



Austin Independent School District

Department of Program Evaluation

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BILINGUAL EDUCATION AND ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE PROGRAMS SUMMARY REPORT: 2007–2008

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Texas law requires that every student with a primary home language other than English, who is identified as limited English proficient (LEP), be provided with a full opportunity to participate in a bilingual education (BE) or English as a second language (ESL) program. To ensure educational equity, the law also states that districts must seek certified teaching personnel and assess these students' achievement in the state-mandated Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) curriculum. Austin Independent School District (AISD) provides two programs to serve LEP students and English language learners (ELL): BE, which provides instruction in English and the native language (e.g., Spanish, Vietnamese, and Korean) in the content areas; and ESL, which provides intensive English instruction. ESL is both a component of BE and a stand-alone program. The goal of the BE program is to enable ELL students to become competent in comprehension, speaking, reading, and writing through the development of literacy and academic skills in the students' primary language. The goal of the ESL program is to develop students' literacy through the integrated use of second-language instructional methods.

In compliance with state law, the Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC) on each campus makes instructional placement and testing decisions intended to ensure that students will be served by the program that can best address their language needs. At each school, the role of the LPAC members is to evaluate the academic progress and language of instruction of ELL students and to determine if ELL students will take the state assessments in English or in Spanish. The program in which a particular student participates depends on the student's home language, grade level, language dominance, and program availability. Parental permission is required for an ELL student to participate in either language program. If parental permission for program participation is not granted, the student participates in an all-English classroom without BE or ESL services provided.

AISD received the following allocations during 2007-2008 to support BE/ESL programs and initiatives: \$53.4 million (local), \$3 million (federal Title III, Part A), and \$1.6 million (federal Title I, Part A).

EVALUATION MANDATE

In reference to program evaluation, Chapter §89.1265, of the 19 Texas Administrative Code (TAC, 1996) states the following:

- (a) All districts required to conduct a bilingual education or English as a second language program shall conduct periodic assessment and continuous diagnosis in the languages of instruction to determine program impact and student outcomes in all subject areas.
- (b) Annual reports of educational performance shall reflect the academic progress in either language of the limited English proficient students, the extent to which they are becoming proficient in English, and the number of students who have been exited from the bilingual education and English as a second language programs (TEA, 2005).

The purposes of this report are to provide information to district program decision makers and staff, as well as to comply with the legal mandate. This report presents a brief description of the demographics pertaining to AISD ELL students and summarizes their academic achievement in English and Spanish on the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) and their acquisition of English on the Texas English Proficiency Language Assessment System (TELPAS). Unless otherwise noted, all student data summarized in this report were obtained from the district's student data systems. The student demographic data were part of the district's fall report to the state-required Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS).

AISD ELL STUDENTS

In Fall 2007, 23,291 ELL students (28.2% of the total student population) were enrolled in AISD. Most of these students were enrolled in elementary grades (76%, n = 17,616). The number and percentage of ELL students served in each program and the number and percentage of students whose parents did not approve program services are as follows:

- The BE program served 14,869 (64%) students.
- The ESL program served 7,493 (32%) students.
- Parents of 929 (4%) ELL students did not approve services by either the BE or ESL program.

The number of ELL students served in the 2007–2008 BE/ESL programs increased from the previous year by 2,401 students. The number of students whose parents did not approve of their child's BE/ESL program participation in 2007–2008 increased by 108, compared with the prior year.

Of the 22,362 ELL students who participated in AISD's BE/ESL programs,

- 17,052 (76%) were in elementary grades pre-K through 6;
- 2,788 (12%) were in middle school, grades 6 through 8; and
- 2,522 (11%) were in high school, grades 9 through 12.

The ethnic distribution of all ELL students shows that most (94%, n = 21,817) were of Hispanic origin, and the next largest group (4%, n = 987) were of Asian origin. The ethnicity of the remaining ELL students (2%, n = 487) included American Indian or Alaskan Native, African American, and White students. Fifty-two percent were males and 48% were females. Ninety-one percent were economically disadvantaged, 14% were recent

immigrants, and 7% were receiving special education services.

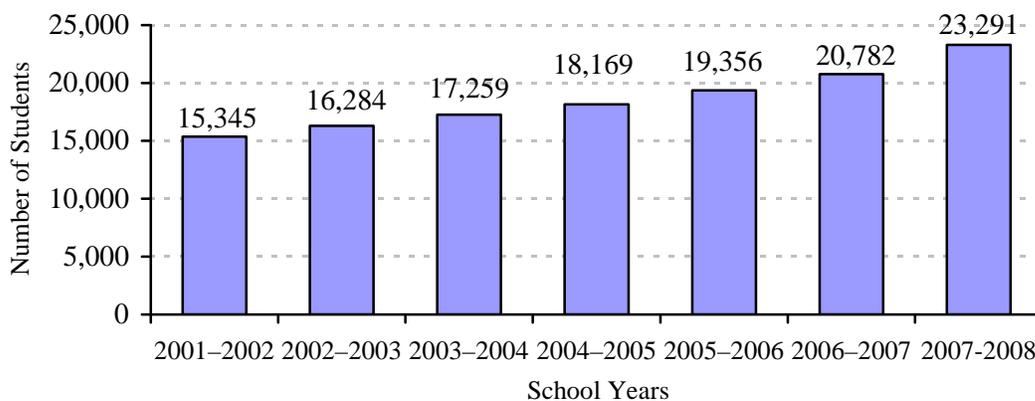
Languages spoken

In 2007–2008, most AISD ELL students were native Spanish speakers (94%, $n = 21,799$). Speakers of Vietnamese comprised the next largest segment of AISD ELL students (1%, $n = 314$), followed by Korean (1%, $n = 205$). The remaining ELL students (4%, $n = 973$) included speakers of other native languages, including Arabic, Urdu, French, Farsi (Persian), Portuguese, Russian, Japanese, Hindi, Gujarati, Telegu, Mandarin (Chinese), and Russian.

GROWTH IN AISD ELL STUDENT POPULATION

The AISD ELL student population has increased incrementally for the past 19 years (González, 1995, 1999, 2006a, 2006b, 2007). Between 2001–2002 and 2007–2008, the population of AISD ELL students increased by 34% ($n = 7,946$) (see Figure 1). The largest year-to-year increase of AISD ELL students occurred from 2006–2007 to 2007–2008 ($n = 2,509$), and the smallest occurred from 2003–2004 to 2004–2005 ($n = 910$). ELL students became an increasingly large percentage of the total AISD student population during this same period. In 2001–2002, ELL students comprised almost 20% of the district’s students, and by 2007–2008 the percentage had risen to 28%.

Figure 1. Growth of AISD ELL Student Population from 2001–2002 Through 2007–2008



Source. AISD PEIMS student records, 2001–2002 through 2007–2008

ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

The TAKS tests are administered in reading to students at grades 3 through 9; in writing to students at grades 4 and 7; in English language arts (ELA) to students in grades 10 and 11; in science to students in grades 5, 8, 10, and 11; and in social studies to students in grades 8, 10, and 11. The

TAKS are administered in Spanish and English to students in grades 3 through 6. The Spanish TAKS assesses the academic progress of ELL students who receive academic instruction in Spanish while they are learning English.

Satisfactory performance on the TAKS in grade 11 is a prerequisite to earning a high school diploma. Exit level tests for

grades 11 and 12 are offered at different times throughout the year for students who have not yet passed in one or more subject areas. As part of the state’s Student Success Initiative (SSI), students in grades 3, 5, and 8 must pass certain subject areas to be promoted to the next grade (TEA, 2006). SSI allows for three administrations of the Spanish or English TAKS in reading for students in grades 3, 5 and 8, and in mathematics for students in grade 5 and 8. TAKS results in this report represent the cumulative district and state summary reports as of the end of July 2008.

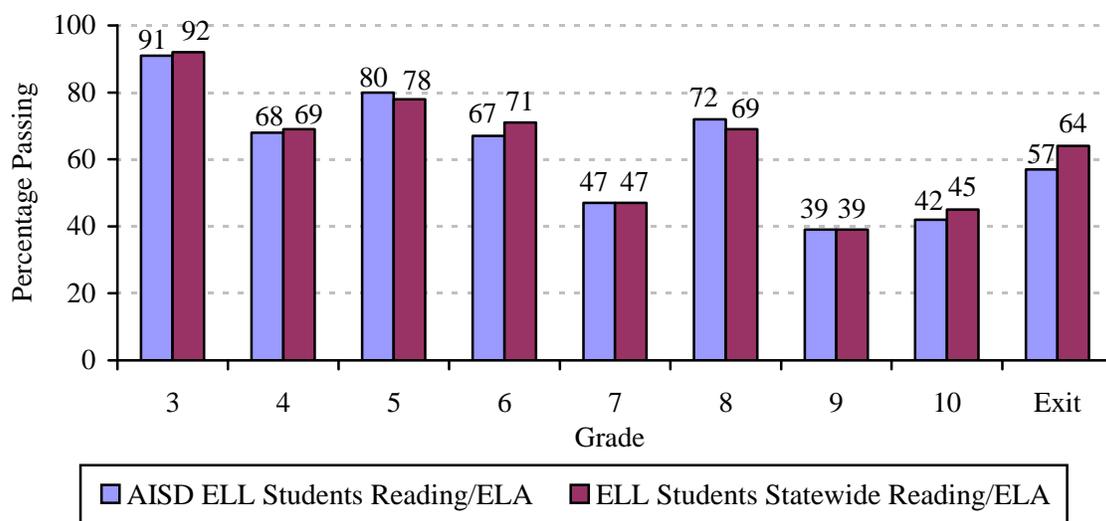
AISD ELL STUDENTS’ TAKS RESULTS

Figures 2, 3, 4, and 5 present the combined English and Spanish TAKS results for AISD ELL students and ELL students statewide for grades 3 through 10 and exit level (grades 11 and 12), by subject area, for 2007–2008.

At most grade levels, AISD ELL students passed TAKS reading/ELA and mathematics at rates similar to those of ELL students statewide. The highest passing rates for reading/ELA (91% AISD, 92% state) occurred at grade 3, and the highest mathematics passing rates occurred at grades 3 (75% AISD, 79% state) and 5 (75% AISD, 81% state). In writing, grade 4 students (87% AISD, 87% state) had higher passing rates than did grade 7 students (58% AISD, 64% state). In science and social studies, AISD ELL students had lower passing rates than did ELLs statewide.

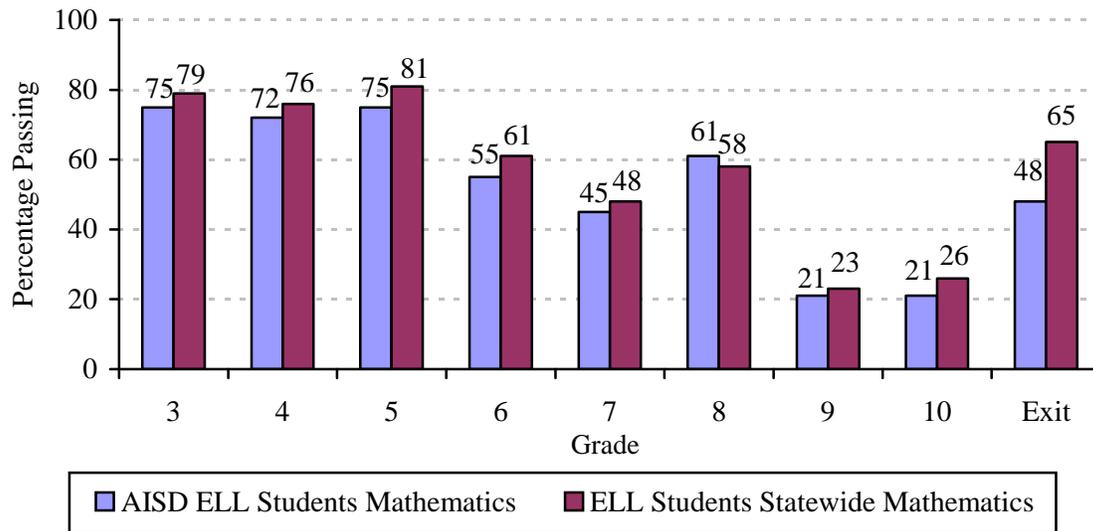
The greatest differences in passing rates between AISD ELLs and ELLs statewide occurred at exit level on TAKS science (20 percentage points) and mathematics (17 percentage points) with AISD ELLs passing at lower rates.

Figure 2. AISD ELL Students and ELL Students Statewide Passing English or Spanish TAKS Reading/ELA, by Grade Levels, 2007–2008



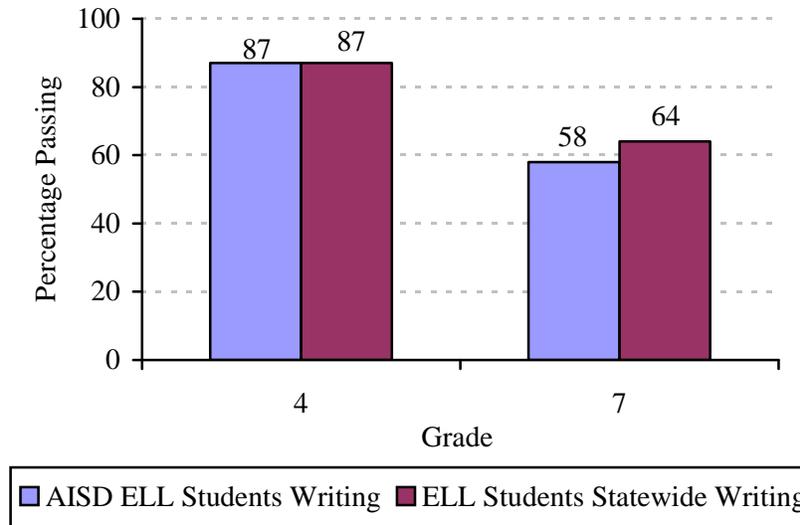
Source. AISD TAKS district files; TEA Statewide TAKS Summary Reports, May and July 2008

Figure 3. AISD ELL Students and ELL Students Statewide Passing English or Spanish TAKS Mathematics, by Grade Levels, 2007–2008



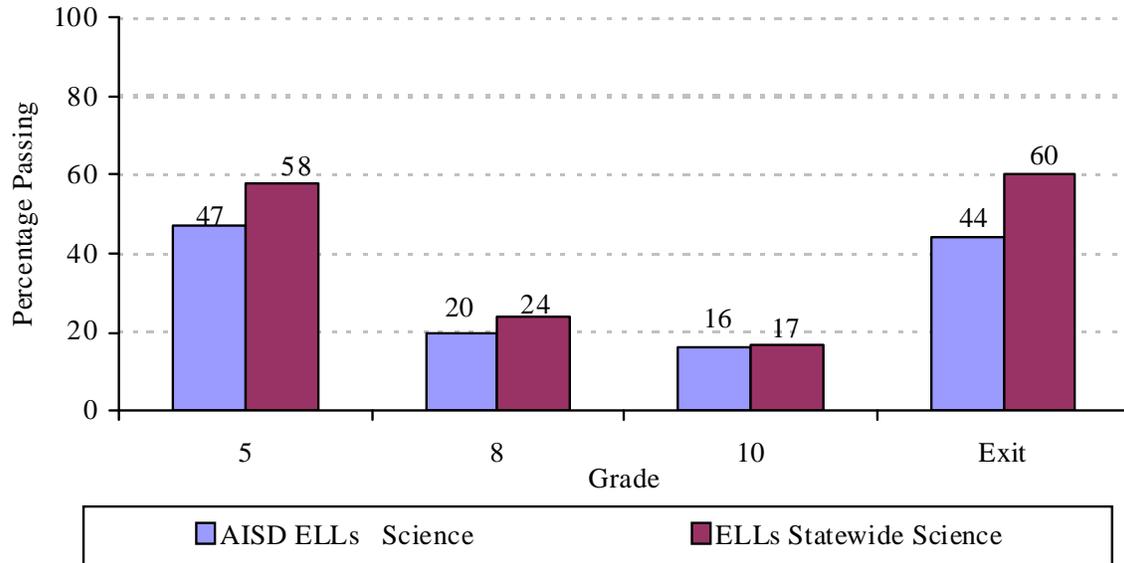
Source. AISD TAKS district files; TEA Statewide TAKS Summary Reports, May and July 2008

Figure 4. AISD ELL Students and ELL Students Statewide Passing English or Spanish TAKS Writing, by Grade Levels, 2007–2008



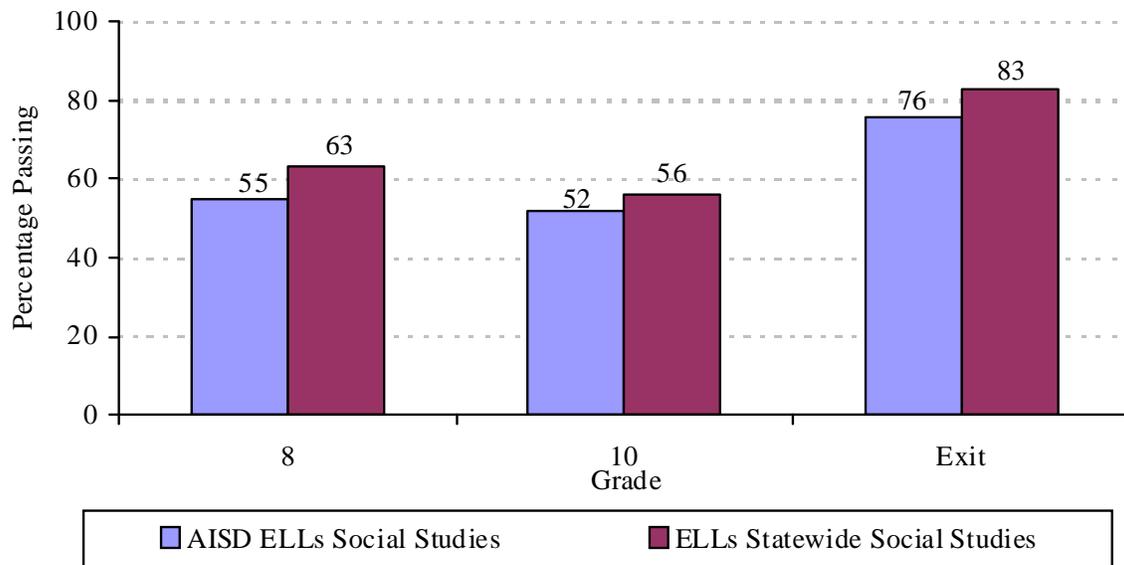
Source. AISD TAKS district files; TEA Statewide TAKS Summary Reports, May and July 2008

Figure 5. AISD ELL Students and ELL Students Statewide Passing English or Spanish TAKS Science by Grade Levels, 2007–2008



Source. AISD TAKS district files; TEA Statewide TAKS Summary Reports, May and July 2008

Figure 6. AISD ELL Students and ELL Students Statewide Passing English or Spanish TAKS Social Studies by Grade Levels, 2007–2008



Source. AISD TAKS district files; TEA Statewide TAKS Summary Reports, May and July 2008

The percentages of AISD ELL students who passed TAKS in all subject areas in school years 2006–2007 and 2007–2008 are presented in Tables 1 and 2. AISD ELLs showed gains from 2006–2007 to 2007–2008 in every subject at almost every grade level. The greatest percentage point gain in reading/ELA was at grade 8 (27 percentage points). The greatest gain in mathematics also was at grade 8 (38 percentage points).

The greatest gain in writing was at grade 4 (1 percentage point). The greatest gain in science was at grade 5 (13 percentage points). The greatest gain in social studies was at grades 8 and 10 (17 percentage points each). Only two losses were observed from 2006–2007 to 2007–2008: grade 4 in reading (1 percentage point), and grade 7 writing (1 percentage point).

Table 1. AISD ELL Students Passing English or Spanish TAKS Reading/ELA and Mathematics, 2006–2007 and 2007–2008

Grade	Reading/ELA percentages passing			Mathematics percentages passing		
	2007	2008	Difference	2007	2008	Difference
3	85	91	6	66	75	9
4	69	68	(1)	69	72	3
5	65	80	15	68	75	7
6	56	67	11	41	55	14
7	36	47	11	38	45	7
8	45	72	27	23	61	38
9	34	39	5	14	21	7
10	27	42	15	16	21	5
Exit	40	57	17	47	48	1

Source. AISD TAKS District Summary Reports, 2007, 2008

Note. Decreases are noted in parentheses.

Table 2. AISD ELL Students Passing English or Spanish TAKS Writing, Social Studies, and Science, 2006–2007 and 2007–2008

Grade	Writing percentages passing			Science percentages passing			Social studies percentages passing		
	2007	2008	Difference	2007	2008	Difference	2007	2008	Difference
4	86	87	1						
5				34	47	13			
7	59	58	(1)						
8				13	20	7	38	55	17
9									
10				7	16	9	35	52	17
Exit				38	44	6	66	76	10

Source. AISD TAKS district summary reports, 2007, 2008

Note. Some grade levels are not tested in certain subjects. Decreases are noted in parentheses.

TELPAS 2008 RESULTS

In order to meet federal testing requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), the Texas Education Agency (TEA) developed the TELPAS to assess Texas public school LEP students in grades kindergarten through 12. Annually, these students must be assessed in listening, speaking, reading, and writing until they become proficient in the English language. Students receive language proficiency ratings (i.e., beginning, intermediate, advanced, advanced high) for each test. In most of the 2008 results, AISD students at the early elementary grades (K, 1, and 2) had beginning or intermediate ratings, while most students at higher grade levels had advanced or advanced high ratings. See Table 3 for overall TELPAS composite ratings (i.e., an overall rating across the 4 tests).

The TELPAS reading results show that most students in grades K, 1, and 2 had a beginning (53.2%) or intermediate rating (22.6%), while most students in grades 3 through 12 had an advanced (26.8%) or advanced high (42.1%) rating. On TELPAS writing, most students in grades K, 1, and 2 had a beginning rating (61.4%), while most students in grades 3 through 12 had an intermediate (32.9%) or advanced (30.3%) rating. On TELPAS speaking, most students in grades K, 1, and 2 had a beginning (42.4%) or intermediate (30.1%) rating, while most students in grades 3 through 12 had an advanced (32.9%) or advanced high (29.6%) rating. On TELPAS listening, most students in grades K, 1, and 2 had a beginning (32.4%) or intermediate (32.3%) rating, while most students in grades 3 through 12 had an advanced (35.3%) or advanced high (37.2%) rating.

Table 3. AISD Students Achieving TELPAS 2008 Ratings, by Grade Level

Grade	TELPAS beginning %	TELPAS intermediate %	TELPAS advanced %	TELPAS advanced high %
Kindergarten	75.8	11.6	7.3	5.3
1	53.5	25.0	12.5	9.0
2	26.8	32.9	22.5	17.8
3	19.3	24.9	26.9	28.7
4	11.7	24.2	25.7	38.4
5	7.7	16.6	25.1	50.6
6	6.3	20.8	35.2	37.8
7	5.8	17.5	31.5	45.1
8	9.7	16.5	28.6	45.2
9	14.4	17.5	30.9	37.0
10	5.8	20.6	35.3	38.3
11	6.4	16.3	35.2	42.1
12	2.9	13.4	31.3	52.2

Source. AISD TELPAS 2008 records, as of September 15, 2008

Note. Highest percentages are highlighted in bold red font.

TITLE III, PART A

Annually, AISD reports information about the NCLB Title III, Part A grant to the TEA as part of the requirements for receiving such funds to support ELL students. The district compliance report includes a variety of information (e.g., the numbers of programs offered to ELL students; number of students initially tested for English language proficiency; teachers' language proficiency; number of teachers licensed or certified as BE/ESL who are working with ELL students; number of instructional and professional development activities funded by Title III, Part A; demographics of ELL students and immigrant students; and number of ELL students who have exited program service).

As of August 2008, AISD reported that 1,522 students were initially tested for LEP status during the 2007–2008 school year. During this same period, 24,562 ELL students and 3,594 immigrant students attended the school district. Of the total number of immigrant students, 3,501 (97.4%) were ELLs. Of all ELL students served during 2007–2008, 916 had been exited or transitioned from language instruction educational programs as of the end of the school year and were no longer classified as ELL.

The district offered the BE program at the elementary grades and the ESL program at secondary grades. The Title III, Part A grant provided supplemental support for staff salaries, family literacy activities, tutorials, instructional materials, parent outreach activities, staff training sessions and materials, and many other activities to

support ELLs and their teachers. Topics addressed in professional development activities funded by Title III, Part A funds included instructional strategies for ELL students, understanding and implementing assessments for ELL students, understanding and implementing ELL standards and academic content standards, subject matter knowledge for teachers, and aligning curriculum in language instruction educational programs to ELL standards. According to human resource records, 1,416 teachers with BE or ESL certification worked with ELL students. This group included teachers with language proficiency in Spanish, Vietnamese, Korean, or Mandarin. With the steady growth of ELL students as a proportion of all AISD students, the district projects that approximately 500 more BE/ESL certified teachers will be needed over the next five years.

SUMMARY

Both BE and ESL programs emphasize the mastery of English language skills, as well as the mastery of skills in mathematics, science, and social studies, as critical parts of the academic goals for all students to achieve in school. Through the years, an increasing number of ELL students have participated in the state's student assessment system because the state's rules guiding student exemptions have become more rigorous. NCLB requires ELL students to be one of the groups examined for Adequate Yearly Progress measures and has very specific requirements that pertain to ELL students who participate in programs funded by Title III, Part A. Academic performance standards for ELL students are the same as

those for all students. Although they are becoming academically proficient in English, ELL students must participate in the state's assessment program. Thus, in some situations, their academic performance can affect school and district accountability ratings. As the number of ELL students continues to increase in schools, their English language acquisition and general academic success in the state's assessment programs have become an important concern for all educators and administrators. In AISD, progress is being made with respect to the percentages of ELLs passing in all TAKS subject areas, but room for improvement remains.

RECOMMENDATIONS

A persistent achievement gap remains between AISD ELL students and ELL students statewide in certain TAKS subject areas, especially at the secondary grade level. Therefore, the following recommendations are offered to AISD decision makers.

- District and campus staff should provide more comprehensive academic support to AISD ELL students at middle and high schools where the percentages passing TAKS have been low.
- Given the 2008 TAKS results, the focus of supporting AISD ELL students at the secondary level should be in the subject areas of mathematics and science, followed by the other subject areas of reading, writing, and social studies.
- ELL students must have opportunities to participate in any

intervention program or service on campus that supports students who are struggling academically.

- The LPACs' role in monitoring the academic achievement of ELL students is important. Because of this role, LPAC members should recommend and ensure that appropriate academic interventions and support are provided to ELL students to enhance their progress toward English language acquisition and academic achievement in general.

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