

Students of International High School

Enrollment and Language Proficiency Over Time

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide a longitudinal analysis of enrollment patterns and development of English proficiency among International High School students. This report constitutes a special project requested by the Austin Independent School District's (AISD) Department of English Language Learners (ELLs).

What is International High School?

International High School (IHS), part of AISD, is a school for 14- to 16-year-old students who are new to the United States and who have limited English proficiency. The school, which shares a campus with Eastside Memorial High School, was established in 2003 to provide sheltered instruction to newcomers as they acclimate to the public school experience in America. Students at IHS work closely with staff to create individual academic plans that integrate language learning and cultural activities. At the end of their 10th-grade year, students participate in a bridging ceremony to celebrate their achievements at IHS and mark the transition to their new high schools across AISD.

Who are the students of IHS?

Students who attend IHS come to Austin from all over the world. Among the 314 students currently enrolled for the 2016–2017 school year, 17 countries and 14 languages are represented. Nearly 80% of currently enrolled students are Hispanic, arriving from Mexico, Cuba, and Central and South America. African countries of origin include Rwanda, Eritrea, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Students from the Middle East come to Austin from Syria, Iraq, and Iran, while students from Southeast Asia come from Vietnam, Thailand, Nepal, and Myanmar. Ninety-four percent of students at IHS are considered economically disadvantaged, as measured by their parents' self-reported income.

Where do students transfer after their time at IHS?

To assess the migration of IHS students to other high schools in the district, the freshman class of 2012–2013 was followed for 4 years, until their expected graduation in 2016. Table 1 lists the AISD high schools to which IHS students transferred each year, as well as the number of students who left the district. Among the 249 freshmen in 2012–2013, 85% of students who remained in the district in 2013–2014 attended IHS for a second year. After 2 years at IHS, 25% of the remaining students enrolled at Eastside Memorial High School (which houses IHS), while another 27% enrolled at



Lanier High School, and 16% enrolled at Travis High School. These three high schools continued to be the most often attended by former IHS students the following school year.

Table 1.

Eastside Memorial, Lanier, and Travis High Schools were common transfer schools for 2012–2013 IHS freshmen.

School	2012–2013	2013–2014	2014–2015	2015–2016
Akins HS		4	5	4
Alternative Learning Center		3	0	3
Crockett HS		2	4	2
Eastside Memorial HS		4	32	25
International HS	249	155	18	1
Lanier HS		15	34	20
Lanier Graduation Prep. Academy		2	3	0
L.B. Johnson HS		1	4	1
Reagan HS		3	10	10
Travis HS		9	20	14
Travis Graduation Prep. Academy		0	2	1
No longer in the District		65	122	171

Source. Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) 400 basic attendance data, as reported in PEIMS data submission 3

Note. These attendance data are reported each summer and include any students who attended AISD schools at any point during the school year. Totals for columns may differ due to some students attending more than one school in a school year.

Analysis of the migration patterns of the IHS freshman cohorts of 2013–2014 and 2014–2015 revealed similar patterns to those of the 2012–2013 cohort. Specifically, IHS remained the primary school of choice for students in their second year of high school, and Eastside Memorial, Lanier, and Travis remained common choices for students after their time at IHS. Reagan High School also enrolled a significant number of former IHS students from the two more recent cohorts.

One notable difference between the three cohorts of IHS freshmen is the total number of students enrolled. Table 2 highlights that each freshman cohort included more students than did the previous freshman cohort, suggesting increased awareness of the opportunities provided at IHS for immigrants and refugees. However, the percentage of IHS students who remained in the district decreased each year.

Table 2.

Enrollment at IHS increased each year; however, the percentage of students who remained in the district decreased.

Freshman cohort at IHS	Initial number of students	Percentage remaining in district after 1 year	Percentage remaining in district after 2 years	Percentage remaining in district after 3 years
2012–2013	249	74%	51%	31%
2013–2014	344	72%	46%	TBD
2014–2015	396	68%	TBD	TBD

Source. PEIMS 400 basic attendance data, as reported in PEIMS data submission 3

Note. TBD indicates to be determined.

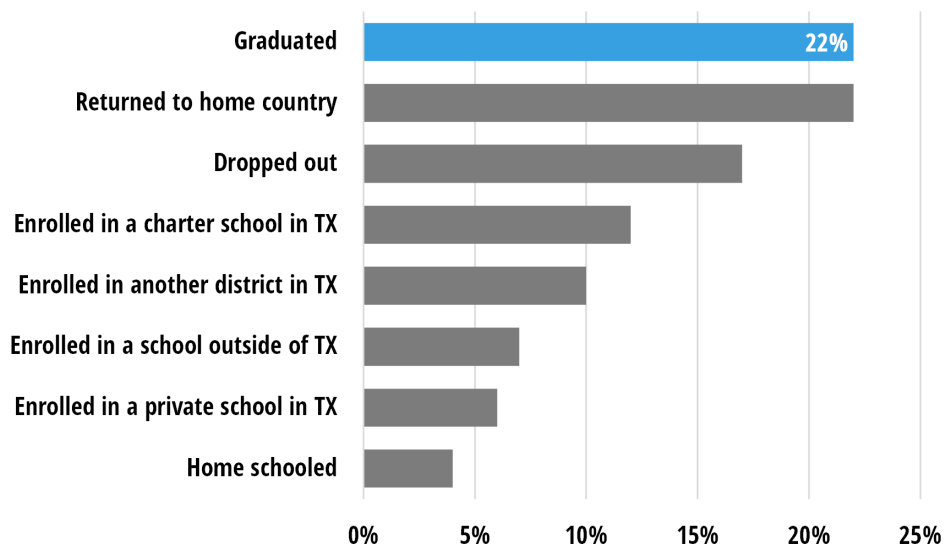


Another difference between the three cohorts is the variety and number of high schools that former IHS freshmen attended. Specifically, students from the 2013–2014 and 2014–2015 cohorts transferred to a greater number of AISD high schools after attending IHS than did students from the 2012–2013 cohort. Moreover, the number of students who attended more than one high school in a given school year increased with each cohort. For example, 10% of students in the 2014–2015 cohort attended more than one school in their second year of high school, compared with 8% of students from the 2012–2013 cohort. These trends demonstrate the mobility that is common among AISD students.

What happens to former IHS students after they leave the district?

Attrition among IHS students is high, with nearly a quarter of students leaving the district after just one year of high school. To further investigate this phenomenon, state and local leaver reason codes were examined for all students in the 2012–2013 cohort of IHS freshmen. Among the 249 students in the cohort, 22% graduated from AISD by the end of the 2015–2016 school year (Figure 1). The same percentage (22%) returned to their home country during that time frame, and 17% of the students dropped out before their target graduation year. Other leaver reasons included enrolling in a charter school (12%), enrolling in another district in Texas (10%), and enrolling in a school outside Texas (7%).

Figure 1.
Fewer than a quarter of the 2012–2013 IHS freshmen graduated from the district.



Source. PEIMS 203 records and local student demographic records from 2012 to 2017

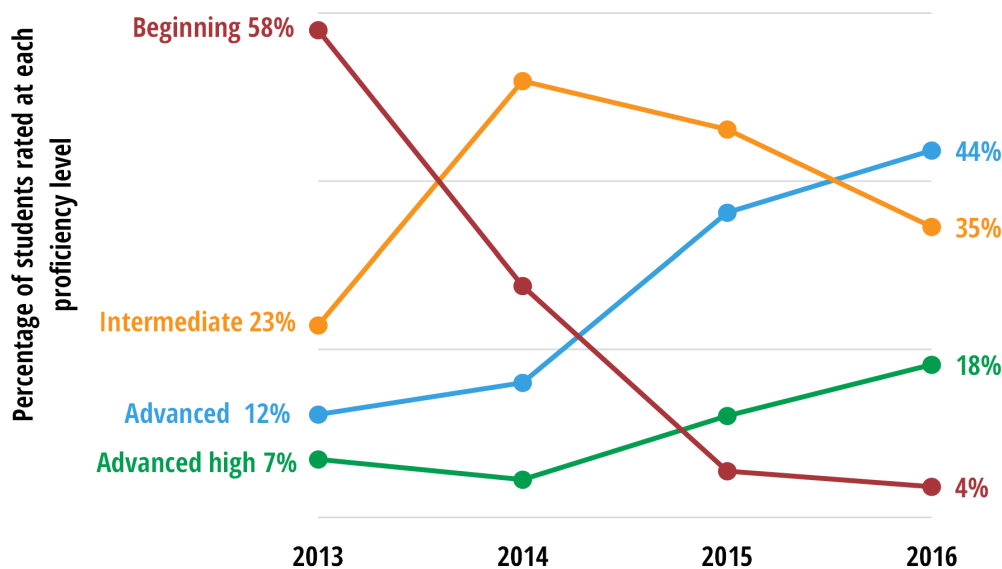
How does IHS students' English proficiency change over time?

One of the eligibility requirements for enrollment at IHS is limited English proficiency. To assess development of academic English, all ELLs are rated each spring using the Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System, or TELPAS (see side bar for

more information on TELPAS).

Figure 2 shows that the majority of 2012–2013 IHS freshmen were rated at the beginning level of English proficiency in their first school year, which is the lowest level on TELPAS. In their second school year, the percentage of students rated at the beginning level decreased, and the majority of students were rated at the intermediate level. In their third school year, the percentage of students rated at the advanced and advanced high levels increased, and few students were still rated at the beginning level. By the time students were in their fourth year of high school, the majority were rated at the advanced level of English proficiency.

Figure 2.
English language proficiency improved over time for 2013–2013 IHS freshmen.



Source. AISD TELPAS records

Note. Percentages were calculated using the total number of students from the cohort who received a composite rating in a given year.

Longitudinal analysis of TELPAS ratings for the IHS freshman cohorts of 2013–2014 and 2014–2015 revealed similar patterns to those of the 2012–2013 cohort. Specifically, the percentage of students rated at the beginning level decreased over time, while percentages of students rated at the intermediate, advanced, and advanced high levels increased over time. Table 3 shows that the percentage of students in a cohort who were rated at the beginning level in their freshman year increased with each subsequent cohort. This indicates that among each incoming cohort of IHS freshmen, more students entered with very limited English skills. However, the percentages of students rated at the various proficiency levels in the second year of school were comparable across the three cohorts, suggesting similar trajectories for developing English proficiency.

What is the TELPAS?

The Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS) is a federally required assessment designed by the Texas Education Agency to measure the annual progress of ELLs. The assessment includes four language domains: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. For each domain, a student's proficiency level is rated as beginning, intermediate, advanced, or advanced high. Teachers who are TELPAS calibrated and trained each year holistically rate students in the domains of writing, listening, and speaking, while the reading domain is assessed online for students in grades 2 through 12. After a student's proficiency is rated for all four language domains, a composite score is calculated by weighting the domains. In 2014, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) revised the weights that are assigned to each of the four language domains when calculating composite scores. Before 2014, the reading domain constituted 75% of the composite score; it now constitutes 50% of the composite score. The weights for the other language domains are as follows: 30% for writing, 10% for listening, 10% for speaking. After a composite score has been calculated using these weights, an overall proficiency level is assigned to the student.

For more information about TELPAS, visit <http://tea.texas.gov/student.assessment/ell/telpas/>

For a closer look at how AISD ELLs performed on TELPAS in 2015–2016, visit https://www.austinisd.org/sites/default/files/dre-surveys/rb/15.59_RB_TELPAS_2016.pdf

Table 3.

Although recent cohorts had more students rated at the beginning level of English proficiency in their freshman year than did prior cohorts, the progression to higher levels in the second year was similar across cohorts.

Freshman cohort at IHS	Rated beginning in freshman year	Rated beginning in 2 nd year	Rated intermediate in 2 nd year	Rated advanced in 2 nd year	Rated advanced high in 2 nd year
2012–2013	58%	28%	52%	16%	4%
2013–2014	66%	34%	40%	21%	5%
2014–2015	75%	30%	44%	23%	4%

Source. AISD TELPAS records

Note. Percentages were calculated using the total number of students from a cohort who received a composite rating in a given year.

Conclusion

This report provided a longitudinal analysis of the enrollment patterns and development of English proficiency among students at IHS. Each year since 2012–2013, IHS has enrolled more freshmen than it enrolled the previous school year. However, the percentage of students in a given cohort who remained in AISD decreased over time. Among the 2012–2013 cohort, more than 50% of students either returned to their home country or enrolled in a school outside the district before their target graduation date. This decline in retention was not unique to IHS students; enrollment has decreased district wide every year since 2012–2013 (Looby, Lyons, & Williams, 2016). Follow-up analyses with the current cohort of IHS freshmen will reveal whether the trends of increased enrollment at IHS and decreased retention in the district persist.

A 4-year analysis of the 2012–2013 IHS freshmen’s TELPAS data indicated improved English proficiency over time, as most students in the cohort were rated at the beginning level of proficiency in their first year and progressed to the advanced level by their fourth year. A comparison of the 2012–2013 cohort with the 2013–2014 and 2014–2015 cohorts revealed that the proportion of students who entered high school with limited English proficiency increased over time. Nonetheless, students in the more recent cohorts successfully progressed to higher levels of English proficiency in their second year of high school. The district will continue to use TELPAS data to inform instructional planning and programmatic decisions for IHS students and all of AISD’s English language learners.

References

Looby, K., Lyons, A., & Williams, H. (2016). *Enrollment from Fall 2015 to Fall 2016* (DRE publication No. 16.07 RB). Austin, TX: Austin Independent School District.

AUSTIN INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Chelsea Cornelius, Ph.D.

Department of Research and Evaluation



1111 West 6th Street, Suite D-350 | Austin, TX 78703-5338
512.414.1724 | fax: 512.414.1707
www.austinisd.org/dre | Twitter: @AISD_DRE

February 2017

Publication 16.14