

RESEARCH BRIEF

Background. In December 2012, Austin Independent School District’s (AISD) board of trustees approved the expansion of the Spanish dual language (DL) program into middle school. A DL program provides instruction in two languages (in this case, English and Spanish). This report summarizes analysis of program need, campus and staff capacity, and parent and staff interest, and provides supporting data for possible program sites. Summaries of the analysis in this report are presented in Tables A-1 through A-3 in the appendix.

Spanish ELL needs. To determine the need for the middle school DL program, Department of Research and Evaluation (DRE) staff were asked to provide data on the following:

- Population of Spanish-speaking English language learners (ELLs) enrolled in DL and their feeder middle school, for each residential address
- Number of enrolled Spanish-speaking recent immigrants to the United States, for each middle school
- Number of enrolled long-term (i.e., in United States for 6 or more years since 1st grade) Spanish-speaking ELLs
- Reading and mathematics (math) State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) results

Population. Spanish-speaking ELLs accounted for 25% ($n = 21,741$) of AISD’s total enrollment in Fall 2012 and 16% ($n = 2,792$) of MS enrollment (i.e., 6th through 8th grade). Unlike other bilingual education programs, DL can be extended through middle school and high school. Although students may exit from ELL status, they may continue in the DL program, gaining academic content area proficiency in two languages. Non-ELLs may take DL courses as part of foreign language enrichment, usually (but not necessarily) in continuation from an elementary one-way or two-way DL program.



Top Potential Program Sites

- | | |
|------------|---------------|
| 1. Mendez | 10. Covington |
| 2. Garcia | 11. Kealing |
| 3. Burnet | 12. Bedichek |
| 4. Fulmore | 13. Lamar |
| 5. Webb | 14. Gorzycki |
| 6. Pearce | 15. Small |
| 7. Paredes | 16. Murchison |
| 8. Dobie | 17. O’Henry |
| 9. Martin | 18. Bailey |

Rankings were based on equal weighting of all the need (p. 1), capacity (p. 5), and interest (p. 6) criteria evaluated in this report.

	Need	Capacity	Interest
1	Burnet	Pearce	Burnet
2	Dobie	Garcia	Mendez
3	Mendez	Webb	Murchison
4	Fulmore	Paredes	Garcia
5	Garcia	Fulmore	Paredes

Source. AISD DRE records, DL Staff survey, DL parent survey, 2013
Note. The first column represents rank.

Figure 1: AISD Elementary Dual Language Programs and Density of Spanish Speaking English Learners, by Middle School Zones

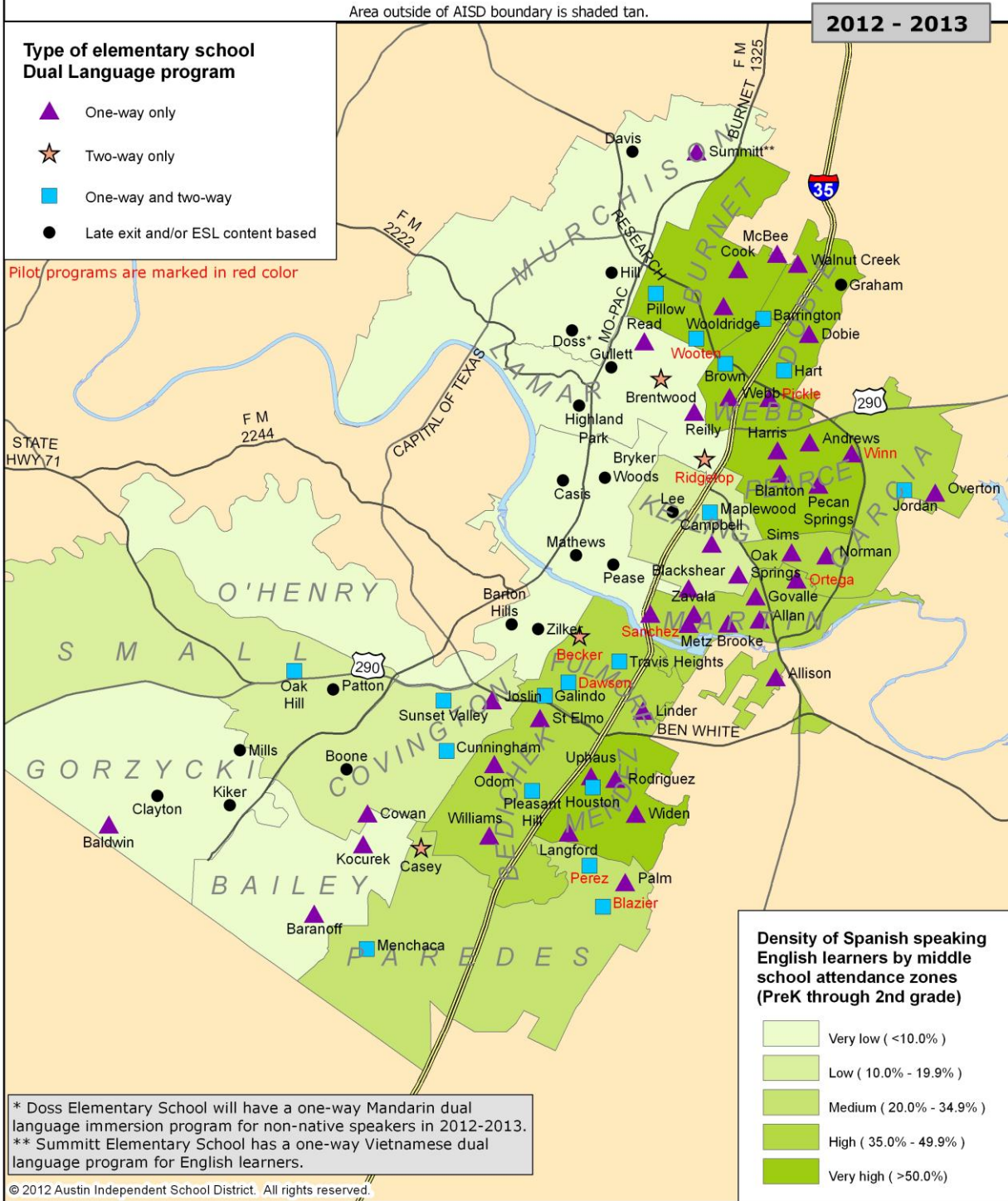
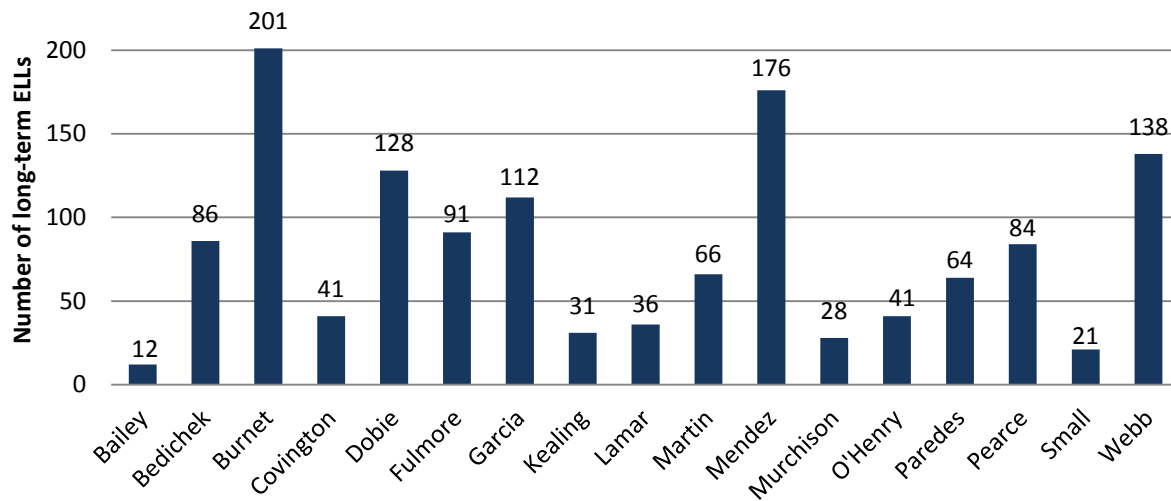


Figure 1 overlays the density (i.e., percentage) of Spanish-speaking ELLs enrolled in prekindergarten (PK) through 2nd grade in Fall 2012,¹ for each middle school attendance zone,² with the 2012–2013 elementary DL programs. The highest concentrations of Spanish-speaking ELLs (PK through 2nd grade) were in the northeast quadrant of the district, primarily in the attendance zones of Webb (74%), Dobie (68%), Burnet (64%), and Pearce (54%). Mendez (60%), in the southeast, also had a high concentration of Spanish-speaking ELLs.

Recent immigrants. Sixty-one percent ($n = 159$) of the 260 recent immigrants (i.e., 3 or fewer years in the United States) enrolled in grades 6 through 8 in Fall 2012 spoke Spanish. At least 20³ languages other than Spanish was spoken by recent immigrants in middle school. The middle schools with the largest enrollment of recent Spanish-speaking immigrants in Fall 2012 were Burnet ($n = 31$), Bedichek ($n = 19$), Fulmore ($n = 17$), and Martin ($n = 17$; Table A-1). Burnet also had the largest enrollment of recent immigrants who did not speak Spanish ($n = 21$). The next largest was Murchison ($n = 19$), followed by Pearce ($n = 18$) and Dobie ($n = 9$). English as a second language (ESL) programs would still be required to serve students who cannot be served under a Spanish DL program.

Long-term ELLs. Although “long-term” ELLs defined solely by years in the United States represent a diverse range of performance with respect to English proficiency and content area mastery (Brunner, 2012), DRE staff used 6 or more years in a language program starting at the 1st grade year to classify an ELL as long term. This definition excluded many 6th-grade students who would still fall into the 5 to 7 years range required to exit a bilingual program. Burnet ($n = 201$), Mendez ($n = 176$), Webb ($n = 138$), and Dobie ($n = 128$) had the largest enrollment of long-term Spanish-speaking ELLs (i.e., ELLs who have been in the district since 1st grade and have not exited the program) (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Enrollment of Long-Term Spanish-Speaking, English Language Learners (ELLs), Fall 2012



Source. Public Education Information Management System 110 records, Fall 2004–2012

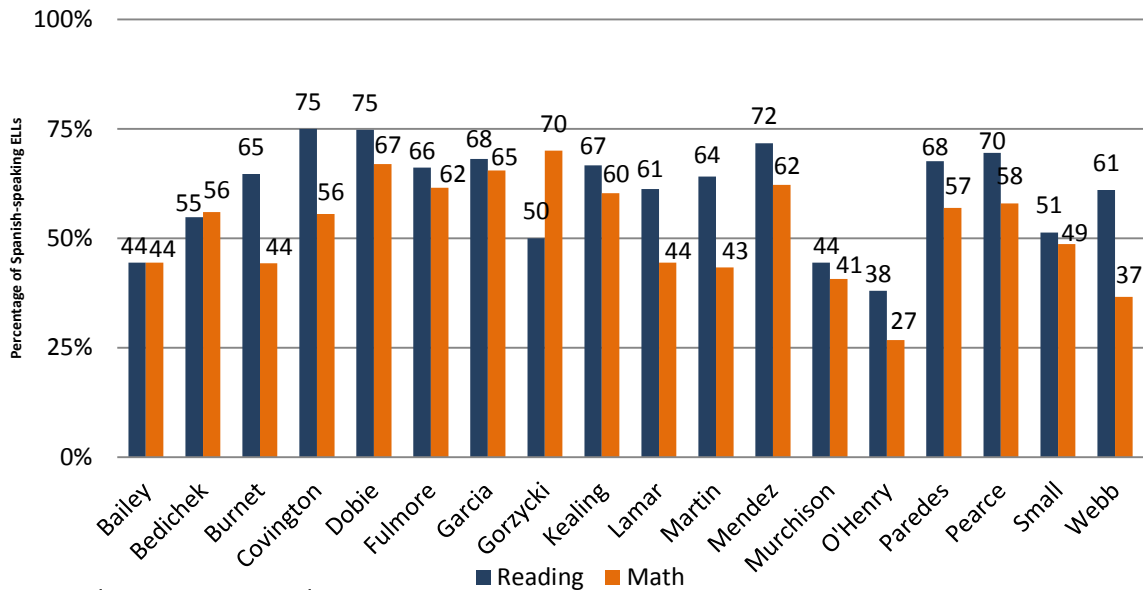
¹ Spanish DL was offered district wide for prekindergarten through 2nd grade in 2012–2013.

² Based on students’ residential address

³ PEIMS code “99” represents other languages. Nine students were coded as other language.

Student performance. Figure 3 provides the percentage of Spanish-speaking ELLs in grades 6 through 8 who did not meet the initial Level II standard on the Spring 2012 STAAR, for each campus and for reading and math. In general, Spanish-speaking ELLs performed lower on STAAR reading than on math. Dobie and Mendez were in the top quartile of the lowest passing rates by Spanish ELLs for both reading and math STAAR in Spring 2012 (Table A-1).

Figure 3. Spanish-Speaking English Language Learners (ELL) Who Did Not Meet the Initial Level II Passing Rate on the Reading and Mathematics (Math) State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR), Spring 2012, by Middle School Campus (Grades 6–8)



Source. Student STAAR records, Spring 2012

Note. Students enrolled on the campus in Fall 2011 were included. Results include STAAR, STAAR-alternative, and STAAR-modified. Students who took the Algebra I end-of-course exams were included. See Table A-1 in Appendix for student data.

Capacity. DRE staff examined the following to evaluate capacity:

- Permanent capacity of the facility
- Number of proficient or exemplary DL feeder programs, as rated by the DL Training Institute⁴
- Number of teachers certified in a core content area (i.e., math, reading, social studies, or science) and Spanish
- Number of teachers certified in ESL
- Campus offered or will offer the accelerated Spanish program (i.e., advanced placement [AP] Spanish in 8th grade)

Facility capacity. The Department of Facilities (DF) estimates the permanent and functional student capacity of facilities each year. Permanent capacity considers the number of classrooms in a building operating at optimal efficiency. Functional capacity factors in how programs and departments are assigned in the given year to a facility and all classrooms at the site, including the use of portable

⁴ The DL Training Institute provided the district professional development activities using the Gómez and Gómez (1999) DL 50/50 Enrichment model.

buildings. For long-term planning, permanent capacity is often used. DRE staff divided the Fall 2012 enrollment for each school by permanent capacity to estimate under- or overenrollment. Campuses with capacities greater than 100% were overenrolled in the fall. Bedicheck, Burnet, Murchison, and O’Henry were at permanent capacity. Pearce and Garcia had the most open capacity; however, at the time of this report, these two schools were considered for another Annual Academic and Facilities Recommendation (AAFR) plan for single-sex education.

Proficient DL feeder campuses. The middle school DL program will be an extension of the elementary DL program, and ideally will have vertical support from its feeder campuses. Using the Dual Language Training Institute’s campus program ratings, DRE determined the number of proficient and exemplary DL programs represented in each middle school feeder pattern. Paredes had the highest number of proficient DL programs in its feeder pattern. More than half of the middle schools had at least one or two proficient DL programs in their feeder patterns.

Certified teachers and Spanish language programs. DL requires students to receive instruction in two languages. Pharr-San Juan-Alamo ISD, a Texas Education Agency (TEA; 2010) model kindergarden through 12th grade DL enrichment program, has an 80/20⁵ partial immersion model for middle schools. Students in this middle school program were required to take Spanish language arts, Spanish I, Spanish II/AP, and one content-area course in Spanish every year (based on the language of instruction at the elementary level). The number of Spanish teachers for middle school campuses ranged from 1 to 3 with a mode of two. The number of ESL-certified teachers for middle school campuses ranged from 0 to 5 with a mode of one. Furthermore, only three middle schools currently offer or will offer accelerated Spanish (i.e., AP Spanish in 8th grade; Fulmore, Pearce, and Webb).

The middle school DL program will require investment in recruiting highly proficient Spanish-speaking staff who can teach in a core-content area (preferably social studies or science) to provide a similar 80/20 model. In general, staffing for ELL students at the middle school level is much lower than at the elementary level (i.e., 32 ESL-certified middle school staff were working with ELLs in Spring 2013, compared with 1,139 ESL-certified staff for PK through 5th grade).⁶

Interest. DRE staff conducted surveys of parents and staff to determine to determine the level of interest in the middle school DL program; specifically:

- Interest by families of students currently enrolled in a DL program
- Interest by families of students among the first cohort of eligible students to enroll in the DL program (i.e., the 3rd-grade cohort, regardless of current DL program participation)
- Interest by middle school campus principals, core-content area teachers, and Spanish language teachers

Parental interest in a middle school DL program. In January 2013, DRE conducted a phone survey in Spanish and English⁷ of households with students who were enrolled in a DL program⁸ and of all AISD

⁵ Eighty percent of instruction is in English, and 20% of instruction is in Spanish.

⁶ Based on ELL ESL program enrollment as of Fall 2012, there were approximately 90.3 ESL ELLs per ESL-certified staff for middle schools, and 2.2 ESL ELLs per ESL-staff in PK through 5th grade

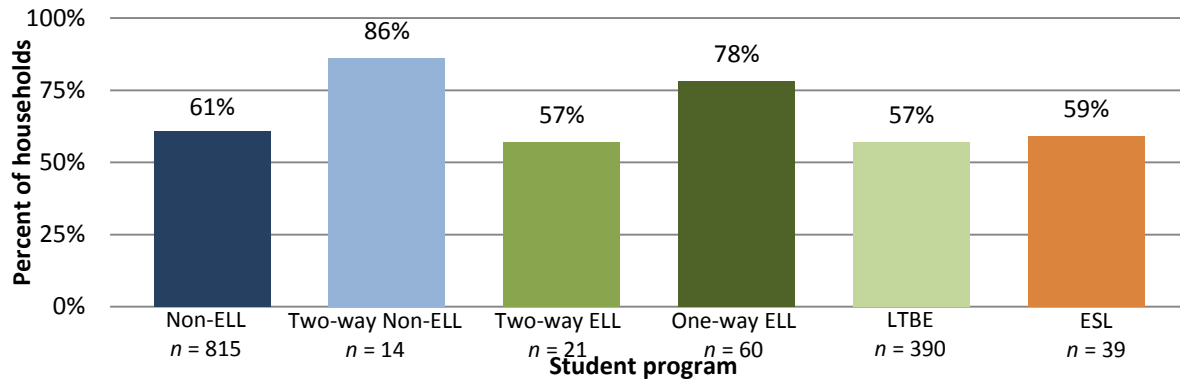
⁷ Students’ home language code determined survey language.

⁸ As of January 14, 2013

English- or Spanish-speaking households with 3rd-grade enrolled student. The DL family survey had a 24% response rate ($n = 2,227$), and the 3rd-grade family survey had a 21% response rate ($n = 1,339$).

Sixty-seven percent of households with a student enrolled in a DL program were interested in a Spanish middle school DL program. No statistical difference was found between middle school campuses with respect to the percentage of parents interested in their student attending a Spanish middle school DL program.⁹

Figure 5. Third-Grade Households’ Responses for “I want my child to participate in a Spanish dual language program in middle school, if available,” Spring 2013



Source. AISD dual language (DL) parent survey, Spring 2013

Note. ELL is English language learner. One-way and two-way refer to the type of DL program. LTBE is late-translational bilingual education. ESL is English as a second language.

Figure 5 provides the results from the 3rd-grade household survey. Nine pilot schools offered DL at 3rd grade. Third-grade households with a student currently enrolled in a DL program were slightly more likely to express interest in having their student participate in a DL program in middle school, if available, than were households that did not have a student in DL ($OR^{10} = 2.2, p < .01$). Household respondents in the Garcia attendance zone expressed greater interest in a Spanish middle school DL program than the district average response ($p = .058$), while households in the Bedichek attendance zone expressed less interest than the district average ($p < .05$).

Staff interest in a middle school DL program. In March and April 2013, DRE staff conducted an online survey of middle school principals, core-content area teachers, and Spanish teachers. The survey had a 24% ($n = 74$) response rate.¹¹ Response rates for each school are provided in Table A-3 in the appendix.

Overall, 2 out of 3 (66%) staff who participated in the survey were “supportive of having a Spanish [DL] program at [their] school.” Surveyed principals were more supportive of having a DL program at their school than were teachers who responded to the survey (average principal rating = 3.42; average

⁹ Based on residential address of parental contact, as of January 22, 2013

¹⁰ OR = odds ratio, or the probability of an event occurring over the probability of it not occurring.

¹¹ Principals = 12; core-content area teachers = 54; Spanish teachers = 8.

teacher rating = 2.79, $p < .05$).¹² Teachers who were certified in Spanish were more supportive of a Spanish DL program at their school than were teachers who were not certified in Spanish (Spanish-certified teacher ratings = 4.0; non-Spanish certified teacher rating = 2.59; $p < .001$). Thirty-nine percent of middle school staff respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement “Parents at our campus are advocates for the [DL] program.”

The district does not have data on the language proficiency of staff when that proficiency is not part of their assigned duties,¹³ so DRE staff cannot estimate the district’s capacity for middle school DL instruction based on the results of this survey.¹⁴ However, among those teachers who took the survey, 19 (30%)¹⁵ provided self-reports of speaking, reading, and writing in Spanish proficiently. Of those who were proficient in Spanish, 10 were willing to provide instruction in Spanish, and nine of those teachers were willing to take professional development courses to learn how to implement DL at their school. These nine teachers were spread across seven campuses. Seven additional teachers were willing to deliver instruction in Spanish, but did not rate themselves as proficient in Spanish in all three areas of reading, writing, and speaking. However, these seven teachers were willing to take additional professional development courses to improve their content-area vocabulary in Spanish and were willing to obtain additional certifications. Forty-five percent of teachers surveyed believed they had a good understanding of DL instruction.

Although it is difficult to generalize staff interest for each campus due to the low response rates, the campuses whose staff provided the highest ratings to the item “I am supportive of having a Spanish [DL] program at our school” and had a greater than 10% response rate were Bedichek, Martin, Mendez, Pearce, and Dobie (see Table A-3 in the appendix).

Comparison with elementary staff prior to DL program implementation. Middle school staff were asked their opinion about similar items asked of elementary teaching and administrative staff in Spring 2011 prior to district-wide implementation of the elementary DL program in 2011–2012. Middle school staff rated DL as less effective in helping students to learn language and academic skills and knowledge than did non-DL implementing elementary staff from schools with a bilingual program (Figure 6). Middle school staff also provided lower ratings than did elementary staff with respect to their belief that all languages were valued equally on their campus (Figure 9). When bilingual teachers were removed from the elementary comparison group,¹⁶ the differences in the aforementioned ratings were still present. Based on these results, it is possible that gaining staff buyin for a DL program at the middle school level may be more challenging than it was at the elementary school level.

¹² Based on analysis of variance. Ratings ranged from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 4 = *strongly agree*.

¹³ Although the current AISD job application requests applicants to provide their own assessment of language proficiency, records are only obtainable for new employees as of the 2012–2013 school year.

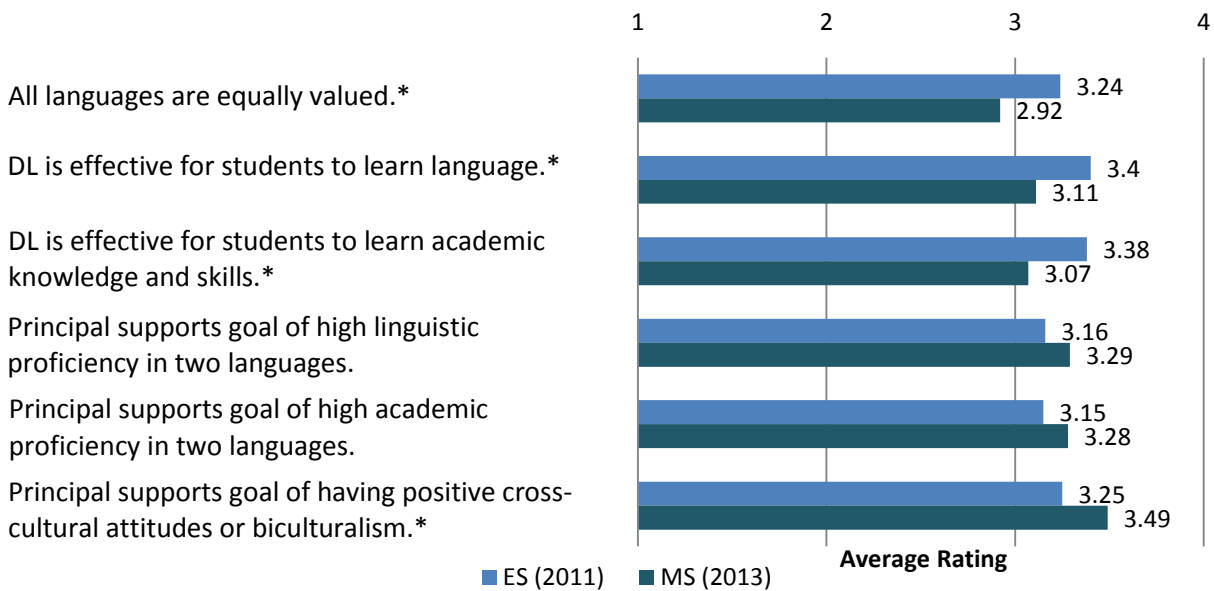
¹⁴ Without knowing the number of middle school teaching staff who speak, read, and write in Spanish, it is difficult to infer an estimated number of current staff willing to provide instruction in Spanish as part of the middle school DL program.

¹⁵ This number should not be used to generalize to middle schools.

¹⁶ DL is a bilingual program. Bilingual teachers might be more familiar with the program and thus more likely than are other teacher to believe in its effectiveness. When bilingual teachers were removed, only administrators, ESL teachers, and general education teachers were included.

In general, middle school staff provided higher ratings than did EL staff with respect to their principal supporting the goal of positive cross-cultural attitudes (Figure 6). However, when bilingual teachers were removed from the sample, no significant difference was found between the two groups' ratings (i.e., in Spring 2011, elementary bilingual teachers in non-implementing DL schools rated their principals lower in this area than did ESL and non-bilingual teachers).

Figure 6. Non-Dual Language (DL) Program School Staff Response to Survey Items, by School Level



Source. AISD DL Staff Survey, Spring 2011, Spring 2013

Note. Results from the 2011 elementary staff survey do not include the 10 DL pilot campuses.

ES = elementary school; MS = middle school. The elementary survey had 519 to 553 respondents, and the middle school survey had 65 to 71 respondents. (Number of respondents varied by item, but standard deviations were similar for each item.) Ratings ranged from 1 = strongly disagree to 4 = strongly agree.

* Significant difference in group mean ratings, based on analysis of variance test

Primary support or resources required for a middle school DL program. Teachers and principals were asked what primary support or resources they would need to deliver instruction in Spanish effectively. Among teachers, the most frequently mentioned support was in Spanish language proficiency ($n = 24$). As one teacher stated, “I never studied Spanish grammar, though I grew up in a home where parents and grandparents spoke Spanish and parents spoke English. When I speak, I don't always conjugate verbs correctly, and I am sometimes stuck grasping for a vocabulary word in general. I have learned much Spanish...content [area] vocab[ulary] this year... I primarily instruct students in English and offer translations to my newcomers.”

The top area of support mentioned by 10 of the 12 principals surveyed was qualified staff who were proficient in both English and Spanish to “deliver a high level of academic rigor in each respective subject with fidelity and differentiation for students.” DL emphasizes academic language proficiency,

and having staff who can provide instruction using academic Spanish is a critical area of need for the middle school DL program.

Also mentioned by staff as areas of need were increased materials/resources/technology in Spanish ($n = 12$), professional development opportunities ($n = 5$), and additional certification ($n = 4$).

Middle school staff were asked, “What are your top three concerns or questions about implementing a dual language program at your school?” A summary of the responses is provided in Table 1.

Table 1. Teachers’ Responses to the Open-Ended Item, “What are your top three concerns or questions about implementing a dual language (DL) program at your school?”

Concern	Themes	Percentage
Success/benefits questioned	Students will not be proficient in English; impede students’ desire to learn English; disrupt learning environment for others; take away critical instruction time leaving gaps in either language	37%
Professional development (PD) opportunity	Ongoing PD, opportunity to observe DL classroom; length of PD involved; access to PD; no knowledge of DL	35%
Staffing implications	Recruiting teachers with qualifications and desire to implement DL; staffing; process to apply and transfer for DL position; certifications; bilingual teachers forced to teach; future employment of [non-bilingual] teachers	27%
Future of other programs/languages	One language favored over another; school has more than Spanish as area of need; focus on other areas, e.g., special education, 504; what is future of Spanish as foreign language program; other initiatives that conflict with DL model; alternative to ESL	25%
Language proficiency	Effective teachers with high proficiency in Spanish; staff does not speak Spanish; communicate [content area] standards in Spanish	20%
Availability of resources/materials	Resources to sustain the program; quality materials and library books in Spanish; fund allocation formula	18%
Accountability	STAAR in English; STAAR scores; courses rigorous as others to prepare students for STAAR	12%
Time management	Work overload; additional planning and preparation	6%
Vertical team alignment	How will program be phased in? Feeder schools are doing different versions of DL; alignment	6%

Source. AISD Staff Dual Language Survey, Spring 2013

Note. Percentages sum to more than 100% because staff were allowed to comment on three concerns. The percentages are based on the percentage of respondents ($n = 51$) whose answer fit in a particular category or theme, as determined through content analysis. PD = professional development; ESL = English as a second language; STARR = State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness

More than a third (37%) of respondents questioned the benefit or success of a middle school DL program, mostly in the area of students' English language proficiency. Many of these staff (25%) were concerned about how students from other language backgrounds would be helped, and how other areas of focus (e.g., special education) would be addressed. These teachers generally supported the ESL model. For example, one teacher wrote, "To prolong the reality of [the need for] learning English academically to ensure success in high school and beyond would be a huge mistake. This would simply kick the issue down the road even further, and my concern is the results would be lower test results and a higher dropout rate for these...students. The district...need[s] to get much better at effectively instructing in English. I hope the district will reconsider [middle school DL] and change its efforts toward becoming much stronger in the field of ESL."

Another teacher replied, "By 6th grade, I feel LEP¹⁷ students should transition into ESL classes, NOT dual language. However, they need highly trained teachers in ESL instruction. Language acquisition at the middle school level is exposure, not instruction in L1.¹⁸ I feel [DL] classes at this age could hinder further advancement in L2."¹⁹

Staffing implications were another related area of concern for staff. Administrators were primarily concerned about how to recruit staff. Spanish-speaking staff were divided among those who wanted to know the steps for becoming a DL teacher, training, and certifications, while others voiced concerns about their level of Spanish proficiency or being expected to teach in Spanish. Finally, staff questioned what would happen to non-bilingual staff who worked with ELLs and how the needs of those staff would affect the campus. As one teacher wrote, "My colleagues are not bilingual and would not be capable of delivering instruction in a [DL] setting. The implementation of this model at my campus would entirely alter the teaching staff and culture of the school. This would be a painful and difficult transition."

Conclusion. Recruiting highly qualified staff and educating middle school staff about the components of a middle school DL program should be top priorities for the middle school DL planning year. Limitations in staff capacity pose the greatest obstacle in implementing a district-wide middle school DL program within the near future, and district administrators might consider how this will affect the quality of implementation. Limitation in staff will directly affect the breadth of DL courses offered at each school; however, placing many qualified staff at one or two schools may affect staffing needs at other middle schools because secondary staff proficient in Spanish and/or certified in ESL are limited.

References

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¹⁷ Limited English proficient

¹⁸ Native language (i.e., Spanish)

¹⁹ Second language (i.e., English)

Table A-1. Summary Matrix of Need for the Spanish Dual Language Program, by Middle School (MS)

MS	% by residence (PK–grade 2)	# recent immigrant (grade 6–8)	# ELLs in US 6+ years from grade 1	% did not pass STAAR (reading)	% did not pass STAAR (math)
Bailey	8.9%	<5	12	44%, N = 27	44%, N = 27
Bedichek	36.7%	19	86	55%, N = 166	56%, N = 166
Burnet	64.4%	31	201	65%, N = 368	44%, N = 368
Covington	19.4%	<5	41	75%, N = 72	56%, N = 72
Dobie	68.2%	16	128	75%, N = 222	67%, N = 221
Fulmore	44.2%	17	91	66%, N = 195	62%, N = 195
Garcia	48.6%	<5	112	68%, N = 113	65%, N = 113
Gorzycki	2.2%	<5	<5	50%, N = 10	70%, N = 10
Kealing	17.4%	<5	31	67%, N = 63	60%, N = 63
Lamar	9.5%	<5	36	61%, N = 62	44%, N = 63
Martin	43.0%	17	66	64%, N = 142	43%, N = 143
Mendez	59.6%	8	176	72%, N = 318	62%, N = 320
Murchison	5.8%	8	28	44%, N = 27	41%, N = 27
O'Henry	6.3%	<5	41	38%, N = 71	27%, N = 71
Paredes	32.9%	5	64	68%, N = 145	57%, N = 144
Pearce	53.6%	5	84	70%, N = 151	58%, N = 150
Small	13.7%	6	21	51%, N = 37	49%, N = 37
Webb	73.7%	13	138	61%, N = 280	37%, N = 280

Source. AISD student records, 2012, assessment records, Spring 2012, and Public Education Information Management System records, 2012

Note. PK = prekindergarten; ELL = English language learner; STARR = State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness

Table A-2. Summary Matrix of Capacity for the Spanish Dual Language (DL) Program, by Middle School (MS)

MS	Permanent capacity	Proficient DL feeder	AP Spanish
Bailey	85%	-	Not available
Bedichek	111%	2	Not available
Burnet	108%	-	Not available
Covington	59%	2	Not available
Dobie	75%	1	Not available
Fulmore	90%	1	Available
Garcia	41%	2	Not available
Gorzycki	86%	-	Not available
Kealing	87%	1	Not available
Lamar	58%	-	Not available
Martin	69%	1	Not available
Mendez	73%	2	Not available
Murchison	132%	-	Not available
O'Henry	114%	-	Not available
Paredes	92%	4	Not available
Pearce	46%	2	Available
Small	85%	-	Not available
Webb	85%	1	Available

Source. AISD Department of Facilities Permanent Capacity Calculation, 2012–2013, Dual Language Training Institute Ratings, Fall 2012, Office of Academics, World Languages

Note. ESL = English as a second language; AP = advanced placement


Table A-3. Summary Matrix of Interest in the Spanish Dual Language (DL) Program, by Middle School (MS)

MS	% DL households interested	# DL households interested	% 3 rd grade households interested	# 3 rd grade households interested	MS staff survey response rate	MS staff interested
Bailey	81%	21	53%	33	17%	3.33
Bedichek	71%	151	49%	39	32%	4.00
Burnet	66%	408	57%	66	35%	2.89
Covington	73%	73	60%	30	20%	3.33
Dobie	60%	181	55%	30	36%	3.40
Fulmore	68%	189	64%	43	35%	2.50
Garcia	67%	108	73%	44	<10%	*
Gorzycki	100%	9	56%	62	20%	2.25
Kealing	72%	25	74%	23	<10%	*
Lamar	81%	32	67%	40	14%	3.00
Martin	76%	145	62%	43	30%	3.50
Mendez	68%	220	59%	61	11%	3.50
Murchison	78%	9	66%	73	22%	3.00
O'Henry	90%	20	66%	45	<10%	*
Paredes	75%	151	63%	53	29%	2.40
Pearce	75%	133	58%	30	22%	3.50
Small	69%	54	65%	39	19%	3.33
Webb	60%	279	60%	43	58%	2.20

Source. AISD Dual Language Parent Survey, Spring 2013, Dual Language Staff Survey, Spring 2013

*Redacted data based on too low a response rate.

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