

# Eighth-Grade Students' Feedback on the Middle School Dual Language Program

Austin Independent School District, 2017–2018

This report provides the results of a survey completed by 8th-grade, middle school students who were enrolled in the Dual Language Program in the 2017–2018 academic year. The survey included questions assessing reasons students enrolled in the program, their experience using Spanish while enrolled, and feedback on the program. A total of 73 students ( $N = 74$ ) responded to the survey across three schools: Paredes ( $n = 32$ ), Fulmore ( $n = 25$ ), and Burnet ( $n = 16$ ).

## Why did students enroll in the Dual Language Program?

Students were first asked if they were proud to be able to speak English and Spanish and to provide a reason for their response; 95% of students indicated they were proud. Many students indicated they were proud to speak both languages because it allowed them to be able to communicate with more people, will help improve job prospects, and allowed them to help people/parents who only speak one language. Students selected similar reasons when asked why they enrolled in the Dual Language Program or what they enjoyed most while enrolled in the program. As seen in Table 1, 88% of students selected they enrolled in the Dual Language Program “Because Spanish is part of my culture and family” and “Knowing two languages will give more opportunities in the future.”

Table 1.

**Most students indicated they enrolled in the Dual Language Program “Because Spanish is part of my culture and family” and “Knowing two languages will give me more opportunities in the future.”**

Reason students enrolled in the middle school dual language program	<i>n</i> =	%
Because Spanish is part of my culture and family.	64	88%
Knowing two languages will give me more opportunities in the future.	64	88%
To get high school and college credit.	59	81%
I want to be able to learn, communicate, and make friends with people from other cultures and languages.	51	70%
I want to learn how to use Spanish very well.	45	62%
Knowing two languages is cool/fun.	35	48%
I want to be able to talk to my parents/ grandparents / family.	34	47%
So that my parents will understand me better.	33	45%
Other	2	3%

Source. 2018 Middle School Dual Language Student Survey

Table 2.

**Students indicated they most enjoyed using Spanish with their friends, teachers, and parents while enrolled in the middle school Dual Language Program.**

While enrolled in the Dual Language Program, I enjoyed:	<i>n</i> =	%
Using my Spanish with my friends, teachers, and parents.	57	78%
Making projects where I can showcase the Spanish I know.	41	56%
Seeing different people on campus using Spanish.	38	52%
Having time and space to learn Spanish at school.	36	49%
Having a variety of students learning Spanish in my class.	36	49%
Access to books in Spanish.	21	29%
Other	4	5%

Source. 2018 Middle School Dual Language Student Survey

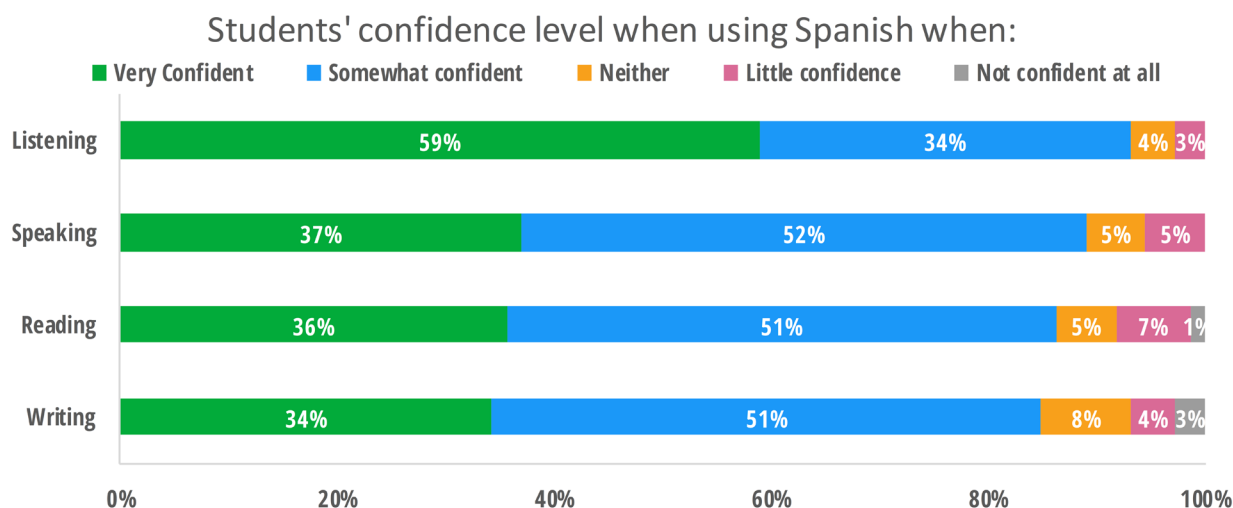
When responding to what they enjoyed while enrolled in the Dual Language Program, 78% of students indicated they enjoyed “Using my Spanish with my friends, teachers, and parents” (Table 2). Five percent of students disagreed when asked whether they were proud to be able to speak English and Spanish; however, reasons listed by these students suggested they were proud. Reasons provided by these students were related to being able to communicate/connect with other people. For example, reasons provided included “I am proud to be able to speak both languages because it helps me communicate with friends and family” and “I am able to connect very well with both sides of my culture.”

## How confident were students when using Spanish?

Students were asked to rate their level of confidence when using Spanish in four domains: speaking, writing, listening, and reading. Students felt most confident when listening to Spanish with 59% indicating they were very confident (Figure 1). Students were least confident when writing in Spanish, with only 34% indicating they were very confident. Overall, aside from listening, most students only felt somewhat confident when using Spanish.

Figure 1.

**Students felt most confident using Spanish when listening.**



Source. 2018 Middle School Dual Language Student Survey

## What did students find difficult while enrolled in the middle school Dual Language Program?

Although numerous topics were listed when students were asked what they found difficult while enrolled in the Dual Language Program, several themes emerged in students' written responses. Some comments centered on vocabulary, such as forgetting what a word means and difficulty learning/understanding new words. Additionally, several students found writing and speaking in Spanish difficult. Another topic mentioned in responses was regarding difficulty in testing. One student wrote, "Having core class in Spanish and then taking the STAAR in English," while another student noted "The AP exam."

## Conclusion

This report summarized the results from a survey completed by 8th-grade students enrolled in the Dual Language Program in middle school and provided insights into students' experience with and feedback for the middle school Dual Language Program. Most students were proud that they were able to speak more than one language and indicated that knowing two languages will assist them in the future and assist them with connecting with more people. Overall, although students had difficulties while enrolled in the program, 71% of students indicated they would continue in the Dual Language Program if it were offered in high school. Students were asked what would make the Dual Language Program better. Some of the most common suggestions included having more field trips, having more contact with others from the Spanish culture, and having more projects.

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