half (57%) of newcomer students came from three Central American countries: Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala (**Table 2**). The majority were English Learners (ELs, 88%), qualified for free or reduced lunch (80%), with more males than females (52% vs. 48%). 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 PowerSchool records via IBM Cognos queries. Enrollment is cumulative for the 2020–2021 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 11,834 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 the statewide STAAR 3–8 and EOC assessments. For STAAR 3–8, only the first administration results were included (no retests), while for EOC only the spring administration was included. Comparison data came from results for district EL students and for the district overall. **Appendix B** (see p. 17) provides further details on each of the assessments analyzed for this report.
- A second set of performance data came from EL immigrant results for TELPAS (Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment). Two measures were included in the report, one being the level of English language proficiency exhibited by immigrant students, the second being the percentage of students showing progress or gains in English proficiency (for those immigrants who have taken the TELPAS at least twice). Comparisons were made to TELPAS performance of all district ELs.
- Other performance measures reported included: school attendance, a measure of student mobility (percentage of students missing more than 30 days of school), student retention/promotion results, and 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, attendance at a magnet school or program, enrollment in Advanced Placement (AP) courses, and participation and performance on AP exams.

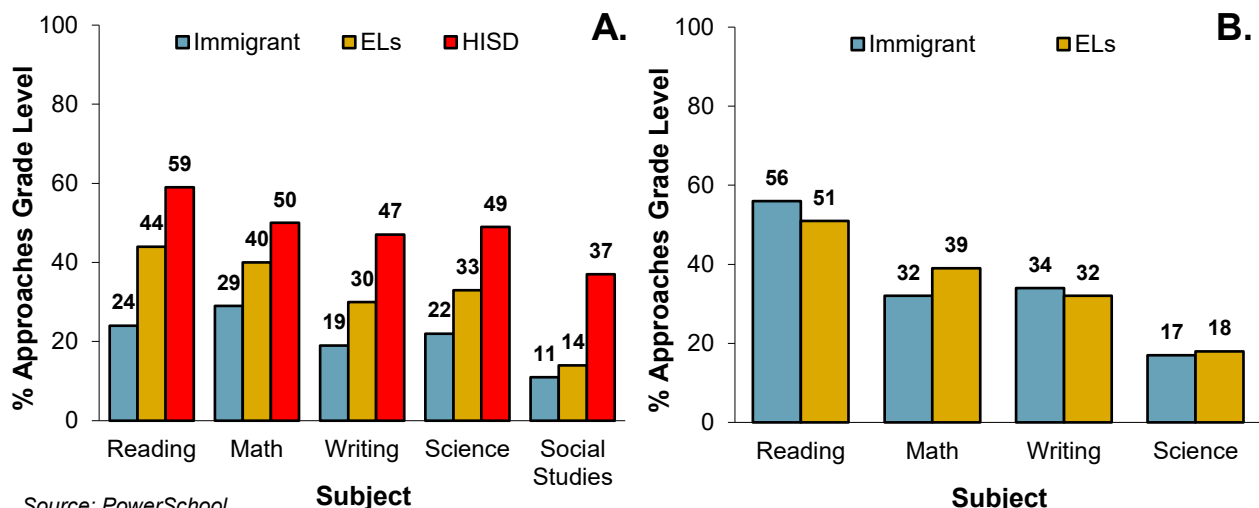
## Results

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

Immigrant students were tested on both the STAAR 3–8 and the EOC assessments in the spring of 2021, and this section summarizes their performance in comparison with EL students and all students districtwide. Summary results for STAAR 3–8 are shown in **Figure 2**. Further details are provided in **Appendices C and D** (pp. 18-19).

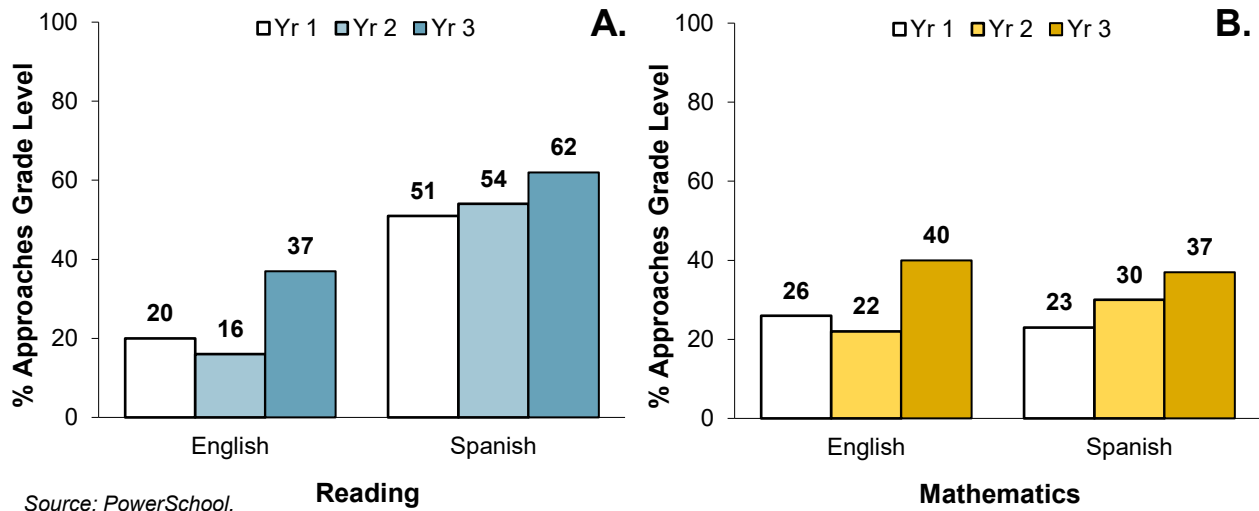
- English STAAR results (Figure 2a) show that immigrant students did not perform as well as EL students, who in turn did less well than did district students overall. This was true for all subjects tested.
- Spanish STAAR results are shown in Figure 2b. Data for district overall results are excluded, since these are essentially equivalent to those for ELs as a group. Immigrant students had lower passing rates than ELs on the Spanish STAAR for mathematics and science, but they had higher passing rates than ELs on reading and writing.
- Further analysis 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.
- Results for both STAAR reading and mathematics show indications that performance improved the longer an immigrant student was enrolled. English STAAR performance actually declined for 2nd-year immigrants compared to newcomers, but showed large improvements for 3rd-year immigrants. Spanish STAAR results showed a more uniform pattern, with 2nd-year immigrants having higher passing rates than newcomers, and 3rd-year immigrants in turn doing even better.

**Figure 2. Percentage of immigrant and EL students who met Approaches Grade Level standard on STAAR tests in 2021, first administration only, district data in red (A. English, B. Spanish)**



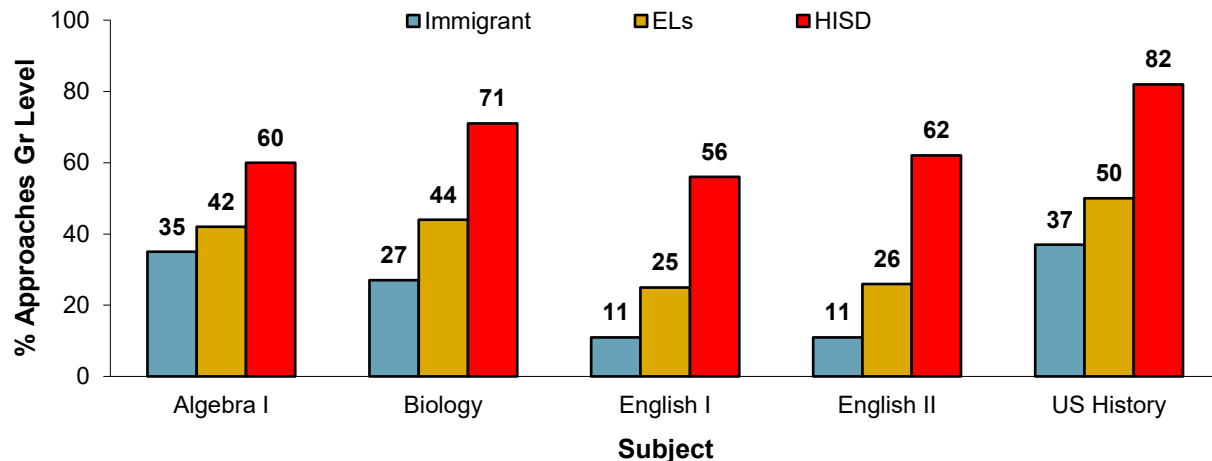
Source: PowerSchool, Cognos STAAR 7/12/21

**Figure 3. Percentage of immigrant students who met Approaches Grade Level standard on STAAR reading (A) and mathematics tests (B) in 2021, by year of immigrant status**

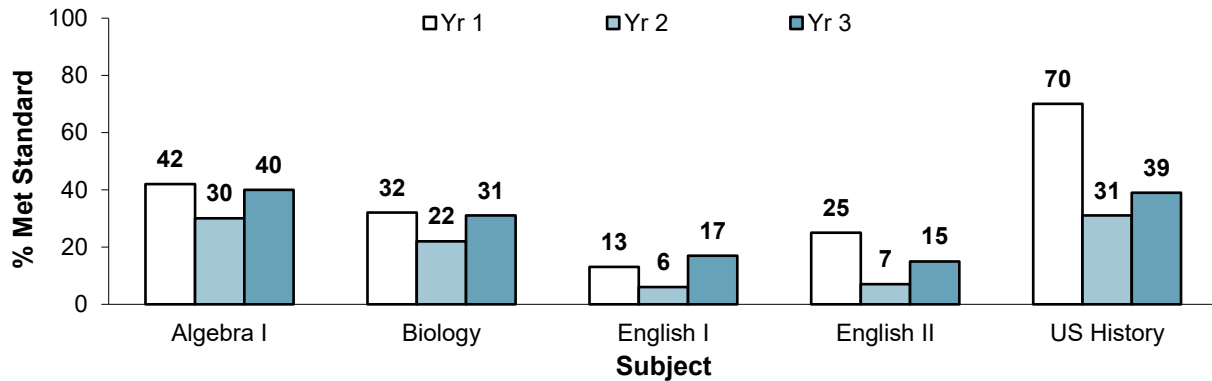


- Results for the STAAR EOC exams are shown in **Figure 4**. The overall pattern is consistent with that seen with the STAAR 3–8 tests. Namely, immigrant students did not perform as well as EL students, who in turn had lower passing rates than district students overall (see **Appendix E**, p. 20).
- However, the gaps for immigrants relative to ELs were larger on the EOC exams than on the STAAR 3–8. The median gap for English STAAR 3–8 tests was 11 percentage points (see Figure 2), whereas for the EOC tests, the median gap size was 15 percentage points.
- As was done with the STAAR 3–8 data, the 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** (see p. 9).

**Figure 4. Percentage of immigrant and EL students who met Approaches Grade Level standard on STAAR End-of-Course tests, 2021 (spring administration only)**



**Figure 5. Percentage of immigrant students who met Approaches Grade Level standard on STAAR EOC tests in 2021, by year of immigrant status**



Source: PowerSchool, Cognos STAAR EOC 6/15/21

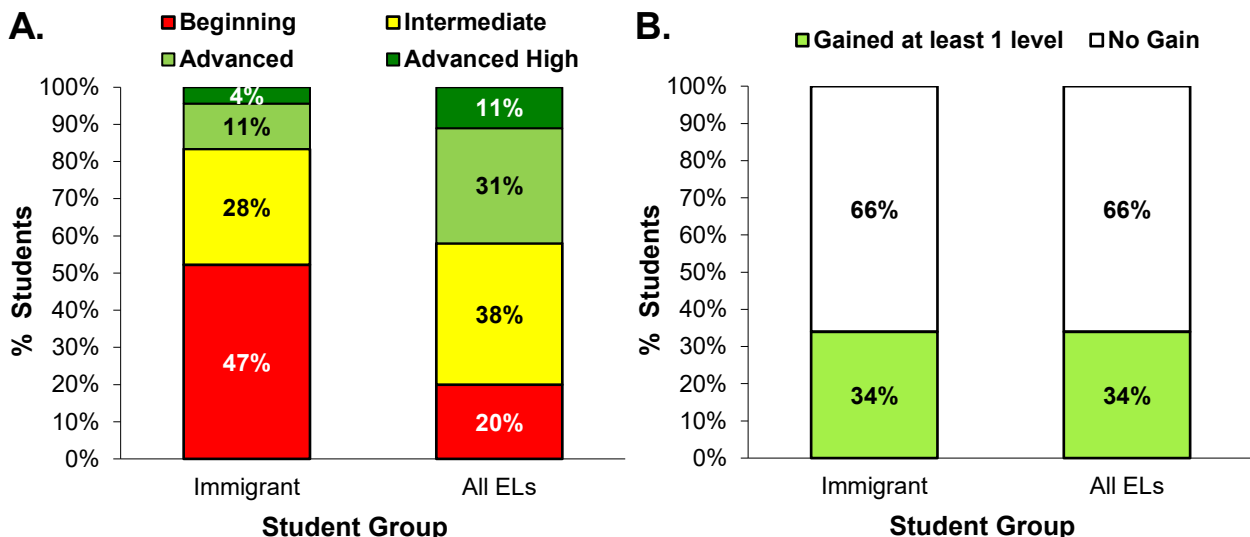
- The pattern with the EOC tests was very different from that observed with STAAR 3–8. Recall that those assessments showed a trend of improvement in passing rate, with 3rd-year immigrants having higher passing rates than 1st- or 2nd-year immigrants. With the EOC, however, this pattern of improvement was not evident. In fact, 3rd-year immigrants did not perform as well as those in their 1st year, and this was true for all subjects tested, except English I

*What was the TELPAS performance of immigrant students?*

Figure 6 shows the data from immigrant students tested on the spring 2021 TELPAS assessment. Overall proficiency is shown in Figure 6a, with yearly progress in Figure 6b (see also **Appendices F and G** (pp. 21-22)).

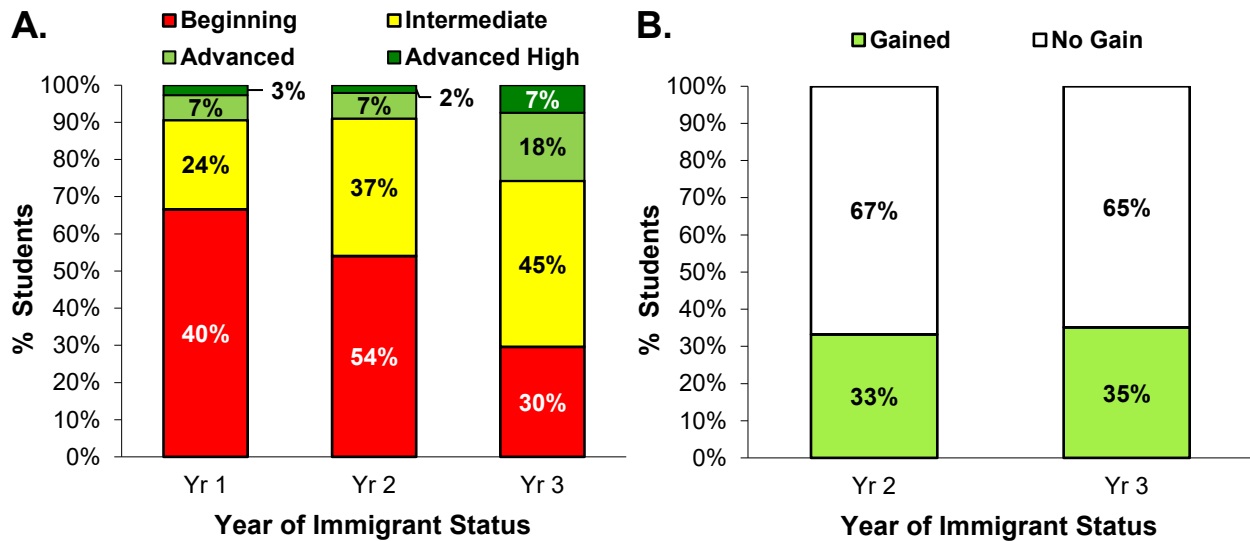
- Immigrant students as a group showed lower English language proficiency than did ELs overall (Figure 6a), but the same proportion of them showed progress in TELPAS proficiency between 2020 and 2021 (Figure 6b).

**Figure 6. TELPAS performance of immigrant students and all ELs districtwide: A. Overall proficiency level in 2021, B. Percent of students making gains in proficiency between 2018 and 2019**



Source: PowerSchool, TELPAS data file 7/20/21

**Figure 7. TELPAS performance of immigrant students based on year of immigrant status: A. Overall proficiency level in 2021, B. Percent of students making gains in proficiency between 2020 and 2021**



Source: PowerSchool, TELPAS data file 7/20/21

- Overall English language proficiency for immigrant students improved with each year they spent in U.S. schools (**Figure 7a**). Furthermore, yearly progress for 3rd-year immigrants was slightly higher than that for 2nd-year immigrants (**Figure 7b**).

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

District student attendance data from 2020–2021 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 2020–2021 showed that the average attendance rate for immigrant students was 92.7%, which did not differ from comparable rates for EL students (93.9%) or all students districtwide (93.6%).

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

Promotion and retention data for 2020–2021 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 2020–2021, and were shown as having a grade level assigned to them for the following school year (2021–2022). Results of the analyses are shown in **Table 3**.

**Table 3. Retention and Promotion Data for Immigrant Students, English Learners, and All District Students in 2020–2021**

Student Group	# Students	# Promoted	# Retained	% Retained	Yr 1	Yr 2	Yr 3
Immigrants	5,857	5,596	261	4.5%	6.1%	4.1%	4.1%
ELs	47,924	46,551	1,373	2.9%			
HISD	119,847	115,284	4,563	3.8%			

Source: Promotion Standards File 2020-2021

- 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 (2.9%) or the district overall (3.8%). Both of these differences were statistically significant ( $p < .006$ ). 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 9.9 percent, which was significantly greater ( $p < .00001$ ) than comparable rates for ELs (4.8 percent) or the district overall (2.9 percent).
- Four-year completion rate data for the class of 2020 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 dropout and graduation rates were significantly worse than those of EL students ( $p < .0001$ ).

**Table 5. Four-Year Completion Rates for Class of 2020: 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	1,233	690	445	96	2	56.0	36.1	7.8	0.2
ELs	2,136	1,353	610	167	6	63.3	28.6	7.8	0.3
HISD	13,179	10,803	1,695	641	40	82.0	12.9	4.9	0.3

Source: TEA Completion Rate roster class of 2020, PowerSchool

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

To assess student mobility, attendance records were used to identify students who missed at least six weeks (30 days) of school throughout the year. Data for this measure is shown in **Table 6**.

- Mobility based on the number of school days missed showed a significant deficit for immigrant students. Over forty percent 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 partially supported by further analyses of immigrant mobility based on year of immigrant status. There is a large decline in the percentage of student who missed 30 days or more of classes for immigrants in their 2nd or 3rd year (see Table 6). However, even 3rd year immigrants were significantly more likely to have missed 30 days of school than were ELs overall.

**Table 6. Student Mobility: Number and Percent of Students Who Missed at Least 30 Days of School**

Student Group	# Students	Percent of Students Missing 30 Days or More School				
		# Missed 30 Days	% Missed 30 Days	Yr 1	Yr 2	Yr 3
Immigrants	11,353	3,530	31.1%	53.3%	29.0%	22.7%
ELs	68,873	12,994	18.9%			
HISD	209,795	46,069	22.0%			

Source: Cognos enrollment data 8/20/21

**Table 7. Student Enrollment at Non-Zoned Campuses During 2020–2021 (Grades 6 to 12 Only)**

Student Group	# Students	# Zoned	# Not Zoned	% Not Zoned	Yr 1	Yr 2	Yr 3
Immigrants	3,873	3,285	588	15.2%	25.4%	13.9%	13.1%
ELs	22,030	17,034	4,996	22.7%			
HISD	86,173	55,619	30,554	35.5%			

Source: PowerSchool, Cognos 4/6/21

### **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**).
- 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 affected by length of time in U.S. schools. Immigrant students are less likely than other students, including ELs, to attend non-zoned campuses in their 2nd or 3rd-year of immigrant status. Although 1st-year immigrants appeared to show a higher rate of non-zoned enrollment than EL students, this difference was not statistically significant.
- **Magnet student status:** **Table 8** summarizes data on district magnet program participation during 2020–2021. Enrollment and magnet status counts include all students in grades K through 12, and were extracted from an end-of-year roster (6/14/2021).
- Districtwide, 31.0 percent of students were listed as magnet program participants in 2020–2021. For immigrant students, magnet participation was only 12.2 percent, while for ELs the rate was 19.7.
- Data showed that immigrant student magnet participation increased with length of time in school. Only 6.1 percent of 1st-year immigrants were listed as magnet, but this rate improved to 14.6 percent for 3rd-year immigrants. Note that this percentage is still significantly below the participation rates for ELs or district students overall.

**Table 8. Student Magnet Status During 2020–2021 (Grades K to 12 Only)**

Student Group	# Students	# Magnet	% Magnet	Yr 1	Yr 2	Yr 3
Immigrants	9,680	1,185	12.2%	6.1%	12.4%	14.6%
ELs	59,967	11,799	19.7%			
HISD	184,962	57,345	31.0%			

Source: PowerSchool, Cognos 6/14/2021



**Table 9. AP Course Enrollment During 2020–2021 (Grades 8 to 12 Only)**

Student Group	# Students	# Enrolled AP	% Enrolled AP	Yr 1	Yr 2	Yr 3
Immigrants	2,813	366	13.0%	8.2%	11.4%	16.9%
ELs	14,041	2,265	16.1%			
HISD	66,691	18,284	27.4%			

Source: PowerSchool, IBM Cognos EOY roster 6/14/21

- Advanced Placement course enrollment: **Table 9** summarizes data on student enrollment in AP courses during 2020–2021. Enrollment counts include all students in grades 8 through 12, and were extracted from a PowerSchool end-of-year roster (6/14/2021). AP course enrollment was obtained from PowerSchool records via IBM Cognos.
- Immigrant student AP course enrollment in 2020–2021 was lower than that for ELs or the district overall. By their 3rd year of immigrant status, AP course enrollment had improved to 16.9 percent, statistically the same as the EL student rate, but this was still well below the district average participation rate of 27.4 percent.
- Advanced Placement test performance: Finally, **Table 10** shows data on AP test performance during 2020–2021. 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 7.3 percent of immigrant students enrolled during the year took an AP test, which was lower than the rate for either ELs (11.2%) or the district (21.3%). This rate did increase for immigrants in their 2nd or 3rd-year of immigrant status.

**Table 10. AP Test Performance During 2020–2021 (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	289	46.7%	53.3%	3,011	221	7.3%	2.8%	5.6%	11.3%
ELs	1,870	79.5%	20.5%	12,198	1,361	11.2%			
HISD	23,807	64.2%	35.8%	60,077	12,789	21.3%			

Source: PowerSchool, AP exam data file 10/11/21

## Discussion

The district has a large 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, STAAR 3–8 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 STAAR after three years, and while TELPAS results show improvement over time, overall English language proficiency still remains lower for 3rd-year immigrant students than for ELs as a group.

A notable set of findings concerns performance of immigrants at the secondary level. As has been shown in previous reports, STAAR EOC results do not appear to improve over time. In fact, EOC passing rates for 3rd-year immigrants were lower than those for 1st-year immigrants in four of five subjects tested. Furthermore, 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, magnet status, and AP course enrollment. 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.

District immigrant enrollment declined by 34 percent in 2020–2021 from the previous year. This decrease is also reflected in statewide numbers (see **Figure 8**). The reasons for this drop are unclear, but could be related to the COVID-19 pandemic and its consequences, including border restrictions. Another significant factor dates back to January of 2019, when the Trump administration implemented the Migrant Protection Protocols (MPP), also known as the “[Remain in Mexico](#)” program. Under this program, non-Mexican asylum seekers can be returned to Mexico while their asylum claims are adjudicated. Previously, they would be allowed to remain in the U.S. during this process. Since 57 percent much of the immigrant student enrollment in the district come from three Central American countries (Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala), MPP could be expected to have a significant impact on enrollment of new immigrant students. This policy remains in effect under the new presidential administration, as court challenges have prevented its revocation. Given the continuing COVID situation and lack of closure regarding MPP, it is unclear what the medium-term impact on immigrant student enrollment will be.

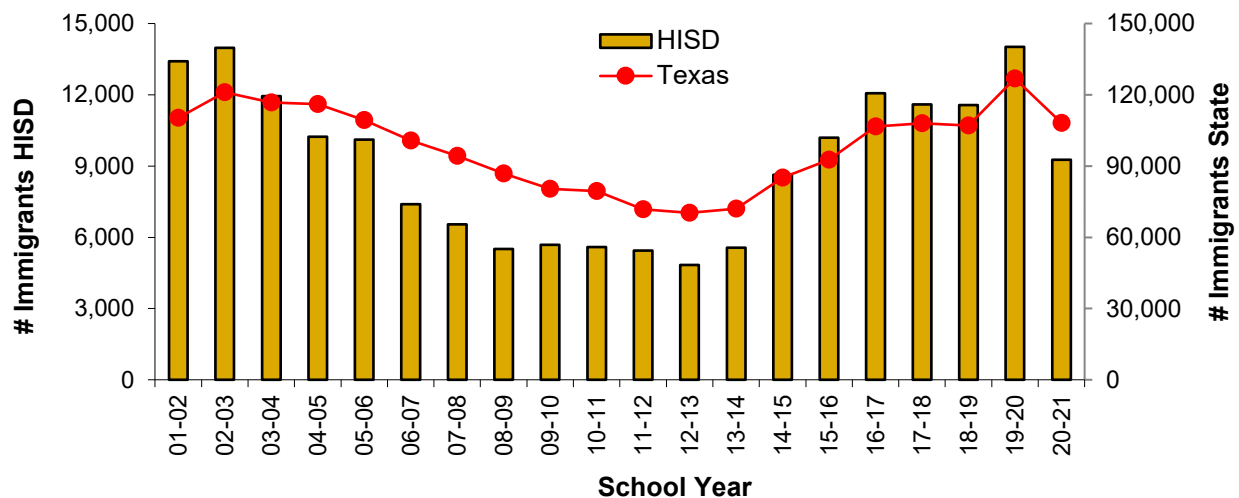
### Endnotes

1. Figure 1 shows the number of immigrant students in 2020–2021 as 11,834, whereas, Appendix A shows an immigrant enrollment of 9,263. 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 30, 2020.

### References

Families on the run: Why families flee from northern Central America? UNICEF report retrieved from <https://familiesontherun.org/>

**Figure 8. Immigrant student enrollment 2001–2002 through 2020–2021, state numbers in red**



Policy Guidance for Implementation of the Migrant Protection Protocols, Department of Homeland Security (Jan. 25, 2019), available at [https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/19\\_0129\\_OPA\\_migrant-protection-protocols-policy-guidance.pdf](https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/19_0129_OPA_migrant-protection-protocols-policy-guidance.pdf).

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## Appendix A

### District Immigrant Student Enrollment: Number and Percentage of Students Enrolled in 2020-2021 Who Were Current (Years 1-3) or Former Immigrants

Enrollment Status	# Students	% Students
HISD Enrolled	196,550	
Current Immigrant	9,263	4.71%
Current/Former Immigrant	19,205	9.77%
<hr/>		
EL Enrolled	65,609	
EL Immigrant	8,250	12.57%
EL Current/Former Immigrant	14,974	22.82%

*Data were extracted from fall PEIMS records covering the years 2005-2006 through 2020-2021.*

## Appendix B

### Explanation of Assessments Included in Report

The 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 Level II Phase-in 1 Satisfactory standard (used for 2012 to 2015) was increased to the Level II Satisfactory progression standard in 2016, and was to increase each year until 2021–2022. However, by commissioner's rule, that planned annual increase was overruled, and as of 2017 the standards which were in place for 2016 were retained (albeit relabeled as "Approaches Grade Level") in order to provide consistency for districts looking to assess growth in student achievement. However, it does remain true that different passing standards applied for the years 2012–2015 as compared to 2016 or later. Students taking the STAAR grades 3–8 assessments now have to answer more items correctly to “pass” the exams than in 2015 or earlier.

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). For EOC exams, the passing standard was also increased in 2016 to the Level II Satisfactory 2016 progression standard and was to increase each year until 2021–2022. This means that students taking an EOC for the first time in 2016 had to answer more items correctly to “pass” STAAR EOC exams than in 2015. As was the case with the STAAR 3–8, the planned annual increase in the EOC passing standards was dropped by commissioner's rule effective with the 2016–2017 school year. Thus, passing standards for 2018–2019 are the same as those used in 2015–2016, and will remain the same for the foreseeable future (relabeled as "Approaches Grade Level").

The 2015–2016 academic year also saw the introduction of a new "Student Standard" for EOC exams. This measure is what is reported here for the EOC results ("Approaches Grade Level at Student Standard"). Under the Student Standard, all students taking EOC exams are not necessarily held to the same passing standard. Instead, the passing standard applicable is determined by the standard that was in place when a student first took any EOC assessment. This standard is to 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 students who first tested in 2015–2016 or later, it is equivalent to the 2016 Progression Standard. For context, in 2017–2018 only 7.7 percent of EOC results were scored using the older standards. By 2018–2019, this number fell to 0.8 percent, and in 2020–2021 it was 0.01 percent (9 tests of 61,302 scored).

The TELPAS is an English language proficiency assessment which is administered to all EL 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 EL 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. In grades K–1, all language domains are scored via holistic ratings of trained observers. In Grades 2–12, only writing is scored by holistic ratings, while listening, speaking, and reading are assessed via online technology.

## Appendix C

### STAAR 3–8 English Results: Number Tested and Percent Meeting Approaches Grade Level Standard by Student Group, Grade Level and Subject (Spring 2021, First Administration Only)

Immigrants										
Grade	Reading		Mathematics		Writing		Science		Social Studies	
	Tested	% Met	Tested	% Met	Tested	% Met	Tested	% Met	Tested	% Met
3	348	34	366	44						
4	341	36	352	41	353	28				
5	355	36	357	45			378	29		
6	413	13	412	20						
7	421	14	420	14	429	11				
8	377	17	393	16			396	16	394	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,255</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>2,300</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>782</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>774</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>394</b>	<b>11</b>

English Learners										
Grade	Reading		Mathematics		Writing		Science		Social Studies	
	Tested	% Met	Tested	% Met	Tested	% Met	Tested	% Met	Tested	% Met
3	2,884	50	3,127	46						
4	3,921	45	3,923	43	3,923	33				
5	4,538	54	4,473	53			4,703	36		
6	3,437	34	3,415	39						
7	2,823	37	2,829	25	2,876	25				
8	2,690	40	2,468	23			2,615	27	2,617	14
<b>Total</b>	<b>20,293</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>20,235</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>6,799</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>7,318</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>2,617</b>	<b>14</b>

HISD										
Grade	Reading		Mathematics		Writing		Science		Social Studies	
	Tested	% Met	Tested	% Met	Tested	% Met	Tested	% Met	Tested	% Met
3	9,166	59	9,447	51						
4	10,364	56	10,364	56	10,379	44				
5	11,095	65	10,983	59			11,223	49		
6	8,813	52	8,785	52						
7	8,258	60	7,760	41	8,482	51				
8	7,953	62	6,193	34			7,592	49	7,732	37
<b>Total</b>	<b>55,649</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>53,532</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>18,861</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>18,815</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>7,732</b>	<b>37</b>

Source: Cognos STAAR data extract 7/12/21 , HISD Cognos Data Warehouse

## Appendix D

### STAAR 3–8 Spanish Results: Number Tested and Percent Meeting Approaches Grade Level Standard by Student Group, Grade Level and Subject (Spring 2021, First Administration Only)

Immigrants								
Grade	Reading		Mathematics		Writing		Science	
	Tested	% Met	Tested	% Met	Tested	% Met	Tested	% Met
3	434	59	418	38				
4	322	44	310	27	321	34		
5	211	70	206	27			178	17
<b>Total</b>	<b>967</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>934</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>321</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>178</b>	<b>17</b>

English Learners								
Grade	Reading		Mathematics		Writing		Science	
	Tested	% Met	Tested	% Met	Tested	% Met	Tested	% Met
3	2,767	51	2,504	44				
4	1,517	42	1,516	33	1,518	32		
5	625	70	677	36			403	18
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,909</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>4,697</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>1,518</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>403</b>	<b>18</b>

Source: Cognos STAAR data extract 7/12/21, HISD Cognos Data Warehouse

## Appendix E

### STAAR End-of-Course Results: Number Tested and Number and Percentage Meeting the Approaches Grade Level Standard (Spring 2021 Data Only, All Students Tested)

Grade	Algebra I		Biology		English I		English II		US History	
	Tested	% Met	Tested	% Met	Tested	% Met	Tested	% Met	Tested	% Met
Immigrant	643	35	696	27	632	11	635	11	441	37
English Learners	3,431	42	3,591	44	3,949	25	3,296	26	1,998	50
HISD	12,215	60	12,462	71	13,171	56	12,474	62	10,982	82

Source: STAAR EOC 6/15/21, HISD Cognos Data Warehouse



## Appendix F

### Composite TELPAS Results: Number and Percent of Students at Each Proficiency Level in 2021, by Grade and Student Group

Immigrants										
Grade	# Tested	Beginning		Intermediate		Advanced		Advanced High		Composite Score
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
K	840	621	74	149	18	46	5	24	3	1.3
1	1,141	614	54	357	31	105	9	65	6	1.6
2	870	349	40	383	44	119	14	19	2	1.8
3	703	246	35	339	48	94	13	24	3	1.8
4	612	283	46	222	36	79	13	28	5	1.8
5	481	198	41	192	40	61	13	30	6	1.8
6	322	148	46	138	43	29	9	7	2	1.6
7	355	157	44	156	44	33	9	9	3	1.7
8	350	159	45	137	39	41	12	13	4	1.7
9	398	183	46	167	42	32	8	16	4	1.7
10	433	198	46	185	43	38	9	12	3	1.7
11	336	109	32	175	52	36	11	16	5	1.9
12	160	31	19	74	46	39	24	16	10	2.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,001</b>	<b>3,296</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>2,674</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>752</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>279</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1.7</b>

English Learners										
Grade	# Tested	Beginning		Intermediate		Advanced		Advanced High		Composite Score
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
K	5,559	3,753	68	1,330	24	339	6	137	2	1.4
1	6,199	2,491	40	2,460	40	874	14	374	6	1.8
2	5,890	945	16	3,018	51	1,681	29	246	4	2.2
3	5,898	455	8	2,449	42	2,261	38	733	12	2.6
4	5,581	492	9	2,095	38	2,233	40	761	14	2.5
5	5,307	334	6	1,574	30	2,275	43	1,124	21	2.8
6	3,102	236	8	1,206	39	1,261	41	399	13	2.6
7	2,701	246	9	1,030	38	1,135	42	290	11	2.6
8	2,682	248	9	1,051	39	1,051	39	332	12	2.6
9	2,508	290	12	1,086	43	809	32	323	13	2.5
10	2,038	255	13	875	43	665	33	233	11	2.5
11	1,356	145	11	602	44	423	31	186	14	2.5
12	967	67	7	388	40	367	38	145	15	2.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>49,788</b>	<b>9,957</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>19,164</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>5,374</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>5,283</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>2.3</b>

Source: TELPAS data file 7/20/21, HISD Cognos Data Warehouse

## Appendix G

### TELPAS Yearly Progress: Number and Percent of Students Gaining One or More Levels of English Language Proficiency in 2021, by Grade and Student Group

Immigrants									
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	%
1	584	181	31	24	4	0	0	205	35
2	421	167	40	13	3	0	0	180	43
3	212	75	35	8	4	0	0	83	39
4	155	41	26	2	1	0	0	43	28
5	132	52	39	5	4	0	0	57	43
6	66	23	35	0	0	0	0	23	35
7	41	5	12	0	0	0	0	5	12
8	47	9	19	0	0	0	0	9	19
9	55	5	9	0	0	0	0	5	9
10	150	37	25	0	0	0	0	37	25
11	83	24	29	0	0	0	0	24	29
12	22	6	27	0	0	0	0	6	27
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,968</b>	<b>625</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>677</b>	<b>34</b>

English Learners									
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	%
1	3,230	1,120	35	188	6	7	<1	1,315	41
2	2,999	1,092	36	127	4	4	<1	1,223	41
3	1,909	672	35	40	2	0	0	712	37
4	1,832	436	24	7	<1	0	0	443	24
5	1,813	697	38	23	1	0	0	720	40
6	932	207	22	5	1	0	0	212	23
7	492	110	22	0	0	0	0	110	22
8	428	101	24	0	0	0	0	101	24
9	412	72	17	3	1	0	0	75	18
10	676	176	26	2	<1	0	0	178	26
11	386	108	28	7	2	0	0	115	30
12	253	60	24	1	<1	0	0	61	24
<b>Total</b>	<b>15,362</b>	<b>4,851</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>403</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>&lt;1</b>	<b>5,265</b>	<b>34</b>

Source: TELPAS data file 7/20/21, HISD Cognos Data Warehouse