

# KINDERGARTEN AND FIRST-GRADE ASSESSMENT RESULTS, BY ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNER STATUS, 2009–2010, RESEARCH BRIEF

September, 2010

## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this brief is to provide summary data for kindergarten and first-grade students' assessments for the 2009–2010 academic year to determine any gaps in achievement for English language learners (ELLs). Kindergarten and first grade are the pilot grade levels for the dual language program. (Prekindergarten students do not share the same assessments and, therefore, were not included in the analyses.)

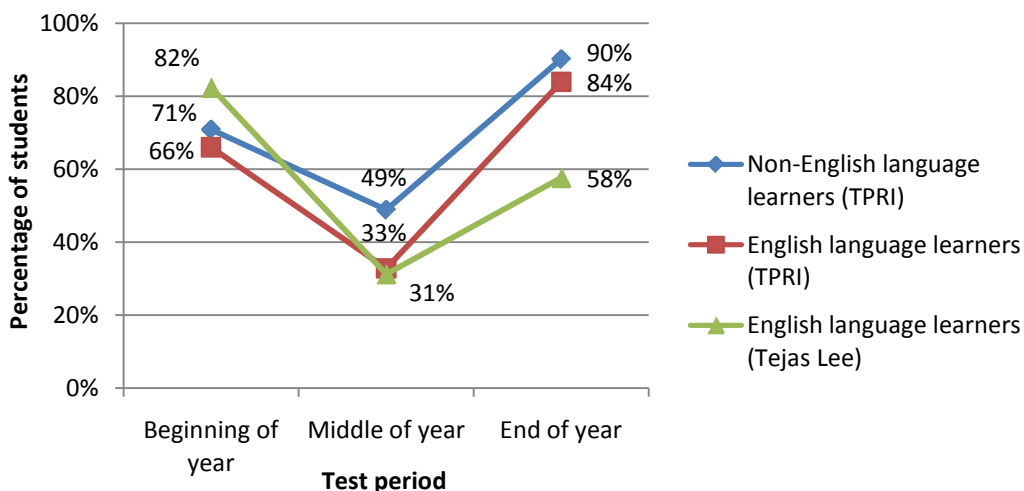
A summary of results are provided for the following assessments:

- Texas Primary Reading Inventory (TPRI/English) and the El Inventario de Lectura en Español de Tejas (Tejas Lee/Spanish)
- Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA/English) and Evaluación del Desarrollo de la Lectura (EDL/Spanish)
- Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS)

## TEXAS PRIMARY READING INVENTORY (TPRI) AND EL INVENTARIO DE LECTURA EN ESPAÑOL DE TEJAS (TEJAS LEE)

TPRI and Tejas Lee are screening and monitoring assessments used to help teachers identify strengths and problem areas in students' reading/language arts development, so teachers may effectively deliver appropriate instructional activities for each of their students. The assessments are given to kindergarten through third-grade students by their teachers at three time periods during the year. The majority of entering kindergarten students had grade-appropriate "developed" reading skills at the beginning of the year (Figure 1).

**Figure 1. Percentage of Kindergarten Students Scoring "Developed" on Texas Primary Reading Inventory (TPRI) and El Inventario de Lectura en Espanol de Tejas (Tejas Lee), 2009-2010**



Source. AISD student records

DPE Publication No. 09.60 RB

Josie Brunner, M.A.



## Key Findings

- *On average, kindergarten ELLs had lower scores on the TPRI/Tejas Lee and DRA/EDL at the end of the year than did non-ELLs.*
- *For first graders, no significant difference was found between the probability of Spanish-speaking ELLs scoring "developed" on the Tejas Lee or "on grade level" on the EDL and the probability of non-ELLs achieving those scores.*
- *First-grade ELLs taking the DRA were 1.6 times more likely not to score "on grade level" than were non-ELLs taking the DRA.*
- *Forty-two percent of first-grade ELLs made progress on the TELPAS.*

### TELPAS YEARLY PROGRESS OF FIRST-GRADE ELLS

Improvement	Percent of Students
No progress	58
Up one level	29
Up two levels	10
Up three levels	30

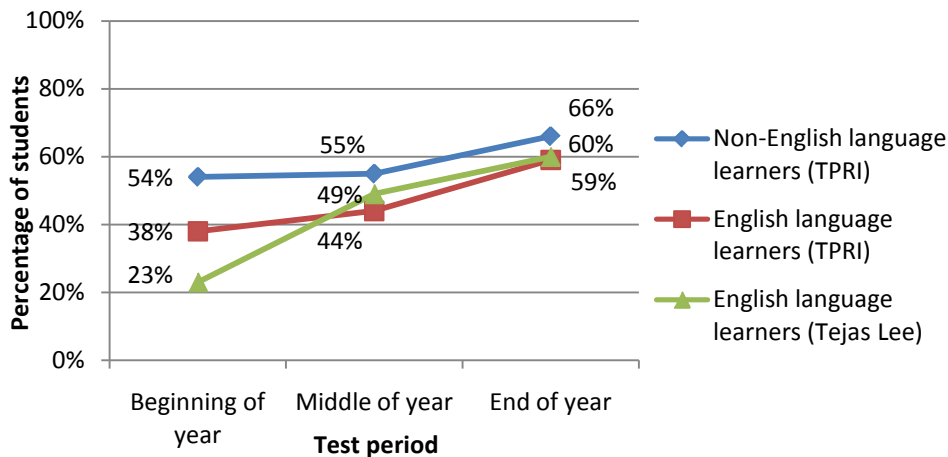
## TPRI AND TEJAS LEE, CONTINUED.

A greater percentage of kindergarten Spanish-speaking ELLs (i.e., ELLs who took the Tejas Lee) had “developed” reading skills at the beginning of the year, compared to non-ELLs and ELLs who took the TPRI (i.e., English exam) (82%, 71%, and 66%, respectively). The early advantage of Spanish-speaking ELLs may be due to the rising kindergarten summer school program in which enrolled bilingual (BE) kindergarten students had significantly higher first 9-weeks reading grades than did BE students who did not attend summer school (Brunner & Malerba, 2009).<sup>1</sup>

Since “developed” skill sets are not tested in subsequent time periods, the test does get progressively harder with each time period, which explains the drop in percentage of students scoring “developed” at the middle of the year. By the end of the year, only a little more than half (58%) of Spanish-speaking ELLs “developed” grade-appropriate reading skills, as measured by the Tejas Lee. Conversely, non-ELLs experienced a 19% gain in the number of students overall scoring “developed” on the TPRI from the beginning of the year to the end of the year. ELL students who took the TPRI demonstrated similar gains, with an 18% increase in the percentage of ELL students scoring “developed” on the TPRI from beginning of year to end of year.

Unlike in kindergarten, in first-grade, the percentage of students scoring “developed” on the TPRI and Tejas Lee increased gradually from the beginning of year to end of year (Figure 2). In general, non-ELLs were likely to perform better than ELLs on the TPRI or Tejas Lee. However, the increase in percentage from beginning of year to end of year of students scoring “developed” was greater for Spanish-speaking ELLs on the Tejas Lee (37%) than for non-ELLs on the TPRI (12%). The increase in percentage of ELLs scoring “developed” on the TPRI from beginning of year to end of year was 21%.

**Figure 2. Percentage of First Grade Students Scoring “Developed” on Texas Primary Reading Inventory (TPRI) and El Inventario de Lectura en Espanol de Tejas (Tejas Lee), 2009-2010**



Source. AISD student records

See Appendix A-1 for complete table of TPRI scores for kindergarten and first grade.

<sup>1</sup> Brunner, J. & Malerba, C. (2010). *Rising Kindergarten and First Grade Summer School Program for English Language Learners Evaluation, Summer 2009*.

## Quick Facts

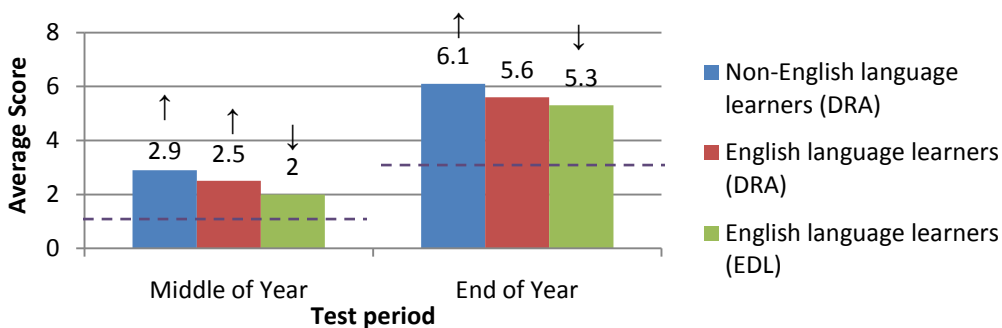
- *In kindergarten, Spanish-speaking ELLs were 6.7 times more likely to score “still developing” on the Tejas Lee at the end of the year than were non-ELLs on the TPRI.*
- *Kindergarten ELLs were 1.8 times more likely to score “still developing” on the TPRI at the end of the year than were non-ELLs on the TPRI.*
- *No significant difference was found in the probability between non-ELLs and Spanish-speaking ELLs scoring “developed” at the end of the year on the TPRI and Tejas Lee, respectively.*
- *ELLs taking the TPRI were 1.4 times more likely to score “still developing” on the TPRI than were non-ELLs.*

## DEVELOPMENTAL READING ASSESSMENT (DRA) AND EVALUACIÓN DEL DESARROLLO DE LA LECTURA (EDL)

DRA and EDL are criterion-referenced reading assessments used to identify students' independent reading level in terms of accuracy, fluency, and comprehension. Tests are individually administered by teachers at the middle and end of year for kindergarteners and beginning, middle, and end of year for first graders to determine students' "at grade level" performance. Unlike the TPRI and Tejas Lee, teachers are able to select the text they find appropriate for the student, which makes the assessments susceptible to confirmation bias (i.e., the tendency for people to choose based on preconceived notions of what they believe is true.<sup>2</sup>) (See Appendix A-2 for summary of DRA/EDL scores.)

Eighty-one percent of all kindergarten students were "on grade level" on the DRA or EDL at the middle of the year, and 83% were "on grade level" by the end of the year. Although the majority of students performed well on the tests, on average, non-ELL students scored higher on the assessments than did ELL students (Figure 3).

**Figure 3. Average Kindergarten Students' Scores on the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) and Evaluación del Desarrollo de la Lectura (EDL), 2009-2010**



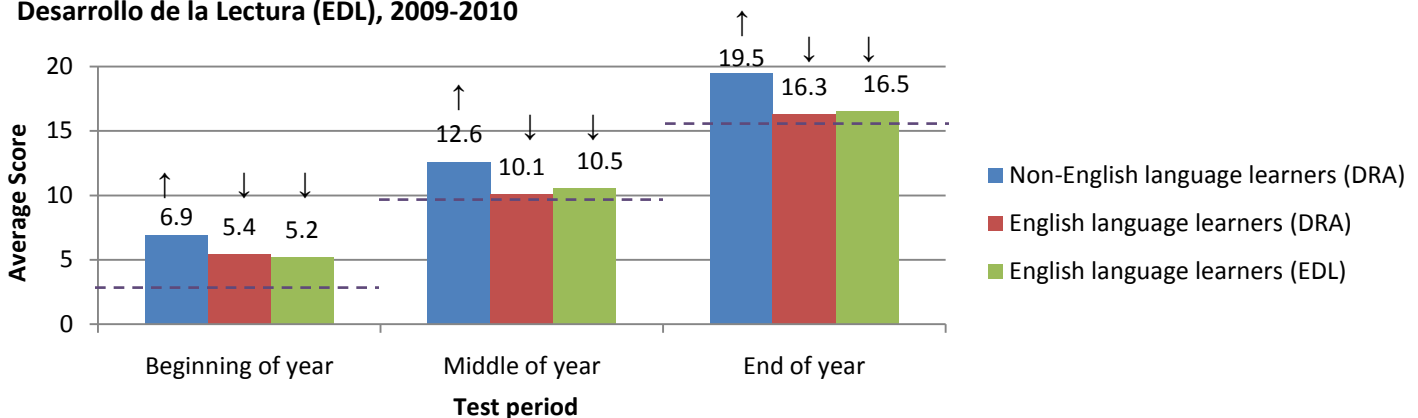
*Kindergarten ELL students who took the DRA or EDL and first grade ELL students who took the DRA were 1.6 times more likely not to be "on grade level" at the end of the year than were non-ELL students.*

Source. AISD student records

Note. The dotted line represents the "on grade level" score for the test period. The up and down arrows represent significant differences in mean scores between groups within a time period according to Bonferroni *t* tests.

Overall, 69% of first-grade students were "on grade level" in reading at the end of the year, compared with 54% of first-grade students at the start of the year, representing a 15% increase. First-grade non-ELL students scored significantly higher on the DRA than did ELLs on the DRA or EDL, at all three time periods (Figure 4).

**Figure 4. Average First-Grade Students' Scores on the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) and Evaluación del Desarrollo de la Lectura (EDL), 2009-2010**



Source. AISD student records

Note. The dotted line represents the "on grade level" score for the test period. The up and down arrows represent significant differences in mean scores between groups within a time period according to Bonferroni *t* tests.

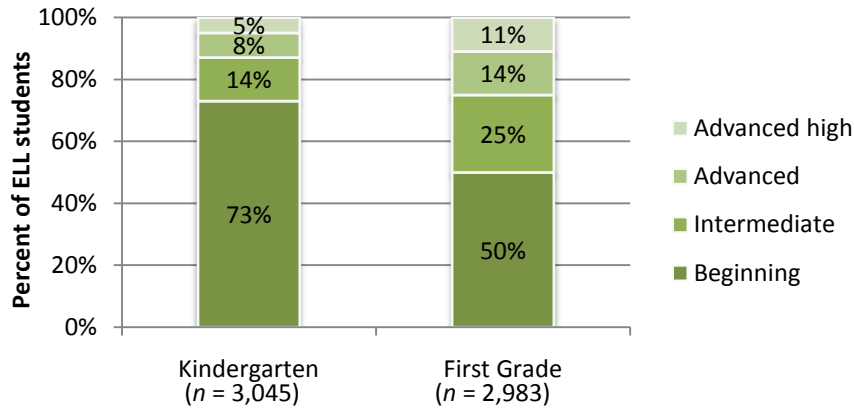
<sup>2</sup> Nickerson, R. S. (1998). Confirmation bias: A ubiquitous phenomenon in many guises. *Review of General Psychology*, 2, 175-220.

## TEXAS ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY ASSESSMENT SYSTEM (TELPAS)

TELPAS is the state mandatory assessment to monitor the progress ELL students make toward learning the English language. The test was administered in the spring of 2010 to ELL students in the bilingual and English as a second language (ESL) programs in kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade.

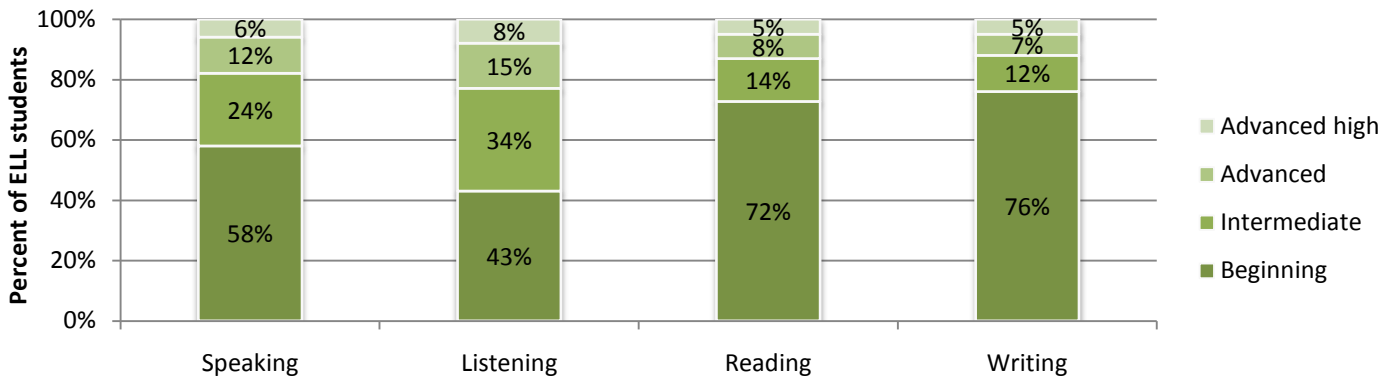
Eighty-seven percent of kindergarten and 75% of first-grade ELLs had English proficiency levels of “beginning” and “intermediate” (Figure 5) in Spring 2010. The weakest area of proficiency for both kindergarten and first grade ELLs was writing followed by reading (Figures 6 & 7).

**Figure 5. Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS) Overall Composite Scores, by Grade, 2010**



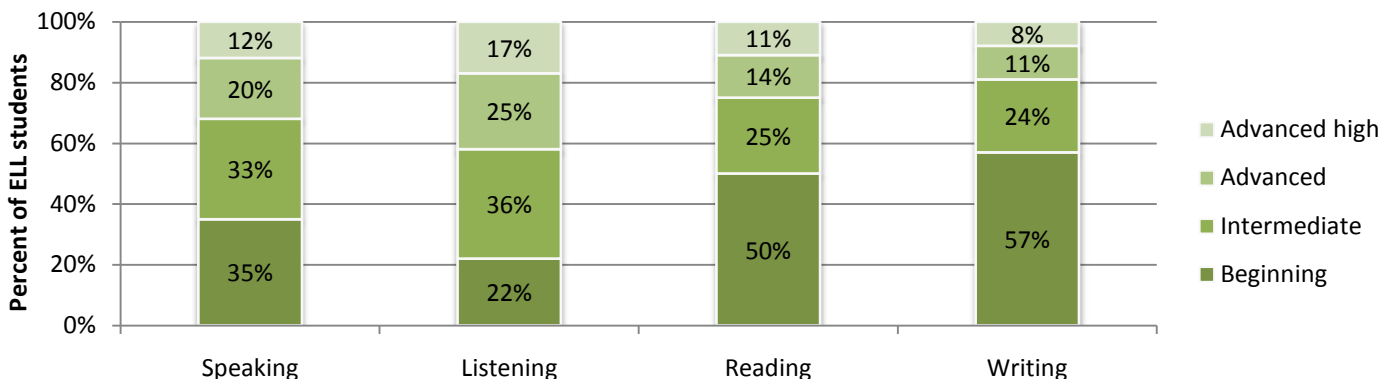
Source. AISD student records

**Figure 6. Kindergarten Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS) Content Area Scores, 2010**



Source. AISD student records

**Figure 7. First-Grade Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS) Content Area Scores, 2010**



Source. AISD student records  
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APPENDIX

**Table A.1 Kindergarten and First-Grade Students Scoring “Developed” on Texas Primary Reading Inventory (TPRI) and El Inventario de Lectura en Espanol de Tejas (Tejas Lee), 2009-2010**

	Beginning of year		Middle of year		End of year	
	Total students	Percentage scoring “developed”	Total students	Percentage scoring “developed”	Total students	Percentage scoring “developed”
<b>Kindergarten</b>						
Non-English language learners (TPRI)	5,945	71	4,925	49	4,669	90
English language learners (TPRI)	905	66	737	33	676	84
English language learners (Tejas Lee)	2,375	82	2,403	31	2,395	58
<b>First Grade</b>						
Non-English language learners (TPRI)	5,058	54	4,692	55	4,571	66
English language learners (TPRI)	761	38	713	44	647	59
English language learners (Tejas Lee)	2,683	23	2,494	49	2,432	60

Source. AISD student records

**Table A.2 Kindergarten and First Grade Students Scoring “On Grade Level” on Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) and Evaluación del Desarrollo de la Lectura (EDL), 2009—2010**

	Beginning of year		Middle of year		End of year	
	Total students	Percentage scoring “on grade level”	Total students	Percentage scoring “on grade level”	Total students	Percentage scoring “on grade level”
<b>Kindergarten</b>						
Non-English language learners (DRA)	-	-	4,445	85	4,486	85
English language learners (DRA)	-	-	563	81	579	79
English language learners (EDL)	-	-	2,409	74	2,438	78
<b>First Grade</b>						
Non-English language learners (DRA)	4,374	58	4,298	64	4,424	71
English language learners (DRA)	576	45	579	52	595	61
English language learners (EDL)	2,433	56	2,393	64	2,387	69

Source. AISD student records