Special Education Program: 2013-2014

Robert Costello, Ph.D., Jiangang Xia, Ph.D.

At-a-Glance

The Special Education program provides support and services for students with disabilities. The academic performance of these students is monitored primarily by two systems of accountability, the Performance-Based Monitoring Analysis System (PBMAS) and Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). In PBMAS, a performance level (PL) ranging from 0 (met standard) to 3 (significantly below standard) is assigned to each indicator. This report evaluated trends, in three main areas related to PBMAS and AYP: the over-representation of African American students in special education, disproportionate placements of special education students to out-of-school suspension, and the performance and participation of special education students on state assessments.

Program Participants

The special education population for the district, as of October 28, 2013, was 11,937 students or 7.5 percent of the total population of 159,760. The special education representation of the two most populous ethnic groups within the district, Hispanic and African American, was monitored through PBMAS. Hispanic students have typically been under-represented in special education. That is, fewer Hispanic students were classified as special education students than were expected based on the population of the district as a whole, while African American students typically have been over-represented in special education. The district received a PBMAS performance level of 3 for the 2013-14 school year on this measure. In addition, although males and females were equally represented in the district total population, the majority of special education students were male (67.6%). Thirty-four percent (34%) of the special education students were also English language learners (ELL), while 41 percent of the district students were ELLs.

The out-of-school suspension (OSS) indicator for special education students was first reported through PBMAS in 2007-08 with performance levels first assigned in 2009-10 (Table 1). The difference rate steadily increased from 2007-08 to 2009-10, at which point the district received a performance level of 2 for this indicator. Since then the difference rate declined each succeeding year from 19.5 to 10.2 in 2012-13, lowering the district’s performance level to 1. However, 2013-14 data indicated a difference rate of 17.2 which raised the district’ performance level to a 2.

Table 1. PBMAS Performance Level of Out-of-School Suspensions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Special Ed.</th>
<th>District</th>
<th>Difference Rate</th>
<th>Perf Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007-08</td>
<td>30.6</td>
<td>17.2</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<tr>
<td>2008-09</td>
<td>36.1</td>
<td>19.0</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<tr>
<td>2009-10</td>
<td>40.6</td>
<td>21.1</td>
<td>19.5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010-11</td>
<td>34.0</td>
<td>17.9</td>
<td>16.1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011-12</td>
<td>25.1</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012-13</td>
<td>21.8</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013-14</td>
<td>33.5</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>17.2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Trends in Academic Performance

ITBS/Logramos

District students showed losses from one year to the next for grades KN, 1 and 2 on ITBS Reading Profile and Total. Special education students showed gains in kindergarten and grade 1. Kindergarten special education students showed a ten percentage point gain on ITBS Reading Profile. District students showed losses from one year to the next for grades KN, 1 and 2 on ITBS Mathematics Total. Special education students showed increases in grades KN and 2. Logramos is the Spanish language version of the ITBS. District students showed losses from 2013 to 2014 for all grades, while special education students showed a gain in kindergarten.

STAAR

Special education students did not reach state special education averages across all grades for STAAR Reading. Dallas ISD special education students were outperformed on STAAR Mathematics test when compared to comparable state groups. STAAR Writing scores for special education students showed lower percentages than comparable State groups. Fourth grade special education students performed better than seventh grade special education students in writing. Comparisons with State STAAR Science percentages showed that district scores were lower than State scores for special education grade 5 students. However, grade 8 special education students performed at approximately the same level as State special education students (31% vs. 32%). STAAR Social Studies results showed Dallas ISD grade 8 special education students outperforming State special education students.

Another way to compare STAAR results was to examine progress from one year to next year. In grades 4, 6 and 8 special education students show year-to-year progress on STAAR Reading. Special
education students showed progress in mathematics across all grades with the exception of grade 7. In four cases, the special education students showed a decrease from one year to the next when State scores showed an increase (grades 5 and 7 reading, grade 4 writing and grade 5 science). Overall, 57 percent of the STAAR test measures examined showed improvement from 2012-13 to 2013-14 for special education students.

Figure 1 shows the percent of special education students who took the various versions of the STAAR test. Almost 50 percent of the special education students took the STAAR Modified versions of the reading, mathematics, writing, science and social studies tests. Approximately 35 percent took the regular STAAR tests and 15 percent took the STAAR Alternate.

Figure 2 showed a greater percentage of special education students reached the Satisfactory level 2 on the STARR Modified version of the tests than on the regular STAAR and/or STAAR Alternate tests. Special education student performance was highest on STAAR Modified Social Studies (60.4%) and lowest on STAAR Writing (18.4%) and STAAR Social Studies (17.4%).

Figure 1: Percent of Special Education Students Tested on STAAR, STAAR Modified and STAAR Alternate

**STAAR End-of-Courses (EOC)**

STAAR EOC results showed gains in Algebra I and Biology for special education students from 2012-13 to 2013-14. District special education students performed at a lower level than special education students statewide (Figure 3). English I, English II and U.S. History were given for the first time in 2014; therefore, no past year comparisons could be made. The district and State students were closest on the Biology EOC and within eight to nine percentage points on English I and II EOCs. History showed a three point difference and Algebra had a five point difference.

Figure 3. Special Education Percent Satisfactory EOC

### RECOMMENDATIONS

Examine the use of the Instructional Setting/Assessment report showing participation rates on STAAR and STAAR-M and the reasons for the increase in students taking STAAR-M, in particular, whether there were changes in students’ instructional arrangement or curriculum requirements to justify the increase.

Given the high percentage of special education students (approximately 50%) who took the STAAR Modified version of the tests, the special education department needs to prepare teachers, LPAC members and principals to the fact that the modified versions of the STAAR tests will not be available next year.

As with disproportionality, response treatment interaction (RTI) training completed by campuses should be documented with state testing results serving as an additional outcome measure. Within the framework of RTI, teachers should be trained to respond to environmental needs of children with specific disabilities.

For more information, see EA14-519-2, which can be found at [http://www.dallasisd.org/page/888](http://www.dallasisd.org/page/888).