



Board Monitoring System: Indicator J

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Purpose

The Houston Independent School District (HISD) exists to strengthen the social and economic foundation of Houston by assuring its youth the highest-quality elementary and secondary education available anywhere. In fulfilling this goal, HISD's Board of Education has designed a program to systematically monitor achievement of the district's goals and adherence to core values. The Board Monitoring System requires the administration to report on each goal and core value on a routine basis. The indicator currently under review is ENGLISH ACQUISITION FOR LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENT STUDENTS. The objective of this indicator states: "Limited English Proficient (LEP) students shall make the transition into English courses as rapidly as individually possible" (Goal 1, Section J).

Findings

English Acquisition for LEP Students

- In Figure 1, the total number of exited students increased by 32-percent, going from 3,923 in 2007–2008 to 5,185 in 2008–2009.
- During the 2008–2009 school year, the largest number of exited students was in the fourth grade with 1,096, followed by fifth grade with 923.
- In Figure 2, the total number of first- or second-year exited LEP students (i.e., "monitored" students) decreased from 7,365 in 2007–2008 to 5,541 in 2008–2009, a decline of 25-percent.
- During the 2008–2009 school year, the largest number of monitored students was in the sixth grade with 1,287, followed by the fifth grade with 1,021.

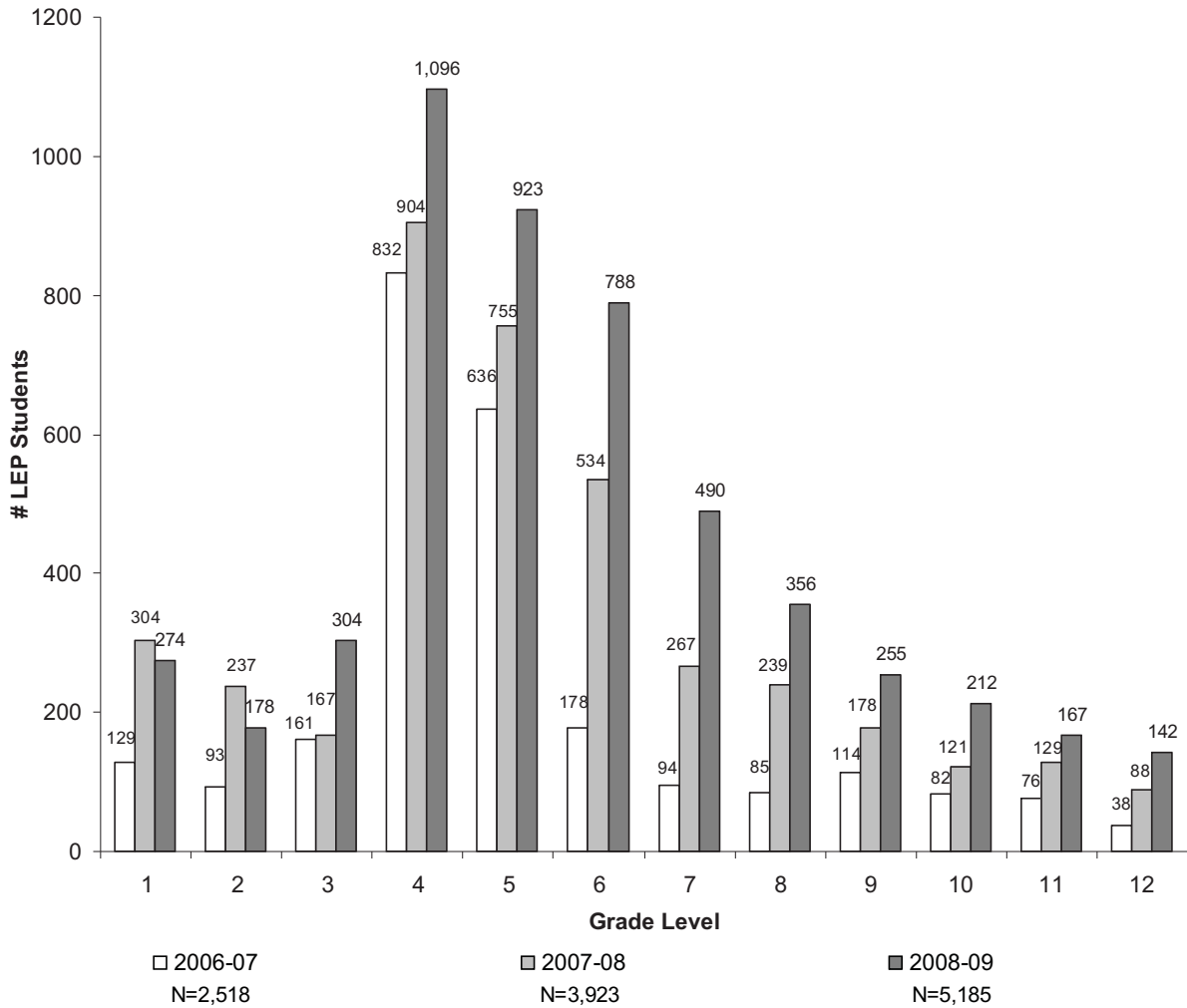
Analysis/Administrative Response

- LEP exits declined two years ago in large part due to new exit criteria mandated by TEA, specifically those requiring evidence of oral and written English proficiency. The Multilingual Department subsequently introduced, and continues to emphasize, an increased focus on productive (i.e., oral and written English) language for English Language Learner's (ELLs) in professional development

activities for the district’s bilingual and English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers.

- Since these initiatives, the number of LEP exits has increased over a two year period and now is close to that reported historically.
- Monitored ELLs will continue to be closely tracked in order to verify that students who exit special language programs are performing at the required levels.

Figure 1: HISD LEP Students Who Exited by Grade

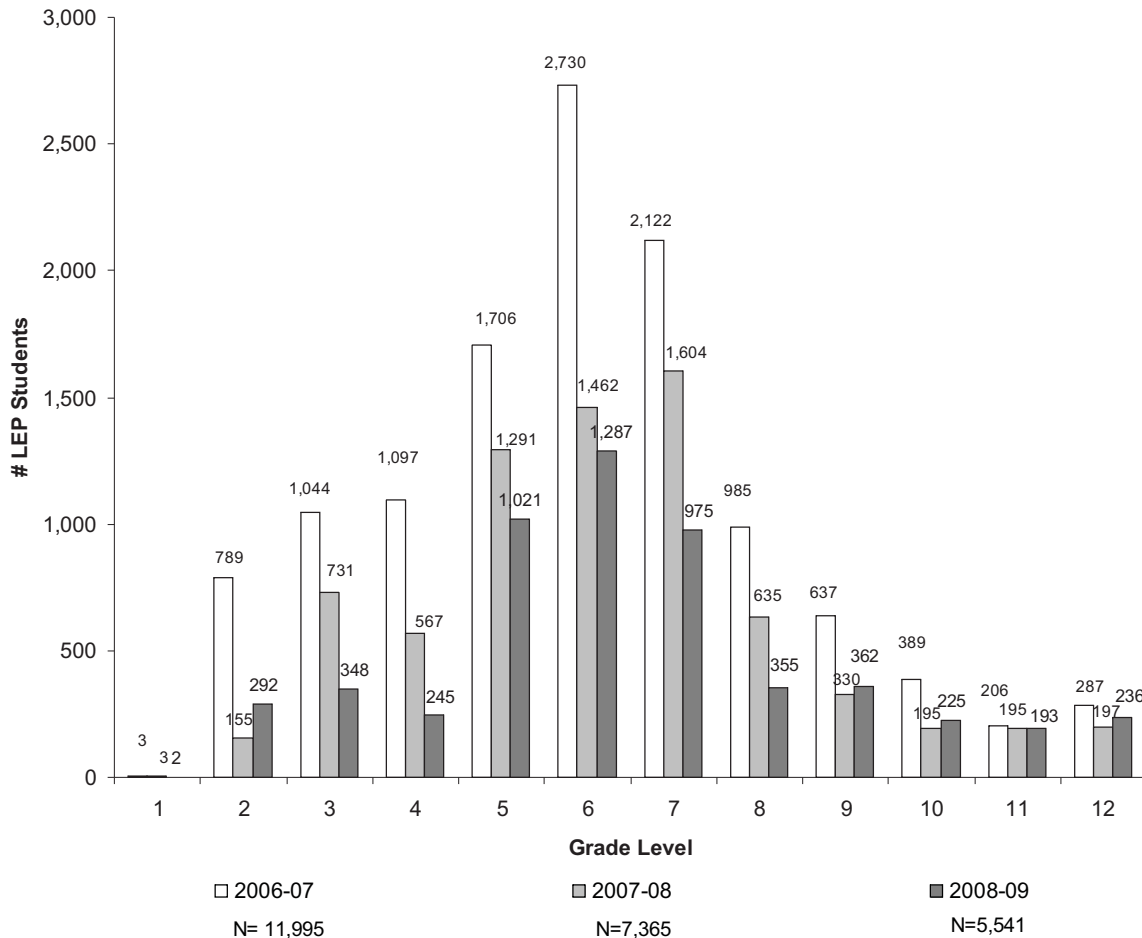


The Bilingual/ESL Program Guidelines describe an exited LEP student as a LEP student who was reclassified as a non-LEP student in the last school year. Reclassification is based on State criteria.

This chart shows the number of LEP students who exited at each grade by year between 2006–2007 and 2008–2009. Grade shown is the grade in which they were enrolled at the time they were exited. Most exits in 2008–2009 occurred in the fourth and fifth grades, as had been the case in prior years. During the past academic year,

the number of exits increased by 32-percent, going from 3,923 in 2007–2008 to 5,185. This is almost back to the levels observed in 2006 and prior years, when there were more than 5,500 exits annually. New, more stringent LEP exit criteria were mandated by the Texas Education Agency as of August 2006. These new standards required LEPs at all grade levels to demonstrate proficiency in oral and written English as well as in reading. Subsequently, it was determined that low scores on the IPT oral and written tests were a contributing factor to the decrease in LEP exits, and the multilingual department focused on increasing the emphasis on productive aspects of English language proficiency (i.e., speaking and writing) in its professional development activities for bilingual and ESL teachers. The initial decline in exits that followed introduction of these rules appears to have been largely reversed.

Figure 2: HISD Monitored LEP Students by Grade



The Bilingual/ESL Program Guidelines describe a monitored LEP student as a LEP student who was reclassified as a non-LEP student sometime during the previous two school years. The total number of monitored students decreased from 7,365 in 2007–2008 to 5,541 in 2008–2009, a decline of 25-percent.

This chart shows the number of monitored LEP students at each grade by year between 2006–2007 and 2008–2009. The highest number of monitored students

were in the sixth grade, with the next-highest enrollments in the fifth and seventh grades. Last year (2007–2008), the highest number of monitored students was in the seventh grade (1,604), but in previous years the sixth grade had the highest number of monitored LEPs. The number of monitored LEP students has declined from that observed in previous years, but is expected to increase in the future as the number of LEP exits returns to more typical levels. That is, the relatively low number of monitored LEPs observed in 2008–2009 is a reflection of two consecutive years with low exit numbers. With these apparently approaching more typically observed levels of 5,000+ annually, the number of monitored LEPs should begin to rebound as well.