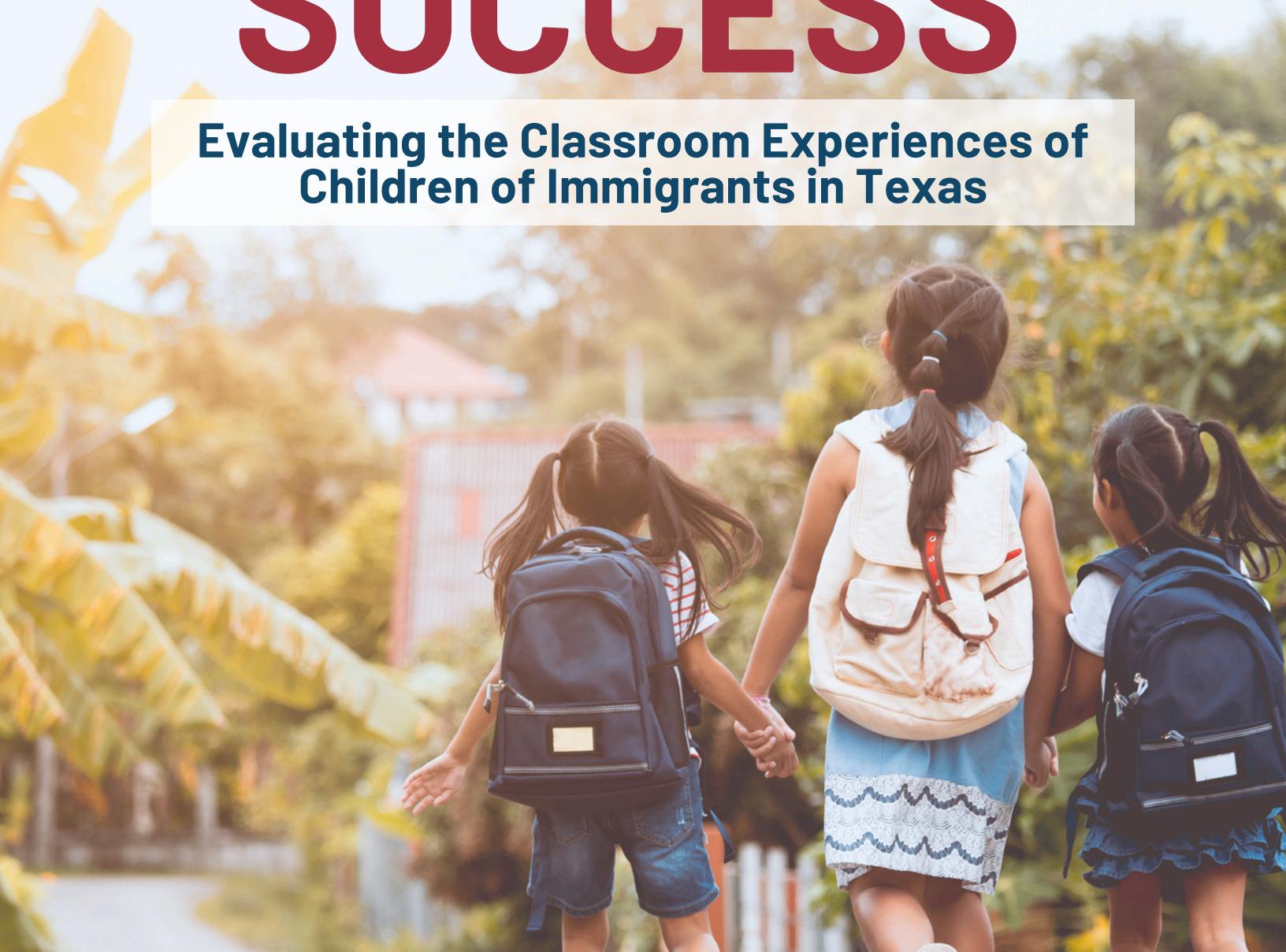


WINTER 2024

CHARTING SUCCESS

Evaluating the Classroom Experiences of
Children of Immigrants in Texas



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children
atRisk

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children at Risk

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Glossary of Terms



Children of Immigrants- a broad definition by CHILDREN AT RISK, which includes children whose parents are foreign born or children who are foreign born (first and second generation immigrants, refugees, asylum seekers, temporary protected status, undocumented children, emergent bilingual/English language learners and migrants).

EB/EL- Emergent Bilingual/English Learner, describing a student who is in the process of acquiring English and has another language as the student's primary or home language.

Newcomer Student- foreign born students who have been enrolled in U.S. schools for three years or less.

Unaccompanied Youth/Minor- someone who enters the U.S. under the age of 18 years old, without an accompanying parent or legal guardian or lawful status.

BIL Certification- Bilingual/English as a Second Language (BIL/ESL) certification allows teachers to specialize in teaching English learners and support students from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

Chronic absenteeism- missing at least 10 percent of days in a school year for any reason.

STAAR- State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness, a standardized test that measures a student's academic achievement in Texas public schools.

TEA- Texas Education Agency, state agency that oversees primary and secondary education.

TELPAS- Texas English Proficiency Assessment System, an assessment to provide a measure of progress, indicating annually where each EB/EL student is on a continuum of English language development designed for second-language learners.

Title III- federal funds apportioned to improve the educational outcomes of EB/EL learners and newcomer students.

Wraparound services- comprehensive support and services provided at schools to help student well-being and achievement

Executive Summary



Executive Summary & Key Findings

CHILDREN AT RISK analyzes the educational outcomes and classroom experience of children of immigrants in Texas.

Executive Summary

A special focus on how children of immigrants are faring in our Texas classrooms.

Our children are charting a new course for America. They are at the leading edge of the nation's growing diversity. Approximately 53% of the U.S. population under age 18 belonged to a minority group in 2020, compared to 39% of the population over age 18¹. English language learners are among the fastest growing student populations in the country and in Texas, they amount to nearly a quarter of the student population.² By 2050, the Pew Research Center projects immigrants and their children will account for 34% of the population, a projection that is largely contingent on how our immigration policy shifts in the coming years.³

Approaching this diversity in our Texas classrooms with a strengths-based approach is critical to propel our economy forward. Let's focus on the strengths that emergent bilingual students, English language learners and children of immigrants bring to our schools. After all, the U.S. economy could be \$8 trillion larger by 2050 if the country eliminated racial disparities in several sectors of our society, including our schools.⁴ Powerful change begins in our Texas classrooms.

The reality is that in Texas, the odds are stacked against our students. They face pervasive teacher shortages and underfunded schools. Texas is measured as a "medium level fiscal effort state" but spends only 3.45% on K-12 public schools.⁵ Despite these odds, it is Texas educators who are doubling down to improve outcomes for all students. Our report provides a special focus

on how children of immigrants are faring in our classrooms across the state, using our unique methodology to determine whether districts meet and exceed expectations or need improvement. Beyond the data, we strive to provide a deeper understanding of the classroom experience through the perspectives of multilingual directors across the state.

This publication is intended to inform stakeholders, advocates and policy makers on the challenges facing our children as well as the opportunities and winning strategies being leveraged by educators across the state. While the lives of children of immigrants are often politicized, it is our educators and advocates who are charting a better course. They welcome students and ensure that all students are equipped with the tools for success. We celebrate their efforts and hope this publication also serves as a powerful tool for educators across the country embarking on this urgent mission.

Strengths-based approaches used by Texas educators:

- **Pushing for dual language programs** to help children strengthen their native language while improving their English proficiency using grade level content
- **Advocating for full day pre-k** to help children radically improve vocabulary development
- **Providing incentives to attract aspiring bilingual educators** and continuously explore new ways to provide teachers with real time coaching and support

Key Findings

Interplay of teacher shortages

In regions with high teacher turnover or poor teacher to student ratios, we find a negative impact on test scores and a surge in chronic absenteeism.

Federal funding produces better outcomes

Evidence shows the more Title III funds a district spends, the better students perform on test scores. This funding plays a crucial role in supporting EB/EL and newcomer students and provides districts with critical supplemental funding to improve services.¹⁶

Community partnerships make a difference

In areas where the teacher turnover rate is high, connecting new teachers to community partners like ImmSchools and Communities in Schools helps ensure a common understanding in the classroom. This helps lessen negative disciplinary actions against students.

The benefits of a resilient teacher workforce

In the Borderland, where there is strong teacher retention but poor bilingual certified teacher to EB/EL student ratios, we see how a stable teacher workforce perseveres to keep graduation rates higher.

EB/EL students are engaged

Across the state, EB/EL students tend to be less chronically absent than non-EB/EL students. They also tend to receive less disciplinary action than their non-EB/EL peers. With an engaged student population, it is critical to ensure our schools are able to maximize student outputs through investments in teacher training and supports.

Who are Children of Immigrants in Texas?

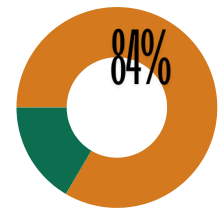
The U.S. Department of Education has long collected state-level data on the number of foreign-born students who have been enrolled in U.S. schools for three years or

less to distribute federal funds to support such students. This data shows that the size of this population steadily increased over the 2010s, reaching about 1.2 million students nationwide before the COVID-19 pandemic, then fell to 990,000 in school year 2020-21.⁶ Approximately three quarters of recent immigrant students are also English learners.⁷

At CHILDREN AT RISK, we define children of immigrants broadly as all first- and second-generation children of immigrants, including those in mixed-status households, with temporary protected status, undocumented children, and refugee children. Children of immigrants, especially those hailing from mixed-status households, live a precarious life, beholden to politics, a maze of case law and judicial intervention that could separate them from their families, all factors that contribute to disruptive childhood development and trauma.⁸ Beyond the data collected at the behest of the U.S. Department of Education, much is left to understand about this broad subset of the population that we consider to be children of immigrants in our Texas classrooms.

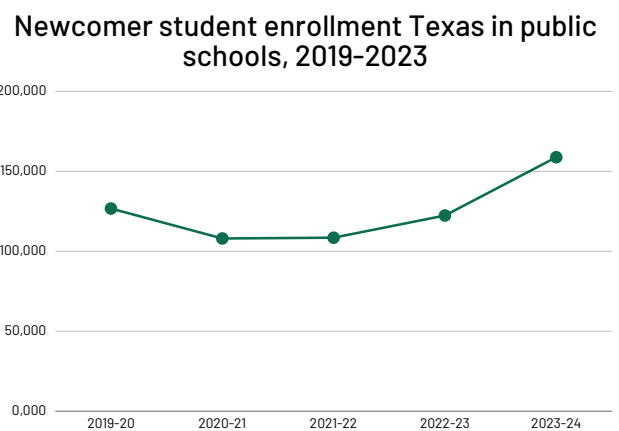
In 2023, there were 13 million children of immigrants from the ages of 6 to 17 living in the United States.⁹ **Notably, eighty-four percent of the 13 million children of immigrants who are school-aged were born in the U.S.**⁹

of the 13 million children of immigrants, 84% are born in the U.S.⁹



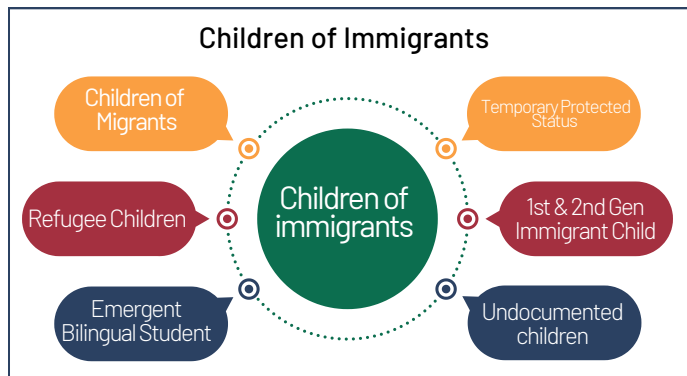
Just under one-third of all school-aged children in the U.S. come from an immigrant background, either foreign born or children of immigrants.⁹

In Texas, nearly 3 million children of immigrants were living in the state in 2023, representing 11 percent of all children of immigrants in the nation.⁹ **Texas public schools saw a 30% increase in enrollment of newcomer students** from 122,504 in the 2022 school year to 158,832 in 2023.¹⁰



Graph: This graph illustrates the changing enrollment patterns of newcomer immigrant students over the 2019-2023 school years

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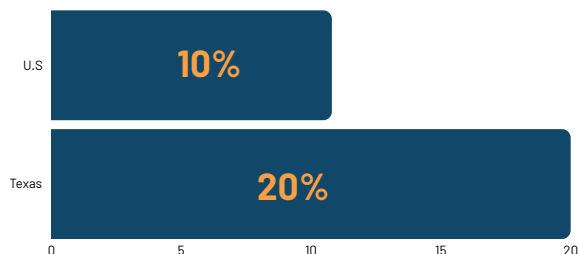
This chart breaks down the diverse categories included under the definition of 'children of immigrants,' as defined by CHILDREN AT RISK.

As we strive to quantify the classroom experience of children of immigrants, we must acknowledge the administrative limits of data. Like the Department of Education, The Texas Education Agency defines immigrant students as foreign-born students who have been enrolled in U.S. schools for three years or less. That number does not quantify the diverse population of children of immigrants as defined by CHILDREN AT RISK, including U.S. citizen children or foreign-born children who have been enrolled in schools for 4 years or more.

For this report, we endeavor to understand the classroom experience for children of immigrants, as broadly defined by CHILDREN AT RISK, by analyzing data for the emergent bilingual student population. The terms “emergent bilingual” and “English learner” have been bridged as EB/EL. The term “English learner” is used in federal regulations and guidance. EB/EL data could capture the reality of those children of immigrants who are learning English in our schools: about 89 percent of recent immigrant children in 2021 spoke a language other than English at home, compared to 81 percent of longer residing

immigrants and 60 percent of U.S. born children with at least one immigrant parent.¹² We recognize that EB/EL data is not completely accurate since for example, children of immigrants who speak a second language at home may not be classified as EB/EL since they may already be English proficient. **EB/EL data by no means encompasses the entire population of children of immigrants attending Texas public schools, nor does the EB/EL category entirely capture the reality of all children of immigrants, but with the data available, this category captures a shared experience for many.**

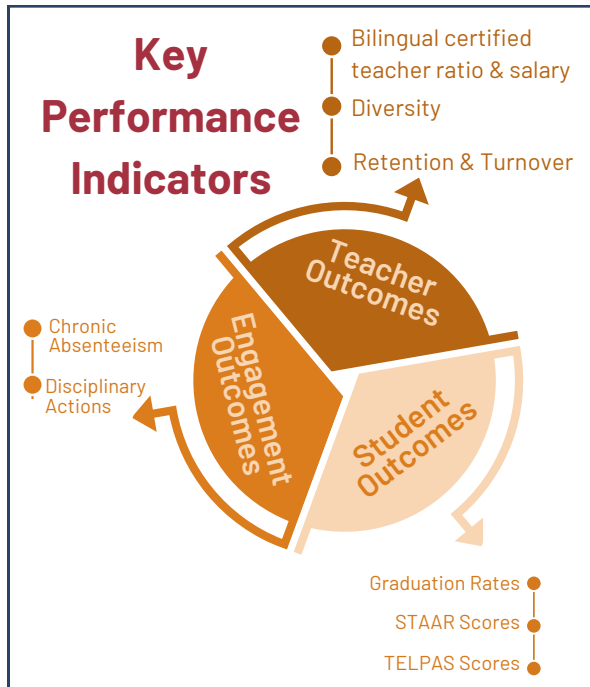
One final note on data availability, as our methodology section explains, of the 1,207 school districts in Texas, we were only able to score 479 districts. Districts without available data were dropped from the analysis. Most districts had data for their non-EB/EL students, but among EB/EL students, data on absence rates and graduation rates were often missing or masked. To ensure ratings were holistic, we removed districts without complete data from the analysis. This disparity highlights the importance of providing uniform reporting requirements across all school districts to ensure data analysis is reflective of all our Texas communities.



Graph: The percentage of public school students in the U.S. and Texas who were English learners, 2021.



Methodology



This section provides an overview of the metrics and scores used to evaluate how school districts provide support to Emergent Bilingual/English Learner students

Our analysis focuses on engagement outcomes, student outcomes, and teacher outcomes. Engagement outcomes are evaluated through chronic absenteeism and disciplinary actions. Student outcomes are measured by graduation rates, STAAR scores, and TELPAS scores for English language proficiency. Teacher outcomes are based on bilingual certified teacher ratio and salary, as well as overall teacher diversity, retention and turnover.

The final rubric categorizes districts into these categories based on their overall scores in each domain.

The analysis calculates percentile rankings for districts based on their performance in each domain and classifies them into three categories: Exceeds Expectations, Meeting Expectations, and Needs Improvement. Districts without available data were dropped from the analysis. Most districts had data for their non-EB/EL students, but among EB/EL students, data on absence rates and graduation rates were often missing or masked. To ensure ratings were holistic, we removed districts without complete data from the analysis. This disparity highlights the importance of providing uniform reporting requirements across all school districts to ensure data analysis is reflective of all our Texas communities.

Overall scores are generated by averaging the domain scores, and districts are indexed based on their performance across teacher, student, and engagement outcomes. The report highlights the importance of evaluating and addressing disparities in outcomes for immigrant students and provides a structured approach to assess and categorize school districts based on their support for EB/EL students.

Exceeds Expectations

Meeting Expectations

Needs Improvement

Our Approach

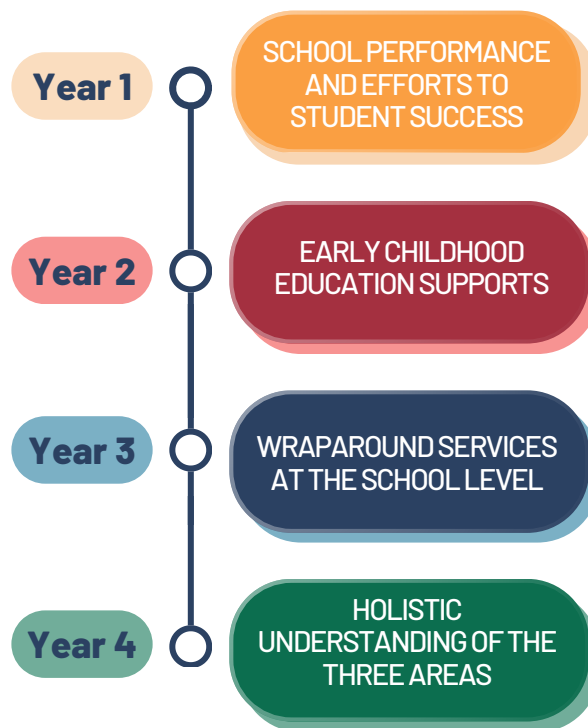
Taking a holistic approach to measure how communities take care of our children

To truly measure the success of a school and its students, CHILDREN AT RISK is working towards a more holistic approach to better understand the

classroom experience for children of immigrants and EB/EL students. Our approach is twofold, to measure the outputs, but to also measure the inputs such as access to early childhood education and wraparound services and resources for students and families. This approach would provide a more comprehensive understanding of a school's performance in the context of the communities they are a part of, as well as the efforts being made to support student success.

This year, we aim to understand the data with a qualitative understanding of approaches being taken across the state to support children of immigrants. Next year, our focus will be on early childhood education supports across the state and by our third year, we target wraparound services and supports for immigrant families at the school level. By year four, we aim to provide a holistic understanding of all three aspects, data from the TEA, maps of early childhood education across the state and innovative supports to strengthen immigrant families. By doing so, we aim to understand how communities and schools support children as an accountability measure for our families.

Our approach confronts the reality that letter grades may oversimplify the complex factors that contribute to a school's success or struggle. Additionally, the



grading system does not take into account external factors such as poverty or how our immigration laws impact student performance and well-being, which can heavily influence a student's success.

The impact of these grades goes beyond just parents' perceptions, as it also affects the employment and retention of teachers, narrows a view of a student's abilities and impacts how resources are allocated. We hope our approach widens perspectives and sparks more cross-collaboration across the state as we continue to amplify strategies and models that help make a positive difference in the lives of children and student outcomes.

Solutions in Real Time



Interviewing Multilingual Department Directors

We interviewed multilingual department directors from school districts across Texas to better understand how their approaches towards children of immigrants have evolved and which practices have proven to better serve this ever-changing student population. Their perspectives range from approaches in the classroom, supports for teachers and creative ways to keep families involved in their students' educational experience.

Best Practices

Replicable Best Practices from Multilingual Directors in Texas

Like many regions across Texas, with a large and growing population of EB/EL and newcomer students, local educators have created comprehensive and effective supports from the ground up. This report is an effort to highlight some of those best practices and make recommendations that support immigrant students based upon these real world experiences.

Through hours of conversations with educators, administrators, and advocates, common themes have emerged. The lessons being learned every day in classrooms, schools, and communities across Texas about how to best support immigrant students can and should be applied rigorously throughout our districts.

This report hopes to make that replication of good work just a little bit easier.

Start from a place of welcome.

The classroom can be the only stable and predictable place for an immigrant student. Schools and educators are anchors in many immigrant communities. Recognition and appreciation of this responsibility demands genuine community engagement. Creative public private partnerships are bringing resources and academic supports directly to immigrant students and their families. Summer camps for newcomer students, resource fairs and ESL classes for parents, and connections to faith communities all increase the likelihood of students' academic success.

Local Case Study: *Alief ISD, Pflugerville ISD Dallas ISD*

Prioritize early childhood education.

The research is clear. Investing early is investing well. The sooner students are ready for school, the more successful they will be. This principle applies to *all* young learners, it is most important for immigrant students to ensure that they start school on par with their peers. Districts saw a jump from 40% vocabulary development to 72% after successfully implementing full day pre-k at their schools.

Local Case Study: *Alief ISD, Ysleta ISD*

Best Practices

Replicable Best Practices from Multilingual Directors in Texas

Use incentives to recruit teachers.

There is a teacher shortage in Texas. Across the state school districts are struggling to recruit and retain quality teachers. The shortage is particularly severe for school districts looking to hire bilingual and ESL teachers. Fortunately, school districts are finding creative ways to incentivize certification by using stipends among new and existing teachers and to increase the pipeline of teachers entering bilingual education.

Local Case Study: *Aldine ISD, Fort Bend ISD*

Enhance professional development.

Training matters. Ongoing professional development is key to the successful implementation of quality bilingual education programs. Successful districts in Harris County are providing professional development in real time by incorporating coaches into classrooms. Additionally, districts are offering more interactive training for administrators and teachers.

Local Case Study: *Aldine ISD, Pflugerville ISD, United ISD, Dallas ISD*

Ease Enrollment Barriers.

Every school district employee must be aware of the real barriers students and their families face just registering for public school. Engagement and enrollment of immigrant students must be an issue for all-staff, not just an often-overtaxed administrator. Enrollment barriers are often very easy issues to take on, but in practice, become mountains for parents to move when all stakeholders are not acting in concert.

Local Case Study: *Spring ISD*

Support comprehensive student needs.

Immigrant students often bring many challenges with them to school. Poverty, legal concerns, and lack of access to stable housing and medical care all make it hard to go to school, let alone thrive in school. Students and their families need access to services and supports like food pantries and mobile medical clinics to provide required school immunizations.

Local Case Study: *Spring Branch ISD, United ISD, Dallas ISD, Ysleta ISD*

Transitioning to dual language across all elementary and primary campuses has been a critical focus at Aldine. We want to ensure that all students, especially the 45% who are emergent bilinguals, have the opportunity to strengthen their native language to enhance their English language proficiency. We also champion English as a second language classrooms from Pre-K all the way to 12th grade.



Ensuring alignment and high-quality educational materials in dual language classrooms is a special challenge for teachers, who need support both in the primary and secondary language they're teaching. Transitioning to dual language means that teachers need to see professional development in real time with their own students.

So, Aldine brings coaches to the classroom where trainers model lessons to students, supporting teachers in real time as they troubleshoot the best ways to teach their kids and bridge the learning gap. Aldine also has a platform for teacher training which is essentially a repository of linguistic strategies where teachers can access videos and instructions throughout the training module. To ensure seamless application, Aldine provides teachers with coaches to help teachers marry the content with strategy.

Aldine Independent School District

Altagracia Delgado

Executive Director of Multilingual Services

BEST PRACTICES

- Enhance Professional Development
- Use Incentives to Recruit and Retain Teachers
- Create a newcomer school



Aware of the acute bilingual teacher shortage, Aldine also offers a bilingual stipend to teachers and an ESL stipend in classrooms where there is a bilingual and ESL pair.



The Newcomer Experience at Aldine

Dr. Adrian Bustillos
Chief Transformation Officer



Joining Aldine in 2019 there was one very particular goal: create a new school option that expands choices and opportunities for students. My mission was to recreate schools to “expand greatness” for all students. I began by focusing on the 1200 students at that time who had been in the country for three years or less and were in grades six to twelve. We selected a principal to help plan and found the new school, La Promesa, a newcomer dual language experience and launched with grade nine in 2021. We formed a class of 150 students.

That first class had the highest Algebra I scores in Aldine on the STAAR assessment. They were above the state average. How were their English scores? The complete opposite. Our focus was growth. By the second year, the TELPAS scores for students in grade nine to ten had significantly increased as well.

“

Our students at La Promesa do not get some watered-down instructional material, they’re not getting a different curriculum. Instead, they get the same materials, the same tools, and then we enhance that with the supplemental pieces for teacher development, English recognition and supports.

“When you walk on our campus, you can just feel it. It feels like a community.”

When you walk on our campus, you can just feel it. It feels like a community. And we know what the community needs, that’s why we partner with the Houston Food bank where students get to shop with their families to get the things they need. We feel that as we build the whole student model, it’s important for us to focus on wraparound services as well. Like our students, we must keep evolving, from our classrooms to how we engage with families.

La Promesa’s first class graduates in 2025.

”



Alief Independent School District

Mrs. Patricia Cantu
Director of Alief ISD Multilingual
Programs

Alief is nearly reaching completion of their implementation of their One-Way Dual Language program for pre-k through 6th grade. However, their biggest challenge isn't the politics of immersion but instead stems from an endemic teacher shortage that plagues the entire state.

Not only do our Title III funded Refugee/Newcomer Interventionists welcome Refugee students but they also provide targeted language development support during the school day across multiple campuses. As the district welcomed Afghan refugees, they were supported by community partners like Catholic Charities, Amaanah Refugee Services and SEWA International who fell out of the heavens for the district. Alief's support needed to be malleable to the demands of their students, that's why we created the Language Institute for Newcomers (LINC) which has a core of experts trained in Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) and are passionate about building language. LINC has been a program in Alief for over 20 years.

It has made a world of a difference for our students and their families to be able to speak with people on our campus who speak Pashto and Dari and other dialects.

BEST PRACTICES

- **Prioritize Early Childhood Education**
- **Make trauma informed practices a priority**

Our school also welcomed that big wave of Central American students a few years back. Oh, the trauma that these kids had been through! By pivoting, we need to be able to navigate in a triage space where we lean on our mental health department which is rich in counselors to help our kids with the mess and turmoil, they find themselves in. As educators, we need to meet kids where they're at when we meet them in their journey.

“With Title III funding, we have also been able to run our Summer Language Institute to tailor language supports and newcomer supports to our immigrant and refugee students.”

The Early Childhood Experience at Alief

Alief's Early Childhood program started with a district bond that passed in May 2015. This bond allowed us to build out our program so that we

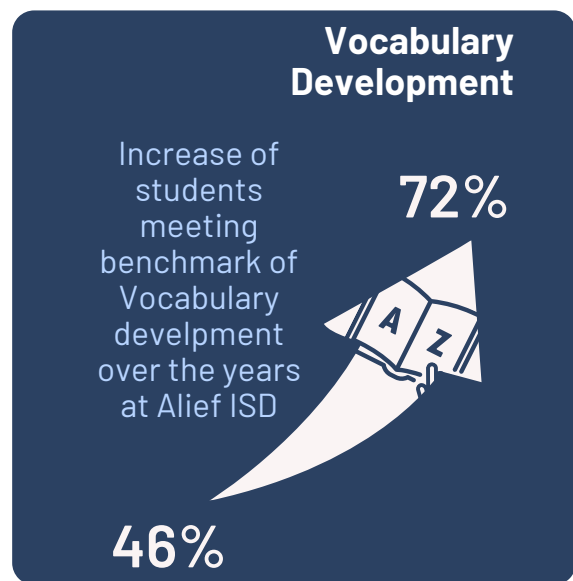
had capacity to move from a half-day program to a full-day program. We created a task force with a number of stakeholders that met monthly to come up with a plan to present to our board. The bond allowed us to either build PK centers or build additions to our elementary campuses. We built out a timeline and the first step were to start a full day PK pilot program in the fall of 2019. The following year we added 9 additional campuses for a total of 14 full day PK programs at 14 (out of 24) elementary campuses. The Task Force presented to the board, and it was approved that we could build two PK centers that would house the remaining PK programs that were still half-day.

My team and I felt strongly that what we wanted to build needed to be a developmentally appropriate program that supported best practices in early childhood. We had conversations with our architects and worked with a company that designed experiential, thematic classrooms where children could immerse themselves completely in that theme

(Gulf Coast, Pet Vet, Farm to Table, etc.) for three weeks before transitioning to the next classroom. We also talked to Exhibit Concepts (the design company) about what we could do to make the experience equitable to our PK classrooms that would continue to be housed on our elementary campuses. Mobile, convertible classrooms were created for the elementary campuses.

Through all of these initiatives, creating a full day schedule that supported literacy and oral language development and building thematic, experiential classrooms that builds background knowledge and vocabulary, we saw an improvement in our scores, most notably in our vocabulary scores that went up significantly from the time I started in my role.

Boosting vocabulary development through full day Pre-K



Maria Martinez
Alief Early Childhood Coordinator



While the bulk of our students are Spanish speaking, one of the changes we have had to go through is serving students who speak multiple languages, like Arabic, Fasu, Urdu, Pashto. Before the pandemic, we had also begun servicing students with Q'eqchi and K'iche dialects from Guatemala. And most recently, we have begun servicing refugees from Ukraine and asylum seekers from Venezuela who are experiencing significant social emotional needs.

Embarking on these needs means we have to start at the very beginning, when kids register and connect with their parents or caregivers.

The TEA has been very helpful in that regard since they've translated crucial documents in 50 different languages, we also support our campuses with translators and interpretation services so that parents always understand, from the very beginning, what's going on and how American school systems work.

Spring Branch Independent School District

Yoset Altamirano

Director of Multilingual Department

BEST PRACTICES

- **Support comprehensive needs through community partnership**
- **Engage parents at every step**

For teachers, we enlist the use of services like Seidlitz to help develop language instruction in their classroom, through research-based consultations, trainings and coaching. Those coaches work closely throughout our campuses.

Emotionally, our students also need additional supports, which is why we've enlisted the support of Communities in Schools. The services Communities in Schools provide are so essential that every single campus has Communities in Schools and we also re-enforce support through our own team members to help bridge any gaps that CIS is trying to bridge.

We also streamline our communication with YMCA, the interfaith community and Catholic Charities, because while we provide professional development and emotional supports, we also need to take a holistic view of our kids and understand their journey. That is something we are continuing to push ourselves to understand more.



In Fort Bend ISD, we're focused on ensuring that emergent bilingual students aren't just learning English but also feel a sense of belonging within our schools. Our phased dual-language model allows us to support these students from early grades through high school. Instead of isolating newcomers, we've opted to integrate them across our campuses, particularly in middle and high school, where they have access to double-blocked ESL classes led by experienced, ESL-certified teachers.



Fort Bend Independent School District

Tinou (Angela) Tran

Director of Multilingual Department

BEST PRACTICES

- Establish a social-emotional learning department
- Prioritize dual language instruction

The district's approach goes beyond academics, we take a holistic view of student support, collaborating closely with our Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) department. Through initiatives like Shared Dreams, we can provide students with essential items—clothing, food, and other supplies—to ensure they're supported in every aspect. And it's not just the students; we want families to feel included too. That's why we have translators and even leverage AI tools to facilitate communication with parents who might speak other languages.

Fort Bend ISD also emphasizes the importance of hiring the right teachers for its diverse student body. We require all new English Language Arts teachers to hold ESL certification. It's non-negotiable. We provide free certification review sessions and coaching to ensure our teachers have the tools they need. When we hire, we're not just looking for content expertise; we're looking for teachers with a passion for supporting bilingual and immigrant students. They need to believe in what we're doing and be ready to step up for these kids.



We use high-interest, immigrant-centered literature from Saddleback Publishing in these classes. These books are not only engaging but feature characters who reflect our students' own experiences. It's important for them to see themselves in the curriculum, and it promotes the kind of language development that keeps them engaged and invested.

“—
It's about giving these students the opportunity to thrive, not just academically but socially and emotionally, too.
—”

Fort Bend Continued...

At Fort Bend ISD, we're dedicated to fostering an environment where students feel safe, supported, and ready to tackle whatever comes next. Our goal is for them to overcome any language barriers and thrive in a world that's as diverse as they are.

The district's use of Title III funding for programs like the Summer Language Institute, which provides extended support to emergent bilinguals. This goes a long way in reinforcing the language skills they're building during the school year.



Pflugerville ISD is deeply committed to supporting our emergent bilingual and immigrant students through comprehensive and well-designed programs

The Multilingual Department has seen firsthand how our resources have expanded to meet the needs of our students and help them thrive. Our dual-language program begins in pre-K and continues through fifth grade, with 11 elementary schools offering this model. Five of these campuses even feature a two-way dual-language approach, where English-speaking and Spanish-speaking students learn together, promoting bilingual proficiency and cultural understanding.

For students new to the country, we've developed specialized newcomer programs at both the middle and high school levels. Our middle school program at Westview Middle School spans two years, featuring tailored schedules that include sheltered core classes and focused English language development instruction. At the high school level, we run an intensive one-year newcomer program that prepares students to transition smoothly into the broader academic curriculum.



Pflugerville Independent School District

Jose Alejandro Mojica

Director of Multilingual Education

BEST PRACTICES

- **Prioritize recruitment through incentives & free academies**
- **Develop specialized newcomer programs like The Welcome Center**

Staffing for these specialized programs has been one of our biggest challenges. To address this, we make significant investments in professional development, ensuring our teachers are prepared to meet the needs of our emergent bilingual students. We offer ESL academies at no cost to teachers, providing preparatory courses, materials, and covering exam fees and substitute teacher costs on test days. Once teachers complete their certification, we reimburse them for their expenses, reinforcing our commitment to professional growth and retention.

Our support extends beyond academics. Through our Welcome Center, funded by the Refugee School Impact Grant, we provide essential services to new families. This center offers orientation sessions that help families navigate life in the U.S. and understand our educational system. Our staff at the Welcome Center speak nine different languages, allowing us to conduct many of these sessions in the parents' native languages. When additional support is needed, we rely on contracted interpretation services to ensure effective communication.



When additional support is needed, we rely on contracted interpretation services to ensure effective communication.

Recognizing that some students come to us with significant educational gaps, we offer after-school tutorials focused on building foundational skills. These tutorials help students who may have had limited or interrupted schooling develop the essential competencies needed for their classes. We also prioritize trauma-informed education and culturally responsive teaching in our professional development to ensure that our educators can address both the academic and emotional needs of our students.

Pflugerville continued...

Engaging parents is key to our approach. We partner with community organizations like Central Texas Catholic Charities to provide legal and immigration support, helping families understand their rights and connect with resources. We know that language barriers and cultural hesitancy can be obstacles, so we take a proactive approach to bridge these gaps and ensure families can access services such as food programs, rental assistance, and healthcare options.

Through our comprehensive programs, ongoing professional development, and strategic community partnerships, Pflugerville ISD is dedicated to creating an inclusive and supportive environment. Our efforts are focused on making sure every student, regardless of background or language proficiency, has the opportunity to succeed both academically and personally.



United Independent School District

Maria H. Arambula Ruiz
Bilingual/ESL Department Director

Our commitment to emergent bilingual and immigrant students is at the core of our educational mission here at United ISD. We serve one of the largest student populations in the region, with a focus on creating systems that support these learners' academic and personal growth. Our district implements a transitional early exit bilingual program, supplemented by three elementary schools offering full dual-language programs from kindergarten through fifth grade. For middle and high school students, we offer the ESL pull-out program where we assign ESL certified teachers to support the students,



Meeting the needs of emergent bilinguals has required creative approaches, particularly as we face challenges common across the state, such as the shortage of certified bilingual and ESL teachers. To counter this, we invest heavily in professional development and provide financial incentives for teachers to obtain their ESL certifications.

BEST PRACTICES

- **Enhance Professional Development through monthly training sessions**
- **Leverage technology to enhance English proficiency**

We ensure teachers have access to monthly training sessions throughout the school year and additional cohorts during the summer. Our district covers test fees, pays stipends for attendance, and provides substitute coverage for teachers taking certification exams, removing financial burdens from the process.

Our district's instructional strategy includes leveraging technology to enhance language acquisition. We partnered with Lexia Learning Systems, introducing programs like Lexia English and Core5 to boost both reading and language skills. The results have been noteworthy, with students achieving higher scores on assessments and excelling in language proficiency tests. Our dedication was recognized at conferences such as TCEA, where we shared our successful practices with other districts.



United Continued...

“ We’re not just teaching language; we’re building confidence and creating a foundation for lifelong success. ”

United ISD prioritizes ongoing support for teachers through a structured network of coordinators who offer classroom modeling and assist in the implementation of programs. This collaborative culture extends to all departments, ensuring that the needs of emerging bilinguals are met comprehensively. Our data-driven approach, supported by an internal program called IRIS, enables us to track student performance across various metrics and make informed decisions that enhance educational outcomes.

We also emphasize family engagement by providing bilingual communication channels and virtual parent meetings, which have significantly boosted participation post-COVID. Parents can now ask questions and interact more comfortably through chat features without the pressure of in-person settings.



United ISD’s collective effort, spanning administrators, teachers, counselors, and community partners, creates a network of support that allows emergent bilingual students to succeed. Through strategic planning, resource allocation, and an unwavering commitment to our students’ well-being, we maintain a standard of excellence that reflects in our strong academic performance and the success of our programs.

Ysleta Independent School District

Ana C. Esqueda

Academic Language Programs
Department Director

Dual-language programming at Ysleta ISD begins in the form of Early Education (EE) for three-year-olds, using a 90/10 model where most instruction is delivered in Spanish, with English introduced through core curriculum lessons. This early start ensures that young learners develop a strong foundation in both their native language and English, setting them up for academic success.

Recognizing the importance of quality early education, Ysleta ISD has implemented strategies to engage families and encourage attendance. Perfect attendance initiatives, including competitions and rewards like bicycles, help reinforce the value of consistent participation in school. These efforts are crucial in fostering early engagement and building positive habits for students and families alike.

Their dual-language program spans from early education through high school, with select feeder patterns allowing students to continue their bilingual studies into secondary school. Students meeting dual-language criteria are celebrated at graduation with stoles and medals. Ysleta is also exploring the possibility of implementing a localized Seal of Biliteracy to further honor these achievements.



BEST PRACTICES

- **Prioritize the mastery of dual language through Early Education**
- **Tackle chronic absenteeism early through family engagement**

In addition to dual-language programs, Ysleta provides English Language Development Acquisition (ELDA) courses at the middle and high school levels, supporting students with focused, language-rich instruction. Ysleta ISD also emphasizes collaboration across departments to provide wraparound services for students and families, including family engagement events such as the Early Education and Family Engagement conferences. These events connect parents with resources to support their children's academic journeys.

Ysleta ISD's commitment to early learning, bilingual education, and family engagement reflects its dedication to creating a supportive environment where all students can thrive academically, socially, and linguistically. Through innovative programming and a collaborative approach, the district continues to empower its students to succeed in an increasingly global society.

Dallas Independent School District

Richard F. Heffernan

Executive Director Dual Language
ESL

At Dallas ISD, we're proud to lead the way in bilingual education with a comprehensive dual-language program that serves students from elementary through high school. Our dual-language programs serve as a cornerstone of this effort, starting at the elementary level with a one-way model designed exclusively for emergent bilingual students. Additionally, 70 campuses offer two-way dual-language programs, where native English and Spanish speakers learn side by side, fostering bilingualism, biliteracy, and cultural understanding. These programs not only help students achieve academic success but also build sociocultural competence.



BEST PRACTICES

- **International Welcome Center to support newcomer families**
- **Cohorts for newcomer students to create supportive learning environments**

For our middle and high school students, we've implemented newcomer sections where emergent bilingual students can focus on English as a Second Language (ESL) and ESOL reading classes. These sections employ content-based language instruction, ensuring that students can master English while staying on track with grade-level academic content. This simultaneous approach to language and content learning is a key part of our instructional philosophy.

One of our most innovative programs is the Dallas International Academy pilot at Thomas Jefferson High School. This program cohorts newcomer students and their teachers for two years, creating a supportive learning environment while allowing students to fully engage in the school's extracurricular activities. From sports teams to theater and band, students are encouraged to participate in the broader school culture, helping them form lasting relationships. After two years,

Dallas Continued...

students remain at the same campus through graduation, benefiting from continuity in their support network of teachers, counselors, and peers.

Our commitment to professional development ensures that teachers are equipped to meet the unique needs of emergent bilingual students. Each summer, we run our Dual Language and ESL Institutes, providing essential training tailored to their classrooms. Instructional specialists work closely with educators throughout the year, offering co-teaching opportunities, feedback, and professional learning communities. Programs like the Dual Language Teacher Academy mentor new teachers, ensuring they have the tools and confidence to excel in their roles.



Supporting families is just as important as supporting students. Our International Welcome Center serves as a central resource for newcomer families, providing language testing, health screenings, and a comprehensive orientation to prepare students for their first day of school. Families receive uniforms, school supplies, and even tokens for our book vending



machine, so students leave with their first book in the U.S. These thoughtful touches ensure families feel welcomed and supported from the start.

At Dallas ISD, we are dedicated to creating an inclusive environment where emergent bilingual students can thrive. Through innovative programs, comprehensive professional development, and strong family engagement, we empower our students to succeed academically, socially, and linguistically.

At Spring ISD in Houston, Cultural Awareness Training is mandatory for all employees to create a cohesive and accepting environment for the diverse student body. This is overseen by the Multicultural Programs Director, Lettie Houck.

Cultural awareness training helps create cohesive acceptance of the diverse Spring ISD student body. Last year, she led the launch of a new Emergent Bilingual program; the One-Way Dual Language model that supports equitable English proficiency while honoring students' native language.

Spring ISD's Multilingual Department offers comprehensive support for both students and staff. The district's efforts go beyond simple compliance, focusing on building a strong foundation for academic and linguistic growth by ensuring that all departments work together, speak the same language and have a common understanding about the students they serve.



Spring Independent School District

Lettie Houck

Director of Multilingual Department

BEST PRACTICES

- **Ease Enrollment Barriers through concerted administrative actions**
- **Make cultural awareness training mandatory**

Through structured training for campus administrators, the district ensures staff are equipped to handle the unique needs of emergent bilingual students, from strategic placement to resource allocation

Key to this support is the district's 5 Building Blocks Every Administrator Should Know, a framework that equips school leaders with essential strategies to ensure all emergent bilingual students receive equitable and high-quality instruction. This includes targeted, systematic language instruction for students at the beginning or intermediate levels of English proficiency, particularly in grades three through twelve.

Spring ISD's commitment to its diverse student body is reinforced through its structured and ongoing professional development, ensuring that staff across the district are prepared to support students' academic, social, and emotional needs. Through initiatives like these, Spring ISD continues to create an inclusive and supportive environment, empowering students to thrive in a global society.

Survey on Newcomer Student Enrollment

To better understand the enrollment barriers faced by children of immigrants, we surveyed key service providers and organizations that work closely with immigrant families in the Greater Houston area. These organizations include Central American Minors (CAM), Harris County Resources for Children and Adults, Kids in Need of Defense (KIND), HISD, The Alliance, The Young Center for Immigrant Children's Rights, Communities in Schools Houston, YMCA of Greater Houston, Catholic Charities, and the Houston Immigration Legal Services Collaborative. These partners are on the front lines, helping families navigate the complexities of accessing public education, and they play a critical role in supporting students through challenges related to documentation, language, and unmet basic needs.

52% state that students lack proper documentation as a barrier to enrollment

42% find language as one of the top barriers

Findings from community engagement of service providers in the Greater Houston Area who work closely with immigrant families.

Children are being denied access to education due to challenges in providing required paperwork despite protections/ Many children of immigrants in the Houston area still face significant barriers when trying to enroll in school. **On average, 55% of the students served by the survey providers experienced enrollment barriers.**

To address these barriers, respondents recommended expanded enrollment support, such as designated staff to assist immigrant families in navigating the process, as well as increased awareness and training for school administrators and registrars about the laws that protect immigrant children's right to education. Establishing centralized enrollment systems could simplify paperwork and documentation requirements, while more compassionate enrollment practices could help bridge the gaps immigrant families face. The enrollment barriers children of immigrants face in Houston are complex but not insurmountable. By improving awareness, support systems, and communication between families and school districts, we can help ensure that all children have access to the education they deserve.

Removing barriers to enrollment:

- Expand enrollment support through designated staff to assist families throughout the process
- Increase awareness and training for school administrators and laws and protections
- Establish centralized enrollment systems
- Be compassionate

What We Learned Statewide

For this report we were able to score 479 districts out of 1,207 districts across the state. This highlights the importance of providing uniform reporting requirements across all districts to ensure data analysis is reflective of all Texas communities. Of the 479 districts analyzed, 16% of districts exceeded expectations, only 67% met expectations, and 16% need improvement.

In terms of engagement, the rates of chronic absenteeism for EB/EL students in Texas are on par with their peers. Chronic absenteeism rates for EB/EL students are 21% compared to 22% for non-EB/EL students. Unfortunately, the percentage of all students chronically absent in Texas has nearly doubled since the beginning of the pandemic. Students who are chronically absent are less likely to read at grade level and to graduate from high school. Improving attendance could have positive effects on college enrollment and educational attainment.

When it comes to disciplinary action, EB/EL students are less likely to have any type of disciplinary action on record. On average 7% of EB/EL students received some type of disciplinary action versus 11% for non-EB/EL students. The state overall has good engagement amongst EB/EL students, these students are attending school at similar rates to their peers and are less likely to get into trouble than their peers.

Children of immigrants and EB/EL student populations in Texas

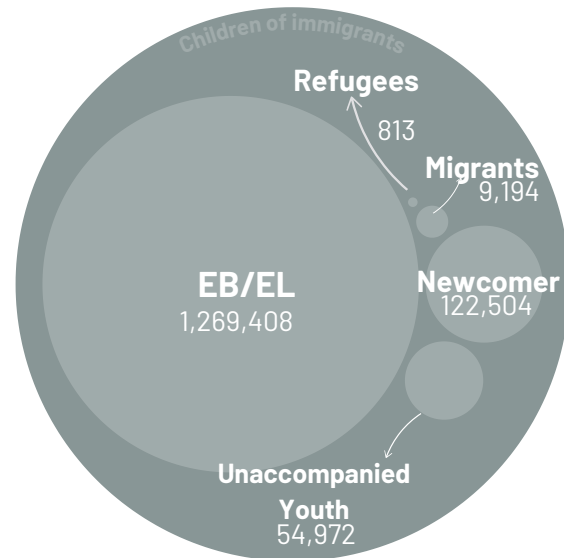
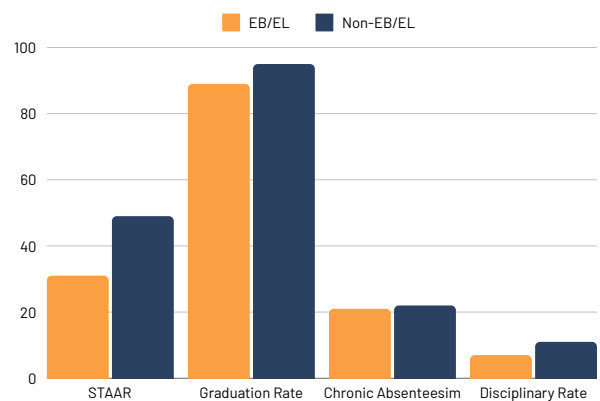


Chart: Breakdown of Children of Immigrants in the Region, highlighting the numbers of Emergent Bilingual/English Learner (EB/EL) students, refugees, migrant children, newcomers, and unaccompanied youth.

Comparative Outcomes for Emergent Bilingual vs. Non-Emergent Bilingual Students



Graph: This bar graph illustrates the differences between emergent bilingual students and their non-emergent bilingual peers.

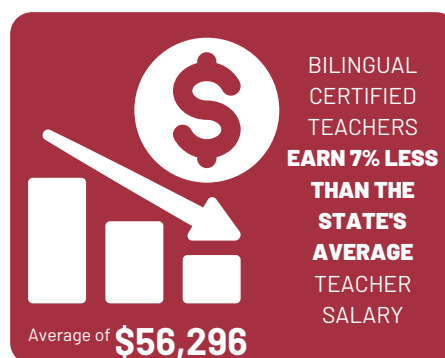
Despite this good level of engagement amongst EB/EL students, the mean percentage of EB/EL students in Texas passing their Math and English STAAR exams is significantly lower than non-EB/EL students. **Meaning that on average EB/EL students are not performing at their grade level for Math and Reading levels.** EB/EL students have passing rates (meets or above) of 31% while all other students are passing at rates of 49%. EB/EL students also have a lower graduation rate compared to their peers, 89% for EB/EL students and 95% for non-EB/EL students.

On average, in the state of Texas, there is one bilingual certified teacher per 16 students, this is higher than the state average for all teachers students, which is, 15:1 student-teacher ratio. The small class sizes allow for more personalized instruction and individualized attention for each student. This can greatly benefit students who are learning English, as they may require additional support and guidance in their academic studies.

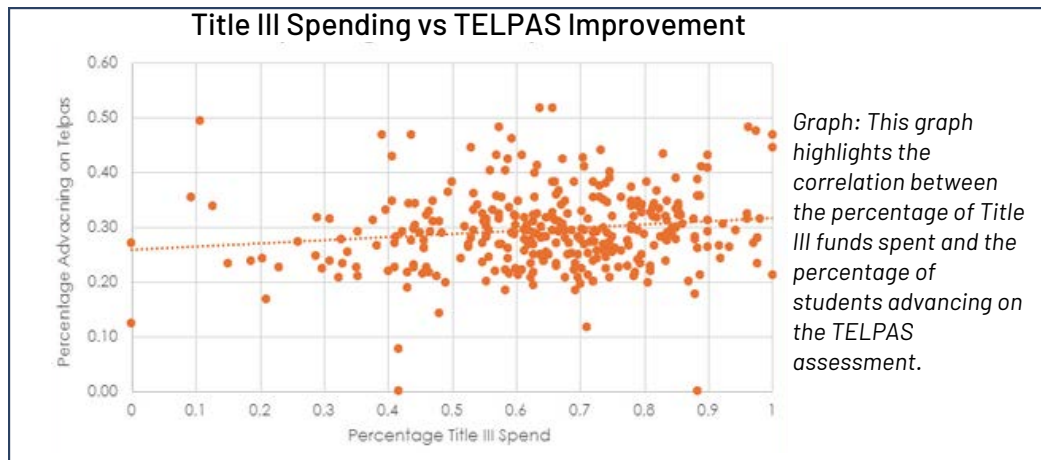
While students are attending school and receiving adequate teacher resources, there is a gap that needs to be filled to help EB/EL students succeed in the classroom and beyond. Based on these statistics, EB/EL students are facing significant challenges when it comes to completing their education. This could be due to a variety of reasons such as language barriers, lack of resources, or cultural differences.²⁵ As a state we must work towards providing equal opportunities and support for all students, to ensure they can reach their full potential.

Despite the increasing diversity of K-12 students in the United States, the teacher workforce remains largely homogenous, 70% of teachers in Texas are white. More than half of the child population in Texas is non-white.

This lack of diversity can be attributed to various factors, such as limited resources for recruiting diverse candidates and systemic barriers in the education system.¹³ To address this issue, it is crucial for school districts and states to implement policies and initiatives that promote diversity in the teacher workforce.



Generally, the value of all teachers' salaries varies based on where they work. Teachers receive different salaries, and their salaries are more or less comparable to their peers depending on where they work. Teachers' salaries also vary across their careers; however, the increases in salary are generally modest and consistent over time. For the 2022-2023 school year, teacher salary average base pay was \$60,716.¹⁴ Bilingual certified teachers, on the other hand, earn 7% less than the state's average teacher salary, with an average of \$56,296. Our interviews across the state illustrate ways in which districts try to bridge this divide through teacher incentives, bonuses and reimbursement for courses once teachers successfully obtain their bilingual certifications. Approaching this disparity is critical as teachers in bilingual education are also likely to grow in demand, by 13% from 2020 to 2030 as the student population of non-English-speaking students in K-12 schools continues to grow.¹⁵



TELPAS

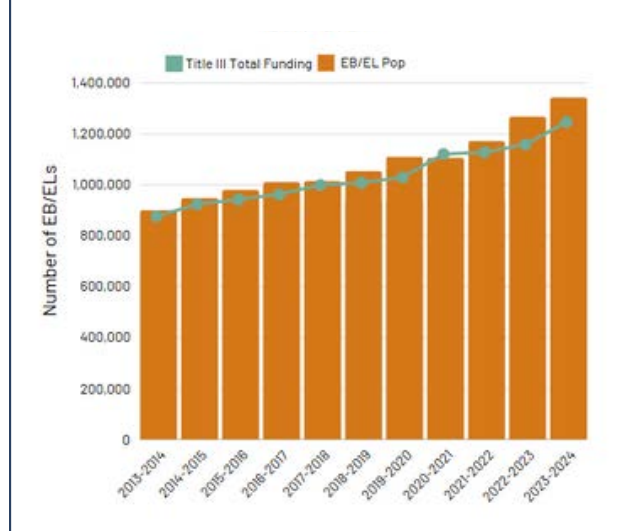
The Texas English Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS) is an assessment to provide a measure of progress, indicating annually where each English language learner (ELL) is on a continuum of English language development designed for second-language learners. This continuum is divided into four proficiency levels: beginning, intermediate, advanced, and advanced high. The progress of students along this continuum is the basis for the TELPAS reporting system and the key to helping districts monitor whether their ELLs are making steady annual growth in learning to listen, speak, read, and write in English. The statewide average for TELPAS is 2.7 resulting in a composite rating of Advanced. Statewide, 33% of ELLs who took the TELPAS the previous year progressed at least one proficiency level in the most recent 2023-2024 school year.¹⁶

Title III

Evidence shows that **Title III funding has a direct impact on TELPAS scores for that district. The more funding a district spends, the better the improvement on their TELPAS scores.** This funding plays a crucial role in supporting English learners and provides districts with critical supplemental funding to help improve their services for English learners. Federal funding is apportioned to states, which can reserve a small percentage of the federal dollars and disperse the bulk to districts

apply for those funds to support EB/EL students. These specific Title III funds can be used to support a variety of different services that are tailored to newcomer students such as family services, newcomer programs, and activities that help students and families transition to the U.S. education system. Texas receives the second highest amount of Title III funding, just behind California.¹⁷ Title III funding has not kept pace with the growing immigrant student population in Texas, we see that since 2013, the EB/EL student population in Texas has grown by 49% while Title III funding has only increased by 43%.¹⁸

Title III Funding and EB/EL Enrollment, School Years 2013-2024



Graph: This graph highlights the total number of EB/EL students in Texas with the total number of Title III funding for EB/EL students from 2013-2023 school years.

Texas

Key Performance Indicators Measured



Engagement Outcomes

Measured chronic absenteeism, and disciplinary actions



Student Outcomes

Compared Graduation rates, STAAR scores, TELPAS scores



Teacher Outcomes

Evaluated teacher diversity, and experience, bilingual teacher pay, student-teacher ratios, years of experience, turnover rates.



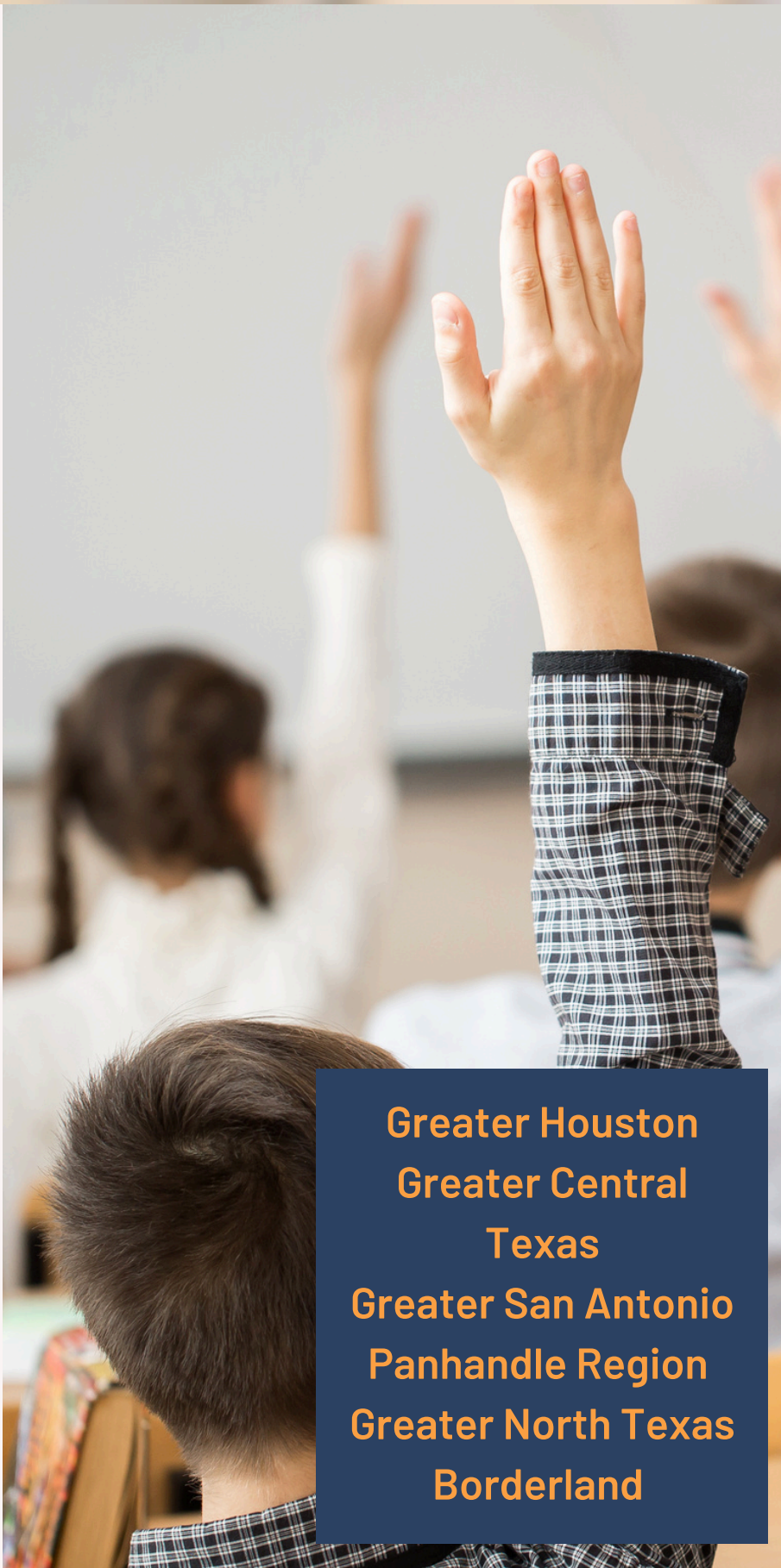
Overall Score

Based on student performance across the teachers, student, and engagement domains, districts were categorized:
 -Exceeds
 -Meets
 -Needs Improvement

Top 25 School Districts in Texas with the Highest EB/EL Student Population

ISD	County	EB/EL STUDENT POPULATION					
1	Houston ISD	Harris	70,125	Needs Improvement	Meets	Meets	Meets
2	Dallas ISD	Dallas	68,821	Meets	Needs Improvement	Meets	Meets
3	Idea Public Schools	Hidalgo	32,080	Needs Improvement	Exceeds	Meets	Meets
4	Fort Worth ISD	Tarrant	28,407	Meets	Needs Improvement	Meets	Meets
5	Aldine ISD	Harris	26,847	Meets	Meets	Meets	Meets
6	Austin ISD	Travis	22,343	Needs Improvement	Exceeds	Exceeds	Needs Improvement
7	Cypress-Fairbanks ISD	Harris	22,278	Needs Improvement	Meets	Exceeds	Needs Improvement
8	Alief ISD	Harris	21,747	Meets	Needs Improvement	Exceeds	Meets
9	Katy ISD	Harris	21,713	Needs Improvement	Needs Improvement	Exceeds	Meets
10	Garland ISD	Dallas	20,515	Needs Improvement	Exceeds	Meets	Meets
11	El Paso ISD	El Paso	18,123	Needs Improvement	Meets	Exceeds	Needs Improvement
12	Arlington ISD	Tarrant	17,353	Meets	Needs Improvement	Meets	Meets
13	Pasadena ISD	Harris	17,023	Needs Improvement	Needs Improvement	Meets	Meets
14	United ISD	Webb	16,901	Needs Improvement	Needs Improvement	Exceeds	Meets
15	Irving ISD	Dallas	16,596	Meets	Needs Improvement	Meets	Meets
16	Fort Bend ISD	Fort Bend	16,392	Needs Improvement	Needs Improvement	Exceeds	Meets
17	Brownsville ISD	Cameron	15,120	Needs Improvement	Needs Improvement	Exceeds	Meets
18	La Joya ISD	Hidalgo	14,222	Needs Improvement	Needs Improvement	Exceeds	Meets
19	Socorro ISD	El Paso	13,864	Needs Improvement	Needs Improvement	Exceeds	Meets
20	Kipp Texas Public Schools	Travis	13,670	Meets	Exceeds	Needs Improvement	Meets
21	Conroe ISD	Montgome	13,601	Needs Improvement	Needs Improvement	Exceeds	Meets
22	Pharr-San Juan-Alamo ISD	Hidalgo	13,452	Needs Improvement	Needs Improvement	Exceeds	Meets
23	Mesquite ISD	Dallas	12,896	Meets	Needs Improvement	Meets	Meets
24	Edinburg CISD	Hidalgo	12,736	Needs Improvement	Meets	Exceeds	Meets
25	Spring Branch ISD	Harris	12,664	Needs Improvement	Needs Improvement	Exceeds	Needs Improvement

REGIONAL BREAKDOWNS



**Greater Houston
Greater Central
Texas
Greater San Antonio
Panhandle Region
Greater North Texas
Borderland**

What We Learned Greater Houston

Brazoria, Chambers, Fort Bend, Galveston, Harris, Liberty, Montgomery, and Waller

For the greater Houston region, out of 97 districts, a total of 57 were scored. A total of 11% excelled, 74% met expectations, and 16% need improvement. Twenty seven percent of EB/EL students are registered in the Greater Houston Region and 76% of all EB/EL students in the region are concentrated in Harris County. Notably, Greater Houston has the highest newcomer population in the state at 38% and the highest population of unaccompanied youth at 27%.

The demands are great in the region, yet the ratio of bilingual certified teachers to EB/EL students is 23:1 in Harris County, which is worse than Greater Houston at 19:1 and the state at 16:1. Nevertheless, nearly 100% of Greater Houston's top 25 schools with the largest EB/EL student population meet or even exceed teacher outcomes. To help explain this phenomenon, we dive into several issues. Firstly, to help stimulate teacher growth, which is the second highest in the state at 17%, teachers enjoy the highest teacher pay at about about \$65,000 on average, with bilingual certified teachers earning a salary average of \$64,983^{19, 14}. However, once teachers enter the classroom, the challenge is retention, teacher turnover is high at 29%. Here, districts heed the call to bridge the turnover gap through innovation.

Our interviews with Multilingual Directors starting on page 13 highlight how school districts support teachers in the classroom through real time support with coaches in the classroom or online platforms for teacher training, which contain a repository of linguistic strategies.

Children of immigrants and EB/EL student populations in Greater Houston Texas Region

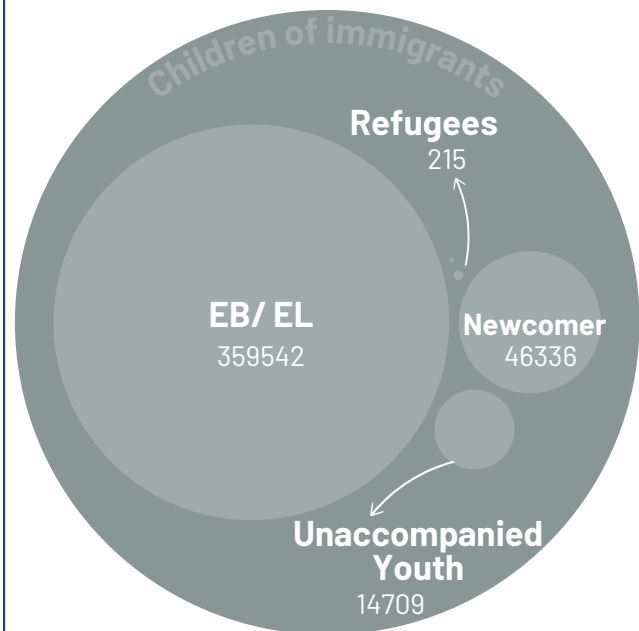
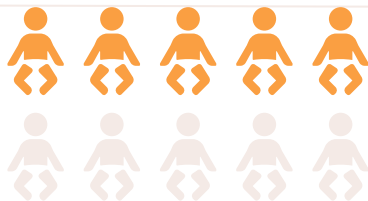


Chart: Breakdown of Children of Immigrants in the Region, highlighting the numbers of Emergent Bilingual/English Learner (EB/EL) students, refugees, migrant children, newcomers, and unaccompanied youth.

Through the distribution of stipends and reimbursements for courses upon successful completion of certification, districts also incentivize the recruitment of more bilingual certified teachers to the classroom. When combined, these efforts create positive outcomes for teachers in the region.

While on average, non-EB/EL students have higher disciplinary actions and chronic absenteeism than their EB/EL peers, nevertheless, EB/EL students experience higher disciplinary action and chronic absenteeism than the state, at 9% and 22% respectively. When students are not in classrooms, their student outcomes naturally suffer. Only 32% of EB/EL students in Houston are passing their exams, compared to 46% of their peers. The graduation rates for EB/EL students in Houston are also lower, with only 86% graduating compared to 92% of non-EB/EL students.¹⁴

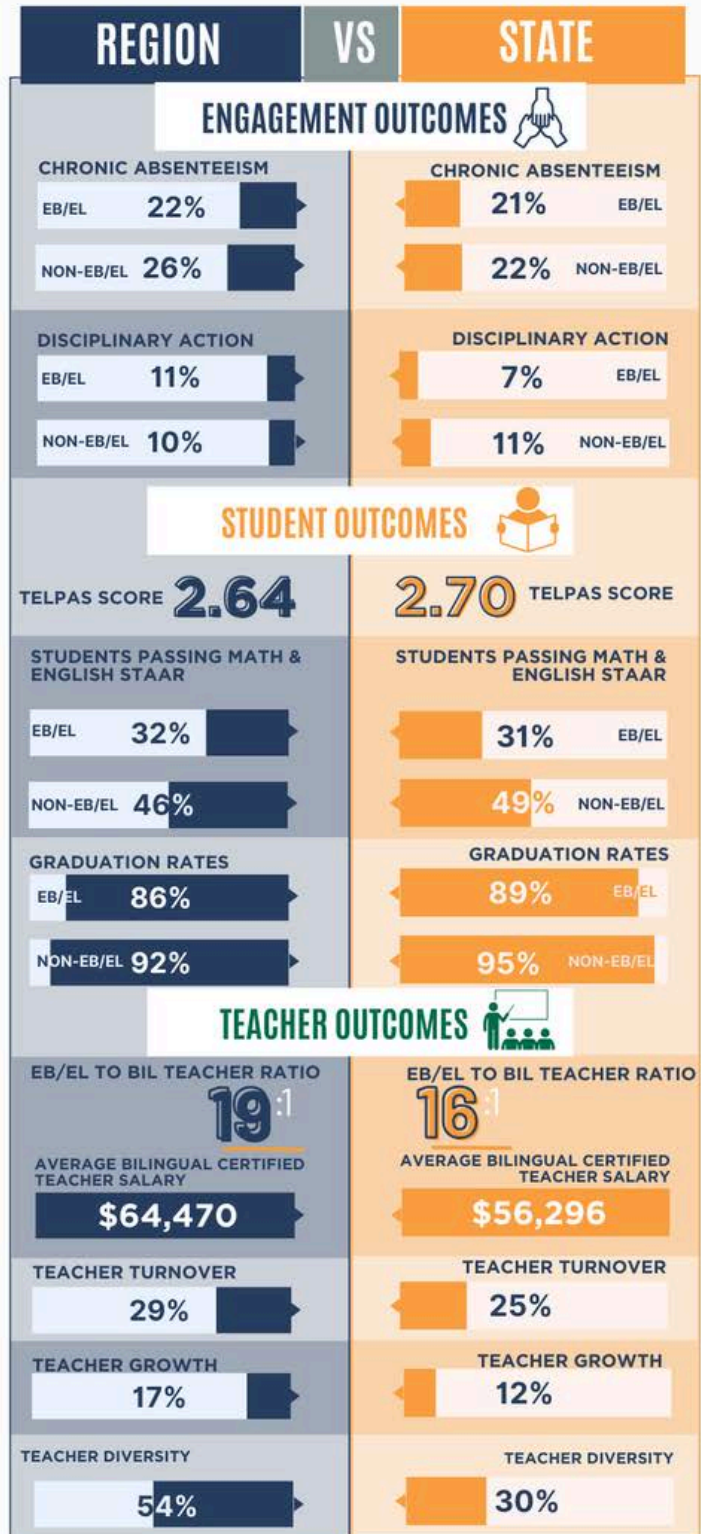
With 31% of the state's Title III funding allocated to the greater Houston area, EB/EL students enjoy relatively high English proficiency in the area, with 2.64 of TEPAS test scores. Implementing more strategies to support teachers like the ones listed in our interviews, could help lessen the teacher turnover rate, infusing the region with a more stable and resilient teacher population to help improve student outcomes.²⁰



44% of Houston children have an immigrant parent ⁹

GREATER HOUSTON REGION

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS COMPARISONS BETWEEN EB/EL AND NON EB/EL STUDENTS IN THE REGION VS STATE



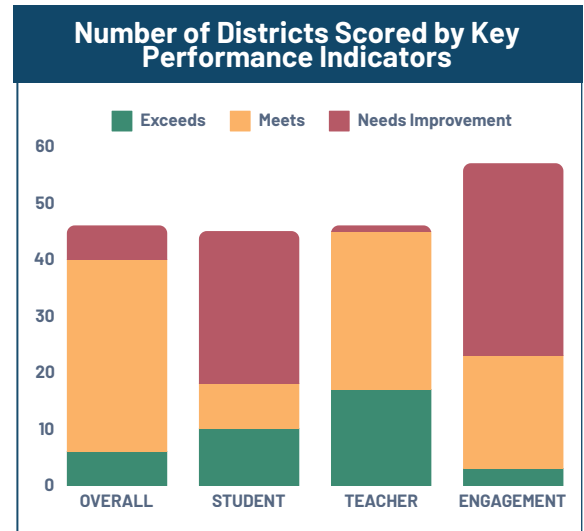
Greater Houston

Key Performance Indicators Measured

- ENGAGEMENT OUTCOMES**
Measured Chronic Absenteeism, and Disciplinary Actions
- STUDENT OUTCOMES**
Compared Graduation rates, STAAR scores, TELPAS scores
- TEACHER OUTCOMES**
Evaluated teacher diversity, Bilingual teacher pay, Student-teacher ratios, BIL Certification, Turnover rates, Growth Rates.
- OVERALL SCORE**
Districts were categorized as:
-Exceeds
-Meets
-Needs Improvement
Based on student performance across the teacher, student, and engagement domains.

Scored School Districts

- 11%**
Exceeded Expectations
- 74%**
Met Expectations
- 16%**
Needed improvement



Top 25 School Districts in the Greater Houston Region with the Highest EB/EL Student Population

ISD	EB/EL STUDENT POPULATION	Engagement	Student	Teacher	Overall
1 Houston ISD	70,125	Needs Improvement	Meets	Meets	Meets
2 Aldine ISD	26,847	Meets	Meets	Meets	Meets
3 Cypress-Fairbanks ISD	22,278	Needs Improvement	Meets	Exceeds	Needs Improvement
4 Alief ISD	21,747	Meets	Needs Improvement	Exceeds	Meets
5 Katy ISD	21,713	Needs Improvement	Needs Improvement	Exceeds	Meets
6 Pasadena ISD	17,023	Needs Improvement	Needs Improvement	Meets	Meets
7 Fort Bend ISD	16,392	Needs Improvement	Needs Improvement	Exceeds	Meets
8 Conroe ISD	13,601	Needs Improvement	Needs Improvement	Exceeds	Meets
9 Spring Branch ISD	12,664	Needs Improvement	Meets	Exceeds	Needs Improvement
10 Klein ISD	10,892	Needs Improvement	Needs Improvement	Meets	Needs Improvement
11 Spring ISD	10,580	Meets	Needs Improvement	Meets	Meets
12 Galena Park ISD	8,868	Meets	Exceeds	Meets	Meets
13 Lamar CISD	8,393	Needs Improvement	Needs Improvement	Exceeds	Meets
14 Yes Prep Public Schools Inc	7,930	Needs Improvement	Needs Improvement	Meets	Meets
15 Cleveland ISD	6,922	Needs Improvement	Meets	Needs Improvement	Needs Improvement
16 New Caney ISD	6,229	Needs Improvement	Needs Improvement	Meets	Meets
17 Humble ISD	5,652	Needs Improvement	Needs Improvement	Exceeds	Meets
18 Goose Creek ISD	5,332	Meets	Needs Improvement	Meets	Meets
19 Clear Creek ISD	5,325	Needs Improvement	Needs Improvement	Exceeds	Meets
20 Alvin ISD	5,163	Needs Improvement	Exceeds	Meets	Meets
21 Harmony Public Schools-Houston	4,969	Needs Improvement	Exceeds	Meets	Meets
22 Channelview ISD	4,107	Needs Improvement	Needs Improvement	Meets	Meets
23 Sheldon ISD	3,765	Meets	Needs Improvement	Meets	Meets
24 Tomball ISD	2,914	Needs Improvement	Exceeds	Exceeds	Meets
25 Waller ISD	2,861	Needs Improvement	Needs Improvement	Meets	Needs Improvement

What We Learned Greater Central Texas

Bastrop, Blanco, Burnet, Caldwell, Hays, Travis and Williamson

For the Central Texas region, out of 55 districts, a total of 34 were scored. A total of 6% of districts exceeded in performance, 62% met expectations, and 32% of districts needed improvement. There are a total of 24% of EB/EL students in schools. The population in Central Texas includes 9% of students who are identified as newcomer students, 7% are unaccompanied youth and 2% are refugees.

Central Texas enjoys a better bilingual certified teacher ratio to EB/EL students, of 16:1. However, teacher turnover is the highest in the state at 31%. The average bilingual certified salary is low at \$54,905. To help recruit more teachers to the field, which is currently at 13%, our interview with Pflugerville ISD showcases their efforts to provide English as a second language academies to teachers at no costs, providing preparatory courses and materials, they also cover exam fees. Teachers are reimbursed for their certifications upon completion.

While a majority of the top 25 school districts in Central Texas with EB/EL populations meet or exceed teacher outcomes, the disparities in student outcomes and engagement outcomes are bleak. Only 28% of EB/EL students in Central Texas are passing their exams, compared to 51% of their peers. These are the lowest rates in the state. Central Texas

also has the one of lowest TELPAS scores in Texas, at 2.6. The graduation rates for EB/EL students in Central Texas are lower, with only 87% graduating compared to 89% of non-EB/EL students.

Children of immigrants and EB/EL student populations in Greater Central Texas Region

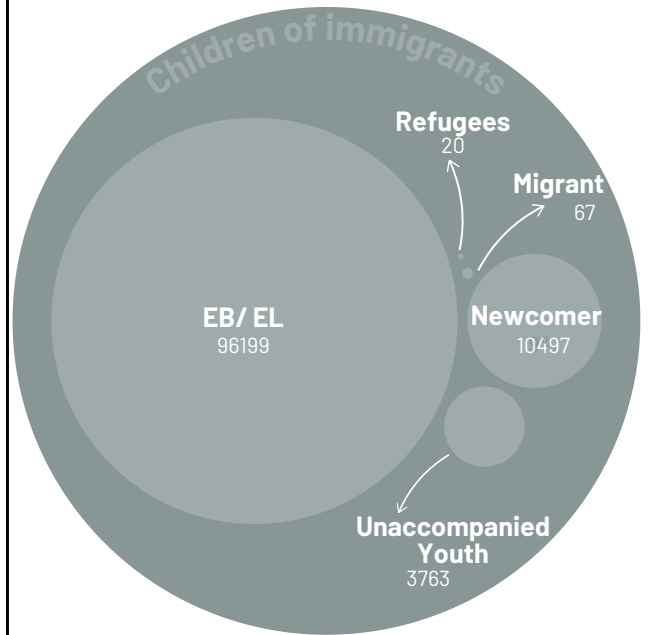


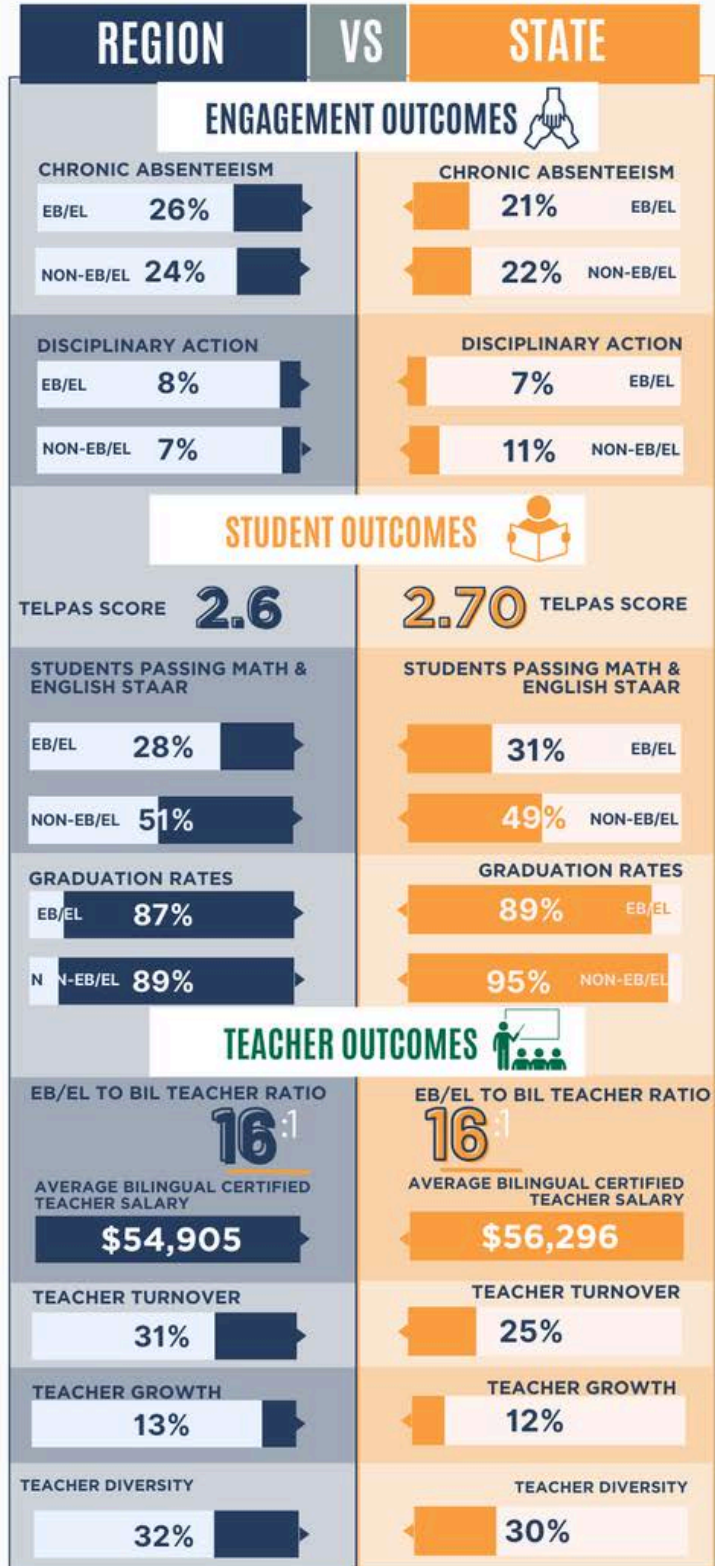
Chart: Breakdown of Children of Immigrants in the Region, highlighting the numbers of Emergent Bilingual/English Learner (EB/EL) students, refugees, migrant children, newcomers, and unaccompanied youth.

Lower student outcomes could stem from low engagement. Central Texas is the only region in Texas where EB/EL students are more likely to be chronically absent than their peers, 26% compared to 24% for non-EB/EL students. When it comes to disciplinary actions, EB/EL students also receive more disciplinary action than their non-EB/EL students, 8% to 7%. While districts are maintaining a good bilingual certified teacher ratio to EB/EL students, a special focus on student engagement is paramount. Districts must focus on teacher retention strategies, since the region has the highest teacher turnover rate in the state at 31%. Encouraging a more diverse teacher population could also be positive for the region, which has a relatively low teacher diversity rate of 32%.



CENTRAL TEXAS REGION

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS COMPARISONS BETWEEN EB/EL AND NON EB/EL STUDENTS IN THE REGION VS STATE



Central Texas Region

Key Performance Indicators Measured

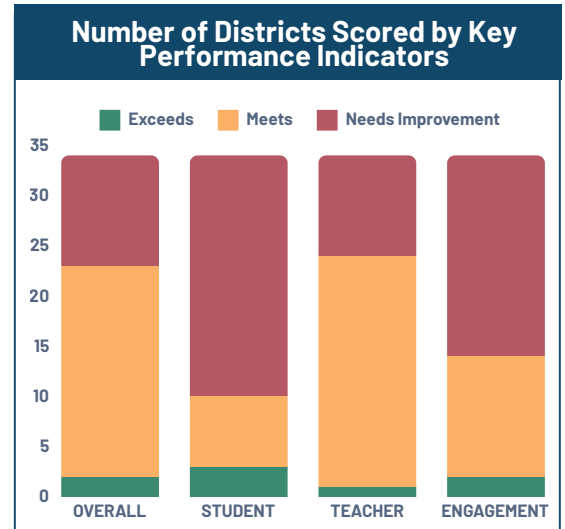
- ENGAGEMENT OUTCOMES**
Measured Chronic Absenteeism, and Disciplinary Actions
- STUDENT OUTCOMES**
Compared Graduation rates, STAAR scores, TELPAS scores
- TEACHER OUTCOMES**
Evaluated teacher diversity, Bilingual teacher pay, Student-teacher ratios, BIL Certification, Turnover rates, Growth Rates.
- OVERALL SCORE**
Districts were categorized as:
-Exceeds
-Meets
-Needs Improvement
Based on student performance across the teachers, student, and engagement domains.

Scored School Districts

6%
Exceeded Expectations

62%
Met Expectations

32%
Needed Improvement



Top 25 School Districts in Central Texas with the Highest EB/EL Student Population

ISD	EB/EL STUDENT POPULATION	Engagement	Student	Teacher	Overall
1 Austin ISD	22,343	Needs Improvement	Meets	Meets	Needs Improvement
2 Kipp Texas Public Schools	13,670	Meets	Exceeds	Needs Improvement	Meets
3 Round Rock ISD	7,118	Needs Improvement	Needs Improvement	Meets	Meets
4 Pflugerville ISD	6,958	Needs Improvement	Needs Improvement	Meets	Needs Improvement
5 Del Valle ISD	5,212	Meets	Needs Improvement	Meets	Meets
6 Bastrop ISD	5,111	Needs Improvement	Meets	Needs Improvement	Needs Improvement
7 Leander ISD	4,891	Needs Improvement	Meets	Needs Improvement	Needs Improvement
8 Hays CISD	4,588	Needs Improvement	Needs Improvement	Exceeds	Needs Improvement
9 Manor ISD	4,170	Meets	Needs Improvement	Needs Improvement	Meets
10 Elgin ISD	2,416	Needs Improvement	Meets	Needs Improvement	Needs Improvement
11 Lockhart ISD	2,265	Needs Improvement	Needs Improvement	Meets	Needs Improvement
12 Harmony Public Schools	2,253	Needs Improvement	Needs Improvement	Meets	Needs Improvement
13 Georgetown ISD	2,113	Needs Improvement	Meets	Meets	Needs Improvement
14 Austin Achieve Public Schools	1,618	Meets	Needs Improvement	Meets	Meets
15 Hutto ISD	1,378	Needs Improvement	Needs Improvement	Meets	Meets
16 San Marcos CISD	1,234	Needs Improvement	Needs Improvement	Meets	Meets
17 Marble Falls ISD	928	Meets	Needs Improvement	Meets	Meets
18 Lake Travis ISD	906	Needs Improvement	Needs Improvement	Meets	Needs Improvement
19 Jarrell ISD	716	Meets	Needs Improvement	Needs Improvement	Meets
20 Wayside Schools	697	Meets	Needs Improvement	Needs Improvement	Meets
21 Liberty Hill ISD	581	Needs Improvement	Needs Improvement	Meets	Meets
22 Taylor ISD	562	Meets	Meets	Needs Improvement	Meets
23 Dripping Springs ISD	415	Needs Improvement	Needs Improvement	Meets	Meets
24 Valere Public Schools	387	Needs Improvement	Needs Improvement	Meets	Meets
25 Florence ISD	379	Needs Improvement	Meets	Needs Improvement	Needs Improvement

What We Learned Greater San Antonio

Atascosa, Bandera, Bexar, Comal, Guadalupe and Medina

For the greater San Antonio region, out of 55 districts, a total of 29 were scored. A total of 17% of districts excelled in performance, 79% met expectations, and 3% of districts need improvement. The region has a 15% EB/EL student population. Newcomer students make up 6% of the population. Five percent of unaccompanied youth live in San Antonio. The region has the highest concentration of refugees in the state at 39%. Greater San Antonio region receives 5% of the state's Title III allotment.

The rate of chronic absenteeism for EB/EL students is very high at 26%. As is the case for other regions, high chronic absenteeism could lead to poorer student outcomes. For the Math and English STAAR exams, 30% of EB/EL students pass in comparison to 42% of their non-EB/EL students, the third lowest passage rate in the state. The graduation rates for EB/EL students in the Greater San Antonio area are about average at 88%.

The region has a relatively healthy emergent bilingual certified teacher ratio to EB/EL students, at 1:16, but teacher turnover in the region is relatively high, at 29%. This means that students are often taught by less experienced teachers, which could lead to lower student outcomes. The bright spot here is that salaries for certified emergent bilingual teachers are the second highest in the state at \$59,858.

these salaries could be a positive force to help districts attract more teachers to the field. That may help explain why the region enjoys the highest teacher growth in the state at 18%.

Children of immigrants and EB/EL student populations in Greater San Antonio Region

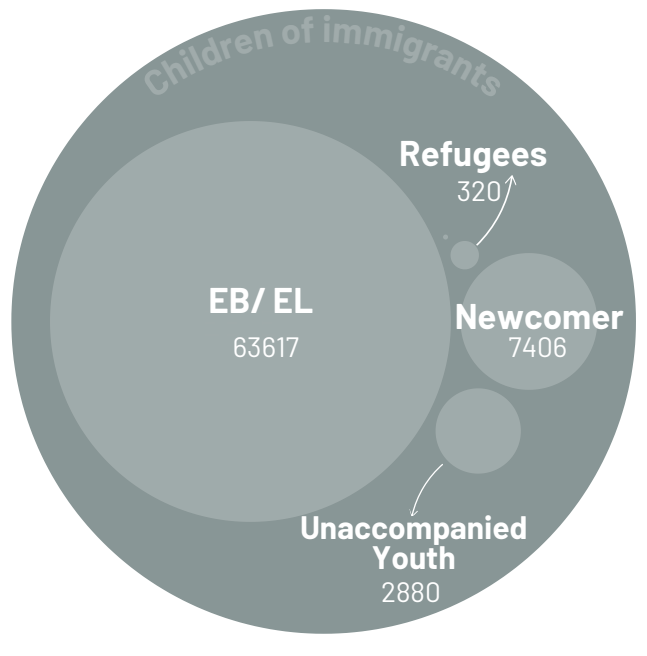


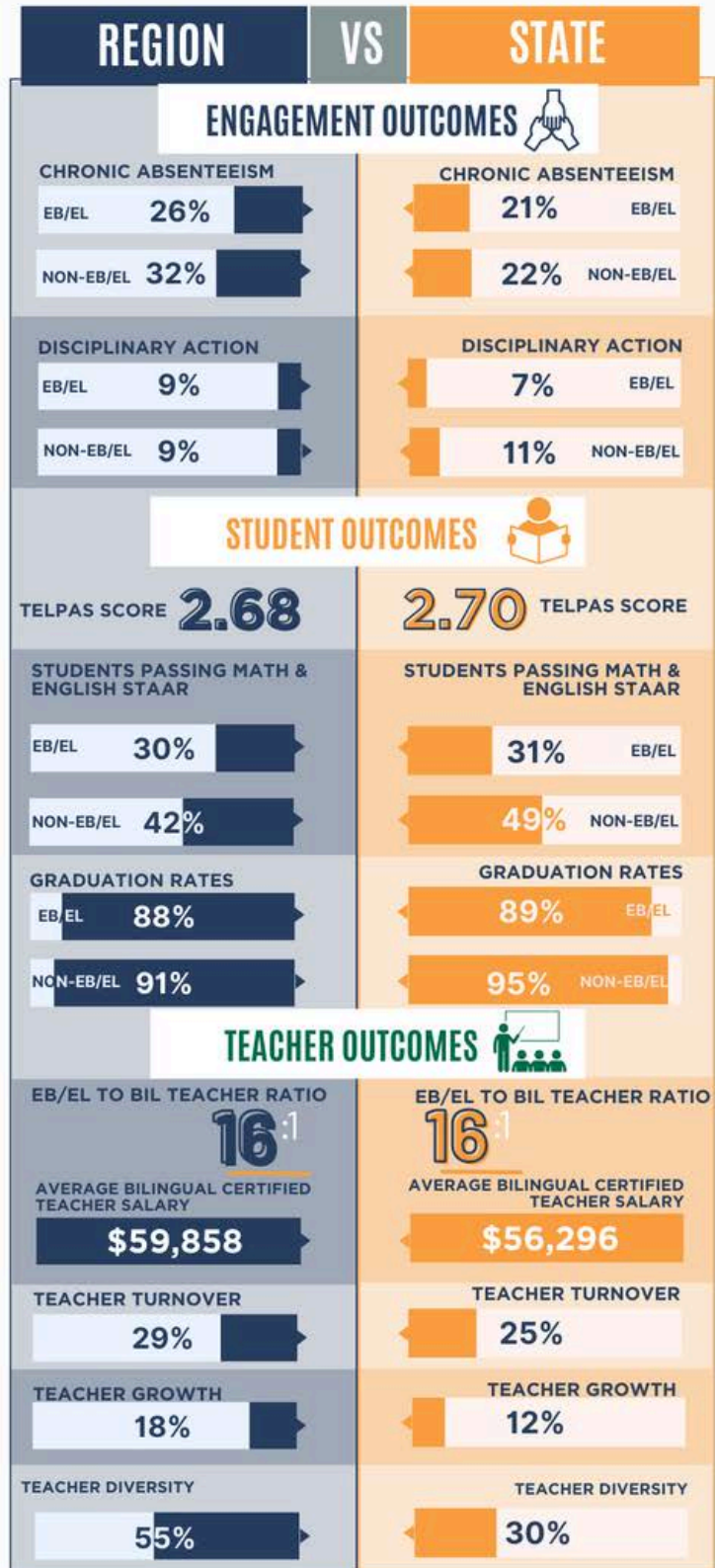
Chart: Breakdown of Children of Immigrants in the Region, highlighting the numbers of Emergent Bilingual/English Learner (EB/EL) students, refugees, migrant children, newcomers, and unaccompanied youth.

Ensuring teachers receive adequate support in the classroom could also lessen the turnover rate, this is of particular concern since newer teachers are working with a larger population of refugee students. Not only do teachers need to immediately pivot in the classroom to adjust to diverse student experiences and backgrounds, but they must also be nuanced in trauma responses in children and how those responses manifest in the classroom. A meaningful way forward is to support teachers through strategic community partnerships like Communities in Schools, featured in our report on page 60, which ensures that refugee students are supported in a collaborative way to feel welcome, to acclimate to a new environment, and to ultimately, succeed. By providing targeted support to teachers, students could experience a stabilizing teacher experience in the classroom, should the turnover rate begin to lessen as a result. These positive experiences could help boost engagement levels and student outcomes for EB/EL students.



GREATER SAN ANTONIO

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS COMPARISONS BETWEEN EB/EL AND NON EB/EL STUDENTS IN THE REGION VS STATE



San Antonio Region

Key Performance Indicators Measured

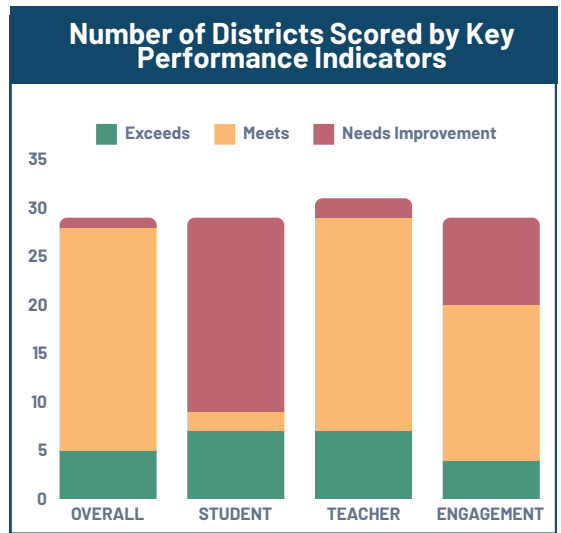
- ENGAGEMENT OUTCOMES**
Measured Chronic Absenteeism, and Disciplinary Actions
- STUDENT OUTCOMES**
Compared Graduation rates, STAAR scores, TELPAS scores
- TEACHER OUTCOMES**
Evaluated teacher diversity, Bilingual teacher pay, Student-teacher ratios, BIL Certification, Turnover rates, Growth Rates.
- OVERALL SCORE**
Districts were categorized as:
-Exceeds
-Meets
-Needs Improvement
Based on student performance across the teachers, student, and engagement domains.

Scored School Districts

17%
Exceeded Expectations

79%
Met Expectations

3%
Needed improvement



Top 25 School Districts in the Greater San Antonio Region with the Highest EB/EL Student Population

ISD	EB/EL STUDENT POPULATION	Engagement	Student	Teacher	Overall
1 Northside ISD	12,283	Meets	Needs Improvement	Exceeds	Meets
2 North East ISD	10,801	Meets	Needs Improvement	Meets	Meets
3 San Antonio ISD	10,640	Meets	Needs Improvement	Meets	Meets
4 Judson ISD	2,979	Meets	Needs Improvement	Meets	Meets
5 Southwest ISD	2,626	Needs Improvement	Exceeds	Meets	Meets
6 Harlandale ISD	2,413	Meets	Needs Improvement	Exceeds	Meets
7 Harmony Public Schools	2,038	Needs Improvement	Exceeds	Meets	Meets
8 Edgewood ISD	1,998	Meets	Needs Improvement	Meets	Meets
9 Comal ISD	1,697	Needs Improvement	Needs Improvement	Meets	Meets
10 Jubilee Academies	1,674	Meets	Exceeds	Needs Improvement	Meets
11 South San Antonio ISD	1,654	Meets	Needs Improvement	Meets	Meets
12 East Central ISD	1,449	Meets	Needs Improvement	Meets	Meets
13 Southside ISD	1,341	Meets	Exceeds	Exceeds	Exceeds
14 Great Hearts Texas	986	Meets	Needs Improvement	Needs Improvement	Meets
15 School Of Science And Technology Discovery	946	Exceeds	Needs Improvement	Meets	Exceeds
16 New Braunfels ISD	943	Needs Improvement	Needs Improvement	Meets	Needs Improvement
17 Seguin ISD	927	Needs Improvement	Needs Improvement	Meets	Meets
18 Somerset ISD	918	Meets	Needs Improvement	Meets	Exceeds
19 School Of Science And Technology	917	Needs Improvement	Exceeds	Meets	Meets
20 Schertz-Cibolo-U City ISD	676	Meets	Needs Improvement	Exceeds	Meets
21 Medina Valley ISD	557	Needs Improvement	Exceeds	Meets	Meets
22 Alamo Heights ISD	346	Needs Improvement	Needs Improvement	Exceeds	Meets
23 Heritage Academy	311	Meets	Exceeds	Meets	Exceeds
24 Lytle ISD	273	Needs Improvement	Needs Improvement	Meets	Meets
25 Pleasanton ISD	202	Exceeds	Needs Improvement	Exceeds	Exceeds

What We Learned *Panhandle Region*

Dallam, Sherman, Handsford, Ochiltree, Lipscomb, Hartley, Moore, Hutchinson, Roberts, Hemphill, Oldham, Potter, Carson, Gray, Randall, Armstrong, Donley, Collinsworth, Parmer, Castro, Swisher, Briscoe, Hall, Childress, Bailey, Lamb, Hale, Floyd, Motley, Cottle, Cochran, Hockley, Lubbock, Crosby, Dickens, King, Knox

There are a total of 99 districts in the Pan Handle region, we scored 21. Sixty-two percent of districts met expectations, 19% need improvement and 19% excelled in performance. The EB/EL student population is 12%. There are a total of 12% of unaccompanied youth in the Panhandle, 1% newcomer students, 5% refugees and 8% migrants.

The emergent bilingual certified teacher ratio is 1:9 and next to the Borderland, teacher retention rates are the second highest in the state at 74%. Student outcomes, however, do not correlate with the benefits that come from smaller classrooms, with the exception of 4 school districts that either meet or exceed expectations, 18 of the 22 school districts with the largest EB/EL student populations need improvement. That’s the case even though the graduation rate for EB/EL students is the highest at 96% and English proficiency is also high, TELPAS scores are at 2.7064.

Teachers in the Panhandle are working with the most engaged EB/EL students in the state, their chronic absenteeism is low, at 15%, compared to 19% for non-EB/EL students, yet that time in the classroom, while it may be leading to higher graduation rates and some of the best rates in English proficiency in the state, educators are not

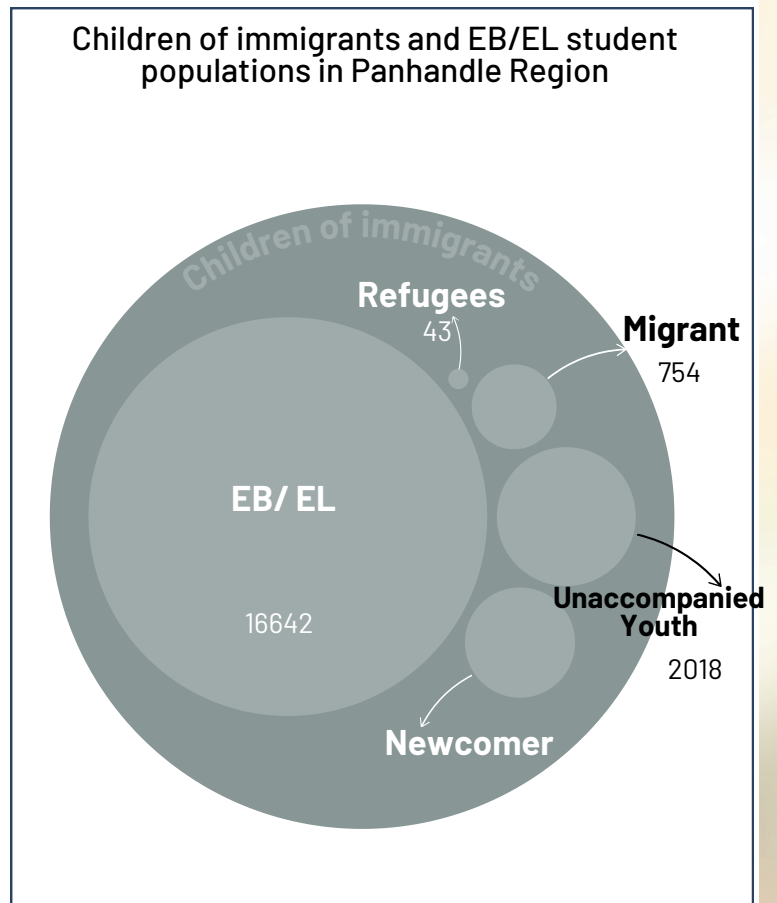


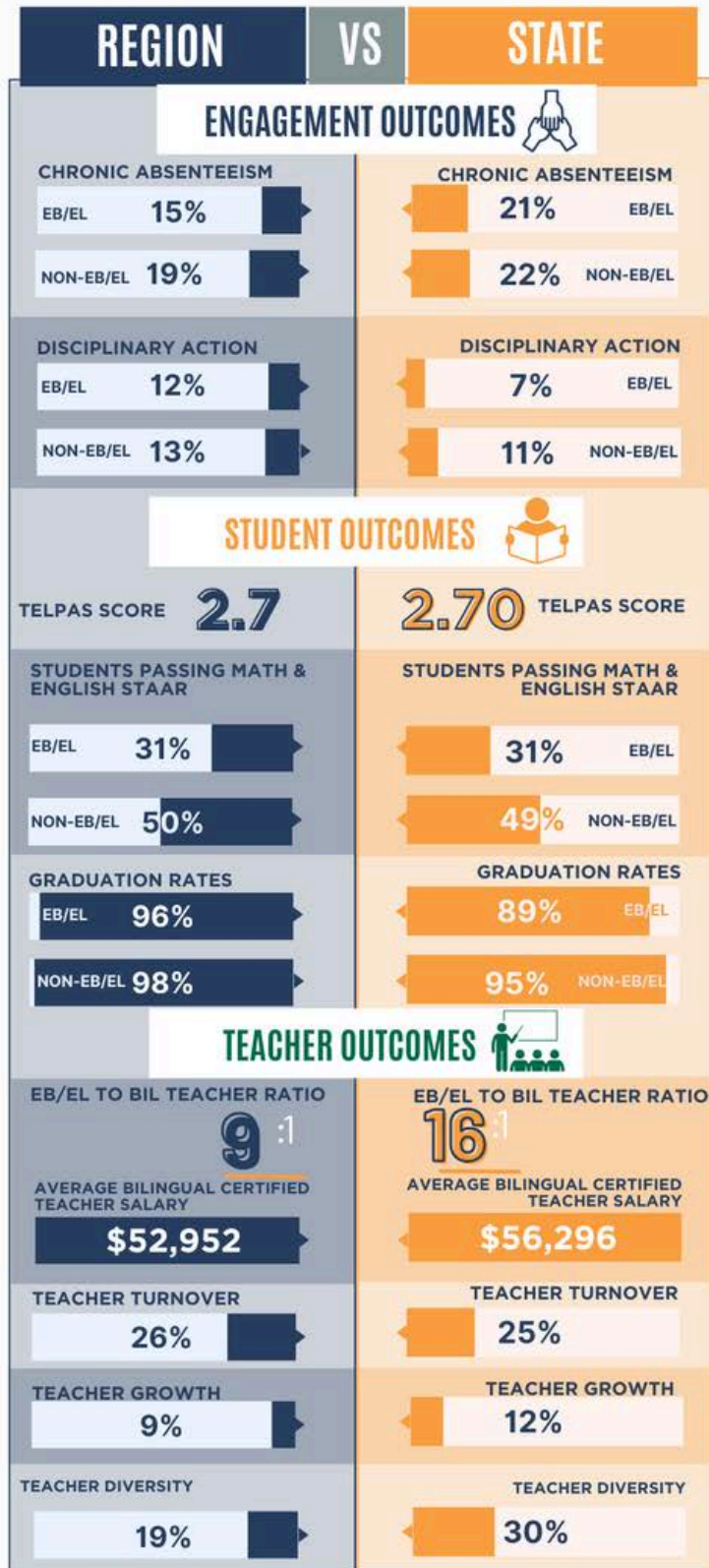
Chart: Breakdown of Children of Immigrants in the Region, highlighting the numbers of Emergent Bilingual/English Learner (EB/EL) students, refugees, migrant children, newcomers, and unaccompanied youth.

translating this engagement into better student outcomes. Instead, disciplinary actions are the highest in the state for EB/EL students at 12%. The Panhandle also has the lowest teacher diversity rate at 19%. This may help provide some more context to better understand why student outcomes remain disparate, with a nearly 20% difference between EB/EL and non-EB/EL students.



PANHANDLE REGION

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS COMPARISONS BETWEEN EB/EL AND NON EB/EL STUDENTS IN THE REGION VS STATE



Panhandle Region

Key Performance Indicators Measured

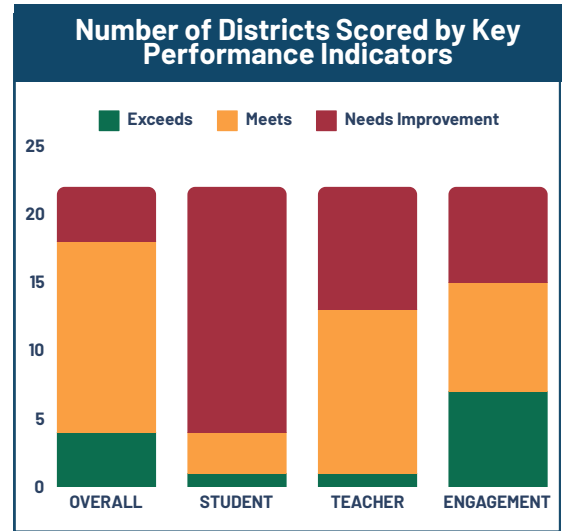
- ENGAGEMENT OUTCOMES**
Measured Chronic Absenteeism, and Disciplinary Actions
- STUDENT OUTCOMES**
Compared Graduation rates, STAAR scores, TELPAS scores
- TEACHER OUTCOMES**
Evaluated teacher diversity, Bilingual teacher pay, Student-teacher ratios, BIL Certification, Turnover rates, Growth Rates.
- OVERALL SCORE**
Districts were categorized as:
-Exceeds
-Meets
-Needs Improvement
Based on student performance across the teachers, student, and engagement domains.

Scored School Districts

19%
Exceeded Expectations

62%
Met Expectations

19%
Needed improvement



Top 22 School Districts in the Panhandle with the Highest EB/EL Student Population

ISD	EB/EL STUDENT POPULATION	Engagement	Student	Teacher	Overall
1 Amarillo ISD	5,432	Meets	Needs Improvement	Exceeds	Meets
2 Dumas ISD	1,677	Needs Improvement	Needs Improvement	Meets	Meets
3 Lubbock ISD	1,584	Meets	Needs Improvement	Meets	Meets
4 Perryton ISD	696	Needs Improvement	Needs Improvement	Needs Improvement	Needs Improvement
5 Pampa ISD	641	Needs Improvement	Needs Improvement	Needs Improvement	Needs Improvement
6 Dalhart ISD	581	Meets	Meets	Needs Improvement	Needs Improvement
7 Frenship ISD	572	Exceeds	Exceeds	Meets	Exceeds
8 Plainview ISD	512	Meets	Needs Improvement	Meets	Meets
9 Muleshoe ISD	454	Meets	Needs Improvement	Needs Improvement	Meets
10 Friona ISD	411	Exceeds	Meets	Meets	Meets
11 Lubbock-Cooper ISD	323	Exceeds	Needs Improvement	Meets	Exceeds
12 Dimmitt ISD	286	Meets	Needs Improvement	Needs Improvement	Meets
13 Levelland ISD	271	Exceeds	Needs Improvement	Meets	Exceeds
14 Borger ISD	257	Exceeds	Needs Improvement	Needs Improvement	Meets
15 Spearman ISD	158	Needs Improvement	Needs Improvement	Meets	Meets
16 Stratford ISD	156	Needs Improvement	Meets	Needs Improvement	Needs Improvement
17 Canadian ISD	119	Needs Improvement	Needs Improvement	Meets	Meets
18 Littlefield ISD	113	Exceeds	Needs Improvement	Meets	Exceeds
19 Booker ISD	107	Meets	Needs Improvement	Needs Improvement	Meets
20 Farwell ISD	101	Meets	Needs Improvement	Meets	Meets
21 River Road ISD	88	Needs Improvement	Needs Improvement	Meets	Meets
22 Tulia ISD	78	Exceeds	Needs Improvement	Needs Improvement	Meets

What We Learned Greater North Texas

Collin, Dallas, Denton, Ellis, Hunt, Johnson, Kaufman, Rockwall, and Tarrant

For the Greater North Texas region, out of 141 districts, a total of 94 were scored. A total of 13% of districts excelled in performance, 74% met expectations, and 13% of districts needed improvement. A total of 25% of students are classified as EB/EL students. There are a total of 34% newcomer students in the region, 25% unaccompanied youth and 18% are refugees.

North Texas has the highest TELPAS scores in the state at 2.71 along with the highest percentage of students passing the Math and English STAAR exams at 33%. Dallas ISD boasts of a rigorous dual language program from elementary through high school. Seventy campuses offer two-way dual language programs where native English and Spanish speakers learn side by side, fostering common understanding amongst students. The district continues this theme of mutuality towards newcomer families with welcome centers.

These more positive trends in student outcomes may be attributed to the fact that the ratio of bilingual certified teachers to EB/EL students is 16:1 and the teacher retention rate falls at aRn average of 71%, providing students with a relatively stable teacher workforce.

Children of immigrants and EB/EL student populations in Greater North Texas Region

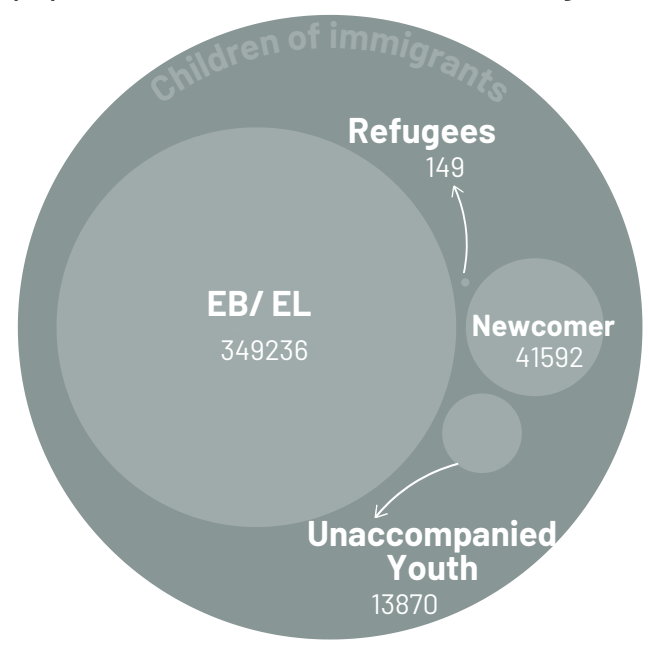
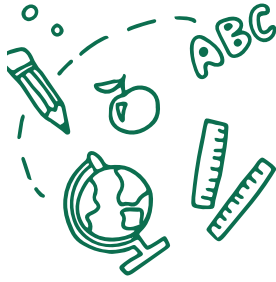


Chart: Breakdown of Children of Immigrants in the Region, highlighting the numbers of Emergent Bilingual/English Learner (EB/EL) students, refugees, migrant children, newcomers, and unaccompanied youth.

Additionally, smaller classroom settings allow teachers to work more closely with students and adapt English acquisition techniques to the specific students' needs. One might assume these positive student outcomes would trend positively and that



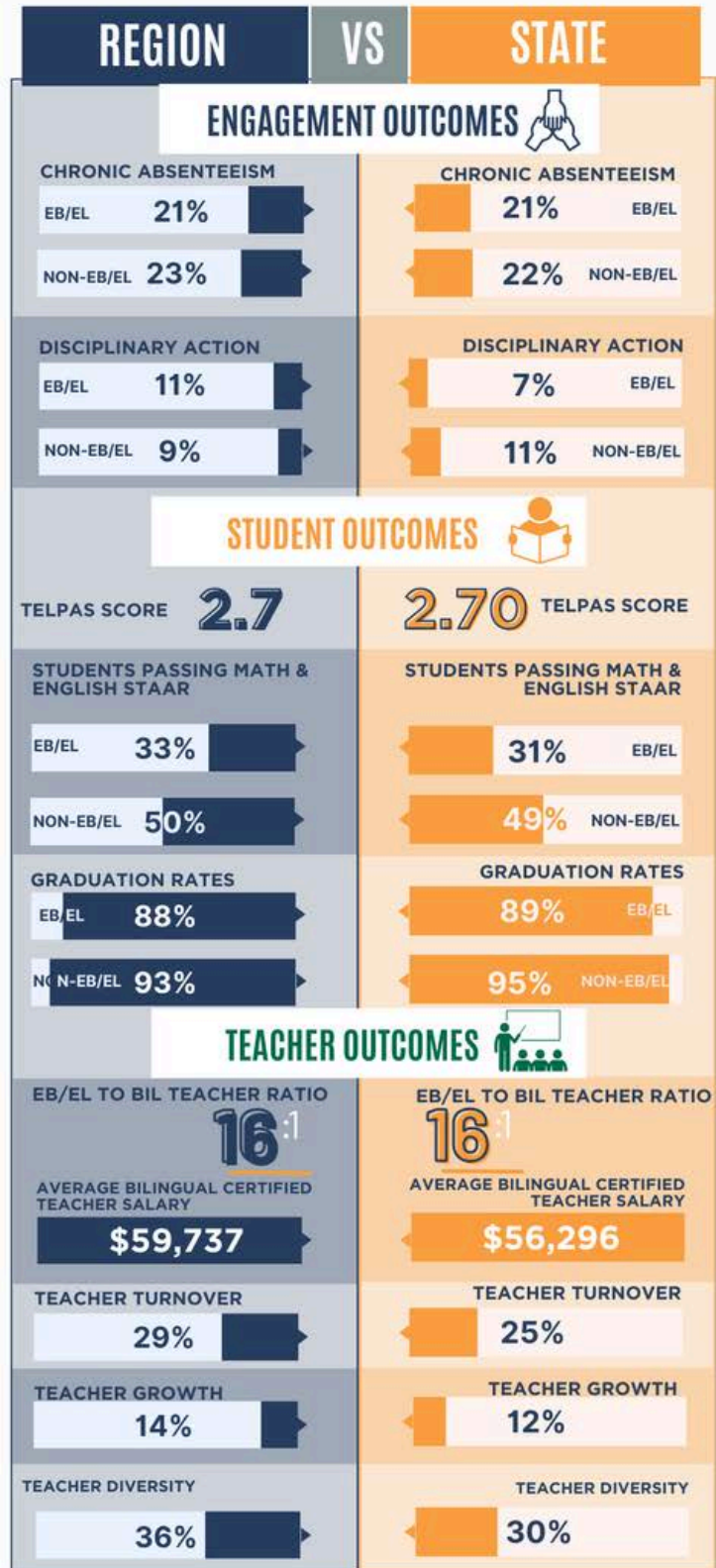
the graduation rates for EB/EL students would also be higher, however, that's not the case in North Texas. Graduation rates are lower, with only 88% of EB/EL students graduating compared to 93% of non-EB/EL students.

Student engagement outcomes may help provide more context here. Yes, EB/EL students are more likely to be engaged in the region, only 21% are chronically absent, however, EB/EL students are also more likely to receive disciplinary action than their non-EB/EL peers, 11% to 9%. Teacher diversity is also relatively low, at 36%. These trends may indicate that while students are engaged, more intentional work should be done to ensure a better understanding between teachers and students to prevent disproportionate disciplinary actions against EB/EL students.

What we find in North Texas is that EB/EL students are present in schools, they're performing the best in Math and English STAAR and have the best English proficiency in the state. However, they are also not graduating at the highest levels and are also faced with the highest disciplinary actions in the state. Bridging this gap could propel North Texas into even greater success.

NORTH TEXAS REGION

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS COMPARISONS BETWEEN EB/EL AND NON EB/EL STUDENTS IN THE REGION VS STATE



North Texas Region

Key Performance Indicators Measured

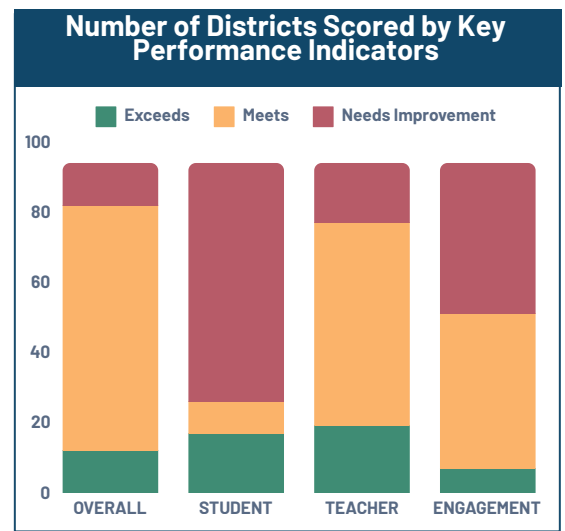
- ENGAGEMENT OUTCOMES**
Measured Chronic Absenteeism, and Disciplinary Actions
- STUDENT OUTCOMES**
Compared Graduation rates, STAAR scores, TELPAS scores
- TEACHER OUTCOMES**
Evaluated teacher diversity, Bilingual teacher pay, Student-teacher ratios, BIL Certification, Turnover rates, Growth Rates.
- OVERALL SCORE**
Districts were categorized as:
-Exceeds
-Meets
-Needs Improvement
Based on student performance across the teachers, student, and engagement domains.

Scored School Districts

13%
Exceeded Expectations

62%
Met Expectations

19%
Needed improvement



Top 25 School Districts in North Texas with the Highest EB/EL Student Population

ISD	EB/EL STUDENT POPULATION	Engagement	Student	Teacher	Overall
1 Dallas ISD	68,821	Meets	Needs Improvement	Meets	Meets
2 Fort Worth ISD	28,407	Meets	Needs Improvement	Meets	Meets
3 Garland ISD	20,515	Needs Improvement	Exceeds	Meets	Meets
4 Arlington ISD	17,353	Meets	Needs Improvement	Meets	Meets
5 Irving ISD	16,596	Meets	Needs Improvement	Meets	Meets
6 Mesquite ISD	12,896	Meets	Needs Improvement	Meets	Meets
7 Plano ISD	11,538	Needs Improvement	Meets	Meets	Needs Improvement
8 Richardson ISD	11,282	Needs Improvement	Meets	Meets	Needs Improvement
9 Lewisville ISD	10,360	Needs Improvement	Needs Improvement	Exceeds	Needs Improvement
10 Grand Prairie ISD	9,823	Needs Improvement	Needs Improvement	Meets	Meets
11 Carrollton-Farmers Branch ISD	9,579	Needs Improvement	Needs Improvement	Meets	Meets
12 International Leadership Of Texas	8,645	Meets	Needs Improvement	Needs Improvement	Meets
13 Uplift Education	7,825	Needs Improvement	Needs Improvement	Meets	Meets
14 Frisco ISD	7,352	Needs Improvement	Exceeds	Exceeds	Exceeds
15 Denton ISD	5,729	Needs Improvement	Needs Improvement	Exceeds	Meets
16 Birdville ISD	5,656	Meets	Needs Improvement	Meets	Meets
17 Hurst-Euless-Bedford ISD	5,015	Meets	Exceeds	Exceeds	Exceeds
18 Mansfield ISD	4,948	Needs Improvement	Needs Improvement	Exceeds	Meets
19 Keller ISD	3,876	Needs Improvement	Exceeds	Exceeds	Meets
20 Eagle Mt-Saginaw ISD	3,445	Needs Improvement	Exceeds	Meets	Meets
21 McKinney ISD	3,272	Needs Improvement	Needs Improvement	Meets	Meets
22 Crowley ISD	2,936	Exceeds	Exceeds	Meets	Exceeds
23 Duncanville ISD	2,893	Meets	Needs Improvement	Meets	Meets
24 Northwest ISD	2,765	Needs Improvement	Needs Improvement	Meets	Meets
25 Wylie ISD	2,756	Needs Improvement	Needs Improvement	Meets	Meets

What We Learned *Borderland Region*

El Paso, Hudspeth, Culberson, Jeff Davis, Presidio, Brewster, Terrell, Val Verde, Kinney, Maverick, Dimmit, Webb, Zapata, Cameron, Hidalgo, Starr, Willacy

There are a total of 76 districts in the Borderland Region, 52 were scored. A total of 56% met expectations, 35% need improvement and 9% exceeded expectations. There are 39% EB/EL students in the region. The Borderland has 5% newcomer students, 77% migrant students, nearly 11% of unaccompanied youth and no refugees.

The demands are great in the Borderland, which has the highest population of EB/EL students in the entire state, yet the bilingual certified teacher ratio to EB/EL students is far behind at 1:22, also the highest in the state. Teacher growth is only at 14%. The pains of teacher shortages could be felt acutely in student outcomes and student engagement, where English proficiency is the lowest in the state at 2.6 and engagement is at a critical level, the region faces the highest chronic absenteeism rate at 31% for EB/EL students. One hundred percent of the top 25 school districts with the largest EB/EL student population in the Borderland need improvement when it comes to student engagement. Naturally, this could negatively impact student outcomes, where the vast majority of these school districts also need improvement.

Districts like Ysleta ISD take a proactive approach to chronic absenteeism by fostering the importance of steady attendance in their early education programs. These interventions help instill good habits for students.

These approaches also include families as part of a larger dialogue to help ensure these values carry on as students move forward throughout their educational experience.

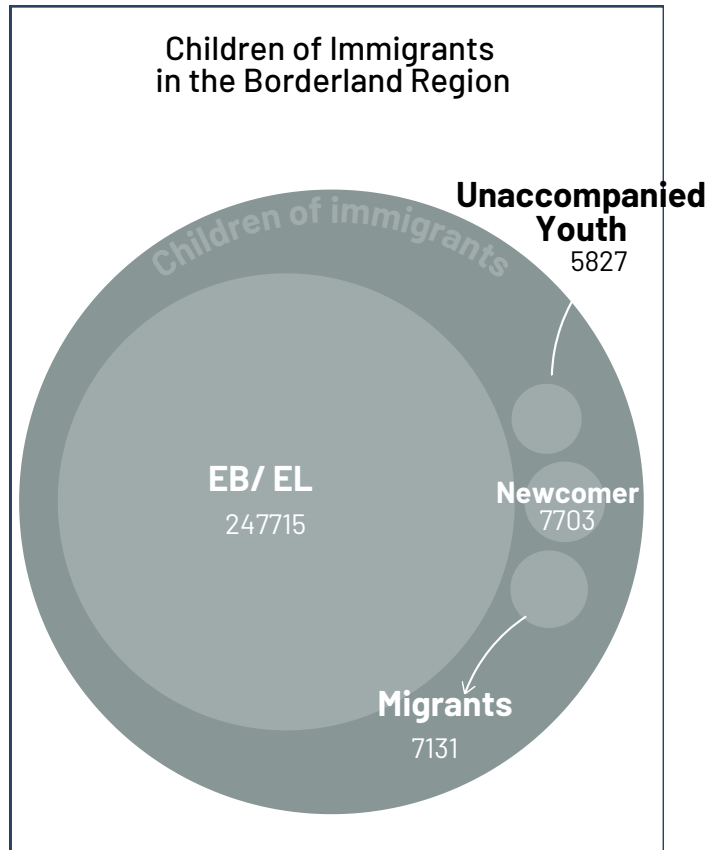


Chart: Breakdown of Children of Immigrants in the Region, highlighting the numbers of Emergent Bilingual/English Learner (EB/EL) students, refugees, migrant children, newcomers, and unaccompanied youth.

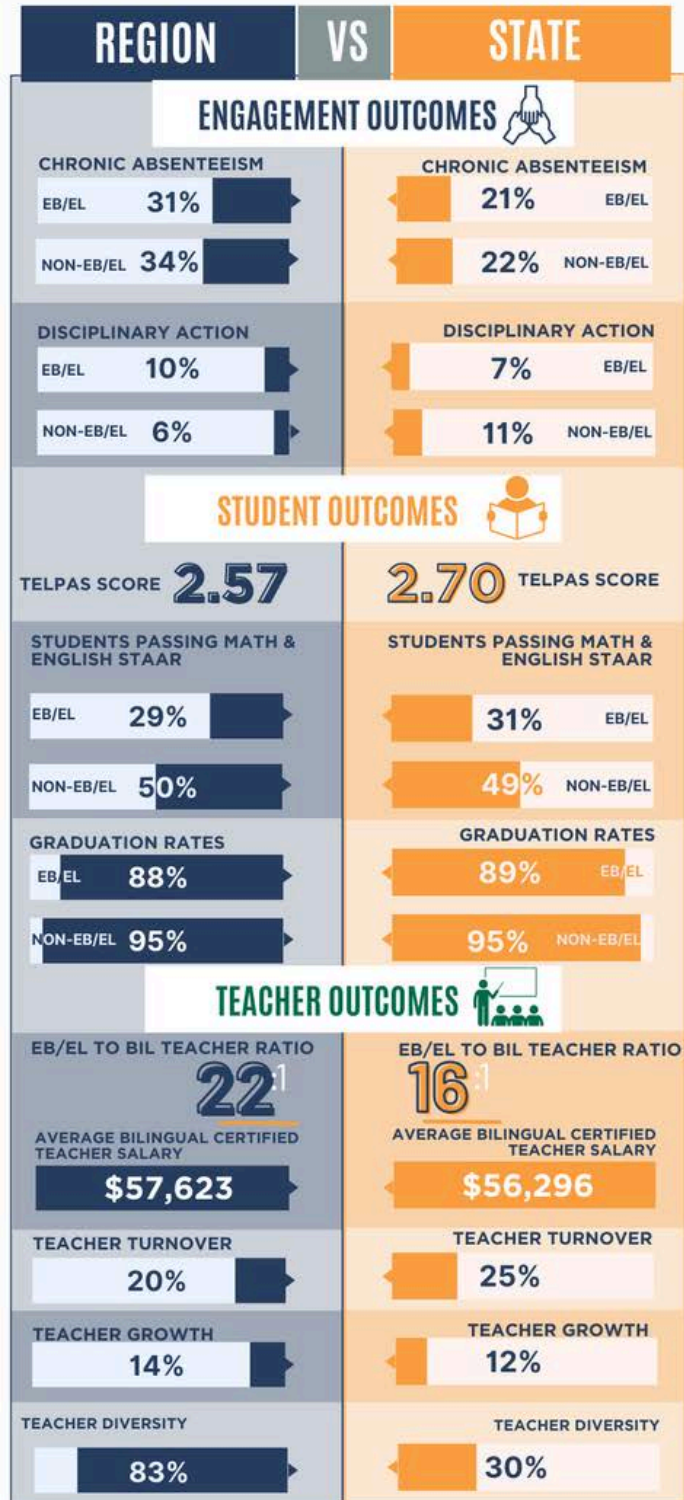
The Borderland is experiencing promising trends in teacher outcomes, where all of the top 25 school districts with the largest EB/EL student population either meet or exceed teacher outcomes. Teacher resilience is also strong, the region has the lowest teacher turnover rate in the state at 20% and it also enjoys the most diverse teacher population.

The high bilingual certified teacher ratio however, is a steep obstacle to overcome. When faced with these teacher shortages, districts like United ISD in Laredo leverage technology in the classroom to enhance language acquisition. As a result, United reports that students achieve higher grades on assessments, improving their overall student outcomes.

Finally, despite the high level of chronic absenteeism in the Borderland, it is possible that when EB/EL students are in school, they may reap the benefits of a relatively stable, experienced and diverse teacher population, the Borderland has a graduation rate that is about average for the state at 88%.

BORDERLAND REGION

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS COMPARISONS BETWEEN EB/EL AND NON EB/EL STUDENTS IN THE REGION VS STATE



Borderland Region

Key Performance Indicators Measured

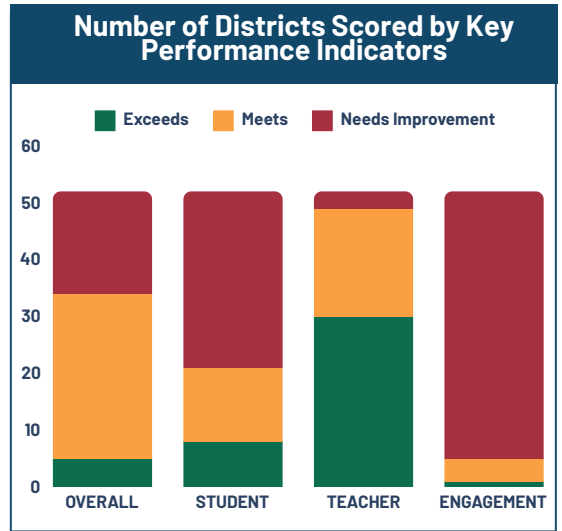
- ENGAGEMENT OUTCOMES**
Measured Chronic Absenteeism, and Disciplinary Actions
- STUDENT OUTCOMES**
Compared Graduation rates, STAAR scores, TELPAS scores
- TEACHER OUTCOMES**
Evaluated teacher diversity, Bilingual teacher pay, Student-teacher ratios, BIL Certification, Turnover rates, Growth Rates.
- OVERALL SCORE**
Districts were categorized as:
-Exceeds
-Meets
-Needs Improvement
Based on student performance across the teachers, student, and engagement domains.

Scored School Districts

9%
Exceeded Expectations

56%
Met Expectations

35%
Needed improvement



Top 22 School Districts in the Borderland Region with the Highest EB/EL Student Population

ISD	EB/EL STUDENT POPULATION	Engagement	Student	Teacher	Overall
1 El Paso ISD	18,123	Needs Improvement	Meets	Exceeds	Needs Improvement
2 United ISD	16,901	Needs Improvement	Needs Improvement	Exceeds	Meets
3 Brownsville ISD	15,120	Needs Improvement	Needs Improvement	Exceeds	Meets
4 La Joya ISD	14,222	Needs Improvement	Needs Improvement	Exceeds	Meets
5 Socorro ISD	13,864	Needs Improvement	Needs Improvement	Exceeds	Meets
6 Pharr-San Juan-Alamo ISD	13,452	Needs Improvement	Needs Improvement	Exceeds	Meets
7 Edinburg CISD	12,736	Needs Improvement	Needs Improvement	Exceeds	Meets
8 Laredo ISD	11,899	Needs Improvement	Needs Improvement	Exceeds	Meets
9 Ysleta ISD	11,700	Needs Improvement	Needs Improvement	Exceeds	Meets
10 Rio Grande City Grulla ISD	7,579	Needs Improvement	Exceeds	Meets	Meets
11 Donna ISD	7,361	Needs Improvement	Needs Improvement	Exceeds	Meets
12 Mcallen ISD	7,324	Needs Improvement	Needs Improvement	Exceeds	Meets
13 Eagle Pass ISD	6,372	Needs Improvement	Meets	Exceeds	Meets
14 Mission CISD	5,620	Needs Improvement	Needs Improvement	Exceeds	Meets
15 Roma ISD	4,948	Needs Improvement	Needs Improvement	Exceeds	Meets
16 Weslaco ISD	4,404	Needs Improvement	Needs Improvement	Exceeds	Meets
17 Clint ISD	4,357	Needs Improvement	Needs Improvement	Meets	Needs Improvement
18 Sharyland ISD	3,487	Needs Improvement	Exceeds	Exceeds	Meets
19 Vanguard Academy	2,965	Needs Improvement	Exceeds	Exceeds	Exceeds
20 Valley View ISD	2,718	Needs Improvement	Needs Improvement	Exceeds	Meets
21 Harlingen CISD	2,653	Needs Improvement	Needs Improvement	Exceeds	Meets
22 San Benito CISD	2,516	Needs Improvement	Meets	Exceeds	Needs Improvement
23 Los Fresnos CISD	2,437	Needs Improvement	Needs Improvement	Exceeds	Meets
24 San Felipe-Del Rio CISD	2,102	Needs Improvement	Meets	Meets	Needs Improvement
25 Hidalgo ISD	2046	Needs Improvement	Needs Improvement	Meets	Needs Improvement

Partner Profiles



Partner Profiles

We highlight the important work our partners are doing across the state and country to uplift immigrant students in the classroom.

Partner Profile

Communities in School (CIS)

Lisa Descant, LPC-S, LMFT-S
CEO, Communities In Schools of Houston, Inc.

1. WHAT IS YOUR APPROACH, COMMUNITIES IN SCHOOLS?

The Communities In Schools of Houston model is designed to be adaptable to meet the unique needs of students. To support students, we meet them where they are, understand the root causes of the challenges they face, and provide them with the supportive guidance and resources they need to learn at their best. Our model places at least one CIS Student Support Specialist inside the school campus all day, every day, to strategically align, coordinate, and deliver direct services and needed resources so that students can focus on learning and reach their greatest potential. By connecting students and their families with resources such as tutoring, counseling, healthcare, and basic needs assistance, CIS aims to create a school environment where all students can thrive academically, socially, and emotionally. **We work with over 300 community partners to bring resources directly into schools and connect students with the essential resources** they need to show up to school prepared and ready to engage in learning.

2. HOW HAS CIS EVOLVED OVER THE YEARS?

CIS of Houston began in 1979 at one middle school as a collaboration between local leaders, educators, and social workers to address the unequal access to resources

that students in Greater Houston faced. Initially known as Cities in Schools, we expanded into five schools by 1982 and rebranded as Communities In Schools in 1985, growing to serve 40 schools by 1997. By 2001, we had provided 1 million hours of service to nearly 38,000 students. Responding to crises like Hurricane Katrina in 2005 and Hurricane Harvey in 2017, CIS has continued to evolve, launching a Mental Health Initiative in 2012 and receiving a transformative \$13 million gift from MacKenzie Scott in 2021.

Today, we support 135 campuses, providing vital resources and mental health services, and remain dedicated to building a stronger Houston by supporting students every step of the way.

3. WHY ARE THESE SERVICES SO ESSENTIAL TO IMPROVE STUDENT OUTCOMES?

Today, our students are facing more barriers than ever. Students living in under-resourced communities receive less support and face more obstacles in and outside the classroom. Our model of integrated student supports surround students with a community of support and provides them with access to the support and resources they need when they need them.

CIS Interview Continued...

CIS is backed by over 40 years of compelling data on the positive impacts of our model-- school-based approach to promoting student academic success through the development and coordination of supports that target both academic and non-academic barriers to achievement in school. **CIS provides support on campus through our six core services, delivered through a three-tiered model.** Our mission is to ensure every student, regardless of race, gender, ability, zip code, or socioeconomic background has access to what they need to stay in school and achieve in life.

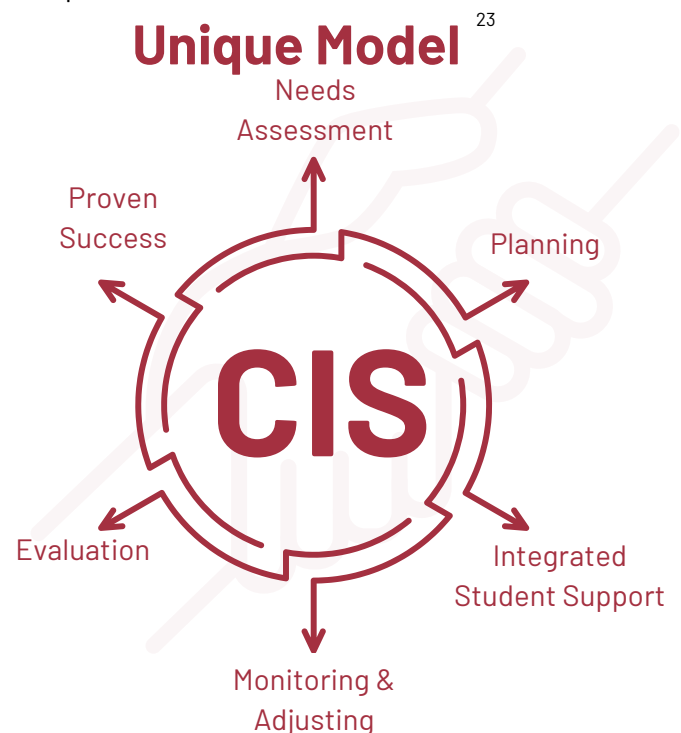


4. IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE YOU WOULD LIKE TO SHARE?

As of July 2024, nearly half (46%) of CIS Houston's employees were bilingual. The majority of bilingual employees were Spanish speakers, but other spoken

languages include Arabic, Farsi, French, Igbo, Korean, and Mandarin Chinese. In the 2022-2023 School Year, 40% of the students we served had limited English proficiency. 63% of the students we serve are from Hispanic/Latinx backgrounds.

With the CIS Mental Health Initiative (MHI), CIS implements targeted efforts to collectively address the growing mental health needs on CIS campuses. The MHI provides students with trauma informed interventions that alleviate emotional and behavioral challenges, enhance coping skills, improve student emotional and physical health, and in turn, academic achievement. The MHI is a three-part program: (1) CIS campus-based mental health professionals who provide mental health counseling and support groups and referrals to students and their parents, (2) CIS Mobile Mental Health Team who travel to serve CIS campuses seeking additional mental health support from CIS, and (3) CIS-coordinated partner mental health agencies who also provide services to students on campus.



1. WHAT IS CAM?

The Central American Minors (CAM) working group aims to expand the capacity of local institutions, organizations, and providers through collaboration, training, consultation, and advocacy to better support the unique needs of Central American immigrant children.

CAM does this by bringing together community members and organizations in the Houston Area to proactively support new arrivals and navigate an array of supportive services and practices to strengthen individuals and families. **The group meets monthly and communicates regularly to support each other and the broader community by sharing resources, troubleshooting complex cases, educating and training others about the community's needs, and seeking creative solutions to newcomer needs.**



Partner Profile

Central American Minors (CAM) Working Group

Sarah Howell, LCSW
&
Arlene Bjugstad, PhD

2. HOW HAS THIS GROUP EVOLVED OVER THE YEARS?

Beginning in 2014, the Houston area began to see a large increase in the number of immigrant children from Central American countries, many who arrived unaccompanied settling in the area. The organization, Save the Children, saw this as an opportunity and they initiated a convening of stakeholders from local organizations, universities, and community members. Since 2014, the Central American Minors (CAM) working group has been an active resource in the community, meeting consistently on the first Monday of each month.

While CAM initially was started by a group of program administrators, researchers, and attorneys, our working group has grown to include many front-line service workers and organizational administrators, such as post-release service providers, case managers, social workers, doctors, and clinicians in and around the Houston-metro area. While the objectives of our primary working group is to expand knowledge of and access to community resources, our members have also formed subcommittees to organize around specific action areas, determined by CAM members

to be community needs including access to healthcare and enrollment in school. It should also be noted that while our group was developed to support Central American newcomer youth and families, we know that our work intersects with many migrant groups coming from places all over the world. Therefore, **our focus is on creating environments that support the safety and wellbeing of all newcomer immigrant youth and families arriving in our communities**, whether they are from Eritrea, Afghanistan, Venezuela, Haiti, or anywhere else. Since 2014, the CAM working group is a completely voluntary effort and continues to meet once per month on Monday mornings. In addition to our monthly meetings we disseminate information and resources via two monthly newsletters to our nearly 300 members.

3. WHERE HAVE YOU SEEN THE POWER OF COLLABORATIVE HELP IMPROVE THE WAYS GROUPS SERVE AND RESPOND TO CENTRAL AMERICAN STUDENTS IN THE HOUSTON AREA?

Houston, Texas consistently receives the largest number of unaccompanied immigrant children each year, in addition to large numbers of recent migrant families settling in the area. Many communities are unprepared and even unwilling to provide supportive services for the wellbeing and integration of newcomer immigrant families, particularly those fleeing violence and poverty in Central America.

“**The CAM working group leverages community connections to ensure the array of services available in our community are accessible to newcomer immigrant populations.**”

Through this grassroots collective of providers we have been able to leverage resources to help families navigate complicated medical systems, legal systems, and to provide referrals and resources for basic needs and direct support.



In cases of emergencies, such as natural disasters, the local use of temporary influx facilities for unaccompanied children, family, child, or community crises, **CAM members will use our extensive network and listservs to communicate needs, capacity, and to provide direct referrals and assistance for services.** We have used our collective power to address issues of access to resources, lack of care in facilities, training, and capacity building to support practitioners and organizations serving immigrant children and families across Houston and beyond.

4. IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE YOU WOULD LIKE TO SHARE?

CAM is open to all interested individuals. If you would like to attend our monthly meetings or simply receive our twice monthly newsletters, please reach out and sign up for our listserv. <https://starcounselingconsultation.com/cam-working-group>

1. WHAT INSPIRED THE CREATION OF NNN?

Before the NNN, there were already several working groups, organizations, and partnerships dedicated to the success of English learner (EL) students, and their advocacy has been quite visible and successful at all levels of government. However, while many newcomers are ELs, not all ELs are newcomers--to the contrary, over two-thirds of ELs are born in the U.S. After I left the classroom to begin my policy and advocacy career, I quickly realized there wasn't a space that paid explicit attention to the unique legal and socio-emotional programmatic needs of newly-arrived K-12 students in addition to those critical linguistic development and core content supports.

My co-founder, Xilonin Cruz-Gonzalez of Californians Together, and I hoped to bridge that gap in 2022 by convening EL researchers, district and state leaders, newcomer teachers, and immigrant- and refugee-serving community organization leaders that have developed this work for decades into the same room to build community, share resources, and coordinate advocacy efforts to improve the educational experiences of newcomer students across the U.S. While we initially aimed for this to be a temporary effort, our group grew quickly,

Two Years since we were funded



We have over **250** members

In over **35** states



Partner Profile

National Newcomer Network (NNN)

Alejandra Vázquez Baur, M.A.

Co-Founder and Director, National Newcomer Network

and our members demonstrated interest in formalizing. We formalized our coalition at The Century Foundation under the “[National Newcomer Network](#)” name and launched a collective [policy platform](#) at our 1.5-year mark, in February 2024.

2. HOW IS THIS SPACE UNIQUE?

The NNN is unique in a few ways. First, the leadership structure is different by design. We are a Latina-led coalition, housed at The Century Foundation but co-led with Californians Together. To strengthen the network, my co-founder Xilonin and I have built a leadership team of dedicated leaders who are predominantly women, immigrants or children of immigrants, and former educators or system-level leaders. We have developed a strategic plan together, and the members of our leadership contribute their expertise and organizational resources to see to the success of the NNN agenda.

Second, the NNN isn't just an advocacy group -- we have developed an informal national community of practice within the network. We recognize that the majority of our members are teachers or school and district leaders who are looking for resources and best practices to implement with the students who

NNN interview continued

are currently enrolled. In every meeting, we create space for a program or district spotlight in which a member shares what they are doing to support their newcomers. This is often the most engaging part of the bi-monthly meetings for members due to the rare opportunity for peer learning focused on newcomers outside of this space. We also send a monthly newsletter with resources, toolkits, guides, webinars, and more. Additionally, we are visiting members across the country to write about what they are doing. In short, we're creating community and building member capacity. As one member put it, "A huge strength [of the NNN] is that we are enlightened by what we learn from others. ... That's been really helpful to me to hear what other schools, districts, states are doing."

Finally, our expectations for members are flexible and inclusive. We benefit from having a broad membership, from classroom teachers and school and district leaders to researchers and community advocates. Our diversity is our strength.



3. WHAT ARE 1-3 GOALS THE NNN IS STRIVING TOWARDS FOR THE NEW YEAR?

This year we will begin implementing our strategic plan, which includes the following short-term goals.

1 Strengthen NNN's organizational capacity.

2 Build member skills and capacity.

3 Amplify newcomer advocacy and thought leadership.

4. IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE YOU WOULD LIKE TO SHARE?

Membership in the NNN is free, and if you're reading this, you should consider joining us!

1. WHAT TRENDS ARE YOU SEEING ACROSS EB CLASSROOMS ACROSS THE STATE?

First, **there's a growing emphasis on dual language programs**, which are proving to be highly effective in promoting both English and Spanish literacy while preserving students' native languages and cultures. Districts across the state are expanding these programs as research continues to show the cognitive, academic, and social benefits of bilingualism and biliteracy.

Second, **there is an increasing demand for culturally relevant and linguistically responsive teaching practices**. Teachers are seeking more professional development and resources that help them better understand the diverse cultural backgrounds of their students, and districts are making efforts to adopt curricula that reflect the identities and experiences of their emergent bilingual learners.



Building Inclusive
Classrooms for
Emergent
Bilingual
Learners

We are also seeing a rise in the integration of technology into bilingual classrooms. Whether it's through digital language learning platforms or virtual reality tools for immersive language experiences, educators are leveraging technology to enhance language acquisition and engagement.

However, we continue to face challenges related to teacher shortages, particularly in bilingual education. Many districts are struggling to recruit and retain qualified

Partner Profile

Texas Association for Bilingual Education (TABE)

Karina E. Chapa, M.Ed.

Executive Director, Texas Association
for Bilingual Education

bilingual teachers, which impacts the quality of instruction for emergent bilingual students. This issue underscores the need for initiatives, like our own Latino Leaders and Educators Alliance (LEA), to support the pipeline of bilingual educators.

2. WHAT ARE THE BIGGEST SUPPORTS TEACHERS NEED TO BE SUCCESSFUL?

First, **teachers need ongoing, high-quality professional development that equips them with the latest research-based strategies for teaching emergent bilingual students**. This includes training on dual language methodologies, culturally responsive pedagogy, and language development strategies. Many teachers are

**Newcomer
Students Face a
RANGE OF
CHALLENGES**



TABE interview continued

Teacher Support

- High-quality professional development
- Instructional materials for dual language education
- Support from administrators
- Classroom Support Staff
- Mental Health Support for teachers

eager to improve their practice, but they need access to targeted workshops, coaching, and collaborative opportunities with peers to refine their skills and adapt to their students' needs.

Second, **teachers need access to high-quality instructional materials that are aligned with bilingual and dual language education.** This includes resources in both English and the students' native languages, as well as culturally relevant curricula that reflect the diverse experiences of their students. Too often, teachers have to supplement or create their own materials, which can be time-consuming and lead to inconsistencies in instruction.

Another critical area is **classroom support staff.** With the growing number of emergent bilingual students, bilingual teachers often manage large, diverse classrooms. Having instructional aides or co-teachers who are trained in language acquisition strategies can help ensure that students receive more individualized attention, which leads to better academic outcomes.

Additionally, **teachers need support from school leaders and administrators who understand the unique challenges of bilingual education.** Administrators must prioritize adequate funding for bilingual

programs, reduce class sizes, and create a school culture that values bilingualism and biliteracy. Teachers thrive when they feel supported by a system that recognizes the importance of their work.

Finally, we cannot overlook the **importance of emotional and mental health support for teachers.** Teaching emergent bilingual students can be both rewarding and challenging, and teachers need access to resources that support their well-being, such as counseling services, manageable workloads, and a strong professional community.

By addressing these needs, we can ensure that our bilingual teachers have the tools and support necessary to foster success for all students.

3. WHAT IS ONE THING YOU WISH PEOPLE KNEW MORE ABOUT THE ROLE TEACHERS PLAY FOR NEWCOMER STUDENTS?

One thing I wish people understood more about the role teachers play for newcomer students is how much they go beyond academics to support these students' overall well-being and adjustment. For newcomers—teachers are not just educators; they are mentors, advocates, and sometimes the most stable and supportive figures in the students' lives.

I wish more people realized the depth of empathy, patience, and dedication it takes to effectively support newcomer students. These teachers work tirelessly, not just to meet academic standards, but to truly nurture the whole child and guide them and their families through an incredibly transformative and challenging period in their lives.

1. HOW HAS IMMSCHOOLS EVOLVED OVER THE YEARS?

Over the last 6 years, ImmSchools has expanded to 4 states, 27 districts, and directly impacted over 30,000 educators, students and families through our programs. Our impact goes beyond the classroom as more than 320,000 students are actively supported by teachers and school leaders who have participated in our programming.

Since our founding, our programs have focused on building a sense of belonging in our schools. We're working with teachers, principals, system leaders, and parents to share best practices for creating strong school climates and cultures for all students, specifically focusing on immigrant students. We do this because we know that when schools are safe and welcoming for immigrant students - the most marginalized student group across race, class, and language - schools will be better for all students.

In the next five years, we will double our efforts to support a thriving network of school and system partners by providing professional development and resources that foster and sustain strong school cultures climates, as well as family engagement practices. As part of this, we plan to engage school, system, community, and research partners in developing the first Immigrant School Culture and Climate Framework. This will be the first in our sector to capture best practices for developing strong school cultures and climates to support immigrant students, parents, and caregivers not just in Texas but across the U.S.

Partner Profile

Imm Schools

Viridiana Carrizales

Co-Founder & CEO of Imm Schools

2. WHAT IS YOUR APPROACH AT IMMSCHOOLS?

ImmSchools support K-12 teachers and school leaders in creating a positive school culture and climate for all students, parents, and caregivers, regardless of immigration status. As an immigrant-led organization, our team translates the complexity of our immigration experiences into effective, intentional and research-based programming that leads to enduring change within schools. ImmSchools specifically serves schools in Texas, New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania which are among the states and urban regions with the largest populations of immigrants.

ImmSchools' day-to-day consists of providing tailored, comprehensive programs to our school partners in the following ways: 1) build educators' knowledge of immigrant student



ImmSchools interview continued

experiences and classroom practices through trauma-informed, culturally-responsive professional development trainings; 2) host community-led student and family sessions to build students' and families' knowledge of their rights and resources in schools, post-secondary pathways and career opportunities; and 3) influence district leaders to implement inclusive policies that protect the rights of all students in our schools.

3. WHY ARE THESE SERVICES SO ESSENTIAL TO IMPROVE STUDENT OUTCOMES?

Research shows that students' sense of belonging improves academic outcomes, increases continuing enrollment in school, and is protective for mental health. However, for immigrant students, the perceived and real fear of losing their parents to deportation can have a detrimental impact in their well-being and academic success. **In Texas, one in eight students are undocumented or living in a mixed-status household with at least one undocumented immigrant parent.** These students face toxic stress caused by a range of related issues that make it difficult to learn and thrive in school. They face the looming threat of deportation for themselves or their parents, the exclusion of their parents from public school campuses, confusion over whether and how they can access post-secondary options and aid, and insufficient access to translated content and educational resources. Given these barriers, **The Urban Institute estimates that one-fifth to one-sixth of undocumented immigrant students drop out of high school every year and less than 10% of those who graduate high school go on to college.**

All of our students in Texas and across the nation, deserve to have schools that take proactive approaches to support them and their families with the language services, quality instruction, and resources they need to acclimate and succeed in schools. As the number of immigrant and Multilingual Learners (English Language Learners) continue to represent a significant portion of the student population, it is essential that educators are equipped not only to meet their academic needs but also to foster an inclusive environment that values their diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. This approach empowers students to thrive both academically and socially, building a foundation for lifelong success and contribution to our society.



1. HOW DID RGV PUEDE COME INTO EXISTENCE?

The story of RGV PUEDE (Parents United for Excellent Dual Education / Padres Unidos para una Educación Dual de Excelencia) begins when our (Alex and Mariana's) first child was getting ready to enter into the public school system. We had raised Santiago as a native Spanish speaker despite the fact that neither of us spoke Spanish as a native language and only became fluent later in life. We are not from the Rio Grande Valley, but we wanted Santiago to grow up fully bilingual, bicultural, and biliterate. Santiago was finishing up with Spanish-immersion preschool, and we only spoke Spanish with him at home, but we were worried that public school would make him an English-monolingual.

The seed of RGV PUEDE was sowed by Dr. Francisco Guajardo, who is now the Executive Director of the South Texas Museum of History. Born in the Mexican state of Tamaulipas to Mexican parents who had little formal schooling, young Francisco immigrated to Texas and started kindergarten at Edcouch Elementary in 1970 where he was taught in both Spanish and English, later becoming a professor and champion of bilingual and bicultural education. We (Alex and Mariana) met with him to discuss the Spanish-language education of our children. We asked who was going to fight for dual language in public schools. "You!" he said. "If you want this work done, you will have to do it so that others may follow." So, a group of parents came together in 2016, and we formed RGV PUEDE with the specific purpose of mobilizing parents around the issue of language justice in public schools in the Rio

Partner Profile

RGV PUEDE

Dra. Mariana Alessandri & Dr. Alex Stehn

Co-founders of RGV PUEDE



Grande Valley, where roughly 80% of people speak Spanish at home. We incorporated as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit in 2021 and received our first small donation. We are 100% run by parents and volunteers with no permanent budget or staff.

2. HOW DO YOU ENGAGE PARENTS IN THE RGV?

Over the last eight years we have mobilized parents to offer public comment at school board meetings whenever a district threatens to close the program or a particular dual language campus. Our first public action in 2016 was to organize parents to get a local school board to reverse a superintendent's recent decision to end the dual language program at 15 local elementary schools. More than 100 parents showed up to that school board meeting. We didn't get everything we were asking for, but they re-opened the program at two schools and promised to create a dual language pathway through middle school a high. Since then, we have co-organized four annual parent conferences, three in partnership with UTRGV's Center for Bilingual Studies and one in partnership with TABE. We've also spoken at various

parent and family engagement or empowerment events hosted by Region One ESC, RGV TABE, or RGV PUEDE itself.

The world has changed a lot since Covid-19. Before that, parents were more likely to show up to board meetings, conferences, and other gatherings. Afterwards, when many other groups went online, RGV PUEDE tried to keep our meetings in-person, but we can see the difference. We do have an online presence on Instagram and are trying to grow it through volunteers.

3. WHAT CAN OTHER TEXAS REGIONS LEARN ABOUT THE CRITICAL MOBILIZATION WORK YOU'RE DOING?

This work takes commitment first and foremost, and the people most committed will be the people most affected by the issue. This is why we are focused regionally on dual language education for children in the RGV. There is a long history and ongoing legacy of linguistic and cultural violence against Spanish-speakers and Mexican Americans in the RGV, so it takes a great deal of work to educate people about it and try to reverse the damage it has done across several generations. The work to convince people that our education system would be better for everyone if we treated the Spanish so many children bring to school as a gift to build upon rather than something to replace with English will take a long time, but we're in it for the long-haul,

so that's ok. The gains often seem meager and the work tremendous, but if you know you are doing good work and are on the right side of history, you can be confident that your work has value, *que vale la pena*. We don't do this work because it is lucrative or prestigious, but because not doing this work is worse, and every child and family deserves access to a quality dual language education program that runs from Pre-K to 12th grade in their local schools.

4. IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE YOU WOULD LIKE TO SHARE?

We would encourage people to rethink their assumptions. We think that it's a problem that our school system is mostly monolingual. Even the "bilingual" programs that do exist like Early Exit or ESL aren't really bilingual, since their primary goal is to transition students to English-only classes. But when we ask parents—"If you could have it either way, would you prefer to have a child who ends up bilingual or a child who ends up monolingual"—almost all parents recognize that it would be better for their child to be bilingual. We then ask, "Then why should their education at school be only in English?" Parents are smart. Whether they speak Spanish, English, or both, it's not very hard to convince them of the value of dual language education once they find out that it exists, but most parents don't know that it exists, and most schools don't offer it. That's why the mission of RGV PUEDE is to educate and organize parents, families, and communities to support, improve, and extend dual language bilingual education programs from Pre-K to 12th across the Rio Grande Valley.

“the mission of RGV PUEDE is to educate and organize parents, families, and communities to support, improve, and extend dual language bilingual education”



children **atRisk**

CHILDREN AT RISK's mission is to serve as a catalyst for change to improve the quality of life for children through strategic research, public policy analysis, education, collaboration, and advocacy.

CHILDREN AT RISK is a research and advocacy nonprofit leading the way in improving the quality of life for Texas's children. CHILDREN AT RISK considers the whole child by tracking issues in children's health, safety, education, and economic security. Committed to action beyond the data, CHILDREN AT RISK drives evidence-based change by speaking out on behalf of children. For more information, visit childrenatrisk.org.

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CHILDREN AT RISK is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization (EIN: 76-0360533).

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**WOODY AND GAYLE HUNT
FAMILY FOUNDATION**

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