

MEMORANDUM

July 16, 2020

TO: Board Members

FROM: Grenita Lathan, Ph.D.
Interim Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: **HISD TEACHERS OF ENGLISH LEARNER STUDENTS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SURVEY SPRING 2020**

CONTACT: Allison Matney, 713-556-6700

In November of 2019, a report by the Legislative Budget Board recommended that the district survey teachers of English Learner (EL) students in order to assess their views on professional development opportunities in HISD related to teaching ELs. The attached report summarizes the findings from that survey, which was administered to core content-area teachers between February 24th and March 11, 2020.

Key findings include:

- While most teachers reported that they had previously attended EL-related PD in the district (87 percent), only a slight majority (55 percent) felt that the training had been either “fairly” or “very good” (as opposed to “somewhat effective” or “poor”).
- A majority of teachers surveyed expressed at least a moderate degree of knowledge about ten key EL-related topics, and teachers also were interested in learning more about these topics.
- Teachers had definite preferences concerning the format of any PD sessions they would consider attending. Teachers preferred face-to-face meetings, conferences, or a series of sessions throughout the year, as opposed to using videos, online courses, or webinars.
- Teachers also showed preferences regarding to the scheduling of PD sessions. Specifically, they did not appear interested in giving up their free time to attend PD (after school, weekends, summer).
- Only about two-thirds of teachers surveyed reported access to SMART Boards for use in teaching their students, with lower numbers reporting availability of iPads or Chromebooks.
- Differences between school levels were observed, with elementary teachers being more positive about the quality of the PD training they had received, believing it had had more of an impact on them and their students, and reporting higher levels of knowledge of key EL-related topics, than teachers at the secondary level.
- School office differences were also seen. Teachers in the North area tended to have somewhat higher ratings of the PD sessions in general, felt that it had more of an impact on them or their students, and indicated higher levels of knowledge of various PD topics than those from other area offices. Teachers from the Northwest area tended to have the lowest ratings on these measures.
- Teachers who had positive overall ratings of the PD they had received felt that it had a positive impact on both their job performance and student outcomes. Teachers who were less positive about their PD experiences did not feel that the training helped them or their students. Interestingly, when asked whether they were interested in learning more about those same topics, the two groups of teachers were essentially the same.

- Responses to open-ended questions indicated a number of areas of concern, including the following: a lack of PD focused on specific content areas, scheduling issues, a lack of model teachers who could demonstrate proper implementation or use of strategies reviewed during PD training, lack of specific resources or strategies that could be readily implemented in the classroom, lack of PD options, too much of a focus on introductory level PD and not enough for teachers with more experience, and a lack of ongoing training and support at the campus level.

Should you have any further questions, please contact Allison Matney in Research and Accountability at 713-556-6700.



GL

Attachment

cc: Superintendent's Direct Reports
Area Superintendents
School Support Officers
Anna White



RESEARCH

Educational Program Report

**HISD TEACHERS OF ENGLISH LEARNER STUDENTS
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SURVEY
SPRING 2020**



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HISD TEACHERS OF ENGLISH LEARNER STUDENTS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SURVEY SPRING 2020

Executive Summary

Program Description

In November 2019, the Legislative Budget Board published a management and performance review of the Houston Independent School District. Among its recommendations was one that concerned professional development for teachers of English learners (ELs). Specifically, the report recommended:

“[S]urveying teachers of ELs to determine where they perceive their own instructional challenges to better tailor professional development focused on instruction for ELs.”

In accordance with this recommendation, the district administered an online survey to all content teachers in the district, specifically targeting those who worked with ELs in the following core areas: reading, language arts, English language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, and career & technical education. The survey was designed to collect data on teachers’ opinions concerning the effectiveness of PD opportunities they may have had, their knowledge and interest in various topics related to teaching of ELs, and what they believe would be useful to offer in the future. The present report represents a summary of the findings from this survey.

Highlights

- Most teachers of ELs had attended at least some PD training related to teaching EL students (87%), but only two-thirds of them indicated that the training had targeted their content area.
- Only about two-thirds of teachers (65%) thought that the PD they had received for ELs had a positive impact on their job performance, with roughly the same proportion (63%) believing it had impacted student outcomes.
- A slight majority (55%) of teachers felt that the PD available was “fairly” or “very good”, while 44% thought it was “somewhat effective” or “poor”.
- When queried on their level of knowledge on ten key EL-related topics, a majority of teachers expressed at least a moderate level of knowledge on all topics. When asked whether they had interest in learning more about those same topics, teachers were more positive and expressed interest in all ten topics.
- Teachers preferred face-to-face meetings, a series of sessions throughout the year, and conferences for their PD sessions, and showed less interest in using videos, online courses, or webinars.
- The most commonly stated reasons for attending district PD sessions were learning new ideas, help to improve their teaching, and helps their students.
- Teachers had definite preferences as to when they would like to attend PD sessions. Specifically, they did not appear interested in giving up their free time to attend PD.
- Only about two-thirds of teachers surveyed reported access to SMART Boards for use in teaching their students (n = 407), with lower numbers reporting availability of iPads or Chromebooks.

- Differences between school levels were observed. Specifically, elementary teachers were more likely to say that their PD training had targeted their content area, and were more positive about PD in terms of their overall rating of the training, and whether it had impacted either them or their students.
- Elementary teachers reported higher levels of knowledge about EL-related PD topics than did secondary teachers. Teachers at all levels expressed interest in learning about these topics, however.
- In terms of differences between school offices, teachers in the North area tended to have somewhat higher ratings of the PD sessions in general, felt that it had more of an impact on them or their students, and indicated higher levels of knowledge of various PD topics than those from other area offices. Teachers from the Northwest area tended to have the lowest ratings on these measures.
- Teachers from all areas expressed interest in learning more about the various PD topics, with those from the West area being slightly less positive.
- Teachers who had positive overall ratings of the PD they had received felt that it had a positive impact on both their job performance and student outcomes. Teachers who were less positive about their PD experiences did not feel that the training helped them or their students.
- Teachers who rated their PD experience as “poor” or only “somewhat effective” indicated that they had lower levels of knowledge of various PD topics than did teachers who liked the training they had received. Interestingly, when asked whether they were interested in learning more about those same topics, the two groups of teachers were essentially the same.
- Responses to open-ended questions suggest that teachers had concerns about the following: more PD focused on specific content areas, PD focused on needs of newcomers, the need for examples of model classes or teachers where they could see how various strategies were implemented, lack of specific resources or strategies that could be readily implemented in the classroom, issues with scheduling of PD, lack of PD options, too much of a focus on introductory level PD and not enough for teachers with more experience, and a lack of ongoing training and support at the campus level.

Introduction

In November 2019, the Legislative Budget Board published a management and performance review of the Houston Independent School District. Among its recommendations was one that concerned professional development for teachers of English learners (ELs). Specifically, the report recommended:

“[S]urveying teachers of ELs to determine where they perceive their own instructional challenges to better tailor professional development focused on instruction for ELs.”

In accordance with this recommendation, the district administered an online survey to all content teachers in the district, specifically targeting those who worked with ELs. The survey was designed to collect data on teachers' opinions concerning the effectiveness of PD opportunities they may have had, their knowledge and interest in various topics related to teaching of ELs, and what they believe would be useful to offer in the future. The present report represents a summary of the findings from this survey.

Methods

Data Collection & Analysis

The survey items were developed using input from stakeholders in the Multilingual Programs department and consisted of nineteen items. The question format included multiple choice, multiple response, and two open-ended questions. Respondents were asked to provide some basic background information (campus taught at, grade levels taught, years of experience), and were queried on their experiences with EL-related PD in the district. This consisted of questions concerning ten specific topics in this area including their levels of knowledge and interest in further PD opportunities. There were also questions related to their preferences concerning PD format and scheduling, and reasons why they had or would participate in EL-related PD. Finally, they were asked what types of interactive tools they typically used in the classroom, and two open-ended questions provided the opportunity to say what new PD offerings they would like to see and their thoughts on how the district's PD for EL teachers could be improved. A copy of the survey items is provided in **Appendix A** (see pp. 18-20).

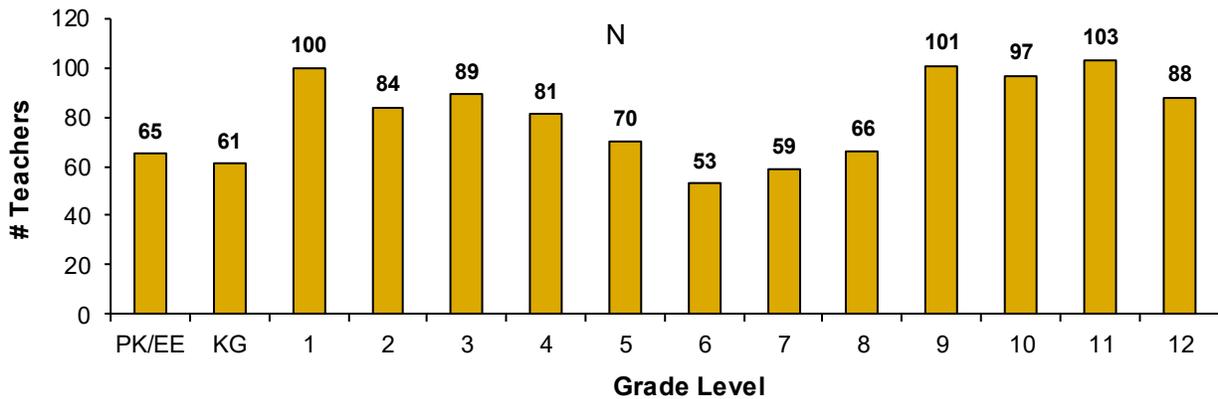
The survey was made available through Google forms. Content area teachers were identified via a Cognos report which identified teachers in the core areas of reading, language arts, English language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, and career & technical education. This included teachers at all grade levels. Working with the General Manager of Communications, an email including a link to the survey was sent to over 10,000 teachers, and the survey was open for data collection from February 24th through March 11th, 2020.

Results

Participation & Demographics

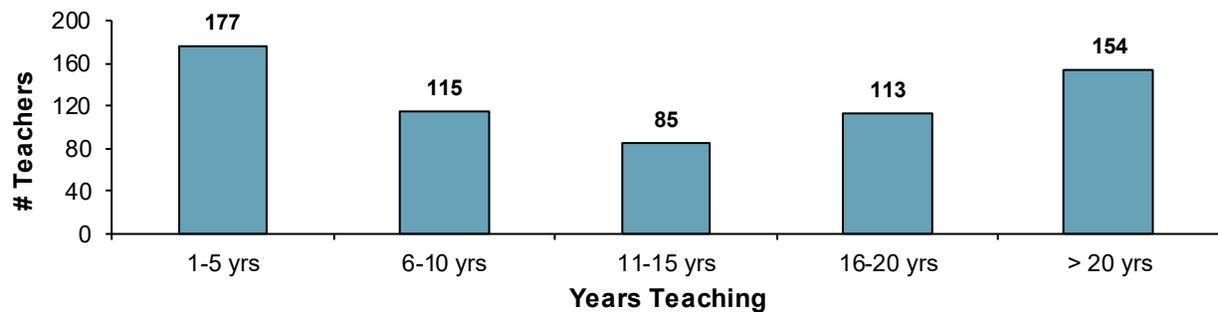
- Six hundred eighty-two teachers responded to the survey (response rate of 6.8%), of whom 644 indicated that they did teach EL students. Responses from teachers who did not teach any ELs (n = 38) were not included in any analyses.
- Approximately two-thirds (66%) of respondents also indicated that they had 1st-year immigrant students in their classes.

Figure 1. Number of Teacher Responses by Grade Level Taught (Note: Some Teachers Taught Multiple Grade Levels)



- Teachers who responded were evenly distributed across grade levels, with responses from teachers of PK/Early Childhood through high school (see **Figure 1**).
- In terms of teaching experience, the largest groups in the sample were teachers with 1-5 years of experience, or more than 20 years experience (see **Figure 2**).

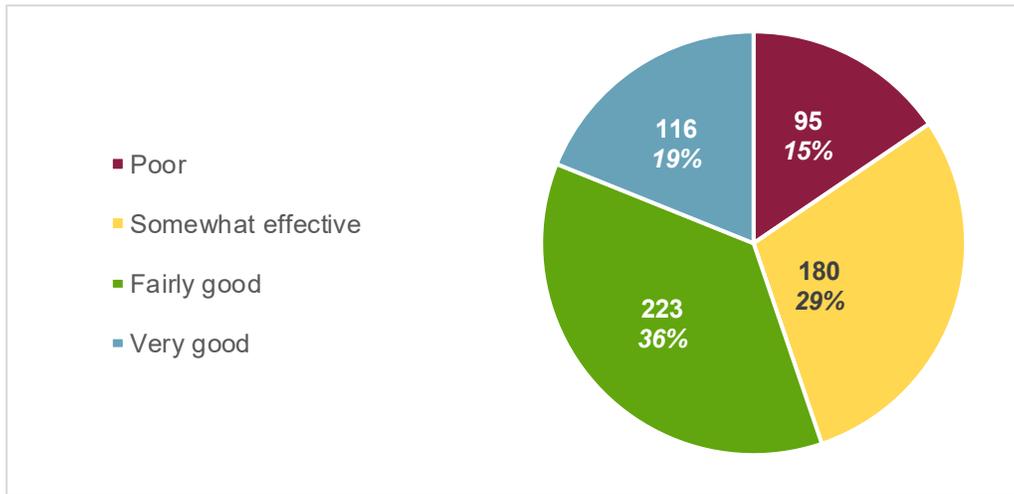
Figure 2. Number of Teacher Responses by Years of Teaching Experience



Overall Opinions Regarding PD Offered By The District

- Have you attended PD offered by HISD on how to support English learners in your classroom? In response to this question, 87% of teachers indicated “yes”, while 13% said “no”.
- Was the HISD training targeted to support your specific content area? Only 66% of teachers responded “yes”, with one-third (34%) saying that the PD they had received for EL students did not target their specific content area.
- Do you think that PD offered by HISD in this area had an impact on your job performance/student outcomes? Only about two-thirds of teachers (65%) thought that the PD they had received for ELs had a positive impact on their job performance, with roughly the same proportion (63%) believing it had impacted student outcomes.
- What is your overall rating of PD offered by HISD to support English learners? Overall ratings by teachers of PD the district offered for support of ELs are summarized in **Figure 3** (see p. 5). Around 55% of teachers felt that the PD available was “fairly” or “very good”, while 44% thought it was “somewhat effective” or “poor”.

Figure 3. Number and Percent of Teachers Who Rated The District's PD for Supporting ELs as Poor to Very Good



Teacher Level of Knowledge of PD Topics

- Teachers were queried about their knowledge level on ten topics related to teaching of ELs. Summary data are shown in **Table 1**. These are percentages (the total number of responses for each item was 644).
- On all topics, a majority of teachers indicated at least a moderate level of knowledge, with a median response value of 77% “moderate”/“high” knowledge of the topic indicated.
- The highest values recorded were for Language Proficiency (80% Moderate level of knowledge or better) and Language Objectives (79% Moderate or better).
- The lowest values recorded were for Biliteracy Development (57% Moderate or better) and Second language acquisition (69% Moderate or better).

Table 1. Teacher Responses Concerning Their Level of Knowledge of Ten Critical Topics Related to Teaching of ELs

PD Topic	Degree of Knowledge			
	None	Low	Moderate	High
* ELPS Integration	5%	19%	51%	25%
Texas ELPS	5%	19%	51%	26%
Proficiency level descriptors	4%	19%	45%	32%
Linguistic accommodations	3%	20%	44%	33%
Sheltered instruction	5%	18%	43%	35%
Language objectives	4%	16%	43%	36%
Language proficiency	3%	17%	44%	36%
Biliteracy development	13%	31%	37%	20%
Second language acquisition methods	8%	23%	40%	29%
Linguistically/culturally responsive teaching	6%	19%	43%	35%

* ELPS = English Language Proficiency Standards

Table 2. Teacher Responses Concerning Their Level of Interest in Learning More About Topics Related to Teaching of ELs

PD Topic	Interest in Learning More			
	No Interest	Little Interest	Moderate Interest	Very Interested
* ELPS Integration	8%	13%	43%	37%
Texas ELPS	8%	14%	43%	34%
Proficiency level descriptors	8%	16%	42%	34%
Linguistic accommodations	5%	8%	40%	47%
Sheltered instruction	7%	11%	38%	44%
Language objectives	8%	11%	42%	39%
Language proficiency	6%	10%	41%	44%
Biliteracy development	7%	12%	33%	49%
Second language acquisition methods	5%	8%	34%	54%
Linguistically/culturally responsive teaching	5%	8%	35%	52%

* ELPS = English Language Proficiency Standards

Teacher Interest in Learning More About PD Topics

- Teachers were also queried about how interested they were in learning more about these same ten topics. Summary data are shown in **Table 2**. Again, these are percentages, with the total number of responses for each item equal to 644.
- On all topics listed, a large majority of teachers expressed at least a moderate degree of interest in learning more about the subject. The percentages of teachers who responded with either “moderate interest” or “very interested” ranged from 76% (for PLDs) to a high of 88% (second language acquisition).

PD for EL Teachers: Miscellaneous Questions

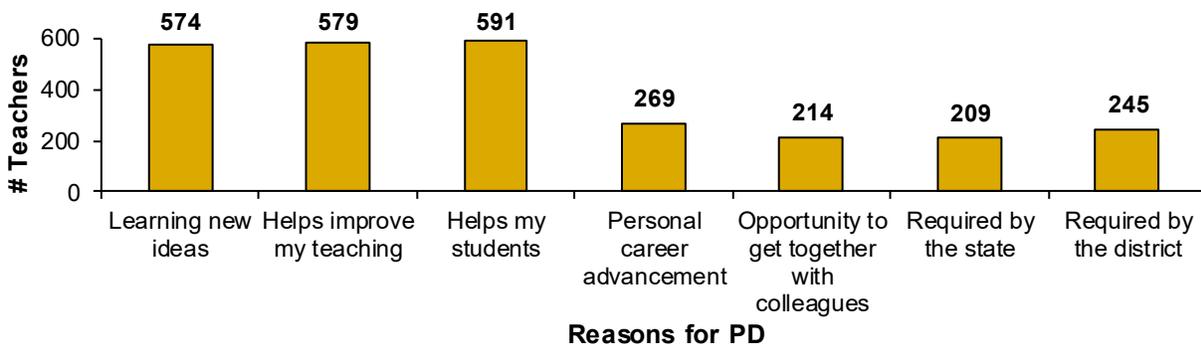
- Preferred PD format:** Data were collected concerning teacher opinions on their preferred ways to have PD made available. Summary data are shown in **Table 3** (total responses for each item equals 644)
- Face-to-face presentations were the most popular format, with 91% of teachers indicating that these were at least moderately helpful. Webinars were the least popular format, with most teachers (57%) saying they were only slightly helpful or not helpful at all.

Table 3. Teacher Preferred PD Formats

PD Format	How Helpful is Each PD Format			
	Helpful	Slightly Helpful	Moderately Helpful	Very Helpful
Face-to-face	3%	7%	23%	68%
Online courses	17%	24%	32%	27%
Webinars	25%	32%	26%	17%
Videos	16%	21%	35%	28%
Series throughout the year	9%	15%	37%	39%
Conferences	9%	14%	34%	43%

- In terms of popularity, from most to least preferred, the ranking was: face-to-face (91% moderately or very helpful), conferences (77%), a series throughout the year (76%), videos (63%), online courses (59%), and webinars (43%; see Table 3, p. 6).
- Reasons for participating in PD for English learners: Responses were collected from teachers concerning their reasons for participating in PD for English learners, and the results are summarized in **Figure 4**. The most commonly stated reasons were (in decreasing frequency) “helps my students” (n = 591), “helps improve my teaching” (n = 579), and “learning new ideas” (n = 574).
- The least frequently stated reasons were “required by the state” (n = 209) and “opportunity to get together with colleagues” (n = 214).

Figure 4. Number of Teacher and Reasons for Attending District PD Sessions



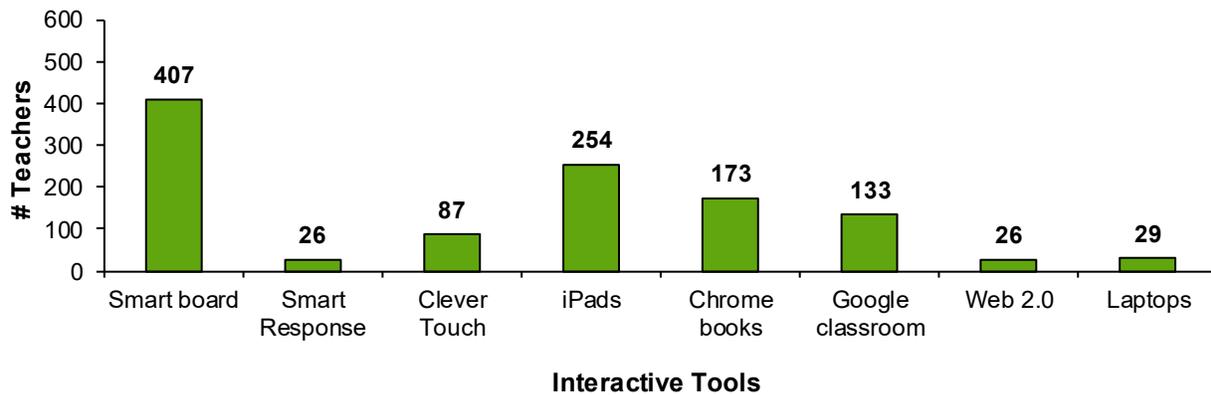
- What time periods would you be more likely to attend PD? Teachers were also asked when they would be more likely to attend PD, and results are summarized in **Table 4**.
- The fall and spring semesters, as well as during the school day, were the most popular times suggested by teachers. They had little interest in attending PD during the summer, after school, or on Saturdays.

Table 4. Teacher Preferred PD Time Periods

PD Time Period	Interest in Attending PD			
	Not at All	Possibly	Probably	Definitely
Summer	27%	29%	21%	23%
Fall Semester	9%	19%	32%	40%
Spring Semester	11%	22%	32%	35%
After School	56%	23%	14%	7%
School Day	11%	17%	28%	45%
Saturday	46%	25%	17%	12%

- What interactive tools do you have available or use in your classroom? Finally, teachers were asked to indicate what interactive tools they had available to use in the classroom., and summary data are shown in **Figure 5** (see p.8).
- Smart boards (n = 394) and iPads (253) were the most frequently cited tools available, followed by Chromebooks (173), and Google classroom (133).

Figure 5. Availability and Use of Interactive Tools in the Classroom



- The least frequently mentioned items were Clever touch (87), laptops (28), Smart response (26), and Web 2.0 (26).

Differences Between School Levels

This section of the report reiterates the major analyses previously summarized, but focuses on differences based on school level. Campuses were divided into five groups; PreK/early childhood education, elementary, middle, and high schools, and finally K-8 or cross-level campuses.

School Level Differences: Overall Opinions on PD

- Have you attended PD offered by HISD on how to support English learners in your classroom? In response to this question, 87% of teachers indicated “yes”, while 13% said “no”.
- **Figure 6** summarizes results concerning teachers’ overall opinions on PD training for ELs. As seen in **Figure 6a**, more than 80% of teachers reported attending some type of PD training related to ELs, and this was true at all school levels. In **Figure 6b**, teachers in elementary and K-8 had the highest percentage of responses indicating that the PD training was targeted to their specific content area. Teachers at the secondary level reported fewer positive responses (note: there were only 8 PK/EE teachers who responded).

Figure 6. Percentage of Teachers Who Said They Had Attended PD for ELs (6a), and Percentage Who Said That PD Training Targeted Their Content Area (6b): School Level Differences

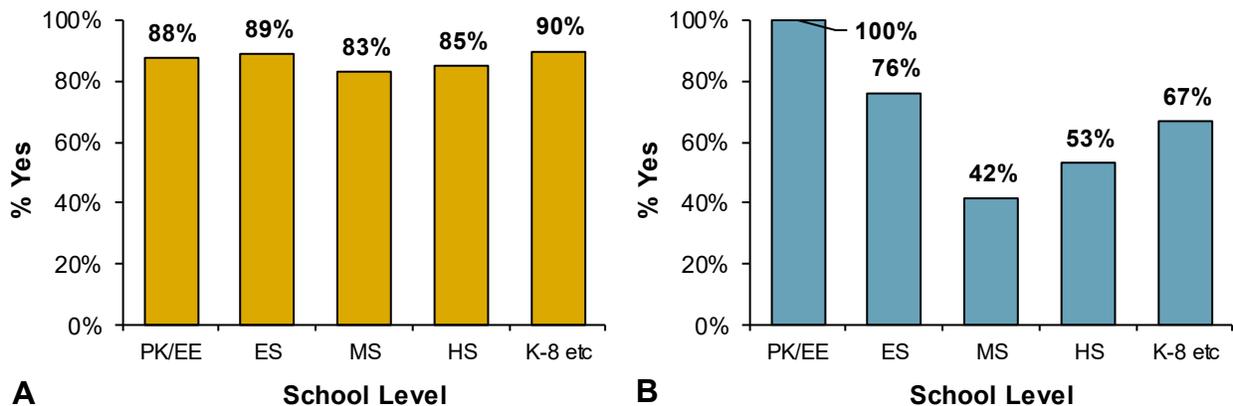
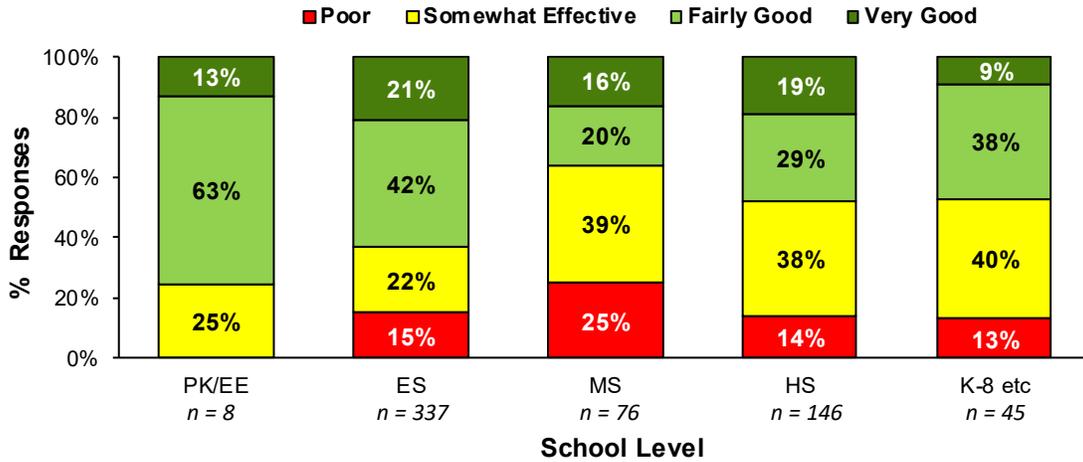
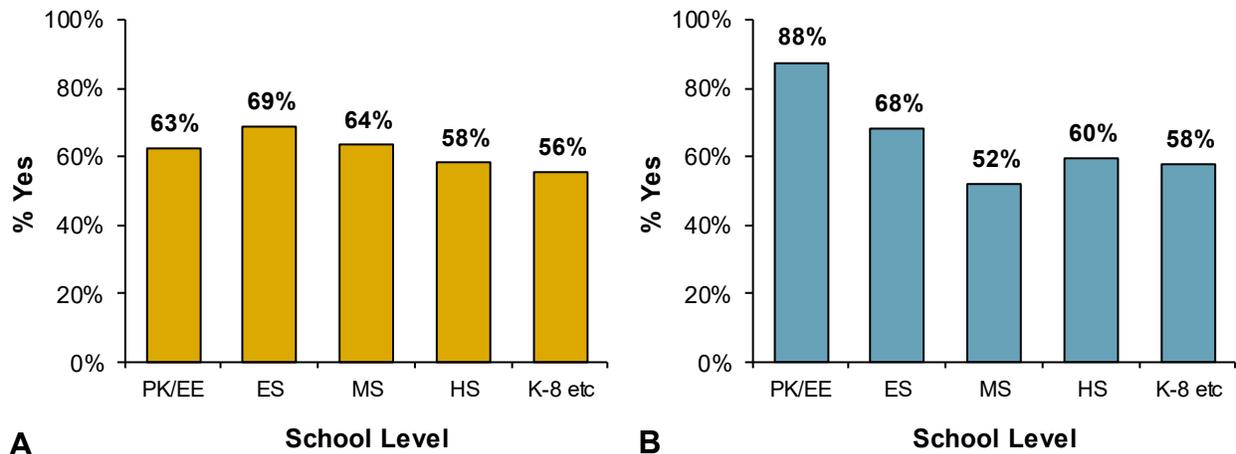


Figure 7. Teacher Overall Ratings of EL-Related PD Offered by the District: School Level Differences



- **Figure 7** summarizes teachers' overall ratings of EL-related PD training offered by the district. It can be seen that teachers in PK/EE and elementary had more positive views of the PD training than did teachers at the secondary level.
- Finally, **Figure 8** shows data concerning teacher opinions relating to whether the PD training they received had an impact either on their job performance (**Figure 8a**) or on student outcomes (**Figure 8b**).
- Elementary school teachers had the most positive responses, with secondary-level teachers being less positive (again, there were only 8 responses from PK/EE teachers).

Figure 8. Percentage of Teachers Who Said That Their PD Training Had a Positive Impact on Their Job Performance (8a) or on Student Outcomes (8b): School Level Differences



School Level Differences: Teacher Knowledge About PD Topics

- Data were previously summarized on the level of knowledge teachers had on ten topics related to teaching EL students (see Table 1). In this section, the same analysis is presented but with a breakdown based on school level.

Table 5. Teacher Level of Knowledge of PD Topics by School Level: Percentage of Teachers Indicating Either Moderate or High Levels of Knowledge of Specific Topics

PD Topic	School Level					80+	70-79	61-69	51-59	< 51
	PK/EE	ES	MS	HS	K-8 etc.					
ELPS Integration	75	81	65	69	77					
Texas ELPS	63	81	72	68	79					
Proficiency level descriptors	100	83	66	68	84					
Linguistic accommodations	88	82	65	67	84					
Sheltered instruction	75	85	63	66	84					
Language objectives	100	86	67	69	88					
Language proficiency	88	87	66	68	84					
Biliteracy development	74	65	44	42	64					
Second language acquisition methods	75	79	49	55	78					
Linguistically/culturally responsive teaching	76	78	58	72	82					

- The results of these analyses are summarized in **Table 5**. This table shows, for each combination of school level and PD topic, the percentage of teachers who rated their knowledge level as either “moderate” or “high”. Color coding is used to indicate the relative level of knowledge (see key to right of table).
- Cells shaded green indicate higher levels of knowledge, while those highlighted in red indicate lower levels of knowledge. Yellow indicates an intermediate levels of knowledge about a particular topic.
- The main finding from this analysis is that teachers in elementary, PK/EE, and K-8 campuses expressed higher levels of knowledge about EL-related PD topics than did teachers at the secondary level. Across all ten topics listed, middle and high school teachers indicated lower levels of knowledge than their peers at other campus levels (with the sole exception of PK/EE teachers and Texas ELPS).

School Level Differences: Teacher Interest in Learning More About PD Topics

- School level differences were also analyzed regarding the level of teacher interest in learning more about these ten PD topics. Results of these analyses are summarized in **Table 6** (see p. 11). This table shows, for each combination of school level and PD topic, the percentage of teachers who were either “moderately” or “very Interested” in learning about a specific PD topic. Color coding is used to indicate the relative level of knowledge (see key to right of table).
- Cells shaded green indicate higher levels of interest, while those highlighted in red indicate lower levels of interest. Yellow indicates an intermediate levels of interest in a particular topic.
- Teachers at all school levels showed at least moderate levels of interest in every topic. Elementary teachers showed the most interest overall, with secondary level teachers showing relatively less interest in certain topics (ELPS, proficiency level descriptors, and language objectives). However, across all school levels the interest levels were positive.
- The one exception to this pattern was for teachers at K-8/multi-level campuses. They expressed lower levels of interest, which may indicate that these topics were not as relevant for teachers who need to teach ELs in contexts where the typical program guidelines aren’t as easily applied.

Table 6. Teacher Level of Interest in PD Topics by School Level: Percentage of Teachers Who Were Either Moderately or Very Interested in Specific Topics

PD Topic	School Level					80+	70-79	61-69	51-59	< 51
	PK/EE	ES	MS	HS	K-8 etc.					
ELPS Integration	75	84	79	78	61					
Texas ELPS	76	82	76	74	63					
Proficiency level descriptors	76	78	77	74	67					
Linguistic accommodations	88	87	86	93	74					
Sheltered instruction	88	84	77	85	72					
Language objectives	76	86	73	77	72					
Language proficiency	88	88	80	83	70					
Biliteracy development	75	83	82	83	66					
Second language acquisition methods	88	90	87	89	67					
Linguistically/culturally responsive teaching	88	88	83	90	74					

School Level Differences: Usefulness of Various PD Activities

- **Table 7** summarizes data concerning school level differences in teacher opinions concerning how useful different PD formats or activities would be. The data in the table show, for each combination of type of activity and school level, the percentage of teachers who were thought the activity would be either Moderately or Very Helpful. Color coding is used to indicate the relative level of perceived helpfulness (see key to right of table).
- There was a rough consensus across elementary, middle, and high school teachers as to which activities they would find useful or not useful. Only K-8 campuses stood out, as they had relatively lower opinions than other school levels on every PD format.

Table 7. Teacher Preferred PD Formats: School Level Effects

PD Topic	School Level					80+	70-79	61-69	51-59	< 51
	PK/EE	ES	MS	HS	K-8 etc.					
Face-to-Face	88	91	92	92	86					
Online Courses	63	62	53	54	67					
Webinars	63	46	35	41	38					
Videos	75	68	57	58	51					
Series Throughout the Year	88	78	75	77	66					
Conferences	88	78	81	80	64					

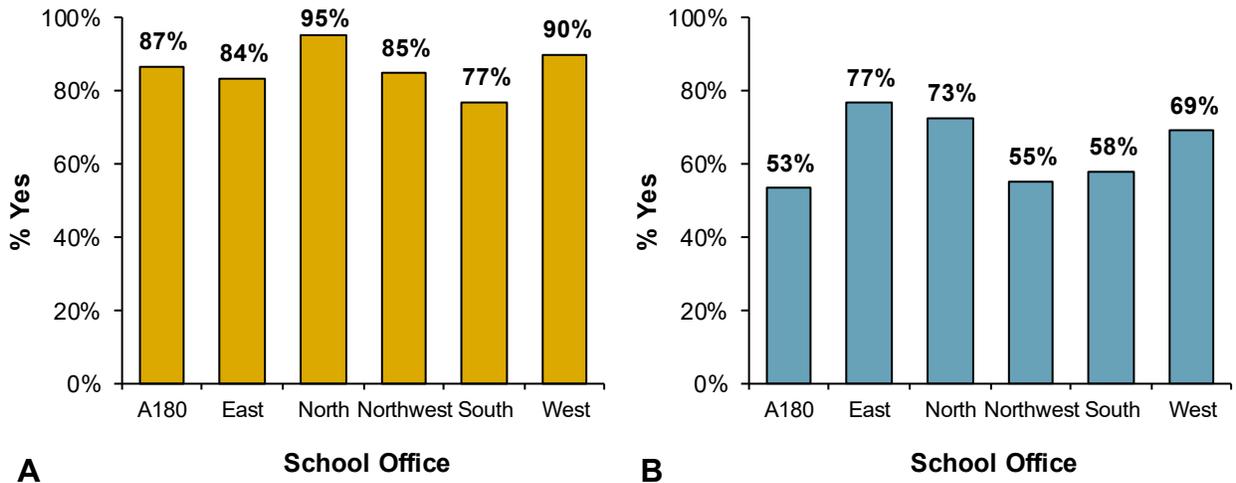
Differences Between School Offices

This section of the report reiterates the major analyses already summarized, but focuses on differences based on school office.

School Office Differences: Overall Opinions on PD

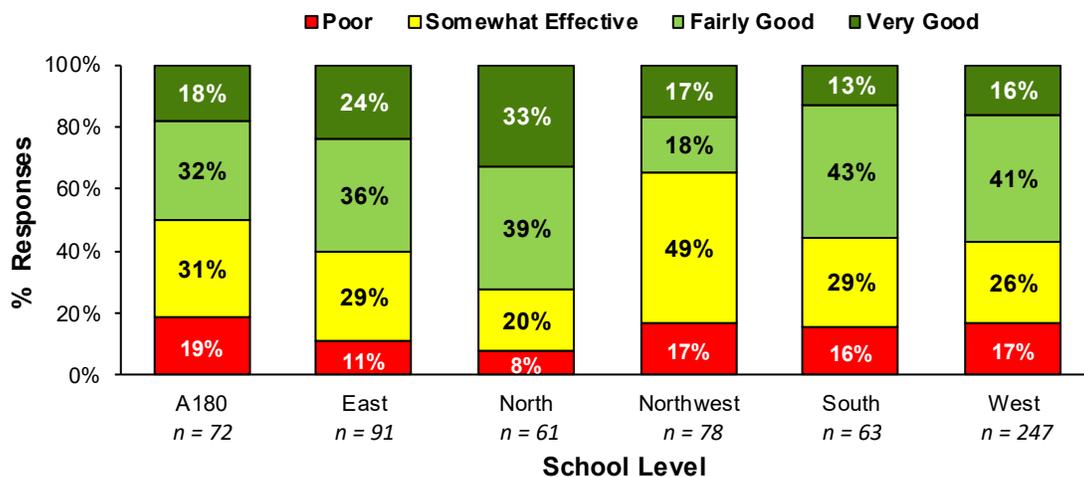
- **Figure 9** (see p. 12) summarizes results concerning teacher overall opinions on PD training for ELs. As seen in **Figure 9a**, teachers in the North (95%) and West (90%) school office areas reported the highest percentages of EL-related PD attendance. The South area reported the lowest (77%).

Figure 9. Percentage of Teachers Who Said They Had Attended PD for ELs (6a), and Percentage Who Said That PD Training Targeted Their Content Area (6b): School Office Differences



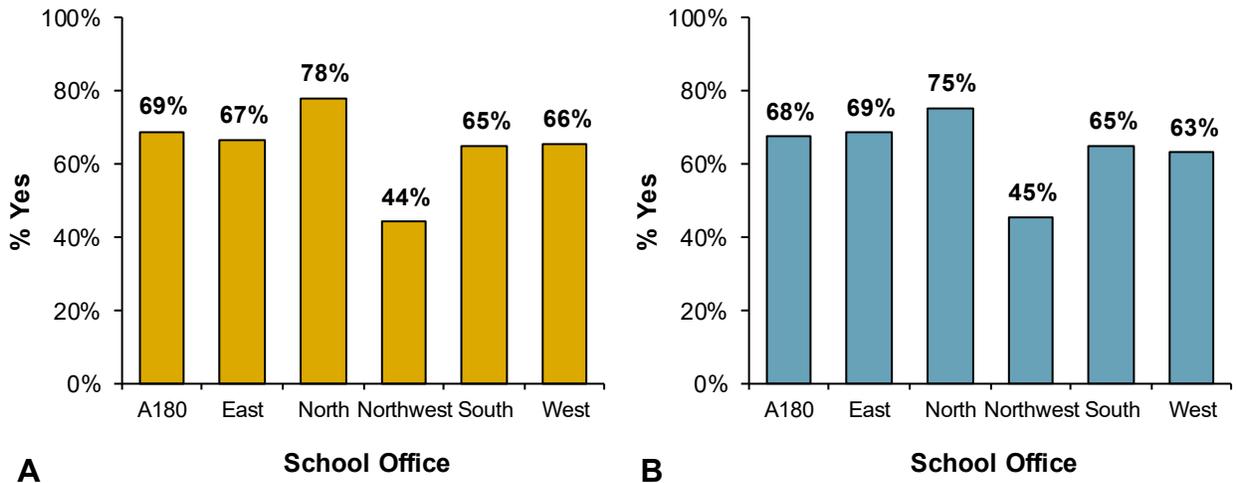
- **Figure 9b** summarizes results concerning whether the PD training targeted the teachers' specific content area. There appeared to be a discrepancy between responses of teachers in the East, North, and West school offices, and those from the Northwest, South, and A180 offices.
- **Figure 10** summarizes teachers' overall ratings of EL-related PD training offered by the district. It can be seen that teachers in the North area had more positive views of the PD training than did teachers in other areas. Teachers in the Northwest area had the lowest opinions of EL-related PD training (only 35% Fairly/Very Good).

Figure 10. Teacher Overall Ratings of EL-Related PD Offered by the District: School Level Differences



- Finally, **Figure 11** (see p. 13) shows data concerning teacher opinions relating to whether the PD training they received had an impact either on their job performance (**Figure 11a**) or on student outcomes (**Figure 11b**).
- Results for both questions were very similar. Teachers in the North area had the most positive opinions, those is the Northwest area the least positive, and other offices were somewhere in the middle.

Figure 11. Percentage of Teachers Who Said That PD Training Had a Positive Impact on Their Job Performance (11a) or on Student Outcomes (11b): School Level Differences



Effects of Overall PD Rating

One of the main questions in this survey concerned teachers’ overall rating of the district’s PD offerings for teachers of ELs (see Figure 3, p. 5). Recall that responses to this question were fairly evenly split; about 55% of teachers thought that the PD sessions were either “fairly” or “very good”, while 44% felt that they were only “somewhat effective” or “poor”. In this section analyses are reported for responses to some of the main survey items, with responses by teachers in these two groups considered separately.

Teacher PD Rating: Impact of PD on Job Performance & Student Outcomes

- **Figure 12** summarizes results concerning teacher overall opinions on the impact of PD sessions on either their own job performance (**Figure 12a**) or student outcomes (**Figure 12b**).
- Unsurprisingly, teachers who had more positive opinions regarding the PD sessions they had attended also felt that the sessions had a positive impact on their job performance (89% “Yes”) as well as on how their students did (87% “Yes”).

Figure 12 Percentage of Teachers Who Said That Their PD Training Had a Positive Impact on Their Job Performance (12a) or on Student Outcomes (12b): PD Rating Effects

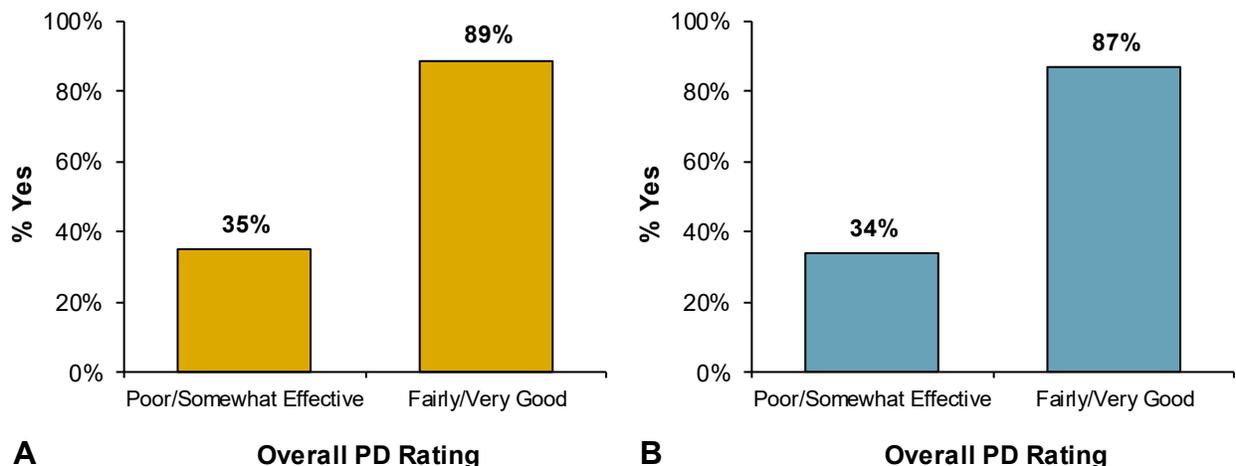


Table 8. Teacher Level of Knowledge of PD Topics by Overall PD Rating: Percentage of Teachers Indicating Either Moderate or High Levels of Knowledge of Specific Topics

PD Topic	Teacher PD Rating			
	Poor/ Somewhat Effective	Fairly/ Very Good		
ELPS Integration	67	86	80+	
Texas ELPS	69	85	70-79	
Proficiency level descriptors	69	86	61-69	
Linguistic accommodations	67	86	51-59	
Sheltered instruction	71	86	< 51	
Language objectives	70	89		
Language proficiency	72	88		
Biliteracy development	48	65		
Second language acquisition methods	61	78		
Linguistically/culturally responsive teaching	69	81		

Teacher PD Rating: Level of Knowledge of PD Topics

- As was done earlier, data were summarized on the level of knowledge teachers had on ten topics related to teaching of EL students. This new set of analyses is based on showing responses separately for teachers who were either positive or negative regarding the PD they had attended. Data are summarized in **Table 8**. This table shows, for each combination of overall PD rating and PD topic, the percentage of teachers who rated their knowledge level as either “moderate” or “high”. Color coding is used as was done previously.
- It is clear from these data that teachers expressed level of knowledge about these topics is related to their overall opinions regarding the quality of the PD they received. Teachers who were more positive about the PD sessions indicated higher levels of knowledge, while those who were more negative about the PD sessions indicated they had less knowledge about these topics.

Teacher PD Rating: Teacher Interest in Learning More About PD Topics

- Data were analyzed regarding the level of teacher interest in learning more about these ten PD topics, with results shown separately based on their overall ratings of the PD they had received. Results of these analyses are summarized in **Table 9** (see p. 15). This table shows, for each combination of overall PD rating and PD topic, the percentage of teachers who were either “moderately” or “very interested” in learning about a specific PD topic. Color coding is used to indicate the relative level of knowledge (see key to right of table).
- These results showed that teacher overall ratings of PD sessions they had attended had little relationship with their interest in receiving further training. Whether they thought that the PD they had received was good or poor, there were high levels of interest across all ten topics.

Teacher PD Rating Effects: Usefulness of Various PD Activities

- Finally, **Table 10** (see p. 15) summarizes data concerning teacher opinions concerning how useful

Table 9. Teacher Level of Interest in PD Topics by Overall PD Rating: Percentage of Teachers Who Were Either Moderately or Very Interested in Specific Topics

PD Topic	Teacher PD Rating		80+	70-79	61-69	51-59	< 51
	Poor/ Somewhat Effective	Fairly/ Very Good					
ELPS Integration	75	85					
Texas ELPS	71	83					
Proficiency level descriptors	72	79					
Linguistic accommodations	85	89					
Sheltered instruction	79	86					
Language objectives	76	85					
Language proficiency	81	87					
Biliteracy development	80	83					
Second language acquisition methods	87	89					
Linguistically/culturally responsive teaching	84	90					

different PD formats or activities would be, and whether these differed based on overall PD ratings. The data in the table show, for each combination of type of activity and overall PD rating, the percentage of teachers who were thought the activity would be either “moderately” or “very helpful”. Color coding is used to indicate the relative level of perceived helpfulness (see key to right of table).

- There was a rough consensus across as to which activities teachers would find useful or not useful, regardless of their ratings of the PD they had received. The rankings of which activities would be more or less useful were similar for the two groups of teachers. However, teachers who had more positive opinions regarding their PD experiences appeared to be more flexible as to what types of PD sessions they would find useful

Table 10. Teacher Preferred PD Formats by Overall PD Rating: Percentage of Teachers Who Thought the Activity Would Be Either Moderately or Very Helpful

PD Format	Teacher PD Rating		80+	70-79	61-69	51-59	< 51
	Poor/ Somewhat Effective	Fairly/ Very Good					
Face-to-Face	86	94					
Online Courses	47	70					
Webinars	31	51					
Videos	51	73					
Series Throughout the Year	67	83					
Conferences	70	84					

Responses to Open-Ended Survey Items

The EL Teacher Survey included two questions that allowed for open-ended responses. The first of these asked “What other professional development would you like to see offered to help you support your English learners in your classroom?” The second question was “How can the district improve professional development for English learners?” In this final section of the report, teacher responses to these two questions are briefly summarized.

- Three hundred forty teachers responded to one or both the two short-answer questions. Responses to the two questions were reviewed separately in order to identify frequently raised themes or issues.
- Other PD teachers would like to see offered: The most frequent cited issue in response to this question was a lack of PD opportunities tied to specific content areas for ELs. Teachers wanted training that provided more than general background on how to teach ELs, but sessions that offered specific strategies pertaining to particular subjects.
- Another common theme raised was the need for PD attuned specifically to the needs of newcomers. Thirdly, many teachers indicated that it would be helpful to have some type of video or example of a model teacher or classroom. What seemed to be lacking in the PD they had received were clear examples of how to apply the principals or strategies they were learning.
- Two further suggestions raised by teachers were that PD should provide resources that could be used in the classroom, and that they should also be provided with some specific, useable strategies which could be immediately implemented.
- Other suggestions included: how to teach ELs who are not Spanish speaking, more information on differentiation of instruction, opportunities for teachers to learn some Spanish, and issues regarding instruction of ELs who are in special education or who have behavioral issues.
- How to improve PD offered by the district: This question received many more teacher comments than the previous one. The most commonly cited issue raised by teachers were related to scheduling of PD by the district. This included problems with both day and time of day, and many teachers suggested that it would be useful to have their PD earlier in the year than is currently the case, so that things learned could be implemented when the school year started.
- Related to the scheduling issue were concerns over the lack of options regarding the PD location, and the inconvenience this represented. Somewhat related to the issue of scheduling, a number of teachers raised the issue that when PD was scheduled during the school day, it was often difficult to get principals' approval to attend.
- Two other themes emerged in response to this question. First, teachers indicated that there should be more options, both in terms of when PD was offered but also what topics were available. In a few cases, this was tied to the lack of spaces available in PD sessions they would have liked to attend.
- Second, teachers indicated that PD training was too repetitive, and that it was tailored only to teachers at the introductory level. There was instead a lack of ongoing training for teachers who had already been exposed to the basics, and who might want more advanced information.
- Some themes were similar to concerns raised with the other short answer question. Specifically, teachers thought that useable resources should be provided in any PD, that more of their PD should be tailored to content areas, that examples from a real class or model teacher would be useful, and in general, that they needed less about theory and the law and more about useable strategies they could implement.

- Other common themes observed included: need for PD that was grade-level specific, lack of stipends or monetary incentive to attend PD, lack of ongoing or campus-level support, and inconsistency in the skills of the staff who were providing the PD. Some suggested that more non-district trainers might be useful.

Conclusion

In accordance with a recommendation in a report from the Legislative Budget Board, HISD administered an online survey to content teachers in the district, specifically targeting those who worked with ELs. The survey was designed to collect data on teachers' opinions concerning the effectiveness of PD opportunities they may have had, their knowledge and interest in various topics related to teaching of ELs, and what they believe would be useful to offer in the future.

While the response rate was less than was anticipated, there were sufficient responses to come justify a number of conclusions. While most teachers who answered said they had attended some type of PD related to teaching ELs, only a slight majority (55%) thought that the training they received was "Fairly" or "Very Good". A majority of teachers expressed at least moderate knowledge on ten key topics related to PD for EL teachers, and there were high levels of interest in learning more about each topic. Teachers had definite preferences in terms of both the format and scheduling of any future PD sessions. There were differences between school levels, with elementary teachers having more positive opinions of the PD they received and its impact on both them and their students. Secondary teachers were less positive. There were also differences between teachers representing the various school offices, although these were harder to characterize. Finally, in response to open-ended questions, teachers raised a number of issues that suggest possible areas for improvement in PD options.

Appendix A

Teachers of English Learners - Professional Development Opportunities Survey

This questionnaire is designed to get your opinion concerning the effectiveness of professional development opportunities provided by the district related to teaching students who are English learners. Please respond honestly and completely. Your responses will shape the PD calendar for upcoming professional learning opportunities related to servicing English learners. At the end of the survey, please feel free to add any additional comments that you find appropriate and were unable to address in the survey. Thank you, in advance, for taking the time to respond.

1. Are you a teacher who teaches English learner students? Y / N / not sure

If yes or not sure, continue with survey

If no, done [skip to end]

2. Do you have newcomers (1st-year immigrants) in any classes you teach? Y / N / not sure

3. Campus taught at [drop down list]

4. Please indicate the grade level or levels you teach. (Check all that apply)

EE/PK/KG/1/2/3/4/5/6/7/8/9/10/11/12

5. What content area do you primarily teach? (Check all that apply)

Math, Science, ELA/Reading, Social Studies, ESL/ESOL, CTE/CATE, other

6. How many years have you been a teacher, including this year?

1-5 years; 6-10; 11-15; 16-20; 20+

7. Have you attended professional development offered by HISD on how to support English learners in your classroom? Y/N

If NO, skip to question 12

8. Was the training targeted to support your specific content area? Y/N

9. What is your overall rating of professional development offered to support English learners in HISD?

Poor, Somewhat Effective, Fairly Good, Very Good

10. Do you think that PD in this area had an impact on your job performance? Y/N

11. Do you think that PD in this area had an impact on student outcomes? Y/N

12. Please indicate what you think is your level of knowledge about each of these topics.

None, Low, Moderate, High

- ELPS Integration
- Texas ELPS
- Proficiency Level Descriptors (PLDs)

- Linguistic Accommodations
- Sheltered Instruction
- Language Objectives
- Language Proficiency
- Biliteracy Development
- Second Language Acquisition Methods
- Linguistically and Culturally Responsive Teaching

13. Please indicate to what extent you would like to learn more about each of these topics.

No Interest, Some Interest, Fairly Interested, Very Interested

- ELPS Integration
- Texas ELPS
- Proficiency Level Descriptors (PLDs)
- Linguistic Accommodations
- Sheltered Instruction
- Language Objectives
- Language Proficiency
- Biliteracy Development
- Second Language Acquisition Methods
- Linguistically and Culturally Responsive Teaching

14. What types of professional development activities would you find most helpful to assist you in improving your knowledge as a teacher of English learners?

Not Helpful, Somewhat Helpful, Fairly Helpful, Very Helpful

- Face-to-Face
- On-line Courses
- Webinars
- Videos
- Series, through-out the school year
- Conferences

15. Why do you (or why would you) participate in professional development for English learners? (Check all that apply).

- Learning new ideas
- Helps improve my teaching
- Helps my students
- Personal career advancement
- Opportunity to get together with colleagues
- Required by the state
- Required by the district

16. What time periods would you be more likely to attend PD?

Not at All, Possibly, Probably, Never

- | | | |
|---------------|-----------------|------------|
| Summer | Spring Semester | School Day |
| Fall semester | After School | Saturday |

17. What interactive tools do you have available or use in your classroom? (Check all that apply)

- Smart board
- Smart Response
- Clever Touch
- iPads
- Chromebooks
- Google classroom
- Web 2.0
- Other

18. What other professional development would you like to see offered to help you support your English learners in your classroom?

open-ended

19. How can the district improve professional development for English learners?

open-ended